

# Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines



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# A compiled list of Tibetan districts (*rdzong*) and government estates of the Ganden Phodrang territory (1830-1959)<sup>1</sup>

Alice Travers

(CRCAO, UMR 8155)

he Ganden Phodrang (Dga' ldan pho brang) government (1642-1959) has been often described as maintaining a remarkably small administration to rule over a comparatively vast territory. This was achieved not only by maintaining the core of political and administrative offices and functions in Lhasa while delegating great power to territorial representatives posted throughout the whole territory, but also by letting portions of this territory be administered semi-autonomously,<sup>2</sup> in what has been characterised overall as “a balance between centralisation and decentralisation” (Goldstein 1971). The Ganden Phodrang territory was divided into estates (*gzhis ka*) given in tenure to three types of landlords, with the ultimate lord of all land being theoretically the Dalai Lama. An estate could thus belong to either the aristocracy and was termed *sger gzhis* (private/noble estate) or a monastery and was termed *chos gzhis* (monastic estate), or it was held

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<sup>1</sup> This compiled list of districts and government estates was first started in the framework of doctoral research on the aristocracy of the Ganden Phodrang and on the careers of lay officials, for which systematic information on all districts' names and ranks attached to the various positions of their heads was required (Travers 2009). I would like to thank in particular *bka' zur* Zhe bo Blo bzang dar rgyas (born 1933), a former lay official of the Tibetan government, for his help and for the time he dedicated to checking a first draft of this list in 2003 and 2005. The list was recently reviewed and expanded in the framework of the ANR-DFG project TibStat (“Social Status in Tibetan Societies”) thanks to the addition of the information available in Bshad sgra and Nor nang 1956 (presented below); I am very grateful to Josayma Tashi Tsering (AMI) who shared a copy of this source. All errors and uncertainties left in the final version of this work remain mine only.

<sup>2</sup> These semi-autonomous sub-entities were Tashi Lhunpo labrang (Bkra shis lhun po bla brang), Sakya (Sa skya) monastery (often referred to, along with the Lhasa government, as “*gzhung bla sa gsum*” (lit. “the [Lhasa] government, the [Tashi Lhunpo] *bla brang* and Sakya [monastery]”), and Lhagyari (Lha rgya ri).

directly by the government and termed *gzhung gzhis* (government estate) or more often only *gzhis ka*.<sup>3</sup>

The district (*rdzong*),<sup>4</sup> which encompassed several such estates, was the basic territorial administrative unit of the Tibetan government during the entire Ganden Phodrang period. Districts were placed under the authority of one or two District Commissioners (in official documents *rdzong sdod* and more informally *rdzong dpon*)<sup>5</sup> based at the fortress used as the district headquarters (*rdzong*).<sup>6</sup> It was there that, outside the capital of Lhasa, justice was administered and taxes were collected.

In the last phase of the Ganden Phodrang rule, and in the context of extending and modernising its administration,<sup>7</sup> another level was added between the districts and the Central government in Lhasa, namely the regional provinces, whose number progressively increased during the first half of the 20th century. These provinces

<sup>3</sup> In Tibetan sources such as lists of districts and estates where it is obvious that the estate is administered directly by the government, the generic term *gzhis ka* is often only used.

<sup>4</sup> The Tibetan term "*rdzong*" originally designated simply a fortress. The exact time of its semantic extension, also to encompass the territorial unit over which the fortress ruled, and the exact time of the generalisation in Tibet of the administrative unit *rdzong* based on their eponymous fortress requires further research. It has been attributed to Ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan's rule in the 14th century in Tibetan (Shakapa 1981: 30) and Western (Kapstein 2006: 118) secondary literature, but there is no evidence to support this claim in the autobiography of Byang chub rgyal mtshan (Petech 1990: 90 and 120; Van der Kuijp [1991] 2003: 431). According to Petech, during the Ganden Phodrang period, *rdzong* meant first only a fortress and only progressively took the meaning of "district", replacing the former *khul*; see Petech 1973: 12 and his explanation of *khul* in his "Glossary of Administrative Terms" of the Ganden Phodrang government: "this term originally indicated a district, but was later replaced by *rdzong*. It is still used, with the more vague meaning of region or province" (*ibid.*: 236).

<sup>5</sup> From the very beginning of the Ganden Phodrang rule, the officials in charge of the fortresses and their associated districts (*khul* and later *rdzong*, see above) were termed *rdzong dpon*: see Cüppers' study on the duties of a *rdzong dpon* (Cüppers 1999), though as Petech remarks in non-Tibetan sources (Chinese and Nepalese) of the 18th to 20th century, they continued to be referred to by their earlier title of *sde pa* (Petech 1973: 13).

<sup>6</sup> A short note of explanation on the choice made here regarding the English translation of the districts' incumbents: though the translation "District Governor" is also sometimes to be found, in Petech's work for instance, I have translated *rdzong sdod* (literally "district resident") and *rdzong dpon* (literally "district chief") as "District Commissioner", following the common translation found in British archives of the period, and keeping "Governor" for the positions of *spyi khyab*. The term "district head" renders the term, also used in Tibetan sources, of *rdzong 'go*.

<sup>7</sup> On which see Travers 2009.

were placed under the authority of one or two Province Governors (*spyi khyab*) who were entrusted with military responsibilities, in addition to the task of supervising the districts of their province. Nonetheless, until 1959, the district or *rdzong* remained the basic level of the State administration.

To the above-mentioned government estates (*gzhung gzhis* or *gzhis ka*) were appointed Estate Managers (*gzhis sdod*)<sup>8</sup>—an office that was often assimilated to that of District Commissioners (although it was of inferior status, as will be seen later); therefore, districts and government estates were often listed together, and referred to as “*rdzong gzhis*, a collective name for administrative units outside Lhasa” (Petech 1973: 13).

Despite the clear administrative significance of these two territorial units, the exact number of districts and government estates under the Ganden Phodrang government, even for its last period, appears to vary greatly according to the sources. Indeed, as will be seen below, these estimates depend on whether the source does or does not include government estates in addition to districts; districts and estates outside Dbus and Gtsang; and last, districts and estates that were under the control of semi-autonomous entities.

In any case, it is hoped that this new list of all presently known districts and government estates<sup>9</sup>—the choice made here has been to be as inclusive as possible based on the current state of research—under the direct or indirect (for those under the Tashi Lhunpo labrang) control of the Ganden Phodrang government will be a useful tool for anyone interested in the history of this government and time, and in particular its later phase, for which the present work is most valid.

*Explanation of the sources used for the compiled list of districts and government estates*

The starting point of the present work is the detailed list of districts (*rdzong*) and government estates (*gzhis ka*) that Melvyn Goldstein

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<sup>8</sup> The Estate Manager (*gzhis sdod*) mentioned here is usually chosen among government officials and appointed by the Tibetan government to administrate an estate belonging directly to the government. It is not to be confused with other private estate managers, also termed *gzhis sdod*, who were privately sent by aristocratic landlords to their estate, often chosen either from among family members not serving the Tibetan government as officials, or a servant.

<sup>9</sup> Except for *Gzhis ka rtse*, which was considered a district before becoming the capital of a Regional province (i.e. the seat of a *spyi khyab*), Regional provinces and their capitals have not been included in the list. They were usually not listed in our sources (except for *Sgar tog*, the seat of the *sgar dpon* in Western Tibet, which is included in *Bshad sgra* and *Nor nang* 1956).

included in his pioneering anthropological study of the Ganden Phodrang government in the early 20th century (Goldstein 1968: 32-37).<sup>10</sup> Goldstein states the Tibetan tradition held that there should be 76 districts, but that his own research in 1968 led to the higher figure of around 120 (*ibid.*: 19), in which he included not only districts but also government estates, as well as the districts and estates under the direct authority of the Ganden Phodrang in areas of Tibet other than Ü and Tsang, i.e. those in the East, North, South and West, and last those which were under Tashi Lhunpo labrang.<sup>11</sup>

Later on, the same author revised his estimate to around 200 districts and government estates (Goldstein 2007: 461) over the whole territory under the direct or indirect (Tashi Lhunpo) control of the Ganden Phodrang, though without providing a new list. Thus, the information available in Goldstein's 1968 list comprises 85 *rdzong* and 31 *gzhis ka*, for a total of 116 administrative units. This list proved to be extremely valuable because it proposes, though with some gaps, the name of the district or government estate, a geographical location in one of the provinces of the Ganden Phodrang, the number of Commissioners appointed to each *rdzong* or *gzhis ka*, their particular titles, the rank of those Commissioners, and finally the origin of their recruitment.<sup>12</sup>

In order to supplement the missing information and cross-check the information available in Goldstein's list, and thus finalise the revised compiled list presented in this paper, four different types of primary sources have been used. The first one, the *Iron-Tiger Land Settlement (Lcags stags zhib gzhung*, hereafter *ITLS*) of 1830, represents the latest (so far) available land settlement of the Ganden Phodrang

<sup>10</sup> Goldstein does not mention his exact sources for this list, but it can be assumed that it is based—as the rest of the dissertation is—on his extensive oral history project, conducted with former (often prominent) officials of the Ganden Phodrang government.

<sup>11</sup> Eight districts and one estate (Lcib lung, Lhan lhun rab gzhis, 'Dam bla ma, Bzhad mthong smon gzhis, Rta nag rin rtse, Phun tshogs gling, Lha rtse, Gam pa and Ngam ring) are mentioned as normally occupied by Tashi Lhunpo officials. Including these estates in such a list was relevant inasmuch as they passed under the direct control of the Ganden Phodrang government in the aftermath of the Ninth Panchen Lama's flight in 1924 (on this event and its consequences, see Jagou 2011), and Lhasa officials were appointed to some of them as District Commissioner and Estate Managers. The precise time and type of change of authority over all these districts still requires further research.

<sup>12</sup> A few details in Goldstein's list remain inexplicable: for instance, some Districts' heads are given a rank of "0". I have deduced that they were not recruited among government officials, but others have no rank indicated at all, and the difference with those whose rank was "0" is not explained. I have tried to correct and supplement when possible the information, and to highlight any remaining gaps, so that it might be hopefully complemented by future research.



period.<sup>13</sup> This census includes 57 districts (still referred to as *khul*, and not *rdzong*) and estates. They are all under the direct administration of the Ganden Phodrang<sup>14</sup> and located in the central part of the Ganden Phodrang territory (Ü and Tsang), which explains the limited total number of districts and estates included. As Surkhang puts it, the *ITLS* comprises only those districts and estates “from Shelkar to Kongpo” (Surkhang 1986: 28), and excludes a number of those located in Northern, Southern and Western Tibet—which will be the case with traditional Tibetan estimates until 1959, as we will see with the next source.<sup>15</sup> One advantage of the *ITLS* is that it allows us to trace the existence of this limited number of districts back to 1830 and ascertain their names at the time. However, the territorial organisation of the Ganden Phodrang underwent significant changes between 1830 and 1959, and some of the districts listed there do not appear in the later sources consulted; it can be assumed that their territories were either integrated into others, or passed under the authority of a semi-autonomous entity, or changed names.

The second source which has been consulted, produced just a few years before the end of the Ganden Phodrang rule and administration in Tibet, is entitled “Shod drung las tshan gyi rim pa dang/ *rdzong gzhis khag gi ming tho*” [Ranks of the government noble lay officials and lesser officials and list of the various districts and government estates]. It was authored by two Tibetan government officials, *bka' blon* (Cabinet minister) Bshad sgra and *bka' drung* (Cabinet secretary) Nor nang and included as an appendix to their famous *Letter Writers* (*Yik bskur rnam gshag*)—though only in one specific edition published by Tharchin at the Tibet Mirror Press in Kalimpong in 1956 (Bshad sgra and Nor nang 1956).<sup>16</sup> It is a list of all government positions to which lay officials could be appointed, ordered by the rank (*rim pa*) attached to the position, and including 70 estates and districts. The list mentions the respective number and

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<sup>13</sup> The version published in Bod rang skyong ljongs lo rgyus yig tshags khang (ed.) 1989 has been used here. Several scholars have worked on the *Iron-Tiger Land Settlement*, in particular Ryavec (2001 and 2002), who studied the evolution of the use of agricultural land in Central Tibet, and Gurung (2016).

<sup>14</sup> It does not include estates that were under Tashi Lhunpo labrang and Sakya for instance. For a study of tax collection on an estate under Tashi Lhunpo, see Travers Forthcoming.

<sup>15</sup> See Surkhang (1986: 28) for the list of districts of Western Tibet which are not included in the *ITLS*.

<sup>16</sup> I have included a transcription of the passages related to the District Commissioners and Estate Managers, and the subsequent description of the main road from Lhasa to Markham in the appendix of the present article.

title of District Commissioner and Estate Managers for each district and estate, as well as the distance separating the district or estate from Lhasa (given in Chinese *li*, i.e. 500 m). This source was consulted and mentioned in a footnote (without its precise content being provided) by Petech in his short description of the districts' system in the introduction of his book *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet*.<sup>17</sup> Based on it, he states that "At the time of the 13th Dalai-Lama there were 52 rdzoñ [...]" (Petech 1973: 13),<sup>18</sup> an estimate that is close to the one (53 districts) given by other authors, probably also derived from similar Tibetan written and oral sources regarding districts.<sup>19</sup>

Interestingly, in this same appendix to their *Letter Writers* and following the list of all the government positions, Bshad sgra and Nor nang include a detailed description of the main road (*gzhung lam*) linking the Ganden Phodrang's capital of Lhasa to the eastern end of its territory in Markham (Smar khams), entitled "Lha sa nas smad khams phyin gyi lam tho dang tham deb". It describes the 45 travel stages or *zhag* (a period of one day and one night) on the road from Lhasa to Markham, including a few *rdzong*,<sup>20</sup> as well as all places where travellers stopped simply to feed the animals and/or overnight, and could use the animals provided by the transportation corvée system between districts called the *rdzong skyel*.<sup>21</sup>

The third Tibetan primary source is an oral history type one, written by three former officials of the Ganden Phodrang and published in 1991 in the detailed description of the Ganden Phodrang administration that forms volume 13 of the collection published in the Tibet Autonomous Region entitled *Bod kyi rig gnas lo rgyus dpyad gzhi'i rgyu cha bdams bsgrigs* (*Materials for the Culture and History of*

<sup>17</sup> It is referred to as "Tharchin" by Petech. Petech also mentions, as a source for his description, the data available in the "Shin byi roll", another list of government lay officials dated 1924 in which a number of *rdzong sdod* and *gzhis sdod* appear with their rank. This list is reproduced in transcription in the appendix of Petech's book (1973: 240-249).

<sup>18</sup> Petech obviously reached this figure by withdrawing from his calculation all the estates as well as the first place to be listed (see the reproduction of the Appendix), Sgar tog, where two *sgar dpon* were posted, probably because they are usually regarded as Province Governors (*spyi khyab*) rather than District Commissioners.

<sup>19</sup> O'Connor 1903: 41 and Bacot 1962: 71-72.

<sup>20</sup> They are however already mentioned in the previous list of officials including district and estate heads. The main interest of this road description resides in the information it provides on the government road and transportation corvée system to its easternmost part. The transcription of this part has been therefore also included in the appendix of this paper.

<sup>21</sup> On the Tibetan governmental transport system, see Surkhang 1986: 24-25 and Maurer 2019-2020: 29-37.

*Tibet* or *MHCT*) (Bshad sgra, Chab tshom and Sreg shing 1991: 92-94).<sup>22</sup> Based on these authors' recollections, and most probably on written sources as well, this is the most complete source, including 121 district and estate heads (*rdzong 'go*)<sup>23</sup> ordered according to the seven regional areas to which they belong (Stod sgar dang la stod lho byang khul, Gtsang khul, Dbus khul, Lho kha khul, Dwags kong khul, Byang rgyud khul and Mdo smad khul).<sup>24</sup>

The fourth and last primary source is an archival type one and thus contemporary to the period under scrutiny: the various lists of Tibetan Government officials and the successive positions they occupied, which were recorded by the different British Trade Agents and Political Officers appointed in Tibet between 1908 and 1950 both in their diaries and in the several *Who's Who* they compiled, and kept in the archives of the British Raj in London and Delhi. These archive documents interestingly reflect the actual appointments of Tibetan government officials to a number of these *rdzong dpon* and *gzhis sdod* positions between 1895<sup>25</sup> and 1959.<sup>26</sup>

The resulting compiled list which is presented below in the form of a table includes, for the territory of the Ganden Phodrang (Ü, Tsang, Northern, Western, and Eastern Tibet), 166 *rdzong* and *gzhis ka* (respectively 109 and 57) whose existence is attested after consulting the five primary and secondary sources mentioned above.

A short word of explanation and a few remarks on the personnel appointed as heads of these districts and government estates will help better understand the information gathered in the table.

<sup>22</sup> For a presentation of this collection see Travers 2020.

<sup>23</sup> In a few cases however, only the status of the territorial unit (*rdzong* or *gzhis ka*) is given without the exact title and number of the incumbent(s) being recorded.

<sup>24</sup> The list is followed by the description of the exact land composition and production of three districts and estates of different size and significance—big (*che gras*), middle (*'bring gras*) and small (*chung gras*)—according to the rank (*gnas*) of the district, a status that was actually that of the district head: Rgyal rtse, a district with a 5th rank Commissioner (*ibid.*: 94-97), Rin spungs, a district with a 6th rank Commissioner (*ibid.*: 97-99), and Rgya mtsho, an estate with a 7th rank Estate Manager (*ibid.*: 99-100).

<sup>25</sup> The reconstruction of the Tibetan officials' career in some British sources goes back to a period predating by a few years their actual presence in Tibet and thus allows one to go back to the beginning of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's rule for a number of these officials.

<sup>26</sup> In these sources, the names of districts and estates are given only in English transcription. A few of these districts, where government officials were appointed according to the British archives, could not be matched with a corresponding district in the various Tibetan lists. They have been retained (in italics) in the compiled list only when corroborated by their mention in Petech 1973.

*The District Commissioners and Estate Managers*

The District Commissioners and Estate Managers were usually officials (*gzhung zhabs*) appointed by the Ganden Phodrang government for a duration of three years (though the actual duration of their position could differ significantly from that norm).<sup>27</sup> The *rdzong* was placed under the authority of one single official or a pair of officials (*rdzong sbrel*, in one third of all districts),<sup>28</sup> in which case it could be either one lay official and one monk official, or two lay officials—but never two monk officials.

The officials' rank depended on the significance of the *rdzong*. The rank of the District Commissioners (*rdzong dpon*) varied between the fourth<sup>29</sup> and the seventh rank, with the vast majority of them holding the fifth and sixth rank. The rank of the Estate Managers (*gzhis sdod*) varied between the sixth and seventh rank, with a majority of them holding the seventh rank.

Based on the list of Bshad sgra and Nor nang (1956), Petech had already underlined the diversity in ranks and titles of the District Commissioners: *rdzong sdod* in most cases, but also *spyi khyab* (even when not the head of a regional province), *'go pa*, *sho pa* and other titles linked to the status of the particular incumbent (*lha gnyer*, *bla gnyer*, *bla spyi* for instance). Petech defines their role as follows:

They were responsible for the collection of revenue, for law and order and for the hearing of civil and criminal cases arising in their districts. Often a *rdzoñ-dpon*, especially when young and belonging to a family of the higher nobility, was an absentee; he stayed on in Lhasa and his duties were performed by a steward (*gñyer-pa*). (Petech 1973: 13)<sup>30</sup>

Besides, as pointed out by Melvyn Goldstein, some districts were permanently given to aristocratic or monastic units as a kind of prebend. Twelve districts and estates were the preserve of specific noble families, with the district's head position either conferring a

<sup>27</sup> See Travers 2009 for an analysis of the careers of lay officials including District Commissioners.

<sup>28</sup> 34 out of the 109 districts listed in the compiled table. Government estates were always placed under the authority of a single official.

<sup>29</sup> For the highest-ranking District Commissioner only, i.e. the Mar khams *thai'ji* who held the 4th rank when in Markham but the 5th rank when in Lhasa (Petech 1973: 13).

<sup>30</sup> In a few cases, Bshad sgra and Nor nang (1956) add to the description of a District with a pair of Commissioners: "*ngo 'gro gcig dang tog gnas gcig*", which I have interpreted as: "one who goes in person and one who has only the position or title (i.e. but does not go in person)".

rank—suggesting that a member of those aristocratic families who served the government as an official occupied these positions—or not, in which case it was apparently customary to reserve the position either for family stewards or for family members who did not already serve the government.

Moreover, the management of thirteen districts and estates was entrusted to particular monasteries. Thus, a number of the District Commissioners and Estate Managers positions were occupied by individuals who were not government officials.

Finally, another interesting aspect was that ten districts were assigned to government offices or to particular officials already holding another position in the government, in which case the management of the district was considered a source of income and was granted in lieu of a salary.

As a matter of fact, districts were a source of income for their incumbents, and District Commissioners in pre-1959 Tibet have been described by external observers as “revenue contractors” (Richardson 1998 [1945]: 94), trying to maximise profits during their tenure, through various means (Goldstein 1968: 24).

#### *How to read the table*

The table provides (and is alphabetically ordered by) the name of the district or estate first in its English transcription (based on the THL Simplified Phonetic Transcription of Standard Tibetan), followed by the Tibetan spelling in Wylie—the abbreviated forms in which the district is referred to in most official Tibetan sources is shown through the use of brackets;<sup>31</sup> then all information available in the sources on the districts and estates (location in one of Tibet’s provinces according to the various sources, distance from Lhasa as per *Bshad sgra* and *Nor nang* 1956),<sup>32</sup> and on their incumbents (number, rank, title, recruitment, i.e. either monk of lay officials or both, or other types of appointees as per the various sources). The

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<sup>31</sup> It has to be noted that all districts with a one syllable name (Lho, Jo, Do, Sngang, etc.) were always referred to with “rdzong” afterwards, which thus produced a doubling of this word when referring to the incumbent (“Lho rdzong rdzong sdod”), while incumbents of districts with a two and more syllables title were referred to as “Snye mo rdzong sdod” for instance.

<sup>32</sup> A good number of these districts and estates can be located more precisely by consulting the maps 36 and 37 in Ryavec 2015: 138-143, for which Goldstein 1968 is quoted as a source. However, only English transcriptions appear for places’ names (without any Tibetan), which maintains some room for ambiguity. The districts included in the *ITLS* have been precisely located on a map by the same author in Ryavec 2002: 61.

penultimate set of columns notes in which of the above-mentioned sources the district/estate appears.

The different sources display a number of discrepancies not only with respect to the number of districts and estates they include, but also the identification of a territory either as a district or as a government estate, or the number of incumbents, or their rank and their precise title. In the above-mentioned columns, when a choice had to be made, priority was given to the information corroborated by the highest number of sources. When there were only two sources, priority was given to one of the three Tibetan sources over Goldstein or the British archives. However, these discrepancies have been retained as far as possible in the final table, and they are all recorded and explained in the last column of the table. Indeed, since all these sources are produced by or based on reliable informants (be they Goldstein's informants, or the various Tibetan authors of the sources and, to a lesser extent, British observers of the time), in my view the discrepancies do not so much reflect errors (it can be the case of course marginally) on the part of the authors of these sources, but rather they reflect the variety of points of view (a more or less inclusive one) and variation over time in the status of the territorial entities and their incumbents.

For instance, some entities described as a district in one source are defined as an estate in another: in a few cases (such as Yar stod for example), this change seems to have happened after the government transferred the management to monastic or private individuals. The reasons for having only one incumbent in a source and two, with different ranks, in another, could be either the result of a change of authority of the district or estate or just due to the government having decided to change the rank of the incumbent of a particular district (as was the case for Gzhis ka rtse, for example). Some sources give only the largest government estates, while others (Bshad sgra, Chab tshom and Sreg shing 1991) include even the smallest. The appearance of certain districts in one source and not in another might be the result of a recent extension of the Ganden Phodrang territory (for instance, the districts of Spo stod and Spo smad). Government estates that appear in one source and not in another might have just joined the "group" of government estates following confiscation from a monastic or private landlord, or they might have just "left" this group following allocation of a government estate to a monastic or private landlord.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the information given by the Tibetan

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<sup>33</sup> The instability that affected estates in Tibet, a phenomenon well described by Melvyn Goldstein (1973), had direct consequences on the quantity and nature of the estates directly managed by the government, and it seems to have, to a much lesser extent, indirectly also affected the districts, with the possibility for the ruler

authors of the various sources are only valid for the particular period with which they are concerned, which seems to be for most sources (except the *Land-Tiger Lang Settlement*) between the early 1940s and the late 1950s. The list by Bshad sgra and Nor nang (1956) reflects, for a few districts, both an anterior situation and new administrative changes affecting the district.

Thus, the compiled list presented here remains by necessity a provisional one, and it is hoped future work will allow it to be complemented further, in particular by providing additional information on the chronological administrative evolution of the various districts and government estates with precise dates of creation, dismantling, and changes of responsibility over these districts and estates.

*Legend and abbreviations used in the table*

N = Identification number

**District name:**

Transcr.= English phonetic transcription according to the THL Simplified Phonetic Transcription of Standard Tibetan.

Translit.= transliteration according to the Wylie system.

single underlining= *gzhis ka* or government estate (57 districts, i.e. 52 districts and estates underlined, plus Mkhar rtse, Skyar po, Lho mos, Phod mdo and Sog which happen to also have a monastic recruitment and are thus already marked by a double underlining).

double underlining= district or estate with monastic recruitment (at least one of the district holders is a monk and not a government official, neither lay or monk) (13 districts).

**bold**= the position is, at least in a given period, the preserve of one particular aristocratic family and the incumbent can be a government official or not (12 districts).

*italics*= the district's name only appears in the British archives and in Petech (3 districts).

**dark grey highlight**= the district belongs to Tashi Lhunpo labrang (9 districts).

**light grey highlight**= *rdzong* linked to another government position or office as a salary or source of income (10 districts).

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and the government to bestow the privilege of managing particular districts or estates to specific offices, monasteries or aristocratic families.

**Location:**

Dist.= distance from Lhasa as per Bshad sgra and Nor nang 1956, expressed in *li*, i.e. 500 m (only for those districts mentioned in this source).

**District heads:**

Nb= number of districts' or estates' incumbents working together at the same time (one or two).

Rk= rank of the districts' or estates' incumbents when they are government officials (*gzhung zhabs*).

LO= lay official (*drung 'khor* or *shod drung*) of the Ganden Phodrang administration.

MO=monk official (*rste drung*) of the Ganden Phodrang administration.

**Sources:**

LS= [=ITLS, *Iron-Tiger Land Settlement*] Bod rang skyong ljongs lo rgyus yig tshags khang (ed.). [1830] 1989. *Lcags stag zhib gzhung*. Beijing: Krung go bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang.

BN= Shod drung las tshan gyi rim pa dang/ rdzong gzhis khag gi ming tho/ lha sa nas smad khams phyin gyi lam tho dang tham deb [Ranks of the government noble lay officials and lesser officials and list of the various districts and government estates; travelling notes of the road from Lhasa to Khams] (Bshad sgra and Nor nang 1956: 164-169, reproduced in the appendix of this paper).

BA= British Archives (*Who's Who*, diaries and reports, see bibliography).

V13=[*MHCT, Materials for the History and Culture of Tibet*] Bshad sgra, Dga' ldan dpal 'byor, Chab tshom, 'Chi med rgyal po, Sreg shing, Blo bzang don grub. 1991. *De snga'i bod sa gnas srid gzhung gi srid 'dzin sgrig gzhi*. In *Bod kyi rig gnas lo rgyus dpyad gzhi'i rgyu cha bdams bsgrigs*, vol. 13. Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 92-94.

G= List of districts in Goldstein 1968: 32-37.



N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
1	Ardza bésok	Ar rdza be sog	Khams		1	6	'go pa	LO					x	
2	Béru	Be ru	Khams		1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	MO					x	
3	<u>Bétsang/</u> <u>Beltsang</u>	<u>Sbas</u> <u>tshang/</u> <u>Sbal tshang</u>	Byang		1	0	'go pa / 'Bras spungs bla spyi	'Bras spungs monastery				x	x	Rank and title by G, indicating an incumbent who is not a government official, but a monastic representative from 'Bras spungs); V13 records as Sbal tshang/G as Sbas tshang
4	<u>Bodong</u> <u>trégang</u>	<u>Bo gdong</u> <u>bkras sgang</u>	Gtsang				<i>gzhis sdod</i>					x		
5	<u>Chiplung</u>	<u>Lcib lung</u>	Gtsang		1	0	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	Bkra shis lhun po					x	Rank by G, indicating an incumbent who is not a government official
6	Chökhorgyel	Chos 'khor rgyal	Dwags po	420	1	7	<i>gnyer sdod</i>	LO	x	x		x	x	BN records the 7th rank, G the 6th
7	Chölung	Chos lung	Dbus		1	?	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	MO					x	Rank unfixed (G)
8	Chonggyé	'Phyongs rgyas	Lho kha	350	2	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	
9	<u>Chuwar</u> <u>tardong</u>	<u>Chu dbar</u> <u>star gdong</u>	Gtsang				<i>gzhis sdod</i>					x		
10	Chushur/ Chushül	Chu shur/ Chu shul	Dbus	140	1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	Chu shur (LS) / Chu shul (BN)

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
11	<u>Chushur lhashong</u>	<u>Chu shur lha gshongs</u>	Dbus				<i>gzhis sdod</i>					x		
12	Dakhar	Mda' mkhar	Stod mnga' ris	3100	2	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>			x	x	x	x	"rdA kong khri bcu gnyis pa'i snyan zhus kyi blon chen shin lung gnyis nas mi gcig gis shor lcogs byas mthus stsal" (BN). G has only one incumbent
13	<u>Dam</u>	' <u>Dam</u>	Byang		1	0	<i>spyi khyab / Se ra bla pyi</i>	Se ra monastery					x	Rank and title by G, indicating an incumbent who is not a government official
14	Dam lama	'Dam bla ma	Gtsang		1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	Bkra shis lhun po					x	
15	Dargön	Dar dgon	Mdo smad				<i>mkhan po</i>					x		
16	<u>Darma</u>	<u>Dar ma</u>	Lho kha	560	1	6	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO	x	x		x	x	BN identifies it as a district/V13 and G as an estate (which might reflect a change?)
17	<i>Dawa/Tawa</i>	<i>Zla ba (mkhar)</i>	Lho kha			6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>				x			Petech 1973: 63 (fn. 1) and 167 (fn. 1). AR for the rank
18	<u>Déchen</u>	<u>Bde chen</u>	Dbus		1	0	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	Dga' ldan monastery					x	Rank by G, indicating an incumbent who is not an official. Under the authority of the <i>zhol las khungs</i> (G)

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
19	Démo chapnak	De mo chab nag	Dwags kong khul		1		<i>las 'dzin</i>					x		
20	Denma	'Dan ma	Mdo smad		1	5	<i>mdzod pa / bla gnyer</i>	MO				x	x	V13 records 'Dan ma <i>mdzod pa</i> ; G records <i>bla gnyer</i>
21	Dingri	Ding ri	Gtsang (G) or Stod (O'connor)		1	0	<i>sdod mda'</i>	Servant of a General (G)			x		x	Rank by G, indicating an incumbent who is not an official. However, two LO hold the position in the BA. The district might be one given to General who sends a servant as representative?
22	Do(bo)	Do bo	Lho ka	420	1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	=Do bo in G only
23	Dokhar	Mdo mkhar	Dbus		1	0	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	Secretary in the <i>zhol las khungs</i> (G)					x	Rank by G, indicating an incumbent who is not a government official (G spells it incorrectly Gdong skar)
24	<u>Döl (kyil tang)</u>	<u>Dol (dkyil thang)</u>	Lho kha	900	1	6	<i>gzhis sdod</i>		x	x		x		Dol in LS and BN/Dol dkyil thang in V13
25	Drachen	Sbra chen	Byang/ Khams		2	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	1 LO and 1 MO			x	x	x	V13 places it under the Hor tsho pa so dgu Byang/G in Khams

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
26	<u>Drachi</u>	<u>Gra bzhi</u>	Dbus		1	7	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO (BN); noble house of Skyid zur (G)		x	x		x	Under the authority of the <i>zhol las khungs</i> (G)
27	<u>Drachi</u>	<u>Gra phyi</u>	Lho kha	210	1	7	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	
28	<b>Drak</b>	<b>Sbrag</b>	Dbus		1	0	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	aristocratic Nang dkar house					x	Under the authority of the <i>zhol las khungs</i> (G). Rank by G, indicating an incumbent who is not an official. If so, <i>and</i> from the aristocratic Nang dkar house, then he is either a servant or a member of the family not serving the government as an official
29	<u>Dranang</u>	<u>Gra nang</u>	Lho kha		1	6	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	aristocratic Bsam pho house (G)	x			x	x	
30	<u>Dréling</u>	<u>'Bras gling</u>	Dbus		1	7	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	<i>rtse gnyer tshang</i>		x			x	Under the authority of the <i>zhol las khungs</i> (G); also in BN, starting from the Wood tiger year (1914)
31	<u>Drigu</u> ( <u>tongmön</u> )	<u>Gri gu</u> ( <u>mthong smon</u> )	Lho kha	350	1	6	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO	x	x		x	x	BN and G list it as an estate/V13 as a district. BN gives a LO incumbent; G a MO. Petech 1973: 71 has Lcag rtse gri gu

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
32	Drongpa	'Brong pa	Stod mnga' ris		1	7	<i>lho byang spyi khyab</i>	MO ( <i>rtse mkhan drung</i> )				x	x	V13 identifies it as a "means of support" ( <i>thab rten</i> ) for a <i>rtse mkhan drung</i>
33	<u>Düjung</u>	'Dus byung	Gtsang	560	1	7	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	
34	Dzito	Rdzi tho	Mdo smad		1	7	<i>lha gnyer</i>	MO				x	x	Part of the "39 tribes" (G), title in V13
35	Dzogang	Mdzo sgang	Mdo smad	2240	1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	MO		x	x	x	x	
36	Dzongga	Rdzong dga'	Stod mnga' ris	1610	1	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	G indicates two incumbents; BN only one
37	<u>Dzongok</u>	<u>Rdzong 'og</u>	Dbus				<i>gzhis sdod</i>					x		
38	Gampa	Gam pa	Gtsang		1	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	Bkra shis lhun po			x		x	British Archives have a Ganden Phodrang official as incumbent after 1924
39	Garap	Dga' rab	Dwags kong khul		1		<i>lha gnyer</i>					x		
40	<u>Géhor</u>	<u>Gad hor</u>	Dbus		1	0	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO				x	x	Rank by G; however, if he is a LO, he necessarily holds a rank
41	Go	Go'o	Mdo smad				<i>lha gnyer</i>					x		
42	<u>Gojo</u>	<u>Go 'jo</u>	Mdo smad		1	6	<i>gzhis sdod</i>					x	x	V13 records <i>gzhis sdod</i>
43	Gongkar	Gong dkar	Lho kha	140	2	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	
44	<u>Gongkar nésar</u>	<u>Gong dkar gnas gsar</u>	Lho ka				<i>gzhis sdod</i>					x		
45	Gyamda	Rgya mda'	Kong po	490	1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x		

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
46	<u>Gyangdrong</u>	<u>Gyang grong</u>	Dbus		1	0	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	MO				x	x	Rank by G; however, if he is a MO, he necessarily holds a rank
47	Gyantsé	Rgyal rtse	Gtsang	490	2	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	
48	<u>Gyantsé lungmar</u>	<u>Rgyal rtse lung dmar</u>	Gtsang				<i>gzhis sdod</i>					x		
49	<u>Gyashar terna</u>	<u>Rgya shar gter sna</u>	Gtsang				<i>gzhis sdod</i>					x		
50	<u>Gyatso</u>	<u>Rgya mtsho</u>	Gtsang	420	1	7	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	G indicates the 6th rank
51	<u>Gyelgor</u>	<u>Rgyal sgor</u>	Dwags kong khul				<i>gzhis sdod</i>					x		
52	<u>Gyeltön</u>	<u>Rgyal ston</u>	Mdo smad		1	0	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	Rtse phyag office (G)				x	x	Rank and recruitment by G (rank 0 indicates that the incumbent is not a government official)
53	Jakminma ling	Ljags smin ma gling	Dbus				<i>she dpon</i>					x		
54	<u>Jayül</u>	<u>Bya yul</u>	Lho kha		1	0	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	aristocratic Stag lha house (G)				x	x	Rank by G; if the incumbent holds no rank and is from the aristocratic Stag lha house, then he is either a servant or a member of the family not serving the government as a government official

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
55	Jo(bo)/Jomo	Jo (bo)/Jo mo	Kong po		1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>		x	x	x	x		LS and BN record Jo rdzong, V13 Jo bo. "Chomo dzong" in the BA. Jo mo in Petech 1973: 92 and 158
56	Jogo	Jo 'go	Khams	3150	1	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>			x				According to BN, the Smar khams 'go pa actually takes charge of this district
57	<u>Jorra</u>	<u>Sbyor ra</u>	Lho kha		1	6	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	aristocratic Stag lha house (G)				x	x	
58	<u>Kharek chakbam</u>	<u>Kha reg lcags bam</u>	Lho kha		1		<i>gzhis sdod</i>					x		
59	<u>Kharta</u>	<u>Mkhar rta</u>	La stod				<i>gzhis sdod</i>		x			x		
60	<u>Khartsé</u>	<u>Mkhar rtse</u>	Dbus		1	6	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	from Kun bde gling monastery (G)	x	x		x	x	BN gives the 6th rank and specifies that it became a monastic estate ( <i>chos gzhis</i> ) of Kun bde gling in the Fire dog year [1946]. G gives the 7th rank
61	Ku(rab) nam(gyel)	Sku (rab) rnam (rgyal)	Dwags po	630	1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x		x	
62	<u>Kyadam</u>	<u>Skya 'dam</u>	Dbus		1	0	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO					x	Rank by G; however, if he is a LO, he necessarily holds a rank

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
63	<u>Kyarpo</u>	<u>Skyar po</u>	Dbus		1	7	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	'Bras spungs monastery (G), Sgo mang grwa tshang (BN)					x	Under the authority of the <i>zhol las khungs</i> (G). BN records it as given to Sgo mang grwa tshang in the Fire tiger year [1926]
64	Kyemtong/ Kyemtö	Skyems stong/ Skyem stod	Dwags po				<i>rdzong sdod</i>		x			x		LS records as Skyems stong/V13 as Skyem stod. Whether the two names refer to the same district remains uncertain
65	Kyirong	Skyid grong	Stod mnga' ris	1750	2	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	"Snyid grong" in G, probably a typo
66	<u>Kyishong</u>	<u>Skyid gshongs</u>	Lho ka				<i>gzhis sdod</i>					x		
67	<b>Langru</b>	<b>Glang ru</b>	Dbus		1	0	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	aristocratic Phun khang house					x	Under the authority of the <i>zhol las khungs</i> (G). Rank by G; if the incumbent holds no rank <i>and</i> is from the Phun khang aristocratic family, he is either a servant or a member of the family not serving the government as an official
68	<u>Langtang</u>	<u>Glang thang</u>	Dbus		1	7	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	MO	x			x	x	
69	<u>Laö</u>	<u>Gla 'od</u>	Lho kha				<i>gzhis sdod</i>				x	x		"La-hyo" in the BA



N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
70	Lari (lama)	Lha ri (bla ma)	Dwags kong khul		1	5	'go pa	MO			x	x	x	G places the district in Khams
71	Lhabu	Lha bu	Gtsang		1	6	gzhis sdod	MO	x			x	x	
72	Lhakhang	Lha khang	Lho kha		1	6	rdzong sdod	MO	x		x	x	x	V13 identifies it as a district in Lho ka and G as an estate in Lho brag
73	Lhasöl	Lha gsol	Dwags po		1	7	rdzong sdod	LO mda' dpon (BN); rtse phyag (G)	x	x			x	BN identifies it as a district with a LO of the 7th rank and adds that it was given as an offering to an Army general ("di mda' gzhis can du mchod"). G identifies it as an estate and the incumbent as a clerk (nang gzan) of the rtse phyag office instead, with the 6th rank
74	Lhatsé	Lha rtse	Gtsang ou La stod (G)		1	6	rdzong sdod	Bkra shis lhun po			x		x	
75	Lhenlhün rapzhi	Lhan lhun rab gzhis	Gtsang		1	7	rdzong sdod	Bkra shis lhun po					x	
76	Lho	Lho	Mdo smad	1750	2	5	rdzong sdod	LO		x	x	x	x	"ngo 'gro gcig dang tog gnas gcig" (BN)

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
77	<u>Lhomö</u>	<u>Lho mos</u>	Dbus		1	7	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO (BN); Phur bu lcogs (G and BN)		x			x	Described by G as a district, instead of an estate, and being under the authority of the <i>zhol las khungs</i> (G); given to Phur bu lcogs (G) as monastic estate in the Wood mouse year [1924] (BN)
78	Lhonem trido	Lho nem khri rdo	Byang		2		<i>'go pa</i>					x		Under the Hor tsho pa so dgu
79	(Penpo) Lhündrup	('Phan po) Lhun grub	Dbus		1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	MO ( <i>rtse mkhan drung</i> )	x			x	x	District or estate given as source of income to a <i>rtse mkhan drung</i> (V13)
80	(Yülgyel) Lhüntsé	(G.yul rgyal) Lhun rtse	Lho kha	490	2	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	G.yul rgyal lhun rtse in LS
81	<b>Ling</b>	<b>Gling</b>	Lho kha	420	1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO (BN); aristocratic Khe smad house (G)	x	x	x		x	BN specifies " <i>tog gnas gcig</i> "; G identifies it as an estate instead of a district
82	<u>Lingkar</u>	<u>Gling dkar</u>	Gtsang	420	1	6	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO	x	x		x	x	V13 and G identify it as an estate, BN as a district
83	<u>Lönpo zhi</u>	<u>Blon po</u>	Dbus				<i>gzhis sdod</i>					x		
84	<u>Lumpa</u>	<u>Lum pa</u>	Dbus		1	0	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	'Bras spungs monastery					x	Rank by G. Under the authority of the <i>zhol las khungs</i> (G)

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
85	Markham	Smar khams	Mdo smad	3500	1	4 / 5	<i>Smar khams rdzong sdod/ 'go pa/tha'i ji</i>	LO		x	x	x	x	4th rank when in Markham and 5th rank when in Lhasa (Petech 1973: 13)
86	Markyang	Mar rkyang	Gtsang				<i>'go pa</i>		x			x		
87	<b>Mel(dro) gung(kar)</b>	<b>Mal (gro) gung (dkar)</b>	Dbus	140	1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO (BN); aristocratic Bshad sgra house (G)	x	x	x	x	x	V13 records as Mal gro gong dkar
88	<u>Meldro namling</u>	<u>Mal gro rnam gling</u>	Dbus		1	0	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO				x	x	Rank by G; however, if he is a LO, he necessarily holds a rank
89	<b>Nak</b>	<b>Snag</b>	Dwags po		1	6	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO, aristocratic Glang mdun house					x	
90	Na(kar)tsé	Sna (dkar) rtse	Lho ka	380	2	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	1 LO and 1 MO (G)	x	x	x	x	x	Only one LO in BN because this list comprises only LO
91	Nakshö biru	Nag shod 'bri ru	Byang		2		<i>rdzong sdod</i>					x		Under the Hor tsho pa so dgu

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
92	Nakchu(ka)	Nag chu (kha)	Byang		2	6	'go pa: 1 MO <i>mkhan po</i> and one LO termed <i>Nag chu nang so</i>	1 LO and 1 MO		x	x			
93	<u>Naktsang</u>	<u>Nag tshang</u>	Byang	1750	2	5	'go pa	1 LO et 1 monk from Bsam blo dormitory in 'Bras spungs monastery		x	x		x	BN and BA give the 5th rank, G the 6th
94	<u>Namgyel gong</u>	<u>Rnam rgyal sgong</u>	Dbus		1	0	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	From Mtsho smon gling monastery					x	Under the authority of the <i>zhol las khungs</i> (cf. G)
95	Namling	Rnam gling	Gtsang	400	2	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	G records only one incumbent, but BN writes: <i>"ngo 'gro gcig dang / tog gnas gcig"</i>
96	Namru	Gnam ru	Byang		2	6	'go pa	1 LO and 1 MO			x	x	x	
97	<u>Nang</u>	<u>Snang</u>	Dwags po	700	1	6	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO	x	x		x		BN identifies it as a district and V13 as an estate

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
98	Nédong/ Néudong	Sne gdong/ Sne'u gdong	Lho kha	280	2	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	BN and V13 have two <i>rdzong sdod</i> . G records two separate entries, "Sne gdong" in Lho ka and "Sne'u" in Dbus, which have been merged here: no other source documents the existence of two districts with a similar name, plus the alternate form of Sne'u gdong is known for Lho ka Sne gdong rdzong. G describes "Sne'u" as being under the authority of the <i>zhol las khungs</i> and with recruitment in "Stag rtse" (?)
99	Ngamring	Ngam ring	Stod mnga' ris		1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	Bkra shis lhun po					x	
100	<u>Ninkhar</u>	<u>Nyin mkhar</u>	Stod mnga' ris		1	7	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO			x		x	
101	<i>Nyalam</i>	<i>Gnya' lam/nam</i>				6	<i>Gnya' lam sho pa</i>				x			Also in Petech 1973: 64; BA for the rank

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
102	Nyanang	Gnya' nang	Stod mnga' ris	1190	2	5	<i>sho pa</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	Two <i>rdzong sdod</i> in BN; only one in G; the title is <i>sho pa</i> according to V13 and G
103	<b>Nyémo (mönkhar)</b>	<b>Snye mo (smon mkhar)</b>	Gtsang	210	1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO; aristocratic Lha klu house (G)	x	x		x	x	
104	Nyenrong	Snyan rong	Byang		2		<i>rdzong sdod</i>					x		Under the Hor tsho pa so dgu
105	Nyétang	Mnyes thang	Dbus		1	0	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	<i>gzim 'gag</i>					x	Under the authority of the <i>zhol las khungs</i> (G). Rank by G; however, if the holder is a <i>gzim 'gag</i> , he necessarily holds the 7th rank
106	Nyuk chökhörling	Nyug chos 'khor gling	Gtsang		1		<i>lha 'dzin</i>	MO ( <i>rtse gzim 'gag khri pa</i> )				x		Given as support to a <i>rtse gzim 'gag khri pa</i> (V13)
107	Ölga	'Ol dga'	Lho kha	310	1	6	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	BN identifies it as a district/G and V13 as an estate (which might reflect a change?)

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
108	<u>On(drak khang)</u>	'On (brag khang)	Lho kha		1	6	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO	x	x		x	x	BN as a district with one LO and specifies: " <i>rdzong sdod gcig la tog gnas gcig</i> "; G identifies it as an estate instead of a district, and with a MO
109	<i>Oyuk/Uyuk</i>	'O yug/ 'U yug	Gtsang				<i>gzhis gnyer</i>				x			"Huyu lingke" in the BA
110	Panam	Pa snam	Gtsang	560	2	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x		x	x	x	V13 writes Pa rnam
111	<u>Panam jatsang</u>	<u>Pa rnam bya tshang</u>	Gtsang				<i>gzhis sdod</i>					x		
112	Pari	Phag ri	Gtsang	630	2	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	One "Eastern" and one "Western" District Commissioner
113	Pelchö	Dpal chos	Gtsang		1	7	<i>Pal chos mkhan po</i>	MO				x	x	District or estate managed by the <i>Rgyal rtse pal chos mkhan po</i>
114	Peldi	Dpal di	Lho ka		1		<i>rdzong sdod</i>					x		
115	<u>Pengya</u>	<u>Span rgya</u>	Gtsang		1		<i>gzhis sdod</i>					x		
	(Penpo) Lhündrup= cf. Lhündrup													
116	Penpo nalenda	'Phan po na leN+Da	Dbus				<i>bla gnyer</i>	MO ( <i>rtse mkhan mgron che ba</i> )				x		District or estate given as source of income to the <i>rtse mkhan mgron che ba</i>
117	Phüntsoqing	Phun tshogs gling	Gtsang		1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	Bkra shis lhun po					x	Stod mnga' ris (cf. G)

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
118	Pobo (chö)	Spo bo (chos)	Mdo smad	2100	2	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO		x	x	x	x	Posted there only from 1924 onwards, resulting from the incorporation of Spo bo under the control of the Ganden Phodrang. G records only 1 incumbent; BN has two but specifies: "ngo 'gro gcig / tog gnas gcig"
119	<u>Podrang</u>	<u>Pho brang</u>	Lho ka	380	1	7	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO		x		x		BN specifies: "gzhis sdod tog gnas gcig"
120	<u>Pomdo</u>	<u>Phod mdo</u>	Dbus		1	7	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	Se ra monastery (G)	x				x	From Se ra (Bsam blo dormitory)
121	Pomé (yülgong)	Spo smad (yul gong)	Mdo smad		1	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO				x	x	
122	Potö(chumdo)	Spo stod (chu mdo)	Mdo smad		1	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	MO				x	x	
123	Puhrang/ Puhreng	Spu hrang/ Spu hreng	Stod mnga' ris	2450	1	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO		x	x	x	x	Puhrang in BN/Puhreng in V13 and G
124	Ri(bo)ché	Ri (bo) che	Mdo smad		1	5	<i>bla gnyer</i>	MO				x	x	
125	<u>(Sé) Rin(chen) tsé</u>	<u>(Srad) rin (chen) rtse</u>	Gtsang	630	2	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	2 LO (BN) or 1 LO and 1 from Rgyud stod college (G)	x	x	x	x	x	In LS= Rin chen, BN = Rin rtse, V13= Srad rin chen rtse, BA="Serintse"



N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
126	Rinpung	Rin spungs	Gtsang	350	1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	G records the 5th rank; BN and V13 the 6th rank. G has only one incumbent but BN records: “ngo 'gro gcig dang tog gnas gcig”
127	<u>Rong jazang</u>	<u>Rong bya bzang</u>	Gtsang				<i>gzhis sdod</i>					x		
128	Rongshar	Rong shar	La stod		1	5	<i>sho pa</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	
129	Rutok	Ru thog	Stod mnga'ris		1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	MO			x	x	x	
130	Saga	Sa dga'	Stod mnga'ris	1610	2	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i> (BN)/ 'go ba (G and V13)	LO		x	x	x	x	V13 records two incumbents ('go sbrel). Thus, when BN writes “tog gnas gcig”, it might imply “ngo 'gro gcig dang tog gnas gcig”?
131	Samyé	Bsam yas	Lho kha		1		<i>rdzong sdod</i>		x			x		
132	Sangen	Sa ngan	Mdo smad		1	6	'go pa	LO			x	x	x	
133	Sang(ngak chö)	Gsang (sngags chos)	Khams	3150	1	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO		x	x	x		
134	Seng(gé)	Seng (ge)	Lho kha	490	1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	
	<u>Sérintsé, cf. Rin(chen)tsé</u>													
135	Serkha	Gser kha	Byang		2		<i>rdzong sdod</i>					x		Under the Hor tsho pa so dgu

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
136	Sertsa	Ser tsha	Khams		2	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	1 LO and 1 MO			x		x	
137	Shang gachö	Shang dga' chos	Gtsang		1		<i>bla 'dzin</i>	MO ( <i>gzim dpon mkhan po</i> )				x		Given as support for a <i>gzim dpon mkhan po</i> (V13)
138	<u>Sheldrong</u>	<u>Shel grong</u>	Dbus		1	0	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	'Bras spungs monastery					x	Rank by G. Under the authority of the <i>zhol las khungs</i> (cf. G)
139	Shelkar	Shel dkar	La stod	150	2	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	1 LO and 1 MO	x	x	x	x	x	Only one LO in BN because this list concerns only LO
140	Shentsa	Shan rtsa	Byang		2		<i>rdzong sdod</i>					x		
141	<u>Sho(pa)ndo</u>	<u>Sho (pa) mdo</u>	Mdo smad		1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	1 LO (BN)		x		x	x	BN records a district with a 6th rank LO; V13 identifies it as an estate; G records, as incumbent, a monk from Kun bde gling monastery
142	<u>Sok</u>	<u>Sog</u>	Mdo khams	140	1	6	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	1 LO (BN)		x			x	G records two incumbents from 'Bras spungs monastery (Har gdong dormitory); BN has 1 LO
143	Taktsé	Stag rtse	Dbus	70	1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	
144	<u>Tanak rangjön</u>	<u>Rta nag rang byon</u>	Gtsang				<i>gzhis sdod</i>					x		Estate given as "support basis" to the <i>bka' blon bla ma</i> (V13)

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
145	Tanak rintsé	Rta nag rin rtse	Gtsang		1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	Bkra shis lhun po					x	
146	Tar	Star	Mdo smad	1050	2	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO		x	x	x	x	G records the 5th rank, BN the 6th. G gives only 1 incumbent; BN has two but specifies: "ngo 'gro gcig /tog gnas gcig". Also "Phemba" in the BA
147	Tengchen	Steng chen	Khams		2	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	MO				x	x	V13 places it under the Hor tsho pa so dgu in Byang; G in Khams
148	Tingkyé	Gting skyes	Gtsang	770	2	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	
149	Tölung (tsel)dé(chen) /Tsel	Stod lung (tshal) bde (chen)/Tshal	Dbus	35	1	7	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x		x	x	Bde chen in G and under the authority of the <i>zhol las khungs</i> ; Stod lung bde chen in V13. IN G and V13 a district. Tshal estate in BN.
150	<u>Treng(go)</u>	<u>Phreng ('go)</u>	Dbus	70	1	7	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO (BN); aristocratic Bsam pho house (G)		x			x	Under the authority of the <i>zhol las khungs</i> (G)

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
151	Tsahreng/ Tsadrang	Rtsa hreng/ Rtsa brang	Stod mnga' ris	3290	1	6	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO		x	x	x	x	G indicates the 5th rank but BN and BA the 6th. Petech (1973: 126 and 167 fn 1) has "Rtsa brang". Sometimes "Tsaparang" or "Chaprang" in the BA
152	Tsé(la)gang	Rtse (la) sgang	Kong po	840	1	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x		
	Tsel= Tölung (tsel)dé(chen)													
153	Tsétang ngachö	Rtse thang Inga chos	Lho kha		2	6		1 LO, 1 MO					x	G writes incorrectly Rtse thang dga' chos
154	<u>Tsona</u>	<u>Mtsho sna</u>	Lho kha	700	2	5	<i>rdzong sdod / Dga' ldan bla spyi</i>	1 LO, 1 from Dga' ldan monastery (G)/2 LO in BN	x	x	x	x	x	The 5th rank is only for lay official incumbents
155	<u>Wangden</u>	<u>Dbang ldan</u>	Gtsang	560	1	7	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x	x	
156	Yang(pa)chen	Yangs (pa) can	Dbus				<i>rdzong sdod</i>		x			x		Pastoral district
157	Yardrokling	Yar 'brog gling	Lho kha		1		<i>rdzong sdod</i>					x		

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
158	<b>Yartö</b>	<b>Yar stod</b>	Lho kha		1	7	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO (BN): aristocratic Lcang lo can house (G)		x			x	BN for the rank, who adds that it was given to Lcang can house in the Me lang year (1937). G identifies it as an estate (following that change?) with "0" for the rank (which could imply that the family could send as incumbent a member who was not a government official?)
159	<u>Zadam</u>	<u>Za dam</u>	Dbus				<i>gzhis sdod</i>		x			x		
160	<u>Zala</u>	<u>Za lha</u>	Dbus		1	7	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	MO					x	
161	<b><u>Zangri</u></b>	<b><u>Zangs ri</u></b>	Lho kha		1	0	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	aristocratic Bsam pho house (G)				x	x	Rank by G. If the holder comes from the aristocratic Bsam pho house, then he is either a servant or a member of the family not serving as a government official
162	<u>Zé</u>	<u>Zas / Zad</u>	Dbus	140	1	7	<i>gzhis sdod</i>	LO		x		x	x	BN and G record as Zas/ V13 as Zad
163	Zhétong mönzhi	Bzhad mthong smon gzhis	Gtsang		1	7	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	Bkra shis lhun po					x	

N	District name		Location		District and estate head				Sources					Additional remarks
	Transcr.	Translit.	Province	Dist.	N b	R k	Title	Recruitment	L S	B N	B A	V 13	G	
164	Zhi(ka)tsé	Gzhis (ka) rtse	Gtsang	630	2	5 / 4	<i>rdzong sdod/spyi rdzong</i>	1 LO and 1 MO	x	x	x	x	x	It was first a simple district, and then became the capital of the newly created Gtsang Province in 1921; the incumbents became the Gtsang Province Governor in addition to the district's head. BN gives only one LO because his list comprises only LO. BN gives the 5th rank and G the 4th, which reflects the chronological evolution: after the Gtsang Province was created, the rank of the position holder was elevated
165	Zhokha	Zho kha	Kong po	630	1	5	<i>rdzong sdod</i>	LO	x	x	x	x		A district in LS and BN (with a 5th rank incumbent), an estate in V13 and BA
166	Zingpu	Zing phu	Dwags kong khul		1		<i>gzhis sdod</i>					x		

## Appendix

### shod drung las tshan gyi rim pa dang/ rdzong gzhis khag gi ming tho/ lha sa nas smad khams phyin gyi lam tho dang tham deb

[Ranks of the government noble lay officials and lesser officials and  
list of the various districts and government estates;  
travelling notes of the road from Lhasa to Khams]  
(Bshad sgra and Nor nang 1956: 164-169)

shod skor nas gzhung gi las tshan tog gnas yod rigs kyi 'gro khungs  
rgya deb nas zur 'don byas pa'o/  
[...]

rim pa lnga pa'i gras/ [...]

rdzong gzhis gras/ stod sgar dpon gnyis/ lha sa nas le dbar 3500/  
smar khams rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 3500 nag chu 'go pa gcig le  
dbar 700 mtsho sna rdzong sdod gnyis/ le dbar 700 phag ri rdzong  
sdod gnyis/ le dbar 630 gting skyes rdzong sdod gnyis/ le dbar 770  
gnya' nang rdzong sdod gnyis/ le dbar 1190 skyid grong rdzong  
sdod gnyis/ le dbar 1750 jo 'go rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 3150 'di  
smar khams 'go pas zhor skyong/ spu hrang rdzong sdod gcig/ le  
dbar 2450 spo bo rdzong sdod gnyis la ngo 'gro gcig/ tog gnas gcig/  
le dbar 2100 zho kha rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 630 rong shar sho pa  
gcig/ mda' mkhar rdzong sdod gnyis/ le dbar 3100 rdA kong khri  
bcu gnyis pa'i snyan zhus kyi blon chen shin lung gnyis nas mi gcig  
gis shor lcogs byas mthus stsal/ sne gdong rdzong sdod gnyis/ le  
dbar 280 'phyongs rgyas rdzong sdod gnyis/ le dbar 350 gong dkar  
rdzong sdod gnyis/ le dbar 140 lhun rtse rdzong sdod gnyis/ le dbar  
490 gsang rdzong rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 3150 rtse sgang rdzong  
sdod gcig/ le dbar 840 rgyal rtse rdzong sdod gnyis/ le dbar 490  
gzhis rtse rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 630 shel dkar rdzong sdod gcig/  
le dbar 150 nag tshang 'go pa gcig/ le dbar 1750

rim pa drug pa'i gras/[...]

rdzong sdod gras/ lho rdzong rdzong sdod gnyis la ngo 'gro gcig  
dang tog gnas gcig/le dbar 1750 jo rdzong rdzong sdod gcig/ le  
dbar/ stag rtse rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 70 pa rnam rdzong sdod  
gnyis/ le dbar 560 rin spung [spungs] rdzong sdod ngo 'gro gcig  
dang/ tog gnas gcig/ le dbar 350 rin rtse rdzong sdod gnyis/ le dbar  
630 'di nas gcig lcang can gung bkra shis rab brtan la cA chin khri  
bzhugs nyer gnyis pa me glang lo bsko bzhag stsal zhing/ gcig dpal  
lhun pa rdo kong khri bzhugs bcu drug pa me sprel lo bsko bzhag  
stsal/ dpal lhun 'pho tsha ba gtsang mda' dpon lcog spe ba/ gnam

gling rdzong sdod gnyis la ngo 'gro gcig dang/ tog gnas gcig/ le dbar 400 rdzong dga' rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 1610 sa dga' rdzong sdod gnyis/ le dbar 1610 mdzo sgang rdzong sdod tog gnas gcig/ le dbar 2240 star rdzong rdzong sdod ngo 'gro gcig dang/ tog gnas gcig/ le dbar 1050 rgya mda' rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 490 sku rnam rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 630 'ol dga' rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 310 chu shul rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 140 do rdzong rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 420 seng rdzong rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 490 rtsa hreng rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 3290 sog gzhis sdod gcig/ le dbar 140 dol gzhis sdod gcig/ le dbar 900 gri gu gzhis sdod gcig/ le dbar 350 shod mdo rdzong sdod ngo 'gro gcig dang tog gnas gcig/ 'di gnyis gcig lcogs su shod mdo dgon par zhan hong khri bzhugs dang po lcags phag lo bsko bzhag stsal/ snang rdzong rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 700 mal gung rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 140 mkhar rtse rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar/ 'di zhu tho mgo mchan dgongs don kong zhu'i khri bzhugs bcu gnyis me khyi lo dbus gtsang kun bde gling gi chos gzhis su stsal/ 'on brag khang rdzong sdod gcig la tog gnas gcig/ le dbar/ dar ma rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 560 snye mo rdzong sdod tog gnas gcig/ le dbar 210 sna rtse rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 380 gling gzhis sdod tog gnas gcig/ le dbar 420 gling dkar rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 420/[...]

rim pa bdun pa'i gras/[...]

rdzong gzhis gras/ yar stod rdzong sdod gcig/ 'di lchang can gung la cA chen khri bzhugs nyer gnyis pa me glang lo bsko bzhag stsal/ lha gsol rdzong sdod gcig/ le dbar 420 'di mda' gzhis can du mchod/ pho brang gzhis sdod tog gnas gcig/ le dbar 380 gra phyi gzhis sdod gcig/ le dbar 210 zas gzhis sdod gcig/ le dbar 140 'dus byung gzhis sdod gcig/ le dbar 560 dbang ldan gzhis sdod gcig/ le dbar 560 rgya mtsho gzhis sdod gcig/ le dbar 420 chos 'khor rgyal gzhis sdod gcig/ le dbar 420 tshal gzhis sdod gcig/ le dbar 35 sgrags phreng gzhis sdod tog gnas gcig/ le dbar 70 'bras gling gzhis sdod gcig/ 'di zhan hong khri bzhugs bzhi pa shing stag nas bzung khral se legs 'grigs ched zhol gnyer thun mong nas nor skyongs su bsko bzhag stsal/ gra bzhi gzhis sdod tog gnas gcig/ lho mos gzhis sdod gcig/ 'di kong zhu'i khri bzhugs bcu gcig pa shing bya lo zhu tho 'go mchan don yongs 'dzin phur lcogs sprul sku'i chos gzhis su stsal/ skyar po gzhis sdod gcig/ 'di 'bras sgo mang grwa tshang la cA chin khri bzhugs bcu gcig pa me stag lo bzhag stsal/

// smar khams bar gzhung lam gyi lam tho bkod par/

lha sa nas bde chen du zhag sgrigs cha rang khungs rdzong skyel phar 'gro rta khal mi gsum lha zhol nas mal gung bar gtsang skyel



dang/ tshur yong mal gung pas bde chen dang/ bde chen pas brje len gyis lha skyel/ mal gung du rgya zhag sgrig cha rang khungs rta khal brje len/ rin chen gling du tsha zhag gang bde/ sgrig cha rang khungs mal gung khongs/ 'od zer gyang du zhag/ sgrig cha rang khungs 'ol dga'i khongs/ 'dir rtswa dug yod/ mtsho mo rags su zhag am ban/ chin phral/ zhabs pad dkor rten bcas par sgrig cha 'ol kha nas gtong zhing/ de byings la sgrig cha mi dgos pa'i bka' gtan 'dug kyang dga' res 'ol dga' bar bskul lam dang/ de byings rang khungs rtswa dug yod/ nu ma rir zhag sgrig cha rang khungs rgya mda'i khongs mtsho mo rags nas 'di bar thag ring bas zhabs pad phebs skabs shan pa thang du rgya mda' bas tsha sgrig zhu lam/ rgya mdar zhag/ sgrig cha rang khungs rta khal brje len/ gla rur zhag sgrig cha rang khungs rgya mda'i khongs/ gram mdor zhag/ sgrig cha rgya mda'i tshab brag mi ser nas byed lam/ ko leb tu zhag/ zhabs pad am ban chin phral gong rten bcas par sgrig cha 'brug la bar 'khri lam/ de byings rang khungs 'di nyin phrog la grang zug che/ a rtsar zhag/ phral si gong gsal rnams la sgrig cha 'khri khungs pas zhu lam de byings rang khungs/ lha ri 'gor zhag sgrig cha rang khungs rta khal brje len dgos par rgya 'grul rnams kyi rta khal rgya sder 'khri zhing/ bod pa'i dpon rigs kyi rta khal kyang rgya sde rtswa za bas rtswa rin thog gtong yong bas spyi khyab pas a dar la gang 'byar byed cing/ chu ngan/ 'di nyin b+han+ng+ha la grang zug che/ tsha chu khar zhag am ban/ chin phral/ zhabs pad/ gor rten bcas la sgrig cha rgyal ston pas phyed dgos dpyad mtshams dang 'brel rung bdag med nyag rkyang gi gra ma 'grigs mang gshis sngon tshud lha ri nas bskul thabs lha shing/ de byings sgrig cha rang khungs lha ri'i khongs chu ngan/ rdo thug tu zhag dpon khag ming gsal gong bzhin la sgrig cha dpyad don rgyal ston par 'khri bdag med mang bas sngon tshud bca' gong par mol thabs de byings rang khungs rngod cha bca' gong khongs chu ngan/ 'di nyin nub kong grangs zug che thag ring yang tsha sgrig byed mi mi 'ong/ bca' gong du zhag sgrig cha rang khongs rngod khongs thag ring bas zhabs pad phebs skabs lam gsum mdo zhig yod par bca' gong pas tsha sgrig zhu lam/ a la mdor zhag sgrig cha rang khungs rngod khongs thag ring bas zhabs pad phebs skabs a la 'gag tu bca' gong pas tsha sgrig zhu lam/ bca' phreng Tam gsum mang zhing dbyar rbab nyen dang/ dgun gangs nyil gyi nyen che/ rngod grogs khad du zhag sgrig cha rang khungs/ rta khal dpyad mtshams grangs bcad kyi de min yar mar gnyis ka rngod pas brje len dang/ de las 'thol tshe lhag 'thol 'bab mar 'gro lha ri bas dpal 'bar du gtsang skyel/ yar yong dpal 'bar bas lha rir gtsang skyel/ lam bgrod phal cher gong mtshungs/ 'di nas chab mdo bar rdo thag gsil tshong mkho che/ rnam rgyal mgon du zhag sgrig cha rang khongs rngod khongs zam phreng mang/ tsha rag gsum mdor zhag/ zhabs pad

phebs skabs sgrig cha rnam rgyal dgon nas gtong lam 'dug kyang/  
 khang chung gcig las med cing/ grang zug che bas sge khung yod na  
 nges par rgyag dgos dang/ khral si chung kha zhag sdod ma byas  
 par rta mdar shar rgyag 'gro mi mang/ shar gong la'i gnas bdag bka'  
 gnyan pas me mda' rgyag pa sogs spyod lam mi bzo ba'i rigs mi  
 byed/ o rgyan rta mdar zhag sgrig cha rang khongs dpal 'bar khongs  
 lcags ra ba/ 'di nyin shar kong la grang ngad che bas dka' sbyongs  
 che zhing zhabs pad phebs skabs la rtser lcags ra bas chibs sna gtong  
 lam dang/ 'di nas bzung brag g.yab 'ba ' gong bar rtswa dug la gang  
 'dzem/ dpal 'bar du zhag sgrig cha rang khungs rta khal brje len/  
 lha rtser zhag sgrig cha rang khungs dpal 'bar khongs/ ba ri nang du  
 zhag/ sgrig cha rang khungs sho mdo'i khongs/ chu ngan/ 'di nyin  
 thag ring yang lam bar grong med/ zhabs pad phebs skabs lha rtse  
 ba ri gang rung gis thog gsol tsha khungs su khel nas sgrig lam  
 dang/ so mig dgung la grang zug che/ sho mdor zhag/ sgrig cha  
 rang khungs rta khal brje len/ chu ngan/ za dus 'dzoms/ yul 'di  
 nyin thag ring bas zhabs pad phebs skabs po ti dgon du tsha sgrig  
 rang sho mdo'i khungs/ rdze thor zhag/ sgrig cha rang khungs lho  
 rdzong khongs 'bru tsam cung 'bol yul/ lho rdzong du zhag/ sgrig  
 cha rang khungs rta khal brje len thag ring bas lam bar lho rdzong mi  
 ser grong pa mang bas gang rung du tsha sgrig rang khungs/ zhabs  
 g.yas zam par/ sgrig cha rang khungs lho rdzong/ 'di nyin chu  
 tshod la che zhing lam gzar rtsub las/ thag ring med/ zam lha bka'  
 gnyan pas me mda' mi rgyag/ rma rir zhag/ sgrig cha rang khungs  
 ri che'i khongs 'dir rta'ul lnga bcu tshun brje len dang/ de 'phros  
 rngin mdar gtsang skyel/ yi dwags la che tsam/ wa rgor zhag/ sgrig  
 cha rang khungs ri che ba/ thag nye/ rngin mdar zhag/ sgrig cha  
 rang khungs ri che/ rma ri'i rta rnams rang 'jags thog 'phros rta khal  
 brje len/ yig drug la che zhing grong thag shin tu ring yang thang  
 gshams gnyis ma zhag sa'i grong med pas la'i phyed tsam la wa rgo  
 pas tsha sgrig ched 'dzugs/ ri shig tu tsha sgrig cha rang khungs  
 chab khongs rta khal brje len/ phreng zam mang/ la gong du zhag/  
 sgrig cha rang khungs chab khongs/ lcags glang/ lcags khog/ lcags  
 'gug/ lcags dam bcas thon khungs/ gla mda' zhag/ sgrig cha rang  
 khungs chab khongs lcags chas gong bzhin thon khungs/ chab mdor  
 zhag/ sgrig cha rang khungs rta khal brje len zas sna tshong zog  
 'dzoms/ mang phur zhag/ sgrig cha rang khungs chab khongs/  
 spom sder zhag/ sgrig cha rang khungs chab khongs/ 'ga ' gong du  
 zhag/ sgrig cha rang khungs brag g.yab khongs dang/ rta khal brje  
 len 'di nas bzung lam bde yan rkun nyen che/ wang dkar du zhag/  
 sgrig cha rang khungs brag g.yab khongs rta khal brje len dang 'di  
 nas bzung rtswa dug med/ 'ga ' dkar tsha/ sgrig cha rang khungs  
 brag g.yab khongs 'dir rta khal brje len/ 'gam du zhag/ sgrig cha  
 rang khungs brag g.yab khongs/ de nas tsha sar rta khal brje len gyi

byams 'dul du zhag/ tsha zhag sgrig cha rang khongs brag g.yab khongs dang byams 'dun du rta khal brje len/ ra rtser zhag/ sgrig cha rang khongs brag g.yab pa'i khungs/ rta khal brje len 'di nas ar thang bar sa ngan gyi dgra nyen che zhing zhabs pad phebs skabs brag g.yab pa'i phebs sgrol rta mi go hrag gtong zhing smar khams pa'i sa mtshams nas khams g.yogs rnams kyis phebs bsu dang 'brel phebs sgrol zhu lam/ a tshur du zhag/ sgrig cha rang khungs smar khams khong rta khal/ nyin dbar du zhag/ sgrig cha rang khungs smar khams khongs rta khal brje len dang 'di nyin a tshur shos bu la grang zug che/ a ra thang du zhag/ sgrig cha rang khungs smar khams khongs/ ru shod du zhag/ sgrig cha rang khungs smar khams zhes/ de nas smar khams sgar rdzong du 'byor rgyu rnams/ sgrig cha rang khungs rta khal brjod med/

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## On the Authorship of the *Tshad ma'i de kho na nyid bsdus pa*

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**T**wenty years have passed since the publication in China of the book, *Tshad ma'i de kho na nyid bsdus pa* (“The Compilation of the Essential Nature of Epistemology,” henceforth, *Tshad bsdus*), by Sichuan People’s Press. This important work on Buddhist Epistemology is purported to be authored by the great, fourteenth century Nyingma scholar Klong chen Rab ’byams. Thanks to the careful scholarship carried out by Leonard van der Kuijp soon after the book’s publication, it has long been agreed by contemporary scholars of Tibetan epistemology that the *Tshad bsdus* was *not* in fact authored by Klong chen pa.<sup>1</sup> Yet, identification of the real author of the *Tshad bsdus* has eluded researchers’ grasps. Thankfully, there is now enough evidence to put forward a highly credible thesis regarding the authorship of this text, and to clarify the author’s connection to the tradition of epistemological theorizing that was centered on gSang phu Monastery in central Tibet. The evidentiary support for this thesis, as well as an indication of the process by which this thesis was generated, will be presented in the following pages. To put the cards on the table straight away, however, the claim is this: the author of the *Tshad bsdus* is a Tibetan scholar named ’Jad pa gZhon nu byang chub (c. 1150–1210), a person whose main teacher—Byang chub skyabs—was a direct student of the critically important Tibetan thinker Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge (1109–1169).<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Background

Before delving into the evidence of the *Tshad bsdus*’s authorship, it is important to provide readers with a brief synopsis of some of the most relevant information concerning this text, including the information that was used by Leonard van der Kuijp in support of his

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<sup>1</sup> See van der Kuijp (2003).

<sup>2</sup> The tentative dating for gZhon nu byang chub—*circa* 1150–1210—comes from van der Kuijp (2014), p. 123.



determination that the text was not in fact composed by Klong chen pa in the fourteenth century. To begin, a book-form version of the *Tshad bsdus* was published in China in the year 2000. In the introduction to the text, we are told that the book's editor, Padma tshul khrim, produced the typeset version of the *Tshad bsdus* from two existing manuscripts, one written in cursive (*dbu med*) and one written in block script (*dbu can*). Unfortunately, little else is said about the editorial practices that were used, and Western scholars have not been provided with access to (even copies of) the existing manuscripts.<sup>3</sup>

The last line of the text attributes authorship to “*klong chen rab 'byams*” — that is, to Klong chen pa. Be that as it may, there are a number of clues contained within the text itself that made it possible for van der Kuijp to reach his contrary conclusion that “the cumulative evidence strongly argues for holding that the *Tshad ma'i de kho na nyid bsdus pa* was written not by the great Klong chen pa, but by another, as yet unidentified scholar who most likely flourished before Sa skya Paṇḍita.”<sup>4</sup> Among the evidence cited by van der Kuijp, the most important bits of information are the frequent references that the author makes to the views and definitions held by other Tibetan epistemologists. The two most-cited figures in the text are “*phya*” — that is, Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge — and “*rgya*” — who is rGya dmar ba Byang chub grags.<sup>5</sup> Also cited prominently are “*lo tsa ba*” — i.e. rNgog lo tsā ba Blo ldan shes rab — “*jo btsun*” — who we can now identify as Khyung Rin chen grags — and “*byang chub skyabs*” — about whom much more will be said below.<sup>6</sup> There are, to be sure, more Tibetan scholars cited in the book than those listed above. But what is remarkable about the full list of people referenced in the *Tshad bsdus* is that all of them appear to be either contemporaneous to or earlier than Phya pa (1109–1169). In

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<sup>3</sup> It would be incredibly helpful for scholars to have access to the manuscripts of the *Tshad bsdus*, which, at the very least, could lead the creation of a critical edition of the text. The publication contains, for example, numerous typos, and it would be important to know whether these are editorial errors or mistakes inherent to the manuscripts themselves. In addition, there is at least one case (p. 39) where the topic shifts unexpectedly and where it appears that an entire folio has been skipped in the publication.

<sup>4</sup> Van der Kuijp (2003), p. 419.

<sup>5</sup> A more detailed discussion of these references will take place in §2. In the introduction of the 2000 publication of the *Tshad bsdus*, it is incorrectly implied that the “*rgya*” referenced frequently in the text is rGya Grags (pa) bsod (nams). This mistaken attribution is repeated in van der Kuijp's (2003) article on the text. There is indeed a single reference to “*rgya grags bsod*” (p. 166), but the evidence is clear from other texts of the same general period that the marker “*rgya*” in the *Tshad bsdus* refers to Phya pa's teacher rGya dmar ba. For more on this, see Hugon & Stoltz (2019), especially ch. I.2.

<sup>6</sup> For more on the identity of “*jo btsun*” as Khyung Rin chen grags, see Hugon (forthcoming).

particular, Phya pa's two most important students, gTsang nag pa brTson 'grus seng ge and Dan 'bag pa sMra ba'i seng ge, are neither directly mentioned by name in the *Tshad bsdus*, nor are their most distinctive epistemological positions even indirectly referenced.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the *Tshad bsdus* displays no familiarity with the epistemological views and criticisms (of earlier Tibetan epistemologists) that are associated with Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251). This absence of figures from generations after Phya pa, who himself flourished in the middle of the twelfth century, lends powerful credence to the view that the text was unlikely to have been written in the fourteenth century.

A second relevant bit of information that van der Kuijp relied on to reach his conclusion was the fact that the *Tshad bsdus* contains a large number of Sanskrit expressions written phonetically in Tibetan script, both for technical terms and for names of historical figures. For example, while there are multiple places where the name "*chos kyi grags pa*" appears, in many other places within the text one finds the Sanskrit wording "*dar ma kir ti*" (i.e., Dharmakīrti). Similarly, the text contains the expression "*bu ta*" (i.e., Buddha) in many places instead of the standard Tibetan term "*sangs rgyas*." With respect to technical terminology, one also finds prominent use of the Sanskrit term "*he du*" (i.e., *hetu*) instead of the Tibetan terms "*gtan tshigs*" or "*rtags*." This frequent use of transliterated Sanskrit does not provide definitive insight, but given the general absence of such expressions in Tibetan epistemology texts from later periods their inclusion in the *Tshad bsdus* provides some indication of the text's early composition date.

Beyond the evidence provided by van der Kuijp, additionally relevant to dating the composition of the *Tshad bsdus* are the precise Tibetan technical terms that the author uses. For example, the objects of non-conceptual erroneous cognition are denoted, in the *Tshad bsdus*, with the expression "*rtog med 'khrul pa'i dmigs pa*." This is the same term that is used by Phya pa in his *Tshad ma yid kyi mun sel* and by mTshur ston gzhon nu seng ge (c. 1150–1210) in his *Tshad ma shes rab sgron ma*—both of which were composed in the twelfth century.<sup>8</sup> Yet, by the early thirteenth century, this particular expression for the objects of non-conceptual erroneous cognition is abandoned and replaced with other (admittedly simpler) expressions. For example, these same items are called "*med pa gsal ba*" by Sa skya paṇḍita (1182–

<sup>7</sup> That is, the specific, idiosyncratic positions that are ascribed to gTsang nag pa and Dan 'bag pa within later Tibetan epistemological compilation texts are absent from the *Tshad bsdus*.

<sup>8</sup> See Hugon (2004) and (2016) for documentation indicating that mTshur ston's epistemology compilation text was composed prior to his being the teacher of Sa skya paṇḍita in 1201.

1251) and are called “*dingos med gsal snang*” by Chu mig pa (c. 1200–1270).<sup>9</sup>

In much the same way, among the five principal types of cognition that are not instances of knowledge (*tshad min lnga*), the author of the *Tshad bsdus* calls one of these “*bcad pa'i yul can*,” which is the same term used by Phya pa.<sup>10</sup> In some places in the *sGron ma*, mTshur ston also uses the term “*bcad pa'i yul can*.” In other places in his text, however, he uses the term “*bcad shes*” to denote this same class of cognitions. Yet, by the early part of the thirteenth century, it is this latter term, “*bcad shes*,” that is systematically found within Tibetan epistemology texts and the earlier expression “*bcad pa'i yul can*” is abandoned. Linguistic clues of this sort—including the author’s use of the terms “*rtog med 'khrul pa'i dmigs pa*” and “*bcad pa'i yul can*”—provide us with promising evidence for thinking that the *Tshad bsdus* was composed sometime in the second half of the twelfth century, and hence that it was not composed by Klong chen pa in the fourteenth century.

## 2. References in the *Tshad bsdus*

Even though the cumulative evidence is overwhelming that the *Tshad bsdus* was not composed in the fourteenth century but was likely written sometime in the second half of the twelfth century, the evidence thus far provided is merely helpful in relation to *dating* the composition of the *Tshad bsdus*, and does nothing to help us positively identify the actual author of the text. There are, however, some additional clues within the text that allow us to make some headway toward identifying the author. These clues come from information concerning the other Tibetan epistemologists who are referenced throughout the text—but less from *who* those thinkers are and more from *how* their views are presented.

As was mentioned in the preceding section, the *Tshad bsdus* contains a plethora of references to the views held by earlier Tibetan epistemologists. That rNgog lo tsā ba is referenced fifty-two times and that Phya pa is referenced ninety-nine times is not entirely surprising.<sup>11</sup> These two figures were, after all, incredibly important players in the development of the Tibetan epistemological tradition. Likewise, the

<sup>9</sup> In addition to these two texts by Sa skya paṇḍita and Chu mig pa, these same two expressions are found in other epistemology treatises as well. For example, the epistemology text composed by gTsang drug pa rDo rje 'od zer (the *gSal byed*) uses the term “*dingos med gsal snang*,” and the text written by Dharmaratna (the *sNying po*) uses the term “*med pa gsal ba*.” Both of these texts likely date to the very end of the twelfth century or first quarter of the thirteenth century.

<sup>10</sup> This term could be translated into English as “post-knowledge cognition.” For more on this see Hugon & Stoltz (2019), ch. IV,2.

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix for a more detailed enumeration of references in the *Tshad bsdus*.

fact that rGya dmar ba is referenced seventy-nine times is a testament to his importance to later scholars—not just as the direct teacher of Phya pa, but also as a scholar who was purportedly the author of an epistemological compilation text (*Tshad ma bsdus pa*) himself.<sup>12</sup> What stands out as unique, however, are the fifty-three references to a figure named Byang chub skyabs. Little is otherwise known about the epistemological views of this scholar, as that particular name is not mentioned within any other presently available Tibetan epistemological treatise. It is, therefore, rather peculiar, and potentially informative, to find so many references to Byang chub skyabs in this text.

As van der Kuijp has pointed out in his (2003) article, the internal evidence within the *Tshad bsdus* would seem to indicate that Byang chub skyabs was a junior contemporary of Phya pa. The reasoning for this is two-fold. First of all, many of the positions attributed to Byang chub skyabs in the *Tshad bsdus* appear to be in response to claims made by Phya pa. This suggests that Byang chub skyabs was writing—or at least developing his positions—after Phya pa wrote his *Tshad ma yid kyi mun sel*. Second, in a few cases it also appears that Phya pa has replies to Byang chub skyabs' objections—which serves to strengthen the hypothesis that the two thinkers were contemporaries.<sup>13</sup> The author of the *Tshad bsdus* was clearly intimately familiar with the views of both Phya pa and Byang chub skyabs. But again, this familiarity with the views of Phya pa is not so surprising given his outsized role in the development of Tibetan Buddhist epistemology.

The key significance of these references to the positions of Byang chub skyabs can only be seen by taking note of the *precise ways* in which his views are presented by the author of the *Tshad bsdus*. On this, there are two critical observations that must be made. First, while *all* of the other Tibetan authors cited within the text are systematically quoted/cited in conjunction with non-honorific verbs, most frequently with the word “zer”—either with the expression “[name] na re...zhes zer” or with “...zhes [name] zer”—this is almost *never* the way that Byang chub skyabs' positions are expressed. In fact, of the fifty-three times in which Byang chub skyabs is referenced in the *Tshad bsdus*, there are only two occurrences where the verb “zer” is used when mentioning his views. Instead, the author systematically uses the

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<sup>12</sup> For more on the claim that rGya dmar ba authored a *Tshad ma bsdus pa* see van der Kuijp (1983), p. 60.

<sup>13</sup> One example of a possible back-and-forth exchange (on p. 314 of the *Tshad bsdus*) between Phya pa and Byang chub skyabs is cited in van der Kuijp (2003). Other back-and-forth exchanges occur on p. 175 and on p. 264. One additional potential back-and-forth takes place on pp. 72-73, where there is an unnamed view (quite possibly from Byang chub skyabs, as it is expressed with the honorific verb “gsung”) asserted between two pronouncements by Phya pa.

honorific verb “*gsung*” when mentioning Byang chub skyabs’ positions. (Moreover, in nearly all of these cases, it is the present tense verb “*gsung*” that is used, whereas quotes from Indian scriptures make use of the past tense form “*gsungs*.”) Likewise, only infrequently (eleven times) does the author refer to Byang chub skyabs in conjunction with the expression “[name] *na re...*” Instead, in the vast majority of cases, some version of the name Byang chub skyabs appears at the end of a quotation and right before the word “*gsung*,” but without any preceding use of the expression “*na re*.” And again, this is in contrast to every single other Tibetan philosopher mentioned in the text, all of whom are typically referenced or quoted by way of the non-honorific verb “*zer*” and who much more frequently are introduced with the expression “[name] *na re...*” This is true for Khyung Rin chen grags, rGya dmar ba, and Phya pa, as well as other lesser-known figures in the Tibetan tradition of epistemology. (Please see the Appendix for details on these attributions.)

The second critical observation with respect to the author’s references to Byang chub skyabs has to do with *where* within a given discussion Byang chub skyabs’ positions are discussed. Within his presentations on many topics, the author of the *Tshad bsdus* references the views of multiple Tibetan thinkers and, in a fair number of cases, offer critiques of those earlier Tibetans’ views. (Sometimes those criticisms are from the author himself, but in many cases they are criticisms coming from other Tibetan scholars that he cites.) What it is important to recognize, however, is that the author of the *Tshad bsdus* never disagrees with or responds to the claims that are put forward by Byang chub skyabs. Instead, the views of Byang chub skyabs nearly always appear at the very end of his discussion of a given topic and serve as (literally) the final statement on the issue under question.<sup>14</sup>

Putting these above two points together, it is clear from the style of presentation that the author of the *Tshad bsdus* held Byang chub skyabs in very high esteem and that the author took Byang chub skyabs’ assertions to be definitive. This thus gives us some reason to suspect that the author of the *Tshad bsdus* could have been a devoted student of Byang chub skyabs, and that he wrote his epistemological compilation under the influence of Byang chub skyabs, either during or shortly after the lifetime of Phya pa.

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<sup>14</sup> It is only in the back-and-forth discussions between Phya pa and Byang chub skyabs that we find responses to any of the claims made by Byang chub skyabs.

### 3. *Teacher-Student Lineages in Tibet*

It is remarkable that the author of the *Tshad bsdus* quotes from or otherwise references the views of Byang chub skyabs fifty-three times, and yet this person's epistemological views seem not to have been remarked upon in any other extant epistemological texts.<sup>15</sup> It is likewise remarkable that the *Tshad bsdus*, even without putting forward any groundbreaking epistemological contributions of its own, seems to have gone entirely unnoticed by later generations of Tibetan scholars. As van der Kuijp modestly announces in his (2003) article on the *Tshad bsdus*, his "...limited reading in the literature strongly suggests that it fell dead from the author's pen, since [he has] yet to come across one single reference to it, explicit or otherwise."<sup>16</sup> But these two facts—viz., the relative anonymity of Byang chub skyabs and of the *Tshad bsdus* itself—would actually fit together quite well if the author of the *Tshad bsdus* was indeed a direct student of Byang chub skyabs.

#### 3.1. *Byang chub skyabs*

So who was Byang chub skyabs? Thankfully, there is enough information available from a variety of sources to clarify who Byang chub skyabs was and to ascertain the identities of (at least some of) his principal students. Versions of Byang chub skyabs' name can be found within multiple historical texts in relation to transmission lineages for the *Abhidharma-samuccaya* and the *Abhidharmakośa*.<sup>17</sup> We know that he received teachings on Abhidharma from Tho ston Kun dga' rdo rje, who was himself a student of 'Ban dKon mchog rdo rje. Both of those figures are known to have flourished in the first half of the twelfth century.<sup>18</sup> Byang chub skyabs, in turn, was the Abhidharma teacher of

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<sup>15</sup> There is one possible reference to Byang chub skyabs in mTshur ston's *sGron ma* (28b7). This identification is only tentative, however, as the reference is simply to "byang" and the view—relating to yogic perception—held by this figure in the *sGron ma* does not match up with any views attributed to Byang chub skyabs in the *Tshad bsdus*.

<sup>16</sup> Van der Kuijp (2003), p. 389.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, *Deb sngon*, p. 420, *rGya 'grel*, p. 743, and *Thob yig*, p. 409.

<sup>18</sup> While no exact dating of these two individuals could be made, there is at least some reason to think that 'Ban dKon mchog rdo rje was roughly contemporaneous with rGya dmar ba and sTag pa kha che—two important students of Khyung Rin chen grags. This would suggest that he flourished in the first half of the twelfth century. Among the evidence for this is the fact that, within the rNam thar of Rwa lo tsā ba (*rNga sgra*, p. 19), it is remarked that sTag pa kha che and 'Ban dKon mchog rdo rje traveled together to gSang phu so that they could see rNog lo tsā ba just before his death (in 1109). In addition, it is known that one of 'Ban's teachers, Brang ti Dar ma snying po, was also a teacher of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092-1158).

gZhon nu byang chub (c. 1150–1210). Later figures in the same transmission lineage of the *Abhidharma-samuccaya* include Bo dong Rin chen rtse mo and dPang lo tsā ba Blo gros brten pa (1276–1342), both of whom were affiliated with Bo dong E Monastery in gTsang. Both Byang chub skyabs and his student gZhon nu byang chub frequently find their names prefaced with the modifier “‘jad pa” which indicates that they hailed from the area called ‘Jad in present-day Shigatse Prefecture.

In addition to teaching the *Abhidharma-samuccaya* and the *Abhidharmakośa* to gZhon nu byang chub, at least a few other students can be linked to Byang chub skyabs. One such person is Mus srad pa chen po, who is said to have received teachings on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* from Byang chub skyabs. A second figure is sPrul sku Yang dben pa who is known to have lived from 1160 to 1217. It appears that Yang dben pa received his full ordination vows, as well as various teachings, from Byang chub skyabs when he was approximately seventeen years old.<sup>19</sup> This would thus imply that Byang chub skyabs lived until at least 1177.

This connection to transmission lineages of the *Abhidharma-samuccaya* and *Abhidharmakośa* is informative, but it doesn’t fully explain why Byang chub skyabs’ name would appear in an epistemology text, nor does it explain why it would appear in connection to other scholars from gSang phu Monastery. The key insight comes from recognizing that ‘Jad pa Byang chub skyabs is the same person as ‘Jad pa sTon skyabs. In listings of the relevant Abhidharma transmission lineages, some historical sources list his name as “‘jad pa ston skyabs” and others as “‘jad pa byang (chub) skyabs.”<sup>20</sup> This is an important detail because ‘Jad pa sTon skyabs is also listed in the *Blue Annals* as being a student of Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge. When exactly Byang chub skyabs (a.k.a. ‘Jad pa sTon skyabs) studied with Phya pa is not specified. It could have been during the time that Phya pa was the head teacher of epistemology at gSang phu Monastery, or it could have been earlier when Phya pa was still in residence with his own

<sup>19</sup> This information comes from *Ming mdzod*, p. 1043.

<sup>20</sup> In the *Blue Annals* (*Deb sngon*, p. 419-420) the lineage reads: *brang ti la ko bo ye shes ‘byung gnas / ... ‘ban / tho gar ba gcam lde / ‘jad pa byang skyabs / ‘jad pa gzhon byang / ‘bring mtshams zhang*. In the commentary on the *Abhidharma-samuccaya* written by dPang lo tsā ba (rGya ‘grel, p. 743) we find: *brang ti dar ma snying po / ‘ban dkon mchog rdo rje / tho kun dga’ rdo rje / byang chub skyabs / gzhon byang / ‘bring ‘tshams zhang*. By contrast, in the collected works of the Sakyapas (*gSan yig*, p. 785) we find the following: *ngur smrig pa dar ma snying po / ko bo ye ‘byung / de gnyis ka’i slob ma ‘ban dkon mchog rdo rje / de nas tho ston kun dga’ rdo rje / ‘jad pa ston skyabs / gzhon byang*. Finally, in the collected works of the fifth Dalai Lama (*gSung ‘bum*, vol. 1, p. 31), the lineage reads: *brang ti dar ma snying po / ko ye ‘byung / ‘ban dkon cog rdo rje / tho kun dga’ rdo rje / ‘jad pa ston skyabs / ‘jad pa gzhon byang / zhang ‘bring mtshams pa*.

teacher rGya dmar ba in sTod lungs. What is clear is that, while Byang chub skyabs is primarily known for his contributions to Abhidharma, he received teachings on epistemology, as well as on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, from Phya pa.<sup>21</sup>

Two texts within *The Collected Works of the Kadampas* (vol. 25) are attributed to a person named “*byang chub skyabs*.” Whether those two texts were indeed written by the same person who is referenced repeatedly in the *Tshad bsdus* is not something that can be affirmed with certainty at this time, but there is at least some reason to suspect that those two texts were composed by the same Byang chub skyabs who studied under both Tho ston Kun dga’ rdo rje and Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge. The longer of those two texts (see *rNam bshad*) contains a fair number of interlinear notes, a few of which mention the Tibetan figures that are associated with certain views. Though there are not many such references, the labels used include multiple occurrences of “*lo ts+tsa ba*,” “*jo btsun*,” “*rgya*,” “*phya*,” and “*tho*.” This suggests that the Tibetans being cited are rNgog lo tsā ba, Khung Rin chen grags, rGya dmar ba, Phya pa, and Tho ston Kun dga’ rdo rje, respectively.<sup>22</sup> In fact, on one occasion (*rNam bshad*, 43a7) these latter four persons are all referenced together with respect to the same position. Given that both Phya pa and Tho are cited in this text, and insofar as there are no references to any figures from later generations, this would lend some credence to the conclusion that the author was indeed ‘Jad pa Byang chub skyabs.

Having already established that Byang chub skyabs was a direct student of Phya pa, and given the reverence that the *Tshad bsdus* shows toward Byang chub skyabs, it is then important to look more closely at who that scholar’s primary students were. As mentioned above, there are three people who I have been able to identify as disciples of Byang chub skyabs, and who should thus be under consideration as possible authors of the *Tshad bsdus*. These three known disciples are the aforementioned gZhon nu byang chub, Mus srab pa chen po, and sPrul sku Yang dben pa.

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<sup>21</sup> With respect to Phya pa transmitting teachings of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* to Byang chub skyabs, see *Thob yig*, p. 262, where the transmission lineage reads: *rngog lo tsa+tsa ba / khyung rin chen grags / stod lung rgya dmar / slob dpon phya pa / ‘jad pa ston skyabs / mus srab pa chen po*.

<sup>22</sup> There are other references as well. For example, one finds a few tags of “*zhang chos*” and “*zhang tshes*,” both of which I take to be references to rNgog lo tsā ba’s student, and the third throne-holder of gSang phu Monastery, Zhang tshe spong Chos kyi bla ma. There are also several tags for “*chos ye*,” which would seem to refer to Zhang tshe spong’s student Nyang bran pa Chos kyi ye shes, who is claimed to have written a commentary on the *bSlab pa kun las btus pa* (see *Deb sngon*, p. 405).



3.2. *gZhon nu byang chub*

With that said, the fact that one of Byang chub skyabs' students went by the name *gZhon nu byang chub* (at least to writers in later generations) may be taken as *prima facie* evidence for thinking that this student bore a very close connection to, and may even have been a blood relative of, Byang chub skyabs. It is thus worth exploring the possibility that the *Tshad bsdus* could have been authored by *gZhon nu byang chub*. Specific evidence linking *gZhon nu byang chub* to the composition of the *Tshad bsdus* will be presented in the next section. Before providing that evidence, I will spend the next few paragraphs saying a bit more about what is known of *gZhon nu byang chub*.

Two texts written by *gZhon nu byang chub* have been published within *The Collected Works of the Kadampas*. One text, a short Prajñāpāramitā commentary called the *mNgon rtogs rgyan yum bar ma nyi khri dang sbyar ba'i rgyan 'grel* (henceforth, *rGyan 'grel*), is contained in volume 10 of the *Collected Works of the Kadampas*, and a second text, a much longer Abhidharma commentary called the *Chos mngon pa kun las btus pa'i Tikka Shes bya thams cad gsal bar byed pa'i sgron me* (henceforth, *sGron me*), is found in volume 40. (Stylistically, these two texts are quite different from one another, but a discussion of those differences is beyond the scope of this article.)

We have already seen above that *gZhon nu byang chub* was a student of Byang chub skyabs—receiving teachings from him on both the *Abhidharma-samuccaya* and the *Abhidharmakośa*. This comports well with the references contained within *gZhon nu byang chub's sGron me*, which includes, aside from forty-nine explicit references to Byang chub skyabs, an additional 221 references to Byang chub skyabs' teacher Tho ston Kun dga' rdo rje and 187 references to Tho's teacher 'Ban dKon mchog rdo rje.

The editors of *The Collected Works of the Kadampas* assert that *gZhon nu byang chub* was a direct student of one "*dkar chung ba gzhon nu tshul khrims*," who was himself a student of Ar Byang chub ye shes. Though not noted as such, this information would appear to come from claims made in the collected works of Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507). In his short text on the spread of rNgog lo tsā ba's teachings, Shākya mchog ldan provides information on each of the four main disciples of rNgog lo tsā ba. *gZhon nu byang chub's* name is indeed found within the brief discussion of the followers of rNgog's

student 'Bre Shes rab 'bar.<sup>23</sup> 'Bre's principal student was Ar Byang chub ye shes. Shākya mchog ldan tells us that Ar was the teacher of one "gzhon nu tshul khrims"—who I believe is the same person as 'Dul 'dzin dkar mo—and this latter figure was the teacher of 'Jad pa gZhon nu byang chub.<sup>24</sup> Interestingly, Shākya mchog ldan reports that it was gZhon nu byang chub who was responsible for bringing Prajñāpāramitā teachings to Bo dong—that is, to Bo dong E Monastery in gTsang.<sup>25</sup>

In this same text by Shākya mchog ldan, he mentions that 'Bre Shes rab 'bar received Prajñāpāramitā teachings from rNgog lo tsā ba and Abhidharma teachings, in Bo dong, from dGe bshes Mu tra chen po, the person who is proclaimed to have founded Bo dong E Monastery in the year 1049. This very much fits with the pattern of names appearing within the Abhidharma commentary written by gZhon nu byang chub, as his *sGron me* contains references to all these individuals. In addition to seven references to rNgog lo tsā ba, there are fifty-four references to Mu tra chen po and fifteen references to 'Bre Shes rab 'bar. (See Appendix for a more comprehensive listing). The stylistically different *rGyan 'grel* contains many fewer references to Tibetan scholars—and the references that it does contain are found only within interlinear/sublinear notes. That said, there are references in the *rGyan 'grel* to "lo tsa ba" (i.e., rNgog lo tsā ba), "'bre" (i.e., 'Bre Shes rab 'bar), and "Ar" (i.e., Ar Byang chub ye shes).

Finally, it was mentioned above that gZhon nu byang chub was a student of 'Dul 'dzin dkar mo. This latter name figures in various transmission lineages associated with followers of 'Bre, but he is also

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<sup>23</sup> Within many typeset versions of this text, gZhon nu byang chub's name is rendered "'jam dpal gzhon nu byang chub." In an existing *dbu med* version of the text (*Rol mo*, p. 509), however, his name is correctly rendered as "'jad pa gzhon nu byang chub."

<sup>24</sup> Though Shākya mchog ldan's *Rol mo* speaks just of "gzhon nu tshul khrims," the editors of *The Collected Works of the Kadampas* claim that the Prajñāpāramitā teacher of gZhon nu byang chub was "dkar chung ba gzhon nu tshul khrims"—that is, 'Dul 'dzin dkar mo's student dKar chung ring mo. I believe this to be incorrect. First of all, in another text within his collected works, Shākya mchog ldan refers to this same student of Ar with the more extensive name "'dul 'dzin gzhon nu tshul khrims." Second, within the collected works of the Sakya master Tshul khrims rin chen (1697–1774) we are provided with a comprehensive listing of these same figures, and that text proclaims that 'Dul 'dzin dkar mo had the 'real name' (*mtshan dngos*) of "gzhon nu tshul khrims" and that his student dKar chung ring mo had the name "shes rab 'bum." (See *Chu gter*, p. 128.) As such, I believe that this teacher of gZhon nu byang chub was 'Dul 'dzin dkar mo.

<sup>25</sup> The transmission lineages that include gZhon nu byang chub do indeed feature a number of scholars known to be associated with Bo dong E Monastery. Among them are Bo dong Rin chen rtse mo (c. 12th to 13th centuries) and dPang lo tsā ba Blo gros brtan pa (1276–1342).

found within transmission lineages for the *Chos nyid rnam 'byed* and *rGyud bla ma*. Most importantly, he is said to have had those texts transmitted by Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge.<sup>26</sup> This means that gZhon nu byang chub was indirectly connected to Phya pa in two different ways. gZhon nu byang chub was a student both of Byang chub skyabs and of 'Dul 'dzin dkar mo, each of whom had studied under Phya pa. Recall that the *Blue Annals* tells us that Byang chub skyabs (a.k.a. 'Jad pa sTon skyabs) was a student of Phya pa, and information within the *Tshad bsdus* makes it clear that Byang chub skyabs had interactions with Phya pa on various epistemological topics. As such, it is important to seek out evidence that could support the hypothesis that Byang chub skyabs' student gZhon nu byang chub could have authored the *Tshad bsdus*.

#### 4. Comparing Texts

The corroborating evidence for concluding that the author of the *Tshad bsdus* is in fact gZhon nu byang chub comes from an examination of the strong similarities between the *Tshad bsdus* and the commentary on the *Abhidharma-samuccaya* that is known to have been written by gZhon nu byang chub—the *sGron me*. In what follows, I will focus on four points of similarity between the *Tshad bsdus* and gZhon nu byang chub's *sGron me*. These similarities are so striking that, when used in concert, and when combined with the evidence provided above of Byang chub skyabs' role as student of Phya pa and teacher of gZhon nu byang chub, we are in the position to assert with high credibility that the author of the *Tshad bsdus* is in fact gZhon nu byang chub.

##### 4.1. Invocation

The first compositional similarity between the *Tshad bsdus* and gZhon nu byang chub's *sGron me* to be mentioned here relates to the opening verses of the two works. The opening lines of the two texts are so similar in structure that one has good reason to suspect that the authorship is the same. As documented in the 2000 publication of the *Tshad bsdus*, that text opens with the verse:

*byang chub* sems dang blo gros thogs pa med mnga' bas//  
 'gro ba rnams kyi skyabs gyur de la phyag 'tshal tel//  
 mdo' dang rnam 'grel mdzad pa'i dri med gzhung rnams las//  
 tshad ma'i de nyid rab tu bsdus pa'i brjed byang brill

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<sup>26</sup> See gSung 'bum, vol. 2, p. 202.

There are at least two items to note about this opening verse. First, the lines contain hidden within them the name “*byang chub skyabs*.” Second, this opening verse ends with a proclamation that the author is *writing a memorandum (brjed byang bri)* of epistemological matters. This description as a memorandum is rather peculiar in relation to texts of this sort, and the peculiarity of this wording is discussed at some length in van der Kuijp (2003).

Due to apparent damage to the original manuscript that is reproduced in *The Collected Works of the Kadampas*, the opening verses of gZhon nu byang chub’s *sGron me* are not fully readable. Nevertheless, enough of the first verse can be identified to note the clear similarities between the two texts. Here is the opening of gZhon nu byang chub’s Abhidharma commentary:

*'phags pa 'jam dpal gzhon nur gyurd pa la phyag 'tshal lo//  
 gang dag sgrib gnyis mtha' dag byang gyur cing//  
 yang dag [unclear] mngon du chub gyur tel//  
 [unclear]  
 skyabs gyur de la btud nas brjed byang bri//*

As one can plainly see, this text likewise contains a hidden invocation of his teacher Byang chub skyabs. Perhaps more importantly, we see the exact same language of writing a memorandum (*brjed byang bri*) at the close of the verse. It must be remarked again that this specific way of expressing things appears to be unique within texts from these genres in this time period.<sup>27</sup> The isolated fact that the exact same expression is used in these two texts, in the exact same situational context, does not decisively prove that the texts were written by the same author, but it does serve to increase the credence for that hypothesis.

#### 4.2. Citations of Predecessors

It was emphasized in §2 above that the *Tshad bsdus* contains fifty-three references to Byang chub skyabs, and that in nearly all of these cases, the honorific verb “*gsung*” is used when mentioning Byang chub skyabs’ views. Yet, when all other Tibetan epistemologists are mentioned, the honorific verb “*gsung*” is not used. We find, instead, the verb “*zer*” generally used for these other thinkers. Given this systematic difference in how Tibetan thinkers’ views are presented in the *Tshad bsdus* and given the live hypothesis that gZhon nu byang chub might have been the author of the *Tshad bsdus*, it is important to

<sup>27</sup> This language of a memorandum (*brjed byang*) is found within dPang lo tsā ba’s *rGya 'grel*, but he uses this language precisely in reference to gZhon nu byang chub’s *sGron me*, which he calls “*gu ru gzhon byang gi brjed byang*.”

examine the names referenced in gZhon nu byang chub's *Abhidharma-samuccaya* commentary. Indeed, though I have likely missed at least some occurrences within the text, my initial inspection of the Tibetan names cited within gZhon nu byang chub's *sGron me* makes it quite clear that the pattern of citation found in the *Tshad bsdu* is also exhibited within the *sGron me*.

I have identified forty-nine explicit references to the views of Byang chub skyabs in gZhon nu byang chub's *sGron me*, and in forty-eight of those cases the author has used the honorific verb "gsung."<sup>28</sup> Yet, of the more than 600 references to other Tibetan scholars, in only two instances is the verb "gsung" used when referencing these other Tibetan scholars.<sup>29</sup> The text contains, for example 221 references to "tho" —i.e., Byang chub skyabs' teacher Tho ston Kun dga' rdo rje— and 187 references to "bhan" or "ban" —i.e., Tho's teacher 'Ban dKön mchog rdo rje. Yet, in none of these cases is the honorific verb "gsung" used when mentioning these two thinkers' views. Instead, in nearly all these cases it is the non-honorific verb "zer" that is used.<sup>30</sup> In short, the reference style employed in gZhon nu byang chub's *sGron me* is exactly the same as what is found in the *Tshad bsdu*. (See Appendix for further details.)

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<sup>28</sup> To be clear, all of these references in the *sGron me* are within the main text itself—not within interlinear notes. (Having said that, it is possible, or perhaps likely, that some/most/all of these references originally took the form of interlinear notes that were subsequently inserted into the body of the text by a scribe copying the text.) With respect to Byang chub skyabs, in seventeen cases, reference is made with the full attribution "byang chub skyabs," but in thirty-five cases it is just with the abbreviated form "skyabs." In one additional case the label "'jad pa" is used. In thirty-nine occurrences, the references to Byang chub skyabs come at the end of a quote: either "[quote] zhes byang chub skyabs gsung ngo" or "[quote] zhes skyabs gsung ngo." In three cases one finds the form "byang chub skyabs ni [quote] zhes gsung ngo" and in seven cases it is of the form "byang chub skyabs na re [quote] zhes gsung ngo."

<sup>29</sup> As for these two occasions where the honorific verb "gsung" is used for a Tibetan other than Byang chub skyabs, one occurrence (*sGron me*, 155b9) involves Gangs pa she'u, and in a second occurrence (*sGron me*, 183a4) it is in reference to the view of Khyung Rin chen grags—mentioned with the label "jo btsun."

<sup>30</sup> Two points of clarification are in order here. First, the claim here is only about cases where the present tense, honorific verb "gsung" is used in conjunction with an explicit speaker/author attribution. The text does additionally contain numerous (at least sixty-eight) occurrences of the present tense, honorific verb "gsung" for which no explicit speaker/author attribution is made. It is possible that many (or all) of these are also references to the views of Byang chub skyabs—for in most places it is clear that these are views that are in response to Byang chub skyabs' teacher Tho ston Kun dga' rdo rje. Nevertheless, these cases are separate from the explicit attributions to Byang chub skyabs and have played no role in supporting the central conclusion of this article. The second point of clarification is that the past tense, honorific verb "gsungs" is frequently used when quoting from Indian sutras. There are dozens of expressions of the form "[sometimes name of sutra] mdo las [quote] zhes gsungs so."

### 4.3. Sanskrit and Spellings

It was additionally mentioned in the first section of this paper that the *Tshad bsdus* contains a fair number of Sanskrit terms in transliteration, and that this could be taken as evidence that the text was composed sometime earlier than the fourteenth century. In particular, it was noted that the author of the *Tshad bsdus* frequently used the spelling “*dar ma kir ti*” instead of the expected Tibetan rendering “*chos kyi grags pa*” when mentioning the views of the Indian epistemologist Dharmakīrti. Now, because gZhon nu byang chub’s *sGron me* is a text on Abhidharma and not epistemology, Dharmakīrti’s name does not show up very often. Yet, in each of the two places I have identified within the *sGron me* where his name does appear, gZhon nu byang chub does indeed use the Sanskrit spelling “*dar ma kir ti*.”

Relatedly, within the introduction to Chinese publication of the *Tshad bsdus*, it is remarked that the manuscripts of the text contained a non-standard spelling of Dignāga’s name. Though now standardly spelled “*phyogs kyi glang po*,” it is mentioned in the introduction of the *Tshad bsdus* that the manuscripts contained the spelling “*klang*” instead of “*glang*.”<sup>31</sup> Matters are identical in the *gGron me*. In the places where Dignāga’s name appears in gZhon nu byang chub’s *gGron me*, his name is systematically spelled “*phyogs kyi klang po*.” (Moreover, there are various places in the text—when providing examples and analogies—that a reference is made to elephants, and in each of these cases, the Tibetan term for an elephant is spelled “*klang po che*.”) In short, the peculiarities of spelling for both Dignāga’s name and Dharmakīrti’s name in the *Tshad bsdus* match up with those in the *gGron me*.

### 4.4. Text Re-use

While the above three similarities are suggestive of common authorship between the *Tshad bsdus* and the *sGron me*, there is still the possibility, however faint, that the *Tshad bsdus* could have been written by some other student of Byang chub skyabs—one who just happens to exhibit a writing style remarkably similar to that found in the *sGron me*. What would be ideal, therefore, would be to identify some sort of independent textual evidence that directly links the *Tshad bsdus* to gZhon nu byang chub. This could involve, for example, a later writer attributing some view to gZhon nu byang chub that comes from the *Tshad bsdus*. Evidence of any such attributions have yet to surface,

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<sup>31</sup> It appears that the editor of the *Tshad bsdus* systematically “corrected” the spelling of Dignāga’s name in the version of the text published in 2000, as the spelling “*klang*” is found only once in the text, with the spelling “*glang*” used in all other occurrences.

however. In the absence of such an attribution, another option would be to look for passages in the *Tshad bsdu pa* that are identical to claims found within either of the two texts known to be authored by gZhon nu byang chub, the *sGron me* and *rGyan 'grel*.

Unfortunately, I have been thus far unable to identify enough cases of text re-use that allow us to definitively establish identical authorship. There may very well be instances of text re-use between the *Tshad bsdu pa* and the other two texts known to be composed by gZhon nu byang chub—and one example will be described below—but a more comprehensive identification of such re-use would likely require the latter texts to be digitally input into a searchable computer format. I say this because there is at least some reason to think that both the *sGron me* and the *rGyan 'grel* were written prior to the *Tshad bsdu pa*. My own manual inspection of the *sGron me* and *rGyan 'grel* for passages on epistemological themes—for which there are many—has not revealed any passages with language identical with what is written in the *Tshad bsdu pa*. The *sGron me*, for example, displays a clear acquaintance with themes coming from the Buddhist tradition of epistemology, but the wording on epistemological matters is actually more similar to what is found in Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge's *Tshad ma yid kyi mun sel* and his *Pramāṇaviniścaya* commentary than it is to the wording in the *Tshad bsdu pa*.

To give but one example of this, gZhon nu byang chub's *sGron me* contains, on its first page, a brief discussion of the difference between concepts (*don spyi*) and particular things (*don rang gi mtshan nyid*). While he describes concepts as being “mixed (*'dres pa*) with respect to place, time, and aspect,” particular things are spoken of as “unmixed with respect to place, time, and nature.”<sup>32</sup> This language is very much in accord with the way that these objects are described by Phya pa in his *Mun sel*.<sup>33</sup> Yet, this wording in the *sGron me* is slightly different from how concepts and particular things are described within the opening pages of the *Tshad bsdu pa*, where the language of being “mixed” or “unmixed” is not used. Instead, the *Tshad bsdu pa* speaks of concepts as having their “place...time...and nature or aspect *indeterminate (nges pa med pa)*.”<sup>34</sup>

To be clear, I take this *not* as evidence that the *Tshad bsdu pa* was not written by the same person as the *sGron me*, but instead as evidence that the *sGron me* was likely composed prior to the *Tshad bsdu pa*. If that's right, it suggests that text re-use in the *Tshad bsdu pa* would most likely occur when a topic related to Abhidharma (or Prajñāpāramitā in the

<sup>32</sup> *sGron me*, 1b3-4.

<sup>33</sup> See *Mun sel*, 1b6-7 and 4a7.

<sup>34</sup> *Tshad bsdu pa*, p. 4. The passage reads: *de'ang mi gsal ba ni yul nges pa med pa dang / dus nges pa med pa dang / rang bzhin nam rnam pa nges pa med pa*.

case of the *rGyan 'grel*) is taken up within the *Tshad bsdus*. Indeed, I have been able to thus far find a single example illustrative of possible text re-use. Early in the *Tshad bsdus* there is a brief discussion of the Three Natures (Skt. *trisvabhāva*). That text describes 'the perfected' (*yongs grub*) in the following way:<sup>35</sup>

*yongs grub ni chos can gzhan dbang rnam rig tsam de'i steng du  
dgag bya gang zag gi bdag dang chos kyi bdag gnyis khegs tsam gyi  
med dgag go //*

Within the *sGron me*, that same term is described thusly:<sup>36</sup>

*yongs grub ni chos can gzhan dbang rnam rig tsam de'i steng du  
dgag bya gang zag gi bdag dang chos gyi bdag med tsam gyi med  
dgag ste...*

As one can see, the language in these two passages is identical except for a single term. This may therefore be evidence that gZhon nu byang chub simply copied his earlier characterization of 'the perfected' (*yongs grub*) when writing about the topic within the *Tshad bsdus*.

I do not think, of course, that this proves definitively that these two texts must have been authored by the same person. (For example, it is possible that this specific language could originate in an earlier source, which was then reproduced both by gZhon nu byang chub in his *sGron me* and also, independently, by the author of the *Tshad bsdus*.) It would be helpful to have additional instances of identical language shared by the two texts. As I have said earlier, however, because these instances of text re-use are likely to involve Abhidharma themes being reproduced within the *Tshad bsdus*, their identification would be aided by having a searchable, digital version of the *sGron me*, which to my knowledge does not currently exist. Nevertheless, the example of identical language provided above does, when combined with all the other evidence presented in this paper, lend additional support to the conclusion that the author of the *Tshad bsdus* was the same as the author of the *sGron me*.

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<sup>35</sup> *Tshad bsdus*, p. 7.

<sup>36</sup> *sGron me*, 4b7.



### 5. Conclusion

Given the fragmentary nature of the documentary record, I do not believe we can ever establish with *absolute certainty* who the author of the *Tshad bsdus* was. Yet, I do believe that the evidence provided above, when taken altogether, allows us to conclude with high credibility that the author of that epistemology text was 'Jad pa gZhon nu byang chub (c. 1150–1210), a disciple of 'Jad pa Byang chub skyabs, who was himself a direct student of Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge (1109–1169). Just to summarize the central strands of evidence:

1. Linguistic clues within the *Tshad bsdus* strongly suggest that the author of the text was a devoted disciple of Byang chub skyabs.
2. Byang chub skyabs was a direct student of Phya pa—the student identified in the *Blue Annals* as 'Jad pa sTon skyabs—and had as one of his disciples a person named gZhon nu byang chub.
3. A comparison of the *Tshad bsdus* with a separate text known to have been authored by gZhon nu byang chub, the *sGron me*, shows these two texts to share a large number of linguistic and stylistic peculiarities in common—which suggests that they were composed by the same person.

As a result, I believe it is warranted to conclude that the author of the *Tshad ma'i de kho na nyid bsdus pa* was 'Jad pa gZhon nu byang chub, and that this text was, therefore, composed sometime in the last thirty or so years of the twelfth century. The lack of references to figures like gTsang nag pa brTson 'grus seng ge and Dan 'bag pa sMra ba'i seng ge—the two students of Phya pa known to have composed their own epistemology texts—may be viewed as a reason to think that the *Tshad bsdus* was composed prior to the epistemological works of those two figures. But it might just as likely be the case that the views presented by gZhon nu byang chub in the *Tshad bsdus* were simply limited to the range of views that were known by Byang chub skyabs at the time that he taught epistemology to gZhon nu byang chub.

What is left unanswered is how and why Klong chen pa's name came to be attached to this text. While I do have some ideas about how that false attribution may have happened, those ideas do not at this time come anywhere close to having the level of epistemic security necessary to be considered highly credible. As such, the puzzle of why an epistemology text composed by gZhon nu byang chub in the second half of the twelfth century came to be attributed to the fourteenth

century Nyingma scholar Klong chen Rab 'byams will need to be solved at a later point in time.

### Appendix – References to Tibetan scholars in the *Tshad bsdus* and *sGron me*

Below is a list of all the Tibetan scholars who are either (a) referenced in both the *Tshad bsdus* and *sGron me* or (b) referenced at least ten times in one or the other of those texts.

Name	Standard reference tag	# of references in <i>Tshad bsdus</i>	# of occurrences in <i>Tshad bsdus</i> w/ " [name] ni"	# of occurrences in <i>Tshad bsdus</i> w/ " [name] na re"	# of occurrences in <i>Tshad bsdus</i> with " <i>gsung</i> "	# of references in <i>sGron me</i>	# of occurrences in <i>sGron me</i> w/ " [name] ni"	# of occurrences in <i>sGron me</i> w/ " [name] na re"	# of occurrences in <i>sGron me</i> with " <i>gsung</i> "
Byang chub skyabs <sup>37</sup>	"byang chub skyabs"	53	8	11	46	49	3	7	48
Phya pa	"phya"	99	4	62	1 <sup>38</sup>	0	0	0	0
rGya dmar ba	"rgya"	79	0	54	1 <sup>39</sup>	0	0	0	0
rNgog lo tsā ba	"lo tsa ba"	52	0 <sup>40</sup>	21	0	7	0	6	0
Khyung Rin chen grags	"jo btsun"	34	0	25	0	11	0	6	1

<sup>37</sup> Of the 53 references in the *Tshad bsdus*, in 33 occurrences the full name "byang chub skyabs" is given. In 19 additional occurrences one finds the abbreviated form "byang skyabs." In one final case the form "skyabs" is used. Within the *sGron me* one finds "byang chub skyabs" 17 times, "skyabs" 31 times, and "'jad pa" one time.

<sup>38</sup> There is but a single occurrence, on p. 193 of the *Tshad bsdus*, in which the verb "gsung" is used for a person other than Byang chub skyabs, and in that one case the pair of names "rgya" and "phya" are referenced together.

<sup>39</sup> See fn. 38 above.

<sup>40</sup> There are no references to rNgog lo tsā ba with the marker "ni," but there are ten occurrences with the third case marker "-s"—e.g., "lo tsa bas [quote] zer."

Gangs pa She'u	"gangs pa"	19	0 <sup>41</sup>	15	0	6	0	3	1
Me dig pa	"me dig"	6	0	5	0	1	0	1	0
gNyags <sup>42</sup>	"gnyags"	3	1 <sup>43</sup>	2	1 <sup>44</sup>	31	2	19	0
Tho Kun dga' rdo rje	"tho"	0	0	0	0	221	1	77	0
'Ban dkon mchog rdo rje	"bhan"	0	0	0	0	187	1	97	0
Mu tra chen po	"mu tra"	0	0	0	0	54	1	45	0
Brang ti Dar ma snying po <sup>45</sup>	"ngur smrig pa"	0	0	0	0	33	4	16	0
mChims brT-son 'grus seng ge	"mchims"	0	0	0	0	30	0	25	0
'Bre Shes rab 'bar	"bre"	0	0	0	0	15	0	10	0
Unattributed		15	0	0	15	63	0	0	63

<sup>41</sup> There are no references to Gangs pa She'u with the marker "ni," but there are two occurrences with the third case marker "-s"—e.g., "gangs pas [quote] zer."

<sup>42</sup> The total of thirty-one occurrences of the name "gnyags" in the *sGron me* does not include three additional places in the text where one finds the names "gnyags seng ge grags," "gnyags tshul," and "gnyags tshul brtson." It is assumed (perhaps incorrectly) that these latter names refer to two individuals different from the referent of the term "gnyags."

<sup>43</sup> This single occurrence (p. 245) is one in which gNyags is cited together with Byang chub skyabs. The wording is "gnyags dang byang chub skyabs ni...gsung"

<sup>44</sup> See fn. 43 above.

<sup>45</sup> There is good reason to believe that both "ngur smrig pa" and "brang ti" are ascriptions for the same person, Brang ti Dar ma snying po. Of the 33 references to him in the text, 24 occurrences have the label "ngur (s)m(r)ig pa" and 9 places use the label "brang ti." In each and every case in which "brang ti" is used, the form is "[quote] zhes brang ti zer (ro)." In most of the places where "ngur smrig pa" is used, we find instead "ngur smrig pa na re [quote]." The four places where one finds "ngur smrig pa ni [quote]" are all on the same page: folio 126a.

"zhes gsung"									
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# Towards a standardisation of Tibetan transliteration for textual studies

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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

**I**n the past few decades the so-called ‘Wylie-system of transliteration’<sup>2</sup> has been more and more commonly used in scholarly literature. It owes its popularity mainly to the fact that it can be written with any Latin keyboard and does not require coding of special signs or adding of diacritics. Accordingly, the Wylie-system’s greatest advantage is that it is easy to operate and comfortable for those not primarily interested in language, be it written Tibetan or modern spoken vernaculars.<sup>3</sup> Well that’s nice, but not enough. Its

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to acknowledge financial support provided by grant BI 1953/1-1 of Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft in years 2017-2020 that enabled me to prepare this paper. I would also like to express my gratitude to Nathan Hill and especially Michael Balk for stimulating discussions on practical and theoretical aspects of transliteration. Furthermore, I would like to thank all those who engaged in the discussion on a previous version of the paper within a session on Academia. The paper uses the following conventions: Latin letters proposed for transliteration of Tibetan letters are enclosed in pointy brackets < >; examples of transliteration are provided in italics; and the IPA transcription in square brackets.

<sup>2</sup> Put forward in Wylie (1959).

<sup>3</sup> Wylie has defined the main criteria for a “standard system of Tibetan transcription (sic)” as: 1. minimal complexity; and 2. capability of reproduction on a standard typewriter (1959: 263). These of course have nothing to do with academic standards required for a transliteration system. It is also not clear whether Wylie knew the difference between ‘transliteration’ and ‘transcription’ and deliberately devised a ‘Tibetan transcription system’, or whether he ignored the distinction. The ‘Wylie transliteration’ first gained in popularity in the 1980s and 1990s. The immediate reason might have been delivered with digital typesetting and the use of text editors by authors. The basic tool was there but in the beginning it lacked the functionality and precision of traditional printing, at least in the range of characters available. These limitations are now mostly overridden by character encoding of Unicode and we can again demand a better transliteration system.

most serious disadvantage is that it has not been based on any serious considerations of the relations between the characters used. For instance, it uses the letter 'h' with three different functions:

- For the 29th letter of the Tibetan alphabet: ཧྲ *h*;
- For 'aspiration': *kh, ch, th, ph, tsh*;
- For 'palatalisation': *zh, sh*.<sup>4</sup>

This 'logic' makes the transliteration useless for any language-related studies. Moreover, the paramount principle of transliteration – 'one letter for one letter' – was not observed by Wylie. The use of an apostrophe for transliterating འ and the lack of transliteration for the last letter of the alphabet, ཨ, have already been criticised in Hill (2012: 103) and Balk (2005: 2).<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, publications on Tibetan languages make use of very diverse systems. In fact, it seems as if every scholar has been using her own transliteration.<sup>6</sup> The table in the Appendix presents a selection of transliterations used in publications on Tibetan languages.

It is not the aim of this paper to convert everybody to one transliteration system, or to argue that the system herewith presented is the only correct one. My basic motivation is to suggest general *rules* any transliteration system should accord to in order to be internally coherent and logically structured. In an ideal case, a transliteration system is based on a one-to-one relation between the letters of the source script and the letters of the Latin alphabet. This however is seldom possible alone because many scripts make use of more than 26 letters that are inherent to the Latin alphabet. The result is that one has to either use more than one letter of the Latin alphabet to transliterate the source alphabet or resort to diacritic signs. The latter solution is conceived of as a better standard for a *transliteration*. In devising the transliteration put forward in the paper I attempted to follow these rules.

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<sup>4</sup> This argument has been formulated in Hill (2012: 103).

<sup>5</sup> Other shortcomings of the 'Wylie system' are discussed in Balk (2005: 1-2).

<sup>6</sup> Regrettably, even in linguistic studies the 'Wylie transliteration' finds its adherents.

**'Librarian Romanisation' vs. 'academic transliteration'**<sup>7</sup>

The idea of writing a paper on a new transliteration system for the Tibetan འགྲུབ་མཚན་ script arose from my own work on the origins of the Tibetan script<sup>8</sup> and on a new textbook for Classical Tibetan<sup>9</sup>. My work in this field gained additional motivation from stimulating exchanges with Michael Balk, long-standing curator (now retired) of the Central Asian Collection of the State Library in Berlin and expert on the Romanisation of non-Latin scripts such as Tibetan and Mongolian. Most importantly, it occurred to me from discussions with Michael Balk that the wish for a unitary system of transliteration for all purposes cannot be fulfilled for the time being. Librarians, for instance, require a system that ensures efficient managing of large amounts of foreign literature that has to be properly catalogued. The system should allow them to ascribe a letter of the Latin script to a letter of a foreign script without the demand of knowing the language of the foreign script, and to interpret not only titles, but also proper names, including toponyms. On the other hand, library users do not always (e.g., in public spaces) have easy access to non-Latin letters or symbols with diacritics that they could enter in their search query. These specific requirements run counter to the needs of academic community, especially of those scholars who work with languages. Tibetologists preparing critical editions or text-linguistic analyses require more precision and, first of all, consistency in using written conventions. Comparative and historical linguists (who use written Tibetan sources but do not necessarily have a good command of the language) expect transparency and intelligibility from the system. Furthermore, a system that is well-motivated and comprehensible can facilitate the learning process for students who wish to acquire skill in reading Classical Tibetan texts. Therefore, it seems essential that 'academic transliteration' be distinguished from 'librarian Romanisation', at least until tools are available that would considerably facilitate the

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<sup>7</sup> I distinguish between 'Romanisation', which is a broader concept, and 'transliteration'. The former is understood as a conversion of one writing system to Latin script without observing the stringent rules of transliteration. According to my definition, 'Wylie transliteration' would be a Romanisation, albeit an infelicitous one.

<sup>8</sup> See Bialek (Forthcoming a).

<sup>9</sup> See Bialek (Forthcoming c).



use of Unicode characters in search queries, including Internet search engines.

### Transliteration vs. transcription

Theoretically there exist no regulations concerning the issue of which letter of the source alphabet should be given which equivalent in the Latin alphabet. Thus, we can also think of the following transliteration system:

ཀ	ཁ	ག	ང	ཅ	ཆ	ཇ	ཉ	ཏ	ཐ	ད	ན	པ	ཕ	བ	མ	ཙ	ཛ	ཎ	ཤ	ཧ	ཟ	འ
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w
ཡ	ར	ལ	ཤ	ས	ཏ	ཨ		ོ	ི	ུ	ེ	ོ										
x	y	z	A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H	I										

Accordingly, the Tibetan syllable ཅེན་ would be transliterated as *oxHk*. We could also agree on a system in which the same syllable would be transliterated as *mfeD* | (with the vertical line transliterating the *cheg* < ` >). The only true restriction is that the assignment of the letters must be predictable.

A transliteration is *not* a transcription. The latter encodes *sounds* of a language in script.<sup>10</sup> The most accurate system of transcription is the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) devised to represent sounds that are part of oral language. As with any written form of communication, the IPA is based on conventions. For instance, that the sound described phonetically as ‘velar voiced stop’ is ascribed the letter < g > and its IPA notation is [g]. The sound could likewise have been ascribed the letter < n >, theoretically. But the convention was established and there is wide agreement on its foundations.

There is a good reason that transliterations have some resemblance to the representation of the sounds in script based on widely accepted conventions – like writing < g > for [g]. This reason is most obvious to those working with written languages like Old Tibetan (OT) or the so-called Classical Tibetan (CT). Of course, one can read texts just by looking at them without speaking aloud, or with the ‘sounds of the letters’ kept ‘in mind’. But as soon as one has to teach

<sup>10</sup> Funnily enough, Wylie calls his system “a standard orthographic *transcription*” (1959: 263; my emphasis).

the language to students, saying that “the pronunciation does not matter” won’t suffice.<sup>11</sup> Because there is no way to ascertain the actual pronunciation of Old Tibetan – or, more generally, written Tibetan – so that it could be transcribed in the IPA,<sup>12</sup> it is helpful to create a tool that would support students in their efforts to learn Tibetan. Another, perhaps more important, reason for having one transliteration system is that it can become a platform between the written language of yore (whose orthography was established almost 1400 years ago) and the modern varieties of Tibetan, that all go back to a Central Tibetan language of the first half of the 7th century for which the script was devised (cf. Bialek 2018b).

Sometime between the years 630s and 648, the Tibetan script was invented, and we have every reason to assume that its shape was very close to the script we know from the oldest dated Old Tibetan text: the Žol inscription from the year 764.<sup>13</sup> In the meantime we know that the OT orthography rather faithfully mirrored the pronunciation of the Central Tibetan language at the time of the script invention (cf. Bialek 2018b). Moreover, Nathan Hill has succeeded in reconstructing the Old Tibetan phoneme inventory (2010). Therefore, we are now in a very comfortable position to devise a transliteration system of the Tibetan script that can be roughly based on the recon-

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<sup>11</sup> Reading old texts in a modern pronunciation is even more problematic, but that’s an issue for a separate discussion.

<sup>12</sup> It is only possible to reconstruct the phonetic values ascribed to the letters at the time of the script invention (see below). This is however not synonymous with being able to transcribe syllables or words of Old Tibetan. We know that in the 7th century dialectal differentiation had already occurred (cf. Bialek 2018b). In fact, from then on we can’t reasonably speak of the ‘pronunciation’ of Old Tibetan, not to mention an oxymoron such as ‘pronunciation of Classical Tibetan’. Any attempt at devising a transcription for any of these languages (like, for instance, the one proposed by Jacques (2012)) must therefore be rejected as ill-founded and misleading. Jacques’ argument that such a transcription would facilitate the work of historical linguists (*ibid.*, p. 95) is likewise delusive. A transcription of a fifteenth century text with a system based on the pronunciation of the early seventh century is founded on a grave misunderstanding. By way of example, later texts contain vocabulary largely unknown in Old Tibetan, part of which was certainly also coined much later. How can one ascribe them a pronunciation from the period in which they did not even exist?

<sup>13</sup> The recently discovered bell inscription from Dgay-ldan-byin-chen (cf. Lhamchog-rgyal 2011) dates to the reign of Khri Lde-gcug-brcan (704–54) and is certainly older than the Žol inscription (cf. Bialek Forthcoming b). However, till now no concrete date could be proposed for its composition.

structured phonetic values ascribed by the Tibetans to the single letters of the alphabet at the time of its invention.

### Transliteration system for textual studies

Based on the above general considerations Fig. 1 provides the reconstructed phonetic values (in square brackets) of the corresponding Tibetan letters and the proposed transliteration of the latter (in italics).<sup>14</sup>

ཀ	<i>k</i> [k]	ཁ	<i>kh</i> [k <sup>h</sup> ]	ག	<i>g</i> [g]	ང	<i>ñ</i> [ŋ]
ཅ	<i>č/ć</i> [tɕ]	ཆ	<i>čh/ćh</i> [tɕ <sup>h</sup> ]	ཇ	<i>ǰ/j</i> [dʒ]	ཉ	<i>ñ/n</i> [ɲ]
ཏ	<i>t</i> [t]	ཐ	<i>th</i> [t <sup>h</sup> ]	ད	<i>d</i> [d]	ན	<i>n</i> [n]
པ	<i>p</i> [p]	ཕ	<i>ph</i> [p <sup>h</sup> ]	བ	<i>b</i> [b]	མ	<i>m</i> [m]
ཅ	<i>c</i> [ts]	ཆ	<i>ch</i> [tɕ <sup>h</sup> ]	ཇ	<i>ǰ/j</i> [dʒ]	ཉ	<i>w</i> [w]
ཞ	<i>ž</i> [z]	ཟ	<i>z</i> [z]	འ	<i>y/h/h̄</i> [ɣ]		
ཡ	<i>y</i> [j]	ར	<i>r</i> [r]	ལ	<i>l</i> [l]		
ས	<i>ś</i> [ɕ]	མ	<i>s</i> [s]	ཏ	<i>h</i> [h]	ཨ	<i>q</i> [ʔ]/[Ø]

Fig. 1

A quick look at the table in the Appendix suffices to see that the transliteration proposed here shares many of the 'new' features with

<sup>14</sup> If more than one transliteration is proposed for a Tibetan letter, the first one is preferred. Letters added after slash present an alternative transliteration. For their discussion see below.

the 'old French system' as used by Bacot and the transliteration of the first edition of Hahn's *Lehrbuch* (1971).

My first consideration in devising the transliteration was that the system should be internally coherent and accord with generally acknowledged transliteration standards. Furthermore, it should give the student a rough impression about the pronunciation of the letters at the time of their invention, or at least not be misleading in this regard. In the following I will discuss the most controversial elements of the proposed transliteration.

ཅ — ཆ — ཇ — ཉ — འ — ཡ

Because most of the previous systems that used diacritics transliterated letters འ and ཡ as < ž > and < ś ><sup>15</sup>, one could propose using the acute accent < ´ > (U+0301) to mark the quality of palatalisation in general. This would yield the following equivalents for all the letters that represented palatal sounds:

ཅ < č >   ཆ < čh >   ཇ < j >   ཉ < ě ><sup>16</sup>   འ < ž >   ཡ < ś ><sup>17</sup>

This transliteration is reinforced by the fact that the acute accent, when used with consonantal letters, unanimously represents alveolo-palatals in various orthographies (cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acute\\_accent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acute_accent); accessed 29.10.2019). This solution, however, has one serious flaw: it has to use the combination of < j > (U+0237) and the acute accent < ´ > (U+0301) in < j´ > to transliterate ཇ. Therefore, instead of the acute accent one could opt for the caron < ˇ > (U+02C7) that was sometimes applied for transliteration of ཅ, ཆ, and ཇ:

ཅ < č̇ >   ཆ < č̇h >   ཇ < j̇ >   ཉ < ě̇ >   འ < ž̇ >   ཡ < ṥ >

However, a closer examination has yielded that the caron diacritic is generally used to represent retroflex or palatalo-alveolar sounds in world orthographies (cf. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caron>; accessed 29.10.2019).<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the letters < ž̇ > and < ṥ > have only

<sup>15</sup> Only Zeisler consequently uses caron to transliterate the letters (see Appendix). Curiously, Bacot (1946-8: 9) transliterated འ with a caron but ཡ with an acute accent (see Appendix).

<sup>16</sup> Instead of the more popular < ě̇ >, Beckwith used < ě̇ > (see Appendix).

<sup>17</sup> It came as surprise to me that the same transliteration was already used in Kaschewsky (1987). The only exception is his < ě̇ > for ཉ.

<sup>18</sup> By the way, Old Tibetan did not have palatalo-alveolar consonants therefore the frequently encountered transcriptions [ʃ], [ʒ] and others based on them are inaccurate. This is also obvious from the dialectal material collected in CDTD. [ʃ] and

seldom been used, whereas < ñ > is completely absent from previous transliterations. In order to keep in with the established conventions the following combination can be proposed:

ཅ < č >    ས < čh >    ཇ < j >    ཉ < ñ >    འ < z >    ཡ < ś >

ཉ, འ, and ཡ are transliterated as in the majority of previous transliteration systems, whereas ཅ, ས, and ཇ acquire Latin equivalents that allow to relate them more easily to another series of affricates, namely č, čh, and j (see below). I deem this transliteration a temporary solution until a Unicode character for < j > with the acute accent has been developed (which, however, may never happen...).

č — čh — j

Old Tibetan had two sets of affricates: alveolo-palatal and alveolar. Because letters of all alveolo-palatals are transliterated either with an acute accent or with a caron, it follows that the letters representing alveolar affricates can be transliterated by the same Latin letters minus the diacritics. Therefore, the transliteration of all the affricates would be:

ཅ < č >    ས < čh >    ཇ < j >    ཅ < c >    ས < ch >    ཇ < j ><sup>19</sup>

Compare hereto the sibilant sets:

འ < z >    ~ ཟ < z >

and

ཡ < ś >    ~ ལ < s ><sup>20</sup>

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[3] attested in WAT and SMu are areal features and resulted from direct and long-standing contact with languages like Urdu or Hindi that don't have alveolo-palatals but only palatalo-alveolars (cf. Bialek Forthcoming a).

<sup>19</sup> If caron is used for transliterating the 'alveolo-palatal letters', then one can adopt the common < j > (U+006A) for ཇ.

<sup>20</sup> Alternatively, one could propose the following transliterations: ཅ < tś >, ས < tśh >, ཇ < dž >, ཅ < ts >, ས < tśh >, ཇ < dz >. It has two advantages over the first option: its letters are coded in Unicode (i.e. there is no need to add special diacritics) and, depending on one's linguistic background, it may be more intuitively pronounced without confusion. Its disadvantage is that it uses up to three letters (< tśh >, < tś >). More importantly, letters ཅ, ས, and ཇ have virtually never been transliterated with < tś >, < tśh >, and < dž > or similar, whereas for the transliteration of č, čh, and j with < c/č >, < ch/čh >, and < j/j > there is a precedence case in the 'old French tradition' and Hahn (1971). The only author known to me who used ཅ < tś >, ས < tśh >, ཇ < dž >, is Richter (see Appendix). Likewise, Beyer used the latter letter combination (1993: 66) but his system cannot be considered a

ꠄ

The greatest bone of contention among Tibetologists has been the transliteration of the letter ꠄ. Most frequently one decided either for < h > with a diacritic or for various forms of 'apostrophe'. Nathan Hill convincingly reconstructed the phonetic value represented by the letter as voiced velar fricative [ɣ] (2009).<sup>21</sup> This reconstruction makes the use of the letter < h > for transliterating ꠄ problematic, because < h > is unanimously associated with voiceless sounds in various orthographies. Thus, < h >, < h̃ >, < h̄ >, < h̅ >, < h̆ >, < ḣ >, < ḧ >, < h̉ >, or < h̊ >, if used at all in linguistic contexts, always mark a voiceless sound.<sup>22</sup> Chinese scholars since Yu Daoquan (于道泉) use the letter < v > for transliterating ꠄ. This convention was also adapted by Kolmaš in his cataloguing work (<http://katalog.orient.cas.cz/tibet/tibet.htm>; Michael Balk, p.c. 24.10.2019 & 03.11.2019). The only motivation for choosing < v > seems to have been the fact that < v > was otherwise not assigned to any Tibetan letter. Theoretically, one could have chosen < f > or < x > or < q > instead. The choice of < v > has no phonetic rationale but, as mentioned before, a transliteration system does not need to account for phonetics. The assignment of < v > to ꠄ has however unpleasant consequences for didactics; students learn that ꠄ was originally devised for a voiced velar fricative [ɣ] (realised as such even today in some dialects, cf. Hill 2009: 117ff.), but for unknown reasons it is represented in the transliteration as < v > which usually stands for bilabial or labiodental fricatives [ɸ], [ɸ], [ɸ]. There is not the least concurrence between the Tibetan letter and its Latin representation. Apart from the < h >-letters, 'apostrophes', and < v > no other Latin character has ever been proposed for ꠄ. I put forward three options for a new transliteration of ꠄ, discussing pros and cons for each:

1. < ɣ > (U+0263) is Latin letter gamma based originally on the Greek gamma < γ > (U+03B3) and used in the IPA to represent voiced velar fricative [ɣ].<sup>23</sup> I started using this transliteration in

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transliteration.

<sup>21</sup> This reconstruction is confirmed in my forthcoming study (cf. Bialek Forthcoming a).

<sup>22</sup> The use of < h̄ > may also lead to confusion when Tibetan transliterations/transcriptions of originally Sanskrit words are being transliterated.

<sup>23</sup> The letter < ɣ > is used in various orthographies (most commonly of African languages) to represent [ɣ].

my publications some time ago. In a private communication (email 26.10.2019), Nathan Hill remarked that one should avoid using the same symbols in transliteration and transcription. I agree with this argument, in general, although one notices that the transliteration of the majority of Tibetan letters is done by means of characters that are likewise used in transcription, cf. ཀ < k > [k], ད < d > [d], or མ < m > [m], etc.

2. < ġ > (U+0121) or < ĝ > (U+011F). In an ongoing study I have reconstructed the origins of the Tibetan letter ར as going back to an Indian g with the same diacritic as the one used to disambiguate alveolar affricates from alveolo-palatal ones: ར̣.<sup>24</sup> The two reconstructions (of the phonetic value [ɣ] and of the shape based on an Indian letter g) would speak for the transliteration of ར with a < g > letter + a diacritic. The overdot in the transliteration would relate < ġ > to another velar: ས < ñ >. In writing systems of the world, < ġ > is preponderantly used to transliterate letters that represent voiced sounds. With this proposal the overdot would be associated in the transliteration of the Tibetan script with the quality of 'velarity': ར < ġ >, ས < ñ ><sup>25</sup>. However, the unpleasant consequence of the use of a transliteration based on the letter < g > would be forms like ġgaġ or ĝgaĝ for རགའ. Any combination ར + ཀ (and these are many) would yield the 'g-cluster' ġg-/ĝg- in onset. This is aesthetically not a good solution and might be difficult for students to handle.
3. < h > with a diacritic might be a compromise if one does not want to use < ɣ > due to its application in the IPA. As I said, it is not an optimal solution because any letter < h > is commonly associated with voiceless sounds and ར represented a voiced sound. On the other hand, both letters are associated with fricative values. Because < ḥ > is used to transliterate Sanskrit *visarga*, a distinct diacritic should be used for ར in order to avoid

<sup>24</sup> In Bialek (Forthcoming a) I provide paleographical evidence from Indian inscriptions and early Tibetan writings which supports the hypothesis that was formulated for the first time by Francke (1912: 270). The relics of the original shape of ར can be encountered in OT texts in which ར is added a small hook on the top.

<sup>25</sup> The association of the overdot with the velar quality would necessitate the question about the use of < j > for ས. To preserve the coherence of the system it would be advisable to use < j > (U+0237) instead. On the other hand, < j > would be a more user-friendly option.

confusion when transliterating Tibetan transliterations/transcriptions of Indian words. In previously proposed transliterations two other diacritics occurred: a macron below < ħ > (U+1E96) and a breve < ħ > (U+1E2B). One can remark however that the choice of < h > with whatever diacritic would result in clusters with two *h*'s that might be difficult to handle by students: *ħkh-*, *ħčh-*, *ħth-*, *ħph-*, and *ħch-*.

None of the suggested transliterations seems flawless. The transliterations with < g > and < h > could cause problems in processing of certain clusters for students learning written Tibetan. I may only express my wish that new considerations or arguments will be put forward in favour of one of the characters in later studies.

### ཧ

The letter < h > is used for transliterating the 29th letter of the Tibetan alphabet and as an additional grapheme of letters that represented aspirated sounds. The sound value represented by the letter ཧ has been reconstructed as voiceless glottal fricative [h] (Hill 2010) and so its transliteration as < h > is likewise appropriate for the quality of aspiration.

### ཨ

The final controversial issue concerns the last letter of the Tibetan alphabet: ཨ. Previous transliteration systems were usually unanimous in ignoring it. That is, they treated the letter as non-existent and transliterated only the vowel value associated with it, e.g. ཨ *a*, ཨི *i* etc.<sup>26</sup> The phonetic value associated originally with the letter could not yet be conclusively reconstructed; the letter might have been a mere place holder for marking a vocalic onset or represented glottal stop [ʔ]. In a recent publication Nathan Hill proposed transliterating ཨ with < q > (Hill 2019: 6). It is a good practice to transliterate every letter of a writing system with a letter of the Latin alphabet. Whatever its original phonetic value might have been, we cannot deny that the letter ཨ does exist in the Tibetan alphabet and seems to have been there from the very beginning. If one strives not to introduce non-Latin letters into a transliteration and to keep the system distinct

<sup>26</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the issue, see Balk 2005: 2-3.



from a transcription (e.g., < ? >) then < q > seems to be the least irritating choice. The comparison with other writing systems shows that the letter is usually associated with voiceless uvular or velar stops (although voiced equivalents are also represented; cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Q#Use\\_in\\_writing\\_systems](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Q#Use_in_writing_systems); accessed 29.10. 2019). Accordingly, I propose accepting Hill's transliteration of ལ as < q >.

**Additional letters.** For transliterating 'reversed' letters ར̣ < ṭ >, ལ̣ < tḥ >, ལ̣ < ḍ >, ལ̣ < dḥ >, ལ̣ < ṇ̇ >, and ལ̣ < ṣ̣ > the underdot is used. The diacritic then represents the quality of 'reflexivity' and the transliteration makes such words resemble their Sanskrit origins more faithfully. Capital letters, suggested instead by Imaeda (2011: 42), unnecessarily blur the picture; a danger of misinterpretation might occur when proper names are capitalised as well. In Old Tibetan another form of the vowel sign for [i] was used: ལ̣̣. As I argue in Bialek (Forthcoming a), this sign originally represented the lengthened [i:] and therefore I suggest to transliterate it as < ī > (by analogy with the use of the macron in transliterations of Indian alphabets).

In conclusion, the proposed transliteration exclusively uses Latin letters, consistently adding the following markers to represent particular qualities:

- < h > for aspiration: < kh >, < čh >, < th >, < ph >, < ch >;
- acute accent < ˊ > (U+0301), caron < ˇ > (U+02C7), and tilde < ˜ > (U+0303) for palatalisation: < č/ć >, < čh/čh >, < ĵ/ĵ >, < ñ >, < ź >, < ś >;<sup>27</sup>
- overdot < ˙ > (U+0307) for velarity: < ṅ >;
- underdot < ̣ > (U+0323) for retroflexity: < ṭ >, < tḥ >, < ḍ >, < dḥ >, < ṇ̇ >, < ṣ̣ >;
- macron < ˉ > (U+0304) for vowel length: < ī >;
- (for the lack of a better solution) macron below < ˘ > (U+0331) or breve below < ̆ > (U+1E2B) for the velar fricative ʁ.

These are of course traits of phonetics which do not need to be considered in a transliteration system. However, I think it is important to use diacritics that are not usually associated with other qualities. I

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<sup>27</sup> With the introduction of the precomposed character < j > in Unicode the caron and the tilde could be replaced by the acute accent.

also mentioned the possibility of using double and triple letters for affricates (< ts >, < dz > etc.). This would add more transparency for historical linguists, as the relations between, e.g., < ts > [tʂ] and < ś > [ɕ] or < dz > [dʂ] and < ź > [ʐ] would be straightforwardly marked in the transliteration. But this is a function of a transcription and therefore I decided against this option as it violates the rule 'one letter for one letter'.

If we aspire to call something a 'system' then it has to be internally coherent and logically structured. I dare to state that the above transliteration fulfils these criteria. Moreover, it is based on the first principle in devising transliteration systems: one letter for one letter. The exception is made only for Tibetan letters that represented aspirated sounds. The remaining letters are expressed by simple symbols or a symbol plus a diacritic.

### Punctuation marks

Tibetan script makes use of three basic punctuation marks: ཚེག་ < ' >, ལྟ་ < | >, ཡིག་མགོ་ < ། > (sometimes also called དབྱ་ or དབྱ་ལྷུང་) and manifold combinations thereof. There exist almost unlimited ornamental variants of the basic signs but they have little or no relevance to the text discourse and therefore can be omitted from the discussion.

Because each sign of the original script should have its representation in the transliteration, a consensus has been reached to transliterate < ' > with a space (U+0020) and < | > with a slash < / > (U+002F).<sup>28</sup> In Bialek (Forthcoming a) I propose transliterating ཡིག་མགོ་ as section sign < § > (U+00A7). I argue that the ཡིག་མགོ་ and the section

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<sup>28</sup> Beckwith, Walter (e.g., in 2010 & 2015), and Zeisler (e.g., in 2011) have been using the inconsistent transliteration of a ཚེག་ once as a space, once as Ø, joining the neighbouring syllables into 'one word'. This method was also followed, although not consequently and using the Wylie 'transliteration', by Tournadre in (2010). I agree with Jacques (2012: 93–4) that, apart from producing strings of letters difficult to disambiguate, this approach fuses transliteration with transcription and should not be followed in a pure transliteration system. Due to the unsettled character of the Old Tibetan orthography, diplomatic transliteration of an Old Tibetan text may sometimes deviate from the one used here. If necessary, one can use the following signs: ཚེག་ = interpunct < · > (U+00B7), 'double ཚེག་' = colon < : > (U+003A), lack of ཚེག་ = space (U+0020). Richter suggested an interpunct as an alternative transliteration of a ཚེག་ (1964b: 177), which is also an option worth considering for Classical Tibetan texts.

sign have parallel functions in the writing systems of Tibetan and Latin: i.e. they introduce a new section of a text (or at least this seems to have been the original function of ཡིག་མཐོག་ in OT).<sup>29</sup>

### Conclusions

The transliteration system proposed in the paper should not be understood as an ultimate solution. Rather it is intended as an invitation to a discussion in which other alternatives can be introduced and considered. It is conceivable that more than one Romanisation system for dealing with written Tibetan is actually necessary. Depending on the purpose of the Romanisation and the target group one can think of three independent systems:

- Professional transliteration for textual and text-linguistic studies (like the one proposed here);
- Less rigorous and devoid of diacritics system for non-textual studies, catalogues, and (web) search engines similar to ‘Wylie’ but adding handleable transliterations for འ and ཨ. As an example, the ABEC system developed for the online Old Tibetan Dictionary can be quoted.
- IPA-based transcription for linguistic studies and historical reconstructions.

The paper presents tentative proposals and is certainly not comprehensive in terms of the problems discussed.<sup>30</sup> However, I deem it important that a few basic rules are observed when devising a new transliteration system for textual and text-linguistic studies:

- Use of one letter for one letter (plus diacritics);<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> As kindly remarked by Nicola Bajetta (session on Academia; November 2019), the section sign < § > was used by Orofino to transliterate *sbrul śad* (Orofino 2007: 99).

<sup>30</sup> I think it is necessary to first agree on the basic elements of the system before we extend it with the purpose of including elements that are used only, e.g., in Tibetan transcriptions/transliterations of other writing systems or in intricate ‘clippings’ like ཨྲྀ.

<sup>31</sup> An exception can be made for Tibetan letters that represent aspirated sounds. The use of an apostrophe instead (e.g., འཇམ་ གཙམ་) would blur the transliteration, making single letters indistinguishable from each other, and so unnecessarily

- Use of Latin letters;
- Coherence;
- Consistency;
- Avoidance of misleading symbols.<sup>32</sup>

The advantage of living in digital times is that we have unlimited access to data on all documented languages and orthographies of the world. We can make use of the data in devising a tool that will meet scholarly standards of a transliteration system and be used by a wider community than the previous scholarly transliterations could reach.

### Abbreviations

CDTD	Bielmeier et al. (see References)
CT	Classical Tibetan
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
OT	Old Tibetan
SMu	Southern Mustang
U	Unicode
WAT	Western Archaic Tibetan
WTS	Franke et al. 2005– (see References)

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complicate the reading for students.

<sup>32</sup> A slightly different set of criteria was proposed by Richter: "1. Jedem tibetischen Schriftzeichen (Buchstaben) soll nach Möglichkeit nur ein Transliterationszeichen entsprechen; 2. Die Transliterationszeichen müssen: a. möglichst genau, b. gut unterscheidbar, c. einprägsam und d. ohne Druckschwierigkeiten wiederzugeben sein." (1964b: 172f.).

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### Appendix

The table presents a selection of transliterations used in publications on Tibetan languages. The shadowed rows of the table mark the transliterations on which there is little or no agreement among scholars.

	Bacot 1946-8: 9	Wylie 1959:267 <sup>33</sup>	Richter 1964a: 7	Hahn 1971: 1	Beckwith 1993: xiii	Hahn 1996: 1 <sup>34</sup>	Zeisler 2004: 223	Jacques 2012:90 <sup>35</sup>	Bialek 2018b	Hill 2019: 6
ཀ	k	k	k	k	k	k	k	k	k	k
ཁ	kh	kh	kh	kh	kh	kh	kh	k <sup>h</sup>	kh	kh
ག	g	g	g	g	g	g	g	g	g	g
ང	ñ	ng	ñ	ñ	ñ	ñ	ñ <sup>36</sup>	ŋ	ñ	ñ
ཅ	č	c	tš	c	c	c	c	te	c	č
ཆ	čh	ch	tšh	ch	ch	ch	ch	te <sup>h</sup>	ch	čh
ཇ	j	j	dž	j	j	j	j	ɟe	j	j
ཉ	ñ	ny	ñ	ñ	ñ	ñ	ñ	ɲ	ñ	ñ
ཏ	t	t	t	t	t	t	t	t	t	t
ཐ	th	th	th	th	th	th	th	t <sup>h</sup>	th	th
ད	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d
ན	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
པ	p	p	p	p	p	p	p	p	p	p
ཕ	ph	ph	ph	ph	ph	ph	ph	p <sup>h</sup>	ph	ph
བ	b	b	b	b	b	b	b	b	b	b
མ	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
ཚ	c	ts	ts	ć	ts	ts	ts	ts	ts	ts
ཛ	ch	tsh	tsh	čh	tsh	tsh	tsh	ts <sup>h</sup>	tsh	tsh
ཞ	j	dz	dz	j	dz	dz	dz	ɟe	dz	dz
ཟ	v	w	w	w	w	v (w)	w	w/ɦ <sup>w</sup>	w	w
འ	ž	zh	ž	ž	ž	ž	ž	z	ž	ž
ཨ	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z
ཨ	,	,	,	ḥ	,	,	ḥ	ɦ/ <sup>n</sup>	ɣ	ḥ
ཨ	y	y	j	y	y	y	y	j/j	y	y <sup>37</sup>
ཨ	r	r	r	r	r	r	r	r	r	r
ཨ	l	l	l	l	l	l	l	l	l	l
ཨ	ś	sh	š	ś	ś	ś	š	e	ś	ś
ཨ	s	s	s	s	s	s	s	s	s	s
ཨ	h	h	h	h	h	h	h	h	h	h
ཨ	∅	∅	∅	∅	,	∅	∅	?	∅	q



<sup>33</sup> The 'Wylie transliteration system', apart from not being a transliteration, has in fact been entirely borrowed from Nebesky-Wojkowitz (Wylie 1959: 267). Also, recent language-oriented publications like Tournadre and Dorje (1998: 32), Schwieger (2006: 21f.), and Sommerschuh (2008: 5) use this 'transliteration'.

<sup>34</sup> In the fifth edition of his textbook (1995) Hahn first changed the transliteration. The change concerned the transliteration of the alveolar affricate series and the letter ཅ. The new transliteration has been followed in WTS (see fasc. 1, p. xx), CDTD, and Bialek (2018a: 52).

<sup>35</sup> The system proposed by Jacques is basically a transcription and as such cannot be compared with the remaining systems, but the author himself calls it "transliteration" (ibid., pp. 90, 93 (twice), 95). Similarly, the system used in Beyer (1993) is a mixture of transliteration and transcription and for this reason has been omitted from the table.


<sup>36</sup> In more recent publications Zeisler replaced *ñ* with *ŋ*; so, e.g., in Zeisler (2011).

<sup>37</sup> In Hill (2019: 6, Fig. 1.1) there is a typographical error: ཨ is transliterated as < j >, although in the book < y > is used.



# With the power of their forefathers: Kinship between early Tibetan ritualists and the Naxi dongba of southwest China<sup>1</sup>

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here is a well-documented history of translation between India, Tibet and China beginning in the seventh century and continuing for almost a millennium. The transmission of the Buddhist canon that took place during this time has been perceived as one of the world's greatest cultural exchanges.<sup>2</sup> But what about the transmission of the non-Buddhist Tibetan canon (if indeed it can be called a canon), that is, the ritual tradition from early Tibet that has been classified by some as "Bon"? In the mid-twentieth century it was suggested that the explication of the still-extant religious literature of a small tribe in southwest China, the Naxi, would lead to a fuller understanding of the Tibetan Bon tradition. But there has still been little comparative study between these two lineages. Analysis of the Dunhuang manuscripts, in particular the textual references to the archetypal ritualist, gShen-rab myi-bo, reveals a common through line from old Tibet, to Bon tradition, to Naxi ritual manuscripts, which feature prominently a chief ritualist known as Do-bbaq sheel-lo.<sup>3</sup> I suggest that the Naxi manuscripts show an inheritance from early Tibet – perhaps before the formation of an organized "Bon" religion. In this essay I posit that the existence of an archetypal ritualist in the Naxi canon is a continuation of a narrative theme (that of the well-versed ritual practitioner), and indeed possibly of specific ritual personages themselves, from the old Tibetan manuscripts, filtered through the

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<sup>1</sup> This work has been supported by a British Academy Stein-Arnold Exploration Fund Grant (SA1819\190000).

<sup>2</sup> Peter Skilling attributes this greatness to the creation of a "new" religious language, and the transfer of a "vast body of knowledge...not only in letter but in spirit". Skilling 2009: 23.

<sup>3</sup> In this essay I use Naxi pinyin (a romanization system formulated by Chinese state-sponsored linguists in the 1950s) to write Naxi words, alongside the logographic dongba script for certain words where appropriate. Wylie transliteration is used for Tibetan words.

lens of cultural translation, across the borders from the Tibetan empire into southwest China.

Perhaps the most famous scholar of the Naxi, Joseph Rock,<sup>4</sup> was keen to prove the links between the Naxi religious literature (of which the extant historical manuscripts mostly date to the late Qing dynasty in China, and at the earliest the Ming dynasty)<sup>5</sup> and that of the Bon. He indicated that the Naxi texts were required for a complete understanding of Bon literature: "I contend that the translation of the entire Naxi literature...will be indispensable to the proper comprehension of Bon literature, for I believe that the Naxi religious literature is in its greater part pure Bon".<sup>6</sup>

The famous Bon text, the *Klu 'bum* (which Henk Blezer suggests can perhaps be dated to the beginning of the tenth century),<sup>7</sup> has many textual analogues in the Naxi tradition. Rock identified areas of similarity between Naxi ritual practice and the rites detailed in the *Klu 'bum*, but he did so in broad strokes and without detailed explanations. He noted that the Naxi *svq kv* ceremony is, for the most part, derived from Bon tradition.<sup>8</sup> First, the *svq kv* is marked by the invitation of the Naxi *svq*

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<sup>4</sup> Rock, known as the "father" of Naxiology, is a central figure in the Naxiological tradition. He gave us the first comprehensive English translations of the "dongba" texts (dongba is the Hanyu pinyin transcription of the Chinese word for the native Naxi ritualists, 东巴, who are known in Naxi as *dobbaq*. Despite being exonymic, "dongba" is now the standard term), as well as a Naxi dictionary (Rock 1963 and 1972) that has yet to be surpassed in terms of scope. During his lifetime he completed over 400 translations, although few were published in full. Rock's works remain the best way to access the Naxi ritual literature (at least in English). Perhaps it was the British anthropologist Anthony Jackson who best summed up this achievement: "No one understood just what these manuscripts were or how they were to be read until Rock commenced his systematic investigations" Jackson 1966: 147.

<sup>5</sup> "Only a few Naxi books can be firmly dated with textual evidence. These dates are mostly in the nineteenth century, when there was a surge in manuscript production. The earliest date on a manuscript about which scholars can agree is 1703." Mueggler 2011: 91.

<sup>6</sup> Rock 1952: 15.

<sup>7</sup> See Blezer 2012: 2.

<sup>8</sup> Rock was initially confused as to why the Naxi called their Naga spirits "*svq*" when, to him, they were clearly an analogue to the Tibetan *klu*. In his 1952 work, *The Naxi Na-khi Naga Cult*, he recounted a discovery: In Professor Tucci's book, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, a class of demons known as *Se* or *bSe* is mentioned, of which nearly all are Nagas. This led him to the conclusion that the Naxi *Svq* were in fact the Tibetan spirits known as "*Se*": "There is now no doubt that the Tibetan *Se* and the Na-khi *Ssu* are identical" (Rock 1952: 11). In fact, Rock believed that the Tibetan *Se* was the older name for the *kLu*, to which he ascribed a Buddhist origin: "I would therefore consider *Se* and *Ssu* the much older names for Naga then [sic.]

serpent spirits (Naxi dongba script: 𑄎) to the ceremony, which is followed by the offerings of grain, and then a rite in which all the gods and spirits are invited. This is followed by the *rherq zhail*, during which the dongba ritualists beseech the gods to invest them with their power, then the burning of juniper twigs as offerings, followed by the lighting of the lamps, and finally the portion of the ceremony where the gods fight and suppress their individual enemies. Rock states that the elements of the *svq kv* ceremony described above “nearly all” have their counterparts in the Bon text, the *Klu 'bum*, as translated by Anton Schiefner.<sup>9</sup> But it must be noted that the *Klu 'bum* is a rediscovered Bon text, and as such offers no concrete evidence that the Naxi rites emerged from an older, pre-Buddhist milieu. Nevertheless, Rolf Stein said that the funerary rites in the *Klu 'bum* and those from the Naxi ritual corpus are “analogous”, a repetition of Rock’s earlier assertion: “I have myself tried to show that the archaic accounts with a funerary theme have the same structure and the same contents as the analogous rites from the *Klu 'bum* and from the Na khi (Naxi, Mosso) accounts.”<sup>10</sup> Further, Stein believed the ritual elements of Naxi religious rites to be a “textual borrowing”, and he attributed the cosmogony to introduction of Bon rites among the Mosso in the Mongolian era, which he suggested was the period in which Naxi religious texts were “invented”.<sup>11</sup>

While Stein never engaged with the primary sources of the Naxi ritual texts (instead relying on Rock’s studies), his enquiries, in his own words, “notably demonstrate to us the possibility, and even the necessity, of simultaneously utilizing many corpuses despite their chronological variation (Dunhuang manuscripts, relatively modern texts) and despite their membership to very different milieus (lamaist, bonpo, and Mosso)”.<sup>12</sup> It is my goal here to continue this line of work, of comparing two corpuses (Dunhuang manuscripts and Naxi manuscripts) despite their marked difference in historical period.

Much historical and philological work has been done on early Tibetan manuscripts in recent years,<sup>13</sup> but there has been no serious comparative study between the early Tibetan sources and the Naxi

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kLu, dating back to the ancient black Bon, and kLu of more recent Buddhistic origin, it may even have been derived from the Chinese word lung = dragon” (*Ibid.*).

<sup>9</sup> See Rock 1952: 15.

<sup>10</sup> Stein 2010: 245.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*: 292-293.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*: 328. Here “Mosso” means Naxi, and is the old Romanized exonym for the tribe based on the Chinese “Mosuo 摩梭”.

<sup>13</sup> See for example van Schaik 2014 and Dotson and Helman-Ważny 2016.

literature. It is precisely the “textual borrowing” of ritual elements as noted by Stein that I wish to explore: to ask how 21<sup>st</sup> century Naxi ritual texts (themselves belonging to manuscript traditions that can be dated back to the Ming dynasty) might relate to Dunhuang manuscripts from the old Tibetan period. Stein sees the through-line from Dunhuang manuscripts to the rediscovered Bon texts (*Klu 'bum*) and from those texts to the Naxi manuscripts of Rock's era. I believe we can trace connections between the Dunhuang manuscripts and the Naxi ritual texts more directly. Prior to the textual borrowing from organized Bon texts to the Naxi literature, we can see evidence of repeated narremes found in both the Dunhuang manuscripts and the later Naxi corpus; indeed, some of the more fundamental ritual elements of the Naxi literature can be said to have origins that date back to before the Tibetan *phyi dar* period.

Rock may have perceived the borrowing process as a simple transfer of “like equals like” (he writes of “the discovery of a Na-khi literature of purely Bon origin”).<sup>14</sup> But the transmission of early Tibetan ritual tradition into Naxi lands should be understood as very much a nuanced process of cultural translation.<sup>15</sup> Here I use the term cultural translation not to define a translation of one particular text from one language into another, but as an overarching term to describe the movement of ideas (potentially alongside written texts, but not necessarily) across cultural and linguistic borders. It is important to problematize cultural translations in the same way as interlinguistic textual translations, because the movement of an idea between nations and languages frequently necessitates some form of change; change that is enacted at both the linguistic and semantic level.

If these are ideas that moved from Tibet into Yunnan, and in doing so underwent some form of alteration, can we really call the rituals preserved in the Naxi literature “Bon”? What a comparative analysis will hopefully reveal is that the Naxi manuscripts preserve centuries old religious rituals that include elements from Bon literature as well as narremes similar to those found in the early Dunhuang texts. It is certainly true that Rock's assertions of the connection between Naxi

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<sup>14</sup> Rock 1952: 1.

<sup>15</sup> The term can be said to have emerged in the field of social anthropology with Edward Evans-Pritchard, who described the process of interpreting one culture to another as “cultural translation”. My own approach is to combine linguistic translation with the anthropological theory of cultural diffusion, where one culture's ideas are borrowed, translated into the target culture language, and subsequently developed in a new cultural milieu. See Kroeber 1940.

manuscripts and Bon are somewhat contradictory. He has been criticized for claiming the Naxi rites as being a “pure” form of Bon: “First of all, Rock may have failed to fully appreciate the localized characteristics of religious practices in Tibet and its surrounding regions”.<sup>16</sup> But he also recognized that Naxi literature was a combination of many different traditions, from non-Buddhist Tibetan religion to Tibetan Buddhism and Chinese Taoism:

Na’khi religious literature is very diverse, and thereby proves that it originated at different times and in different places. It is a composite religious edifice whose foundation rests primarily on primitive nature-worship (*vide* Muan-bpö), and on the ancient pre-Buddhistic national religion of Tibet, known as the Bön, of which it is in fact not only a part but a part which has survived among the Na-khi in a purer form than can now be found in Tibet proper. Na-khi religious literature has been influenced by Burmese Nat worship, Chinese Taoism, and finally Tibetan Buddhism, its core is however Bön with an admixture of tribal shamanism.<sup>17</sup>

Indeed, Rock, based on his reading of early twentieth-century Tibetological studies, divided Bon into two distinct varieties, “primitive Bon” and a “degenerate present type which is a mixture of Bon and Buddhism”,<sup>18</sup> a view that has been nuanced in modern scholarship, with the questioning of the existence of an old Bon religion: van Schaik states “in truth the ‘old religion’ [Bon] was a new religion, an inspired conjunction of Tibet’s pre-Buddhist myths and rituals with the teachings of Buddhism”.<sup>19</sup>

While the Tibetologist Michael Aris has described Rock’s efforts to connect Naxi ritual practices and the Bon religion as “muddled and unproven”,<sup>20</sup> I believe, starting with the publication of *Rock’s Na-khi Naga Cult* in 1952, and continuing with Rolf Stein’s investigations and the more modern (and methodologically distinct) ethnographic Chinese tradition of minority studies (*minzuxue* 民族学), there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that the two traditions are closely intertwined. It obviously cannot be said that the Naxi material reflects *in toto* a pre-Buddhist Bon religion, particularly because the organized

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<sup>16</sup> Mather 2016: 509.

<sup>17</sup> Rock 1952: 5.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*: 1.

<sup>19</sup> van Schaik 2011: 100.

<sup>20</sup> Aris 1992: 18.

Bon religion only really began to take shape in the eleventh century alongside the Buddhist revival.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, the Dunhuang manuscripts of the ancient period, dating primarily from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> centuries (a period in which Buddhism had already emerged in Tibet) still predate the emergence of an organized Bon religion. It is in these manuscripts we find descriptions of funerary rites and divination texts, and in many of them appear ritual specialists known as *bonpo* or *gshen*, individuals who are analogous to the *dongba* ritualists of the Naxi people.

Tibetological studies have shown quite convincingly that the textual origins of the legendary founding father of Bon, sTon-pa gshen-rab, can be traced back to a certain ritualist mentioned in the early Tibetan manuscripts: gShen-rab myi-bo (an early orthographic rendering of the name gShen-rab mi-bo-che). This figure went on to become the founding father of the Bonpo faith, and many origin stories were later compiled to further embellish his mythology. The name "Bon" was likely coined (perhaps sometime in the early *phyi dar* period) in reference to the Bon and gShen ritualists that are mentioned in texts from the imperial period. One of these *gshen* was gShen-rab myi-bo, but in the early manuscripts he is just one among a number of ritualists mentioned. He is often referred to as a "father" (*pha*), and thus may be considered senior to the other ritualists who work together with him. This may be the reason he was elevated to the founder of the Bonpo religion, while the other figures are largely forgotten. Even so, the ritualists as presented in the Dunhuang sources are somewhat homogeneous: "in most Dunhuang sources the distinction between them already appears opaque or confused".<sup>22</sup>

The Dunhuang accounts of the Myi-bo figure seem to suggest a collective identity, while the later *phyi dar* narratives paint the picture of a great hero who is the founder of a unique cultural and religious identity labelled as "Bon". It seems to me that if anything Rock was simply guilty of ascribing to the non-Buddhist Tibetan ritual practices the word "Bon" – whether or not Bon was a later invention, the kinship between old Tibetan rituals, whatever we may call them, and the Naxi rites is observable. Showing this kinship in its entirety would be an undertaking beyond the scope of a single essay, but I choose here to highlight a particular narrative that is consistent between these two corpora: that of the prototypical ritualist.

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<sup>21</sup> van Schaik 2011: 90.

<sup>22</sup> Blezer 2008: 433.

### Early Tibetan sources

We learn of gShen-rab myi-bo from early Tibetan language sources: the Dunhuang and Gathang (*dGa'-thang 'bum-pa*) manuscripts. But in these fragments, he is not the great teacher of the later Eternal Bon literature. He has not ascended to Buddhahood. Instead, he is a priest; a competent priest, to be sure, and one who wields spiritual power, but he is nevertheless one of a number of ritualists who perform sacrificial rites to protect the living and propitiate the dead.

In the Gathang manuscripts described by Samten Karmay, within a narrative that is concerned with a conflict between mankind and the *klu* (an analogue to the Naxi *Svq*) aquatic spirits, a priest who can be identified as gShen-rab myi-bo speaks, and affirms his ritual expertise: “gshen rab responded: ‘I am a man who knows how to do the *gto* rituals and diagnosis. and who knows how to perform the divination and ransom rituals’”.<sup>23</sup> Here we have a clearly proficient ritualist, but he is still presented as (just) a man, working in tandem with others, in Bellezza's words, a “prototypic ritualist”: “In the archaic ritual texts, gShen-rab myi-bo serves as a cultural icon, a laudable and highly influential personality of considerable antiquity, the memory of which must have been passed down to succeeding generations as an oral tradition. In his guise as a prototypic ritualist, gShen-rab myi-bo does not often act unilaterally and it conveys no assertion of omniscience. Rather, he is one of several priests working cooperatively with the support of special deities”.<sup>24</sup>

In the Dunhuang manuscripts, gShen-rab myi-bo appears a number of times as a ritualist who assists in funerary and other rites. Only in PT1289 (a funerary text concerning animal sacrifice) is he physically described (holding a bell and a feather): “He held the *gshang* great bell in his left hand. He held the wing *the-ra ther-bu* in his right hand”.<sup>25</sup> Stein, in a translation that differs slightly (i.e. using “plume” instead of “wing”, suggests that this is a typical description of a “tantrist”).<sup>26</sup> After this description is given, Myi-bo goes on to perform funerary

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<sup>23</sup> Karmay 2009: 71.

<sup>24</sup> Bellezza 2010: 33.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*: 85

<sup>26</sup> Stein 2010: 258. The motif of the feather as a ritual implement is also found in the Naxi tradition. There exists an iconic depiction of Do-bbaq sheel-lo with a peacock feather (and a porcupine quill) in one hand, and a sword and sickle in the other. With these implements he will do battle with the demons (see Rock 1952: 77). On the topic of the ritual use of feathers see Siegbert Hummel, who writes of the feather in the hand of the Naxi ritualist as a prop: “So finden sich auch die betreffenden Requisiten, die Vogelkostümierung oder die Vogelfeder in der Hand der tanzenden Dto-mba, der Na-khi-Priester, die den Bon-po und damit in mancher Hinsicht auch den Schamanen entsprechen”. Hummel 1960: 320.

rites. He is often mentioned alongside other ritualists, notably Dur-shen rma-da. For example, in PT1194: “The fathers Gshen-rab myi-bo and Dur-shen rma-da spoke, ‘You, G.yang ngo-rtsa, your son... the compensation (skyin-ba) of your son, the substitute (tshab) for the destroyed one’”,<sup>27</sup> and also PT1068 “The fathers Dur-shen gyi rma-da, gShen-rab myi-bo and gShen-tsha lung-sgra, these three, replied, ‘We gshen have the ritual remedy ... we have the dpyad, we have the means to rehabilitate (sos) the dead, those who are no more’”.<sup>28</sup> In PT1134, gShen-rab myi-bo is again invited, once more alongside Dur-shen rma-da and another ritualist, to perform a funerary ritual.

Different from the picture painted in these sources, of a priest working alongside others, at some point after the 10<sup>th</sup> century, gShen-rab myi-bo took on the mantle of Buddhahood.<sup>29</sup> Elaborate hagiographies detailing his exploits, such as the *mDo 'dus* and *gZer mig*, were compiled. For Bellezza, this reinterpretation was likely a purposeful way of interpreting ancient traditions by placing them within the predominant Buddhist ideological framework. We see specific personages reappearing in different contexts. These “preexisting personalities” (alongside no doubt, some of the rites which they were said to have officiated) were grafted onto the Buddhist religion so that they might “live on in a Tibet where religion and ideology were undergoing radical change”.<sup>30</sup> The culture shifted, and thus we can see cultural translation at work. After all, “living on” is one of the great metaphors for translation. Ultimately, and what a further comparison with the Naxi literature will reveal, is that the belief systems of Tibet and the surrounding regions are not monolithic: “all Tibetan sects ... are more or less syncretistic affairs, born out of an ancient cultural crucible filled with ideas and personalities of Indic origins”.<sup>31</sup>

What we see in the Tibetan tradition, where the gShen-rab myi-bo figure becomes the founder sTon-pa gshen-rab, are story episodes (narremes) and names from early sources reappearing within new narratives that are classified as “Bon”. These may be new stories, but they contain familiar episodes. Even if the stories change, alongside the identities of those that feature in them, the narrative elements may remain the same. Henk Blezer has labelled these “migrating narremes”, the evolution of which can be seen from the Dunhuang manuscripts to

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<sup>27</sup> Bellezza 2013: 216-220.

<sup>28</sup> Bellezza, 2010: 38.

<sup>29</sup> Buddha features prominently in only one Naxi ceremony, namely the *ssee zhul biu* [Ceremony for the prolongation of life]. Rock states that “it is identical with the Tibetan Tshe-gzungs... The ceremony in both instances is performed after a funeral for the prolongation of life of the relatives of the deceased”. Rock 1948a: 27.

<sup>30</sup> Bellezza 2010: 97.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*



Eternal Bon literature: “It is also clear that a smattering of context and various religious, historical, and literary sensibilities remain connected to migrating narremes and determine whether and how they eventually are incorporated into new contexts and master narratives.”<sup>32</sup> But the “migration” may have encompassed a wider geographic area and longer chronological span. When these migrating narremes move into different cultural contexts (specifically the Naxi context) we can identify a specific mode of cultural translation.

The early sources suggest that the Bonpos were able to tap into a wellspring of traditional narrative: “older Tibetan documents or oral traditions, closely corresponding to what has been preserved in Dunhuang, were in fact available to Bonpo authors and also influenced later works”.<sup>33</sup> Just as the Bonpo’s influence spread to the tribes of southwest China, the influence of these older documents and traditions extends beyond Tibet proper, into the foothills of the Himalayas. The references to “gShen-rab” figure in the Dunhuang manuscripts are mere fragments, but they perhaps point to what must have one been a complex fabric of rituals and legends. It does not require a great leap of imagination to suggest that the Naxi literature represents a continuation of this fabric. While the contents of the Naxi literature cannot be considered an unchanged, pure preservation of old Tibetan religious rites, they may still reflect a record of their Tibetan antecedents.

### The Naxi connection

Scholars agree that we can identify a continuous tradition that links Tibetan Bon and Naxi literature, but there is no consensus on exactly when and how these traditions found their way into southwest China. As we have seen above, Stein attributed the presence of Bon traditions among the Naxi to a Mongolian era policy of the Karmapas. British anthropologist Anthony Jackson believed that the *dongba* emerged in the eighteenth century as the inheritors of a systematized Bonpo tradition that was later supplanted by Buddhist monks: “the *dto-mbas* themselves were originally proscribed Bön monks who settled down and prospered after the overthrow of the matrilineages among the Li-chiang Naxhi”.<sup>34</sup> Looking at the primary sources, such as historical records and the Naxi manuscripts, we cannot trace the existence of the *dongba* before the eighteenth century. Jackson suggested that the Naxi manuscripts were developed by Naxi ritualists already familiar with Tibetan book culture. Both Stein and Jackson however discount the

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<sup>32</sup> Blezer 2008: 453

<sup>33</sup> Gurung 2011: 20.

<sup>34</sup> Jackson 1979: 74.

notion that the Naxi dongba inherited a ritual tradition that their ancestors received *directly* from the Bon priests who were driven out of Central Tibet in the eighth century: this is an idea that originated with Joseph Rock, and that Charles Ramble indicates might be validated by the discovery of the le'u corpus, which contains early Bon myths and rituals and reinforces the hypothesis of an eastward diffusion to Yunnan via Sichuan.<sup>35</sup>

But what about the Naxi texts themselves? What clues do they hold? Perhaps the most obvious textual analogue (which may suggest a “direct” borrowing) between the Tibetan Bon and Naxi traditions that can be identified in the literature is that of sTon-pa gshen-rab, known in Naxi as Do-bbaq sheel-lo.<sup>36</sup> The fact that sTon-pa gshen-rab appears in some form in the Naxi literature is clear: Lhakpa Tsering's 2003 PhD dissertation is a comparative study between the two figures, and, although he does not conclude which name is the “original”, he estimates that they are reflections of the same narrative myth. Indeed, Do-bbaq sheel-lo is depicted in illustrations found in Naxi manuscripts as a green Buddha-like figure, seated on a lotus throne.<sup>37</sup>

Rock said that Do-bbaq sheel-lo was “none other than” sTon-pa gshen-rab, but this is reductive: simply looking at the names, we can see various differences in the phonetics: at least *something* has changed. While it is possible that the Naxi *dobbaq* derives directly from Tibetan *ston pa*, there are other possible etymological origins (such as the Tibetan *bon po*), and, at any rate, a *dobbaq* is not directly equivalent to a *ston pa*.<sup>38</sup> In the later hagiographical accounts, sTon-pa gshen-rab is

<sup>35</sup> Charles Ramble made this argument during a presentation entitled *Bönpo and Naxi ritual texts: some more common features*, part of the workshop “Bonpo Manuscript Culture: Towards a Definition of an Emerging Field” held at the University of Hamburg in 2016.

<sup>36</sup> I romanize this name according to the graphs primarily used to represent the figure in the Lijiang manuscripts. He is known colloquially as Di-bbaq sheel-lo in Ludian and Do-bbaq sa-la in Sanba (see Yang 2012: 305).

<sup>37</sup> See Rock 1937: 53.

<sup>38</sup> Mathieu tells us that “In Rock's time, the priests were known as Dongbas, but this name, which is derived from the Tibetan *stonpa*, meaning “teacher”, never occurs in the manuscripts. The manuscripts depict several specialists, among them a male and female pair who are called Bubbu and Pa. Rock transcribed Bubbu as “Bpombo”, and it may well be that “Bubbu” is the Naxi version of “Bonpo” or “a follower” (2015: 373). This is an interesting, if perhaps oversimplified, assertion; certainly the graph *now read* as “dongba” (*dobbaq*) is present in many manuscripts, in fact almost every time the figure Do-bbaq sheel-lo is mentioned, we see the title “dongba” (*dobbaq*) written *and* read. However, it seems that in many other cases, the same graph is read as *biu* or *biu bbiuq*, (Mathieu's Bubbu) which Rock himself states probably derived from Tibetan *bonpo*. It might be asserted that the Naxi *dobbaq* is a corruption of Tibetan *bonpo* by way of “*py biu*”, that *biu bbiuq* (*bonpo*) became *dobbaq* (*stonpa*). Yang Fuquan has discussed the connection between “*dobbaq*” and “*biu bbiuq*” at length (Yang 2012: 298-334).

invited to a foreign land where he resolves a crisis and imparts teachings, then brings home a bride. In Naxi legend, Do-bbaq sheel-lo is invited down to the world of man to suppress demons, and also ends up with a bride as a prize. The stories are similar in terms of the broad narrative thrust, but many of the specific details are different: take, for example, the story of his birth. According to the *mDo 'dus*, gShenrab was born from his mother's right armpit after a ten-month pregnancy.<sup>39</sup> In Dongba myth, Do-bbaq sheel-lo resides in his mother's womb for nine months and thirteen days, and is then born from his mother's left armpit. Here, the movement from right armpit to left armpit represents a purposeful mirroring, but an expected one, for there is a transformative element to any cultural translation. In the movement from one culture to another, the same ideas are adopted, but in translation new elements are added, and other elements may be either lost or adapted. In this way, cultural hybridity is born. This article will focus primarily on previously unnoticed points of kinship between Naxi ritual texts and the Dunhuang manuscripts. Specifically, I believe the existence of the archetypal Naxi ritualist, "El-miq", is evidence of an early textual borrowing.<sup>40</sup>

To tell the story of El-miq, we must start with the story of a cave, high up in the mountains of Sanba township, in the Baidi region of Yunnan in southwest China. The cave, on a mountainside overlooking the Baidi valley, is said to have been home to El-miq, a particularly adept dongba ritualist. It is a Karst cave, with two main apertures, left and right. The right aperture is some 3.2 metres high, with a diameter of around three metres. The left aperture is 4.2 metres high, with a larger entrance, and divided into two levels. It is a holy place that every dongba aspires to visit, and every year many rituals are performed at a ritual altar between the two apertures: "incense has burned at the cave for every generation, never ceasing".<sup>41</sup>

Potentially the earliest written record of the cave appears in the Zhongdian County gazetteer, from China's Republican period; which states that El-miq was a historical figure linked with the cave: "after [Do-bbaq sheel-lo] there is El-miq Yuq-lei, who commands the teachings of Do-bbaq sheel-lo, and achieved sainthood in the Jiashi cave, Beidi [modern-day Baidi], in Sanba. All those who practice the Dongba faith, whether from Lijiang or Zhongdian, must all come to be baptized at this stone cave".<sup>42</sup> Here El-miq is written in Chinese as 尔米玉勒 Er

<sup>39</sup> See chapter 4 of Gurung 2011.

<sup>40</sup> I follow Rock in transcribing the first syllable of this name with the high tone in Naxi, although most Chinese sources use the level tone.

<sup>41</sup> Yang 2008a: 49.

<sup>42</sup> Duan 1997: 135-137.

mi yu le, (i.e. given his full Naxi name, El-miq yuq-lei), and it is revealed that he is second only to Do-bbaq sheel-lo in fame and power, thus making the cave a pilgrimage site of great importance to the Naxi dongba. This tradition of pilgrimage is referred to by the French Tibetologist Jacques Bacot:

Tous les sorciers ou tumbas des vastes pays Mosos doivent, une fois dans leur vie, faire un pèlerinage à Bedjri. On n'y voit pourtant aucun autre sanctuaire que notre petit temple tibétain. Il ne compte pas du reste, Bedjri est saint parce que Tumbashéra, le dieu des Mosos, est venu s'incarner là, quand il descendit sur la terre.<sup>43</sup>

Bacot travelled to Baidi in 1910, and his accurate, if sparse, account of the holy place is in line with Rock's notes. At first, Rock connects the cave with Do-bbaq sheel-lo (and thus, by extension sTon-pa gshen-rab) himself: "There Dto-mba Shi-lo, founder of the Na-khi religion (Shamanism), was said to have lived, and from there he taught the people and spread his creed. Dto-mba Shi-lo is none other than sTon-pa gShen-rabs (pronounced Tön-pa Shen-rab), founder of the ancient pre-Buddhist Bön religion of Tibet, often also spoken of as Tön-pa Shen-rab-mi-bo ལྷན་པ་གཤེན་རབ་མེ་པོ་ (sic.)".<sup>44</sup> Later, Rock would nuance this position, suggesting that the cave was home to an "incarnation" of gShen-rab, and that this figure's son was in fact the founder of the Naxi dongba faith:

It is possible that later the Na-khi looked upon one of their 2dto-1mbas, especially the one who dwelt in the cave <sup>3</sup>Shi-<sup>2</sup>lo <sup>2</sup>ne-<sup>2</sup>k'o (see Plate 51) in <sup>2</sup>Bbër-<sup>2</sup>ddër (Pei-ti 北地) as an incarnation of the real founder of Bön gShen-rabs-mi-bo, and that his son became the founder or co-founder of the <sup>1</sup>Na-<sup>2</sup>khi shamanism. <sup>3</sup>Shi-<sup>2</sup>lo <sup>2</sup>ne-<sup>2</sup>k'o is a famous place of pilgrimage for every <sup>2</sup>dto-<sup>1</sup>mba, for they believe that gShen-rab-mi-bo lived there. I visited the cave in company with one of my former <sup>2</sup>dto-<sup>1</sup>mba teachers in 1930.<sup>45</sup>

Do-bbaq sheel-lo is, then, associated with the locale of Baidi, and specifically its sacred cave. Bacot does *not* mention the cave, but he does state that "Tumbashera" (Do-bbaq sheel-lo) was incarnated in Baidi. Without explicitly naming him, Rock seems to move toward the position that the incarnation was El-miq, and that El-miq is a historical founder of the dongba tradition, as opposed to a mythological one.

<sup>43</sup> Bacot 1912: 310.

<sup>44</sup> Rock 1948b: 267.

<sup>45</sup> Rock 1952: 369.

It is clear that El-miq and Do-bbaq sheel-lo are confused in these accounts, but this confusion is by no means exclusive to foreign explorers of the previous century; it exists in the work of contemporary local writers also. Sha Li, a prolific Naxi author of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, mentions the cave in an article reminiscing about Joseph Rock and his exploits in Lijiang:

有一次，洛克跟和诚等一行去朝拜东巴圣地三坝，在丁巴什柔（灵洞）洞里，和诚硬是把一卷又一卷的东巴经念得，倒背如流，飞天钻地，出神入化。

[One time, Rock and [the dobbaq] He Cheng went on a pilgrimage to the holy site of Sanba, and there, by the cave of Do-bbaq sheel-lo, He Cheng recited one ritual dongba manuscript after another, the words coursing through him, up into the sky and down through the earth, as if he were possessed.]<sup>46</sup>

In the contemporary Naxi popular imagination El-miq's cave is linked to the founder of the Naxi religion: Do-bbaq sheel-lo [sTon-pa gshen-rab]. So, the cave is known, according to Rock and local commentators alike, as a place where Do-bbaq sheel-lo once resided, or at least an *incarnation* of Do-bbaq sheel-lo.<sup>47</sup> The figures of Do-bbaq sheel-lo and the prominent ritualist, El-miq, are thus here entwined. El-miq is a specific incarnation of the Buddha-like figure. The Dunhuang manuscripts, however, suggest another possibility: that the relationship could be inverted. The legend of Do-bbaq sheel-lo may have grown out from the stories of a prototypical ritualist, such as El-miq. He Zhiwu dates El-miq the historical personage to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, while Yang Zhengwen estimates that he may have lived as early as the 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>48</sup> This early dating is dependent upon oral folk genealogies native to the Baidi region, and cannot be corroborated.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Sha 2005: 64.

<sup>47</sup> The existence of this sacred cave indirectly connects the Naxi tradition with the history of Bon manuscripts: the Bon scriptures had to be hidden away in order to be saved when the religion was persecuted in the 8th century. This is a practice that has a twentieth century analog when it comes to the Naxi manuscripts: many were hidden in remote caves during the Cultural Revolution when the dongba and their "false superstitions" were denounced, and Yang Zhengwen has written a short story in which the most treasured of the dongba books are hidden away in a fictionalized version of El-miq's cave. See Yang 2008b.

<sup>48</sup> See Yang 2008a: 42.

<sup>49</sup> It is worth noting that historical studies do not support these folk genealogies. "Dongba genealogies, like Dongba language, do not provide strong evidence of an early connection between the Bon religion and the Naxi Dongba tradition", states Mathieu, because, according to experts at the Dongba Research Institute in Lijiang, the longest genealogy only dates back twenty-five generations. For Mathieu this suggests that the modern dongba religion has little connection to the early feudal

El-miq is, in Chinese ethnographic scholarship, a historical personage of some importance (despite there being no historical evidence of his existence). He is given the status of a translator that mediated between the Tibetan and Naxi traditions: “We can be sure that, at the time, El-miq, aside from using dongba script to translate a number of scriptures, also introduced several Bon scriptures via phonetic transcription: dongba manuscripts of the Bon religion, read in Tibetan”.<sup>50</sup> El-miq is, then, in the Chinese historiography of Naxi manuscripts, responsible for both translation into the vernacular *and* transcription of Tibetan ritual texts into Naxi. He represents a nexus between Tibetan and Naxi written scriptures: himself a translational figure that symbolizes the power of the Naxi written texts and their performance. He is the great translator of Naxi legend; the model for all dongba ritualists who followed him (ritualists who translated the meaning of the spirits for the locals, and the meaning of the dongba books to European explorers and missionaries in the twentieth century). The statue of El-miq that was placed inside El-miq’s cave in 2014, as part of a local cultural restoration project, depicts him with a small ritual bell in his left hand, but in his right, he holds not a feather, but books. A stone library has been placed next to him. These books are symbolically important: local legends say that it was El-miq who invented the Naxi script in the first place, just as it was probably the migrating ritualists who created the Naxi script(s) as a means of recording their traditions.



Figure 1. Statue of El-miq seated alongside his books inside the sacred cave at Baidi. August 2019.

period, and instead that the religion and its literature developed primarily in the seventeenth century (2015: 373).

<sup>50</sup> He and Zhao 2017: 38.

To learn more about El-miq the person, we must turn to folk stories. Unfortunately, these are all modern tales, and as such place El-miq as part of a Buddhist cultural milieu. The following is a retelling of El-miq's "origin story" as a ritualist, as told by Naxi scholar Zhao Jingxiu:

There was once, long ago, a young *dongba* who lived amongst the *Diqing Naxi* of Yunnan. His name was El-miq. When he was thirteen, with only a coarse blanket and a pocketful of dry provisions, he travelled with a horse caravan, over the mountains and ridges all the way to Lhasa, where he wished to study the Tibetan classics.

After arriving in Lhasa, he found a great master of the scriptures, and asked him to take him on as a student. That master already had eight disciples, all of whom were sons of wealthy nobles. As El-miq was all dressed in rags, the master refused him. And so El-miq said "Well, please let me work here as a servant then." The master was impressed with El-miq's sincerity and shrewd countenance, and he allowed him to stay on as an errand boy. He brewed tea and made *tsamba* during the day, and re-filled the oil lamp at night, all in service of the disciples who were studying the scriptures. In this way, El-miq had the chance to secretly study alongside them. The eight disciples were indolent and lazy. No matter how much the master repeated himself, they just couldn't remember or recite what he said, let alone interpret its meaning. El-miq, however, paid great attention to the teachings. He could recite the words after hearing them once, and explain what they meant after hearing them twice. After three of four times, he knew them off by heart. Once, when El-miq was covertly reciting a scripture, and just about to reach a particular point of great intensity, he forgot himself and began speaking out loud. The master was shocked: the scriptures could only be mastered by the nobility; he couldn't allow a poor errand boy to understand their contents.

From that day on, the master did not ask El-miq to serve the disciples. During the day, he was sent outside to tend the horses, and in the evening, he was locked inside a dark room, and not allowed to leave. El-miq grew anxious. One day, as El-miq was sitting in his room, he realized that he could just about hear the master reciting scriptures: if he held his breath and listened intently, the sound of the disciples following the master grew louder. He had an idea: he grabbed some reins, and whenever he could hear a line from the scriptures clearly, he tied a knot in them, as a memory aid. The next day, when he was out with the horses, he'd recite a line from the scriptures and untie one of the knots. By the time he'd finished reciting, all the knots had been untied – he could remember everything. And that's how he learned the scriptures, year after year. By the time the young lamas were about to finish their studies, El-miq knew that he had already learned as much as he could. "How good would it be if I could take some books home with me to study at leisure?" he thought to himself. But where would he get the money?

The master wouldn't just give them to him. After much thought, he hatched a plan. Every day he would take nine horses out to the eastern pasture. Eight belonged to the little disciples, and one belonged to the master. There was a river in the eastern pasture, and a bridge across it. Every day he would take the horses out to the bridge, and let the disciples' horses cross. But he would stop the master's horse from crossing the bridge, striking at it until it turned back. Every day he did this, until he trained the master's horse to turn back at the very sight of the bridge. The time was right. In the early hours one morning, while the master and the disciples were still asleep, El-miq quietly took seven boxes of scriptures, and taking one of the horses, rode off to the eastern pasture.

After daylight, the master discovered the missing books, and set off on his horse in pursuit. But when his horse reached the bridge, it turned back. The master, furious, tried to force it back over the bridge, but whatever he did it would always turn away. The master believed it was the will of Buddha stopping him from crossing over the bridge, not allowing him to pursue El-miq, so he gave up and went home.

After two months of travel, El-miq returned to Baidi. Afraid that the master would send men to find him, El-miq hid the scriptures in a remote cave. He took up residence in this cave, and after much time had passed, was able to translate the Tibetan scriptures into Naxi.

That's why Baidi has a "cave of hidden scriptures", which is, as legend has it, is the very cave that El-miq had used to hide himself and the books, and every year people make pilgrimages to it, in the hope of acquiring some of El-miq's spiritual power.<sup>51</sup>

The story holds that El-miq learned his trade from the Tibetan lamas, which puts Tibetan Buddhism as the direct antecedent of Naxi dongba teachings. It is also a parable of translation that has motifs common in Buddhist folklore: El-miq goes west, from northern Yunnan to Tibet, to acquire spiritual teachings in the form of written books, and after much tribulation manages to bring them back home, where he can slowly translate them into his "native" language. This story also reflects the invention and evolution of writing, from oral recitation to the tying of knots to aid memory, finally to the creation of full (logographic) writing at the sacred cave. Of course, however, this writing is inspired by the Tibetan books. As he is presented in the early dongba manuscripts, El-miq was likely not ethnically Naxi, but in the folk story he becomes a native of Baidi, only travelling to Tibet to acquire knowledge. This is, I believe, an example of the nativizing process of cultural translation, and could represent a narrative that reflects a





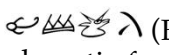
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<sup>51</sup> This tale is collected in Chen 1998: 262-264.



historical migration of the Tibetan Bon priests in exile who perhaps became dongba ritual practitioners, naturalizing themselves in this new locale.

Turning to the Naxi manuscripts themselves, we can see El-miq's name appear in a number of different ritual books. His name is written in the sources via the following means: firstly via the "pictographic"


graph ;<sup>52</sup> secondly with the two graphs   (*el* and *miq*; two phonetic loan graphs, where the first graph, 'el', represents a sound emanating from a mouth, and 'miq', fire); thirdly via his full name,  (El-miq yuq-lei, the latter two syllables used for their phonetic value only, 'yuq', a sheep, and 'lei' a roe deer); and finally  (El-miq yuq-lei, this time the final graph is written with a phonetic from the Geba syllabary, and not a graph from the dongba "pictographic" script). Sometimes these orthographies are used interchangeably. For example, in the British Library Naxi manuscript *El-miq rherq zail* (invest with the power of El-miq), we see El-miq first referenced with his full name in dongba logographs:



<sup>53</sup> Then, a few pages later, we see the final graph exchanged for




a geba phonetic graph: <sup>54</sup> Manuscript D60 of the Harvard-Yenching Naxi manuscript collection follows this orthographic sequence exactly. First with the logographs (on page 2), then with the geba "lei" (page 7).

In his dictionary, Rock says of El-miq: "[he was] A famous ancient <sup>2</sup>Dto-<sup>1</sup>mba and apparently <sup>2</sup>Llü-<sup>1</sup>bu. His power is invoked to defend and invest officiating priests...his long hair would indicate that he was also a 2Llü-1bu or Shaman".<sup>55</sup> Aside from being either a ritualist (*dob-baq*) or shaman (*lee bbuq*), his main identifying trait is long hair. It seems that the single logograph used to depict El-miq () shows that he is either one of the early native shaman-sorcerers who predate the dongba, or a ritualist of Tibetan origin. Rock suggested the former, while I would argue the latter. Dipping our toes into the discipline of

<sup>52</sup> On page 15 of Harvard-Yenching manuscript D24, "Perq la sa (to invite the gods)",







El-miq is referred to via the iconic logograph: . Here we see the visual depiction of El-miq, with the phonetics (el and miq) below an iconic depiction of a seated dongba with long hair, mid-chant. This pictographic graph is *not* read, the two graphs below it provide the syllables for the name.

<sup>53</sup> British Library Or.11417A: 1.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*: 5.

<sup>55</sup> Rock 1972: 196.

etymo-logography, I believe we can make an educated guess as to whether El-miq is supposed to be considered a tantric shaman or a Tibetan. The interesting thing about this iconic graph is the hair: most dongba (or indeed in this case, *biu bbiuq*) are not depicted with hair. I believe the hair here indicates that El-miq was a Tibetan ritual specialist. The following depiction of a ritualist is standard: .<sup>56</sup> The ritualist wears the five-lobed crown (only the front-facing three lobes are visible) which is common to the Bon and Tibetan Buddhist traditions, is seated, and is dressed in a robe. No hair is depicted. El-miq's long hair could be the long hair of the *lee bbiuq/sai niq*, the female shaman. Rock makes note of saying that the *lee bbiuq* has "dishevelled" hair, and this is generally depicted graphically by wavy lines:  (Naxi graph for *sai niq*, female shaman). The logograph used to depict El-miq has long, straight hair, leading I believe more credence to the assertion that he is of Tibetan origin. Fang Guoyu's Naxi dictionary depicts a Tibetan, with this long, straight queue of hair: *ggv-zzee* .<sup>57</sup> The Tibetan with his queue can be spotted in the manuscripts, such as page one of Harvard-Yenching D60: , which shows a depiction of the graph for "Tibetan", with the flowing queue of hair, and the distinctive Tibetan headpiece. The iconic depiction places El-miq (directly or indirectly) into a tradition probably more ancient than the Naxi dongba ritualists – for the early Tibetan ritualists certainly predated them. El-miq comes from a far-off land to lend his power to the rite being performed.<sup>58</sup>

El-miq, if he was indeed a historical figure, was perhaps Tibetan all along: he brought with him knowledge of Tibetan religious teachings (either old Tibetan, Bon, or Tibetan Buddhist religious knowledge, or some combination thereof) and wrote dongba scriptures according to the model he knew, translating the names of the deities, and the gods. This would add weight to Jackson's assertion that the Naxi texts derive from the Tibetan ones.

### El-miq in the Naxi manuscripts

I intend here to enumerate the manuscripts (both historical and contemporary) and the ritual traditions in which El-miq appears.

<sup>56</sup> Harvard-Yenching D24, page 14.

<sup>57</sup> Fang and He 1986: 221.

<sup>58</sup> The *gshen* ritualists in Tibet were often depicted as coming from far-off lands. Tibet, from the Naxi perspective, is also a foreign land: "That these male and female *gshen* types are associated with foreign origins is explicitly indicated. They are vaguely said to be from *dags ri dkar po* (sunny white mountain; yang 陽) and *sribs ri nag po* (shadowy black mountain; yin 陰), successively". Blezer 2008: 430.

## Naxi manuscript traditions that include the name “El-miq”

Title	<i>El-miq rherq zail</i> (invest with the power of El-miq)	<i>rherq zail tei'ee</i> (book of investing with power)	<i>perq la ddeeq sa</i> (inviting the gods – greater ceremony)
Ceremony	<i>ssee zhul biuq, sheel-lo ngvl, jji mu ngvl</i>	<i>svq ggvq</i> , many others (perhaps a generic ‘investing power’ rite that can be performed before any major ceremony)	<i>ssee zhul biuq, svq ggvq</i>
Representative manuscripts from the Harvard Yenching Naxi manuscript collection <sup>59</sup>	D60, A9	5052, 1027	D24

From this table we see that the manuscript traditions most likely to contain mention of El-miq are books that detail the *rherq zail* 禳灾 ritual. Before every major ceremony, the dongba will perform a *rherq zail* rite to invest themselves with power. The *rherq zail* is practiced as follows: 1) Incense is burned; 2) the gods are invited; 3) great ancestors and masters are invited; 4) sacrifices are offered to the gods; 5) the gods of heaven and earth are invited to bestow their power upon the participants; 6) a ritual dance is performed; 7) the officiating ritualist scatters some grains, while the ritualist who is the subject of the rite receives them in a bowl. He must eat all those grains that are caught, symbolizing the planting of the seeds of wisdom; 8) a ceremonial name is

<sup>59</sup> These are fairly common manuscripts traditions, and as such an exhaustive list of manuscripts in museum and library collections around the world would quickly become unwieldy; instead I provide the mss nos. for those that belong to the Harvard Yenching collection, as these are freely available to view online.

bestowed upon the subject of the rite, for example if his name was Kee-sso kee-tal, he would become El-miq do-kee, or El-miq do-tal. The officiating dongba must sprinkle some blessed water; 9) some auspicious words are chanted and the officiating ritualist brings the *rherq zail* rite to an end.<sup>60</sup>

Rock gives an explanation of the name of the *rherq zail* ceremony and an overview of its proceedings:

The first is a phonetic character read <sup>1</sup>ndshër meaning power, awe, pomp, majesty. It is known as <sup>2</sup>ggö-<sup>1</sup>baw character. It is often written with the diagonal line extending to the left and as such it can be read <sup>1</sup>ssan representing the seven maker of the Earth or <sup>1</sup>Ssan-<sup>3</sup>mi <sup>2</sup>shër <sup>3</sup>gkv. The second symbol is a pictograph and represents the Chinese harpsichord, a large lute 琴瑟, when it stands for the latter it is read in the first tone, here its phonetic value has been borrowed to express the verb “<sup>3</sup>tsa” to invest.

This book is chanted at most of the larger ceremonies in the evening before the actual commencement of the ceremony. As the text reveals, the <sup>2</sup>dto-<sup>1</sup>mbas beseech the gods, spirits, deified <sup>2</sup>dto-<sup>1</sup>mbas or <sup>2</sup>Bpö-<sup>1</sup>mbö to invest the with their power and awe, with the help of which the <sup>2</sup>dto-<sup>1</sup>mbas are able to deal with malevolent spirits, demons, etc., to suppress them and finally to kill or evict them.<sup>61</sup>

Rock details a translation of a *rherq zail* manuscript which begins: “In the beginning of time before man had performed any ceremony, the high heavens were sacrificed to and the power of heaven was beseeched to descend; also the power of the vast land. Let the power of the long rays of the sun and that of the full, bright moon be given us...”<sup>62</sup> In this translation, the investment of power begins with the power of the skies and celestial bodies, then of the gods, then the deified dongba who are enumerated. According to Rock, the rite only included the deified dongbas, but Naxi sources relate how the rite frequently also enumerates those dongba that are considered to be proficient (such as El-miq, who is generally not considered to be a god), not necessarily only those who have become elevated into deities.<sup>63</sup> The names in the historical sources listed directly alongside El-miq in the following examples are not dongba deities; they are instead rather proficient, noteworthy ritualists of the past.

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<sup>60</sup> This breakdown is a paraphrase of the information found in He Shangli 2016: 101-102.

<sup>61</sup> Rock 1952: 218.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*: 219.

<sup>63</sup> See for example He Jiquan 2018, and He Shangli 2016: 101-105.

I believe it would be worthwhile to show how El-miq appears in the texts themselves, and in what context. If El-miq is linked directly to the *rherq zail* rite, then he appears to be most directly associated with the *ssee zhul biu* ceremony.<sup>64</sup> The ceremony can be performed at certain years of a person's life as a means of ensuring longevity, and after a death, to extend the life expectancies of those who survive the deceased. According to Jackson, this is among the three highest ranked Naxi ceremonies in terms of purity (there is a "Buddhist-like abstinence from meat eating" during its performance). There is a Tibetan Buddhist analogue to the *ssee zhul* – the *tshe gzungs*. The *tshe gzungs* is a dharani for longevity, performed during morning prayers, where the name and animal sign of the patient is announced, and monks recite one hundred and eight mantras of each of the longevity deities.<sup>65</sup> In Tibetan, *tshe* means one's life-span. The actual particulars of the Tibetan Buddhist and Naxi rituals have few apparent similarities. One of the many rites performed within the ceremony is that of "investing with the power of El-miq".

The manuscript tradition that specifically bears El-miq's name in its title, *El-miq rherq zail*, is associated primarily with funerary ceremonies: *ssee zhul biu* (for longevity and performed at a funeral), *sheel-lo ngol* (funeral for a dongba ritualist), and *jjj mu ngol* (funeral for a worthy woman). El-miq is mentioned alongside other notable ritualists.



Harvard Yenching Naxi manuscript collection D60, page 2

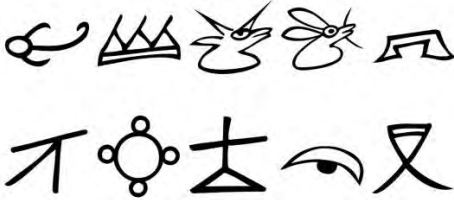
Here, El-miq is mentioned alongside two other ritualists (they make a trio) in separate intonation units, the context is the calling upon the spirit power of each.<sup>66</sup> El-miq is written with the first four graphs (read

<sup>64</sup> Naxi ceremonies, often lasting several days, are comprised of many individual rites.

<sup>65</sup> See Gerke 2011: 188.

<sup>66</sup> This is a trio of ritualists as they are depicted in the Naxi literature. El-miq is merely one of a number of ritualists whose power is called upon to make the ritual more efficacious. Compare with the Dunhuang manuscripts, where the trio of ritualists is a common motif: "In this narrative of funerary ritual origins, gShen-rab is not distinguished in any special way from his priestly counterparts; he is merely one of a trio of ritualists" (Bellezza 2010: 37). In the Tibetan sources, Myi-bo is often accompanied by Dur-shen rma-da. I believe this individual also exists in the Naxi rites as a certain dongba known as Liuq-shee maq-ddal. The phonetics of the name, aside from the initial of the first syllable, are a very close match, and in particular,

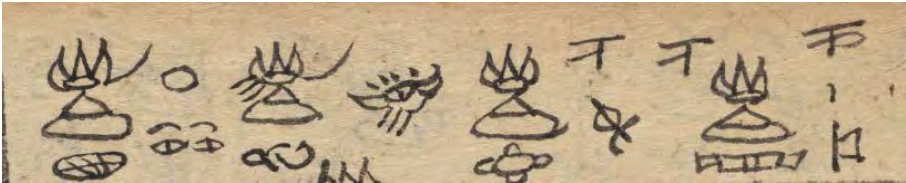
top to bottom, left to right) El-miq yuq-lei. There is no visual depiction of the ritualist himself, unlike in the following two sections (each intonation unit is separated by vertical lines). The identity of the second ritualist is unclear, but he is here associated with the Naxi graph *bbaq*, meaning pig. There is a dongba known as Yi-shil *bbaq-zzo*, who's name is written with the graph for *dobbaq* and the graph for pig, but here we also have the graph *per*, white, above the dongba's speech. The depiction with the graph for 'white' is similar to that of <sup>3</sup>Ss-<sup>1</sup>p'ér-<sup>1</sup>bpö-<sup>1</sup>p'a [in Rock's transcription], a dongba who Rock tells us held the position of a sorcerer. The third ritualist here is a well-known disciple of Do-bbaq sheel-lo, Gge-bbaq. Of Gge-bbaq, Rock says: "disciple of <sup>2</sup>Dto-<sup>1</sup>mba <sup>3</sup>Shi-<sup>2</sup>lo (gShen-rab[s]-mi-bo)...The <sup>2</sup>Dto-<sup>1</sup>mbas are desirous of being invested with his power and that of all the other disciples of <sup>3</sup>Shi-<sup>2</sup>lo."<sup>67</sup> A translation of the first section above would be "The power of El-miq Yuq-lei rests here". Naxi script:



Transcription:

*El-miq yuq-lei gge rherq ddeeq chee haq mei*

In manuscript D24 we also see El-miq mentioned alongside another ritualist:



*Harvard Yenching Naxi manuscript collection D24, page 14*

Of the two ritualists mentioned above (the third and fourth graphs depicting a ritualist are accompanied by graphs for "power", "come

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just like his counterpart Dur-shen rma-da, Liuq-shee maq-ddal is related as a ritualist who performs rites for the people, who can mediate between the living and the dead, and is proficient at both funerary rites and closing the gateway to the spirit world (see YSSMGZCGB 1989: 423-424). Of Liuq-shee maq-ddal, Rock says he is the "second son" of Do-bbaq sheel-lo (Rock 1972: 214).

<sup>67</sup> Rock 1972: 200.

down” and “invest”, making them category nouns, i.e. “the power of the *biubbuq* [dongba] comes down, invest with the power of the *biubbuq*”), only El-miq can be found in the second volume of Rock’s dictionary, which contains a section dedicated to the proper names of the dongba found in the corpus of Naxi literature. The first is marked by the graphs for conch shell, egg and eyes. I am not sure of the reading of this name, although it has been suggested to be Niu-hei gv-she.<sup>68</sup> The final sentence (the first six graphs from the right) of the above section *may* be read:



*Biubbuq rherq zail mei perq ku ddee ku to* (May the power of the [aforementioned] dongba be invested, may the door to good things be opened). The problem of reading manuscripts where the words are not all written down is evident here: the final three words on the page are “white” (good things), “one”, and “door”, but the reading *could* contain five or more words. This interpretation is in line with the appearances of El-miq in the other manuscripts: his power is invoked, and via his power as a proficient ritualist, “good” things may happen, but he is not physically present in the narrative.

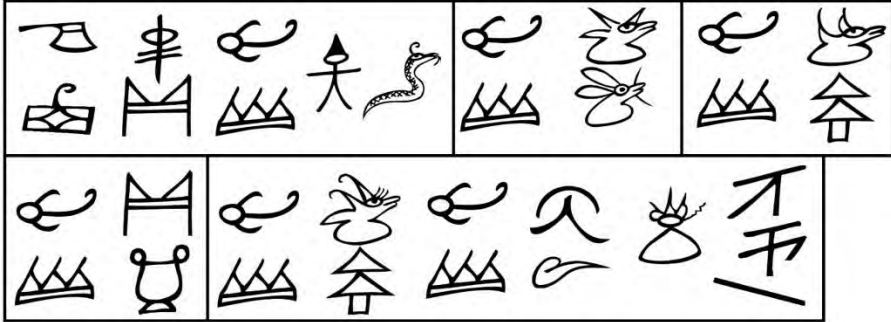
In contrast with these older sources, modern *rherq zail* manuscripts mention a lineage of El-miq ritualists, some with El-miq yuq-lei being the second in that line; the first being an El-miq dvq-reeq; I believe this is the same person as “A ming du ri cu 阿明都日粗” mentioned in Yang Zhengwen’s Naxiological study of the Baidi area.<sup>69</sup> Yang states that there are no written records of El-miq’s life. Nevertheless, he claims that his achievements are listed in a manuscript titled “*zhi zhang* 汁章”, which is probably a Chinese transcription of *rherq zail*. I have yet to see a manuscript that actually offers biographical details of El-miq, but there are certain texts where we see the name occurs as a prefix for an entire lineage of ritualists. These manuscripts that list exhaustive El-miq lineages are newer, late twentieth/early twenty-first century sources; as we can see in the newly-published collection of ritual manuscripts, the *Changyong dongba yishi guicheng ji jingdian* [Commonly-seen dongba ritual practices and manuscripts].<sup>70</sup> As such they can only reflect how the legend of El-miq has developed into the present day.

<sup>68</sup> I thank He Lingyu for the assistance with the interpretation of this section of text.

<sup>69</sup> Yang 2008a: 31.

<sup>70</sup> Some of the manuscripts in this 2019 collection are dated in a final colophon as being copied in “2012”, and all the reproduced manuscripts are recent copies.

An extract from one such *rherq zail* manuscript that focuses on the El-miq lineage is as follows:



Recreation of manuscript section in LJSDBWHYJY 2019: 254.

*Shujjeq liulwe El-miq Ddvqreeq El-miq Yuq-lei El-miq Keetal El-miq Wessoq El-miq Seiqtal El-miq Yiheel rherq perq bbiuq*  
 [In] Shujjeq (Shuijia) village, the spirit power of El-miq Ddvq-reeq, El-miq Yuq-lei, El-miq Kee-tal, El-miq We-ssoq, El-miq Seiq-tal, and El-miq Yi-heel descends.

Here “El-miq” is clearly used as an honorific prefix for this lineage of ritualists, attributed to one particular village in Baidi: Shuijia village 水甲村. These are twenty-first-century copies, but the older books Rock collected (mostly nineteenth-century sources, and primarily from the Lijiang region) only refer to a single “El-miq” or “El-miq yuq-lei”: there is no El-miq lineage as such. This was likely because they were composed before the name El-miq came to be associated with any dongba of great power. The *rherq zail* rite is carried out to bestow a dongba with spirit power of his ancestors, and is often performed outside the cave of El-miq. Part of the rite is the bestowing of a ceremonial name upon the dongba for whom the rite is held.<sup>71</sup> It is worth noting however that the old books of Baidi are now mostly lost, as according to local dongba they were burnt in huge courtyard-filling bonfires during the Cultural Revolution, so it may be true that manuscripts that did furnish El-miq with biographical details were once extant in the region.

It must be said that none of the manuscripts that we have access to, traditional or modern, have anything to say about El-miq beyond that his power should be absorbed: unlike the Myi-bo of the Dunhuang

<sup>71</sup> The outer walls of the cave of El-miq, *El-miq naiq ko*, was in 2016 inscribed with graffiti by a certain “El-miq do-tal” and “El-miq ddiuq-je”. These are Naxi religious names, the former being the prolific Naxi anthropologist, Yang Fuquan, the latter the Naxiologist Yang Jiehong. It is likely that a rite was performed outside the cave to bestow them with these names.



manuscripts, he doesn't appear as a person that takes any concrete action. El-miq has, in effect, become just a name to be invoked and, in modern times, an honorific to be adopted by a competent ritualist. Nevertheless, the similarities to gShen-rab myi-bo are many: he comes from a far off land, he is responsible for the translation of Tibetan ritual texts into Naxi, whether phonetically or into the Naxi vernacular; he is associated with funerary rites and the driving out of spirits. He is mentioned almost always alongside other ritualists, as one amongst a number of powerful practitioners. A holy site is dedicated to him, and this site is often confused with the Naxi analogue to sTon-pa gshen-rab: Do-bbaq sheel-lo. El-miq is a priest; a guardian of ritual methods; he is laudable and influential, of considerable antiquity (his deeds having been passed down via oral transmission); he does not act unilaterally, but as one among a number of priests.

Rock has claimed that El-miq yuq-lei is the ritualist's full name, and that el-miq (Rock: <sup>3</sup>ä-<sup>1</sup>mi) is an honorific, equivalent to the Tibetan *a mi* ཨ་མི་ / *a myes* ཨ་མེས་, which can mean "grandfather".<sup>72</sup> At the time of his writing, Rock seemed unaware of the fact that there are many other ritualists in the supposed lineage of El-miq (which suggests the likelihood that the El-miq "lineage" only developed in the mid to late twentieth century, or that the lineage of ritualists with this honorific was merely an oral tradition and not included in the manuscripts in Rock's time). In this interpretation, the "father" in the Dunhuang manuscripts becomes the "grandfather" in the Naxi manuscripts. Nevertheless, I believe there is another possible interpretation of the name: El-miq as a *translation* of the Tibetan "mi bo". There have already been several discussions of the underlying semantic meaning to the name, gShen-rab mi-bo.<sup>73</sup> "Rab" can be taken to mean "best", and "mi bo" means "best man", while "gshen" refers to a kind of priest. Gurung provides us with the complete formulation "'the supreme gshen priest' who is also 'the best man'".<sup>74</sup> In this translation, *gshen rab* is a title, and *mi bo* means "excellent man" (*bo* being an affix). That said, *mi bo* could simply be the proper name of an individual. Looking at the Naxi name El-miq, *el* is a prefix in Naxi indicating advanced age and station, whereas *miq* does not seem to carry any semantic meaning. It could simply be a personal name. I suggest that *miq* could also be a direct phonetic translation: Naxi *miq* for the Tibetan *mi*; that is, the affix is inverted into a prefix, both surrounding a common core phoneme (Tibetan *mi*, Naxi *miq*). There are cases where Naxi graphs are employed as transcriptions of Tibetan phonemes, and Rock has detailed these in

<sup>72</sup> Rock 1972: 196.

<sup>73</sup> Gurung (2011:28-29), and Bellezza (2010:32).

<sup>74</sup> Gurung 2011:29.

his work. Even without the association of the name itself, the mythic narrative of the excellent priest, and his subsequent place as the legendary creator of the dongba writing system and spiritual head of the Diqing school of ritualists, reflects the bifurcating gShen-rab myi-bo / sTon-pa gshen-rab narrative. There is little doubt that, in myth, El-miq belongs to a lineage of old Tibetan ritualists, quite probably with roots in the non-Buddhist legends of gShen-rab mi-bo. Whether or not we take the Naxi “*miq*” to be a *translation* of the Tibetan phoneme *mi* is ancillary: the narrative traditions of these ritualists are a close match, regardless of the phonetics.

### A syncretic tradition

If the relationship between El-miq and Do-bbaq sheel-lo is the same as that between gShen-rab myi-bo and sTon-pa gshen-rab, that the latter is the deified version of the former, a version which supplants the former in the mythos, the concurrent existence of both El-miq *and* Do-bbaq sheel-lo as two separate figures in the Naxi manuscripts could point towards the syncretic nature of the dongba tradition (that parts originated in organized Bon tradition and Buddhist sources, while other elements may have been borrowed from the earlier ritual sources evidenced in the Dunhuang manuscripts). Christine Mathieu has written incisively on the historical ethnography of the Lijiang area and the roots of the Bon tradition amongst the dongba. She convincingly argues that Rock’s insistence on the Tibetan Bon origins of Naxi tradition should not be discounted, but that Rock perhaps didn’t fully acknowledge the syncretic, hybrid nature of the rites he so exhaustively described: both valuable insights, but her analysis is limited to the Chinese materials and does not engage with the Naxi ritual manuscripts themselves. Mathieu, leaning on the linguistic investigations of Alexis Michaud, points out that there are “entire” Bon rituals to be found in the Naxi literature, but that they are written in the vernacular language:

A point of major importance noted by linguist Alexis Michaud...is that apart from the names of Tibetan deities, which evidently derive from Tibetan, Dongba ritual language shows little Tibetan influence. This not only suggests relative antiquity, but where entire Bon rituals are found in the Dongba manuscripts in Naxi language, it implies *the translation into the vernacular* and therefore the purposeful incorporation, and purposeful transfer of Bon into the Dongba tradition.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Mathieu 2015: 372.

This is not always the case: it depends which manuscripts we read. There exist within the Naxi literature rituals that have been classified as “Bon” that are read entirely in Tibetan and merely *written* in Naxi. There was no doubt translation into the vernacular, but certain written incantations are meant to be read in Tibetan and not Naxi. These recitations appear to be later additions, with Buddhist influences and motifs, when compared to the more ancient depictions of the funerary rituals. This suggests that there was *first* translation into the vernacular, a purposeful transfer of non-Buddhist Tibetan ritual into the dongba tradition, but that some rituals later became appended with Tibetan Buddhist incantations.

The oldest written records mentioning El-miq are those belonging to a Buddhist tradition, the *Tshe-gzungs*, and date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century; but the Naxi ritual as it is practised that may have its roots in pre-Buddhist Tibet. The manuscripts belonging to the *El miq rherq zail* rite are often appended with a phonetic mantra meant to be read in Tibetan, and that has been linked to organized Bon practice. It is in the northern Naxi areas that we find these manuscripts with sections written in Naxi but meant to be read in Tibetan – manuscripts that Naxi researcher He Jiquan has claimed as belonging to an (organized) Bon tradition. These are syncretic written traditions that combine logographic, semi-oral writing with phonetic transcription, the former to be read in Naxi and the latter to be read in Tibetan, detailing rites that have narrative origins in early Tibetan manuscripts, alongside elements of Buddhist ritual and a mantra that has been linked to the Bon tradition (but that is likely Buddhist in origin).

As an example of such a tradition, towards the end of the *El-miq rherq zail* manuscript (see Harvard Yenching Manuscript Collection A9) the traditional dongba script (where one word can stand for several words, and some words are not written) turns into a phonetic incantation, known as (according to He Jiquan) the *daiq shee shuq* in Naxi: a phonetic rendering of the Tibetan *bkra shis shog* (bring forth auspiciousness). This incantation was for many years believed to be untranslatable, and indeed, a translation is not given in a collection of translated manuscripts from the Harvard-Yenching collection published in 2011, which merely lists the Tibetan text in Naxi transcription as a “mantra”.<sup>76</sup> In 2018, however, He Jiquan published a translation of this incantation, directly associating it with what he called a Bon “incantation of good fortune”, 吉祥经 *jixiang jing* (I am not familiar with such a scripture in the Bon canon), and meant to be read in Tibetan.

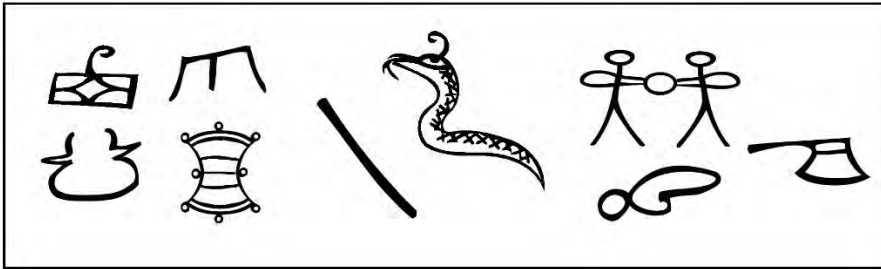
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<sup>76</sup> ZSKMYRY 2011: 135.



Figure 2. Tibetan incantation written in Naxi. Manuscript A-9. Harvard-Yenching Library, Harvard Library, Harvard University

The incantation is particularly relevant to the present discussion because in certain manuscripts we see El-miq appear, alongside Do-bbaq sheel-lo and his father, Laq-bbv tvl-go (lha bon thod kar). The incantation includes certain proper names associated with the Tibetan Bon tradition. One sentence proper construction in particular is repeated often: “(proper noun) + *reeq ddiuq daiq shee shuq*”. In the manuscript contained in LJSDBWHYJY (2019), we see this sentence repeated for Do-bbaq sheel-lo, then Laq-bbv tvl-go (or the variant, Jje-bbv do-ka), and finally El-miq Yuq-lei.

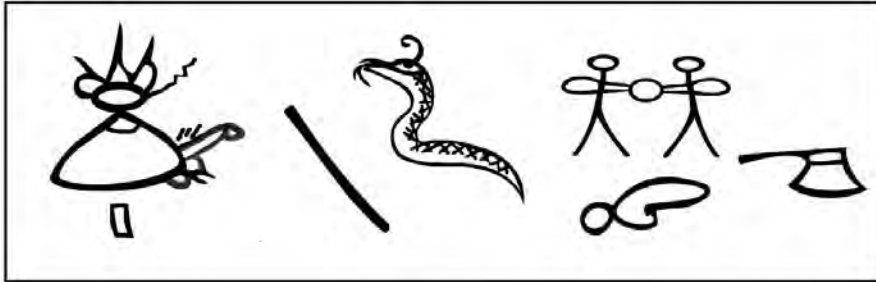


Transcription: *Jje-bbv do-ka reeq ddiuq shee shuq*. LJSDBWHYJY 2019: 399.

Here the name of Do-bbaq sheel-lo's father is given in Naxi graphs (all phonetic loan graphs). The first two, *Jje bbv*, are transcriptions of the Tibetan *rgyal bon*.<sup>77</sup> *Do* and *ka* (borrowed directly in graphic and


<sup>77</sup> He Jiquan (2018: 91) gives the Tibetan reading *rgyal po*. There are examples of him being referred to in Naxi by his alternate Tibetan name, Lha-bon thod-dkar: the name can be written in Naxi “(e ssee) laq bbv tvl go 𑄎𑄎𑄎𑄎𑄎”. Here, in the Naxi name as written by dongba Xi Shanghong, in He Shangli 2016: 11, we see the prefix *el ssee*, meaning “father”. Once again, the “el” acts as an honorific prefix

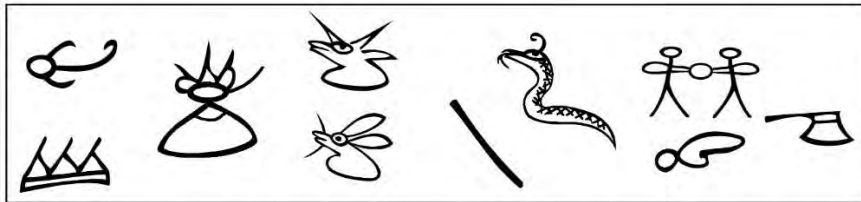
phonetic form from the *ka* of the Tibetan alphabet) are probably written in the incorrect order, and indicate the Tibetan *thod kar*, thus, rGyal-bon thod-kar.



Transcription: Do-bbaq sheel-lo reeq ddiuq daiq shee shuq. LJSDBWHYJY 2019: 399.

It is worth noting how the graphic depiction of Do-bbaq sheel-lo here uses the penis to indicate a phonetic (*ler*; “Do-bbaq sheel-ler” is a common pronunciation in the Baidi area instead of the final *lo* seen in Lijiang) – and locating the manuscript to the Baidi region, where this written form is common. Similar manuscripts from Lijiang record Do-

bbaq sheel-lo’s name with the following two graphs  *shee* (meat) and *do* (wooden board), again acting as phonetics (certain Lijiang manuscripts also omit “El-miq” altogether in the incantation). I would tentatively hypothesize that El-miq is more likely to appear in manuscripts from the predominantly Tibetan areas to the north of Lijiang.





Transcription: El-miq Yuq-lei reeq ddiuq daiq shee shuq. LJSDBWHYJY 2019: 399.

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indicating age. Gurung notes how *lha bon* and *rgyal bon* are both common readings: “A passage from the Khyung ‘bum gong ma (a text found amongst the manuscripts collected from Gansu) sheds light on the question of why the phrase *rgyal bon thod dkar* is attached to the phrase *lha bon* (divine bon)...*Lha bon thod gar* must also be identified as a divine figure. That is probably the reason why the name *Rgyal bon thod dkar* was also attached to *lha bon* (divine bon) to construe the name of Shenrab’s father, *Mi bon lha bon rgyal bon thod dkar*”. Gurung 2011: 9.

In this section, after the first two graphs, *El* and *miq*, there is a depiction of a ritualist, this graph is not read. It is followed by “Yuq” and “lei”.

He Jiquan reads the two Naxi graphs,  *reeq* = snake,  *ddiuq* = stick, as Tibetan *zhi bde* (peace), which he glosses as the Chinese *genben* 根本 (fundamental). As we saw above, the Naxi *daiq shee* is a phonetic translation of the Tibetan *bkra shis*, and *shuq* is likewise equivalent to *shog*. Thus, *zhi bde bkra shis* becomes, in He's translation, “fundamental auspiciousness”; the sentences above therefore reading “call the fundamental auspiciousness of Do-bbaq sheel-lo” (etc). While this reading of *reeq ddiuq* as *zhi bde* is based on what He Jiquan calls the difference in initial sounds of the Diqing southern Khams Tibetan dialect, the difference in vowel sounds between Naxi *ddiuq* and Tibetan *bde* is not addressed. Moreover, *zhi bde* means peaceful, not fundamental. I would perhaps offer a tentative contextual reading of the two Naxi graphs as *gzhi grub*, that is, “established base”, or simply “all things that exist”; in this case an example of this formula might read in Tibetan: *El-miq Yuq-lei gzhi grub bkra shi shog*, i.e. “let come the existent auspiciousness of El-miq”. That is, in this rite the power or auspices of these “Bon” figureheads: rGyal-bon thod-kar, sTon-pa gshen-rab and El-miq, is summoned.

Of course, the phonetics of modern Naxi *reeq / ddiuq* cannot match exactly with this Tibetan reading. This is a problem that cannot be avoided: we are dealing with phonetic renderings of Tibetan words in Naxi based on the pronunciation of the dialect of the people who dictated what was presumably initially an oral text, and the earliest manuscripts from this tradition that we have access to are 19<sup>th</sup> century copies; the manuscript tradition probably dating back a century earlier, and the oral tradition earlier still. At any rate, I suggest that the repeated refrain of *bkra shis shog* is a Buddhist-influenced incantation, and there are many Buddhist symbols mixed up with the personages more familiar to Bon. This incantation cannot, in my view, be classified as pure “Bon” as He Jiquan (2018) does. What is interesting is its position as embedded within the main rite written in dongba script and read in Naxi. We are left, then, with a piece of concrete evidence for the Naxi religion as being, in Rock's words, a “composite religious edifice”.

As noted previously, *El-miq rherq zail* is a manuscript generally used towards the end of a funeral (either as part of the *ssee zhul* or the *sheel'lo ngol* ceremonies). Its first few pages generally depict a traditional, non-Buddhist funerary rite that involves animal sacrifice (in Harvard Yen-ching A9, an ox is sacrificed) and certain narrative elements found in the Dunhuang manuscripts. El-miq is not mentioned in the main body of the text of A-9, but in this manuscript a trio of ritualists,



from later Eternal Bon sources, or is there an inheritance from older Tibetan tradition to be found in the Naxi manuscripts? Where borders – geographic, linguistic or cultural – are crossed, there is translation. If we go beyond the linguistic definition of translation towards an understanding of transfer across semiotic borders, then translation can be understood as the reforming of a concept from one cultural framework into another. In this way cultural translation can be understood as creating, in Homi Bhabha's words, a "borderline condition" of "hybrid states of meaning" (1994: 234). The journey of gShen-rabs mi-bo to sTon-pa gshen-rab, subsequently refracted in a different cultural milieu to El-miq and Do-bbaq sheel-lo, is not a translation from any one source text into any one target text. Nevertheless, these mythic narremes travel across semiotic and cultural borders, and "Myi-bo" is reshaped in the Naxi lands as a competent ritualist who later develops his own local lineage, one that reflects the hybridity of his semiotic journey. While Myi-bo was likely replaced in Tibet by the legendary deity sTon-pa gshen-rab, El-miq's legend as a competent ritualist has continued, alongside the separate (but often interchangeably used) figure of the legendary Do-bbaq sheel-lo (who, specifically in his Buddha-like form, was probably an import from organized Bon). Essentially, the roots of both Naxi mythical personages can be traced back to the Myi-bo (gshen) of the Dunhuang manuscripts. Centuries later, ritualists such as El-miq have faded into the background, but their names still hold power in the Naxi rites practiced today: often literally being adopted by contemporary ritualists as religious names (Chinese *faming* 法名).

It's clear from the above analysis of Naxi sources that El-miq was an adept ritual practitioner, and his provenance may well have been Tibetan (indicated in both his contemporary origin myth, and an etymo-logographic analysis of the graph used to depict him). He is primarily (but not exclusively) mentioned in funerary and life-preserving rituals as an ancestor whose power can be divested to dongba performing a ritual in the present day, but modern manuscripts only usually include his name in their title (e.g. "investing with the power of El-miq"), he is only rarely referred to in the texts themselves, and even then only as one ritual specialist among a number of others. The texts do not furnish El-miq with any biographical information. Nevertheless, his station is clearly elevated when compared to other famous ritualists, such as the Naxi analogue to the Tibetan Dur-shen rma-da, Liuq-shee maq-ddal, whose name does not appear in any manuscript titles.

The argument I am making here is nothing as grandiose as suggesting that the Naxi dongba tradition *as it is now written* dates back to the tenth century and the time of the Dunhuang manuscripts, merely that we can identify narrative elements from Dunhuang manuscripts in the



tradition as it is still practiced today – if we know where (and how) to look. In trying to define the mechanics of translation, Walter Benjamin used the metaphor of a tangent:

Just as a tangent touches a circle lightly and at but one point-establishing, with this touch rather than with the point, the law according to which it is to continue on its straight path to infinity - a translation touches the original lightly and only at the infinitely small point of the sense, thereupon pursuing its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux.<sup>79</sup>

In this conception of translation, the Naxi literature perhaps radiates as one tangent from a larger circle: the wellspring of Himalayan oral traditions, the *written* versions of which can be traced back to the Dunhuang manuscripts.

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<sup>79</sup> Benjamin 2002: 261.

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# Patrons and Barbarians: The Righteous Dharma King and Ritual Warfare According to Tāranātha<sup>1</sup>

William K. Dewey<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

**N**ow did Tibetan Buddhists conceive of the ideal ruler? Early Buddhist thought on this question fell into two camps, either that kingship is inherently karmically negative due to its violence, or that ideal kings are capable of ruling in accordance with the dharma.<sup>3</sup> In more recent times, debate has also raged between those who see Tibetan Buddhism as essentially pacifistic and those who emphasize Tibetans' involvement in warfare and power politics.<sup>4</sup> In order to examine what Tibetan Buddhists actually believed about the ethics of kingship, we must turn to sources written by Tibetan Buddhists. These sources include overtly political writings, such as the *nītiśāstra* literature of statecraft and ethics,<sup>5</sup> but also Tibetan historical writings, which have been overlooked as a source of political thought. The 1608 *History of Buddhism in India* (*Rgya gar chos 'byung*), written by the great Jonangpa scholar Tāranātha (1575–1634), is especially rich in political ideas. In this *chöchung* (*chos 'byung*), or dharma history, Tāranātha does

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Karl Debreczeny for suggesting this project and for organizing the Tibetan Buddhism and Political Power in the Courts of Asia conference at the Rubin Museum of Art, where I presented an earlier version of the paper, entitled “Mlecchas at the Gates: The Dharma King and his Enemies According to Tāranātha on April 6, 2019. Thanks also to Grey Tuttle, Bryan Cuevas, and others at the conference for their comments on my paper, and to Jean-Luc Achard of *RET* and the peer reviewers.

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<sup>3</sup> Steven Collins, *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 420–21.

<sup>4</sup> Elliot Sperling, “‘Orientalism’ and Aspects of Violence in the Tibetan Tradition,” ed. Thierry Dodin and Heinz Räther (Somerville: Wisdom, 2001), 317–30. Bryan Cuevas, “The Politics of Magical Warfare,” in *Faith and Empire*, ed. Karl Debreczeny (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2019), 171–89. Karl Debreczeny, “Faith and Empire: An Overview,” in *Faith and Empire*, 19–52.

<sup>5</sup> A recent study of this literature is José Cabezon’s translation of a *nītiśāstra* treatise by Mipham (Mi pham ‘jam dbyangs rnam rgyal rgya mtsho, 1846–1912): José Ignacio Cabezon and Mi pham, *The Just King: Mipham’s Treatise on Ethics for Kings* (Boulder: Snow Lion, 2017).

not focus on secular affairs but rather Buddhist masters and their lineages. Still, the deeds of kings are essential to his history of Buddhism, and he portrays them either as benevolent patrons of the dharma or as *mlecchas* (barbarians) who oppose the dharma and must be combatted with force. Despite relying on ancient Indian sources, Tāranātha also takes inspiration from the political situation of Tibet in his day, in which his own Jonangpa tradition was threatened by sectarian conflict with the Gelukpa tradition and allied Mongol armies. Beyond its historical content, Tāranātha's *History of Buddhism in India* is an invaluable source of Tibetan political thought, one that advocates that kings should support the dharma, by peaceful and violent means, against rival traditions and hostile powers.

This article first considers the historical context of Tāranātha's life. In particular, I examine the political situation of Tibet in Tāranātha's lifetime, paying special attention to the sectarian and regional conflicts and the involvement of Mongols, and Tāranātha's relationships with his patrons, the Tsangpa *desis* (*sde srid*).<sup>6</sup> Then I examine how the *History of Buddhism in India* expressed a vision of the ideal ruler. I consider especially how he portrayed the virtues of kings who supported Buddhism, as well as the vices of the dharma's opponents. I also explore Tāranātha's portrayal of *mlecchas* as enemies of Buddhism, their historical identity (Muslim, Mongol, or otherwise), and the means he deemed necessary to fight them. Finally, I analyze his work in the context of early seventeenth century Tibet, making the case that this work reflects Tāranātha's concerns over the fate of the dharma in the hands of warring rulers, emphasizing the importance of patrons, the threat of *mlecchas* and sectarianism, and the use of physical and ritual violence in response. Finally, I consider the implications of using historical writings as a source for Tibetan political ethics.

### *The life of Tāranātha*

Tāranātha was one of the greatest Tibetan scholars of his era, best known for his unique connections to India as well as his efforts to revive the controversial Jonangpa tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, which would later be deemed heterodox under the Gelukpa rule of the Dalai Lamas. Tāranātha was born in 1575 in Tsang, in the town of Dreng or Drang ('Breng/'Brang), home to the Ra (Rwa) clan.<sup>7</sup> His lineage

<sup>6</sup> Another common title for the ruler of Tsang was *depa* (*sde pa*).

<sup>7</sup> Per K. Sørensen and Guntram Hazod, *Rulers on the Celestial Plain* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007), 2:675. Tāranātha, *TA ra na tha'i rang nyid kyi rnam thar nges par brjod pa 'i deb gter shin tu zhib mo ma bcos lhug pa'i rtogs brjod*, Gsung 'bum (Dpe bsdur ma) (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2008), 1:12, <https://www.tbrc.org/#!rid=W1PD45495>.

descended from Ra Lotsawa Dorjé Drak (Rwa lo tsA ba rdo rje grags, 1016–1128), a disciple of the renowned translator Atiśa (982–1055), and the family included scholars and patrons of other Buddhist traditions. The Ra clan also became a powerful aristocratic family in Tsang.<sup>8</sup> At a young age, Tāranātha was brought to the Jonangpa monastery Chölung Jangtsé and recognized as an incarnation of the Jonangpa master Kunga Drölchok (Kun dga' grol mchog, 1507–1566). From the disciples of Kunga Drölchok and others, he received a complete set of philosophical teachings and initiations important to the Jonangpa tradition, including Six-Branch Yoga, Mahāmudrā, Lamdré, and Kālacakra. He also received teachings from the Indian yogi Buddhaguptanātha and others.<sup>9</sup> His relationships with and visions of Indian yogis were formative to his identity and influenced his scholarship.<sup>10</sup>

After Tāranātha was enthroned as the lineage holder at Jonang Monastery in 1588, he embarked on a project of reviving the Jonangpa tradition. In particular, he wanted to revive the philosophy of its founder Dolpopa Sherab Gyeltsen (Dol po pa Shes rab Rgyal mtshan, 1292–1361) and his controversial *shentong* (*gzhan stong*) view of emptiness, which Tāranātha considered essential for tantric practices. He also had the great stupa of Jonang Monastery restored.<sup>11</sup> The ruler of Tsang, the *desi*, patronized him extensively and gave him land to build a new monastery (completed in 1628) that served as headquarters for the Jonangpa tradition, known as Takten Damchö Ling (Rtag brtan dam chos gling). Tāranātha was renowned for Indological scholarship on Sanskrit and historical works such as the 1617 *Life of the Buddha*.<sup>12</sup> His most important works, by his own account, were histories and exegeses of tantra systems like Kālacakra and systematizations of the *shentong* philosophy.<sup>13</sup> All in all, he was a very learned man, especially

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<sup>8</sup> David Templeman, “A World Upside Down: Religious Prelates and Secular Rulers in Seventeenth-Century Tsang,” in *The Tenth Karma and Tibet’s Turbulent Seventeenth Century*, ed. Karl Debreczeny and Gray Tuttle (Chicago: Serindia, 2016), 19. Tāranātha, *Tāranātha rnam thar*, 2008, 1:11–15.

<sup>9</sup> Cyrus Stearns, “Tāranātha,” *The Treasury of Lives*, 2008, <http://treasuryof-lives.org/biographies/view/Taranata/2712>. Sherab Drime, “Buddhagupta-Natha,” *The Treasury of Lives*, accessed October 7, 2019, <http://treasuryof-lives.org/biographies/view/Buddhagupta-natha/6412>.

<sup>10</sup> Tāranātha, *Tāranātha rnam thar*, 2008, 1:133, 227–28.

<sup>11</sup> Stearns, “Tāranātha.”

<sup>12</sup> Templeman, “A World Upside Down,” 21, 25.

<sup>13</sup> Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, “Supplementary Notes,” in *History of Buddhism in India*, by Tāranātha, ed. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, 1990 reprint (Simla, India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), xiv.

when it came to Indian Buddhism and Sanskrit. Before Tāranātha died, he prophesied future troubles for the Jonangpa tradition.<sup>14</sup>

*Tāranātha and the U-Tsang war*

Tāranātha was no ivory tower scholar, but intimately involved in the Tibetan political struggles of his era. The background to these struggles involved regional and sectarian rivalries, and the increasing involvement of Mongolians in Tibetan affairs. The *desis* of Tsang had established themselves as the dominant power in Tibet after 1565, following their defeat of the Rinpungpa.<sup>15</sup> Unlike other Tibetan rulers, the Tsangpas were not lineage holders of a religious tradition, or reincarnating *triilkus* (*sprul sku*), and did not claim descent from a prominent imperial-era lineage. They compensated for their lack of traditional legitimation by trying to revive the glories of the old Tibetan Empire.<sup>16</sup> They were generous patrons of a wide range of schools, including Karma Kagyu, Nyingma and Tāranātha's Jonang.<sup>17</sup> The Gelukpa tradition was initially supportive of the Tsangpa regime, but grew suspicious of their power and sought out Mongol allies.<sup>18</sup> According to Elliot Sperling, "The religious authority of the Gelukpa was a source of strength in itself and the school, though subject to severe harassment, could not be dealt with by the rulers of Tsang in a simple, peremptory manner."<sup>19</sup>

The power of the Mongols was reviving in the late sixteenth century, after a long period of retreat following the fall of the Yuan dynasty.<sup>20</sup> In 1577 the Third Dalai Lama made his famous visit to Altan Khan of the Tümed Mongols, who gave him the title of "Dalai Lama" in exchange for initiation into tantric rites and recognition as an incarnation of Qubilai Khan. Both parties desired to restore the relationship between Sakya lama Chögyel Phakpa and Qubilai Khan formed in

<sup>14</sup> Sanggye Gyatso should not be confused with the regent of the Fifth Dalai Lama. Stearns, "Tāranātha."

<sup>15</sup> W. D. Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons: An Advanced Political History of Tibet*, trans. Derek Maher (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 281.

<sup>16</sup> Templeman, "A World Upside Down," 14–15. Samten G. Karmay, "The Fifth Dalai Lama and His Reunification of Tibet," in *Lhasa in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Françoise Pommaret (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 66.

<sup>17</sup> David Templeman, "The Seventeenth-Century Tsang Rulers and Their Strategies of Legitimation," in *The Tenth Karmapa*, 30.

<sup>18</sup> James Gentry, "Representations of Efficacy: The Ritual Expulsion of Mongol Armies in the Consolidation and Expansion of the Tsang (Gtsang) Dynasty," in *Tibetan Ritual*, ed. José Ignacio Cabezón (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 147.

<sup>19</sup> Elliot Sperling, "Tibet's Foreign Relations and the Fifth Dalai Lama," in *Lhasa in the Seventeenth Century*, 122.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.



1251, in which the Mongol emperor had installed the Sakya hierarchs as vassal rulers of Tibet.<sup>21</sup> Many Mongols allied to Altan Khan converted to Geluk in the years following this meeting.<sup>22</sup> Various factions of Mongols began invading Tibet, initially plundering on their own behalf.<sup>23</sup> But soon they became involved in Tibetan factional politics. The Fourth Dalai Lama was recognized in Mongolia, within Altan Khan's family, in 1592.<sup>24</sup> This ultimately had the effect of solidifying the Geluk-Mongol alliance. The rulers of Tsang sought ritual assistance from the so-called Mongol-repellers, tantric masters who sought to repel the Mongols with their rituals. Shortly after his succession to the throne, *desi* Karma Tensung Wangpo (Kar ma Bstan srung Dbang po, reigned 1599–1611) met Sokdokpa and instituted annual rites for Mongol repelling.<sup>25</sup> Tāranātha's predecessor Kunga Drölchok also performed Mongol-repelling rituals for the *desis*.<sup>26</sup> From 1595 on, Tāranātha himself performed many rituals for the *desis*, blessing them and their shrines and counteracting black magic.<sup>27</sup>

In 1599, the Fourth Dalai Lama set out for central Tibet, accompanied by Mongol soldiers, leading to military conflicts that took place from 1603 to 1621 between Tsangpa and Gelukpa forces in the U region.<sup>28</sup> The official recognition of the Fourth Dalai Lama in 1603 was a moment of triumph for the Geluk, but despair for Tsang and their allies.<sup>29</sup> One reason for discontent was that the Mongolian Dalai Lama was recognized over a rival candidate from the Drigung Kagyu tradition, an ally of Tsang.<sup>30</sup> Tāranātha, in his autobiography, blames the wars on Gelukpa-Kagyupa sectarianism, as well as the presence of Mongol troops.<sup>31</sup> Tsang launched an invasion of U and Lhasa in 1603 and in response the Mongols occupied Lhasa to defend Geluk.<sup>32</sup> Both

<sup>21</sup> Shakabpa, *Advanced Political History*, 299–300. Debreczeny, "Faith and Empire: An Overview," 42.

<sup>22</sup> Zahiruddin Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1970), 99.

<sup>23</sup> Gentry, "Representations of Efficacy," 141. James Duncan Gentry, *Power Objects in Tibetan Buddhism* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 111.

<sup>24</sup> Shakabpa, *Advanced Political History*, 305. Karmay, "The Fifth Dalai Lama," 66.

<sup>25</sup> Gentry, "Representations of Efficacy," 148–50.

<sup>26</sup> Templeman, "A World Upside Down," 17. Templeman, "Seventeenth-Century Tsang," 38.

<sup>27</sup> Templeman, "A World Upside Down," 21–23.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 14.

<sup>29</sup> Olaf Czaja, *Medieval Rule in Tibet* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2013), 303–4. Gentry, *Power Objects*, 126.

<sup>30</sup> Sørensen and Hazod, 536.

<sup>31</sup> Tāranātha, *Tāranātha rnam thar*, 2008, 1:233, 235.

<sup>32</sup> W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 98–99. Templeman, "A World Upside Down," 24.

sides turned to wrathful tantric rituals to win victory in battle, including the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama on the side of Geluk, and Sokdokpa and Tāranātha on the side of Tsang.<sup>33</sup> The Tsangpa forces were initially victorious and expelled the Mongols from Lhasa.<sup>34</sup>

In 1604, while fighting raged in the Jang region north of Lhasa, Tāranātha experienced prophetic visions and performed rituals for the success of Tsang. As he traveled toward the fighting and visited different monasteries, visions of Dolpopa and Green Tara assured him of the future of the Jonang tradition and of Tsang victory.<sup>35</sup> He went to Phenyul to bless the Tsangpa armies before their battle and held audiences with the *desi* Karma Tensung Wangpo.<sup>36</sup> Subsequently, the armies of Tsang won a victory over U and the allied Mongols.<sup>37</sup> Tāranātha's biography naturally credits Tāranātha's ritual efforts, although others had done similar rituals: "it was said not just once that the army depended on you for their victory."<sup>38</sup> For the remainder of the war, he frequently performed rituals against Mongols and for the victory of Tsang.<sup>39</sup> This war was still ongoing in 1608 when the time Tāranātha wrote *History of Indian Buddhism*, at a time when Tsang had reached the height of its power, and one of their allies built a palace on the Potala.<sup>40</sup>

Phuntsok Namgyel became *desi* of Tsang in 1611 and renewed the war with U, encouraged by Tāranātha's own *protégé* Rabjampa.<sup>41</sup> Tāranātha tried to discourage him from invading Bhutan, but made no effort to stop the war with U.<sup>42</sup> The war ended in 1621 and Tsang and U remained at peace during Tāranātha's lifetime. Nevertheless, Jesuits who visited later in the century noted ongoing sectarianism, and the Fifth Dalai Lama described Jonang as an ally of Tsang prior to his

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<sup>33</sup> Cuevas, "The Politics of Magical Warfare," 180. Shakabpa, *Advanced Political History*, 314.

<sup>34</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 100–101.

<sup>35</sup> Based on this vision, he also received insight into *shentong* philosophy and wrote the *Ornament of the Shentong Middle Way* (Gzhan stong dbu ma'i rgyan). Stearns, "Tāranātha." Templeman, "A World Upside Down." Tāranātha, *Tāranātha rnam thar*, 2008, 1:234.

<sup>36</sup> Tāranātha, *Tāranātha rnam thar*, 2008, 1:235.

<sup>37</sup> Shakabpa, *Advanced Political History*, 312. Sørensen and Hazod, 536.

<sup>38</sup> Tāranātha, *Tāranātha rnam thar*, 2008, 1:236. Others took credit, including Sokdokpa. Gentry, *Power Objects*, 127. Gentry, "Representations of Efficacy," 151.

<sup>39</sup> Templeman, "Seventeenth-Century Tsang," 42–43.

<sup>40</sup> Sørensen and Hazod, 537.

<sup>41</sup> Czaja, *Medieval Rule in Tibet*, 309–10. Shakabpa, *Advanced Political History*, 283–315.

<sup>42</sup> Shakabpa, *Advanced Political History*, 283–84. Sørensen and Hazod, 537.

conquest of Tibet in 1642.<sup>43</sup> Tāranātha's ritual activities on behalf of Tsang were one reason for the enduring enmity of Geluk toward Jonang, leading eventually to the Dalai Lama's suppression of Jonang in central Tibet.<sup>44</sup>

*Tāranātha and the legitimacy of violence in Buddhism*

According to David Templeman, "Tibetan prelates have often allowed themselves to be drawn into their patron's webs of deceit and have lent their authority to suspect practices such as those of the legitimation of their rule," as shown by Tāranātha's support for military campaigns.<sup>45</sup> Although Templeman sees Tāranātha's actions as inconsistent with Buddhism, Tāranātha likely saw the political and military success of his patron as essential to the survival of Jonang. The modern image of an apolitical, nonviolent Buddhism has been disputed by other scholars as a product of Orientalism. Karl Debreczeny describes Tibetan Buddhism as a religion intrinsically tied to politics and power, characterized by "the force of religion to claim political power, both symbolically as a path to legitimation, in the form of sacral kingship, and literally as a tantric ritual technology to physical power, in the form of magic." Buddhism appealed to rulers because it promoted an ideal of a universal rule in the name of the dharma, as well as esoteric rituals that served as means to power.<sup>46</sup> According to Sperling, it would be anachronistic to see Tibetan rulers of the past as following Gandhian *ahimsa*, and historical Tibetan rulers were quite willing to resort to violence in many circumstances. Rulers including the Fifth and Thirteenth Dalai Lamas believed that protecting the dharma justified wrathful tantric rituals and military campaigns.<sup>47</sup> Tāranātha had similar views about violence, expressed in his biography as well as the *History of Buddhism in India*.

This is not to say that Buddhism never recognized the moral undesirability of violence. Early Buddhist texts describe a contradiction between political rule and the ideal of world renunciation. Despite the ubiquity of violence and coercion in society, according to Steven Collins, some Buddhist texts did express an ideal of peaceful existence without force.<sup>48</sup> Two modes of political ethics can be found in early

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<sup>43</sup> Nancy Moore Gattelman, "Karma-Bstan-Skyong and the Jesuits," in *Reflections on Tibetan Culture*, ed. Lawrence Epstein and Richard F. Sherburne (Lewiston, NY, 1990), 273–76.

<sup>44</sup> Debreczeny, "Faith and Empire: An Overview," 47.

<sup>45</sup> Templeman, "Seventeenth-Century Tsang," 44.

<sup>46</sup> Debreczeny, "Faith and Empire: An Overview," 19. Sperling, "Orientalism," 319.

<sup>47</sup> Sperling, "Orientalism," 320, 324.

<sup>48</sup> Collins, 417.

Buddhism. One mode justified violence on the grounds of “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.”<sup>49</sup> The other mode asserts that all violence is karmically negative and that kings will therefore inevitably go to hell. There were attempts to reconcile the two modes with an ideal of nonviolent kingship (like Aśoka after his conversion) but it was one impossible in the real world.<sup>50</sup>

Tāranātha took the position that violence is justified on behalf of a Buddhist state, including the use of wrathful tantric rituals. In his autobiography, he frequently praises such rituals to repel *mleccha* armies and evil spirits.<sup>51</sup> He engages in a lengthy defense of the legitimacy of rituals of “direct action” (*mngon spyod kyi las*), in response to gossip that criticized him for performing them.<sup>52</sup> Tāranātha quotes a number of tantras that affirm the legitimacy of wrathful rituals (including *Hevajra* and *Guhyasamāja*).<sup>53</sup> He also appeals to the idea of “ten fields of liberation” (*bsgral ba'i zhing bcu*), or people who can justly be killed by these rites for the greater good. These include teachers and students who undermine the Buddha's teaching; those who insult the Three Jewels; those who harm patrons, lamas, or *ācāryas* (spiritual masters); and breakers of spiritual vows. Tāranātha states that “emptiness is refuted without compassion,” which indicates that wrathful actions should be done for the sake of saving sentient beings, and “never for one's own sake.”<sup>54</sup> However, he also argues that if it is wrong to perform wrathful rituals, then Buddhists would have to renounce accepted rituals like pinning down spirits with the *kila*, throwing *torma* effigies, even performing divination.<sup>55</sup> Tāranātha clearly approved of the use of wrathful rituals in war.

#### *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India*

In the midst of the U-Tsang conflicts, Tāranātha wrote his *History of Buddhism in India* in 1608. Unlike the *Life of the Buddha*, he did not dedicate it to a patron, but wrote it based on his own personal interest.<sup>56</sup> In the dedication, he explains that the intent of his work is to correct

<sup>49</sup> At the extreme, it could justify wars of aggression; the Sri Lankan epic *Mahāvamsa*, states that a king who bloodily conquered Sri Lanka only killed one and a half human beings (a monk and a novice); others slain do not count because they refused to go for refuge to Buddhism. Collins, 416–20.

<sup>50</sup> Collins, 421–22.

<sup>51</sup> For example, Tāranātha, *Tāranātha rnam thar*, 2008, 1:120.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:202–7.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:202–4.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:206.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:207.

<sup>56</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 5, 351–52.

Tibetan scholars' mistaken ideas about India and the origins of the Buddhist dharma:

Here [in Tibet], even the scholars who write records and histories, when they take to discussing India, even if they make their best efforts, demonstrate the very cause of their poverty, like poor people selling merchandise. Since some scholars, when setting forth the origin of the dharma, are seen to make many mistakes, for the sake of others' benefit, I will write briefly an account that removes these mistakes.<sup>57</sup>

In the ending colophon, he additionally explains that he seeks to instill devotion for the dharma and those who worked on its behalf.<sup>58</sup> The work falls into the category of *chöchung*, a genre that arose out of the revival of Buddhism in Tibet, according to Leonard van der Kuijp because "it is possible that with the proliferation of various doctrinal cycles a need was felt to place these in historical perspective and thereby legitimate them."<sup>59</sup> Tāranātha's own understanding of the *History* was that it is inherently auspicious as the story of the Dharma, and that it "led to the fulfillment of all desires."<sup>60</sup> However, Tāranātha did not consider it his most important work, and it is never mentioned in his autobiography, unlike his philosophical and tantric works.<sup>61</sup>

The *History* was originally published by Jonang Monastery, but inside central Tibet, the printing blocks were destroyed after the Fifth Dalai Lama took power in 1642. Some copies survived elsewhere, kept by Tāranātha's recognized incarnations in Mongolia.<sup>62</sup> The first translations by Westerners were published by the German Anton Schiefner and the Russian Vasily Pavlovich Vasil'ev in 1869.<sup>63</sup> Tāranātha's incarnation in Mongolia explained to them the importance of the text.<sup>64</sup> The *History* became well known to modern scholars as a valuable source

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 5. Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung* (Chengdu: Si khron mi rig Dpe skrun khang, 1994), 3, <https://www.tbrc.org/#!rid=W12434>.

<sup>58</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 351. Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 268–69.

<sup>59</sup> Leonard van der Kuijp, "Tibetan Belles-Lettres: The Influence of Daṇḍin and Kṣemendra," in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, ed. José Ignacio Cabezón and Roger Jackson (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1995), 46.

<sup>60</sup> Chattopadhyaya, "Supplementary Notes," xxiii.

<sup>61</sup> Samdhong Rinpoche, "Foreword," in *History of Buddhism in India*, xiv.

<sup>62</sup> Chattopadhyaya, "Supplementary Notes," xxiv.

<sup>63</sup> Chattopadhyaya, "Supplementary Notes," xxv.

<sup>64</sup> V. P. Vasil'ev, "Introduction to the Russian Translation of Tāranātha's History of Buddhism," in *History of Buddhism in India*, 468–70.

on the history of Buddhism and of India, containing political history and folktales not known elsewhere.<sup>65</sup>

Tāranātha uses a wide range of Indian Buddhist sources in his *History*, including some that are only known through his history. For the early genealogies of rulers before Buddha, they include the *Vinaya* and biographies of the Buddha like *Abhiniṣkramaṇa-sūtra* and the *Lalitavistara*. He finds that non-Buddhist texts (such as the epics *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*) contain some historical information, but he largely ignores them because “they are mixed up with all kinds of falsehoods and have no connection with the history of the true dharma.”<sup>66</sup> For later history, he relies on accounts from pandits in India and medieval Indian historical writings.<sup>67</sup> His access to such oral and written sources, combined with his Sanskrit learning, is one of the unique features of his work.<sup>68</sup> These sources include verse works such as the *Buddhapurāṇa* of Indradatta, the writings of Kṣemendrabhadra and Bhaṭṭaḥaṭṭi on royal and religious lineages, and Manomati's *Garland of Flowers* (*Me tog phreng ba*) on the South Indian kings.<sup>69</sup>

How is Tāranātha to be characterized as a historian? Vasil'ev describes the *History* that he translated as something of a disappointment; “not a faithful exposition of something unknown” but a guide to future research, one that might help with some of the scholarly questions of his day, like the dating of the Buddha's life.<sup>70</sup> (Samdhong Rinpoche echoes this assessment: “I entirely agree with V.P. Vasil'ev that the history of Tāranātha is not history as such but history in the sense of a document that calls for further research in history.”<sup>71</sup>) Vasil'ev also characterizes Tāranātha's work as inaccurate due to “the general character of the peoples of the East...who believe in everything miraculous.”<sup>72</sup> and criticizes him (and other Tibetans) for “carrying everything back to antiquity,” for instance attributing tantric practices to Nāgārjuna. However, Vasil'ev still recognizes that Tāranātha uses critical historical methods, dating figures by references to them in

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<sup>65</sup> Samdhong Rinpoche, “Foreword,” xiv. Chattopadhyaya, “Supplementary Notes,” xxvii.

<sup>66</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 19. Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 8.

<sup>67</sup> Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 267–68.

<sup>68</sup> Samdhong Rinpoche, “Foreword,” xii–xiii.

<sup>69</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 350–51. Dan Martin, “Tibetan Histories: Addenda & Corrigenda,” 2014, 69–70, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/yfgql972ocunuuj2/Tibetan%20Histories%20Addenda.doc>. Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 267–68.

<sup>70</sup> Vasil'ev, “Introduction,” 453–56.

<sup>71</sup> Samdhong Rinpoche, “Foreword,” xii.

<sup>72</sup> Vasil'ev, “Introduction,” 456.

other works.<sup>73</sup> This positive judgment of Tāranātha been echoed more recently by Templeman who notes the judgments he makes between conflicting sources.<sup>74</sup> Although legends and miracles do appear in the *History*, Tāranātha confines the work to the conventional level (as opposed to the level of tantric pure vision), giving it a character more similar to modern secular history.<sup>75</sup>

In attempting to relate the *History of Buddhism in India* to Tāranātha's milieu and his own ideas, it is important to raise the question, does he do more than passively reproduce his sources? Western scholars from Victorian times to the present have criticized Tibetan historians for their "cut and paste method." Noting the stylistic differences between Tāranātha's sources, Vasil'ev states that "the Eastern writers never try to pass on anything read by them in their own words; the earliest text, as originally written, is reproduced in toto from one work to another."<sup>76</sup> Tāranātha's historical writings themselves have been copied in this way.<sup>77</sup> His nineteenth-century Orientalism is evident, as more recent scholars including Van der Kuijp have also noted that Tibetan histories interpolate others' work and do not clearly mark quoted passages.<sup>78</sup> Per Sørensen criticizes Tibetan historiography thus: "The cases of plagiarism with page-long quotations, most often uncritically and haphazardly rephrased, are well-nigh legion. Nor is a critical attitude a dominant feature among Tibetan monk-historians."<sup>79</sup> But this fails to give Tāranātha his due. Even if Tāranātha reproduces some Indian sources without much editing, Tāranātha (like all historians) still must contribute his own interpretations in order to coherently narrate the history of Indian Buddhism. In order to do this, he has to reconcile a variety of sources, told from different perspectives in different eras. They are especially diverse in the case of the Aśoka narrative.<sup>80</sup> In dealing with the early vinaya councils, Tāranātha likewise faces the problem of conflicting authorities, and he interprets them in a manner consistent with his own tradition's interpretation of the transmission of

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<sup>73</sup> Vasil'ev, "Introduction," 457–59.

<sup>74</sup> David Templeman, "Taranatha the Historian," *The Tibet Journal* 6, no. 2 (1981): 42–43.

<sup>75</sup> Samdhong Rinpoche, "Foreword," xiii. Chattopadhyaya, "Supplementary Notes," xxvii.

<sup>76</sup> Vasil'ev, "Introduction," 456.

<sup>77</sup> Templeman, "Taranatha the Historian," 42.

<sup>78</sup> van der Kuijp, "Tibetan Belles-Lettres: The Influence of Daṇḍin and Kṣemendra," 49.

<sup>79</sup> Per K. Sørensen, *The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies: Tibetan Buddhist Historiography* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1994), 12. Sørensen notes some exceptions among Tibetan historians, but does not mention Tāranātha.

<sup>80</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 362–63.

vinaya into Tibet.<sup>81</sup> In the case of later Indian Buddhism, there is much less of a traditional narrative to draw upon, so Tāranātha needs to do more original work to piece together the later Indian sources. In constructing the overall historical narrative, choosing what to emphasize, and offering assessments, Tāranātha's own concerns enter into the *History of Buddhism in India*.

#### *Tāranātha and Indian Pandits*

A major influence on Tāranātha's historical writings was the Indian travelers he encountered, who made him more cognizant of the current situation of Indian Buddhism. In the early seventeenth century, links between Tibet and India had diminished, due to the near disappearance of Buddhism in India, but they had by no means closed. Bengali writings confirm that there were still Buddhist communities in India in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, long after the destruction of Nālandā.<sup>82</sup> A few Indian pilgrims, mostly Hindu, came through Lhasa en route to pilgrimage sites like Mount Kailash.<sup>83</sup> Tāranātha's connections to India were formative to his identity. His *Secret Biography* states that he learned Indian languages as a young child without a teacher, and two Indian yogis in a dream gave him the Sanskrit name Tāranātha.<sup>84</sup> Many other contacts with and visions of Indian yogis are detailed in his biography; one great Kashmiri pandit appeared in a dream to warn of the coming war.<sup>85</sup> Tibetans often looked to Indians as authenticators of Tibetan Buddhist lineages, and few Tibetans looked to India more than Tāranātha.<sup>86</sup> Templeman has even suggested that the *History of Buddhism in India* was less about Buddhist doctrine than Tāranātha's idealized vision of India.<sup>87</sup>

Tāranātha was unique among Tibetan scholars for his scholarly conversations with Indian pandits, whose knowledge he valued regardless of whether or not they were Buddhist.<sup>88</sup> Among the pandits he met were Purṇānanda and Pryāmānanda, who "held Buddhist tenets, but also were greatly devoted to practicing their ancestors' religions traditions, and honored one or two *tīrthika* [non-Buddhist] gods;

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 370–72.

<sup>82</sup> Giuseppe Tucci, "The Sea and Land Travels of a Buddhist Sadhu in the Sixteenth Century," *Indian Historical Quarterly* 7, no. 4 (December 1931): 683–84.

<sup>83</sup> Templeman, "A World Upside Down," 24–25.

<sup>84</sup> Samdhong Rinpoche, "Foreword," xiii.

<sup>85</sup> Tāranātha, *Tāranātha rnam thar*, 2008, 1:227–28.

<sup>86</sup> James Burnell Robinson, "The Lives of Indian Buddhist Saints," in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, 57.

<sup>87</sup> Templeman, "Taranatha the Historian," 44.

<sup>88</sup> Templeman, "A World Upside Down," 24–25.



therefore [Tāranātha] did not receive teachings or empowerments from them." Tāranātha was willing to learn Sanskrit grammar and read with them the *Rāmāyāna* and *Mahābhārata*, but he resisted their calls to worship the gods of the epics like Hanuman.<sup>89</sup> What remained of Indian Buddhism was losing its distinctiveness within broader South Asian religious currents. Nevertheless, Tāranātha met real practitioners of tantric Buddhism including his guru Buddhaguptanātha, the subject of a biography he wrote.<sup>90</sup> Buddhaguptanātha was from the nonmonastic Nāthapanthi school, a tradition that originally had a connection to Buddhism, and his practices were quite close to Śaiva tantric practices.<sup>91</sup> Tāranātha also corresponded with such figures as the Buddhist yogi Changaśrī from South India who followed the Mahāyāna, and king Balabhadra of the kingdom of Badua in the Vindhya hills (in modern-day Madhya Pradesh), who desired to revive tantric Buddhism.<sup>92</sup> Tucci speculates that these yogis may have influenced him to espouse a monistic philosophical view, closer to Hinduism than Buddhism.<sup>93</sup> As explained above, Tāranātha also relied on conversations with pandits, and the Indian sources to which they introduced him, in writing the *History of Indian Buddhism*. Tāranātha's contacts with Indian religious practitioners were an additional influence on his understanding of politics, giving him a more international perspective on how the fate of Buddhism was intertwined with rulers and armies.

<sup>89</sup> Tāranātha, *Tāranātha rnam thar*, 2008, 1:133. Van der Kuijp, "Tibetan Belles-Lettres: The Influence of Dañḍin and Kṣemendra," 399, 405n3. Samdhong Rinpoche, "Foreword," xiii.

<sup>90</sup> Tāranātha, *Grub chen buddha gupta'i rnam thar rje btsun nyid kyi zhal lung las gzhan du rang rtog gi dri mas ma sbags pa'i yi ge yang dag pa*, vol. 34, Gsung 'bum (Dpe bsdur ma) (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2008).

<sup>91</sup> Drime, "Buddhagupta-Natha." Tucci, "Buddhist Sadhu," 686. Drime compares the nonmonastic nature of the tradition to the Newar Buddhism of the Kathmandu Valley, whose practices often resemble Hinduism. Founded by Gorakṣa Gorakhnātha, the Nāthapanthis and their practice of *haṭhayaoga* were an important influence on modern yoga. Tucci, 685–88. See also David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body: Siddha Traditions in Modern India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

<sup>92</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, xii–xiv.

<sup>93</sup> Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1949), 91. However, the *shentong* view of emptiness was originally propounded by Dolpopa in the fourteenth century and critiqued by Khedrupjé in the *Stong thun chen mo* (1420s) well before Tāranātha. Mkhas grub Dge legs dpal bzang po and José Ignacio Cabezón, *A Dose of Emptiness: An Annotated Translation of the STong Thun Chen Mo of MKhas-Grub DGe-Legs-Dpal-Bzang* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 6, 48–49.

*Kings in the History of Indian Buddhism*

Although the subject of *History of Buddhism in India* is the dharma rather than politics, the structure of the work expresses the centrality of kings to the history of Buddhism.<sup>94</sup> Tāranātha's table of contents outlines the royal genealogies around which the work is organized: four descendants of Ajātaśatru, four descendants of Aśoka, nineteen members of the "Candra dynasty", fourteen Pālas, and so forth.<sup>95</sup> He lists *ācāryas*, *arhats*, Mahāyāna saints and finally tantric teachers only after the kings.<sup>96</sup> The majority of chapters are organized based on the reigns of kings. Even though Tāranātha explains that "I will only tell the story of deeds performed for the dharma," and that he has no interest in the genealogies of non-Buddhist kings "because they have no connection with the history of the true dharma" this does not mean he ignores politics entirely.<sup>97</sup> Clearly, he considers political patrons important to the spread of the dharma. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya criticizes him for praising them excessively; in Chattopadhyaya's view, Buddhism declined when the elite focused on patrons rather than ordinary people.<sup>98</sup> Of course, Tāranātha saw the importance of patrons to Buddhism in a different light. His attitude toward rulers is revealed in tropes that recur throughout the *History*. The best kings are those who pay due respect to monks, build shrines and monasteries, convert their kingdoms to Buddhism, allowed the teachings of great masters to flourish, and help resolve disputes within the sangha. Secondarily, they are may be generous to their subjects. It is justifiable, in Tāranātha's view, for them to resort to violence on the battlefield or in ritual against the enemies of Buddhism.

Kingship is not always portrayed in a good light, as Tāranātha recognizes that kings can be arbitrary and cruel. As Buddhists have long recognized, being a ruler contrasts with the ideal life of a spiritual master. But his harshest blame is reserved for kings who attack the dharma. The worst offenders are *tīrthikas* (adherents of other South Asian religions, usually Hindu) and *mlecchas* ("barbarians," generally equated with Muslims), although inter-Buddhist sectarianism is also a problem. Much of Tāranātha's *History* depicts a centuries-long struggle between the Buddhist dharma and what he sees as false dharmas, fought by kings, armies, and black magic.

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<sup>94</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 6–19.

<sup>95</sup> Of course, the chronology does not match modern historiography except very approximately; Tāranātha does not clearly distinguish the Maurya and Gupta dynasties, mythical kings are included, and so forth.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 6–19.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>98</sup> Chattopadhyaya, "Supplementary Notes."

*The virtuous dharma king*

In the story of king Gopāla, the founder of the Pāla dynasty, Tāranātha portrays kingship as necessary to avoid anarchy. Early in his life, Gopāla had been blessed by a Buddhist monk to obtain a kingdom and became a *siddha*.<sup>99</sup> At a certain time in Bengal, “since many years had gone by without a king, the people were unhappy and suffering. So all the chiefs gathered together, discussed, and appointed a king in order to be protected by the law of the land.”<sup>100</sup> However, a *nāginī* terrorized the kingdom, killing a king every night as he was appointed daily, until Gopāla killed her by invoking his tutelary deity. Gopāla obtained the throne permanently, then became a major conqueror and spread Pāla rule widely, creating an empire that supported Buddhism.<sup>101</sup> This story demonstrates Tāranātha believed a Buddhist ruling power, is necessary to establish a minimum of order and create conditions conducive to the spread of Buddhism.

To Tāranātha, a great dharma king is one who pays respect to monks, supports the teaching of the great philosophers and teachers, and patronizes the sangha by building temples and monasteries, enshrining relics, and so forth. Ajātaśatru, the king of Magadha after the Buddha’s death, fulfilled this ideal by “for five years, mak[ing] offerings bestowing all kinds of goods on five thousand arhats.”<sup>102</sup> A similar description applies to many Buddhist king after him. Such generosity was commonplace until Buddhism’s final decline in India, so that routine patronage was not enough to be a great dharma king. Of the late Pāla dynasty, prior to the Muslim conquest, Tāranātha says “during the reign of these three kings, the dharma was looked after as in previous times, but they are not counted in the ranks of the Seven [great Pāla kings] because they didn’t do anything especially wonderful.”<sup>103</sup>

More important than patronage is conversion, when the ruler is persuaded and persuades others in turn to support Buddhism over rival religions. In Tāranātha’s account, the dharma makes little impact on a region unless the king converts and puts the state’s resources at the religion’s disposal. The most famous convert Aśoka fulfills the Buddha’s prophecy, “you shall cover the earth with stupas which are empowered with the essence of the relics of the Tathāgata,” and thus propagates the dharma throughout Asia.<sup>104</sup> Tāranātha’s narratives of

<sup>99</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 257.

<sup>100</sup> Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 246.

<sup>101</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 257–58. Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 247.

<sup>102</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 22. Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 10–11.

<sup>103</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 312. Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 310.

<sup>104</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 60–63. Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 46.

outlying regions repeat a similar story: Buddhist monks go to a certain place, for instance Sri Lanka,<sup>105</sup> South India<sup>106</sup>, even Tibet<sup>107</sup> and convert the king, who thereafter establishes the dharma through his patronage of the sangha. Tibet even makes an appearance in a conversion narrative, when Tri Songdetsen invites Buddhaghya to preach tantric texts.

Even when Tāranātha shifts his focus to Buddhist scholars, kings are key to promoting their teachings. To name two: Dignāga, though living as a forest ascetic, spread Buddhism greatly in South India by converting kings and ministers who knew of his reputation,<sup>108</sup> and Śāntideva served as the adviser to king Pañcasimha, encouraging him “to rule the kingdom according to the dharma.”<sup>109</sup> Buddhist masters often engaged in debates with non-Buddhists before kings and their victories converted kingdoms. Nālandā monastery and the ruler Pradyota sponsored a debate between the famous Hindu philosopher Śaṅkarācārya and Dharmakīrti, and Śaṅkarācārya lost decisively (needless to say, Tāranātha’s sources have a pro-Buddhist bias). He was said to have drowned himself in the Gaṅgā, after which Dharmakīrti won numerous converts.<sup>110</sup> Organized magical contests with non-Buddhists similarly inspired conversions, like one in which *tīrthikas* painted colored mandalas in the sky and Śāntideva destroyed them.<sup>111</sup> The transmission of teachings like Mahāyāna and tantra are an exception to the pattern of royal conversion, as they initially remained hidden from the public according to traditional Buddhist narratives. But even then, Tāranātha sees royal sponsorship as necessary for the spread of the teaching, as when a king built five hundred temples for the five hundred preachers of Mahāyāna.<sup>112</sup> The later spread of tantra also depended on kings, as when Bālasundara sent scholars to revive the teachings of tantra, including the Kālacakra.<sup>113</sup> Royal assistance is necessary to disseminate such teachings beyond a handful of secret initiates.

Good kings also employ Buddhist masters to perform magical and tantric practices for protection of the state and the dharma. One lay tantric adept offered his services to a king Śubhāsāra to overcome famine and disease and achieve prosperity.<sup>114</sup> But the most common

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<sup>105</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 334.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>107</sup> This is one of Tibet’s few appearances in Tāranātha’s history. *Ibid.*, 282.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 184–85.

<sup>109</sup> Tāranātha *History of Buddhism in India*, 216. Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 202.

<sup>110</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 232–33.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 219–20.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 97–98.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 331.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

benefit is military success. Tāranātha portrays a “who’s who” of famous Buddhist philosophers as using tantric or magical means against invading armies, often followers of the *mleccha* religion.<sup>115</sup>

As [Asaṅga] was preaching dharma, the Garlok army arrived. Having instructed those who were hearing the dharma to generate forbearance, all of them remained in meditation. All the arrows they shot turned to dust. The head of the Garloks struck the teacher [Asaṅga] with a sword but did not harm him, and the sword itself broke into eight pieces.<sup>116</sup>

Candrakīrti likewise “did extraordinary deeds like turning back the *turuṣka* [‘Turk’] armies while riding on a stone lion.”<sup>117</sup> At a time when Vikramaśīla monastery was in serious peril from invading *turuṣkas*, according to Tāranātha, Kamalarakṣita used magical methods against them. As he led a group of yogis to perform a *gaṇacakra* ceremony, they were attacked by an army led by a *turuṣka* king, who tried to rob the ritual materials. Kamalarakṣita responded:

The teacher [Kamalarakṣita] was angry and threw the vase which was full of tantrically blessed water. Immediately very high winds arose and men in black brandishing knives were seen coming from the wind and attacking the *turuṣkas*. The minister himself spewed forth blood and died and the others acquired various diseases.<sup>118</sup>

Tāranātha clearly saw the use of wrathful rituals as justified against the opponents of Buddhism, and the same was true of physical violence. Śrīharṣa (Harsha, who ruled from 606 to 647 in northern India and defeated the Huns),<sup>119</sup> is considered by Tāranātha to be “a king without rival” for his determination to destroy the *mleccha* religion:

In some of the districts outside Multana, he built a wooden house as a *masita* [perhaps meaning madrassa], that is a great congregation of the *mlecchas*. For many months, he gave them all necessities. He also collected all the books of their tradition, then burned them all in a fire. 1012 followers of the *mleccha* doctrine were burned....because of such

<sup>115</sup> The identity of such groups as *turuṣkas* and Garloks will be discussed below, as Tāranātha uses a number of terms for Muslim peoples.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 165. Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 148.

<sup>117</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 199. Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 184.

<sup>118</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 328. Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 314.

<sup>119</sup> Xuanzang and others record that Harsha was a devout Buddhist, and frequently conflicted with other Indian religions (although references to Islam are clearly anachronistic). John Keay, *India: A History* (London, 2000), 160–67.

destruction by that king, the activity of the religion of the Persians (*stag gzig*) and *sokpos* (*sog po*)<sup>120</sup> diminished for a hundred years.<sup>121</sup>

Tāranātha acknowledges this act of murder to be karmically negative act, but one Śrīharṣa could atone for by building Buddhist monasteries around his kingdom.<sup>122</sup>

*The dark side of political rule*

At times, Tāranātha portrays kingship as an obstacle to the ascetic life. Śāntideva was intended to inherit his father's throne, but he received a vision in a dream: "Mañjuśrī was sitting on the throne of the ruler and said 'Oh son! This is my seat. I am your spiritual friend [*dge ba'i bshes gnyen*]. It would be highly improper for us to sit on the same seat."<sup>123</sup> In another vision, Tārā poured hot water over him, saying: "A kingdom is an unbearable hot spring of hell. I consecrate you with this [hot water]."<sup>124</sup> Śāntideva ran away, took Buddhist teachings from a forest yogi, and eventually became the advisor of a king, but this career also became unsuitable:

Because of his advice to rule the kingdom according to the dharma, the other ministers were jealous. They said, 'This one is deceitful toward the king. He has no more than a wooden sword.' The king said, 'All the ministers must show their swords.'... [Śāntideva spoke] 'If you say so, I will show it.' The left eye of the king was blinded by the sword's light. Then [Śāntideva] was known to have attained *siddhi*. After he instructed [the king] in the twenty grounds of the Buddhist dharma, by which to rule according to dharma, he departed for the central country [Magadha].<sup>125</sup>

He stayed out of politics from then on and lived the life of an ascetic teacher. This story falls into a long tradition in Buddhism of critiquing kingship as contrary to religious practice, as it entails negative intentions and actions like violence and greed for power.

A number of kings in the *History* exemplify the evils that rulers are capable of. Tāranātha portrays Aśoka, prior to his conversion to Buddhism, as a surprising exemplar of cruel kingship. Besides his famously bloody wars of conquest, he engaged in animal sacrifice and

<sup>120</sup> For more on the identity of these peoples, see below. *Sokpo* does not mean Mongolians, but a central Asian group.

<sup>121</sup> Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 161–62.

<sup>122</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 178–79.

<sup>123</sup> Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 201.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.* Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 215.

<sup>125</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 216. Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 202.

even human sacrifice. He constructed a torture chamber known as Aśoka's Hell where he killed people for the sheer pleasure of it.<sup>126</sup> He attempted to kill an arhat (among the worst Buddhist sins), but miraculously failed to draw a drop of blood.<sup>127</sup> It was at that point that he realized the power of the Buddhist dharma and repented. These stories became part of the standard Aśoka narrative in Indian Buddhism (found in texts like the *Divyāvadāna* and *Aśokāvadāna*), intended to demonstrate the power of the dharma when he eventually converted.<sup>128</sup> Many other kings, invariably non-Buddhists, are noted by Tāranātha for their violence and cruelty. King Saraṇa is typical as one whose devotion to "false views" led him to attempt a human sacrifice of 108 men in fire, thwarted by a Buddhist's prayers to Tārā.<sup>129</sup> Tāranātha depicts non-Buddhist forms of tantra and magic, as having powers similar to Buddhist tantra, while used for evil:

The Brahmin master Canaka<sup>130</sup> meditated and gazed on the faces of Mahākāla and Yamantaka, and the force of his spells became very great. He killed the kings and ministers of about 16 large cities through wrathful action [*mngon spyod kyi las*]. Meanwhile, the king with his army conquered up to the eastern and western ocean.<sup>131</sup>

As a result of evil actions like this, also including rendering people insane, and other acts of murder and torture, he was eventually reborn in hell.<sup>132</sup> The founding of the barbarian *mleccha* religion also involves the use of magic to ill ends.<sup>133</sup>

*Mlecchas at the gates: narratives of barbarian invaders*

Kings and armies who follow the *mleccha* dharma are one of the greatest threats to Buddhism, according to Tāranātha. In describing them, Tāranātha uses semantically overlapping terminology that lumps many groups together as stereotypical enemies of Buddhism. In addition to *mleccha*, he also uses such terms as *turuṣka*, Turk; *tazik* (*stag gzig*),

<sup>126</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 53–56.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 55–56.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 53n21.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

<sup>130</sup> This may be a reference to Cāṇakya, the purported author of the *Arthaśāstra*, whose legendarily Machiavellian advice helped Chandragupta Maurya rise to establish the Maurya empire. This event takes place in the narrative long after the Maurya dynasty, but Tāranātha's chronology is often confused in any case. L. N Rangarajan, "Introduction," in *The Arthashastra* (Gurgaon: Penguin Books, 1987), 6–8.

<sup>131</sup> Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 115.

<sup>132</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 130.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

Persian; and even *sokpo* (*sog po*), which does not refer to Mongolians but central Asian nomads.<sup>134</sup> These words allude to the Persian and Turkic origin of the Muslim conquerors of India, and also to earlier central Asian invaders (Sogdians, Huns, and so on).

*Mleccha* — Tāranātha uses the Sanskrit term *mleccha* (*kla klo* in Tibetan) to refer to barbarians and their foreign religion.<sup>135</sup> The term *mleccha* should not be seen as synonymous with Muslims, although Tibetans and Indians most often associated the term with the Muslim conquerors. In Tuken Losang Chökyi Nyima's *Grubtha* (*Grub mtha'*), a systematic survey of religious tenets, *mlecchas* are described as people who reject the dharma completely.<sup>136</sup> Modern Tibetan dictionaries also define *kla klo* not as Muslim, but more generally as cruel people who do not follow morality, and reject Buddhist doctrines like rebirth and karma.<sup>137</sup> *Mleccha* in Sanskrit came to be a generic term for Arabs or Muslims.<sup>138</sup> In his other writings, Tāranātha uses the word *mleccha* in association with Muslims; in the biography of Buddhagupta he describes the yogi's travels in the "land of *mlecchas*" to Ghazni in Uddiyana (modern-day Afghanistan).<sup>139</sup>

Tāranātha's use of the term *mleccha* resonates with the apocalyptic narrative found in the *Kālacakratantra*, a text that is not extensively discussed in *History of Buddhism in India* but is a focus of Tāranātha's other scholarship. This narrative is centered on a final battle between the *cakravartin* hero and *mlecchas*, analogized to an inner battle between virtue and vice.<sup>140</sup> The *mlecchas* wear white robes, kill animals and eat meat, and have a dharma of violence as contrasted with Buddhist non-violence.<sup>141</sup> They are Persian in origin, and their characteristic belief is that there is a creator god Rahman (a name for God in Islam), who determines one's fate in the afterlife.<sup>142</sup> The climax of the *Kālacakra* narrative occurs when the ideal Buddhist kingdom of Shambhala defeats

<sup>134</sup> L. A. Waddell, "A 16th Century Account of Indian Buddhist Shrines by an Indian Buddhist Yogi, Translated from the Tibetan," *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1893.

<sup>135</sup> Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 179, 208.

<sup>136</sup> José Ignacio Cabezón, "Islam in the Tibetan Cultural Sphere," in *Islam in Tibet: Tibetan Caravans*, ed. Abdul Wahid Radhu (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 1997), 19.

<sup>137</sup> Blo bzang 'phrin las, ed., "Kla klo," in *Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo* (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2002); Zhang Yisun, ed., "Kla klo," in *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (Beijing: Mi rig dpe skrun khang, 1985).

<sup>138</sup> Pushpa Prasad, "The Turuška or Turks in Late Ancient Indian Documents," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 55 (1994): 173.

<sup>139</sup> Tucci, "Buddhist Sadhu," 688.

<sup>140</sup> Vesna A. Wallace, *The Kālacakratantra: The Chapter on the Individual* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 59–61.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 147–48.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.



*mlecchas* in an apocalyptic battle. According to Johann Elverskog, the text “claims that Muslims [i.e. *mlecchas*] will threaten the Dharma, so that the final eschatological battle will be between the twenty-fifth and final ruler of Shambhala, Kulika Rudra Cakrin, who will ride forth with his Buddhist army and annihilate the Muslims and usher in a new golden age of the Dharma.”<sup>143</sup> The myth of Shambhala has been repeatedly appropriated in different challenging circumstances in Buddhist history. The tantric Buddhist communities that originally composed the text, in Kashmir or northern Pakistan around 1000 CE, were threatened by the advance of Muslim. But in more recent times, the *mlecchas* have been associated with the British, Russians, even Chinese Communists and Nazis.<sup>144</sup> Looking at India where Islam was in ascendancy and only a few remnants of the dharma remained, Tāranātha may have seen echoes of the near victory of the *mlecchas* before Kulika Rudra Cakrin’s triumph.<sup>145</sup> Accordingly, his *History* promotes a still-popular narrative that blames Muslims for the demise of Buddhism.<sup>146</sup>

*Turuṣka* in the Tibetan text of the *History* is a straightforward transliteration of the Sanskrit, meaning “Turk.”<sup>147</sup> It is used more or less interchangeably with *tazik*, often anachronistically for earlier central Asian conquerors.<sup>148</sup> In Islamic literature, the term Turk was usually associated with nomadic peoples in contrast with “Tajik” (Persian) sedentary farmers; neither term was a strict ethnic name at first.<sup>149</sup> The name Turk (*turuṣka*) does not appear in Sanskrit until the ninth century, and eventually came to be a generic term for Muslims in Sanskrit, due to the Turkish origins of Muslim rulers like the Delhi sultans.<sup>150</sup> Later on, based on the anti-Muslim prophecies of the *Kālacakratantra*, Mongolian Buddhists described Turks as “a people without the pure majestic dharma,” demonstrating an enduring association between them and *mlecchas*.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Johan Elverskog, “Maitreya, Shambhala, and the End of Buddhist Empire,” in *Faith and Empire*, 213–27.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>145</sup> Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim, “Islam and Tibet: Cultural Interactions - An Introduction,” in *Islam and Tibet: Interactions along the Musk Routes*, ed. Anna Akasoy, Charles Burnett, and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2011), 13.

<sup>146</sup> Johan Elverskog, “Ritual Theory across the Buddhist-Muslim Divide in Late Imperial China,” in *Islam and Tibet*, 294.

<sup>147</sup> Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 184.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>149</sup> Joo-yup Lee, “The Historical Meaning of the Term Turk and the Nature of the Turkic Identity of the Chinggisid and Timurid Elites in Post-Mongol Central Asia,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 19, no. 1 (2016): 101–32.

<sup>150</sup> Prasad, “The Turuṣka or Turks in Late Ancient Indian Documents,” 171.

<sup>151</sup> Elverskog, “Ritual Theory,” 299.

*Garlok* (*gar log*) ordinarily refers to a subgroup of Turks who clashed with Tibetans in the post-imperial period, although Tāranātha uses the word to denote a group supposedly fought by Asaṅga, much earlier in Tibetan history.<sup>152</sup> Tibetan encyclopedias say that the Garloks were Turkic and come from *khache* (which specifically means Kashmir, but is often a generic term for a Muslim country). According to Karl Ryavec, the Garloks are the Qarakhanid Turks who converted to Islam in 934.<sup>153</sup> Their king fought against the Gugé kingdom in the time of Atiśa and killed Lha Lama Yeshé Ö (947–1024). Dungkar Losang Trinley speculates that the name is a corruption of “caliph,” although this does not appear to be a widespread interpretation.<sup>154</sup> In this case, it appears still more strongly that Tāranātha is subconsciously projecting back a more recent, history of Tibetan-Muslim conflict onto the Indian past.

*Tazik* (*stag gzig*), according to Tibetan dictionaries refers to Iran/Persia, or sometimes Afghanistan, and their inhabitants, and Tāranātha uses it more or less interchangeably with *turuška*.<sup>155</sup> According to the *Encyclopedia Iranica*, the Turkish term *tazik* or *tajik* originally referred to Arabs in the ninth century, and specifically to a group that played a major role in the early Muslim conquests. Adopted into Sanskrit and other languages, the term was later extended to Persians in the eleventh century (without always clearly distinguishing them from other groups), and eventually came to refer to the culturally Persian group known today as Tajiks.<sup>156</sup> The Turks, for their part, used *tajik* as a generic term for Muslims, as the first Muslims they encountered were Iranians.<sup>157</sup> Tibetans used the term *tazik* from the time they occupied Dunhuang (late eighth to early ninth century), referring generically to Arabs or Muslims as a group.<sup>158</sup> As a word for a country, *tazik* was first used by Tibetans for the Abbasid empire (750–1258), which made incursions from Persia into the northern subcontinent.<sup>159</sup> In

<sup>152</sup> Whether Tāranātha intended to refer to a specific Turkic group is unclear. In a note, Chattopadhyaya explains this is a usual Tibetan translation for *turuška*. Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 165.

<sup>153</sup> Karl Ernest Ryavec, *A Historical Atlas of Tibet* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 81.

<sup>154</sup> Pema Dorjé, “Gar log,” in *Dag yig gsar bsgrigs* (Xining: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2003).

<sup>155</sup> Zhang Yisun, ed., “Ta zig,” in *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*; Blo bzang ‘phrin las, “Stag gzig,” in *Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo*.

<sup>156</sup> John Perry, “Tajik,” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2009, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/tajik-i-the-ethnonym-origins-and-application>.

<sup>157</sup> Wallace, *Kālacakratanta*, 225n50.

<sup>158</sup> Yoeli-Tlalim, “Introduction,” 1–3.

<sup>159</sup> Dan Martin, “Greek and Islamic Medicines’ Historical Contact with Tibet,” in *Islam and Tibet*, 126.

Tāranātha's usage, and presumably that of his Indian sources, it is just another term for *mlecchas*, and he makes no attempt to really distinguish them from Turks, or other groups.

*Sokpo* (*sog po*) ordinarily refers to Mongolians, but Tāranātha describes the *mleccha* religion as "religion of the *taziks* and *sokpos*," reflecting an older usage of *sokpo*<sup>160</sup> Chattopadhyaya translates *sokpo* as *turuṣka* and interprets it as a reference to Sakas, Śakeras, or Sogdians, the Iranian peoples who resided in Central Asia (modern day Uzbekistan) prior to the Turks.<sup>161</sup> According to Gentry, the term *sokpo* originally referred to Sogdians; according to the *Tsikdzö Chenmo*, it also once referred to Iran and Turkestan. The term became associated with Mongols when they rose to power in the thirteenth century.<sup>162</sup> Although the Mongols encountered by Tibetans were not Muslims, they were often described by Tibetans as *mlecchas*.<sup>163</sup> It is not clear how conscious Tāranātha was of the overlapping meanings of *sokpo*, but it is clear that he considered invading Mongols a threat to the true dharma, like the *mlecchas* of old, and an equally legitimate target for wrathful tantric rituals.

The rise of the *mleccha* religion and the military campaigns of its followers are portrayed by Tāranātha as destructive to Buddhism over the course of its history, although it is difficult to make sense of the chronology from the point of view of modern historiography. Tāranātha alludes to Islam in his account of the origins of the *mleccha* religion, while placing it long before Islam arose or came to India, and lumps Muslims together with from nomadic groups who followed other religions. This is reminiscent of how European missionaries, when they first encountered Buddhism, did not distinguish it from other forms of "idolatry."<sup>164</sup> He depicts the *mleccha* religion as an evil inversion of the dharma, created by turncoat Buddhists and the wiles of Māra:

There was once one named Shönnu Dé [Gzhon nu'i sde], who was very learned and understood the sutras, but lacked faith. He broke the precepts and was expelled from the sangha, so he was very angry. It is said that he created a religion able to compete with the Buddha's teaching. He went beyond Tokhara [Afghanistan] to the country of

<sup>160</sup> Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 168.

<sup>161</sup> In this case, the translation is "Turuṣka", the only place where that term does not represent the Sanskrit word. Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 208.

<sup>162</sup> Gentry, "Representations of Efficacy," 155n7; Zhang Yisun, ed., "Sog po," in *Bod rgya tshig mādzod chen mo*.

<sup>163</sup> An example can be found in the writings of the Fifth Dalai Lama. Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations*, 98–99.

<sup>164</sup> See Philip C. Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

Śulika.<sup>165</sup> He took the name of Māmathar [i.e., Muhammad] and changed his dress, then composed the *mleccha* dharma which preaches that doing harm is the dharma. He hid it in the place of the great demon of the lineage of *asuras*, Biślimilil [i.e. *bismillah*, the Arabic blessing “in the name of God”]. He was blessed by Māra and obtained many knowledge mantras for victory in battle and so forth.<sup>166</sup>

Another man named Baikhampa<sup>167</sup> then became Māmathar’s disciple under the guidance of Māra:

Having gone to the city of Mecca [*ma kha*], and the surrounding areas, he taught the false dharma to the brahmans and *kṣatriyas*, and because of this, the royal lineages of Saida and Turuṣka arose.<sup>168</sup>

Māmathar is a common Sanskrit rendering of Mohammad, while the name Baikhampa comes from the Persian word *paygambar*, which means “Prophet.”<sup>169</sup> Tāranātha places this narrative within the chapter on Nāgārjuna (according to modern historians, thought to have lived in the second or third century CE), so that the *mleccha* challenge appears early in his history of Buddhism.

Soon after the creation of the *mleccha* dharma, the *taziks* and *turuṣkas* caused much destruction in Magadha including Nālandā Monastery, although this was quickly reversed by the Buddhists.<sup>170</sup> Around the time of Aśaṅga (fourth century), king Śrīharsa (who actually lived later, in the seventh century) murdered the *mleccha* teachers in Multan, causing their influence to decline.<sup>171</sup> But they had returned by the time of Candrakīrti (seventh century), posing an aggressive threat that required magical means of defense in response.<sup>172</sup> While these episodes predate Islam, perhaps Tāranātha or his sources have in mind Central Asian conquerors like the Sakas, Indo-Scythians, or Huns. They may

<sup>165</sup> The location of Śulika is unclear.

<sup>166</sup> Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 103–4. Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 117–18.

<sup>167</sup> This name comes from the Persian word *paygambar*, which means “Prophet.” Yoeli-Tlalim, “Introduction,” 14.

<sup>168</sup> Saida is perhaps *Sa'id* (a common Arabic name) or *Sayyid* (descendants of Muhammad). Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 118. Tāranātha, *Rgya Gar Chos 'byung*, 105.

<sup>169</sup> Yoeli-Tlalim, “Introduction,” 14.

<sup>170</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 137–38. Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 120–21. Vasi'lev dates these invasions to the time of the Indo-Scythians, in the the 1st or 2nd centuries CE; this date roughly fits Tāranātha’s chronology, though Nālanda’s supposed existence is anachronistic.

<sup>171</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 178.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 178–229.

also have in mind the initial appearance of Muslims in the northwest of the continent, placing it earlier than it actually occurred in history.

Throughout the Pāla era (eighth to twelfth century), Tāranātha portrays Bengal as being frequently assailed by *turuṣkas*, placing the arrival of Muslims several centuries before it actually occurred.<sup>173</sup> His account of the defeat of Buddhists at the end of the dynasty more closely corresponds to events recognized by modern history.<sup>174</sup> The final collapse of royally sponsored Buddhism took place as the *turuṣkas* “subjugated all the country of Magadha, killed many monks at Odantapuri monastery, destroyed it and Vikramaśilā, and constructed a *tazik* fortress in the remains of Odantapuri.”<sup>175</sup> Nālandā continued with a small number of followers, under the last remnants of Buddhist royal patronage, but Buddhist kings in India had lost power for good to *mlecchas* and *tīrthikas*, and at this time Tāranātha’s narrative ends.<sup>176</sup>

The ultimate effect of *mleccha* invasion, according to Tāranātha, is that it eliminates the conditions under which Buddhism thrives and spreads, by cutting off its patronage. Despite the imprecise chronology and terminology, the exact identity of the invaders or of the *mleccha dharma* does not matter to Tāranātha’s narrative: they were foreign, and they were seen as hostile to Buddhism. The ideal Buddhist king, like Kulika Rudra Cakrin in the *Kālacakrantra*, is one who can meet the threat of Buddhism being besieged by barbarian invaders and their alien religion.

*Other threats to Buddhism: Tīrthikas and internal dissension*

Although Tāranātha encourages the enduringly popular narrative that Muslims were responsible for Buddhism’s decline in India, Tāranātha does not make Muslims the exclusive scapegoat. *Tīrthikas* rulers too (mainly Hindus) are depicted as persecutors of the dharma at times, conducting actions contrary to dharma like animal and human sacrifice.<sup>177</sup> At the same time that the *mleccha* dharma was first becoming a threat to Buddhism, *tīrthikas* under King Puṣyamitra invaded Buddhist lands and destroyed monasteries.<sup>178</sup> *Tīrthikas* and brahmins were taking over by at the end of the Pāla dynasty, and Buddhists changed their loyalties: “at that time the yogis who were followers of Gorakṣa

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 295, 304, 443–44.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 318–19.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 319; Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 307. According to modern historians, the general Bakhtiyar Kilji of the Delhi Sultan Qutb al-Din Aibak led this invasion, which took place shortly after 1200. Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 442.

<sup>176</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 320.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 224.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 121.

were for the most part very foolish, and for the sake of the riches from the *tīrthika* kings, became the followers of Īśvara [or Śiva], and said 'we have no quarrel with the *turuṣkas* anymore'<sup>179</sup> Tāranātha does not portray Hindus as "the Other" to the same degree as Muslims, and sometimes they were converted through debate or magical competition, as described above. But Tāranātha still portrays *tīrthika* rulers as dangerous enemies of Buddhism who can lure Buddhists astray from the true dharma, if Buddhists succumb to their own weakness.

Buddhists are also threatened by their own internal dissension, according to Tāranātha, and good Buddhist rulers resolve these disputes. This was especially true in Buddhism's early days, marked by internal conflicts among patrons and the monasteries. Ajātaśātru divided Ānanda's relics to avoid conflict between warring groups (the Licchavis and the state of Magadha), as the Buddha had done with his own relics when he died.<sup>180</sup> Tāranātha also relates the stories of the sangha councils, sponsored by kings to resolve schisms. These arose from monks disputing the vinaya rules, as with the disputed Ten Prohibitions that led to king Nandin's Second Council,<sup>181</sup> or from the divisive doctrines of teachers such as Bhadra and Mahādeva which led to Kaniṣka's Third Council.<sup>182</sup> He sees far reaching consequences for Buddhism beyond schism:

Up until Mahādeva and Bhadra, there were a great many who obtained spiritual fruits. After those two disturbed the teaching, and controversies arose, the monks no longer made effort in yoga but focused exclusively on debate. As a result, far fewer obtained spiritual fruits.<sup>183</sup>

Tāranātha does not strongly emphasize sectarian conflict, however. The Śrāvakas and Mahāyāna monks sometimes disagreed, with the Śrāvakas slandering the Mahāyāna,<sup>184</sup> but these disputes rarely entered into state or monastic politics. Tāranātha also portrays the weakening of the dharma over time as due to Buddhist apathy as much as anything, driven by the lure of "false views" or wealth (as with the followers of Gorakṣa described above). One sign of this weakening was king Gopāla's construction of a hybrid Buddhist-Hindu temple in the ninth century, a concession to his non-Buddhist ministers. This indicated a

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 320.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 24–25.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 94, 373.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 94. Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 80.

<sup>184</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 99.

gradual adulteration of Buddhism in Tāranātha's eyes.<sup>185</sup> Later in the Pāla era the kings only gave Buddhism perfunctory patronage, and scholars attained little influence, indicating a decline in Buddhist morale.<sup>186</sup> Good kings have the task of maintaining the morale of themselves and their subjects, so that they continue to support the dharma with enthusiasm, a duty which requires overcoming sectarian disputes.

*A commentary on Tāranātha's time?*

Can *History of Buddhism in India* be read as a commentary on Tāranātha's own time, relevant beyond ancient India to how seventeenth century Tibetan Buddhists perceived the ideal ruler and the just use of force against enemies? Or was Tāranātha a scholar thoroughly immersed in the world of ancient Sanskrit texts and unconcerned with the affairs of his own time?<sup>187</sup> At first glance, the *History* has little to do with Tibet, and depends heavily on earlier Indian sources that may have agendas very different from Tāranātha. But given Tāranātha's original work in piecing together a narrative, his contact with Indian travelers to Tibet, and the rituals he performed for the Tsang rulers, one would expect an implicit concern for his own time. His portrayal of the fate of the dharma and Buddhist kings in ancient India would have resonated with Tibetans in the turmoil of the seventeenth century. Tibetans would have been as concerned as Indians that *mleccha* invaders and internal strife could lead to the decline of the dharma, and equally interested in how Buddhists might guard against these dangers.

Buddhist India, once a strong influence on Tibetan Buddhism, had largely faded from Tibetan consciousness by the seventeenth century, but it was very much alive to Tāranātha. Because of his Sanskrit scholarship, and contacts with Indian yogis and even kings, he had a stronger consciousness of ancient and contemporary India. He would have seen a stark disparity between Buddhism flourishing under the devout patronage of Buddhist kings, and the fate of the dharma under Muslim and Hindu rulers, who were indifferent to or persecuted Buddhism. Additionally, he saw that Buddhist practitioners were more interested in Hindu deities than practices he recognized as Buddhist. Likely influenced by his Indian sources, the *History of Buddhism in India*

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<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 312.

<sup>187</sup> Ronald Davidson describes the Italian Renaissance classicist Petrarch as such a figure who rejected the values of his own society, so it is possible to imagine Tāranātha as a similarly antiquarian Sanskrit classicist. Ronald M. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 17.

further an anti-Muslim narrative by portraying Muslims as *mlecchas*, enemies of the dharma, who were to blame for its final destruction in India, and advocating that Buddhist kings and spiritual adepts have a duty to combat them by ritual and physical means. On the other hand, interactions between Tibetans and Muslims in Tāranātha's day were limited and politically insignificant; even Buddhaguptanātha was little concerned with persecution by Muslims.<sup>188</sup> The Kālacakra myth was frequently reappropriated with the *mlecchas* standing in for current enemies, and Tāranātha would likely have seen the Mongols and Geluks playing the role of enemies of the dharma. He was concerned that Buddhism (and his Jonangpa tradition in particular) might meet a similar fate in Tibet due to foreign threats or internal dissension and believed rulers and adepts should meet this threat aggressively, as also evidenced by his defense of wrathful ritual in his biography.

How would the war between Gelukpa forces and Tsang have influenced Tāranātha? He does not portray inter-Buddhism sectarianism as a factor in wars between Indian kings, and Indian Buddhism was not institutionally divided like in Tibet. However, his narrative in *History of Buddhism in India* does observe that Buddhist sectarianism sometimes weakened the dharma in India, with conflicts over relics, vinaya observance and the validity of the Mahāyāna. From his biography, we know that Tāranātha understood the U-Tsang conflict as being motivated by Gelukpa sectarianism, so it was clearly a live concern for him (needless to say, he did not blame his own side). His commentary that schisms caused Buddhists to "became more keen on debate than meditation"<sup>189</sup> could be read as subtle criticism of the Geluk, who were commonly stereotyped as emphasizing dialectics over practice.<sup>190</sup> His own Jonangpa tradition benefitted greatly from the patronage of the Tsangpa *desis*, who exemplified non-sectarianism by supporting most of the Buddhist traditions under their rule (other than Geluk). He had good reason to fear that Gelukpa victory in the war would jeopardize this patronage and lead to persecution. Tāranātha may not have foreseen the Fifth Dalai Lama's anti-Jonang policies, but there had been a history of sectarian conflict between the Gelukpa and Jonangpa schools, especially involving debates over their philosophical views.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Tucci, "Buddhist Sadhu."

<sup>189</sup> Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, 94.

<sup>190</sup> For an example of philosophical polemics between Geluk and other traditions, see Khedrupjé's defense of the importance of understanding emptiness intellectually prior to engaging in meditation; he claims that other traditions practice a kind of "meditation on nothing," lacking a true understanding of emptiness. Mkhas grub Dge legs dpal bzang po and Cabezón, 112–17.

<sup>191</sup> For example, Khedrupjé sharply denounces Dolpopa's *shentong* view of emptiness as a misunderstanding of the concept. *Ibid.*, 48–49.



Within Tāranātha's *History*, the warnings against sectarianism, praise of royal patrons of Buddhism and argument for a strong ruler to prevent anarchy were all relevant to his contemporary situation. His dependence on loyal patrons may also underlie his selection of narratives in which good Buddhist rulers were lured away from the true dharma by greed and turned to other traditions such as Hinduism.

Mongol intervention in Tibetan affairs was a major threat in Tāranātha's lifetime, especially during the U-Tsang war. Accordingly, Tāranātha's emphasis on the threat of *mlecchas* in the *History of Buddhism in India* indicates that he saw external military intervention as a dire threat to Buddhism, which rulers must combat through wrathful ritual and warfare. The periodic interventions of Mongols had long been resented by Tibetans, especially when they had boosted certain Buddhist traditions at the expense of others. In Tāranātha's time, as the Mongols' political fortunes and patronage of Buddhism revived, they also renewed their feared presence on Tibetan soil, again with sectarian consequences because of their support of the Gelukpa tradition. Consequently, Tibetan rulers and tantric adepts, including Tāranātha himself, turned to the tradition of "Mongol-repelling" via wrathful tantric rituals.<sup>192</sup> It is particularly significant, for this reason, that Tāranātha emphasizes the ability of past Indian tantric masters to repel *mleccha* armies by ritual means. As a scholar of the *Kālacakratantra*, he was well acquainted with the narrative of Shambhala and its prophecies that the *mlecchas* would nearly destroy the dharma and be defeated by a righteous Buddhist king.

The Mongols might appear to be unlikely *mlecchas*, given that they followed Tibetan Buddhism. But like *mlecchas*, they were foreign, occasionally destructive of villages and monasteries, and a threat to the "true dharma" of their sectarian opponents. The Tibetan name for the Mongols, *sokpo*, bears a history of Tibetan encounters with other non-Buddhist "barbarians" such as the Sogdians and Muslims of central Asia. The history of many other ethnonyms (*turuṣka*, *tazik*, *mleccha*) shows that Indians and Tibetans made few hard distinctions, ethnic or religious, between invading foreign groups. Tāranātha saw the Mongolians as a legitimate target of violent rituals to repel them, and as an equally legitimate target of military force in order to defend the dharma.

If Tibetan rulers lived up to Tāranātha's ideals of kingship in *History of Buddhism in India*, it would be beneficial to himself and his Jonangpa tradition. Strong rulers are first of all preferable to anarchy and strife; they refrain from oppression, and also are generous to the people.

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<sup>192</sup> Templeman, "A World Upside Down," 22. Cuevas, "The Politics of Magical Warfare," 175–80.

According to Tāranātha, Buddhism flourishes best under a true dharma king dedicated to patronage of the dharma and the defeat of its adversaries. Chattopadhyaya correctly noted his focus on political patrons, but Tāranātha would not have agreed with Chattopadhyaya's modern, populist view that this emphasis would alienate ordinary people. Tāranātha's ideal dharma ruler gives monks and monasteries lavish patronage, and pays special attention to individual scholars, hosting them in debates and facilitating their preaching. He encourages Buddhists to remain enthusiastically loyal to the dharma and resolves sectarian disputes. No large monastery in Tāranātha's time could have existed without the financial support of a powerful ruler or defense from marauding armies. Tāranātha's narrative does not emphasize ancestry or divine incarnation as means of royal legitimacy, beyond patronage of the sangha and support of Buddhist scholars. Tāranātha's own patrons, the Tsangpa *desis*, struggled to demonstrate their legitimacy, lacking strong ties to a religious tradition or lines of descent to Tibet's original emperors, but would have fulfilled the ideal of a patron and defender of the dharma.<sup>193</sup> The fate of the Jonang tradition, and Tāranātha's own scholarship, depended on Tsang's continued patronage and their defense against the growing "mleccha" threat of the Mongolian allies of the Gelukpa tradition.

### Conclusion

This study of Tāranātha's thought on kingship and violence is just a starting point for future research, as it focuses on *History of Buddhism in India*. The *History* admittedly has some limitations as a source for Tāranātha's contemporary thinking, as Tāranātha does not explicitly discuss sixteenth-century Tibet or even contemporary India. Much of the *History of Buddhism in India* is drawn from Indian sources, not always with extensive editing on Tāranātha's part, so it is possible that some material does not reflect his own point of view. Inferences about the influence of contemporary politics on Tāranātha are necessarily based on circumstantial evidence (that said, such influence is not necessarily conscious on Tāranātha's part).

The relationship between Buddhism and politics was quite different in India and Tibet, which qualifies the degree to which the *History of Buddhism in India* shows Tāranātha's views on political ethics (especially as they apply to Tibet). These differences include the sectarian structure of Buddhism, as Indian Buddhism was not institutionally divided into rival doctrinal and practice traditions, a critical factor in

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<sup>193</sup> Templeman, "A World Upside Down," 14–16.

Tibet.<sup>194</sup> Buddhist rulers in India, although they did practice and patronize Buddhism, did not combine political and religious power to the same extent as Tibetan rulers did, especially if they were *triülkus* or hereditary lineage holders of monasteries. A more comprehensive account of Tāranātha's ideas about rulers and violence would have to consider his other writings discussing these issues from other perspectives, for instance his autobiography, his tantric histories, even his biographies of the Buddha and Buddhaguptanātha. Much more research could be done using those sources.

This article demonstrates that Tibetan historical writing is a source of political and ethical thought that should not be overlooked. Tibetan ideas about religiopolitical ethics do not just come from explicitly political works like *nītiśāstra* texts. They can be found in other texts that recount the doings of kings, especially histories like the *History of Buddhism in India*. Despite Western accusations that Tibetan historiography is derivative, it has creative elements that reveal much about the concerns of its authors and their time. Scholars of Tibetan historiography have considered the religiopolitical implications of these works, focusing especially on narratives of the early imperial kings (like Songtsen Gampo) and their influence on Tibetan nationalism,<sup>195</sup> but a broader selection of texts could reveal more about a Tibetan Buddhist ethic of rulership. Tāranātha's *History of Buddhism in India*, long recognized for its attempt at a critical reconstruction of the history of India and Buddhism, is also rich in narratives of righteous and unrighteous kingship and religious rivalry that demonstrate the proper ends of statecraft and the just use of force, all in the service of Buddhism. These ideals especially come to the fore in a history of India, because Indian narratives, closely connected with the Buddha and other revered masters, have a formative authority for Tibetan Buddhists.

There is much in the *History* that would resonate with seventeenth century Tibetans. The causes of the decline of the dharma would have as much relevance in Tibet as in India, as would stories that warn of the dangers of foreign and sectarian enemies of the dharma, argue for the legitimacy of force and tantric ritual against them, and praise those who patronized and resolved disputes in the sangha. Many scholars (including Sperling, Debreczeny, and Cuevas)<sup>196</sup> have recently argued Tibetan Buddhism is an inherently political religion that has historically accepted political and ritual violence, and Tāranātha's *History* adds further support to that argument. Furthermore, it sheds light on

<sup>194</sup> There were divisions due to different *vinaya* codes, but there were not separate institutions for Mahāyāna and Śrāvākayāna (for instance).

<sup>195</sup> For example, Sørensen's translation of *Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies*.

<sup>196</sup> Sperling, "Orientalism." Debreczeny, "Faith and Empire: An Overview." Cuevas, "The Politics of Magical Warfare."

who is considered the legitimate targets of that violence: foreign *mleccha* opponents of the “true dharma,” stereotyped as Muslim invaders but including any rival to Tibet, and also domestic sectarian opponents. The *History* also demonstrate a more constructive role a king can play in supporting the dharma, through patronizing of monastic communities and scholars and encouraging Buddhist morale. Finally, this work should put to rest any idea that Tibetan had no historical consciousness, or that their historical works lacked original interpretation. Tāranātha clearly did interpret his own life and his milieu in terms of the Indian past, and he used the *History of Buddhism in India* to express a vision of the ideal relationship between religion and politics, that justified the position of himself and the Jonangpa tradition in Tibetan society.

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## On a “Golden” Khara-Khoto Manuscript Preserved in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, RAS\*

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**I**t is well-known that the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, possesses a collection of Tibetan texts brought by Pyotr Kozlov from the dead city of Khara-Khoto (presently, Inner Mongolia, PRC). Its contents, however, still remain largely unknown for the academia due to the lack of its catalogue. While such a catalogue is being prepared by A. A. Sizova, A. A. Turanskaya and myself, some texts of the collection can be already presented. In this paper I would like to introduce a manuscript on blue paper with golden writings — the only sample of such a kind of texts among those found by Kozlov in Khara-Khoto. It was rediscovered among the Tangut texts by K. M. Bogdanov, the curator of the Tangut collection kept at the IOM RAS, in 2017. Having been passed to the collection of Tibetan texts from Khara-Khoto, it received an access number XT-180. The manuscript was almost immediately demonstrated to the wide audience at the exhibition *Brush and Qalam* dedicated to the 200th anniversary of the foundation of the Asiatic Museum held at the State Hermitage (November 2018 to March 2019). Its brief description and fragmentary facsimile edition was included in the catalogue of the exhibition (Zorin 2018, 236).<sup>1</sup> However, this manuscript deserves a fuller presentation since it has some significance in regard of both its form as a book and the text it contains.

It consists of three folios of more or less rectangular shape, two of them have Chinese foliation on the recto side: 12 and 36,<sup>2</sup> while the third one misses the edge where the number must have been found. Nevertheless, a textual analysis shows that, without doubt, it had to bear number 38. We do not know of how many folios the entire man-

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<sup>1</sup> In this catalogue a wrong access number, Kh. Tib. 89, was published.

<sup>2</sup> A cursive shape of the Chinese numeral 6 is used.

uscript consisted initially but I suspect the end of the text could not stand far from f. [38]. Each folio is made of two layers. In some damaged zones on f. [38]v small parts of the second layer of paper are missing and tiny fragments of some Tangut characters<sup>3</sup> can be seen printed on the first layer. It is a clear sign that this manuscript was made of reused paper. The area for the text is marked with one or two vertical bars on the right and left sides (f. [38]r seems to miss them but it is not clear if they disappeared over time or were just never drawn). Both recto and verso sides of f. 12 as well as the recto side of f. 36 arrange the text in nine lines, while the verso side of f. 36 in eight lines and both sides of f. [38] in six lines. The size of the folios is as follows: f. 12 — 7,7/8,1×7,9/8,1; f. 36 — 8,0×7,6; f. [38] — 8,0×7,5/7,6. But all three folios lack some fragments which were torn away somehow and, in addition to that, the last one has a few holes, possibly made by some insect(s). The fact that the first of the three folios is a little wider may indicate that the other two belonged to the final part of the manuscript, especially since they break the presumably standard number of lines, i.e. nine. This assumption corresponds very well with actual contents of the manuscript.

The text is inserted into a soft paper envelope with an inscription in Russian which is likely to be P. K. Kozlov's autograph: *Found / separately / (a cover<sup>4</sup>) / in another house — and below: A little golden book / (Buddh. leaves) / Khara-Khoto.*<sup>5</sup> This inscription corresponds very well with Kozlov's diary record dated May 23, 1909, the first day of the excavations: "a small square Tibetan book with excellent golden writings was found" (Kozlov 2015: 319). It means that the manuscript did not belong to the biggest stock of texts found in the famous *suburgan* (Kychanov 1998: 5) and, therefore, can relate to the later period than them, perhaps, to the 14th century.

The text was easily identified by means of the BDRC search tool as a fragment of *rdzogs chen* instructions preserved in the *Snying thig ya bzhi* Collection compiled by the eminent figure of the Rnying ma sect of Tibetan Buddhism Klong chen rab 'byams Dri med 'od zer (1308–1364).<sup>6</sup> All fragments belong to one particular text inside the *Snying thig ya bzhi* Collection, namely *Bstan pa bu gcig gi rgyud gser gyi snying po nyi ma rab tu snang byed* which is found at the beginning of the first

<sup>3</sup> None of them is seen completely but their visible elements allow us to think they are Tangut, not Chinese. I thank my colleague Alla Sizova for this remark.

<sup>4</sup> It is not quite clear what this word in the inscription means. Some covers of books found in Khara-Khoto were made of reused folios glued together but it does not seem to be the case here.

<sup>5</sup> The Russian text uses pre-revolutionary orthography so it must have been written either during Kozlov's expedition or shortly after his return to St. Petersburg.

<sup>6</sup> About him see Dudjom Rinpoche, Jikdrel Yeshe Dorje 1991, 575–596.

part of the collection known as *Bi ma snying thig* — the “Heart Essence of Vimalamitra”.<sup>7</sup> Thus, it is connected directly with the great 8th century Indian teacher who is said to have brought a number of *rdzogs chen* teachings to Tibet and concealed them at Gedong in Chimpu (Dudjom Rinpoche, Jikdrel Yeshe Dorje 1991, 555). According to the legendary history of the Rnying ma, the tradition of Vimalamitra was passed on from one master to another and the teachings were revealed and concealed again several times (*ibid.*, 555–574). What is certain is that the manuscript with the text of the *Bstan pa bu gcig gi rgyud gser gyi snying po nyi ma rab tu snang byed* was necessarily produced sometime after the middle of the 12th century, i.e., after the discovery of the *Bi ma snying thig* by Zhang ston bKra shis rdo rje (1097–1167). Since the Khara-Khoto manuscript can belong to the 14th century it could have been produced in consequence of the intense diffusion of these teachings by masters such as Ku ma ra dza (1266–1343), Klong chen pa, and others.<sup>8</sup>

This manuscript is definitely an important evidence of the presence of at least some followers of the *rdzogs chen* teachings in Khara-Khoto either when it belonged to the Xi Xia Kingdom or during the first century or so of the Mongol dominance. The elaborate way the manuscript was produced (blue paper, golden ink) shows that the person who made or ordered it revered the text it contained. Its rectangular shape is very rare for the Tibetan pothi books and probably refers, as well as the use of Chinese characters for foliation, to the local Tangut tradition of making books.<sup>9</sup> However, this relation can hardly help us to date the manuscript more precisely. The old Tibetan orthography of the manuscript cannot help, either, since it was still in use in the 14th century.

Apart from the use of *ya btags* in *me-*, *mi-* syllables (*myin*, *myed*, *myig*) and irregular use of the inverted *gi gu* sign (*zhI*, *kyI*, etc.), three other orthographic features can be mentioned:

- one word, *bzhi*, is written with a *chung* as an affix (*bzhi'*) but other syllables that end with open vowels are written without it (except for *mtha'* which is normally written this way),
- the *tsheg* sign is often put after the final syllable of the fragment that ends with the *shad* sign (*mgon· | |*, etc.), this feature is attested already in some Dunhuang texts;

<sup>7</sup> The contents of *Snying thig ya bzhi* are characterized briefly in Buswell, Lopez 2013, 833.

<sup>8</sup> I would like to thank Jean-Luc Achard for his remarks concerning this subject.

<sup>9</sup> The peculiar shape of the manuscript reminds me of the famous Tibetan block print Kh. Tib. 67 produced by the Tanguts in the middle of the 12th century that is also preserved in the IOM RAS; see Helman-Ważny 2014, 67–69.

— the *spr*-ligature has a specific shape:



Below I provide a complete transliteration of the text that was prepared with use of the modern edition of *Snying thig ya bzhi* as a part of Klong chen rab 'byams' *Gsung 'bum* published in Beijing in 2009. In fact, it would have been very difficult to render the text without such an assistance because in many places the ink is very pale and hardly legible; some syllables cannot be seen on the pictures, one has to check the folios from different angles to recognize them.<sup>10</sup> The essential discrepancies between the Khara-Khoto manuscript and the modern edition are presented in the following way: the relevant syllables are underlined in the transliteration of the manuscript in the left column and alternative readings of the modern edition are placed opposite in the right column. The lacunae of the text caused with losses, blurs, etc., are reconstructed, such fragments being italicized and placed in between angle brackets.<sup>11</sup>

Special Tibetan signs used for rendering of Sanskrit words and syllables are transliterated with use of diacritics – ʈ, ṃ, ā, etc. The reverse *gi gu* sign is marked with a capital I. The *tsheg* sign is rendered with the · sign which is available in the standard fonts. Note that I use the plus sign to render an omitted *tsheg* sign, hence I prefer to write *ka+rma* instead of *kar+ma*, etc. I use signs < and > if the *gigu* sign (both normal and inverted) is written to the left or to the right of the root letter to which it is assigned. If a syllable is written in an abridged form I mark it with a hyphen, e.g. *mgo-n*, or two hyphens when the *a chung* letter is subscribed (if only not to mean a long vowel), e.g. *pa-'a-i*. I do not know exactly what the *a chung* letter means when subscribed under the diphthong *ai*. Perhaps, it expresses somehow the idea of a long vowel which is rather strange because *ai* is already long, therefore I tentatively render the syllable as *ai-'a*. Empty spaces found inside the area for the text are rendered with underscores.

I believe this text, even though it is just a small fragment of rather a small manuscript, adds some important details to our understanding of the history of Buddhism in Xi Xia and that of Tibetan book culture.

<sup>10</sup> I would like to thank my friend Mikhail Iokhvin for making the digital copies that are included in this paper more legible; however, some syllables remain very hard to be recognized so the reader has to trust me that the reading was checked as carefully as possible.

<sup>11</sup> Sometimes, we cannot be sure that the manuscript had the same syllables as those borrowed from the modern edition.

## The Edition of the Text Supplied with the Digital Images

**F. 12, recto** [cf. Klong chen rab 'byams 2009, 53, lines 5 to 10]  
[marg.] 十二

[1] <bon>rab·bsgrags·<pas    bskal·pa·tsha>ngs·pa·'a-i	
[2] dbyangs·ca·<n·la    'bur·rdul·bdun·gyi>s·nges_	
[3] par·bzung    rang·bzhIn·drag·po·sde·'dzin·mgo·ni:	ting
[4] phyag·rgya·'khor·lo·bden·spros·ste    skal·_	te: bskal
[5] pa·smra·<bl?>·gzhi·dag·la    phyal·phyol·dgu·'i·	yis
[6] dam·par·bzung    gsang·ba·phyag·rgya·lha·myIn·_	
[7] mgon    yang·gsang·'khor·lo·rnams·_	rnam
[8] spros·ste    skal·pa·'bum·pa·reg·ldan·	te — bskal
[9] la    yal·yol·drug·bcu·'i·snying·po·'o	cu'i

**F. 12, verso** [cf. Klong chen rab 'byams 2009, 53, lines 10 to 15]

[1] rIm·pa·lnga·pa·<gtsug>·phud·mgon    bla·myed·snyIng	
[2] po·yong·s·<p>ro·<s·pas> <sup>12</sup> ·skal·<pa>·yang·gsang·_	bskal — gsal
[3] rab·'byam·sa    khrag·khr·I·g·bye·ba·dgu·brgya·_	'byams·la
[4] yIs    bla·na·myed·pa·'I·gsang·ba·'o    'jig·_	
[5] rten·thog·ma·shes·rab·mgon·    bde·chen·_	
[6] snyIng·po·yang·spros·    skal·pa·bkod·pa·chen·_	yongs·spros·te: bskal
[7] po·la    'bum·phrag·drug·bcu·rtsa·bzhI'·_	cu
[8] yIs    lha·'I·lhar·ni·'di·nyId·do    'chang·ba·_	lha·yi — 'chad·pa
[9] rnams·kyI·thog·ma·mgon    nges·pa·'I·bras <sup>13</sup>	kyis

<sup>12</sup> Rather a big fragment is missing, it seems to be bigger than necessary for this pair of syllables.

<sup>13</sup> The final letter *sa* is written above the first vertical line of the frame while the *tshag* sign between it and the second vertical line.



F. 36, recto [cf. Klong chen rab 'byams 2009, 65, lines 1 to 7] [marg.]  
三十六

[1] <@#>     'di'i·thabs·ni·sna·tshogs·pas     gzhan·gyl·	'di·yi
[2] 'dod·zhen·mtha'·dgag·phyIr     rab·tu·gsang·bar·	
[3] ngang·'byung·ba'o·     khams·la·bslab·pa'I·thabs·	[no <i>ngang</i> ] byung
[4] yod·pas     dran·"?" <sup>14</sup> ·tshor·phyag·rgya·ngang·du·sbyor·   dbang·	rdzogs — rgya'i
[5] po'i·zhen·pa·bzlog·pa'i·phyir     kar·ma·rag·	ka+rmā ra+
[6] sha·kI·hang·ti·   <sup>15</sup>   phung·po'i·zhen·pa·bzlog·pa<'a>·I·	kṣa·ghi·ham — zlog
[7] phyIr     bhe·ga·ra·nI·sod·gad·gling     g·yu<l·kun·zhen>	na·so — yul
[8] pa·bzlog·pa'I·phyIr     bu·ga·ri·la·<bha·dhu·tri>	pu·kā

F. 36, verso [cf. Klong chen rab 'byams 2009, 65, lines 7 to 11]

[1] sems·kyI·dngos·por·sprul·pa'I·phyIr·	po·spur
[2] ram·pa·ka·la·sa·ml·khe     gyur·tshor·gnas·su·	ram — sa·la — khye: byung

<sup>14</sup> It seems that the scribe started to write *dra* but realized it was a typo and changed it to the sign that resembles rather the Tibetan numeral for *three*; the sign is marked with dots above (rendered here with "'") that signify it as a typo.

<sup>15</sup> The first *shad* sign resembles the letter *da*.

[3] gcad·pa'I·phyIr     na·tang·pha· <b>phar·re·mi·ta</b> ·     _	ma — pher·ra+smi·ti
[4] 'dus·tshogs·snang·ba·ngos· <b>bzung</b> ·phyIr·     _	gzung
[5] kha·ta·re·ka·sa·myI·g· <b>klu</b>     rig·pa· <b>brtson</b> · _	ṭa — rlung — btson
[6] rar·gzhug·pa'I·phyir     <b>e·khe</b> ·ra·ni· <b>bheg</b> · _	a·ke — na·bhe
[7] <b>tsag·tsa+she</b> <sup>16</sup>     'khrul· <b>bar</b> ·rang·rgyud·khungs·gcad. <sup>17</sup>	tsak·sha — pa'i
[8] <phyir     ya>ri·mu· <b>ti</b> ·sa·ku·li     rIs·drug·	ḍa — ghu — rigs
[9] <rim·gyis·b>sg<r>al·pa'I·phyIr     ya·sIng· <b>dha·hu</b> · _	ra·rlung



F. [38], recto [cf. Klong chen rab 'byams 2009, 65, lines 17 to 19]

[1] <@>     ghe·ba·su·g<h>ar·rna·ma·ye     yid·spyod·	pa — yai — dpyod
[2] lta·ba·khu<ngs·g>cad· <b>pa'i</b> ·phyi<r     >d<h>a· <b>mi</b> ·	[no pa'i] — rmā
[3] pa·ti·se·gu·li     sku·gsum·lam·du·	sa·ghu·lī
[4] <b>slang·pa'i·phyir     ras·rmi·sa·ma·khar·	mā·kha·
[5] rgad· <b>rtser</b>     snang·ba·dngos·su+bslang·pa'i·	tshe — blang

<sup>16</sup> The text is not seen very well here but it has definitely two letters which are not separated with the *tshag* sign but cannot be read as one syllable; I believe the letter *tsa* is just a typo (probably caused with the preceding *tsag*) because there must be nine syllables in the line and this syllable is not needed here.

<sup>17</sup> The final letter *da* and the *tshag* sign are written between the two vertical lines of the frame.

[6] phyir     ru·pa·sa·mi·ta·lam·_pa·__     __	mi·mi — [no pa]
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F. [38], verso [cf. Klong chen rab 'byams 2009, 65, line 20 to p. 66, line 2]

[1] sgra<·yi·zhen·pa>·mtha'·<gcad>·phyi<r>·     nga·tig·	
[2] pa·yang<·ka>·li·sa     bsam·gtan·chen·	sā
[3] p<o>'i·sa·non·phyir·     ga·tsha·pa·lam <sup>18</sup> ·<?>pa· <sup>19</sup> i·_	la·sa
[4] ṭa<m   >   'phrin·mthar·du'·byung·ba'i·_	'phrin·las·mtha'·ru·dbyung
[5] phyir     kar·ma·ai'·a·a·nu·sa <sup>20</sup>     sangs·	ka+rma·e·ka·ma·nu·sā:
[6] rgyas·zhen·sngon·bzlog·pa'i·phyir<·     >_	mngon·zhen



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<sup>18</sup> The syllable is blurred and I am not sure the reading is correct.

<sup>19</sup> This place is not easily legible, either; I think there was some letter written first, then erased, and the letter *sa* in *dbu med* script along with the *tsheg* sign were subscribed.

<sup>20</sup> Perhaps, *sā* — there is a hole right under the letter *sa* in the folio.



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# Kadampa Pointing-Out Instructions

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## Introduction

The following study provides an English translation and diplomatic Tibetan edition of a manuscript entitled *Pointing-Out Instructions in Sets of Five* (*Ngo sprod Inga tshoms*; hereafter, *Pointing-Out Instructions*). The *Pointing-Out Instructions* are based upon Atiśa's *Stages of the Path* (*Byang chub lam gyi rim pa*; see below) and are found within the cycle of commentaries and ritual texts that supplement this significant work of Buddhist path literature (Apple 2018, 2019a). The work represents an initially oral tradition of pointing-out instructions transmitted by early bKa' gdams pa (hereafter, Kadampa) communities who were followers of the teachings of Atiśa. The *Pointing-Out Instructions* may well represent an oral tradition of meditation instructions that Atiśa himself bestowed to his early followers.

In Indian and Tibetan forms of Buddhism "pointing-out instructions" (*ngo sprod*) generally signifies an introduction to the nature of mind by a spiritual teacher to a qualified disciple. Previous scholarship has noted that the verb "*ngo sprod* means to indicate, indentify, point out, introduce or recognize" (Jackson 2019:91n297), as well as "la confrontation directe" (Achard 1999) or "encounter" (Guenther 1993). As Kapstein (2000:180) summarizes, "Introduction (*ngo sprod/-sprad*)...in its technical sense, refers to instruction that, if skilfully delivered to an appropriately receptive disciple by an appropriately qualified master, catalyzes an immediate intuitive grasp of the instruction's content." The impact of this type of instruction by the teacher is thought to "bring about direct insight into the ultimate nature of mind...without the disciple's having first traversed the entire sequence of tantric initiation and yogic practice" (Kapstein 2000, 77).

As these citations suggest, pointing-out instructions are associated with tantric Buddhist lineages of meditation and yogic practice. The practice of bestowing such instruction has a long, yet uncharted, history in tantric forms of Indian Buddhism and may have its beginnings in the *siddha* culture during the Pāla dynasties (760-1142 CE) in northeastern India. The currently known evidence for pointing-out instructions among *siddhas*, such as Saraha, Tilopa, and Maitrīpa sug-

gests concise, unsystematic, and perhaps spontaneous, direct verbal and/or nonverbal acts of revealing realization to disciples (Trungram 2004:175; Brunnhölzl 2014:193). Female and male yogic masters utilized this technique for directly introducing the nature of the mind (Shaw 1994:98-99) and the technique was closely associated with the practice and realization of *mahāmudrā*. In Tibetan forms of Buddhism pointing-out instructions have been primarily affiliated with the Nyingma (*rnying ma*) and Kagyü (*bka' rgyud*) lineages. In Nyingma lineages pointing-out instructions are connected to varied Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) traditions where one confronts the natural state (*gnas lugs ngo sprod*).<sup>1</sup> Kagyü and other Tibetan Buddhist traditions of the new sects (*gsar ma*) associate pointing-out instructions with the practice of *mahāmudrā*.

Among prominent figures within Kagyü lineages, Gampopa Sönam Rinchen (sGam po pa bSod nams rin chen, 1079–1153) moved *mahāmudrā* “to the heart of Kagyü tradition and to a place of great prominence in philosophical and meditative discourse in Tibet” (Jackson 2019:92). The influence of Gampopa’s *mahāmudrā* teachings in Tibet was such that Roger Jackson even suggests, “all Kagyü reflections on *mahāmudrā* is really but a series of footnotes to Gampopa” (Jackson 2019:88). In his teachings of *mahāmudrā* Gampopa was most renown for what Mathes has termed a “not-specifically-Tantric *mahāmudrā* practice” (2006:201) whereby “a disciple need not receive tantric empowerment in order to attain awakening; hearing the guru’s experiential introduction to the nature of mind through a “pointing-out instruction” (*ngo sprod*) will suffice” (Jackson 2019:91). This style of teaching *mahāmudrā* was called “introduction to the [nature of] mind” (*sems kyi ngo sprod*) and the important role of “pointing-out” in Gampopa’s system was characterized by other twelfth century Tibetan figures such as Lama Zhang (Zhang g.Yu brag pa brTson ’grus grags pa, 1123–1193) as “Pointing-out *mahāmudrā* in the Tradition of Dagpopa (*dags po ba’i lugs kyi phyag rgya chen po ngo sprod*; D. Jackson 1994:2, 13).

Gampopa taught a number of varied meditation techniques to realize *mahāmudrā* and his disciples recorded these teachings in writings found among Gampopa’s collected works. To be sure, some of these teachings do represent succinct, perhaps unsystematic, statements indicating instructions for realization. Yet, Gampopa’s recorded pointing-out instructions also exhibit more structured type instructions incorporating a system of preliminary practices (*ngon ’gro*), emphasis on cultivating the awakening mind (*bodhicitta*), followed by direct instructions on actualizing serenity (*zhi gnas* ≈ *śamatha*) and

<sup>1</sup> See Germano 1994, Achard 1999:58, 176, 197n172, Achard 2002, 45; Achard 2004.

then realizing insight (*lhag mthong* ≈ *vipaśyanā*). The instructions then continue with practices for the union (*zung 'jug* ≈ *yuganaddha*) of serenity and insight, often followed with realizing four yogas, and then culminating in instructions for highest realization (Trungram 2004: 175; Stenzel 2008:26-27; Brunnhölzl 2014:193; Jackson 2019:90). Gampopa's system came to be referred to by his disciples as "*mahāmudrā* of the *sūtra* tradition (*mdo lugs phyag chen*)" (Kapstein 2000: 77).

A major question in the history of *mahāmudrā* exegesis is where did Gampopa come up with this structured and organized system of pointing-out instructions? Did he invent on his own such a system based on *sūtras* such as the *Samādhirājasūtra* and/or technical digests (*śāstra*) like Maitreya's *Uttaratantraśāstra*? Although some scholars have hinted at Atiśa and Kadampa influence on Gampopa (Brunnhölzl 2014; Apple 2017; Callahan 2019: xxxvii), most modern scholarly sources have ignored the possibility of Kadampa influence on Gampopa and the varied Kagyü meditation manuals that came after him (e.g. Jackson and Mathes 2020). In his recent *magnum opus* on Geluk *mahāmudrā* Roger Jackson states that the Kadam influence on Gampopa is "debatable" (2019:73). Yet, in the works presented in the following section, as well as the translation and edition of the *Pointing-Out Instructions* given below, it is important to consider the historical fact that Gampopa studied with at least four Kadampa teachers (Vetturini 2013:139; Brunnhölzl 2014:190) for five years while receiving explicitly tantric type *mahāmudrā* instructions from Milarepa for a mere thirteen months (D. Jackson 1994). Among Gampopa's Kadampa teachers, he is said to have received stages of the path (*lam rim*) instructions from Nye rum pa and most likely rGya lCags ri ba, a figure mentioned several times in the transmission lineage of Atiśa teachings through to Gampopa (Apple 2017, 2019b). A number of scholars, most prominently Mathes (2006, 2007, 2019) in a series of well-researched articles, have pursued the later Kagyü tradition in seeking an influence of "*sūtra mahāmudrā*" or "not-specifically-tantric" *mahāmudrā* through the Indian scholars Maitrīpa and Sahajavajra. Yet, the following evidence presented in this article clearly demonstrates that Atiśa and his early Kadampa followers significantly influenced Gampopa and subsequent Kagyü traditions in their structuring of meditation manuals.

The following sections demonstrate that pointing-out instructions for "not-specifically-tantric *mahāmudrā* practice" did not originate with Gampopa (*sgam po pa*). Structured pointing-out instructions are also practices neither derived from, nor influenced by, other Buddhist traditions such as Chan. Rather, systematized and structured "not-specifically-tantric-practice" pointing-out instructions are inti-

mately related to Atiśa's *Stages of the Path*, its commentaries, and the teachings found in the *Pointing-Out Instructions in Sets of Five*.

### **The Pointing-Out Instructions in Atiśa's Stages of the Path Literature**

The *Pointing-Out Instructions* are found in the cycle of texts within Atiśa's *Stages of the Path* (*Byang chub lam gyi rim pa*) manuscript. The *Pointing-Out Instructions* are approximately thirteen folios long, handwritten in *dbu med* script, and copied out in the same scribal hand as the rest of the *Stages of the Path* manuscript. The colophon provides an alternative title as "The Great Pointing-out Instructions in Sets of Five that Eliminate the Extremes of One's Own Mind" (*Rang sems mtha' gcod kyi ngo sprod lnga tshoms chen mo*). The colophon additionally states, "These are special instructions of the Kadam (*bka' gdams*) textual lineage or practice lineage" (*bka' gdams gzhung pa'am / spyod phyogs kyi gdams ngag*). This information may provide insight into the antiquity of the work in that "the entrusted holders of the lineage" (*bka' babs kyi brgyud 'dzin*) of Kadam teachings are considered by tradition to be the "three Kadam brothers" who were direct disciples of Dromtönpa Gyalwai Jungné (1005–1064): Potowa Rinchen Sal, Chengawa Tsültrim Bar (1033–1103), and Phu-chungwa Shönu Gyaltzen (1031–1106; Jinpa 2008:8). On the other hand, contextual evidence in the following section as well as a brief historical note suggests that the *Pointing-Out Instructions* circulated independently as oral teachings of Atiśa. An episode in the biography of Mokchok Rinchen Tsondru (rMog lcog Rin chen brtson 'grus, 1110–1170), a disciple of Khyung po rnal 'byor (Mei 2009), recounts how he went to request teachings on *mahāmudrā* from the Kadampa Geshe 'Gar (ca. 12th century), who held lineage teachings from both Atiśa and Milarepa. The biography states,

"He fully received the [teachings of the] lineage from Lord [Atiśa] and those of Mila[repa]. Those teachings he requested from Geshe Gar. Then, he offered Geshe Gar some silk cloth. He requested all the teachings on [*mahā*]mudrā without exception. [Gar] said, "Since you are in harmony with the dharma of Lord [Atiśa], I will give teachings to you"....moreover, he requested many pointing-out instructions.... He was granted without exception instructions of *mahāmudrā* utilized by the spiritual teacher himself including the *Two-fold Armor*, the *Fivefold Pointing-out Instructions*, the *Eight Lines of Verse*, *Taking the Three*

*Bodies as the Path, and so forth.*<sup>2</sup>

The *Two-fold Armor* (*Go cha rnam gnyis*) is a non-extant text that is attributed to Atiśa in later historical works (Apple 2017:23-4) and the mention in this episode of the *Fivefold Pointing-out Instructions* (*Ngo sprod lnga*) may be a reference to the *Pointing-Out Instructions*. Whether or not the *Pointing-Out Instructions* were given by Atiśa in their current form or organized by his early Kadampa followers and circulated independently, these instructions are based on Atiśa's *Stages of the Path* and its related commentarial literature.

Atiśa's *Stages of the Path to Awakening* (*Byang chub lam gyi rim pa*, \**Bodhipathakrama*; hereafter, *Stages*) is a previously unstudied but important work found among the newly published manuscript facsimiles of the *Collected Works of the Kadampas* (*bKa' gdams pa gsung 'bum*, 2006–2015).<sup>3</sup> I have recently published an English translation of selections from Atiśa's *Stages* and a full annotated study is forthcoming (Apple 2019a:193-232). The twenty-two folio *Stages* is contained within a larger ninety-one-folio cursive script manuscript of twenty-six other minor works, inclusive of the *Pointing-Out Instructions*. All the works are devoted to aspects of the stages of the path (*lam gyi rim pa*) teachings. An annotation found on the final folio of the *Stages* mentions that Atiśa composed this work for the benefit of his student Dromtönpa. Atiśa's *Stages of the Path* was most likely composed while he resided in Nyethang (sNye thang) towards the end of his life based on an account found in Gö Lotsāwa Shönu Pal's *Blue Annals*.<sup>4</sup>

Atiśa's well-known *A Lamp for the Path to Awakening* (*byang chub lam gyi sgron ma*, \**Bodhipathapradīpa*, Apple 2019a:181-191) is around three folios in length, but the *Stages* is almost seven times as long. In my analysis and translation of the *Stages* I have divided the text into one hundred and eighty-one numbered sections based on notations of the scribe (Apple 2019a). Atiśa's *Stages* outlines all stages of the

<sup>2</sup> *Dpal ldan bla ma rmog cog pa chen po'i rnam par thar pa* (15a1-6; page 391.1-6): *jo bo nas brgyud pa'i dang / mi la'i rnams tshar bar mdzad / dpe rnams dge bshes gar la yod kyiis khong la zhus gsungs / de nas dge bshes gar la dar yug gcig phul nas / phyag dpe rnams ma lus par zhus pas / jo bo khyed chos la nan tan byed pa chos dang mthun pa gcig 'dug pas dpe rnams btang gis ...gzhang yang ngo sprod kyi gdams pa mang du zhus so / / bla ma rang gis mdzad pa'i go cha rnam gnyis dang / ngo sprod lnga dang / tshig rkang brgyad pa dang / sku gsum lam 'khyer la sogs pa'i mahā mu tra'i gdams pa rnams ma lus par gnang nas /*. See also Apple (2017:25).

<sup>3</sup> Note that another copy of the manuscript was published in the PL480 Library of Congress program in 1973 as *Byang chub lam gyi rim pa, Writings of Lord Atiśa on the theory and practice of the Graduated Path*. Leh, Ladakh: Thupten Tsering. See Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (TBRC): W1KG506.

<sup>4</sup> *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po* 1984:316.8-9): *'brom la skyes bu gsum kyi khrid kyi gdams pa rnams kyang snye thang nyid du gnang /*.

Mahāyāna Buddhist path, from taking refuge up through to pointing out a non-conceptual direct vision of the emptiness of one's own mind. The later type of instruction was considered by Kagyüpa scholars such as Gampopa and Pakmo Drupa (Phag mo gru pa rDo rje rgyal po, 1110–1170) to describe *mahāmudrā* teachings.

As mentioned, Atiśa's *Stages* is accompanied by a number of smaller commentaries and ritual texts. In addition to the *Pointing-Out Instructions*, two other works in particular help with discerning how Atiśa and his early Kadampa followers understood pointing-out instructions in relation to Atiśa's *Stages* and its integrated stages of the path system. These two texts are the *Structural Analysis of the Stages of the Path to Awakening* (*Byang chub lam rim bsdus don*) and *Instructions for Selected Disciples* (*IKog chos*). The *Structural Analysis of the Stages of the Path to Awakening* (hereafter, *Structural Analysis*) is a summary (*bsdus don*) of Atiśa's *Stages* and consists of an analysis completely in outline form of the treatise. Its content resembles the Tibetan literary genre of the topical outline (*sa bcad*) in that it provides a layered outline providing an overview of the entire content and structure of Atiśa's *Stages*. This work is key to determining which sections of Atiśa's *Stages* are considered to be pointing-out instructions. The *Instructions for Selected Disciples* (*IKog chos*) is attributed to the Paṇḍita Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna in its colophon and is thirteen folios in length. The colophon gives an alternative title to the work as *The Practical Guidance on the Special Instructions of the Stages of the Path to Awakening* (*Byang chub lam gyi rim pa'i gdams ngag dmar khrid*). This work supplements Atiśa's *Stages* with points of guidance related to the meditations and realizations of the three types of individual—those of small, middling, and supreme capacities—found in the stages of the path system. The *Instructions for Selected Disciples* indicates that pointing-out instructions are for the individual of supreme capacity.

### **The Pointing-Out Instructions within Atiśa's Stages of the Path System**

The *Pointing-Out Instructions*, in terms of its subject matter, presents instructions in sets of five, and this is reflected in the title of the work. This indicates that the *Pointing-Out Instructions* were initially a teaching orally disseminated, as sets of fivefold categories serve as a mnemonic technique in oral recitation. But this is not how the overall text is structured. Three general points (*spyi don gsum*) and four actual practices (*dngos gzhi nyams su blang ba bzhi*), shape the overall structure of the *Pointing-Out Instructions*. The three general points consist of (I) general preliminaries, (II) the actual practices, followed by the (III) distinctive features of the actual practices. The overall structure

of the work is reflected in the outline headings I have applied to both the translation and diplomatic edition. The four actual practices consist of the yogas of (A) serenity (*śamatha*), (B) insight (*vipaśyanā*), (C) union (*yuganaddha*), and (D) signlessness (*animittayoga*). Although the *Pointing-Out Instructions* mentions “four yogas” of serenity, insight, union, and signlessness, these differ from the four yogas found in Atiśa’s *mahāmudrā* instructions to his disciple Gonpawa (Apple 2017) and also differ from other well-known sets of four *yogas* or meditations (Bentor 2002; Katsura 2018).

The four *yogas* discussed in the *Pointing-Out Instructions* have a discernable relation to the content of Atiśa’s *Stages*. In its layered overview of the *Stages*, the *Structural Analysis* summary indicates locations where pointing-out instructions may be found in Atiśa’s *Stages*. That is, pointing-out instructions for the actual practice of serenity (*zhi gnas*), pointing out the mind (*sems ngo sprad pa*) in the practice of insight (*lhag mthong, vipaśyanā*), and pointing out the cultivation of union (*zung ’jug bsgom pa*). The fourth yoga of signlessness is only discussed in the *Pointing-Out Instructions* and briefly mentioned in Atiśa’s *Stages*. The locations for pointing out instructions found in the *Structural Analysis*, when correlated to the sections numbers I have applied to my edition and translation of Atiśa’s *Stages*, indicates what portions of Atiśa’s *Stages* were considered pointing out instructions for Atiśa and his early Kadampa followers.

The pointing-out instructions for the actual practice of serenity (*zhi gnas*) are found in Atiśa’s *Stages* [§142-144]:

[§142] Having ceased all subtle and coarse external and internal concepts remain in the condition of non-conceptual meditative stabilization. Then, at this time, clarity, without grasping thoughts at apparent objects, one’s own mind, without subsequent objects, appears as a mirage like pure space.

[§143] Without the thorns of conceptuality, the body and mind is blissful. Listen to the serviceable contemplating light body.

[§144] With desires and so forth elsewhere, in unwavering meditative stabilization, remain in the condition of one’s own mind being the inseparability of clarity and emptiness. Experienced by oneself, free from doubt, with firm ascertaining awareness internalize the changeless. Forsake physical and mental activities and restrain the sense doors. Sustain in seclusion the elimination of mental afflictions and concepts. Not attached to desires, leveling-out the eight worldly concerns, having conviction in cause and effect, strive to eliminate evil deeds and achieve virtue. Taking delight in solitude and not forsaking the object of



observation, one should eliminate desires and aspirations, maliciousness, excitement and contrition, sleepiness and lethargy, and doubt, the obstructions to concentration (*dhyāna*).<sup>5</sup>

Atiśa's *Instructions for Selected Disciples (IKog chos)* also provides the following corresponding instructions for serenity:

Directly pointing out [serenity] has three topics: non-conceptuality, clear awareness, and blissful experience. First, non-conceptuality, one resides with one-pointedness of mind (*cittaiḥagrata*) non-conceptually by bringing to cessation all subtle and gross discursive thoughts based on external objects and all subtle and gross conceptualization based on the mind within. Clear awareness: one resides with one-pointedness of mind in non-grasping self-luminous awareness which, at first, does not engage with conceptually grasping on to vivid sense objects, and then later is free from identifying with the luminous nature of the lucidity of one's own mind. Blissful: in a diminished unity of emptiness and lucidity that is free from all torments of afflictions and conceptuality that is possessed in previous experience, and having halted even-minded feelings of suffering, one resides with one-pointedness of mind in naturally occurring unconditioned bliss.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Stages of the Path (byang chub lam gyi rim pa)*: [§142] [p. 456.10] :/ \*gzung rtog\* phyi nang<sup>nang</sup> 'dzin rtog\* rtogs pa phra rags kun 'gags nas / rnam par mi rtog ting 'dzin ngang la gnas / [17b5] dus\* . . der yul snang 'dzin rtog med par gsal / rjes\* . . su yul med rang sems smig rgyu sogs\* . . / [§143] [p. 456.13] :/ rnam rtog zug rngu med pas lus sems bde / lus yang bsam pa las su rung ba thos / [§144] [p. 456.14] :/ 'dod sogs [17b6] gzhan du ma yengs ting 'dzin la / rtse cig rang sems gsal stong dbyer med ngang<sup>du gnas</sup> / rang gis nyams su myong bas the tshom bral / nges shes brtan pas\* . . 'gyur med khong du tshud / / : \*lus sems kyi\* bya ba btang la dbang po'i\* . . sgo rnams bsdam / nyon mongs rtog spang [17b7] dben par chun du bskyang / 'dod la ma zhen chos brgyad snyoms pa dang / rgyu 'bras yid ches dge sdig spong sgrub brtson / dben la dga' zhing dmigs pa 'dor mi byed\* . . / 'dod 'dun gnod sems rgod 'gyod gnyid rmugs dang / the\* . . tshom bsam gtan sgrib [18a1] \$\$ / pa spang bar bya /. Note: text between asterisks represents notes added by a scribe/commentator.

<sup>6</sup> *Instructions for Selected Disciples (Lkog chos)*, pp. 513-514: ngo sprad pa la gsum / rnam par mi rtog pa dang / rig pa gsal ba dang / nyams bde ba'o / / dang po ni / phyi yul la brten pa'i rnam rtog phra rags [514] dang / nang sems la brten pa'i kun rtog phra rags thams cad 'gags nas rnam par mi rtog pa la sems rtse gcig tu gnas pa'o / / rig pa gsal ba ni / dang po dbang po'i yul gsal ba la kun rtog gi 'dzin pa ma zhugs pa dang / phyi nas rang sems dang ba'i ngo bo gsal ba ngos bzung dang bral ba'i rig pa rang gsal 'dzin med la rtse gcig tu gnas pa'o / / bde ba ni snga ma'i nyams dang ldan pa'i dus na nyon mongs pa dang rtog pa'i zug rngu thams cad dang bral nas stong gsal gyi nyams pa dang ldan te / sdug bsngal dang btang snyoms kyi tshor ba 'gags nas rang byung zag pa med pa'i bde ba la rtse gcig tu gnas pa'o / / .

In these two citations from Atiśa's texts serenity (*śamatha*) is indicated to be comprised of non-conceptuality, clarity, and blissful experience. As with later pointing-out instructions of *mahāmudrā* by Gampopa, bliss (*bde*) does not connote a tantric meaning but is rather related to the bliss of experience found in the practice of serenity (Trungram 2004:175; Brunnhölzl 2014:193). These sections of Atiśa's *Stages* on serenity will be elucidated upon in the *Pointing-Out Instructions* in section II. Actual Practices, A. Serenity (*śamatha*).

Pointing out the mind (*sems ngo sprad pa*) in the practice of insight (*lhag mthong, vipaśyanā*) is the next yoga. Insight instructions are located in the following sections of *Stages* [§145-149]:

[§145] All things of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are one's own mind. For example, like a mirror, reflection, or echo. All is unmixed, the union of all transcends limited views. The essence [of one's own mind] is luminous and naturally empty. The unified characteristic is liberated from the extremes of elaborations. Whatever happiness or suffering that appears is one's own-mind. There is not another dharma not cognized from the mind. When it is construed as another established elaboration it is mistaken.

[§146] It is from the beginning, innately pure, unconditioned, free from extremes, sameness, without acceptance or rejection of views. In this way, the mind itself is established as the way of things, mind-as-such is pure like the sky. Whether the Victorious Ones of the three times teach it or not, whether sentient beings realize or not, from the beginning perfect gnosis is the dharmakāya, unfabricated, not taken up; from the beginning it is the awakening mind. From the beginning it is stainless and pure; the afflictions and sufferings of cyclic existence are not at all established.

[§147] Mind itself, from the beginning, innately established, cannot be realized by the many who deliberately seek out signs of it. Meditating without a view and free of activity, the result, not to be sought elsewhere, is established from the beginning. [§148] Whether through the condition of the spiritual teacher's teaching or not, whether a yogi meditates or not; [§149] Whether wise ones realize or not, the unconditioned mind-as-such is free from causal conditions. It is not permanent, and is free from the extremes of nihilism; it is without arising, cessation, sameness, difference, coming, or going. Pacified of these eight extremes of elaboration, it has the characteristic of the self-

arisen awakening mind.<sup>7</sup>

*Instructions for Selected Disciples (lkog chos)* provides the following corresponding instructions for the practice of insight:

Pointing out has three topics: pointing out the mind as empty, pointing out conceptual thought as empty, and pointing out whatever appears as empty. First, one's own mind is emptiness. Since the mind is not at all established with shape, color, and so forth, remaining in emptiness from the very beginning, emptiness is not undermined by reasoning, destroyed by antidotes, purified by mantras, or cultivated by meditative stabilization. It is not mind-made emptiness. It is empty by nature, inherently empty. Since the establishment as a mind of male, female, neuter, higher realms, lower realms does not exist in the mere slightest, it is not seen, has not been seen, nor will be seen by the buddhas of the three times. Accordingly, the mind which is empty is pure since it is not polluted or subject to any noxious influence of birth, death, pleasure, pain, and so forth. It is spontaneously present since the beginning as it is not established through effort and striving. The emptiness of one's own mind such like this is called "unproduced," "the realm of reality," and "ultimate reality." It abides from the very beginning as the emptiness of inherent existence.

The method of realizing the meaning of that: by looking directly into one's own mind during the non-conceptual meditative stabilization in serenity, establish in not meditating on anything at all while dwelling in lucidity as

<sup>7</sup> Translation, Apple 2019a, 225. *Stages of the Path (byang chub lam gyi rim pa)*: [S145] [p. 456.20] [18a1] : /'khor 'das chos kun rang gi sems yin te / dper na me long gzugs brnyan brag cha ltar / thams (ca)d\*<sup>kh</sup>or 'das snang ba \* ma 'dres \*<sup>rang gi sems su</sup> kun 'dus phyogs mtha' bral / ngo bo\*<sup>rang sems kyi</sup> \* gsal zhing rang bzhin stong pa nyid / mtshan nyid zung 'jug spros pa'i mtha' [18a2] las grol / bde sdug ci snang thams (ca)d rang sems \*<sup>yin</sup> \* te / [p. 457] sems las ma rtogs chos gzhan gung na med / sprod sgrub\*<sup>sems ma yin pa la</sup> \* gzhan du byed na 'khrul pa yin / [S146] :/ ye nas rnam dag lhun grub 'dus ma byas / mtha' bral mnyam nyid lta ba'i zhe 'dod med / de ltar [18a3] rang sems gnas lugs don la gzhas / sems nyid rnam dag nam mkha' lta bu lam / dus gsum rgyal bas gsung rung ma gsung rung / sems can rnam gyis rtogs rung ma rtogs rung / gdod [18a4] nas yang dag ye shes chos kyi sku \*yin\* / ma bcos ma bslang ye nas byang chub sems \*yin\* / 'dod nas dri med rnam dag 'khor ba yi / sdug bsgal nyon mongs cir yang grub pa med / [S147] :/ sems nyid ye nas lhun gyis grub pa la / mtshan ma'i bya btsal mang [18a5] pos bsgrub tu med / lta ba med cing bsgom dang spyod pa bral / 'bras bu gzhan nas mi btsal ye nas grub / : / [S148] bla ma'i rkyen gyis bstan rung ma bstan rung / rnal 'byor can gyis bsgom rung ma bsgom rung / [S149] shes rab ldan pas rtogs rung ma [18a6] rtogs rung / rgyu rkyen bral ba'i sems nyid 'dus ma byas \*yin\* / :/ rtag pa ma yin chad pa'i mtha' las grol / skye 'gag tha dad don gcig 'gro 'ong med / sprod pa'i mtha' brgyad nye bar zhi ba ni / rang byung byang chub sems gyi mtshan nyid yin [18a7] :/.

empty. Again, establish looking directly. By effort realize that there is emptiness. By producing strong effort with respect to that a meditative stabilization mixed with feeling and conceptual thought arises pure like space. One should become firmly established in the certainty of that [state]. Accordingly, even though realizing one's own mind as emptiness if one thinks while sitting that subtle and coarse conceptual thought which arises from conditions are unhindered fleeting movement of thoughts, one points out that the fleeting movement of thoughts itself is empty. By looking directly into the manner of fleeting movement the haziness disappears without a trace just as a self-arisen cloudy sky vanishes by its own accord.

Just as waves and foam on an ocean are without any differentiation from water, since conceptual thoughts themselves are empty it is not necessary to negate conceptual thought. Like snow descending into water, the ally which is empty is at the same time empty fleeting movement. Since awareness is at the same time empty, it is sufficient to look directly into all conceptual thought. Then, all habituation, body, and appearances should be understood as emptiness. For example, just as the appearance of the moon in water is without an inherent nature, the body is known as bodiless, all appearances are cognized without appearance, and entities are not apprehended as real. Attachment and aversion in reliance upon sense objects does not accumulate. All things are contemplated as dreams and illusions.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Instructions for Selected Disciples (Lkog chos)*, pp. 515-516: / ngo sprad pa la gsum / sems nyid stong par ngo sprad pa dang / rnam rtog stong par ngo sprad pa dang / ci snang stong par ngo sprad pa'o / / dang po ni / rang gi sems stong pa nyid yin te / de la dbyibs dang kha dog la sogs pa cir yang grub pa med de ye nas stong pa nyid du gnas pa yin pas / gtan tshigs kyis bshig pa dang / gnyen pos bcom pa dang / sngags kyis sbyangs pa dang / ting nge 'dzin gyis sgom pa'i stong pa nyid ma yin te / blos byas kyis stong pa ma yin pa / rang bzhin gyis stong pa dang / ngo bo nyid stong pa yin / de pho mo ma ning dang / mtho ris ngan song la sogs pa gang gi sems su yang grub pa cung zad tsam yang med pas dus gsum sangs rgyas kyis kyang ma gzigs / [516] mi gzigs / gzigs par mi 'gyur ro / / de ltar stong pa'i sems la skye shi dang skyid sdug la sogs pas gang gi kyang ma gos pas rnam par dag pa yin / de 'bad rtsol gyis bsgrub pa ma yin pas ye nas lhun gyis grub pa yin / de rgyu rkyen la sogs pa gang gi kyang ma bskyed pas 'dus ma byas pa yin / de lta bu'i rang sems stong pa nyid de la skye med ces dang bya / chos kyis dbying zhes kyang bya / don dam pa'i bden pa zhes kyang bya / rang bzhin stong pa nyid du ye nas gnas so / / de'i don rtogs pa'i thabs ni zhi gnas la mnyam par bzhags pa'i rnam par mi rtog pa'i dus kyis rang sems de la cer bltas pas stong par sang nge 'dug pa de la ci yang mi sgom par bzhag / yang cer lta yang gzhas / byas pas stong pa nyid 'dug bya rtogs pa'o / / de la brtson 'grus drag tu bskyed pas nyams dang rtog pa 'dres pa'i ting nge 'dzin nam mkha' rnam par dag pa lta bu 'byung / de la nges pa'i shes pa brtan par bya'o / / de ltar rang sems stong pa nyid du rtogs kyang rkyen las skyes pa'i rtog pa phra rags rnam mi 'gag par 'gyu yin 'dug pa snyam na rtogs rgyu ba de

As these citations from the *Stages and Instructions for Selected Disciples* illustrates, Atiśa's instructions in private to his advanced students on serenity (*śamatha*) and insight (*vipāśyanā*) focus on pointing out the nature of one's own mind, a nature equivalent to the realm of reality (*dharmadhātu*). These instructions significantly differ from the analytical insight utilizing reasoning found in Atiśa's *Lamp for the Path to Awakening*. As Jackson (2019:71) notes when citing this passage from the *Stages*, "although the term *mahāmudrā* is not specifically applied to this practice, it is very much in line with earlier Indian... contexts in which the term is used." Along these lines, Mathes (2006:23-24) has discussed how pointing-out instructions for insight in "not-specifically-Tantric" meditation manuals among Kagyü scholars differs from practices of insight advocated in traditional works of meditation in Indian Madhyamaka. Traditional works, as described by Mathes, "require an analytical or intellectual assessment of emptiness... mainly based on Madhyamaka reasonings" while insight in *mahāmudrā* pointing-out instruction is "an investigation performed by the inward-looking mental consciousness on the basis of direct cognition." Atiśa's *Instructions for Selected Disciples* cited above instructs the practitioner to "look directly" (*cer lta*) to gain an experiential vision of emptiness in line with an approach through direct cognition by an inward-looking mental awareness. The *Pointing-Out Instructions* will outline guidance on insight in section II. Actual Practices, A. Insight (*vipāśyanā*).

The pointing-out instructions for union (*zung 'jug, yuganaddha*) in Atiśa's *Stages* are as follows:

[§158] The union of the basis, the path, and the result is self-arisen, emptiness, the Realm of Reality, pure, unconditioned, naturally free from elaborations, with nothing at all established, as in empty space. The signs of entities are not established in that. It is the co-emergent way of things, the essence, the factor of clarity, without object, without conceptual thought, inherent translucent radiance, unceasing, appearing like the sun in a cloudless sky, the

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*nyid stong par ngo sprad pa ni / gang ji ltar 'gyu ba la cer gyis bltas pas wal po rjes med du 'gro ste / nam mkha' sprin ltar rang byung rang zhir yal nas 'gro / rgya mtsho'i rlabs dang dbu ba 'dra ste chu dang dbyer med pas rtog pa nyid stong pa yin pas rtog pa dgag mi dgos / chu la kha ba babs pa dang 'dra ste stong pa'i grogs byed pas 'gyu stong dus mnyam / rig stong dus mnyam yin pas rtog pa thams cad la cer bltas pas chog / de nas goms pa dang lus dang snang ba thams cad stong pa nyid du shes par bya ste / dper na chu'i zla ba ltar du snang yang rang bzhin med pas / lus ni lus med du shes / snang ba thams cad snang med du rtogs par byas la dngos po dang bden par mi bzung / yul la brten pa'i chags sdang mi bsags / chos thams cad rmi lam sgyu ma ltar du bsgom par bya'o / .*

union of the unelaborated character of co-emergence, self-illuminating, the unceasing appearance of lucidity and awareness, indivisible appearance and emptiness, like a conch shell and the whiteness of conch shell. There is not anything at all not indivisible from one's own mind. Non-conceptual awareness is without a grasping subject and graspable object while the unceasing agitated mind is like the wind. The appearance factor of indivisible co-emergence is own-form, like five lights without objects, the pure light of crystal. Saṃsāra and nirvāṇa appear as two from conceptual and non-conceptual thought.<sup>9</sup>

[§159] The mind itself, pure from the beginning, is the Realm of Reality, it pervades whatever entities that appear even if they do not directly appear due to delusion, it is all-pervading like sesame oil in sesames. The apprehending subject and apprehended object of karma and appearance is like an illusion. Appearances, reflections, deluded appearances, emanations, non-conceptual appearances, mirages, are like space. All that appears is one's own mind. The nature of all that appears is empty and all various appearances without exception are non-dually unified with one's own mind. Cause and effect are indivisibly empty like waves. Whatever appears is not other than the mind, like the variety of golden things that do not change from their golden form. The formations of virtuous and non-virtuous mental facets are variegated activities like reflections, the pure dharmakāya free from passing stains, inseparable from manifest self-cognizant wakefulness, pure like the sky free from clouds. Just as the bodies, buddha-field, along with mansions, are appearances of pure gnosis, not other, one's own mind is an appearance of merit.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Translation Apple 2019a, 228-9. *Stages of the Path (byang chub lam gyi rim pa)*: [§158] *gnas*<sup>\*gzhil\*</sup> *mtshon*<sup>\*lam\*</sup> *'bras bu*<sup>'i\*</sup> *zung du* *'jug pa ni rang byung stong nyid chos dbyings rnam par dag / 'dus*<sup>\*ma\*</sup> *byas shing lhun grub spros pa bral / cir yang ma grub nam mkha' stong pa 'dra / de la dngos po'i mtshan ma rdul tsam med / lhan [19b2] skyes*<sup>\*\*\*</sup> *gnas lugs ngo bo gsal ba'i cha / yul*<sup>\*dhang po'i\*</sup> *med rtogs*<sup>\*dzin pa'i\*</sup> *med rang*<sup>\*ye nas kyi\*</sup> *gdangs ma 'gags pa*<sup>\*pa'i cha\*</sup> */ sprin med mkha' la nyi shar ji bzhin gsal / lhan skyes*<sup>\*gzhil'i rang byung lhan skyes\*</sup> *mtshan nyid*<sup>\*gzung 'dzin gyi\*</sup> *spros bral zung*<sup>\*snang stong\*</sup> *'zug ni / gsal rig*<sup>\*rang gdangs gyi\*</sup> *snang ba ma 'gags rang shar cing / snang stong byer med [19b3] dung dang dung dkar 'dra / rang sems dbyer med ma yin*<sup>\*gzhon\*</sup> *ci yang med / rtog*<sup>\*gzung 'dzin gyi\*</sup> *med rig pa ma 'gags 'gyu ba'i yid / gzung 'dzin gnyis med bar*<sup>\*\*\*</sup> *snang bsir bu [bser bu] 'dra / lhan skyes dbyer med snang cha rang gi gzugs / 'od*<sup>\*\*\*</sup> *lnga yul med man shel dag pa*<sup>\*\*\*</sup> *'dra / rtogs ma*<sup>\*yul du shes pa\*</sup> [19b4] *rtogs las 'khor*<sup>\*'dzin stang gyi\*</sup> *'das gnyis su shar / :/ .*

<sup>10</sup> Translation Apple 2019a, 229. *Stages of the Path (byang chub lam gyi rim pa)*: [§159]: [§159] [19b4] *sems nyid gdod nas dag pa chos kyi dbyings / dngos po*<sup>\*phyi nang gi\*</sup> *ci snang kun la khyab pa de / rnmongs pas dngos su snang bar ma gyur kyang / til dang til mar*<sup>\*til la mar gyis khyab pa\*</sup> *bzhin du khyab par gnas / las snang gzung 'dzin sgyu ma lta bu dang / rang [19b5] snang gzugs brnyan 'khrul snang thag sprul dang / mi rtog snang ba smig*

The *Instructions for Selected Disciples* (*lkog chos*) provides an extended discussion in its corresponding instructions for directly pointing-out union. The text presents instructions for union in terms of the union of the ground, union of the path, and union of the result. The triadic division of the tantric way into basis (*gzhi*), path (*lam*), and result (*'bras bu*) is considered by Tibetan traditions to be connected to the *Guhyasamājantra* (Broido 1984:5; 1985) and it often utilized in advanced exegesis of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna works. The *Instructions for Selected Disciples* states:

Directly pointing out has three topics: (1) the union of the ground which is the basis, (2) the union of the path which is indicated, and (3) the union of the result which is achieved.<sup>11</sup>

(1) First, the union of the ground which is the basis: there is not a buddha which is made manifest through realization, there is not a mistaken sentient being through non-realization, remaining spontaneously perfected from the very beginning, the natural condition being in itself the general ground of all of cyclic existence and *niroāna* has three characteristics. (a) Its own nature dwells in emptiness. (b) The nature abides in clarity. (c) The characteristic abides indivisibly.<sup>12</sup>

(a) Among these, first, its own nature dwells in emptiness, there is not an emptiness which is destroyed, entrusted, or

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*rgyu mkha' dang 'dra / ci snang de dag tha(m ca)d rang sems yin / gang snang kun gyi rang bzhin stong pa dang / sna tshogs snang ba ma lus tha(m ca)d kun / gnyis su med de rang sems zung du 'jug / rgyu 'bras stong [19b6] par dbyer med chu rlabs bzhin / ji ltar snang yang sems min gzhan med pas / sna tshogs gser gzugs gser las mi 'gyur 'dra / sems pa dge dang mi dge'i 'du byed rnams / sna tshogs 'phrin las bzhin dang gzugs brnyan 'dra / chos sku rnam dag [19b7] glo bur dri ma bral / ye shes rang gsal mngon gyur 'bral med pa / rnam dag nam mkha' sprin dang bral ba 'dra / sku dang zhing khams gzhal yas khang dang bcas / ji ltar ye shes dag pa'i snang ba rnams / gzhan min rang sems bsod nams snang ba yin / [20a1] :/.*

<sup>11</sup> *Instructions for Selected Disciples* (*Lkog chos*): [518.23] / *ngo sprad pa la gsum / gnas pa gzhi'i zung 'jug dang / mtshon pa lam gyi* [519] *zung 'jug dang / grub pa 'bras bu'i zung 'jug go /*.

<sup>12</sup> *Instructions for Selected Disciples* (*Lkog chos*): [519.1] *dang po ni / rtogs nas mngon du gyur pa'i sangs rgyas dang min / ma rtogs nas 'khrul ba'i sems can ma yin te / 'khor 'das kun gyi spyi sa gzhi dngos po'i gnas lugs ye nas lhun grub tu gnas pa'i gnas lugs la gsum / rang bzhin stong par gnas / [gegs bsal ba la gsum / bla ma'i sku la brnyas pa dang / dam pa'i chos spangs pa dang / mtshams med pa'i sdir byas pa dang gsum spang bar bya ste / ma skyes pa mi skye / skyes pa nyams par 'gyur ba'o /* (“Dispelling hindrances has three, despising the body of the spiritual teacher, abandoning the holy Dharma, committing a heinous evil deed. These three should be eliminated, and that uncreated should not be created, and what has been created should degenerate.”) (The sentences in brackets seem out of place and have been removed from the translation.) / *ngo bo gsal bar gnas / mtshan nyid dbyer med du gnas pa'o /*.

purified. It abides as emptiness of inherent nature from the very beginning, free from all phenomenal marks such as shape, color, and so forth. There is not a realization which apprehends a non-existence within. It is the unobstructed clarity of the radiance of one's own awareness. Abiding like the sun rising in pure space or like the wind of pure space.<sup>13</sup> (c) The characteristic: the indivisibility of lucidity and emptiness, inseparable like a conch shell and its whiteness, abides primordially free from conceptuality.<sup>14</sup>

According to Atiśa based on these passages, the union of the ground is the ever-present non-conceptual nature of emptiness equated with the unobstructed radiance of one's own awareness. Atiśa next describes the union of the path in the following passage:

(2) The union of the path which is indicated has three topics: (a) the inherent nature, emptiness, (b) the essence, clarity, and the (c) characteristic, indivisibility.<sup>15</sup>

(a) First, one's own mind, primordially pure, which resides in the realm of reality, all-pervading everywhere just as it appears, although emptiness is not lucid at the time of appearance while ignorance presides, emptiness timelessly abides all-pervading in all whatever appears like sesame oil pervading a sesame seed.<sup>16</sup>

The (b) luminous essence is clear in three appearances: (i) karmic appearance, (ii) delusive appearance, and (iii) meditative appearance. (i) First, are all the appearances of happiness and suffering of the six realms of rebirth. These are not appearances which are established as an external object. Since one's own karmic action is a conjunction of circumstances and connections of virtue and evil deeds like an illusion and so forth, it is like a reflection.

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<sup>13</sup> *Instructions for Selected Disciples (Lkog chos): [519.7-12] / de las dang po rang bzhin stong par gnas pa ni bshig pa dang bcol ba dang sbyangs pa'i stong pa ma yin te / ye nas rang bzhin gyis stong pa nyid du gnas te / dbyibs dang kha dog la sogs pa'i mtshan ma thams cad dang bral ba / nang na med pas 'dzin pa'i rtog pa ma yin pa / rig pa rang gi mdangs ma 'gags par gsal ba / nam mkha' rnam par dag pa la nyi ma shar ba dang bar snang dag pa'i bser bu lta bur gnas so /*

<sup>14</sup> *Instructions for Selected Disciples (Lkog chos): [519.12] / mtshan nyid ni bsal ba dang stong pa dbyer med pa dung dang dung gi dkar po ltar du dbyer med rtog bral du ye nas gnas pa'o /*

<sup>15</sup> *Instructions for Selected Disciples (Lkog chos): [519.14-15] / mtshon pa lam gyi zung 'jug la gsum / rang bzhin stong pa dang / ngo bo gsal ba dang / mtshan nyid dbyer med do /*

<sup>16</sup> *Instructions for Selected Disciples (Lkog chos): [519.15-18] / dang po ni / rang gi sems gdod nas dag pa chos kyi dbyings su gnas pa de / ji ltar snang ba thams cad la khyab par gnas te / gnas par ma rig pas snang ba'i dus na stong pa nyid mi gsal kyang / til la mar gyis khyab pa lta bu ci snang thams cad la stong pas khyab par ye nas gnas pa'o /*



(ii) Delusive appearance is grasping at an external object that is not understood as one's own perception like seeing a rope as a snake.

(iii) Meditative appearance is the appearance of one's own mind, at the time of abiding in non-conceptual meditative stabilization though an appearing external object ceases, the factor of clarity does not cease the appearance of the mind within, like mirage, smoke, star, drops of light and so forth, subtle and coarse colors and shapes mostly appear, utterly empty like a cloudless sky. In brief, all karmic appearances, delusive appearances, and meditative appearances are the luminous essence of one's own mind.<sup>17</sup>

(c) The unified characteristic: since all karmic appearances and so forth are pervaded by emptiness of inherent nature for all appearances seen as subject and object, and since the appearance itself is empty and emptiness is appearance, they are without any differentiation like water and its waves.<sup>18</sup>

The *Instructions for Selected Disciples* continues with instructions on the union of the result in the following passage:

(3) The union of the result which is achieved has three topics: (a) the inherent nature, emptiness, (b) the essence, clarity, and (c) the characteristic, indivisibility.<sup>19</sup>

(a) Among them, first, [the inherent nature, emptiness], since it abides inseparable in the condition of twofold purity through actualizing the meaning of being free from the momentary defilements and being pure from the very

<sup>17</sup> *Instructions for Selected Disciples (Lkog chos): [519.18-520.6] / ngo bo gsal ba ni snang ba gsum du gsal te / (i) las snang ba dang / (ii) 'khrul snang dang / (iii) nyams snang ngo / (i) / dang po rigs drug gi bde sdug gi snang ba thams cad yin te / de dag phyi don du grub pa'i snang ba ma yin / rang gi las dge sdig gi rten 'brel tshogs pa dang sgyu ma la sogs yin pas gzugs brnyan dang 'dra'o / (ii) / 'khrul ba'i snang ba ni / rang snang du ma shes par / phyi don du 'dzin pa thag pa la sbrul du mthong ba lta bu'o / / (iii) nyams snang ni rang gi sems snang ba ste / [520] rnam par mi rtoq pa'i ting nge 'dzin la gnas pa'i dus na / phyi rol gyi yul snang ni 'gags nas / nang sems kyi snang ba ma 'gags par gsal ba'i cha / smig rgyu dang du ba dang skar ma dang 'od kyi thig le 'dra ba la sogs pa kha dog dang dbyibs phra rags mang por snang ba dang / sprin med pa'i nam mkha' ltar stong sang nge ba dang / mdor na las snang dang / 'khrul snang dang / nyams snang thams cad rang gi sems kyi ngo bo gsal ba yin no /*

<sup>18</sup> *Instructions for Selected Disciples (Lkog chos): [520.6] / mtshan nyid zung 'jug ni / las snang la sogs pa thams cad gzung 'dzin lta bar snang ba thams cad la rang bzhin stong pas khyab pas / snang ba nyid stong pa yin la stong pa nyid snang ba yin pas / dbyer med pa chu dang rlabs bzhin no /*

<sup>19</sup> *Instructions for Selected Disciples (Lkog chos): [520.8-10] / grub pa 'bras bu'i zung 'jug la gsum / rang bzhin stong pa dang / ngo bo gsal ba dang / mtshan nyid dbyer med pa'o /*

beginning realm of reality, it is like a cloudless sky.<sup>20</sup>

(b) The luminous essence are all the appearances of the body, wisdom, pure realms, celestial palaces and so forth just as it appears and they are not established from without.<sup>21</sup>

The very embodiment of the awakening mind, one's own mind, the luminous essence of pristine wisdom, wisdom appears like the moon reflected in water and a rainbow in the sky.<sup>22</sup>

(c) The unified characteristic: all the bodies, pure realms, celestial mansions and so forth, appearances of true pristine wisdom, like an illusion, and the actualized realm of reality just-as-it-is are inseparably merged. For example, like the inseparability of the sky and a rainbow. The good qualities and activity that manifest from that inseparability mature and liberate those to be trained.<sup>23</sup>

These sections on the pointing-out instructions for union (*zung 'jug, yuganaddha*) in Atiśa's *Stages and Instructions for Selected Disciples* will be elucidated upon in the *Pointing-Out Instructions* in section II. Actual Practices, C. Union.

The fourth yoga of signlessness is only discussed in the *Pointing-Out Instructions* and briefly mentioned in Atiśa's *Stages*. Atiśa's *Instructions for Selected Disciples* rather than focusing on signlessness, has an extended discussion of the practice of union in terms of the indivisibility of cause/effect and emptiness (*rgyu 'bras dang stong pa dbyer med*), the indivisibility of skilful means and wisdom (*thabs dang sher rab dbyer med*), and the indivisibility of appearances and emptiness (*snang ba dang stong pa dbyer med*). According to the content structure in the *Structural Analysis* these topics correlate to the *Stages*

<sup>20</sup> *Instructions for Selected Disciples (Lkog chos): [520.10-12] / de las dang po ni / chos kyi dbyings ye nas rnam par dag pa la / glo bur gyi dri ma dang bral ba'i don mngon du gyur nas dag pa gnyis ldan gyi ngang la 'bral med du gnas pa ni sprin med pa'i nam mkha' lta bu'o /*

<sup>21</sup> *Instructions for Selected Disciples (Lkog chos): [520.12-14] / ngo bo gsal ba ni / sku dang ye shes dang zhing khams dang gzhal yas khang la sogs pa ji ltar snang ba thams cad yin te / de dag phyi na grub pa med do /*

<sup>22</sup> *Instructions for Selected Disciples (Lkog chos): [520.14-16] / byang chub sems kyi rang gzugs rang gi sems ye shes kyi ngo bo gsal ba ye shes chu zla lta bu dang mkha' la 'ja' tshon shar ba lta bu'o /*

<sup>23</sup> *Instructions for Selected Disciples (Lkog chos): [520.16-20] mtshan nyid dbyer med ni / sku dang zhing khams dang gzhal yas khang la sogs pa thams cad yang dag pa'i ye shes kyi snang ba sgyu ma lta bu dang / chos kyi dbyings ji lta ba mngon du byas pa gnyis dbyer med par 'dres pa yin te / dper na nam mkha' dang 'ja' tshon dbyer med pa lta bu ste / dbyer med de mngon du byas pa'i yon tan dang 'phrin las kyi sgdul bya smin cing grol bar byed pa'o /*

in sections §162-3 on cause/effect and emptiness (Apple 2019a:230-231), section §164 on skilful means and wisdom (Apple 2019a:231-232), and §165 on appearances and emptiness. Analysis of these sections of the *Stages* and *Instructions for Selected Disciples* are forthcoming. But the difference in exegesis between the *Instructions for Selected Disciples* and the *Pointing-Out Instructions* indicates alternative ways of understanding Atiśa's *Stages* and different points of emphasis in meditation practice. The fourth yoga of signlessness is alluded to in Atiśa's *Stages* as follows:

[§167] One's own mind free from extremes, the Great Middle Way, free from conceptuality with signs and without signs, remain without grasping thoughts of the extremes of permanency and nihilism. Not abiding in mere non-conceptuality, free from elaborations [§168] remain in the free relaxation of the six aggregates of consciousness unceasing appearances. Since all apparent objects are the emptiness of one's own mind, appearing, yet lacking inherent existence, remain in the condition of non-grasping the appearances of objects in one's own mind like the moon's reflection in water. When all things within *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are one in the condition indivisible with one's own mind, since *saṃsāra* is not abandoned and *nirvāṇa* is not achieved in the unified mind, remain in the state without anything to be accepted or rejected.<sup>24</sup>

The initial passage of this citation from the *Stages* evokes a phrase from the colophon title of the *Pointing-Out Instructions* "eliminate the extremes of one's own mind" (*rang sems mtha' gcod*). Atiśa also refers to this state as the "Great Middle Way" (*dbu ma chen po*), a term which he utilizes throughout his works on Madhyamaka and the path (Apple 2019b:50-52, 58-60). It is tempting to compare this fourth yoga of signlessness (*mtshan ma med pa*) with other systems such as the fourth stage in Ratnākaraśānti's *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* which is described as "signless emptiness" (*nirnimittā sūnyatā*) (Katsura 2018).

<sup>24</sup> *Stages of the Path* (*byang chub lam gyi rim pa*): [§167] *rang sems mtha' bral dbu ma chen po ni / \*sugon pas snang po lnga kyi\* mtshan [21a7] bcas mtshan ma med pa'i rtog bral zhing / rtag chad mtha'i 'dzin rtog med par bzhag / \*mnyam gzhag tu mi\* rtog med tsam la mi gnas spros bral dang / : / [§168] \*dbang po'i yul\* snang ba mi dgag \*dbang pa\* tshogs drug ldug par \*yul 2 las\* bzhag / \*bzhag pas\* yul snang thams cad rang sems stong pa nyid \*yin par shes pas\* / snang yang [21b1] rang bzhin med de gzugs brnyan \*chu zla dang\* 'dra / rang sems \*la yul\* snang ba 'dzin med ngang la gzhag / 'khor dang myan ngan 'das pa'i chos rnams kun / \*yul med pa'i\* rang sems dbyer med ngang du gcig pas na / \*rang sems\* zung 'jug sems la \*khor ba\* spong sgrub \*das pa\* ma grub pas / \*sang rgyas la\* re dogs spang \*\*\* blangs med pa'i ngang la [21b2] gzhag / :/.*

However, as mentioned, Atiśa's system of four yogas in the *Pointing-Out Instructions* is different from all currently known types of four-fold meditations as studied by Bentor (2002). The *Pointing-Out Instructions* discussion of signlessness is found in section II. Actual Practices, D. Signlessness.

### Conclusion

The *Pointing-Out Instructions* is a central document that illustrates the nature of Kadampa pointing-out instructions. In terms of its content, the *Pointing-Out Instructions* contains a number of features that indicate its tantric orientation, archetypal features that influence later Kagyü meditation manuals, and anomalies that illustrate its unique teachings not found in other Indo-Tibetan meditation traditions.

The tantric orientation of the *Pointing-Out Instructions* is indicated in its content through mention of practices that are explicitly found in Buddhist tantras. The *Pointing-Out Instructions* advocates utilizing the one hundred syllable mantra of Vajrasattva for purification (p. 528; section I.C.), a practice found in the *Sarvatathāgata-tattovasaṅgraha* (Chandra 1981) and *Kriyāsaṅgraha* (Skorupski 2002:142). A text on the one hundred syllables of Vajrasattva is found in Atiśa's collected works (*gsung 'bum*).<sup>25</sup> The *Pointing-Out Instructions* also instructs the practitioner in multiple sections to meditate on the spiritual teacher (*bla ma*) as a buddha (p. 535) and for the meditator to gain a vision of one's deity (p. 549; II.C.3.e) as a benefit of attaining union (*yuganaddha*). At the end of the work, attaining the great clear light (*'od gsal chen po*; p.550, II.D.2.c; p.552, III.C.2) is discussed as a result of attaining a great level in signlessness meditation. Clear light (*prabhāsovara*) is discussed in Atiśa's other works in relation to the *Cakraṣaṅvara tantra* and *mahāmudrā* teachings (Apple 2017). Although the *Pointing-Out Instructions* contains elements that demonstrate a tantric orientation, the work does not directly cite any Buddhist tantra or specify instructions for receiving consecration or empowerment (*abhiṣeka*).

The teachings of the Kadampa *Pointing-Out Instructions* serve as prototype for later Kagyü meditation manuals on *mahāmudrā*. The text presents subject matter in terms of preliminaries (*sngon 'gro*), actual practices (*dngos gzhi*), and subsequent practices (*rjes*) like later Kagyü meditation manuals (Callahan 2019). In addition to pointing-out meditation instructions (*ngo sprod*), the *Pointing-Out Instructions* contain many techniques of meditation instruction found in subsequent Kagyü manuals such as sustaining (*bskyang ba*) the meaning of

<sup>25</sup> This is *The Sādhana of One Hundred Syllables (yi ge brgya'i sgrub thabs)* in *Jo bo rje dpal ldan a ti sha'i gsung 'bum*, Vol. 2, p. 934-35.

the instruction, enhancement (*bogs 'don pa*) of the practice, and eliminating pitfalls (*gol sgrib*) to various stages among the practices.

The *Pointing-Out Instructions* also utilize many analogies and metaphors found in the later Kagyü tradition and its meditation manuals. The *Pointing-Out Instructions* (p.541) mentions the analogy of water and waves (compare Brown 2006:331, 400-401; Callahan 2019:240, 248-9, 278), sugar and its taste (p. 542; compare Trungram 2004:175; Callahan 2019:242, 270), the analogy of water and ice (p. 543; compare Trungram 2004:175; Brown 2006:399-400; Roberts 2011:149), a statue made of gold (p. 543; compare Roberts 2011:87), and the analogy of the Brahmin's thread frequently mentioned in later Kagyü meditation manuals (p. 530; compare Brown 2006:262-264; Callahan 2019:337-8). The *Pointing-Out Instructions* also outlines stages of meditative experience in terms of gradual (*rim gyis pa*), crossing over (*thos rgal ba*), and simultaneous (*cig car ba*), a typology that is found in Kagyü traditions of *mahāmudrā* instruction (Broido 1984:11; Callahan 2019:175-77).

The *Pointing-Out Instructions* have several novel features that I have not so far found in other Indo-Tibetan meditation manuals as well. The first is the analogy of the skillful cow herder (*mkhas pa ba glang skyong ba*) in utilizing mindfulness to maintain insight (p. 537; section II.B.2.d.1). The *ba glang skyong ba* ( $\approx$  *gopālaka*; Skorupski 1996:222; Shukla 2008:400) is a term that refers to a low Indian caste that tends cattle. I have only located this analogy in the *Stages of the Path* and *Instructions for Selected Disciples* works of Atiśa himself. Atiśa's *Stages* [§170] instructs that one should sustain one's mind free from elaborations, in part, through holding "with mindfulness, like a skillful cow herder, be free by resting naturally without projecting, without concentrating."<sup>26</sup> The *Instructions for Selected Disciples* (*lkog chos*, p. 524) has a similar description. Finally, the *Pointing-Out Instructions* instructs the practitioner to have a bodily posture for meditation that is described in terms of the "five-point posture of Amitābha" (*snang mtha' yi chos lnga ldan*, p. 530; II. A.2.a) rather than the more frequent "seven-point of Vairocana" (*rnam snang chos bdun*) (Callahan 2019: 180-82). In sum, the *Pointing-Out Instructions* of Atiśa and his Kadampa followers significantly contributes to understanding the advanced forms of meditation taught in Atiśa's stages of the path systems as well as gaining insight into the historical development and practices of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist forms of meditation related to *mahāmudrā*.

<sup>26</sup> *Stages of the Path* (*byang chub lam gyi rim pa*): [§170] \**sens mi bzung bar\** *mkhas pa ba glang skyong* [21b4] *bzhin dran pas bzung* \*\*\* / *mi spro mi bsdu rang sar bzhang pas* \**rnongs rnam rtog sdug bsngal las\** *grol* / .

### A Note on the Translation and Transcription

The *Pointing-out Instructions* (*ngo sprod lnga tshoms*) occurs in Atiśa's *Byang chub lam gyi rim pa* manuscript folios 52b6-65a4 in *dbu med* script and the *Jo bo rje dpal ldan a ti sha'i gsung 'bum*, Vol. 2, pp. 527-552 in *dbu can* script. The numbers between regular brackets in both the translation and transcription refers to the page number in the *Jo bo rje dpal ldan a ti sha'i gsung 'bum*, Vol. 2, pp. 527-552. I have edited both the translation and transcription of the *Pointing-out Instructions* to include an alphanumeric outline to guide the reader in comparing the two texts. The headings and subheadings preface sections in bold brackets according to the following style: I. A. 1. a. (1.) (a.) (i.). The Roman transliteration of Tibetan follows the Wylie System proposed in Wylie (1959).

#### Translation

[Title and Homage]

[527.10] Pointing-out Instructions in Sets of Five. I pay homage to the Holy Spiritual Teachers!

The great pointing-out instructions that eliminate the extremes of one's own mind in sets of five has three general points: (I.) general preliminaries, (II.) actual practices, and their (III.) distinctive features.

#### [I. General Preliminaries]

The first, general preliminaries, has five topics: (A.) following a spiritual teacher, (B.) guarding moral conduct, (C.) accumulation and purification, (D.) having contentment, and (E.) knowing how to ration food.

#### [A. Following a spiritual teacher]

Among these, first, following a spiritual teacher: in dependence upon a spiritual teacher with all virtuous qualities, with a wish to arise special realization, request special instructions as much as one can with veneration and devotion to a spiritual teacher who is endowed with four characteristics.

Namely, [a spiritual teacher is] one who understands the nature of things, does not cling to selfish vested interests, bears the burdens of

other's welfare, and subjugates the mind with blessings.

First, one who understands the nature of things, understands the general and specific characters of things and realizes the meaning of suchness.

One who cuts off clinging to selfish vested interests does not strive for wealth, food, servants, eight worldly dharmas, and so forth in this life.

One who bears the burdens of other's welfare, by means of great compassion, engages in other's welfare by enduring ingratitude of audiences while not being attached to one's own happiness.

One who subjugates the mind with blessings is able to produce virtuous qualities in the mind for others who have admiration and respect.

[528] Through being supreme in being endowed with these four characteristics one attains the title of precious one (*rin po che*). They are able to accomplish other's welfare to a great extent.

Even if they do not possess all these characteristics, by having realization they are able to engender meditation.

Those who have authentic veneration and devotion to them see the spiritual teacher as a buddha and listen closely to whatever is taught with confidence. As the spiritual teacher is the root of all qualities or the principle of prerequisites for producing virtuous qualities, one should make effort in this regard.

If one does not have respect and devotion, even though having spiritual instructions and blessings, virtuous qualities will not be produced. Although having respect and devotion, since virtuous qualities will not be produced without blessings, one must be endowed with respect and devotion as well as blessings.

One will not understand the practices, dispelling hindrances, and gain improvement if the special instructions are not complete, one should therefore request complete special instructions.

**[B. Guarding Moral Conduct]**

Guarding moral conduct: one must have moral virtue which blocks afflictions and non-virtuous karma. Without that, one does not arise meditation in being polluted with faults and downfalls, therefore one should not be polluted with faults and downfalls. The *Moon Lamp Sūtra* (*Candrapradīpasūtra*) states: "Quickly attaining the comprehension of awareness when not having mental afflictions, this is the benefit of pure moral conduct."

**[C. Accumulation and purification]**

Accumulation and purification: since the path is not produced in the mental continuum when having karma, mental afflictions, and obstructions of knowledge from beginningless lifetimes, one should recite the one hundred syllable mantra and so forth. If one does not accumulate merit, the path will not arise.

*As The Verses That Summarize the Perfection of Wisdom state "As long as one does not complete the roots of virtue for that long this most excellent emptiness will not be attained,"*<sup>27</sup> one should therefore accumulate whatever collections can be gathered, offer offerings and so forth, offer maṇḍalas and recite the one hundred syllables and so forth.

**[D. Having contentment]**

Having contentment with few desires: as one does not arise meditation through having a distracted mind that desires food, wealth, and so forth when not content, one should meditate with contentment in having simple food and clothing while reversing the tendency from desires.

**[E. Knowing how to ration food]**

Knowing how to ration food: one should rely on agreeable food and eliminate harm in sickness through food that is connected with sickness in wind-bile and so forth.

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Ratnagūṣaṃcayagāthā*, 20.10cd (Yuyama 1976, Skt.78, Tib. 177 ). Differs slightly from canonical Tibetan. English Conze 1973, 46.



**[II. Actual Practices]**

Actual practices have four topics: these are the yogas of (A.) serenity (*śamatha*), (B.) insight (*vipaśyanā*), (C.) union (*yuganaddha*), and (D) signlessness (*animittayoga*).

**[A. Serenity (*śamatha*)]**

Among these, first, serenity (*śamatha*) [529] has three topics: (1.) preliminaries, (2.) actual practice, and (3.) subsequent practice.

**[1. Preliminaries]**

From them, the first, preliminaries, has five topics: (a.) residing in solitude, (b.) restraining the sense faculties, (c.) cultivating the awakening mind, (d.) meditating on the spiritual teacher, and (e.) developing aspiration.

**[a. Residing in solitude]**

Among them, first, residing in solitude: if one does not relinquish whichever subtle or coarse causal conditions which distract body, speech, and mind, meditation will not be cultivated. One should demonstrate activities which degenerate the production of those conditions.

Since it is not beneficial if one does not reside in solitude even if relinquishing activities, one must reside in solitude. Furthermore, a place without human noise during the day, without the sounds of chatter during the night, a place without being apprehended by poisonous non-humans and without a busy road, a place to reside with previous spiritual attainment endowed with a plaintain tree, a place which avoids the harm of savages and carnivorous animals, and one which is joyful in one's own experience.

Moreover, since bodily solitude is not beneficial from distraction with mental afflictions, one should eliminate all subtle and coarse mental afflictions and conceptual thoughts.

**[b. Restraining the sense faculties]**

Restraining the sense faculties: as impediments to meditation are created due to the arising from all sorts of conceptual thoughts of hatred and attachment when objects appear to the sense faculties of the eye and so forth, one should make sure to attain conscientious mindful-

ness that guards the sense doors in not engaging sense faculties with appearances to the six sense objects.

### **[c. Cultivating the awakening mind]**

Arising the awakening mind: the oath of the aspiring and engaging [awakening mind] are gathered together and they transform one into the path of the Great Vehicle while not falling into the inferior vehicle. One should arise the supreme awakening mind as it becomes a means for attaining buddhahood and achieving extensive benefit for others.

### **[d. Meditating on the spiritual teacher]**

Meditation on the spiritual teacher: one shows devotion and respect by meditating on the spiritual teacher as sitting above one's head and arising the perception of him as a buddha.

That, having completed an immense accumulation of merit, gives rise to meditation and demonstrates respect and veneration to oneself as a student.

By giving rise to meditation through completing an immense accumulation of merit and having respect and veneration for oneself as a student, the welfare of others will be achieved and buddhahood will be attained.

### **[e. Developing aspiration]**

Developing aspiration: in general, the desire for Dharma is aspiration; since it is a principal cause, here, the fierce aspiration which desires to give rise to meditation is developing aspiration. Without that, although one may have other prerequisites, meditation will not be developed. Therefore, aspiration should be continuously attended upon.

## **[2. Actual practice]**

Actual practice has five topics: (a.) meditative equipoise, (b.) the stages of arising in the mental continuum, (c.) pointing-out, (d.) sustaining the meaning [530] that has been pointed out, (e.) and enhancement.

### [a. Meditative equipoise]

First, meditative equipoise: have a bodily posture with the five qualities of Amitābha, that is, legs in a cross-legged sitting posture, hands in meditation gesture, spine straight, eyes directed toward the nose, and chin tucked slightly toward throat.<sup>28</sup> Five methods of settling the mind should be established: (1) deeply relaxed, (2) non-artificial, (3) non-conceptual, (4) discarding conceptual thought, and (5) without effort.

(1) Deeply relaxed: awareness should be left in its own place the body and mind remaining tranquil like spinning a Brahmin's thread not tightly held.

(2) Non-artificial: fresh awareness left naturally as-it-is is like transparency in calm water, unspoiled by various conceptual thoughts and so forth in meditation.

(3) Non-conceptual: do not evaluate traces of the past, do not receive the future, do not grasp the surface of the present awareness in eliminating all subtle and coarse internal and external conceptual thoughts; a stupid person establishes this as being unconscious for whatever [meditative] basis and the meaning gets lost.

(4) Discarding conceptual thought: when subtle internal fleeting movements, the robbers of conceptual thought, arise without conditions, identify and discard them like particles of food, and establish non-conceptuality.

(5) Effortlessness: establish one's own mind at ease like a person who has completed a deed effortlessly of cause to accomplish.

In brief, establish into one's own understanding the five meditation methods as one group.

Then, the object of observation of mind, do not destroy the bodily

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<sup>28</sup> Compare against the more well-known and standard "seven-point posture of Vairocana" (*rnam snang gi chos bdun*): "(1) legs in the vajra posture (*rkang pa skyil khrung*), (2) hands in the positions of equipoise (*lag pa mnyam bzhag*), (3) spine straight (*sgal tshigs drang por bsrang ba*), (4) neck slightly bent (*ngrin cung zad grug pa*), (5) shoulders spread like the wings of a vulture (*dpung ba rgod gshog ltar brkyangs pa*), (6) gaze resting at the tip of the nose (*mig sna rtser phabs pa*), (7) tongue touching the palate (*lce ya rkan la sbyar ba*)" (Buswell and Lopez 2014:1078).

food in the mind. In between while not entering other conceptual thoughts, each time make a dedication for unsurpassable awakening.

### **[b. The stages of arising in the mental continuum]**

Accordingly, the stages of experience arising by meditative equipoise are five: (1) lesser experience, (2) middling, (3) very best, (4) crossing over, and (5) simultaneous.

(1) Among these, first, at the time of meditative equipoise, through conceptual thought that arises from external objects being stopped, the internal mental conceptual thought is recognized and awareness fleetingly moves, not abiding, like water flowing downhill.

Then, having pacified conceptual thought, the mind remains in non-conceptuality like a stream of water reaching a pool.

Then, sometimes one abides, sometimes one does not abide.

(2) Middling experience: one produces virtuous qualities, like a reflection in sparkling water, unharmed by subtle distractions while in a cognizant yet nonconceptual continual meditative experience. [531]

(3) The very best meditative experience: there occurs continuously experience through uniting luminosity and emptiness through mental pliancy and cognizing the lack of inherent existence in that very luminous experience itself.

(4) Crossing over: while arising upper and lower meditative experience, at times one does not think "I am meditating" and comes to be free from taking up cognition. At times, one thinks there is not anything which exceeds this meditation.

(5) Simultaneous: there occurs a continuous and without diminishing produced from the very beginning experience of the inseparability of luminosity and emptiness, although there exists a little bit of conceptual thought.

### **[c. Serenity Pointing-out Instructions]**

Directly pointing out has five topics: (1) non-conceptuality, (2) luminous awareness, (3) blissful experience, (4) single-pointed nature, (5) steadfast recognition.

(1) Among these, first, non-conceptuality: having ceased the subtle and coarse conceptual thoughts relying on external objects and subtle and coarse conceptuality arising from the mind within, there is non-conceptuality like a statue.

(2) Luminous awareness: first, one engages with apprehending of inner conceptual thought for the luminosity of various and distinct objects. Later on, self-luminous objectless transparent awareness of one's own mind does not grasp self-luminous awareness which is free from any identification like a reflection in a mirror.

(3) Blissful experience: at the time of being free from all mental afflictions and conceptual thought while having the previous meditative experience, one becomes endowed with the meditative experience of emptiness and luminosity free from all discomforts of conceptual thought and so forth, which ceases the sensation of the indifference to suffering, and has self-arisen unconditioned bliss, like a monk arising the meditative absorption of the first concentration (*prathamadhyāna*).

(4) Single-pointedness is the nature of meditative stabilization (*samādhi*). That, having ceased subtle and coarse external and internal conceptual thought, is mental stability undistracted from the state of bliss, clarity, and non-thought, while a person distracted by many indeterminate things is like a parrot.

(5) Steadfast recognition: with a peaceful and tamed mind free from doubt by having the nature of the previous meditative experiences one has mastery in concentration (*dhyāna*), like the power that is mastered by a king.

#### **[d. Sustaining the meaning that has been pointed out]**

Sustaining the meaning that has been pointed out has five topics: (1) eliminating hindrances, (2) renouncing activities, (3) residing in solitude, [532] (4) engendering energetic diligence, (5) continuous non-distractedness.

(1) First, the hindrances are five: desires and aspirations, harmfulness, excitement and sense of guilt, sleep and torpor, and doubt.

First, desires and aspirations are mental distractions through the desire for food, wealth, fame, and so forth for this life.

Harmfulness is the intention to harm through malice and regarding

as an enemy in nine or ten stages of a hostile attitude.

Excitement and sense of guilt is body, speech, and mind being excited with distraction and being unhappy through recalling previous evil deeds, downfalls, and so forth.

Sleep and torpor is the nature of laziness and delusion which occurs from not overtly proliferating thoughts for virtue.

Doubt is one's attention becoming split due to forgetting the quintessential teaching and so forth and maintaining the elimination of these five hindrances.

(2) Renouncing activities: one should eliminate any subtle and coarse bodily, vocal, and mental activities whatsoever that are distractive.

(3) Residing in solitude: one should eliminate floating to objects with the sense faculties in crowds of many people and so forth, eliminate the body being distracted with many activities, eliminate from the mind the multiplicity of conceptual thoughts such as the afflictions and so forth, and one should meditate while residing in solitude in a hermitage and so forth.

(4) Energetic diligence is to have mental enthusiasm for meditation and to reside in methods of settling the mind inseparable with the constitution of the body.

(5) Continuous non-distractedness is to have a non-distracted mind even during times of non-meditation and to sustain concentration without forgetting like the mother of a dying son.

#### [e. Enhancement of Serenity]

Enhancement (*bogs 'don pa*) has five topics: (1) clearing away the defects of *saṃsāra*, (2) renouncing the world, (3) confessing faults and downfalls, (4) accumulating merit, and (5) remaining in solitude while giving up activities.

(1) First, the defects of *saṃsāra*: since rebirth in whichever of the six realms of rebirth is without bliss and happiness, one should have revulsion to *saṃsāra* like seeing vomited food.

(2) Renouncing the world: when one thinks about food, clothing, talk, and so forth, the eight worldly concerns and so forth, the conceptualization of this life, since one will commit evil deeds as mental afflictions

tions proliferate [533] one should eliminate any conceptualization for this life that arises.

(3) Confessing faults and downfalls: one should confess through means of purification and maturation because there are many obscurations and evil deeds from beginningless lifetimes.

(4) Accumulating merit is to offer whatever one has to the spiritual teacher. Offer precious treasures. One should make effort in activities for the spiritual teacher with one's own body. One should gather whatever suitable accumulations such as maṇḍalas and so forth like the water and manure of a farmer.

(5) Renouncing activities: one should meditate while idly residing like a wild animal, eliminating distractive conditions of body, speech, and mind, and restraining the sense faculties.

These [practices] will bring progress.

### **[3. Subsequent practices of Serenity]**

Subsequent practices has five topics: (a.) eliminating pitfalls, (b.) eliminating mental afflictions, (c.) stopping sensory enjoyments, (d.) leveling out the eight worldly concerns, (e.) enabling the body and mind to become serviceable.

#### **[a. Eliminating pitfalls to Serenity]**

The first, pitfalls, has five topics: (1) since one may fall into the formless realm when attached to non-conceptuality, (2) fall into the form realm when attached to clarity, (3) fall into the desire realm when attached to bliss, (4) fall into cessation when attached to one-pointedness, or (5) fall into cyclic existence when attached to an ascertaining consciousness, one should not become attached to the taste of concentration.

#### **[b. Eliminating mental afflictions in Serenity]**

Eliminating mental afflictions has five topics: (1) attachment, (2) aversion, (3) delusion, (4) pride, and (5) jealousy.

(1) First, attachment: one should eliminate attachment to the mind within and external wealth.

(2) Aversion is a malicious attitude that regards others as enemies through nine stages of vindictiveness.

(3) Delusion is activity that becomes a contradictory condition for concentration since one does not understand what to do and what not to do.

(4) Pride is an inflated attitude that is not respectful toward others and scorns others and so forth.

(5) Jealousy is to become tattered and have overtly unhappy thoughts regarding the gain and so forth of another.

Accordingly, since pitfalls and afflictions obscure concentration, these should be identified and eliminated.

### **[c. Stopping sensory enjoyments]**

Stopping sensory enjoyments has five topics: (1) leaving the eye as it is in not having attachment nor aversion for forms. (2) Likewise, neither attachment nor aversion should occur for ears in regards to sound, (3) the nose in regards to smell, (4) the tongue in regards to taste, and (5) the body in regards to touch.

### **[d. Leveling out the eight worldly concerns]**

Leveling out the eight worldly concerns has five topics: (1) being unattached to the four desires, (2) not being hostile to the four non-desires, [534] (3) equalizing these factors, (4) the reason for leveling out these factors, (5) the benefits of equanimity.

(1) Among these, first, the desire for gain, fame, praise, and pleasure of this life, one should not be attached to these four when they occur.

(2) Non-desire is loss, disgrace, slander, and suffering of this life.

(3) Equalizing these factors: if the four desires should occur of their own accord without trying to achieve them one should be without attachment and clinging and if the four non-desires should occur one should not become cowardly, hateful, or with an unpleasant mind.

(4) The reason for leveling out these factors: they should be understood as not being truly existent things.



(5) The benefits of equanimity: one will achieve virtue by being disinterested in these for this life through not giving arise to attachment and hatred and also suppressing other mental afflictions.

### **[e. Enabling the body and mind to become serviceable]**

Enabling the body and mind to become serviceable has five topics: (1) striving for virtue, (2) gaining mastery, (3) becoming steadfast, (4) arising happiness, (5) producing virtuous qualities.

(1) Striving is overtly proliferating the mind in concentration (*dhyāna*) and meditating without abandoning meditative stabilization (*samādhi*).

(2) Mastery is steadily abiding in concentration with an object focus and without an object focus.

(3) Steadfastness is to reside in inalienable concentration through circumstances, subtle distractions, and subtle errors and obscurations.

(4) Happiness is regarded as binding the mind and body into service and having clearness of understanding in the mind being serviceable with pleasurable sense-objects without the discomforts of mental afflictions and discursivity.

(5) Producing virtuous qualities provides a basis for arising supersensory knowledge, miraculous emanations, and the realization of the true nature of reality (*dharmatā*).

### **[B. Insight (*vipaśyanā*)]**

Insight has three topics: (1.) preliminaries, (2.) actual practice, and (3.) subsequent practice.

#### **[1. Preliminaries for Insight]**

The first, preliminaries, has five topics: (a.) renouncing a worldly mind, (b.) residing in solitude, (c.) engendering aspiration, {(d.) arising the awakening mind}<sup>29</sup> and (e.) meditation on the spiritual teacher.

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<sup>29</sup> Phrase missing from the manuscript

**[a. Renouncing a worldly mind]**

First, renouncing a worldly mind, consists in the cultivation and avoidance of the eight worldly concerns and eliminating the perception to accomplish desires and aspirations for food, clothing, and so forth.

**[b. Residing in solitude]**

Residing in solitude: remaining isolated in a hermitage and so forth while eliminating time periods of residing with bodily and mental distraction, being busy with many activities, and eliminating [535] many afflictions and fabricated discursive thought.

**[c. Engendering aspiration]**

Engendering aspiration is to single-pointedly sincerely aspire for realization to emerge.

**[d. Arising the awakening mind]**

Arising the awakening mind is altogether condensed as the promise of aspiration and application.

**[e. Meditation on the spiritual teacher]**

Meditation on the spiritual teacher is to meditate on the spiritual teacher as sitting at the crown of one's head and with devotion and veneration see him as a buddha.

**[2. Actual Practice of Insight]**

Actual practice has five topics: (a.) the method of stabilization, (b.) stages of arising in the mental continuum, (c.) directly pointing-out, (d.) sustaining the meaning of that, and (e.) enhancement.

**[a. The method of stabilizing Insight]**

The method of stabilization has five topics: (1) remaining in a state of natural freshness, (2) remaining without reference points, (3) remaining as empty, (4) remaining without conceptuality, and (5) remaining traceless.

(1) First, remaining in a state of natural freshness is to remain in bodi-

ly serenity while having the mind relaxed in an undistorted, unartificial way without subject to noxious influences of reference points and views.

(2) Remaining without reference points is to refrain from any focal points whatsoever of tenets of views, meditation, and so forth, as well as mental observations of mind while residing without an object of fixation.

(3) Remaining in emptiness, as discussed above, since there is not anything established whatsoever, like empty space, one should remain in a state of pure clarity in not meditating on anything during this state.

(4) Remaining as a support: is to clearly remain without any support whatsoever a basis of awareness like a bird flying in the sky unsupported.

(5) Traceless, at the time of remaining as posited above, is to remain in luminosity and emptiness with unobstructed awareness and without ephemeral fleeting movements like spacial coolness.

In brief, the five methods of stabilization are to be brought together as one and have one's own mind settle in limpid clarity in the condition which is free from elaborations.

### **[b. Stages of arising insight in the mental continuum]**

The awareness which arises has five topics: (1) ordinary, (2) middling, (3) superior, (4) crossing over, and (5) simultaneous.

(1) First, ordinary, although there is merely the realization of one's own mind as emptiness at the time of arising only ordinary special insight, the awareness of conceptuality and experience is not realized as empty. Emptiness, furthermore, at times is clear. At other times, not clear. Although the profound and extensive dharma is seen, it is not understood.

At that time, anyone is inseparable from the spiritual teacher. Through nourishing this [awareness], realization will become middling.

(2) When a middling realization arises, all mind and conceptual thought is realized as emptiness. The thought to accept and reject cy-

clic existence or nirvāṇa does not exist.

Meditation becomes elevated or base [536] and sometimes one doubts even the special instructions and the spiritual teacher. At times, having realized emptiness, one resides in that state. Through nourishment that [awareness] will become superior.

(3) When superior [awareness] arises, by realizing all mind, conceptual thought, and experiential awareness as empty, the cause for transmigration into hell realms does not exist. Even the cause for attaining buddhahood does not exist. This action of buddha dharma body is the source (*kha*). Even with the actual spiritual instructions and meaning of the dharma, one thinks "this meditation of mine has not been reached."

Thinking that just devotion to the spiritual teacher is sufficient, with little attachment to one's own meditation and special instruction, all previous dharma trainings become an outer husk of chaff. Even at the time of sleep, one will not be separate from realization.

(4) Crossing over: meditation does not become elevated or base and since uncertainty arises, realization is unstable.

(5) Simultaneous: having produced the ultimate best meditation from the very outset, by continuously and steadily abiding, one sustains this indeterminately.

### **[c. Directly Pointing out Instructions for Insight]**

Directly pointing out has five topics: (1) the mind itself is directly pointed-out as empty, (2) conceptual thought is directly pointed-out as empty, (3) experiential awareness is directly pointed-out as empty, (4) appearing objects are directly pointed-out as empty, and (5) everything is directly pointed-out as free from elaborations.

(1) First, [the mind itself is directly pointed-out as empty], there is not any nature of the mind whatsoever that is established. Even the buddhas of the three times [of past, present, and future] have not seen, do not see, and will not see [the mind], because the mind does not [inherently] exist.

This emptiness, moreover, is not an emptiness which is nihilistic, destructive, purified in meditation and so forth. It resides empty by way of its own nature and, in this regard, since any phenomenal

marks of color, shape, and so forth are not established, it is like the sky free from clouds.

(2) Conceptual thought is empty: although the mind itself, accordingly, abides as empty, if one thinks that conceptual thought does not cease, one should see whether there is any nature to whichever fleeting movement of conceptual thought, and by doing so, since that very fleeting movement is recognized as empty it is not necessary to cease conceptual thought. As one uproots the fundamental basis of the mind, the haziness disappears without a trace and since the self-arisen nature subsides of its own accord like clouds in the sky, the fleeting movement is not greater as a fault and by understanding emptiness of fleeting movement at all times, one remains in self-cognizant wakefulness (*ye shes rang gsal*).

(3) Experiential awareness is empty: by looking directly into the awareness which is the experiencer of the former realization, [537] as there is not anything identified with respect to that since the experience is empty, the inseparability of awareness and emptiness is realized.

(4) The emptiness of apparent objects: all appearances of external objects of the six sense faculties lack inherent existence. For example, like the happiness and suffering which appears in a dream and so forth, although appearing unhindered they lack inherent existence, one should understand all apparent objects as like an illusion.

(5) Free from elaborations: accordingly, although realizing everything as emptiness, the lucidity of awareness and appearance is unhindered, since the lucidity also does not have a nature, it is free from all elaborations of extremes such as permanence, nihilism, and so forth. In this way, one should directly point out in stages.

#### **[d. Sustaining the meaning that has been pointed out]**

Sustaining the meaning that has been pointed out has five topics: (1) sustaining unwavering mindfulness, (2) sustaining oppressive conditions by antidotes, (3) sustaining change without leaving a trace, (4) sustaining a serene awareness, and (5) sustaining carrying appearances as a friend.

(1) First, sustaining unwavering mindfulness: while being inseparable from the experience of serenity and bodily methods at the time of disturbed meditation, one should have mentally relaxed awareness,

like a skillful cow herder (*mkhas pa ba glang skyong ba*), maintain correct mindfulness and sustain without distraction at all times.

(2) Sustaining oppressive conditions by antidotes: when conditions such as mental afflictions, conceptual thought, or suffering and so forth occur at the time of disturbed meditation, one should clear away contemplating with the mind all that which occurs lacks inherent existence. Or, in another way, by directly looking into whichever conditions that occur, like recognizing a thief, they naturally dissipate and will be realized as emptiness. In another way, one should eliminate with individual antidotes through individually discriminating wisdom.

(3) Sustaining change without leaving a trace: with middling realization all conceptual thought which arises, without a trace like a stick stirring water or a bird flying in the sky, one should understand as an unafflicted friend of wisdom after the conceptual thought is discarded in naturally vanishing upon suddenly arising.

(4) Sustaining a serene awareness: for relaxing body and mind in tightly holding, not grasping the mind through elevated realization, by remaining in the state of conceptualizing in alternating dwelling, path of activity, and focal points, they will naturally dissipate like a bird flying up from a boat, unnecessary to maintain with mindfulness and in general when held as unnecessary, one maintains with mindfulness through arising virtuous qualities. [538]

(5) Integrating appearances as an ally: since all conceptuality that appears through discursive thought is understood as unhindered emptiness and established as naturally free, like consecrating a mantra on poison or snow falling on a hot spring, all conceptualized appearances should be understood as an ally of wisdom and the realization increasingly sustained.

### **[e. Enhancement of Insight]**

Enhancement has five topics: (1) accumulation and purification, (2) eliminating clinging, (3) renouncing a worldly mind, (4) eliminating clinging to a Self, (5) having devotion and veneration to a spiritual teacher.

(1) First, accumulation and purification: although there are evil deeds and downfalls from innumerable lifetimes, one should confess by means of the four opponent powers like clearing away a farmer's ir-

rigation ditch.

Having given away in charity physical wealth and so forth, one should make effort until achieving meditation of concentration like the water and manure of a farmer.

(2) Eliminating clinging: one should eliminate everything that arises attachment and hatred through clinging, such as friends, enemies, and physical resources which are apprehended as a Self and that which belongs to a Self, as well as appearances of happiness, suffering, and so forth that are apprehended as real.

(3) Renouncing a worldly mind: one should abandon elimination and achievement related to the eight worldly concerns, the desires and aspirations of food, clothing, and pleasant conversation, and all concepts of achievement for this life and pursue the happiness of the future.

(4) Eliminating clinging to a Self: since all suffering of cyclic existence arises when there exists clinging to a Self in the continuum of the five aggregates, one should relinquish clinging to the pride of a self and offer the body to demons and forcefully eliminate self-cherishing while offering actions for the spiritual teacher.

(5) Devotion and veneration to a spiritual teacher: in the enhancement as before, firmly establish requests and offers of physical resources directly seeing the dharma-body. Those should be gradually fulfilled and perfected and by meditating as before will bring progress.

### **[3. Subsequent practices after Insight]**

Subsequent to meditation has five topics: (a.) the means of undegenerated actual practice, (b.) special instructions protected with mindfulness, (c.) eliminating pitfalls, (d.) sustaining appearances as unreal, and (e.) unerring signs of progress on the path.

#### **[a. The means of undegenerated actual practice of Insight]**

Among these, first, the means of undegenerated actual practice, has five topics: (1) eliminating adverse circumstances, (2) learning the holy Dharma, [539] (3) accumulation and purification, (4) eliminating evil deeds and downfalls, (5) remaining in solitude.

(1) First, eliminating adverse circumstances: one should eliminate

places which arise afflictions, cities and countrysides, and so forth, groups of friends which arise afflictions, quarreling and fighting, places where many noisy people are gathered, and the good realm of beings who are not kinsfolk, and so forth.

(2) Learning the holy Dharma: one should listen to the profound and extensive special instructions, investigate and consider various *sūtras*, tantras, treatises, and pith instructions, and discuss the vast and extensive Dharma and reflect upon its meaning.

(3) Accumulation and purification: one should make efforts in virtuous actions of body, speech, and mind through reciting the one hundred syllables, offering maṇḍalas, practicing the perfections of giving, and so forth, and listening to Dharma teachings.

(4) Eliminating evil deeds and downfalls: one should purely protect vows which have been taken, all subtle and coarse natural non-virtue should be eliminated, and one should refrain from evil deeds and mental afflictions.

(5) Remaining in solitude: one should eliminate physical activity in cities, countryside, and so forth. One should remain in a hermitage and so forth which eliminates many mentally afflictive conceptual thoughts and so forth.

### **[b. Protecting Insight with mindfulness]**

Protecting with mindfulness has five topics: (1) essential points concerning physical posture, (2) restraining the faculties, (3) nourishing serenity, (4) protecting realization with mindfulness, and (5) engendering energetic diligence.

(1) Among these, first, essential points concerning physical posture: through remaining in a physical posture even when residing in non-meditation one produces virtuous qualities of meditative stabilization (*samādhi*), and so forth.

(2) Restraining the faculties: at all times do not grasp identifying qualities through the non-pursual of objects while not engaging objects which appear to the eye and so forth

(3) Nourishing experience: one should establish the mind in the non-conceptual state during the time of serenity (*śamatha*).

(4) Protecting realization with mindfulness: the realization of empti-



ness in all behaviors in the path of activity, walking, moving around, lying down, sitting, and so forth should be protected with mindfulness.

(5) Engendering energetic diligence: one should engender enthusiasm for meditation and engender physical and mental effort and striving as an antidote for the laziness of lacking enthusiasm for meditation.

### [c. Eliminating pitfalls to Insight]

Eliminating pitfalls and obstructions has<sup>30</sup> five topics: (1) getting distracted in mere darkness, (2) deviating from the fundamental nature, (3) getting distracted through sealing things and experiences, [540] (4) getting distracted in antidotes, (5) getting distracted along the path.

(1) First, getting distracted in mere darkness, through realizing both virtue and evil deeds as empty up to and including middling realization, one may get carried away in nihilistic views in which elimination and achievement are not done.

(2) Deviating from the fundamental nature: one may think that it is not necessary to cultivate emptiness since all things are emptiness and one may think that it is not necessary to make use of antidotes since virtue and evil deeds are also empty.

(3) Getting distracted through sealing things and experiences: one cultivates emptiness which is mind-made not observed after virtue is committed.

(4) Getting distracted in antidotes: by cultivating a mind-made emptiness which annihilates and purifies one cultivates the thought that the object which is to be abandoned is emptiness.

(5) Getting distracted along the path: by means of cultivating medita-

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<sup>30</sup> Compare Brunnhölzl, *The Center of the Sunlit Sky*, 2004, page 867, note 211: pitfalls to be avoided in advanced Mahāmudrā meditation, *stong nyid shor sa bzhi*, four pitfalls: “grasping at it as the fundamental nature of knowable objects (*shes bya’i gshis la shor ba*), deviating from emptiness through sealing things and experiences as empty (*rgyas ’debs su shor ba*), deviating from emptiness through taking it as the remedy that annihilates the afflictions (*gnyen por shor ba*), and deviating from emptiness through taking meditation on emptiness as the only path that leads to the later attainment of Buddhahood (*lam du shor ba*).”

tion on nonarising, clear light, the dharma-body, non-observation, the great middle way (*dbu ma chen po*), and so forth, mind-made cultivation always makes effort to attain buddhahood.

#### [d. Sustaining appearances as unreal]

Sustaining appearances as unreal has five topics: (1) sustaining conceptual thought as unreal, (2) sustaining mental afflictions as unreal, (3) sustaining pleasure and suffering as unreal, (4) sustaining whatever appears as unreal, and (5) sustaining experience and realization as unreal.

(1) Among these, first, sustaining conceptual thought as unreal: all desire, attachment, and so forth that may arise, whatever arises is not let go in one's mind,<sup>31</sup> \*one should refrain from previous attachment to happiness and suffering for whatever entity arises as unreal for all fleeting movements of conceptual thought in the mind.

(2) Sustaining afflictions as unreal\* by seeing that [affliction] itself one should cognize as rootless or otherwise skilfully dissolve with antidotes.

(3) Sustaining pleasure and suffering as unreal: one should not arise attachment or aversion and so forth to any pleasurable conditions, such the riches and honor of food, wealth, and so forth, power, health, and so forth, as well as the unpleasurable conditions the opposite from those, as one should consider that happiness and suffering are to be understood as unreal.

(4) Sustaining whatever appears as unreal: all conditions of pleasure and suffering which appear through the six objects of the eye and so forth should be understood as unreal appearance like an illusory dream and one should not be ensnared by afflictions and so forth.

(5) Sustaining experience and realization as unreal: one should not be attached to the taste of concentration (*dhyāna*), the experience of bliss, clarity, and non-conceptuality and so forth and one should eliminate the attachment (*mngon par zhen pa*, *abhiniveśa*) to the realization of emptiness.

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<sup>31</sup> Text between the asteriks is written under the line in manuscript at 59a7.

**[e. Unerring signs of progress on the path]**

Signs of progress on the path has five topics: (1) suppressing the mental afflictions, (2) non-attachment to sense pleasures, (3) leveling out the eight worldly concerns, (4) conviction in cause and effect, [541] (5) arising compassion for sentient beings.

(1) Among them, first, suppressing the mental afflictions: as one understands all things as unreal all conventional elaborations are seen as chaff of an outer husk and mental afflictions become few.

(2) Non-attachment to sense pleasures: one is unattached and without fixation of the five sense faculties of the eye and so forth for the five sense objects of form and so forth.

(3) Leveling out the eight worldly concerns: even when not achieving, not accomplishing the four harmonious factors one does not have fixation and attachment. One contemplates to not become weary or not discard the four non-harmonious factors.

(4) Having conviction in cause and effect: through understanding virtuous and non-virtuous actions arising as pleasurable or painful effects, one eliminates and achieves through not having contempt (*khyad du mi gsod pa = aparibhavanatā*) for the most subtle causes and effects.

(5) Arising compassion for sentient beings: Accordingly, one implicitly arises compassion for sentient beings lacking realization and engages with effort for the welfare of others.

**[C. Union (*yuganaddha*)]**

The development of union has three topics: (1.) preliminaries, (2.) actual practice, and (3.) subsequent practices.

**[1. Preliminary practices for Union]**

The preliminaries has five topics: (a.) arising the mind for supreme awakening, (b.) accumulation and purification, (c.) nurturing insight, (d.) arising aspiration which desires unity, and (e.) devotion and veneration for the spiritual teacher. These are similar with the previous [preliminaries].

## **[2. Actual practice of Union]**

Actual practice has five topics: (a.) method of stabilization, (b.) the stages of arising, (c.) directly pointing-out, (d.) sustaining the meaning, and (e.) enhancement.

### **[a. Method of stabilizing Union]**

First, methods of stabilization has five topics: (1) leave as it naturally is, (2) remain in the free relaxation of the six aggregates, (3) remain indivisibly, (4) remain without attachment or aversion, and (5) remain free from extremes.

(1) First, leave as it naturally is: remain free from suppressing or cultivating like the activity of a small child that is free from any noxious influences of views, meditation, or reference points.

(2) free relaxation of the six aggregates: do not bind the six sense faculties, like the sun free from clouds, leave whatever objects that are perceived as it is and do not remain apprehending phenomenal marks for objects.

(3) Remain indivisible: all that appears whatsoever remains as the indivisibility of appearance and emptiness like water and waves having a single taste with emptiness.

(4) Remain without attachment or aversion: appearances are unhindered, emptiness is unestablished, [542] as appearances and emptiness are undifferentiated like sugar and its taste, one should remain without accepting and rejecting.

(5) Remain free from extremes: one does not abide in any extremes of appearances, emptiness, and so forth, remaining like a skillful listener. In brief, the five methods of stabilization should be construed as one group, the multiplicity remaining in the condition of being one taste.

### **[b. The stages of arising Union]**

The stages of arising has five topics: (1) lesser, (2) middling, (3) superior, (4) passing over, and (5) simultaneous.

(1) Lesser union: having realized one's own body, mind, and appearances as indivisible, although entering into meditation, sometimes it

is not clear.

Sometimes one has ascertainment. Sometimes appearances are real or solid. One does not refrain from karma and its effects. One does not forsake envy. Sometimes one thinks “This is the ultimate.” Sometimes unwholesome forms of behavior cannot be hidden. Sometimes meditation happens to reside in unity.

(2) Middling: having integrated body, mind, and appearances into one, the thought occurs that there is nothing other than this meditation having dissolved into the condition of whatever appears is the mind. One thinks that since sentient beings and one’s own spiritual teacher are suitable there is not compassion, devotion, and veneration, and having thought that karmic cause and effect and even the cause for abandonment and achievement do not exist, these are straying on the path that are hard to avoid. Sometimes one understands to not go astray on the path.

(3) When the superior arises, appearances, mind, and ultimate reality are realized as one having cognized the equality of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.

Pacification from superior roots of virtue. Experience and realization cannot diminish.

(4) Passing over is to indefinitely arise high and low experience up to and including middling [realization].

(5) Simultaneous is for oneself to never separate from arising superior realization from the very beginning.

### **[c. Directly pointing-out instructions for Union]**

Directly pointing-out has five topics: (1) the basis, the union of the ground; (2) appearances, the union of the path; (3) achievement, together with the result; (4) realization, along with experience; and (5) demonstrating the condensed meaning.

(1) The actual basis has five topics: (a) inherent nature which is emptiness, (b) essential nature which is clarity, (c) the characteristic which is indivisibility, (d) the quality which is unchanging, and (e) the activity which is unobstructed.

(a) First, the inherent nature: primordially abides as emptiness and abiding as emptiness from the beginning it is not destroyed, sup-

pressed, purified, or developed and so forth, like the purity of space.

(b) The essential nature lucidly remains and [543] is the unobstructed natural radiance of emptiness that is not an object of the sensory faculties, like the sun appearing in the sky.

(c) The characteristic of the mind remains as indivisible, indivisible clarity and emptiness since clarity is the essential nature of emptiness and emptiness is the inherent nature of clarity, remaining like the moon reflected in water.

(d) The quality: since *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* do not pass beyond indivisibility, whatever *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* unchangingly remains with the mind and is included together the characteristic.

(e) The awakened activity: the essential nature of that indivisibility remains non-attached, unobstructed, spatial coolness of self-arising awareness non-conceptual, objectless, together with the luminous essential nature.

(2) The union of the path has five topics: (a) inherent nature, (b) essential nature, (c) characteristic, (d) quality, and (e) activity.

(a) The inherent nature: ever-present emptiness, everything in the way that it appears, is a spontaneous manifestation. In this way, like sesame oil in sesames, all that which appears, even ignorance, is pervaded with emptiness.

(b) The luminous essence: (i) karmic appearance, (ii) delusive appearance, (iii) meditative appearance, and (iv) personal experience.

(i) First, karmic appearance, is all appearances of happiness and suffering among the six realms of rebirth. Moreover, [the appearances] are not established as external objects and like the appearance in a dream, the results of each individual virtuous and non-virtuous action merely appears like an illusion.

(ii) Delusive appearance is arising attachment and hatred by grasping at an external object through not understanding one's own perception as empty like seeing a rope as a snake.

(iii) Meditative experience is like smoke, mirage, fire-flies, various-colored drops and pure space.

(iv) Personal experience: accordingly, all appearances are the appearances of one's own mind, like, for example, a reflection.

(c) The characteristic, indivisibility: one should understand that all appearances of karmic appearances and so forth are integrated with emptiness like water and ice.

(d) The quality, unchangibility: just what appears is unchangeable from the indivisibility of one's own mind like a statue made of gold.

(e) The activity is unobstructed: the manifestation of a virtuous or non-virtuous mind arises as happy and painful results like a reflection in a mirror or echo.

(3) The result has five topics: (a) inherent nature, (b) essential nature, [544] (c) characteristic, (d) quality, and (e) activity.

(a) First, inherent nature, since the Realm of Reality is primordially pure and free from all subtle and coarse adventitious stains, actualized emptiness is like space free from clouds.

(b) Essential nature: the very embodiment of the awakening mind, appearances of merit and wisdom, appearances of the body, wisdom, celestial mansions and so forth, appearances of correct exalted wisdom are like the moon reflected in water.

(c) The characteristic, the wisdom of knowing things as they are and the knowledge that perceives all possibly existing things are indivisibly mixed with emptiness, like a rainbow.

(d) The quality: the powers, fearlessnesses, minor and major marks, and other qualities are indivisible with emptiness.

(e) The activity: pacifying, increasing, magnetizing, subjugating, and so forth produces benefit taming beings according to their needs.

(4) Realization has five topics: (a) indivisible with experience, (b) indivisible with realization, (c) indivisible with appearance, (d) indivisible with cause and effect, and (e) realization indivisible with means.

(a) Among them, first, experience: through realizing blissful, clarity, non-conceptual experience, and all appearances of elevated or base experience as mixed with emptiness, there is the unity of experience

and realization.

(b) Indivisible realization: by realizing all subtle and coarse conceptual thought of attachment and aversion which apprehends the dualism of outer object and inner subject as empty there will be the unity of emptiness and realization.

(c) Indivisible with appearance: through realizing all whatever is experienced of unceasing appearances of objects and mind as emptiness, there is the unity of appearance and emptiness.

(d) Indivisible with effects: even while realizing all things as emptiness, one abandons evil deeds and accomplishes virtue through the inevitable relation between karma and its results as merely conventional and realizes the indivisibility with emptiness.

(e) Indivisible method and wisdom: although any perceiver and object, any outer and inner things are not established, one does not abandon the means, great compassion, and the awakening mind. That is the indivisible unity of means and wisdom.

(5) Demonstrating the condensed meaning has five topics: (a) spontaneously present, (b) unconditioned, (c) free from elaborations, (d) neither arising nor ceasing, and (e) free from thoughts and words.

(a) Among these, first, spontaneously present: any effort or exertion is unnecessary to practice as it is primordially [545] established as wisdom.

(b) Unconditioned: whatever causes, conditions, and so forth from one's own mind are established from the very beginning as unproduced.

(c) Free from elaborations: that abode of one's own mind is free from all extremes of permanency, annihilation, and so forth.

(d) Neither arising nor ceasing: whatever phenomenal marks of shape, color, concepts, and so forth are unarisen and whatever of those and so forth are unceasing.

(e) Free from thoughts and words: one's own mind, accordingly, the actuality of thinking with the mind of existent, non-existent, eternalism and nihilism, and so forth does not exist. Whichever of these also does not exist as expressed.



**[d. Sustaining the meaning]**

Sustaining the meaning of these has five topics: (1) sustaining whatever appears as empty, (2) sustaining whatever appears as unreal, (3) understanding whatever appears as one's own mind, (4) taking appearances and concepts as friends, and (5) sustaining undistracted mindfulness.

(1) Among these, first, [sustaining whatever appears as empty]: one arrives at naturally unity by primarily meditating on emptiness while recalling the conceptual thought of *vipaśyanā* like the additional effect that occurs by way of being boastful.

(2) Unreal: since whatever real entity of mental and physical appearances does not exist, whichever conditions of attachment, aversion, and so forth that arise are also unreal and recognizing them as like an illusion should be sustained.

(3) Understanding whatever appears as one's own mind: all entities of appearing objects and so forth are not external objects but are objects of one's own mind. For example, since they are like a reflection, mind apparent phenomena are mixed with the conceptuality of attachment, aversion, and so forth and should be sustained in the condition of non-duality.

(4) Taking appearances and concepts as friends: all appearances and concepts of happiness, pain, and so forth are recognized as false appearances and recognizing them as friends of emptiness, the concepts of attachment and aversion should be recognized as naturally evanescent, unproduced, understood like [snow] falling into a hot water spring.

(5) Undistracted mindfulness: all previous experience and realization should be held and sustained with mindfulness. Integrate the practice in the morning and evening. Integrating at the appearance of the day, integrating at night, one upholds even if it is unnecessary, without distraction, like carrying a vessel full of clarified butter on a slippery platform.

**[e. Enhancement of Union]**

Enhancement has five topics: [546] (1) relinquishing attachment to one's body and wealth, (2) relinquishing Self-grasping, (3) cutting the ropes of pride, (4) alternating residing in a friendly place, and (5)

arising devotion and veneration to the spiritual teacher.

(1) First, relinquishing one's body and wealth: offer whatever of the body and wealth one is able to the spiritual teacher. Make offerings to the Three Jewels. When there is wealth, property, and offerings, one should be destitute. One should eliminate attachment.

(2) Relinquishing self-grasping: sacrifice the body to others on the ground of yakṣas and relinquish grasping one's own five aggregates as a Self. What is the use of anything unless all subtle and coarse conceptual thought is undistracted from the state of selflessness motivated by the awakening mind.

(3) Cutting the ropes of pride: one should cut the ropes of pride of all coarse conceptual thought of attachment, aversion, etc., the abandonment and development of happiness or suffering, attachment to the eight worldly concerns, grasping at experience and realization, and all subtle and coarse conceptual thought in rising up on the path to immortality.

(4) Alternation of residence: at times meditate at the time of a number of people gathering, at times sit on the ground with unharmonious circumstances and cut off mental afflictions which arise from that. At times sit on the ground and cut off afflictions on the ground of fierce gods and demons. At times reside in solitude in a hermitage and so forth. At times remain in a physical posture. At times meditate while walking, moving about, or lying down. Reside in places like this with the path of conduct. At times, through engagement, see experience and realization increases, and meditate to increase [experience and realization].

(5) Arising devotion and veneration to the spiritual teacher: view the spiritual teacher as the embodiment of the three bodies of a buddha and offer whatever wealth and resources one is able. Energetically offer maṇḍalas

### **[3. Subsequent practices of Union]**

Post-meditative practice has five topics: (a.) the methods keeping the actual practice undiminished, (b.) eliminating fundamental pitfalls and obstacles, (c.) continuous sustainment, (d.) signs of progress on the path, and (e.) beneficial qualities.

**[a. The methods keeping the actual practice undiminished]**

The first, [the methods keeping the actual practice undiminished,] has five topics: (1) eliminating major transgressions and downfalls, (2) gathering the accumulations, (3) meditating on everything as unreal, (4) taking objects and circumstances as allies, (5) unceasing devotion and veneration for the spiritual teacher.

(1) Eliminating major transgressions and downfalls: all fundamental downfalls such as having contempt for the embodiment of the spiritual teacher, etc., the great transgressions such as the heinous acts entailing immediate retribution, and [547] abandoning the holy dharma and so forth should be eliminated.

(2) Gathering the accumulations: offer whatever wealth one can afford to the spiritual teacher, offer maṇḍalas, all wholesome roots of virtue and wealth should be shared together with sentient beings and dedicated to unsurpassed awakening.

(3) Meditating on everything as unreal: recognize all whatsoever that appears as unreal like an illusion and eliminate attachment and aversion.

(4) Taking objects and circumstances as allies: through practicing in reliance upon the six objects of the sensory faculties and in reliance upon all conceptual thought of joy, sorrow, goodness and badness, one should take [objects and circumstances] as allies of meditation.

(5) Devotion and veneration for the spiritual teacher: one should establish continuous devotion and veneration [to the spiritual teacher] at all times.

**[b. Eliminating fundamental pitfalls and obstacles of Union]**

Fundamental pitfalls and obstacles has five topics: (1) not having compassion, (2) not having devotion and veneration, (3) not eliminating evil deeds, (4) not performing virtuous deeds, and (5) remaining in the fundamental nature.

(1) First, not having compassion: one thinks that since external sentient beings are not established and there is only one's own mind at the time of appearances and mind becoming a unity that there does not exist an external object for compassion and one becomes compassionless.

(2) Not having devotion and veneration: one comes to have no devotion and veneration by thinking that an external object of devotion and veneration is not established since although there is a spiritual teacher there is only oneself.

(3) Not eliminating evil deeds: as one thinks that the cause to eliminate does not exist as evil deeds are not externally established since there is only one's own mind evil deeds are not eliminated.

(4) Not performing virtuous deeds: one thinks that since the cause to be achieved does not exist as virtue remains as one's own mind virtuous deeds are not performed.

(5) Deviating in the fundamental nature: one deviates into the ordinary without proliferating virtuous actions equanimity not held by means and ascertaining awareness without the oral special instructions having relied on the fundamental nature as one understands it on understanding explanation and listening. These are demonic forces.

These [demonic forces] are also possible for both the individuals of lesser and middling capacity. These do not occur for those who heard previous teachings and have the special instructions. One should eliminate [these demonic forces] with effort since the iron hook of Māra will occur if not having heard previous teachings and special instructions.

### **[c. Continuous sustainment of Union]**

Continuous sustainment has five topics: (1) apprehending with correct mindfulness, (2) remaining in solitude, (3) meditative stabilization, [548] (4) integrating mind and appearances, (5) sustaining things as unreal.

(1) First, although apprehension with mindfulness is not necessary, one should apprehend with correct mindfulness.

(2) Solitude: even if not having distraction at all, one should reside in solitude.

(3) Meditative stabilization: one should have meditative stabilization although meditation and post-meditation do not exist.

(4) Integrating mind and appearances: while alternating abodes, al-

lies, paths of activity, objects of observation, and so forth, since all mental afflictions and conceptuality are the emptiness of one's own mind attachment, aversion, and apparent objects should not be apprehended independently but the multiplicity should be understood as one taste.

(5) Sustaining things as unreal: all embodiments that appear everywhere should be sustained as unreal, like an illusory dream, and mental afflictions and their latent tendencies should be suppressed as powerless.

#### **[d. Signs of progress on the path of Union]**

Signs of progress on the path has five topics: (1) pacifying jealousy, (2) leveling out the eight worldly concerns, (3) understanding things as unreal, (4) hitting the mental afflictions on the head, (5) gaining conviction in virtuous and evil deeds.

(1) First, [pacifying jealousy], by realizing the nature as indivisible when arising great unification, having pacified all dualistic appearances, jealousy does not exist and all other afflictions are overpowered.

(2) Leveling out the eight worldly concerns: attachment to the four desirable qualities does not exist since all things are realized as non-dual. One cognizes the four undesirable qualities with steadfast<sup>32</sup> and courageous equanimity.

(3) Understanding things as unreal: by understanding all forms and sounds as like an illusion, anything whatsoever is not apprehended as real and one is unfettered by any entity.

(4) All coarse afflictions such as attachment, aversion, and so forth due to conceptual thought overwhelmed by mental afflictions is suppressed and unable to arise. Even if arising they will be quickly pacified.

(5) Gaining conviction in virtuous and evil deeds: Since all things are understood as indivisible, by integrating virtue and evil deeds with emptiness one will strive to eliminate evil deeds and achieve virtue.

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<sup>32</sup> T. *mi dga' ba med pa*, S. *dhṛtimān*, see Engle 2016:15.

### [e. Beneficial qualities of Union]

Beneficial qualities have five topics: (1) supersensory powers appear, (2) one has a vision of one's sacred deity, (3) one arises love and compassion for sentient beings, (4) outer and inner dependent arising appears, and (5) one greatly benefits others.

(1) Among these, first, supersensory powers develops with the realization of union (*zung 'jug*) [549]. After a long time the uncontaminated six supersensory powers will manifest.

(2) Vision of one's sacred deity: [one's sacred deity] will appear through directly seeing or in a dream.

(3) Love and compassion will implicitly arise without meditation.

(4) Dependent arising: many inner and outer causes and effects without training will manifest.

(5) Benefitting others: many transmigrating beings will have extensive benefit and all activities will be able to produce realization for others by arising faith and apprehending as true what one utters.

### [D. Signlessness Yoga (*animittayoga*)]

Signlessness meditation has three topics: (1.) preliminaries, (2.) actual practice, and (3.) signs of achievement.

#### [1. Preliminaries for Signlessness Meditation]

The first, preliminaries, has five topics: (a.) eliminating intense grasping, (b.) renouncing the body and so forth, (c.) arising aspiration, (d.) devotion and veneration of the spiritual teacher, (e.) arising distinctive skillful means.

##### [a. Eliminating intense grasping]

The first, eliminating intense grasping: all grasping at views of union are relinquished without any attachment.

##### [b. Renouncing the body and so forth]

Renouncing the body and so forth: all bodies and possessions are offered to the spiritual teacher. One should offer gifts and offerings to

the Three Jewels.

**[c. Arising aspiration]**

Arising aspiration: one should assiduously arise aspiration which desires for signlessness to manifest.

**[d. Devotion and veneration of the spiritual teacher]**

Devotion and veneration to the spiritual teacher: thoroughly supplicate to directly see the spiritual teacher as the Dharma-body.

**[e. Arising distinctive skillful means]**

Distinctive skillful means: relinquish subtle aspects of self-grasping in the presence of fierce gods and demons. Imagine giving away all bodily flesh and blood. Be without fear and self-grasping.

**[2. Actual practice of Signlessness Meditation]**

The actual practice has three topics: (a.) lesser, (b.) middling, and (c.) great signlessness.

**[a. Lesser Signlessness Meditation]**

First, lesser [signlessness]: Through only meditative equipoise on signlessness in reliance upon preliminary practices, one is unchanged from the state devoid of meditation and post-meditation having spontaneously realized signlessness without need of meditation.

**[b. Middling Signlessness Meditation]**

Middling signlessness: without meditation and post-meditation phases, the condition of awareness through meditative equipoise that cuts off disputation entirely immerses one in signlessness. Free from the duality of meditation and meditator, without activities and the potential for action, one mentally resides in the nature of emptiness.

**[c. Great Signlessness Meditation]**

Great signlessness: devoid of all grasping at signlessness, [550] from close subtle aspects of grasping unity and non-meditation, the realizing of signlessness, great clear light. The sky free from clouds, or like dissolving flashes of water, what is to be eliminated and antidotes do

not exist, having become completely immersed in the Dharma-body, free from all exertion of activities, actualizing the path of real exalted wisdom, released from extremes to be eliminated, having realized suchness, outwardly one is called "buddha."

### **[3. Signs of achievement in Signlessness Meditation]**

Signs of achievement has two topics: (a.) internal signs and (b.) external signs.

#### **[a. Internal signs]**

First, internal signs, the appearance of the lack of apprehended and apprehender. Extensive all-knowing wisdom through spontaneously realization unchanged from correct exalted wisdom, the dharma-body, manifests. The dependent-arising of karmic cause and effect is directly realized, one arises great compassion for sentient beings, and one emerges unmoved from the Realm of Reality (*dharmadhātu*).

#### **[b. External signs]**

External signs: others see many bodies, one is seen surrounded by *ḍakas* and *ḍakiṇīs*, and one will be seen as a buddha by pure disciples.

Sometimes seen as childish deeds as perceived by others. The impure see this life as achieved. Some see as an emanation. Oneself is devoid of activities and mind.

At that time it is the occasion of doing the welfare of sentient beings. Some say that the benefit and teachings are for one's own disciples. The use of bodily activity is for others. The blessings arise for those with devotion and veneration wherever they may reside. At that time, since it is a buddhist, one will achieve extensive benefit for transmigrating beings.

### **[III. Distinctive features of the Four Yogas]**

The distinctive features of these four yogas have three topics: (A.) the distinctive feature of serenity and insight, (B.) the distinctive feature of insight and union, and (C.) the distinctive feature of signlessness and union.



**[A. The distinctive feature of Serenity (*śamatha*) and Insight (*vipaśyanā*)]**

Among these, the first, [the distinctive feature of serenity and insight], has three topics: (1.) the distinctive features of what is eliminated, (2.) of realization, and (3.) of virtuous qualities.

**[1. The distinctive features of what is eliminated]**

Among these, the first, the distinctive features of what is eliminated: one eliminates all attachment to desirable qualities of serenity (*śamatha*), the eight worldly concerns, and the perceptions of this life and suppresses the mental afflictions.

Insight eliminates the five fears, such as the fear of death and so forth, and one is free from the grasping of tenets and suppresses the mental afflictions.

**[2. The distinctive feature of of realization]**

The distinctive feature of [551] realization: *śamatha* abiding in the upmost serenity pacifies the subtle and coarse external and internal conceptualizations. These experiences are understood to be like an illusion. Optimally realized by an aspect of the mind.

The least insight (*vipaśyanā*) realizes the mind itself. Middling [insight] also realizes conceptual thought as empty. The best [insight] realizes body, appearances, and aspects as empty. In brief, the meaning of emptiness is either realized or not realized in an excellent manner.

**[3. The distinctive feature of virtuous qualities]**

The distinctive features of virtuous qualities: with serenity (*śamatha*) the body is light, the mind is blissful and happy, suitable in action, and the five supersensory knowledges manifest.

With insight (*vipaśyanā*), realized as empty, appearances are understood as unreal and suffering ceases, with the slightest manifestation of internal dependent-arising one gains conviction in cause and effect, and one implicitly arises compassion for sentient beings.

## **[B. The distinctive features of insight and union]**

The distinctive features of insight and union have three topics: (1) the distinctive features of what is eliminated, (2) of realization, and (3) of virtuous qualities.

### **[1. The distinctive features of what is eliminated]**

Among these, first, [the distinctive features are] similar to that of the previously discussed insight (*vipaśyanā*).

Objects eliminated in union: separately apprehending *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, things abandoned and their antidotes, acceptance and rejection, emptiness and appearance, and so forth, is eliminated, and jealousy is eliminated as well as other manifested afflictions are suppressed.

### **[2. The distinctive features of realization in unified insight (*vipaśyanā*)]**

The distinctive features of realization are as previously stated for insight. By realizing union, all happiness, suffering, abandonment, acceptance, emptiness, appearance, and so forth are realized as illusory personal experiences (*rang snang*) through the single taste of the undifferentiatedness of one's own mind.

In brief, the apprehension of dualistic appearance does not exist. The distinctive features of virtuous qualities are like the previous [virtuous qualities] for insight (*vipaśyanā*).

### **[3. The distinctive features of virtuous qualities in unified insight]**

Virtuous qualities of unity: by realizing external dependent-arising one is beneficial for disciples, the six supersensory knowledges suitably arise, love and compassion implicitly arise, and all appearances are understood as unreal.

## **[C. The distinctive feature of union and signlessness]**

The distinctive features of union and signlessness are three: (1.) objects to be abandoned, (2.) realization, and (3.) virtuous qualities.

**[1. Objects to be abandoned]**

First, [the distinctive features for union] are as previously stated.

Signlessness eliminates the subtle factors of apprehending deceitful appearances and so forth, does not have a differentiation between meditation and post-meditation, and eliminates from the root all mental afflictions.

**[2. Realization]**

Realization is like what was previously stated for union. [552] Realizing signlessness is like purifying clouds from the sky or like frost melting in water. One realizes the dharma-body as one single whole without things to abandon and their remedies within the state of the great clear light (*'od gsal chen po*).

In brief, grasping of appearances as illusory does not exist.

**[3. Virtuous qualities]**

The virtuous qualities are like what was previously stated for union. In signlessness supreme all-knowing wisdom appears as well as the actual state of knowables. Internal and external dependent-arising is realized, pure disciples see one as a buddha, one's body is seen as many, through whichever actions of body, speech, and mind one has the capacity for others and the effect of previous altruism ripens.

At that time one has the capacity to greatly benefit others because of attaining the result.

**[Conclusion]**

The Great Pointing-out Instructions in Sets of Five that Eliminate the Extremes of One's Own Mind is concluded.

These are special instructions of the Kadam (*bka' gdams*) textual lineage or practice lineage.

**Transcription**

[Title and Homage]

[527.10 ] \$\$ / / *ngo sprod lnga tshoms bzhugs / bla ma dam pa rnam la phyag 'tshal lo /*

*rang sems mtha' gcod kyi ngo sprod lnga tshoms chen mo 'di la spyi don  
gsum ste / spyi'i sngon 'gro dang / dngos gzhi nyams su blang ba dang / de  
dag gi khyad par ro /*

### **[I. General Preliminaries]**

*/ dang po lnga ste / bla ma bsten pa dang / tshul khrims bsrung ba dang /  
bsags sbyang bya ba dang / chog shes pa dang / zas tshod rig pa'o /*

### **[A. Following a spiritual teacher]**

*/ de las dang po bla ma bsten pa ni / yon tan thams cad bla ma la rag las pas  
/ khyad par du rtogs pa 'char bar 'dod pas bla ma mtshan nyid bzhi ldan  
zhig la mos gus tshad du byas la gdams ngag zhu ba'o /*

*/ de yang mtshan nyid bzhi ni / chos kyi rang bzhin shes pa dang / rang 'dod  
kyi 'khri ba med pa dang / gzhan don gyi khur theg pa dang / byin rlabs kyis  
blo 'khul ba'o /*

*/ dang po ni / chos spyi dang rang gi mtshan nyid shes shing chos nyid kyi  
don rtogs pa dang ldan pa'o /*

*/ rang 'dod kyi 'khri ba chod pa ni / nor zas dang g.yog dang chos brgyad la  
sogs pa tshe 'di don du mi gnyer ba'o /*

*/ gzhan don kyi khur theg pa ni / snying rje chen po'i sgo nas rang gi bde ba  
la mi chags shing 'khor gyi log sgrub bzod pas gzhan gyi don la 'jug pa'o /*

*/ byin rlabs kyis blo 'khul ba ni / gzhan mos gus byed pa la sems la yon tan  
bskyed nus pa'o /*

*/ [528] bzhi po de tshang na mchog yin pas rin po che'i ming yang thob / des  
gzhan don yang rgya chen po nus so /*

*/ de dag thams cad mi ldan yang rtogs pa yod pas kyang sgom bskyed nus so  
/*

*/ de la mos gus tshad ldan bya ba ni / bla ma de la sangs rgyas su bltas la /  
blo gtad nas ci gsung bka' nyan pa yin te / de chos thams cad kyi rtsa ba'am  
yon tan skye ba'i rgyu tshogs kyi gtso bo yin pas de la 'bad par bya'o /*

*/ mos gus med na byin rlabs dang gdams ngag yod kyang yon tan mi skye /  
mos gus yod kyang byin rlabs med na yang yon tan mi skye bas mos gus*

*dang byin rlabs ldan pa zhig dgos so /*

*/ gdams ngag ma rdzogs na nyams len dang / gegs sel ba dang bogs 'don pa  
la sogs pa mi shes pas gdams ngag rdzogs par zhu bar bya'o /*

### **[B. Guarding Moral Conduct]**

*/ tshul khrims bsrung ba ni / nyon mongs pa dang las mi dge ba khegs pa'i  
tshul khrims shig dgos te / de med na nyes ltung gis gos pa la sgom mi skye  
bas nyes pa dang ltung bas ma gos par bya ste / zla ba sgron ma'i mdo las /  
nyon mongs med na rig 'dzin myur du thob / / 'di ni tshul khrims rnam dag  
phan yon yin zhes pas so /*

### **[C. Accumulation and purification]**

*/ bsags sbyang bya ba ni / tshe thog ma med pa nas kyi las dang nyon mongs  
pa dang / shes bya'i sgrib pa yod na lam rgyud la mi skye bas yi ge brgya pa  
la sogs pa bya / bsod nams ma bsags na yang mi skye ste /*

*/ sdud pa las / ji srid dge ba'i rtsa ba de ni ma rdzogs par / / de srid stong  
nyid dam pa de ni thob mi byed ces pas ci 'byor pa'i tshogs bsags / mchod pa  
la sogs pa dbul / ma 'dal dang yi ge brgya pa zla phyed la sogs pa bya /*

### **[D. Having contentment]**

*'dod pa chung shing chog shes pa ni / chog ma shes pa na zas nor la sogs pa  
'dod pa la sems yengs nas sgom mi skye bas / 'dod pa las blo ldog la zas gos  
ngan ngon la chog shes par byas la bsgom par bya'o /*

### **[E. Knowing how to ration food]**

*/ zas kyi tshod rig pa ni rlung mkhris la sogs pa'i nad khams dang sbyar la  
de dang mthun pa'i kha zas bsten pa dang / nad la gnod pa spang bar bya'o /*

## **[II. Actual Practices]**

*/ dngos gzhi nyams su blang ba la bzhi / zhi gnas dang / lhag mthong dang /  
zung 'jug dang / mtshan ma med pa'i rnam (em. rnal) 'byor ro /*

### **[A. Serenity (*śamatha*)]**

*de las dang po zhi [529] gnas la gsum / sngon 'gro dang / dngos gzhi dang /  
rjes so /*

**[1. Preliminaries]**

*/ de las dang po la lnga / dben pa bsten pa dang / dbang po sdom pa dang /  
sems bskyed pa dang / bla ma sgom pa dang / 'dun pa bskyed pa'o /*

**[a. Residing in solitude]**

*/ de las dang po dben pa ni / lus ngag yid gsum g.yeng ba'i rkyen bya ba  
phra rags gang yang rung ba ma btang na sgom mi skye / skyes pa nyams  
par 'gyur bas bya ba bstan bar bya'o /*

*/ bya ba btang kyang gnas dben pa zhig med na mi phan pas / gnas dben pa  
zhig dgos te / de yang nyin mo skye bo'i ca co med pa / mtshan mo sgra'i tig  
tog med pa / mi ma yin gdug pa can gyis bdag tu ma bzung zhing rgyu  
srang med pa / chu shing dang ldan pa sngar grub pa thob pas bsdad pa / mi  
rgod dang gcan gzan gyi 'tshe ba med pa / rang nyams dga' ba'o /*

*/ der yang sems nyon mongs pas g.yengs nas lus dben kyang mi phan pas  
sems nyon mongs pa dang rnam par rtog pa phra rags thams cad spang ba'o  
/*

**[b. Restraining the sense faculties]**

*/ dbang po sdom pa ni / mig la sogs pa'i dbang po yul la 'char na chags  
sdang gi rtog pa mang po skyes nas sgom gyi gegs byed pas / dbang po yul  
drug la 'char du mi gzhus par sgo bsdams la dran shes bzhin gyis zin par  
bya'o*

**[c. Cultivating the awakening mind]**

*/ sems bskyed pa ni / smon 'jug gi dam bca' bsdus pa re byed pa yin te / des  
theg pa dman par mi ltung zhing theg pa chen po'i lam du 'gyur ba dang /  
gzhan don rgya chen po 'grub pa dang / sangs rgyas thob pa'i rgyur 'gyur  
bas byang chub mchog tu sems bskyed par bya'o /*

**[d. Meditating on the spiritual teacher]**

*/ bla ma sgom pa ni / bla ma la sangs rgyas kyi 'du shes bskyed la spyir bor  
bsgom la mos gus dung pa re bya'o /*

*/ des tshogs rgya chen po rdzogs nas sgom skye ba dang / rang la slob ma  
gus dung pa re bya'o /*

*/ des tshogs rgya chen po rdzogs nas sgom skye ba dang / rang la slob ma*

*gus par 'ong bas gzhan don 'grub pa dang / sangs rgyas thob par 'gyur ba'o*

### [e. Developing aspiration]

*'dun pa bskyed pa ni / spyir chos gang 'dod pa de la 'dun pa ni rgyu'i gtso  
bo yin pas 'dir yang sgom skye bar 'dod pa'i 'dun pa drag po dung pa bskyed  
/ de med na rgyu tshogs gzhan yod kyang sgom mi skye bas / 'dun pa gtsor  
byas la rgyun du bsten no /*

### [2. Actual practice]

*/ dngos gzhi la lnga / mnyam par bzhag pa dang / rgyud la skye ba'i rim pa  
dang / ngo sprad pa dang / de'i don [530] bskyang ba dang / de la bogs gdon  
pa'o /*

### [a. Meditative equipoise]

*/ dang po mnyam par bzhag pa ni / lus snang mtha' yi chos lnga ldan du  
byas te / lus skyil krung / lag pa mnyam bzhag / tshigs pa drang po / mgrin  
pa cung zad dgug pa / mig sna rtse tsam du phab la / sems kyi bzhag thabs  
lnga la bzhag ste / khong glod pa dang / ma bcos pa dang mi rtog pa dang /  
kun rtog dor ba dang / rtsol bral du gzhag pa'o*

(1) */ khong glod pa ni / shes pa mi bsgrim par bram ze skud pa 'khal ba ltar  
lus sems 'bol le shig ge rang sor bzhag pa'o /*

(2) */ ma bcos pa ni / sgom pa la sogs pa'i rtog pa sna tshogs kyis ma bslad  
par chu ma rnyog na d'wangs pa ltar du shes pa so ma rang lugs su bzhag  
pa'o /*

(3) */ rtog med ni / phyi nang gi rtog pa phra rags thams cad spangs la / 'das  
pa'i rjes mi gcod / ma 'ongs pa'i sngon mi bsu / da ltar gyi shes pa ngos mi  
bzung bar skyes bu blun po don stor ba ltar gshi ci la yang mi sems pa gzhag  
go*

(4) */ kun rtog dor ba ni / nang gi 'gyu ba phra mo kun rtog rkun bu rkyen  
med du 'gyu ba byung na de ngos bzung la kha zas kyi rdul dor gin mi rtog  
pa bzhag go /*

(5) *rtsol bral ni / sgrub rgyu'i 'bad rtsol med par skyes bu bya ba tshar ba  
ltar rang sems dal bar bzhag pa'o /*

*/ mdor na bzhag thabs lnga po tshogs pa gcig tu byas la shes pa rang sor*

*bzhag pa'o /*

*/ de nas sems kyi dmigs pa ni blur lus kyi bca' ba ma bshig / rtog pa gzhan  
ma zhugs pa'i bar der bla na med pa'i byang chub tu bsngo ba re bya'o /*

**[b. The stages of arising in the mental continuum]**

*/ de ltar mnyam par bzhag pas nyams skye ba'i rim pa ni lnga ste / (1)  
nyams tha ma dang / (2) 'bring dang / (3) rab dang / (4) thod brgal dang /  
(5) cig car skye ba'o /*

*(1) / de las dang po ni / mnyam par bzhag pa'i dus na phyi yul la skyes pa'i  
rnam rtog 'gags nas / nang sems kyi kun rtog ngos zin te chu thur la 'brub  
pa ltar shes pa mi gnas pa 'gyu ba 'ong*

*/ de nas kun rtog zhi nas chus lteng kar sleb pa ltar sems rtog med du gnas  
par 'gyur ro /*

*/ de nas res gnas / res mi gnas pa 'ong ngo /*

*(2) / nyams 'bring ni / nyams rgyun chad med par gsal la mi rtog par g.yeng  
ba phra mos mi gnod pa chu dwangs pa la gzugs brnyan shar [531] ba ltar  
yon tan skye ba 'ong ba'o /*

*(3) / nyams rab ni / nyams gsal ba de nyid la rang bzhin med par shes te  
sams las su rung bas gsal stong zung du chud nas nyams su myong ba la  
dus rgyun chad med pa 'byung ngo /*

*(4) / thod brgal ni / nyams mtho dman du skye ste res nga la sgom mi 'dug  
snyam ste shes pa blan dang bral ba 'ong / res sgom 'di bas lhag pa logs na  
med snyam pa'o /*

*(5) / cig car ba ni / gsal stong dbyer med kyi nyams dang po nyid nas skyes  
nas 'grib pa dang rgyun chad med pa 'byung ste rtog pa cung zad kyang yod  
do /*

**[c. Serenity Pointing-out Instructions]**

*/ ngo sprad pa la lnga / (1) rnam par mi rtog pa dang / (2) rig pa gsal ba (3)  
nyams bde ba / (4) ngo bo rtse gcig pa / (5) ngos shes brtan pa'o /*

*(1) / de las dang po rnam par mi rtog pa ni / phyi yul la brten pa'i rnam rtog  
phra rags dang / nang sems la skyes pa'i kun rtog phra rags 'gags nas rnam  
par rtog pa med pa lder bzo lta bu'o /*



(2) / rig pa gsal ba ni / dang po yul sna tshogs so sor gsal ba la nang kun rtog gi 'dzin pa la zhugs pa dang / phyi nas rang sems dwangs pa'i rig pa yul med rang gsal ba la ngos bzung dang bral ba'i rig pa rang gsal 'dzin med me long gi gzugs brnyan lta bu'o /

(3) / nyams bde ba ni / snga ma'i nyams dang ldan pa'i dus na nyon mongs pa dang rnam par rtog pa thams cad dang bral ba'i tshe / nyam rtog la sogs pa'i zug rngu thams cad dang bral nas stong gsal gyi nyams dang ldan pas sdug bsngal dang btang snyoms kyi tshor ba yang 'gags nas rang 'byung zag pa med pa'i bde ba dang ldan pa dge slong bsam gtan dang po la snyoms par zhugs pa lta bu 'byung ba'o /

(4) / rtse gcig pa ni / ting nge 'dzin gyi ngo bo yin te / de ni phi nang gi rtog pa phra rags 'gags nas bde gsal mi rtog pa'i ngang las ma yengs par sems gnas pa ste lung ma bstan du ma shor bar skyes bu bya ba la yid gzhung ba lta bu'o /

(5) / nges shes brtan pa ni / sngar gyi nyams rnam la nang na myong ba yod pas the tshom dang bral zhing sems las su rung bas bsam gtan la dbang bsgyur ba rgyal pos dbang la dbang bsgyur ba lta bu'o /

#### **[d. Sustaining the meaning that has been pointed out]**

/ de'i don bskyang ba la lnga / (1) sgrib pa spangs pa dang / (2) bya ba btang ba dang / (3) dben pa [532] bsten pa dang / (4) btson 'grus bskyed pa dang / (5) rgyun du ma yengs pa'o /

(1) / dang po la lnga / 'dod 'dun dang / gnod sems dang / rgod 'gyod dang / gnyid rmugs dang / the tshom mo /

/ dang po 'dod 'dun ni / tshe 'di'i zas nor dang grags snyan la sogs pa 'dod pas sems g.yeng ba'o /

/ gnod sems ni / kun nas mnar sems pa'i rim pa dgu'am bcus dgrar 'dzin cing sdang bas gnod pa bya bar sems pa'o /

/ rgod 'gyod ni lus ngag yid gsum rnam par g.yeng bas 'phyar ba dang / sdig ltung la sogs pa sngar byas pa dran nas sems mi dga' ba'o /

/ gnyid rmugs ni / le lo dang gti mug gi ngo bo yin te / dge ba la sems mngon par mi spro ba las byung ba'o /

/ the tshom ni / gdams ngag brjed pa la sogs pas blo rtse gnyis su gyur pa ste / sgrib pa lnga po de dag spang la bskyang ngo /

(2) / *bya ba btang ba ni / lus ngag yid gsum gyis g.yeng ba'i rkyen bya ba phra rags gang yang rung ba thams cad spang bar bya'o /*

(3) / *dben pa bsten pa ni / skye bo mang po 'dus pa la sogs pa dbang po yul la 'phyar ba dang / lus bya ba mang pos g.yeng ba dang / sems nyon mongs pa la sogs pa rtog pa mang po spang la / dgon pa la sogs par rang gcig pur bsdad la bsgom par bya'o /*

(4) / *brtson 'grus ni / sgom pa la sems mngon par spro ba yin te / lus kyi bca' ba dang mi 'bral bar sems kyi bzhaq thabs la gnas pa'o /*

(5) / *rgyun du ma yengs pa ni / mi sgom pa'i dus na yang sems ma yengs par byas la / bu shi ba'i ma ltar bsam gtan brjed pa med par bskyang ngo /*

### [e. Enhancement of Serenity]

/ *bogs gdon pa [em. 'don pa] la lnga / 'khor ba'i nyes dmigs bsal ba dang / 'jig rten blos btang ba dang / nyes ltung bshags pa dang / bsod nams bsags pa dang / bya ba btang la dben par bsdad pa'o /*

(1) / *dang po 'khor ba'i nyes dmigs ni / 'gro ba rigs drug gang du skyes dang bde ba dang skyid pa med pas skyug nad pas zas mthong ba ltar 'khor ba la yid 'byung bar bya'o /*

(2) / *'jig rten blos btang ba ni / lto rgyab gtam gsum la sogs pa dang / 'jig rten chos brgyad la sogs pa tshe 'di yi rnam par rtog pa bsams na sems nyon mongs pa mang po 'phel [533] nas sdig tu 'gyur pas / tshe 'di yi rtog pa ci skyes thams cad spang bar bya'o /*

(3) / *nyes ltung bshags pa ni / tshe thog ma med pa nas kyi sdig sgrib mang po yod pas rnam smin sbyong byed kyi bshags pa bya'o /*

(4) / *bsod nams bsags pa ni / rang la ci yod pa bla ma dbul / dkon mchog mchod / rang gi lus bla ma'i bya ba la 'bad par bya / ma 'dal sogs ci rigs nas tshogs bsags pa ni zhing pa'i chu lud lta bu'o /*

(5) / *bya ba btang ba ni / lus ngag yid gsum g.yeng ba'i rkyen spang zhing / dbang po'i sgo bsdams la dgon pa'i ri dwags ltar dal bar bsdad la bsgom par bya'o /*

/ *des bogs thon par 'gyur ro /*

**[3. Subsequent practices of Serenity]**

*/ rjes la lnga / gol sa spang ba dang / nyon mongs spang ba dang / 'dod yon 'gog pa dang / chos brgyad snyoms pa dang / lus sems las su rung ba'o /*

**[a. Eliminating pitfalls to Serenity]**

*/ dang po gol sa la lnga / (1) mi rtog pa la chags na gzugs med du gol / (2) gsal ba la chags na gzugs khams su gol / (3) bde ba la chags na 'dod khams su gol / (4) rtse gcig pa la chags na 'gog par gol / (5) nges shes brtan pa la chags na 'khor bar gol bas bsam gtan gyi ro la chags par mi bya'o /*

**[b. Eliminating mental afflictions in Serenity]**

*/ nyon mongs pa spang ba la lnga / (1) 'dod chags / (2) zhe sdang / (3) gti mug / (4) nga rgyal / (5) phrag dog go /*

*(1) dang po ni / nang sems can dang phyi longs spyod la chags pa spang bar bya'o /*

*(2) / zhe sdang ni mnar sems kyi rim pa dgus dgrar 'dzin dang gnod par sems pa'o /*

*(3) / gti mug ni bya ba dang bya ba ma yin pa mi shes pas bsam gtan gyi 'gal rkyen du 'gyur ba la spyod pa'o /*

*(4) / nga rgyal ni sems khengs pas gzhan la mi 'dud cing gzhan brnyas pa la sogs pa byed pa'o /*

*(5) / phrag dog ni / gzhan gyi rnyed pa la sogs pa la sems mngon par mi dga' zhing 'byer ba'o /*

*/ de ltar gol sa dang nyon mongs pas bsam gtan la bsgribs pas de dag ngos bzung zhing spang bar bya'o /*

**[c. Stopping sensory enjoyments]**

*/ 'dod yod 'gog pa ni lnga / (1) mig gzugs la mi chags mi sdang bar rang sor 'jog pa dang / (2) de bzhin du rna ba sgra dang / (3) sna dri dang / (4) lce ro dang / (5) lus reg bya la mi chags mi sdang ba 'byung ba'o /*

**[d. Leveling out the eight worldly concerns]**

*/ chos brgyad snyoms pa la lnga / (1) 'dod pa bzhi la mi chags pa dang / (2)*

*mi 'dod pa bzhi la mi sdang ba dang / [534] (3) de gnyis cha mnyam pa dang / (4) cha snyoms pa'i rgyu dang / (5) mnyam pa'i phan yon no /*

*(1) / de las dang po ni rnyed pa 'dod pa dang / grags pa dang / bstod pa dang / tshe 'di yi bde ba 'dod pa ste bzhi po de yang zhing byung yang zhen par mi bya'o /*

*(2) / mi 'dod pa ni / ma rnyed pa dang / ma grags pa dang / smad pa dang / tshe 'di yi sdug bsngal ba'o /*

*(3) / de gnyis cha mnyam pa ni / 'dod pa bzhi la bsgrub byar mi byed par rang shugs kyis byung na zhen cing chags pa med par bya ba dang / mi 'dod pa bzhi po byung na zhum pa dang zhe sdang ba dang sems mi dga' bar mi 'gyur ba'o /*

*(4) / de gnyis snyoms pa'i rgyu mtshan ni / de dag la bden pa'i dngos po med par shes par bya'o /*

*(5) / snyoms pa'i phan yon ni chags sdang mi skye ba dang / nyon mongs pa gzhan yang mgo gnon pas tshe 'di don du mi gnyer bar dge ba sgrub par 'gyur ba'o /*

### **[e. Enabling the body and mind to become serviceable]**

*/ lus sems las su rung ba la lnga ste / (1) / dge ba la brtson pa dang / (2) dbang bsgyur ba dang / (3) brtan pa dang / (4) bde ba dang / (5) yon tan skye ba'o /*

*(1) / brtson pa ni bsam gtan la sems mngon par spro bas 'jug cing ting nge 'dzin mi dor bar bsgom pa'o /*

*(2) / dbang bsgyur ba ni dmigs bcas dang dmigs med kyi bsam gtan la gtad par gnas pa'o /*

*(3) / brtan pa ni yul rkyen dang g.yeng ba phra mo dang gol sgrub phra mos mi 'phrog par bsam gtan la gnas pa'o /*

*(4) / bde ba ni lus sems bkol du 'dod pa dang / nyon mongs rnam rtog gi zung rngu med pas yul bde ba dang blo las su rung la sems dwangs pa'o /*

*(5) / yon tan skye ba ni / mngon shes dang rdzu 'phrul dang chos nyid kyi rtogs pa skye ba'i rten byed pa'o /*

**[B. Insight (*vipaśyanā*)]**

*/ lhag mthong la gsum / sngon 'gro dang / dngos gzhi dang / rjes so /*

**[1. Preliminaries for Insight]**

*/ dang po la lnga / 'jig rten blos gtang ba dang / dben pa bsten pa dang / 'dun pa bskyed pa dang [em. / sems bskyed pa dang] / bla ma bsgom pa'o /*

**[a. Renouncing a worldly mind]**

*/ dang po 'jig rten chos rgyad kyi blang dor dang / lto gos kyi 'dod 'dun la sogs pa 'di bsgrub pa'i 'du shes spang bar bya'o /*

**[b. Residing in solitude]**

*/ dben pa bsten pa ni / lus sems rnam par g.yeng ba'i gnas tshod dus la sogs pa dang / bya byed mang po la sogs pa'i 'du 'dzi dang / nyon mongs pa dang spros pa'i rnam rtog mang po rnams spang [535] la dgon pa la sogs dben par bsdad pa'o /*

**[c. engendering aspiration]**

*/ 'dun pa bskyed pa ni / rtogs pa 'char bar 'dod pa'i 'dun pa rtse gcig tu bya ba'o /*

**[d. Arising the awakening mind]**

*/ sems bskyed pa ni / smon 'jug gi dam bca' bsdus pa re byed pa'o /*

**[e. Meditation on the spiritual teacher]**

*/ bla ma sgom pa ni / bla ma la sangs rgyas su bltas la mos gus byas la spyi bor bsgom pa'o /*

**[2. Actual Practice of Insight]**

*/ dngos gzhi la lnga / bzhag thabs dang / rgyud la skye ba'i rim pa dang / ngo sprad pa dang / don bskyang ba dang / bogs gdon pa'o /*

**[a. The method of stabilizing Insight]**

*/ bzhag thabs la lnga / (1) so mar bzhag pa dang / (2) dmigs med du bzhag pa dang / (3) stong par bzhag pa dang / (4) rtog med dang (5) rjes med du*

*bzhag pa'o /*

(1) / *dang po lus zhi gnas ltar du byas la sems dmigs gtad dang lta sgom la sogs pa gang gis kyang ma bsal ma bcos par rang sor lhod de bzhag go /*

(2) / *dmigs med ni / lta sgom la sogs pa grub mtha' dang / sems kyi dmigs pa'i gtad so gang la yang mi byar dmigs med du bzhag go /*

(3) *stong nyid du bzhag pa ni / gong ltar bzhag pas nam mkha' stong pa ltar ci yang ma grub par 'dug pas de'i ngang la cir yang mi sgom par sang nge bzhag pa'o /*

(4) / *rten yod du bzhag pa ni / nam mkha' la bya 'phur ba la rten med pa ltar rig pa gzhi ci la yang ma brten par gsal du bzhag pa'o /*

(5) / *rjes med ni gong ltar bzhag pa'i dus na rig pa ma 'gags par gsal te / 'gyu ba la rjes med pa bar snang gi bsir bu [em. bsil bu] ltar gsal stong du bzhag ste /*

*mdor na bzhag thabs lnga po tshogs pa gcig tu byas la rang sems spros pa dang bral'i ngang la gsal sing nge gzhas go /*

### **[b. Stages of arising insight in the mental continuum]**

*skye ba'i rig pa la lnga / (1) tha ma dang / (2) 'bring dang / (3) rab dang / (4) thod brgal dang / (5) cig car ba'o /*

(1) / *dang po ni / lhag mthong tha ma zhig skyes na rang sems stong pa nyid du rtogs pa tsam yod kyang / rtog pa dang myong rig stong par ma rtogs / stong pa nyid de yang res gsal / res mi gsal / zab dang rgya che pa'i chos bltas kyang mi go /*

*de dus su bla ma dang 'bral thabs med / de bskyangs pas rtogs pa 'bring du 'gyur ro /*

(2) / *rtogs pa 'bring skyes na / sems dang rnam rtog thams cad stong par rtogs / 'khor 'das la spang blang mi 'dug snyam pa'o /*

*/ sgom la mtho dman [536] 'ong ste / res gdags ngag dang bla ma la yang the tshom za / res stong par yang rtogs nas de'i ngang la gnas / de bskyangs pas rab tu 'gyur ro /*

(3) / *rab skyes na / sems dang / rnam rtog dang / myang rig thams cad stong par rtogs pas / dmyal bar 'gro rgyu yang mi 'dug / sangs rgyas thob rgyu*

*yang mi 'dug / sangs rgyas chos sku bya ba 'di kha yin / gdams ngag dang  
chos kyi don gyis kyang nga'i bsgom 'di la ma slebs snyam pa'o /*

*/ bla ma'i mos gus gcig pus chog snyam pa dang / rang gi sgom dang gdams  
ngag la yang zhen pa chung / sngar gyi bslab pa'i chos thams cad phyi shun  
sbun par 'gro / gnyid kyi dus su yang rtogs pa dang mi 'bral ba 'ong /*

(4) *thod brgal ba ni sgom la mtho dman du ma 'ong ste nges med du skye  
bas rtogs pa mi brtan pa'o /*

(5) */ cig car ba ni dang po nyid nas sgom rab kyi mthar thug du skyes nas  
'bral med du brtan par gnas te de dag ma nges par bskyang ngo /*

### **[c. Directly Pointing out Instructions for Insight]**

*/ ngo sprad pa la lnga / (1) sems nyid stong par ngo sprad pa dang / (2)  
rnam rtog stong par ngo sprad pa dang / (3) myong rig stong par ngo sprad  
pa / (4) yul snang stong par ngo sprad pa dang / (5) thams cad spros bral du  
ngo sprad pa'o /*

(1) */ dang po ni sems kyi rang bzhin cig yang ma grub ste / de la dus gsum  
gyi sangs rgyas kyi kyang ma gzigs / mi gzigs / gzigs par mi 'gyur te / sems  
med pa'i phyir ro /*

*/ stong pa de yang chad pa dang / bshig pa dang / sbyang sgom la sogs pa'i  
stong pa ma yin te / rang bzhin gyis stong pa nyid du gnas te / de la kha dog  
dang dbyibs la sogs pa'i mtshan ma gang yang ma grub pas nam mkha'  
sprin dang bral ba lta bu'o /*

(2) */ rnam rtog stong pa ni / sems nyid de ltar stong par gnas kyang rnam  
rtog mi 'gag par 'dug pa snyam na rnam rtog gang 'gyus pa de la rang  
bzhin ci 'dug bltas pas / 'gyu ba de nyid stong par ngo shes pas rnam rtog  
dgag mi dgos te / sems kyi gzhi rtsa chod pas wal po rjes med du 'gro ste /  
nam mkha'i sprin ltar rang byung rang zhir 'gro bas / 'gyu ba skyon du mi  
che ste / 'gyu stong dus mnyam du shes pas ye shes rang gsal du gnas pa'o /*

(3) */ myong rig stong pa ni / snga ma'i rtogs pa nyams su myong mkhan gyi  
rig pa de la cer bltas pas / [537] de la ngos bzung gang yang mi 'dug pas  
myong stong du 'dug pas rig stong dbyer med du rtogs pa'o /*

(4) */ yul snang stong pa ni / dbang po drug gi yul phyi rol gyi snang ba  
thams cad la rang bzhin med de / dper na rmi lam la sogs pa'i snang ba bde  
sdug mi 'gag par snang yang rang bzhin med pa ltar / yul snang thams cad  
sgyu ma ltar shes par bya'o /*

(5) / spros bral ni / de ltar thams cad stong pa nyid du rtogs kyang rig snang gsal ba mi 'gag 'dug gsal yang rang bzhin mi 'dug pas / rtag chad la sogs pa'i mtha'i spros pa thams cad dang bral ba'o / / de ltar rim gyis ngo sprad par bya'o /

**[d. Sustaining the meaning that has been pointed out]**

/ don bskyang ba la lnga / (1) dran pa yengs med du bskyang ba dang / (2) gnyen pos rkyen thog tu rdzi ba dang / (3) 'gyur ba rjes med du bskyangs pa dang / (4) rig pa gu yangs su bskyang ba dang / (5) snang ba grogs su khyer la bskyangs pa'o /

(1) / dang po ni / sgom rma ba'i dus su lus kyi bca' thabs dang / zhi gnas kyi nyams dang mi 'bral bar byas la / mkhas pa ba glang skyong ba ltar du shes pa khong glod la yang dag pa'i dran pas bzung la dus thams cad du ma yengs par bskyang ngo /

(2) / gnyen pos rkyen thog tu brdzi ba ni / sgom rma ba'i dus na nyon mongs rnam rtog gam sdug bsngal la sogs pa'i rkyen byung na / de dag gang byung ba de la rang bzhin med par blos bsam la bsal bar bya / yang na rkyen gang byung ba de la cer bltas pas rkun mo ngo shes pa ltar rang log tu 'gro ste stong nyid du rtogs par 'gyur / yang na so sor rtogs pa'i shes rab kyis so so'i gnyen pos spang bar bya'o /

(3) / 'gyu ba rjes med ni / rtogs pa 'bring pos chu la ber ka brgyab pa'am / bya 'phar ba la rjes med pa ltar rnam rtog ci skyes thams cad hol [em. tol] skyes rang yal du btang la rtog pa'i rjes su nyon mongs med par ye shes kyi grogs su shes par bya'o /

(4) / rig pa gu yangs ni / rtogs pa mtho bas sems mi bzung mi bsgrim par lus sems khong glod la / gnas dang spyod lam dang dmigs pa res 'jog tu byas la rtog pa'i ngang la bzhag pas / gzings las 'phur ba'i bya bzhin du rang log tu 'ong bas / dran pas bzung mi dgos te / spyir mi dgos kyang bzung na yon tan skye bas dran [538] pas gzung ngo /

(5) / snang ba grogs su khyer ba ni / rtog pa rab kyis snang rtog thams cad mi dgag par stong par shes par byas la rang grol du bzhag pas / dug la snags kyis btab pa ltar ral / chu tshan la kha ba bab pa ltar / snang rtog thams cad kyis ye shes kyi grogs su shes par byas la rtogs pas gong 'phel du bskyang ngo /



**[e. Enhancement of Insight]**

/ bogs gdon pa la lnga / (1) bsags sbyang bya ba dang / (2) mngon zhen spang ba dang / (3) 'jig rten blos btang ba dang / (4) bdag 'dzin spang ba dang / (5) bla ma'i mos gus bya ba'o /

(1) / dang po ni / tshe thog ma med pa nas kyi sdig ltung yod pas gnyen po stobs bzhi'i sgo nas bshags pa bya ste zhing pa'i yur sel dang 'dra'o /

/ lus longs spyod la sogs pa sbyin par btang ba nas bsam gtan sgom pa'i bar du 'bad par bya ste zhing pa'i chu lud dang 'dra'o /

(2) / mngon zhen spang ba ni / bdag dang bdag gir 'dzin pa yi lus longs spyod dang dgra gnyen dang / bde sdug gi snang ba la sogs pa bden par 'dzin pa dang / de dag la mngon par zhen nas chags sdang skye bar 'gyur ba thams cad spang bar bya'o /

(3) / 'jig rten blos btang ba ni / 'jig rten chos brgyad kyi spong sgrub dang / lto gos gtam gsum gyi 'dod 'dun dang / tshe 'di sgrub pa'i rnam rtog thams cad blos btang la ma 'ongs pa'i bde ba don du gnyer bar bya'o /

(4) / bdag 'dzin spang ba ni / phung po lnga'i rgyun la bdag tu 'dzin pa de yod na 'khor ba'i sdug bsngal thams cad bskyed par byed pas / nga bdag tu 'dzin pa blos btang la lus 'dre la sbyin par btang / gces 'dzin btsan thabs su bcad la lus bla ma'i bya ba la dbul lo /

(5) / bla ma'i mos gus ni / sngar bas bogs btan la / chos sku dngos su bltas la lus longs spyod dbul zhing gsol ba drag tu btab par bya ste / de dag rim pa bzhin du tshang zhing rdzogs par bya ste / yang snga ma ltar bsgoms pas bogs thon par 'gyur ro /

**[3. Subsequent practices after Insight]**

/ rjes la lnga / dngos gzhi mi nyams pa'i thabs dang / gdams ngag dran pas bzung ba dang / gol sa spang ba dang / snang ba bden med du bskyang ba dang / ma nor ba'i lam rtags so /

**[a. The means of undegenerated actual practice of Insight]**

/ de las dang po la lnga / (1) rkyen ngan spang ba dang / (2) dam chos mnyan pa dang / [539] (3) bsags sbyang bya ba dang / (4) sdig ltung spang ba dang / (5) dben par bsdad pa'o /

(1) // dang po ni / nyon mongs pa skye ba'i gnas grong yul la sogs pa dang

*nyon mongs pa skye ba'i grogs dmag dang 'thab rtsod 'byung ba dang / skye bo mang po 'dus pa'i ca co yod pa'i sa dang / nye du ma yin pa'i 'gro ba bzang po la sogs pa spang ngo /*

(2) / *dam pa'i chos mnyan pa ni / zab la rgya che ba'i gdams ngag mnyan pa dang / mdo rgyud dang bstan bcos man ngag la la lta rtog bya ba dang / zab la rgya che ba'i chos gtam bya zhing don yang bsam par bya'o /*

(3) / *bsags sbyang bya ba ni / yi ge brgya pa dang maNDal dbul ba dang / sbyin pa sogs phar phyin drug dang / chos bshad nyan la sogs pa lus ngag yid gsum dge ba'i las la 'bad par bya'o /*

(4) / *sdig ltung spang ba ni / khas blangs pa'i sdom khrims dag par bsrung ba dang / rang bzhin gyi mi dge ba phra rags thams cad spang zhing sdig dang nyon mongs pa la 'dzem par bya'o /*

(5) / *dben pa ni lus grong yul la sogs pa dang bya ba mang po spang / sems nyon mongs pa la sogs pa'i rtog pa mang po spang la ri yi dgon pa la sogs par bsdad par bya'o /*

### **[b. Protecting Insight with mindfulness]**

*/ dran pas bzung ba la lnga / (1) lus gnad dang / (2) dbang po bsdams pa dang / (3) zhi gnas gso ba dang / (4) rtog pa dran pas bzung ba dang / (5) brtson 'grus bskyed pa'o /*

(1) / *de las dang po lus gnad ni / mi sgom par sdod pa'i dus na yang lus kyi bca' thabs la bsdad pas ting nge 'dzin la sogs pa'i yon tan skye ba'o /*

(2) / *dbang po'i sgo bsdams pa ni / dus thams cad du mig la sogs pa yul la 'char du mi 'jug par yul gyi rjes su mi 'brang bar mtshan mar mi bzung ba'o /*

(3) / *nyams gso ba ni / zhi gnas kyi skabs bzhin du sems rnam par mi rtog pa'i ngang du gzhag par bya'o /*

(4) / *rtog pa dran pas bzung ba ni / 'gro 'chag nyal 'dug la sogs pa'i spyod lam thams cad du stong nyid kyi rtogs pa dran pas bzung ngo /*

(5) / *rtson 'grus bskyed pa ni / sgom par mi spro ba le lo'i gnyen po lus sems 'bad rtsol bskyed la bsgom pa la spro ba bskyed par bya'o /*

**[c. Eliminating pitfalls to Insight]**

*/ gol sgrib spang pa la lnga / (1) nag po la 'byams su shor ba dang / (2) gshis la shor ba dang / (3) rgyas 'debs su shor ba dang / [540] (4) gnyen por shor ba dang / (5) lam du shor ba'o /*

*(1) / dang po ni / rtogs pa 'bring man chad dge sdig gnyis ka stong par rtogs pas spong sgrub mi byed par chad ltar 'chor ba yang 'byung ngo /*

*(2) / gshis la shes pa ni / chos thams cad stong pa nyid yin pas stong pa nyid bsgom mi dgos / gnyen po yang bsten mi dgos dge sdig kyang stong pa yin snyam pa'o /*

*(3) / rgyas 'debs su shor ba ni / dge ba byas pa'i rjes la mi dmigs par blos byas pa'i stong pa nyid bsgoms pas /*

*(4) gnyen por shor ba ni / bshig cing sbyangs nas blos byas kyi stong nyid bsgoms nas spang bya yang stong pa nyid yin snyam du bsgom pa'o /*

*(5) / lam du shor ba ni / skye med du bsgom pa dang / 'od gsal dang / chos sku dang / mi dmigs pa dang / dbu ma chen po la sogs pa blos byas bsgoms pas sangs rgyas thob tu re ba'o /*

**[d. Sustaining appearances as unreal]**

*/ snang ba bden med du bskyang ba la lnga / (1) rnam rtog bden med dang / (2) nyon mongs bden med dang / (3) bde sdug bden med dang / (4) ci snang bden med dang / (5) nyams rtogs bden med du bskyang ba'o /*

*(1) / de las dang po rnam rtog bden med du bskyang ba ni 'dod chags la sogs pa gang skyes pa thams cad kha yan rang rgyud du mi btang bar / de nyid la bltas pas rtsa bral du shes pa'am / yang na gnyen po'am thabs kyis gzhom par bya'o /*

*(2) [fol. 59a7] \*sems la rnam par rtogs pa ci 'gyus pa thams cad la dngos so rnam bden pa med par skyes rung ba btar la bde sdug gi chags sngar mi bya'o / nyon mongs bden med du bskyang ba ni \**

*(3) / bde sdug ni / zas nor la sogs pa'i rnyed bkur dang stobs dang nad med pa la sogs pa bde ba'i rkyen dang / de las ldog pa mi bde ba'i rkyen thams cad la chags sdang la sogs pa mi bskyed par / bden med du shes par byas la bde sdug go snyam par bya'o /*

*(4) / ci snang thams cad bden med du bskyang ba ni / mig la sogs pa'i yul*

*drug la bde sdug la sogs pa'i rkyen ci snang yang thams cad sgyu ma'i rmi lam ltar mi bden pa'i snang bar shes par byas la nyon mongs pa la sogs pas mi 'ching bar bya'o /*

(5) / *nyams rtogs ni nyams bde gsal mi rtog pa la sogs pa bsam gtan gyi ro la mi chags pa dang / stong nyid rtogs pa la mngon par zhen pa spang bar bya'o /*

### [e. Unerring signs of progress on the path]

*lam rtags la lnga / (1) nyon mongs pa mgo gnon pa dang / (2) 'dod yon la ma zhen pa dang / (3) chos brgyad snyoms pa dang / (4) rgyu 'bras la yid ches pa [541] dang / (5) sems can la snying rje skye ba'o /*

(1) / *de las dang po chos thams cad bden med du shes pas tha snyad kyi spros pas thams cad phyi shun sbun gog tu mthong ba dang / nyon mongs pa shas chung du song ba'o /*

(2) / *'dod yon la ma zhen pa ni / mig la sogs pa'i dbang po lnga gzugs la sogs pa'i yul lnga la spyod kyang mngon par zhen pa dang / chags pa med pa'o /*

(3) / *chos brgyad snyom pa ni / mthun phyogs bzhi la bsgrub byar mi byed ma bsgrubs kyang byung na zhen pa dang chags par mi byed / mi mthun pa bzhi la zhum pa dang spang byar mi byed par mgo sgoms pa'o /*

(4) / *rgyu 'bras la yid ches pa ni / las dge sdig la 'bras bu bde sdug 'byung bar shes pas rgyu 'bras khyad du mi gsod par phra ba nas spong sgrub byed pa'o /*

(5) / *sems can la snying rje skye ba ni / de ltar ma rtogs pa'i sems can la snying rje rang shugs kyis skye ba dang / gzhan don la brtson pas 'jug pa 'byung ba'o /*

### [C. Union (yuganaddha)]

*/ zung 'jug bsgom pa la gsum / sngon 'gro dang / dngos gzhi dang / rjes so /*

#### [1. Preliminary practices for Union]

*/ sngon 'gro la lnga / byang chub mchog tu sems bskyed pa dang / bsags sbyang bya ba dang / lhiag mthong gsos btab pa dang / zung 'jug 'dod pa'i 'dun pa bskyed pa dang / bla ma'i mos gus bya ba ste / de dag snga ma dang 'dra bar bya'o /*

**[2. Actual practice of Union]**

*/ dngos gzhi la lnga / bzhag thabs dang / skye ba'i rim pa dang / ngo sprad pa dang / don bskyang ba dang / de la bogs gdon pa'o /*

**[a. Method of stabilizing Union]**

*/ dang po bzhag thabs la lnga / rang lugs su bzhag pa dang / tshogs drug lhug par bzhag pa dang / dbyer med du bzhag pa dang / spang blang med par bzhag pa dang / mtha' bral du bzhag pa'o /*

(1) */ dang po rang lugs ni / lta sgom dang dmigs gtad la sogs pa gang gi kyang ma bsldar par bu chung gi spyod pa ltar dgag sgrub med par bzhag go /*

(2) *tshogs drug lhug pa ni nyi ma sprin dang bral ba ltar dbang po drug gi sgo mi bsdams par yul ci snang rang sor bzhag la yul la mtshan mar mi gzung bar bzhag go /*

(3) *dbyer med du bzhag pa ni / ci snang thams cad stong pa nyid dang ro gcig pa chu dang rlabs bzhin du snang stong dbyer med du bzhag go /*

(4) *spang blangs med pa ni / snang ba mi 'gegs stong pa mi sgrub par ka ra dang ro [542] ltar snang stong tha dad med pas gang la yang blang dor yod par [em. med par] bzhag go /*

(5) *mtha' bral ni / snang stong la sogs pa gang gi mthar yang mi gnas pa mnyan pa mkhas pa ltar du gzhag ste / mdor na bzhag thabs lnga po tshogs pa gcig tu byas la du ma ro gcig gi ngang la bzhag go /*

**[b. The stages of arising Union]**

*skye ba'i rim pa la lnga / (1) tha ma dang / (2) 'bring / (3) rab dang / (4) thod brgal dang / (5) cig car ba'o /*

(1) */ zung 'jug tha ma ni / rang gi lus dang sems dang snang ba dang gsum dbyer med rtogs nas sgom zung du tshud kyang res mi gsal /*

*res su nges pa tsug 'dug / res dngos po'am sra 'thas su yang snang / las 'bras la mi 'dzem / phrag dog mi spong / res 'di mthar thug yin snyam pa 'ong / res lkog mi thub par nyes spyod la 'jug pa 'ong / res sgom zung 'jug la gnas pa 'byung ngo /*

(2) / 'bring ni lus dang sems dang snang ba gsum gcig tu 'dres nas / ci snang sems kyi ngang du thim nas sgom 'di bas lhag pa med snyam pa 'byung / sems can dang rang bla ma yang rung du 'dug pas / snying rje dang mos gus byas kyang mi 'dug snyam pa dang / las rgyu 'bras dang lag pas spong sgrub bya rgyu yang mi 'dug snyam nas lam gol ba yang byung srid pa yin / res lam ma gol bar shes pa'o /

(3) / rab skyes na 'khor 'das mnyam pa nyid du rtogs nas snang sems don dam pa'i bden pa gcig tu go /

/ lhag dge rtsa ba nas zhi / nyams rtogs la 'grib pa med pa'o /

(4) / thod brgal ba ni / 'bring man chad la nyams mtho dman can nges med du skye'o /

(5) / cig car ba ni dang po rang nas rtogs pa mchog tu gyur pa skyes nas mi 'bral ba'o /

### [c. Directly pointing-out instructions for Union]

/ ngo sprod pa la lnga / (1) gnas sa gzhi'i zung 'jug dang / (2) snang ba lam gyi zung 'jug dang / (3) grub pa 'bras bu'i dang / (4) rtogs pa nyams gyi dang / (5) don bsdu te bstan pa'o /

(1) / dngos gzhi la lnga / (a) rang bzhin stong pa dang / (b) ngo bo gsal ba dang / (c) mtshan nyid dbyer med dang / (d) yon tan 'gyur med dang / (e) 'phrin las thogs med do /

(a) dang po rang bzhin ni / ye nas rtogs pa nyid du gnas te / bshig bcom sbyang sgom la sogs pa ma yin par gdod nas stong par gnas pa nam mkha' rnam par dag pa lta bu'o /

(a) / ngo bo ni gsal bar gnas te / [543] dbang po'i yul la sogs pa ma yin pa stong nyid kyi rang mdangs ma 'gags pa'i cha mkha' la nyi ma shar ba lta bu'o /

(c) / sems kyi mtshan nyid dbyer med du gnas te / stong pa'i ngo bo gsal zhing gsal ba'i rang bzhin stong pas gsal stong dbyer med chu zla lta bur gnas so /

(d) / yon tan ni dbyer med las ma 'das pas 'khor 'das pas 'khor 'das gang du yang sems las mi 'gyur bar gnas te mtshan nyid kyi zlar gtogs so /

(e) / 'phrin las ni dbyer med de'i ngo bo yul med rtog med rang shar gyi rig

*pa bar snang gi bsir bu [em. bsil bu] thogs chags med par gnas te / ngo bo gsal ba'i zlar gtogs so /*

*(2) / lam gyi zung 'jug la lnga / (a) rang bzhin dang / (b) ngo bo dang / (c) mtshan nyid dang / (d) yon tan dang / (e) 'phrin las so /*

*(a) / rang bzhin ni stong pa nyid ye nas gnas pa de ji ltar snang ba thams cad de nyid rang shar ba yin te / de ltar ma rig kyang til la mar gyis khyab pa ltar ci snang thams cad la stong pas khyab par gnas so /*

*(b) / ngo bo gsal ba ni / (i) las snang dang / (ii) 'phrul [em. 'khrul] snang dang / (iii) nyams snang dang / (iv) rang snang ngo /*

*(i) / dang po ni / 'gro ba rigs drug gi bde sdug gi snang ba thams cad yin te / de yang phyi don du grub pa ni ma yin te rmi lam gyi snang ba ltar rang rang gi las dge sdig gi 'bras bu sgyu ma lta bu shar ba tsam yin no /*

*(ii) / 'khrul snang ni rang snang dang stong par ma shes par phyi don du 'dzin pas chags sdang sbye ba thag pa la sbrul du mthong ba lta bu'o /*

*(iii) / nyams snang ni du ba dang / smig rgyu dang / me khyer dang / thig le kha dog sna tshogs pa dang / nam mkha' rnam par dag pa lta bu'o /*

*(iv) / rang snang ni de ltar snang ba thams cad rang gi sems snang yin te dper na gzugs brnyan lta bu'o /*

*(c) / mtshan nyid dbyer med ni las snang la sogs pa'i snang ba thams cad dang stong par 'dres pa chu dang 'khyags pa bzhin du shes par bya'o /*

*(d) / yon tan mi 'gyur ba ni / ji ltar snang yang rang sems dbyer med las mi 'gyur bas gser la gzugs byas pa lta bu'o /*

*(e) / 'phrin las thogs med ni / sems dge sdig tu shar bas 'bras bu bde sdug tu 'byung ba me long gi gzugs brnyan nam brag cha lta bu'o /*

*(3) / 'bras bu la lnga / (a) rang bzhin dang / (b) ngo bo [544] dang / (c) mtshan nyid dang / (d) yon tan dang / (e) 'phrin las so /*

*/ dang po rang bzhin ni / chos kyi dbyings ye nas rnam par dag pa la glo bur gyi dri ma phra rags thams cad dang bral nas stong pa nyid mngon du byas pa nam mkha' sprin dang bral ba lta bu'o /*

*(b) / ngo bo gsal ba ni / byang chub kyi sems kyi rang gzugs bsod nams ye shes kyi snang ba / sku dang ye shes dang gzhal yas khang la sogs pa'i snang*

*ba yang dag pa'i ye shes kyi snang ba chu zla lta bu'o /*

(c) / *mtshan nyid ni ji lta ba dan ji snyed pa mkhyen pa'i ye shes dang stong pa nyid dbyer med par 'dres pa 'ja' tshon lta bu'o /*

(d) / *yon tan ni / stobs dang mi 'jigs pa dang / mtshan dang dpe byad la sogs pa dang stong pa nyid dbyer med pa'o /*

(e) / *'phrin las ni / zhi rgyas dbang drag la sogs pas gang la gang 'dul du 'gro don mdzad pa'o /*

(4) / *rtogs pa la lnga / (a) nyams dang dbyer med / (b) rtogs pa dang / (c) snang ba dang / (d) rgyu 'bras dang / (e) thabs dang dbyer med par rtogs pa'o /*

(a) / *de las dang po / nyams bde gsal mi rtog pa la sogs pa dang / nyams mtho dman gyi snang ba thams cad dang stong pa nyid 'dres par rtogs pas nyams rtogs zung 'jug go /*

(b) *rtogs pa dang dbyer med ni phyi nang gzung 'dzin chags sdang gi rtog pa phra rags thams cad stong par rtogs pas 'gyur stong zung 'jug go /*

(c) *snang ba dang dbyer med ni / yul sems kyi snang ba ma 'gags pa ci shar ba thams cad stong par rtogs pas snang stong zung 'jug go /*

(d) *'bras bu dang dbyer med ni / chos thams cad stong nyid du rtogs kyang kun rdzob tsam du las dang 'bras bu mi slu bas dge sdig la spong sgrub byed pa dang / stong pa nyid la dbyer med par rtogs pa'o /*

(e) / *thabs shes rab dbyer med ni / yul dang yul can la sogs pa phyi nang gi dngos po gang yang ma grub kyang / thabs snying rje chen po dang byang chub kyi sems mi spangs te / thabs dang shes rab dbyer med pa'i zung 'jug go /*

(5) *don bsdus te bstan pa la lnga / (a) lhun grub dang / (b) 'dus ma byas / (c) spros pa bral ba dang / (d) skye 'gag med pa dang / (e) bsam brjod dang bral ba'o /*

(a) / *de las dang po lhun grub ni / 'bad pa dang rtsol ba gang gis kyang sgrub mi dgos / ye nas [545] ye shes su grub ba'o /*

(b) / *'dus ma byas pa ni / rang sems las de rgyu dang rkyen la sogs pa gang gis kyang ma bskyed par ye nas grub pa'o /*



(c) / spros bral ni / rang sems kyi gnas lus de rtag chad la sogs pa'i mtha' thams cad dang bral ba'o /

(d) / skye 'gag med pa ni / dbyibs dang kha dog dang rnam par rtogs pa la sogs pa'i mtshan ma gang yang ma skyes shing de dag la sogs pa gang yang mi 'gag pa'o /

(e) / bsam brjod dang bral ba ni / rang sems de ltar yin pa'i don la yod med rtag chad la sogs par blos bsam du yang med / de dag tu gang gis brjod du yang med pa'o /

#### [d. Sustaining the meaning]

/ de'i don bskyang ba la lnga / (1) ci snang stong par bskyang ba dang / (2) bden med du bskyang ba dang / (3) ci snang rang sems su shes pa dang / (4) snang rtog grogs su khyer ba dang / (5) dran pa yengs med du bskyang ba'o /

(1) / de las dang po ni / lhag mthong gi rtog pa la gsal btab la stong pa nyid la gtsor bya ste bsgoms pas zung 'jug rang shugs la 'ongs te / 'bras khar la lo legs na yus sogs zhar la 'byung ba lta bu'o /

(2) / bden med ni / yul sems kyi snang ba la bden pa'i dngos po gang yang med pas chags sdang la sogs pa'i rkyen gang byung yang bden med sgyu ma lta bur shes par byas la bskyang ngo /

(3) / sems su shes pa ni / yul snang la sogs pa'i dngos po thams cad phyi yi don ma yin te rang gi sems snang ba yin te / dper na bzhin dang gzugs brnyan lta bu yin pas snang sems dang chags sdang la sogs pa dang rtog pa bsres la gnyis su med par rtog pa'i ngang du bskyang ngo /

(4) / snang rtog grogs su khyer ba ni / bde sdug la sogs pa'i snang rtog thams cad rdzun snang du shes par byas la / stong pa nyid kyi grogs su shes par byas la chags sdang gi rtog pa mi bskyed par rang yal du shes pa chu tshan la kha bab pa ltar du shes par bya'o /

(5) / dran pa yengs med ni / sngar gyi nyams rtogs thams cad dran pas bzung la bskyangs te / nang nub bya ba dang bsre / nyin mo'i snang ba dang bsre / mtshan mo gnyid dang bsres pas bzung mi dgos kyang bzung la ma yengs pa stegs 'drod po [em. 'dred po] la mar khus gang ba'i snod khyer ba lta bu'o /

**[e. Enhancement of Union]**

/ bogs gdon la lnga / (1) lus [546] longs spyod kyi zhen pa btang ba dang /  
 (2) bdag 'dzin blos btang ba dang / (3) rtog pa phra rags kyi snyem thag  
 bcad pa dang / (4) gnas grogs res 'jog tu bsdad pa dang / (5) bla ma'i mos  
 gus bkyed pa'o /

(1) / dang po lus longs spyod btang ba ni / lus dang long spyod ci nus bla  
 ma la dbul / / dkon mchog la mchod / nor rdzas yon na spong thag bya /  
 zhen pa spang bar bya'o /

(2) / bdag 'dzin btang ba ni / rang gi phung po lnga la bdag tu 'dzin pa blos  
 btang la 'dre yod pa'i sar phyin la / lus sbyin par btang / ci byed thams cad  
 byang chub kyi sems kyis kun nas bslangs nas bdag med pa'i ngang las ma  
 yengs par byas la rnam rtog phra rags thams cad do /

(3) / snyems thag bcad pa ni / chags sdang la sogs pa'i rtog pa rags pa dang /  
 bde sdug gi spang blang dang / chos brgyad kyi zhen pa dang / nyams rtogs  
 kyi' dzin pa dang / rnam rtogs phra rags thams cad kyi snyems thag bcad la  
 gang gis kyang mi 'chi bar lam du bslang bar bya'o /

(4) / gnas res 'jog ni / res skye bo mang po 'dus pa'i tshong dus la sogs par  
 sgom res yul rkyen mi mthun pa'i sar bsdad la rkyen de las skyes pa'i nyon  
 mongs bcad / res lha 'dre gnyan po'i sar bsdad la bcad / res dgon pa la sogs  
 pa dben par bsdad / res lus kyi bca' thabs la gnas par bya / res 'gro 'chag  
 nyal ba'i spyod pas bsgom / de la sogs pa'i gnas dang / grogs dang spyod  
 lam res 'jog tu byas la nyams rtogs gang 'phel bltas la gang 'phel bar bsgom  
 pa'o /

(5) / bla ma'i mos gus bskyed pa ni / bla ma sangs rgyas sku gsum gyi bdag  
 nyid du bltas la / lus longs spyod ci 'byor dbul / mañdal phul la gsol ba drag  
 tu gdab bo /

**[3. Subsequent practices of Union]**

/ rjes la lnga / dngos gzhi mi nyams pa'i thabs dang / gol sgrub spang ba  
 dang / rgyun du bskyang ba dang / lam rtags dang / phan yod no /

**[a. The methods keeping the actual practice undiminished]**

/ dang po la lnga / (1) sdig ltung chen po spang ba dang / (2) tshogs bsags pa  
 dang / (3) thams cad bden med du bsgom pa dang / (4) yul rkyen grogs su  
 khyer ba dang / (5) bla ma'i mos gus ma chad par bya ba'o /

(1) / *sdig ltung spang ba ni bla ma'i sku la brnyas pa la sogs pa'i rtsa ltung dang / mtshams med pa dang / dam pa'i chos [547] spong la sogs pa sdig pa chen po thams cad spang bar bya'o /*

(2) / *tshogs bsags pa ni / lus longs spyod ci 'byor bla ma la dbul / maṅdal dbul / lus longs spyod dge ba'i rtsa ba thams cad sems can dang thun mong du byas la bla na med pa'i byang chub tu bsngo bar bya'o /*

(3) / *bden med du bsgom pa ni / ci snang thams cad sgyu ma lta bur bden med du shes par byas la chags sdang spang bar bya'o /*

(4) / *yul rkyen grogs su khyer ba ni / dbang po drug gi yul drug la brten nas / skyid sdug dang bzang ngan gyi rtog pa thams cad la brten nas nyams su blangs pas sgom gyi grogs su 'gro ba'o /*

(5) / *bla ma'i mos gus ni / dus thams cad du mos gus rgyun ma chad par byas la gsol ba gtab bo /*

### **[b. Eliminating fundamental pitfalls and obstacles of Union]**

*/ gol sgrib la lnga / (1) snying rje med pa dang / (2) mos gus med pa dang / (3) sdig pa mi spong ba dang / (4) dge ba mi byed pa dang / (5) gshis la sdod pa'o /*

(1) / *dang po snying rje med pa ni / snang sems zung du chud pa'i dus na sems can phyi na grub pa mi 'dug rang gi sems su 'dug pas snying rje'i yul phyi na mi 'dug snyam nas snying rje med pa 'ong ba'o /*

(2) / *mos gus med pa ni / bla ma yang rang du 'dug pas mos gus bya ba'i yul phyi na grub pa mi 'dug snyam nas mos gus mi byed pa 'ong /*

(3) / *sdig pa mi spong ba ni / sdig pa yang rang gi sems su 'dug pas phyi na grub pa mi 'dug pas spang rgyu mi 'dug snyam nas mi spong ba 'byung ba'o /*

(4) / *dge ba mi byed pa ni / dge ba yang rang gi sems su 'dug pas bsgrub rgyu mi 'dug snyam nas dge ba mi byed pa 'ong ba'o /*

(5) / *gshis la shor ba ni gshis yin lugs go ba la brten nas zhal gyi gdams ngag med pas nges shes dang thabs kyis ma zin par btang snyoms tsam dang nyan bshad la sogs pa dge ba'i las gang la yang mi spro bas tha mal du shor bas de dag bdud yin no /*

*/ de dag chung 'bring gnyis la 'ong ba yang srid / sngar thos pa byas pa*

*dang / gdams ngag yod pa la de dag mi 'byung / thos pa dang gdams ngag med pas gal te byung na bdud kyi lcags kyu yin pas 'bad la spang bar bya'o /*

### **[c. Continuous sustainment of Union]**

*/ rgyun du bskyang ba la lnga / (1) yang dag pa'i drang pas gzung ba dang / (2) dben pa bstan pa dang / (3) mnyam par bzhag pa [548] dang / (4) snang sems 'dre ba dang / (5) bden med du bskyang ba'o /*

(1) / *dang po ni dran pas gzung mi dgos kyang yang dag pa'i drang pas bzung bar bya'o /*

(2) / *dben pa ni / g.yeng ba dang khyad med kyang dben pa la gnas par bya'o /*

(3) / *mnyam bzhag ni / mnyam rjes la khyad mi 'dug kyang mnyam par gzhang par bya'o /*

(4) / *snang sems bsre ba ni / gnas dang grogs dang spyod lam dang dmigs pa la sogs pa res 'jog tu byas la / nyon mongs pa dang rtogs pa thams cad rang gi sems stong pa nyid yin pas / gzhan du chags sdang dang yul snang du mi bzung bar du ma ro gcig tu shes par bya'o /*

(5) / *bden med ni lus thams cad du ci snang bden med rmi lam sgyu ma lta bur bskyang la nyon mongs pa bag la nyal lta mi nus par mnan par bya'o /*

### **[d. Signs of progress on the path of Union]**

*/ lam rtags la lnga / (1) phrag dog zhi ba dang / (2) chos brgyad snyoms pa dang / (3) bden med du shes pa dang / (4) nyon mongs pa mgo gnod pa dang / (5) dge sdig la yid ches pa'o /*

(1) / *dang po ni / zung 'jug chen po skyes na rang bzhin dbyer med par rtogs pas / gnyis snang thams cad zhi nas phrag dog med cing nyon mongs pa gzhan yang zil gyis gnon pa'o /*

(2) / *chos brgyad snyom pa ni / chos thams cad gnyis su med par rtogs pas 'dod pa'i chos bzhi la chags pa med / mi 'dod pa bzhi la zhum pa dang mi dga' ba med par mnyam pa nyid du rtogs pa'o /*

(3) / *bden med du shes pa ni / snang grags kyi chos thams cad sgyu ma lta bur shes pas ci la yang bden par mi 'dzin te / dngos po gang gis rang mi 'ching ba'o /*

(4) / *nyon mongs non pa'i snga ma'i rtog pa des chags sdang la sogs pa nyon mongs pa rags pa thams cad mgo gnon te skye mi nus gal te skyes kyang myur du zhi bar 'gyur ro /*

(5) / *dge sdig la yid ches pa ni / chos thams cad dbyer med du shes pas las dge sdig dang stong pa nyid 'dres pas sdig pa spong ba dang / dge ba sgrub pa la brtson par 'ong ba'o /*

### [e. Beneficial qualities of Union]

*/ yon tan la lnga / (1) mngon shes 'char ba dang / (2) yid dam gyi zhal mthong ba dang / (3) sems can la byams snying rje skye ba dang / (4) phyi nang gi rten 'brel 'char ba dang / (5) gzhan la phan cher thogs pa'o /*

(1) / *de las dang po mngon shes ni / zung 'jug gi rtogs pa de la [549] bsgom / yun ring na zag med kyi mngon shes drug 'char ro /*

(2) / *yi dam mthong ba ni / dngos sam rmi lam du mthong nas lus ston pa 'ong ngo /*

(3) / *byams snying rje ni ma bsgoms par rang shugs kyis skye ba'o /*

(4) / *rten 'brel ni / ma bslabs par phyi nang gi rgyu 'bras mang po 'char ba 'gyur ro /*

(5) / *gzhan phan ni 'gro ba mang pos phan rgya chen po 'byung ste / spyod pa thams cad la gzhan dad pa dang / ci smras bden par 'dzin pas gzhan la rtogs pa bskyed nus pa'o /*

### [D. Signlessness Yoga (*animittayoga*)]

*/ mtshan ma med pa bsgom pa la gsum / sngon 'gro dang dngos gzhi dang / grub pa'i rtags so /*

#### [1. Preliminaries for Signlessness Meditation]

*/ dang po la lnga / yongs 'dzin spang ba dang lus sogs gtong ba dang / 'dun pa bskyed pa dang / bla ma'i mos gus pa dang / thabs khyad par can bskyed pa'o /*

#### [a. Eliminating intense grasping]

*/ dang po yongs 'dzin spang ba ni / lta ba zung 'jug gi 'dzin pa thams cad blos btang gang yang zhen pa med par bya'o /*

**[b. Renouncing the body and so forth]**

*/ lus sogs btang ba ni lus longs spyod thams cad bla ma la dbul / dkon  
mchog mchod sbyin par btang bar bya'o /*

**[c. Arising aspiration]**

*/ 'dun pa skyed pa ni / mtshan ma med par 'char ba 'dod pa'i 'dun pa dung  
pa bskyed par bya'o /*

**[d. Devotion and veneration of the spiritual teacher]**

*/ bla ma'i mos gus ni / bla ma chos sku dngos su bltas la gsol ba drag tu  
gdab bo /*

**[e. Arising distinctive skillful means]**

*/ thabs khyad par can ni / lha 'dre gnyan po yod pa'i sar phyin la bdag tu  
'dzin pa cha phra ba de blos btang la / lus kyi sha khrag thams cad yid kyi  
sbyin pa btang / 'jigs pa dang bdag 'dzin med par bya'o /*

**[2. Actual practice of Signlessness Meditation]**

*/ dngos gzhi la gsum / mtshan ma med pa chung ngu dang / 'bring po dang  
chen po'o /*

**[a. Lesser Signlessness Meditation]**

*/ dang po chung ba ni / sngon 'gro bsten nas mtshan ma med pa la mnyam  
par bzhag pa tsam gyis bsgom mi dgos par mtshan ma med pa lhun grub tu  
rtogs nas mnyam rjes gnyis dang bral ba'i ngang las mi 'gyur ba'o /*

**[b. Middling Signlessness Meditation]**

*/ mtshan med 'bring pos mnyam rjes med kyang mnyam par bzhag pas rig  
pa ngang rtsod chod de mtshan ma med pa ril por gyur te / bsgom par bya  
ba dang sgom par byed mkhan gnyis dang bral te bya byed med pa bya sems  
kyis stong pa'i ngang la gnas pa'o /*

**[c. Great Signlessness Meditation]**

*/ mtshan ma med pa chen po ni / zung 'jug dang sgom med kyi 'dzin pa cha  
phra ba yang dag nas / mtshan ma med par 'dzin pa [550] thams cad dang  
bral nas / mtshan ma med pa'i rtogs pa 'od gsal chen po / nam mkha' sprin*

*dang bral ba'am / chu'i 'khyugs zhu ba ltar spang bya dang gnyen po med  
par chos sku ril por gyur nas bya byed kyi rtsol ba thams cad dang bral te /  
yang dag pa'i ye shes mngon du lam byas pas / spang bya mtha' dag las grol  
ba de nyid la rtogs pa mngon gyur phyi sangs rgyas zhes bya'o /*

### **[3. Signs of achievement in Signlessness Meditation]**

*/ grub pa'i rtags la gnyis / nang rtags dang / phyi rtags so /*

#### **[a. Internal signs]**

*/ dang po nang rtags ni gzung 'dzin med pa'i snang ba / yang dag pa'i ye  
shes chos kyi sku las mi 'gyur bar lhun gyis grub par rtogs pas mkhyen pa'i  
ye shes rgya chen po 'char te / las gyu 'bras kyi rten 'brel mngon du gyur pa  
dang / sems can la snying rje chen po skye ba dang / chos kyi dbyings las ma  
g.yos pa 'byung ba'o /*

#### **[b. External signs]**

*/ phyi rtags ni gzhan gyis lus du mar mthong ba dang / dpa' bo dang mkha'  
'gros bskor ba mthong ba dang / gdul bya dag pas sangs rgyas su mthong ba  
'ong ngo /*

*/ gzhan snang la res byis pa'i spyod pa byed par mthong / ma dag pas tsh  
'di sgrub par mthong / 'ga' zhig gis sprul bar mthong / rang nyid bya sems  
dang bral ba'o /*

*/ de'i dus su 'gro don bya ba'i dus yin te / khas ci smras kyang rang gi gdul  
bya la phan pa dang nyan pa 'ong / lus kyis spyod pa ci byas kyang gzhan  
dang nus / gang du bsdad kyang mos gus can la byin rlabs 'byung / de'i dus  
su sangs rgyas pa yin pas 'gro don rgya chen po 'grub par 'gyur ro /*

### **[III. Distinctive features of the Four Yogas]**

*/ rnal 'byor bzhi po de dag gi khyad par la gsum / zhi gnas lhag mthong gi  
khyad par dang / lhag mthong zung 'jug gi khyad par dang / zung 'jug  
mtshan med kyi khyad par ro /*

#### **[A. The distinctive feature of Serenity (śamatha) and Insight (vipaśyanā)]**

*/ de las dang po la gsum / spang bya'i khyad par dang / rtogs pa'i khyad par  
dang / yon tan gyi khyad par ro /*

**[1. The distinctive features of what is eliminated]**

*/ de las dang po spang bya'i khyad par ni / zhi gnas kyi dod yon dang / 'jig rten chos brgyad dang / tshe 'di yi 'du shes dang zhen pa thams cad spong zhing nyon mongs pa rtse gzhi ba'o /*

*/ lhag mthong gis 'chi ba la sogs pa'i 'jigs pa'i 'jigs pa lnga spong zhing grub mtha'i 'dzin pa dang bral te nyon mongs pa zil gyis gnon pa'o /*

**[2. The distinctive feature of realization]**

*/ rtogs pa'i [551] khyad par ni / zhi gnas kyis phyi nang gi rtog pa phra rags zhi gnas thog na gnas pa dang / nyams de dag sgyu ma lta bur shes pa dang / rab kyis sems kyi cha shas rtogs pa'o /*

*/ lhag mthong tha mas sems nyid rtogs / 'bring gis rnam rtog kyang stong par rtogs / rab kyis lus dang snang ba yang cha shas stong par rtogs / mdor na stong pa nyid kyi don legs par rtogs ma rtogs so /*

**[3. The distinctive feature of virtuous qualities]**

*/ yon tan gyi khyad par ni / zhi gnas kyis lus yang ba dang / sems dga' bde dang / blo las su rung ba dang / mngon shes lnga 'char du rung ba'o /*

*/ lhag mthong gis stong par rtogs pas snang ba bden med du shes pas sdug bsngal 'gog pa dang / nang rten 'brel cung zad 'char bas las rgyu 'bras la yid ches pa dang / sems can la snying rje rang shugs kyis skye ba'o /*

**[B. The distinctive features of insight and union]**

*/ lhag mthong dang zung 'jug gi khyad par la gsum / spang bya'i khyad par dang / rtogs pa'i khyad par dang / yon tan gyi khyad par to /*

**[1. The distinctive features of what is eliminated]**

*/ de las dang po ni / lhag mthong snga ma ltar ro /*

*/ zung 'jug gyi spang bya ni / 'khor 'das dang spang gnyen dang blang dor dang snang stong la sogs pa tha dad du 'dzin pa spong ba dang phrag dog spong ba dang nyon mongs pa mngon 'gyur gzhan yang mgo gnon pa'o /*



**[2. The distinctive features of realization in unified insight (vipaśyanā)]**

*/ rtogs pa'i khyad par ni / lhag stong sngar bzhin no / zung 'jug rtogs pas bde sdug spang blang dang / snang stong la sogs pa thams cad rang sems dbyer med ro gcig pas rang snang sgyu ma lta bur rtogs pa'o /*

*/ mdor na gnyis snang gi 'dzin pa yod med do / / yon tan gyi khyad par ni / lhag mthong snga ma ltar ro /*

**[3. The distinctive features of virtuous qualities in unified insight]**

*/ zung 'jug gi yon tan ni / phyi rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba yang rtogs pas gdul bya la phan thogs pa dang / mngon shes drug 'char du rung ba dang / byams snying rje rang shugs kyis skye ba dang / snang ba thams cad bden med du shes pa'o /*

**[C. The distinctive feature of union and signlessness]**

*/ zung 'jug dang mtshan med kyi khyad par gsum / spang bya dang rtogs pa dang / yon tan gyi'o / / dang po zung 'jug sngar bzhin no /*

**[1. Objects to be abandoned]**

*/ mtshan ma med pas sgyu snang la sogs par 'dzin pa cha phra ba spong ba dang / sgom pa mnyam rjes tha dad med pa dang / nyon mongs pa thams cad rtsa ba nas spangs pa'o /*

**[2. Realization]**

*rtogs pa ni / zung 'jug sngar [552] bzhin no /*

*/ mtshan med rtogs pas nam mkha' la sprin dwangs pa'am / chu la 'khyags zhu ba ltar / 'od gsal chen po'i ngang du spang bya gnyen po med par chos sku ril po gcig tu rtogs pa'o /*

*/ mdor na sgyu mar snang ba'i 'dzin pa yod med do /*

**[3. Virtuous qualities]**

*/ yon tan ni / zung 'jug snga ma ltar ro /*

*/ mtshan med ni mkhyen pa'i ye shes rgya chen po 'char te shes bya ji lta ba / dang phyi nang gi rten 'brel mngon du gyur pa dang / gdul bya dag pas*

*sangs rgyas su mthong ba dang / lus du mar mthong ba dang / lus ngag yid  
gsum gyi spyod pa gang byas kyang gzhan dang nus pa 'ong ste sngar gyi  
phan sems kyi 'bras bu smin pas 'byung ba'o /*

*/ de dus su gzhan don rgya chen po nus pa 'ong ste / 'bras bu thob pa'i phyir  
ro /*

### [Conclusion]

*/ rang sems mtha' gcod kyi ngo sprod lnga tshoms chen mo zhes bya ba  
rdzogs so /*

*/ bka' gdams gzhung pa'am / spyod phyogs kyi gdams ngag yin no //*

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## Materializing Dreams and Omens: The Autobiographical Subjectivity of the Tibetan Yoginī Kun dga' 'Phrin las dbang mo (1585-1668)

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**D**rawing from a rare manuscript that I acquired in 'Dzam thang some years ago, this paper reflects on the autobiographical subjectivity of the seventeenth century Tibetan woman author and yoginī Rje btsun ma Kun dga' 'Phrin las dbang mo (1585-1668).<sup>1</sup> She was a close disciple and secret consort (*gsang yum*) to Rje btsun Tāranātha (1575-1635), a lineage-holder of the Jonang order and key figure in the transmission of *gzhan stong* (zhentong) philosophy, and during the latter period of her life, was a mentor to the generation of masters who were instrumental in transplanting the Jonangpas from Gtsang in central Tibet to 'Dzam thang on the far eastern frontiers of the plateau after the confiscation of Rtag brtan Dam chos gling

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<sup>1</sup> 'Phrin las dbang mo, *Rje btsun rdo rje* and subsequently published, 'Phrin las dbang mo 2013. On her dates, 1585-1668, these calculations are based on dated events in her autobiography and the *kha skongs* by Rnam snang rdo rje. Evidence suggests that she was ten years younger than Tāranātha who was born in 1575, making her birth year 1585. In the *kha skongs*, Rnam snang rdo rje verifies this by stating that in the *chu mo bya* year, which would have been 1633/1634, Tāranātha was fifty-nine (i.e. 58) years old and 'Phrin las dbang mo was forty-nine (i.e. 48) years old, "*chu mo bya'i lo la rje btsun dam pa dgong grangs lnga bcu nga dgu bzhes/ 'phrin las dbang mo zhe dgu yin.*" This dating is however confused elsewhere in the *kha skongs* where it states that she was born in a *sa mo bya* year, which would have been 1609. Based on the other evidence in both the autobiography and elsewhere in the *kha skongs*, this could very well be a scribal error that should read, *shing bya* rather than *sa mo bya*, which would make her birth year 1585, and would align with the other chronological evidence. Rnam snang rdo rje states that she lived to be eighty-four (i.e. 83) or eighty-five (i.e. 84) years old, which would make her death date 1668. See Rnam snang rdo rje 2013, 215-217. For their feedback on earlier versions of this paper, I would like to thank Annabella Pitkin and Holly Gayley, Cyrus Stearns for thinking through her dates with me, Janet Gyatso for inviting me to read excerpts with her class, and Khenpo Ngawang Dorje for pointing out key passages related to Kun dga' Lha mdzes.

Monastery by the Dga' ldan pho brang.<sup>2</sup>

As we begin to reconstruct a portrait of this seventeenth century Tibetan author and yoginī from her autobiography as well as writings that illustrate her life story, the profile of an extraordinary woman comes into focus. One of the earliest accounts by a woman writing about herself in Tibetan literature, 'Phrin las dbang mo's life story not only serves as an example of female authorship in early modern Tibet, her story provides insights into her historical moment, the roles she played, and the broader social milieu in which she participated. Throughout her life writing, she recounts critical moments in the intellectual history of the Jonang order of Tibetan Buddhism as well as the broader cultural history of Tibet during her lifetime, filling-in important episodes. Her narrative reads linearly through her life from her girlhood through her adulthood with Tāranātha in the remote Jo mo nang valley until she became an elder during the final days of the Jonangpa in Gtsang.

To introduce and situate 'Phrin las dbang mo's life story, this paper (a) discusses the provenance of the manuscript of her autobiography, the *Gsang ba'i ye shes* or *The Secret Gnosis*, and related source texts; (b) contextualizes her autobiography in the broader Tibetan literature written by and about women in Tibet; (c) presents her to be an author whose writing style captures her relationality within a given social context and ability to operate within juxtaposed lived worlds; and (d) to exemplify the literary modes that she effectuates as an author, reflects on select dreams in her autobiography that describe the oneiric consciousness that she pilots as a yoginī. To discern preliminary observations about the significance of the *Gsang ba'i ye shes*, I am concerned with the historicity of the person who was 'Phrin las dbang mo, the literary style of her writing, and particularly in her case, how she reflexively facilitates her subjectivity. I conclude with thoughts on how historical circumstance and religious virtuosity operated to construct her autobiographical subjectivity and how she navigates and negotiates her complex identity through her first-person writing.

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<sup>2</sup> On *gsang yun*, see Gayley 2018, 6. Her tantric secret name (*gsang mtshan*) is Rin chen Rdo rje ma (*ratna badzri ŋi*), see Rnam snang rdo rje 2013, 212. This includes 'Broge Kun dga' dpal bzang (1629-1686) who traveled from Amdo to the Jo mo nang valley after Tāranātha had passed to receive teachings from his disciples, especially 'Phrin las dbang mo, and returned home to establish 'Broge Monastery in Rnga ba, one of early major Jonang monasteries in Amdo. See Blo gros grags pa 1992, 77-78 and Stearns 2010, 77. See also below for discussion about Blo gros rnam rgyal who consulted with her before traveling to 'Dzam thang to establish Gtsang ba Monastery.



### The Gsang ba'i ye shes Manuscript

In the summer of 2006, while staying in the 'Dzam thang valley in Amdo, Tulku Kun dga' Tshul khrim bzang po and I accrued a cache of rare Tibetan manuscripts. We were documenting each of the Jonang sites in the Tibet Autonomous Region and Amdo, and it was our habit at each monastery that we visited to inquire and generate conversation about the whereabouts of rare Jonang texts. About a week into our stay at 'Dzam thang, we met a monk who told us about a local lama who had recently passed away. The deceased monk's name was Lama Ngag dbang Phun tshogs, and while he had not formally been affiliated with a monastery since the Cultural Revolution, he was well-known throughout the local area for performing ceremonial death rites.<sup>3</sup> He was a nomad monk who traveled throughout northern Kham and southern Amdo, going from village to encampment, as he was invited by families of the recently deceased to recite the *Bar do thos grol* and perform associated passing rites. When Lama Phun tshogs visited each family, he often stayed as a guest in their homes for days or weeks while he performed the rites. As our monk informant reported, at each home where Lama Phun tshogs made his temporary stay, he allegedly would query his host about their library or any texts that they might have for him to read. During the evening hours, after he had performed the rites for that day, Lama Phun tshogs would read the texts that the family had lent him, and when he discovered a rare manuscript of a text of particular personal interest, he would meticulously copy by hand the texts in cursive (*dbu med*). On other occasions, as a gift for his services, families would give the lama texts that he had expressed an interest in reading. Every few months, after making the rounds on his death ritual sojourns, Lama Phun tshogs would return to his mother's house in 'Dzam thang where he would pile-up the personal manuscript copies that he had acquired. This went on for years until Lama Phun tshogs unexpectedly died at a relatively young age, leaving his private collection of handwritten manuscripts stockpiled in his mother's house. Upon hearing this story, Tulku Tshul khrim bzang po and I informed Tulku 'Jigs med rdo rje, the vajra-master at Jonang Gstang ba Monastery in 'Dzam thang. Tulku 'Jigs med rdo rje had not heard this account but knew this local elderly woman, and vaguely recalled her son. Soon after, Tulku 'Jigs med rdo rje and an entourage of monks arrived at Lama Phun tshogs mother's house. The elderly woman knew nothing about her son's books, in fact she

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<sup>3</sup> During the 1980's and 1990's in eastern Tibet, many of the texts that were hidden during the Cultural Revolution began to surface and were passed around via local circuits.

confessed to being illiterate, but she invited the monks to take the stockpiles of pechas that were wrapped in multicolor patchwork fabrics piled high in her deceased son's room. She gifted her son's entire library to Tulku 'Jigs med rdo rje, and within hours of our conversation with the monk informant, we were in possession of a fantastically rich collection of rare Tibetan manuscripts.

The manuscript cache that we acquired from the late Lama Phun tshogs totals fifteen volumes and includes writings from Nyingma, Kagyu, and Jonang authors. Significant texts in this find include the biography and interlinear annotated commentary (*mchan 'grel*) on the *Kālacakra Tantra* and *Vimalaprabhā* by Mnga' ris pa Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1306-1386), one of Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan's (1292-1361) primary disciples; two volumes of miscellaneous writings (*gsung thor bu*) by the Kālacakra adept Ratna bha dra (1489-1563); two volumes of important writings by Kun dga' Grol mchog (1507-1565), including ritual and liturgical texts concerning Hevajra, Vajrayoginī and the special form of black Cakrasaṃvāra that is transmitted via the Jonangpa, instructions on the sixfold yoga of the Kālacakra, various poetic songs and praises, a guidebook to the sacred sites and nooks of Chos lung byang rtse Monastery, two works on Sakya Lam 'bras and his writing on *gzhan stong*;<sup>4</sup> along with a handful of biographical writings by Tāranātha's closest disciples and their immediate Jonangpa successors in Amdo.<sup>5</sup>

Among the instances of biographical writing by Tāranātha's immediate disciples found in this collection was the autobiography of Rje btsun ma Kun dga' 'Phrin las dbang mo. The full title of her life story in thirty-three folios is, *Rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i sprul pa skal ldan 'phrin las dbang mo'i rnam thar gsang ba'i ye shes*.<sup>6</sup> Though there is

<sup>4</sup> Among the places where these works were composed include Gser mdog can Monastery, Ri chos chen mo hermitage at Jo mo nang, and his own Chos lung byang rtse Monastery. Hence, the colophons of these writings give us a fuller picture of where Kun dga' Grol mchog lived and wrote. These manuscripts are being consulted as part of a project to recompile the writings by Kun dga' Grol mchog as well as by his primary Kālacakra teacher Ratna bha dra, and are currently under preparation for publication in the Jo nang dpe tshogs series by the Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, Beijing.

<sup>5</sup> This version along with other extant versions of Phyogs las rnam rgyal's Kālacakra commentary were consulted in the production of the four volumes that were published as part of the Jo nang dpe tshogs series (vol. 17-20) by the Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, Beijing.

<sup>6</sup> The manuscript is a *dbu med* cursive copy, and to my knowledge, is the only extant witness that we have available to-date. Her autobiography is not known by the elder Jonangpa scholars in Tibet with whom I consulted, suggesting that it was a manuscript that had minimal circulation in Jonang circles through the late twentieth century. The nineteenth century Jonangpa scholar Rnam snang rdo rje's supplemental works are the most extensive treatment that we have (see below), albeit we can infer

nothing to suggest that she titled her own work, and that the title was not added by later editors, the title makes her connection to Vajrayogīni explicit with the phrase, “*rdo rje rnal ’byor ma’i sprul pa,*” indicating that ‘Phrin las dbang mo is considered (or considered herself) an embodiment of the deity. Perhaps it is the latter part of the title that is however most revealing; here the phrase, “*Gsang ba’i ye shes*” which is the primary title of the work, suggests her relationship with and possible self-imaging of *guhyañāna dakīni*, a vermilion esoteric form of Vajrayogīni. This meditation deity (*yi dam*) is known by its full name, *Mkha’ ’gro ma gsang ba ye shes*, and is found in the *Yi dam rgya mtsho* collection of *sadhāna* compiled by Tāranātha.<sup>7</sup> A few folios into her autobiography, ‘Phrin las dbang mo describes having received the empowerment for Cakrasaṃvāra at age fifteen. This initiation seemingly left a deep impression on her as a young woman, so much so that her writing regularly and seamlessly quotes stanzas from the Cakrasaṃvāra and Vajrayogīni literature, as reflected in the title of her own life story. For those familiar with Tāranātha’s praxis, the implicit linkage of her as Vajrayogīni will evoke the idyllic image of her in union with his yidam, Cakrasaṃvāra.

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that Mkhan po Blo gros grags pa (1920-1975) drew information from it for his historical works. See Blo gros grags pa 1992 and Blo gros grags pa, *Rje tā ra nā tha’i sku ’das*.

<sup>7</sup> See Tāranātha 1987a. During her lifetime, a form of *Mkha’ ’gro ma gsang ba ye shes* was also popularized through the *gter ma* revelations of Gter bdag Gling pa ’Gyur med rdo rje (1646-1714). Another cycle is that of the *Mkha’ ’gro gsang ba ye shes kyi chos skor* compiled by the Rnying ma and Dge lugs master Sle lung Bzhad pa’i rdo rje (1697-1740). See Bailey 2020. These writings are relevant also because Bzhad pa’i rdo rje authored several important works about women. In the extant versions of his *gsung ’bum*; this includes a short work written to verify Ye shes mtsho rgyal to be a “flesh and blood” woman (*mi’i sha*) – i.e. a historical person and not an ahistorical deification; an autobiographical account of his mystical unification experience with Ratna Tārā and retinue of female deities (*lha mo* and *mkha’ ’gro*) in the year 1730, and his numerous writings on *ḍākinī*, especially a praise recalling the kindness of the queen mother wisdom *ḍākinī*. See Bzhad pa’i rdo rje, *Ye shes mtsho rgyal* and *Mkha’ ’gro* and *Rgyal yum ye shes* and *Yid bzhin gyi nor bu*. Three other important works not in his extant *gsung ’bum* are: (1) his *Thabs lam zhal gdams* text on the subject of tantric sex, in which he details instructions on yogic postures and secretive practices, and states that it was composed to “study and take-up the bliss of the *ḍākinīs*”; (2) his commentary on the famous *’Dod pa’i bstan bcos*, the *Kāmasāstra*, attributed to the Vedic philosopher Vātsyāyana, translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan and included in the *Bstan ’gyur*, a work that has not yet come to light, though there are rumors that it is extant; and (3) his *Mkha’ ’gro rgya mtsho* or *Ocean of Dakinīs*, a several hundred page detailed autobiographical register of his consorts and female encounters. While conducting fieldwork during the summer 2015 in Tibet, after years of searching for this, a manuscript of the *Mkha’ ’gro rgya mtsho* surfaced. Future research on this work will likely reveal much about the diary practices of a Tibetan Buddhist author, written articulations of tantric sex, and socio-historical observations about sex and gender in Tibet, at least as found within this single ledger. The full title is, *Mkha’ ’gro rgya mtsho’i rtogs pa brjod cing rjes su bzung ba’i tshul gsal bar byed pa dwangs shel dkyil ’khor*.

A year after this find, in 2007, Tulku Tshul khrim bzang po and I digitized the *Collected Works* of the Jonangpa scholar from Swe Monastery in Rnga ba, Dpal ldan Rnam snang rdo rje (d. 1847). Within this collection, there is both a supplement (*kha skong*) that augments and comments on 'Phrin las dbang mo's autobiography as well as a supplication to her successive line of women re-embodiments (*skyes 'phreng gsol 'debs*).<sup>8</sup> These two texts are critical sources for contextualizing and understanding 'Phrin las dbang mo's life writing and for situating her historically. Drawing from a variety of sources, some currently unavailable, Rnam snang rdo rje's supplement details missing or indefinite historical information in her autobiography, including dates, places, and key persons, as well as lineage transmission information.<sup>9</sup> In addition, there are two brief works, if not others, that are dedicated to her: (1) one is a letter written to her by the 'Brug pa Kagyu master Mi pham Dge legs rnam rgyal (1618-1685) that was preserved among his miscellaneous official letters (*chab shog phyogs bsgrigs*), expressing his plea for her to pray for the rebirth of his recently deceased disciple; (2) the other is a personal instruction (*zhal gdams*) that was advised to her by Tāranātha.<sup>10</sup> As for her own writings in addition to the autobiography, she also transcribed, arranged, and compiled a handbook of handwritten notes based on Tāranātha's oral explanations on the history and practice of the Jonang protector deity Trak shad.<sup>11</sup> Another important source for contextualizing her is Tāranātha's *Collected Works* wherein she is documented in colophons as being active as a scribe, commentator, requestor, and close disciple.<sup>12</sup>

### In Context of Tibetan Literary Women

While the Tibetan literary canon is rich with documentation on the lives and practices of its most preeminent figures; documenting who they were, when and where they lived, with whom they forged interpersonal relationships, what they wrote, etc. – in comparison to writing by and about men, writings by and about women remain a small,

<sup>8</sup> See Rnam snang rdo rje 2013 and Rnam snang rdo rje, 'Phrin las dbang mo'i rnam thar kha skongs and Rnam snang rdo rje, 'Phrin las dbang mo'i skyes 'phreng. A special thanks to Matthew Kapstein for encouraging us to search for this *gsung 'bum*.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, the *kha skongs* cites the record of teachings received (*gsan yig*) of Rwa Ngag dbang 'phrin las for information on which lineages she transmitted. Rnam snang rdo rje 2013, 213.

<sup>10</sup> See Mi pham dge legs rnam rgyal, *Jo mo nang du rje bstun* and Tā ra nā tha 2008a.

<sup>11</sup> The colophon reads, "de ltar na dpal mgon trakshad kyi chos skor lo rgyus 'di ni rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa'i gsung bzhin kun dga' 'phrin las dbang mos zin bris su bkod pa'i dge ba'i mthus stobs kyis." See Tā ra nā tha 2008b, 175. It is likely that she authored additional works, including liturgies and a work on the Kālacakra.

<sup>12</sup> For instance, see Tāranātha 1987b.

albeit significant fraction of this canon. In fact, it is estimated that historical Tibetan women were the authors or subjects of less than one percent (1%) of the thousands of biographies that were written in the Tibetan language.<sup>13</sup> With this in mind, however, recent discoveries of Tibetan language source materials by and about women, including several important Tibetan language publications from inside Tibet have broadened the known horizon of Tibetan literary women. Over the past decade, numerous women personages have come to light in historical records, most eminently in the written record of auto/biography and hagiography, though in other notable genres as well.

As a heuristic exercise, in order to gauge an approximate data sampling to enable a sketch of the bibliographic scope of Tibetan literary women, I surveyed the extant literature to compile a list that includes 73 prominent historical women whom I have identified to be authors, *likely authors*, and/or subjects of writing in Tibet.<sup>14</sup> These Tibetan women literati as well as women in literature were compiled from a variety of Tibetan textual sources, including known, newly published, and newfound or rediscovered rare materials. As recent scholarship has shown, from the seventh to ninth century with imperial period iconic women, we have writings attributed to and about women.<sup>15</sup> This survey however is concerned only with religious literary Tibetan women from the twelfth century up to the twentieth, specifically those who died prior to 1959; this sampling does not include South Asian fore figures or modern and living Tibetan literary women. Of these 73 women identified and profiled in this survey, the breakdown by historical period was: the largest grouping of women lived or died during the nineteenth century (16 women); the second largest grouping was those who lived during the early twentieth century (10 women); the same number of women are identified from the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries (7 women each cent.); there is the same sampling from the twelfth and eighteenth centuries (5 women per cent.).<sup>16</sup> From the twelfth century onward, we have more stabilized contributions, with

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<sup>13</sup> See Schaeffer 2004, 4-5 and Jacoby 2014, 13.

<sup>14</sup> First presented at the 2015 American Academy of Religion in Atlanta, Georgia in a paper titled, "The Bibliographic Scope of Buddhist Women Literati in Tibet." A precedent for this project is Tsering 1985. The primary source of person data for this research was the Buddhist Digital Resource Center.

<sup>15</sup> See Uebach 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Given that the majority of this literature is of the auto/biography and hagiography, that the largest grouping is during the nineteenth century and the second largest grouping during the early twentieth century aligns with the broader trend to mass produce biographical and hagiographical literature, starting during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Tibet. However, given this trend, that there are so few extant women auto/biographies from the eighteenth century is surprising. See Schaeffer 2011, 263 and 268.

the exception of the sixteenth century for which there is a drop to zero (0) women.<sup>17</sup> We must also recognize that this sampling of currently available titles and extant works does not in any way constitute the total literary output of literary women in Tibet; works were certainly lost, and it is quite possible that more recent works are overrepresented.<sup>18</sup> Out of this sampling, there are 18 women who are authors and 34 who are subjects of biographical or liturgical writings;<sup>19</sup> 48 of these women have life writing about them, and 13 of these life writings are autobiographical while the other 35 are subjects of either a full-length biography or a brief biography in a history or lineage account. We can estimate that approximately one third (1/3) of this sampling has liturgical writings about these women in the form of long-life prayers (*zhabs brtan*) or supplications (*gsol 'debs*). Of the extant written record of female authored works, in addition to auto/biography, genres and subjects for which there are writings include lineage supplications, chöd (*gcod*), various terma (*gter ma*) rites, personal advice (*zhal gdams*), instruction manuals (*khrid yig*), and letters of correspondence (*chag shog*).

To further contextualize 'Phrin las dbang mo's autobiographical writing in this broader frame of literary women in Tibet, we might note that her work not only gives unique insights into her time, but is a prime example of female authorship in early modern Tibet. In fact, her work is among the earliest known autobiographical accounts by a woman writing in Tibet. Introducing the life writing of O rgyan Chos kyi (1675-1729), the nun from Dol po who authored one of the earliest autobiographies of a female in Tibet, Kurtis Schaeffer makes the point that however unusual it was for a woman to write her autobiography in Tibet, especially prior to the eighteenth century, it would be naïve to assume that women did not tell their stories.<sup>20</sup> With the case of 'Phrin las dbang mo, we have a woman who was born ninety years prior to O rgyan Chos kyi and whose autobiographical writing extends at least until the year 1665. This situates the authorship of 'Phrin las dbang mo's autobiography approximately sixty years earlier than O rgyan Chos kyi's and makes her writing an important contribution to the history of biography by women in Tibet. Earlier women for whom we have biographies include Bsod nams Dpal 'dren (1328-1372) and A lce

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<sup>17</sup> Not having a single woman represented for the sixteenth century is curious but may be due to the fact that dates for many women during this period have not yet been identified. There are 15 women in this sampling for which their dates are not yet known, several of which likely lived sometime during the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries.

<sup>18</sup> See Schaeffer 2011, 267.

<sup>19</sup> Women authors who wrote autobiographies were both the author and the subject.

<sup>20</sup> See Schaeffer 2004, 4-5.

Rig stong rgyal mo (15<sup>th</sup> c.), and contemporaneous female authors in the seventeenth century for whom we have biographies include Lha 'dzin Dbyangs can sgrol ma, A kham Lha mo, Bu Bzhin brtse ba'i ma, and O rgyan Bu khrid.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to 'Phrin las dbang mo's work, recently emerging materials for female-authored Tibetan language auto/biographies are shedding new light on the lives and writings of Tibetan women, and prominent women in Tibetan literature are being studied for the first time. Notable examples include: seven new versions of the life of Tibet's most iconic woman, Ye shes mtsho rgyal (8<sup>th</sup> c.);<sup>22</sup> a biography of Kun tu Bzang mo (15<sup>th</sup> c.), consort of the "Madman of Central Tibet," Gtsang smyon He ru ka sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan (1452-1507), who was a patron of Gtsang smyon He ru ka's enterprise to mass print the songs and biography of Mi la ras pa (1028/40-1111/23);<sup>23</sup> a biography by a male disciple of the female Nyingma hierarch Smin gling Rje btsun ma Mi 'gyur dpal sgron (1699-1769), who was the daughter of Gter bdag Gling pa 'gyur med rdo rje (1646-1714) and niece to the Nyingma master Lo chen Dharma shrī (1654-1718) – Lo chen Dharma shrī, it should be noted, composed a biography of his mother, Lha 'dzin Dbyangs can sgrol ma (17<sup>th</sup> c.);<sup>24</sup> and the autobiography by the early twentieth century woman Lo chen Chos dbyings bzang mo (1853-1951) who was a guru to many of the aristocrats in high society Lhasa and who converted Shug gseb hermitage into a nunnery.<sup>25</sup> There are also several Tibetan women masters connected with the life of the important Nyingma figure, Mdo Mkhyen brtse ye shes rdo rje (1800-1866) for whom we now have biographical materials. In particular, his daughter Mkha' dbyings Sgrol ma (1823-1854), his granddaughter Tshe 'dzin Dbang mo (1894-1953), and his great granddaughter Zla gsal Dbang mo (c. 1928) who authored works on the Gesar epic and history of the

<sup>21</sup> Smin gling Mi 'gyur dpal sgron is the next woman for whom we have a biography. Though there is no extant biography of the yoginī Kun gsal dbang mo (17 c.), associated with the Smin gling lineage of Gter bdag gling pa, she is another candidate who likely lived during at least part of the seventeenth century. See also Jacoby 2009, fn 3.

<sup>22</sup> See Bla rung 2013, 6, 5-331 and 7, 1-192 and Gyatso 2006.

<sup>23</sup> Kun tu Bzang mo is also the biographer of Mon rdzong Ras chen zla ba rgyal mtshan (1418-1506), with whom she was a consort, found in the *'Ba' ra bka brgyud gser 'phreng chen mo*. See DiVelario 2015, 43-44.

<sup>24</sup> Mi 'gyur dpal sgron composed seventeen works on different genres including prayers, letters, and advice to disciples. An aside, Mi 'gyur dpal sgron was reputedly propositioned by Sle lung Bzhad pa'i rdo rje, but she refused his request to be his consort on the grounds that she remain celibate. Lha 'dzin Dbyangs can sgrol ma was the mother to both Dharma shrī and Gter bdag Gling pa.

<sup>25</sup> Her autobiographical memoir is over five-hundred folio and is available in several versions, including xylographic print facsimiles from central Tibet.

Mdo tshang lineage.<sup>26</sup> The most important recent contribution to the study of Tibetan literary women is the 16-volume Tibetan language anthology, compiled and produced by nuns at Larung Gar Buddhist Academy in Kham, *Bod kyi skyes chen ma dag gi rnam thar*.<sup>27</sup> This anthology includes biographical sources that extend our current register of Tibetan literary women. Rare and previously unavailable biographies of premodern Tibetan women that have come to light via this anthology include: Jo mo Sman mo (1248-1283), Kun dga' 'Bum (15<sup>th</sup> c.), Jo jo Bong lha rje (d.u.), A ne Ye shes lha mtsho (b. 1900), Bu Bzhin brtse ba'i ma (17<sup>th</sup> c.), and O rgyan Bu khrid (17<sup>th</sup> c.).<sup>28</sup>

The two most well-known women reincarnation lines are: (1) the twelve Bsam sdings Rdo rje phag mo tulkus from Bo dong Monastery near Yar 'brog Lake, in proximity to where 'Phrin las dbang mo was born and lived her childhood, and (2) the seven Gung ru Mkha' 'gro ma tulkus from Bla brang Brag dkar Monastery in Amdo.<sup>29</sup> Of these, there are biographical accounts of three of the Bsam sdings Rdo rje phag mo tulkus, and Bsam sdings Rdo rje phag mo 09 Chos dbyings Bde chen mtsho mo (d. 1843) authored at least one text that survives in 'Jam mgon Kong sprul's (1813-1899) *Gdams ngag mdzod* anthology of contemplative instructions, though there are likely other writings by the Rdo rje phag mo tulkus.<sup>30</sup> There exists a biography of Gung ru Mkha' 'gro 05 Rig 'dzin dpal mo (1814-1891), written by the nineteenth century monk from Bla brang Monastery, Zhang Ston pa rgya mtsho (1825-1897) and a prayer for her succession of previous reincarnations

<sup>26</sup> See Thub bstan Chos dar 2008 and Zla gsal Dbang mo 2007.

<sup>27</sup> See Bla rung 2013. Five volumes are dedicated to Buddhist women drawn from the Vinaya and Mahāyāna sūtra literature, female deities, and foremother South Asian tantric adepts including Sukhasiddī, Niguma and Mekhālī – all of whose writings were translated into the Tibetan Buddhist canon. The remaining ten volumes include both known biographies of premodern women such as Ma gcig Lab sgron (1055-1149), Bsod nam Dpal 'dren (1328-1372); and modern women authors including Se ra Mkha' 'gro (1892-1940), Rta mgrin Lha mo (1923-1979) and Tā re Lha mo (1938-2002), aural fables (*gtam rgyud*) and operatic dramas. A catalogue is included, making it a total of 16 volumes, 15 of biographies.

<sup>28</sup> Brief biographies of Jo mo Sman mo and Kun dga' 'Bum have been available in the *Gter ston brgya rtsa'i rnam thar* collection compiled by 'Jam mgon Kong sprul (1813-1899). See Kong sprul 2007, 132-134 and 37-138. O rgyan Bu khrid was a disciple and consort of Gter ston Stag sham Nus ldan rdo rje (b. 1655).

<sup>29</sup> See Schneider 2015, 464.

<sup>30</sup> There are biographies of Bsam sdings Rdo rje phag mo 01 Chos kyi sgron ma (1422-1455/6), Bsam sdings Rdo rje phag mo 09 Chos dbyings Bde chen mtsho mo, and Bsam sdings Rdo rje phag mo 12 Bde chen Chos kyi sgron me (c. 1938). There is also a biography of Rdo rje Phag mo Bde skyong ye shes dbang mo (1886-1909). See Jacoby 2014, 340, n. 32. On Rdo rje phag mo 01, see Diemberger 2007. See also Chos dbyings bde chen mthos mo, *Snyan brgyud rde'u bcud len* and Bkra shis tshe ring 1993, 38-40 and Diemberger 2007, 290-315 and 325.



(*skyes rabs*) by Sde khri 03 'Jam dbyangs Thub bstan nyin ma (1779-1862).<sup>31</sup> While the Rdo rje phag mo and Gung ru Mkha' 'gro tulku lineages were quasi-regular lineages, many female tulku lines did not continue to be successive rebirths of historical women but intermittently lapsed over the centuries.<sup>32</sup> Among the irregular female reincarnation lines is that of the thirteenth century nomad woman, Bsod nam Dpal 'dren (1328-1372) who was the subject of an extensive biography by her husband Rin chen Dpal, and was later reincarnated as Mkha' 'gro Kun bzang who deceased in 2004.<sup>33</sup> We also find women tulku lines that occurred relatively early in Tibetan history, but fizzled out. One of these such lines is that of the reincarnation of Mkha' 'gro ma 'Gro ba bzang mo (d. 1259), the yoginī and consort of the thirteenth century 'Bri gung master Rgod tshang pa Mgon po rdo rje (1189-1258) whose reincarnation was 'Khrul zhig Kun ldan ras ma (14<sup>th</sup> cent.), a key female figure in the Kagyu aural transmission (*snyan brgyud*) of Ras chung pa (1084-1161).<sup>34</sup> Lo chen Chos dbyings bzang mo, the early twentieth century woman who converted Shug gseb into a nunnery was considered a reincarnation of the Nyingma luminary Klong chen Rab 'byams dri med 'od zer (1308-1364) in addition to being associated with Ye shes mtsho rgyal and Ma gcig lab sgron (1055-1143).<sup>35</sup>

As is a common pattern among prominent female religious figures in Tibet—including Mi 'gyur Dpal sgron, Se ra Mkha' 'gro, and Mkha' 'gro Tā re lha mo—we find reference to both female deities and legendary Buddhist women in many accounts of their previous lives (*kh rung rabs*), and 'Phrin las dbang mo is no exception.<sup>36</sup> 'Phrin las dbang mo was considered to be a re-embodiment of the female deity Vajrayoginī and is associated with Sarasvatī, Niguma, and Ye shes mtsho rgyal.

<sup>31</sup> There is a prayer for the long-life of Gung ru Mkha' 'gro 06. See Bstan pa rgya mtsho, *Gung ru* and *Bkra shis Tshe ring* 1994.

<sup>32</sup> See Schneider 2015, 465.

<sup>33</sup> See Bessenger, 2016. Other notable women tulkus include, Rgyal yum O rgyan bu khrid, Ryal rtse Rgyang ro dpal sding rje bstun ma, and La stod pa'i Brag dkar rje bstun ma. See *Bkra shis tshe ring* 1994, 22. An example of a *'das log ma* succession of women tulkus are Sangs rgyas chos 'dzoms (19<sup>th</sup> c.) who was a reincarnation of Karma Dbang 'dzin (18<sup>th</sup> c.), both of whom have autobiographical writings. On modern examples of women tulkus, see Schneider 2015.

<sup>34</sup> Biographical and supplementary writings are extant for both 'Gro ba bzang mo and Kun ldan ras ma, including several versions of 'Gro ba bzang mo's life story that were adapted as an opera. 'Gro ba bzang mo is also featured in the biography of O rgyan Rin chen dpal (1229/30-1309), a disciple of Rgod tshang pa.

<sup>35</sup> Rje btsun Lo chen Rin po che from Shug gseb Nunnery recently indicated that she might reincarnate as a boy, see Schneider 2015, 465 and Havnevik 1999, 123.

<sup>36</sup> Most common include the female deities Tārā, Vajrayoginī, Vajravārāhī, Samantabhadrī and the historical women Ye shes mtsho rgyal, Ma gcig lab sgron, and the Indian nun, Dge slong ma dpal mo. See Schneider 2015, 464-465 and Melnick Dyer 2018, 215-223.

This is made explicit in the title of her autobiography, the supplication to her successive previous lives (*skyes 'phreng*), and elsewhere.<sup>37</sup> At the beginning of her autobiography, she writes about her previous incarnations in Nepal, India, and Tibet.<sup>38</sup> All of this situates 'Phrin las dbang mo not only as one of the few women authors in pre-1959 Tibet, but includes her among Tibetan Buddhist women who claimed prominent female figures among their past lives. This is however distinct from women who spawned tulku lines of succession with an established monastic seat, such as the Bsam sdings Rdo rje phag mo and Gung ru Mkha' 'gro ma tulkus.<sup>39</sup>

### Her Historicity and Literary Style

'Phrin las dbang mo was born in the foothills on the southern shore of the turquoise lake Yar 'brog G.yum mtsho near the palace of the snow-peaked glacial Mount Gang bzang in Sna dkar rtse rdzong, south central Tibet.<sup>40</sup> She writes that she was "born into a royal family," and in his supplement, Rnam snang rdo rje elaborates on this phrase by explaining that she was the "*tsha mo*" of Khri dpon chen po Bstan 'dzin mi 'gyur (d.u.), the principle myriarch of the Yar 'brog Stag lung khri skor area of Sna dkar rtse rdzong, making her a princess of royal descent.<sup>41</sup> Here, the term "*tsha mo*" is ambiguous about whether she was the niece or granddaughter of Bstan 'dzin mi 'gyur, since the term can refer to both relationships. An interlinear note inserted into the autobiography helps to clarify, but not define this relationship, which states that she was born into the familial care of Bstan 'dzin mi 'gyur.<sup>42</sup> Why this is historically important is that Khri lcam Kun dga' lha mdzes, the mother of the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag dbang Blo bzang rgya mtsho

<sup>37</sup> Rnam snang rdo rje, *'Phrin las dbang mo'i skyes 'phreng*.

<sup>38</sup> See 'Phrin las dbang mo 2013, 180-181.

<sup>39</sup> The words *sprul pa* or *yang srid* are often used to designate these associations in comparison to a one-to-one line of *sprul sku* succession with an established monastic seat.

<sup>40</sup> 'Phrin las dbang mo writes that she was born in the foothills along the "*lha chen po gang ba bzang po'i pho brang*" which is likely, Gangs ri gnod sbyin gang bzang (7,919 m.). See 'Phrin las dbang mo 2013, 181.

<sup>41</sup> 'Phrin las dbang mo writes, "*rgyal po'i rigs su skyes*." See 'Phrin las dbang mo 2013, 181 and Rnam snang rdo rje 2013, 215. There were thirteen myriarchies (*khri skor*) that constituted the Yar 'brog Stag lung khri skor area of Sna dkar rtse rdzong, of which Yar 'brog Stag lung thar gling chos sde Monastery was the chief monastery. Bstan 'dzin mi 'gyur was an established ruler by the time that Tāranātha was four years old because he mentions Khri dpon chen po Bstan 'dzin mi 'gyur dbang gi rgyal po and his relationship with the royal family in his autobiography. See Tāranātha 2008d, 17.

<sup>42</sup> The insertion reads, "... *khri dpon chen bstan 'dzin mi 'gyur dbang gi rgyal po'i ma mar bya la sku 'khrungs*." See 'Phrin las dbang mo 2013, 181.

(1617-1682), was contemporaneously the daughter of the Yar 'brog Khri dpon in Sna dkar rtse rdzong, as suggested by her appellation, Khri lcam.<sup>43</sup> While dates for Kun dga' lha mdzes remain uncertain, it is well documented that she gave birth to Ngag dbang Blo bzang rgya mtsho in the year 1617, making it probable that she was born in the 1590s, making her roughly a decade or so younger than 'Phrin las dbang mo. Given the known and probable dates, 'Phrin las dbang mo was likely not the granddaughter, but rather was the niece of Khri dpon chen po Bstan 'dzin mi 'gyur and she lived in his royal household during her girlhood. That these women were relatives is made more probable by Ngag dbang Blo bzang rgya mtsho's autobiographical description of his mother being from a Jonangpa family in Sna dkar rtse who were devoted to Kun dga' Grol mchog and then his tulku, Tāranātha.<sup>44</sup> If Bstan 'dzin mi 'gyur was in fact the father of Kun dga' lha mdzes, which the current biographical sources suggest, and 'Phrin las dbang mo was his niece, this would make 'Phrin las dbang mo a cousin of the Fifth Dalai Lama's mother, Kun dga' lha mdzes.<sup>45</sup> This gives us not only a greater salience of the interpersonal relations among the social and kinship worlds of Tāranātha and the Fifth Dalai Lama, which become consequential for the religious history of Tibet, but this contact tracing compounds the psychological and emotional layers of this history.

Her life writing takes us linearly through her autobiographical narrative from the time when she first met Tāranātha as a young girl at the age of seven until she moved to the Jo mo nang valley when she was twenty-two, through her training as a yoginī and eventual lineageholder of the Jonangpa, to her days as an elder exemplar. She lived

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<sup>43</sup> This is made clear by the kāvya tutor to the Fifth Dalai Lama, Smon 'gro ba Dbang rgyal rdo rje, in his early biography of the Fifth where he describes his mother to be, "yar 'brog khri skor du grags pa'i sa skyong ba'i rigs kyi sras mo kun dga' lha mdzes." See Smon 'gro ba, 58. This is the same Smon 'gro ba, that at least according to Si tu Pañ chen, is thought to have fueled animosities between the young Dalai Lama and Tāranātha. See Smith 2001, 95 and Sheehy 2009, 21.

<sup>44</sup> This is further evident in his mother's own name, "Kun dga'," Tāranātha's lineage name from Kun dga' Snying po, and in fact, Ngag dbang Blo bzang rgya mtsho was named Kun dga' Mi 'gyur stobs rgyal dbang gi rgyal po by Tāranātha when he was a baby. See Smon 'gro ba, 58 and Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 1989, 41 and 43-44 and Karmay 2014, 38 and 40 and Karmay 1998, 506.

<sup>45</sup> The critical missing information is whether Kun dga' Grags pa, the name that Ngag dbang Blo bzang rgya mtsho uses for his grandfather, the father of Kun dga' lha mdzes, is a previous or religious name of Khri dpon chen po Bstan 'dzin mi 'gyur. In that same passage, Ngag dbang Blo bzang rgya mtsho states that Tāranātha was consulted about the marriage of his mother, and that Tāranātha sent a painting of the five types of dhāraṇī, "thang ga zhig kyang bskyur bar mdzad." See Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 1989, 41 and Karmay 2014, 38. The other missing piece are the names of 'Phrin las dbang mo's mother and father.

within the inner circle of Tāranātha and his closest disciples during her entire adult life and was charged with compiling his *Collected Works* after his passing.<sup>46</sup> She was his consort (*pho nya mo*), and her intimacy with Tāranātha performs multiple roles, including that of assisting him as a female muse who becomes intrinsically entangled within his secret autobiographical experiences (*nyams*) and realizations (*rtogs*);<sup>47</sup> and by her close association with him, she gained greater agency and authority. She was also a formidable intellectual who is said to have taught *gzhan stong* philosophy “as it dawned spontaneously within her heart” and is listed in Jonang lineage records as a primary figure in the transmission of *gzhan stong* after Tāranātha.<sup>48</sup> She becomes an important human link in the transmission line of *gzhan stong* and other teachings from Tāranātha to Zur Kun bzang dbang po (d.u.) who was the teacher to Rig ‘dzin Tshe dbang nor bu (1698-1755), the torch-bearer who ignited the scholastic renaissance of Jonang teachings in eastern Tibet.<sup>49</sup>

During her lifetime, ‘Phrin las dbang mo was witness to pivotal junctures in both the transplantation of the Jonang order as well as the broader cultural history of Tibet. She observed up-close not only the death of Tāranātha, but civil unrest in Gtsang, the fifteen year period after the death of Tāranātha in 1635 that led to the Dga’ ldan Pho brang takeover of Jonang headquarters at Rtag brtan Dam chos gling Monastery in 1650, its conversion into a Dge lugs establishment in 1658, and the subsequent migration of the Jonangpas to remote regions of Amdo on the margins of the Sino-Tibetan frontier. In fact, hers is one of the only known first-person accounts of this critical moment in Jonang history.<sup>50</sup> Her autobiography unveils her eye-witness account of these events, her memories of intimate encounters and conversations with Tāranātha, her relationships as a mentor to many of Tāranātha’s main disciples, and her role as an heiress to the Jonang order. For instance,

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<sup>46</sup> Based on the account of Blo gsal Bstan skyong (b. 1804), after her compilation of the first fourteen volumes of the *gsung ’bum* that she arranged, the blocks were not immediately carved and the printing was delayed at the Rtag brtan gling par khang.

<sup>47</sup> That is, both in the technical sense associated with the practice during the third empowerment (*dbang*), i.e. the *pho nya’i lam*, as well as a person who is a source of inspiration. See Tāranātha 2008, *Rdo rje’i gnas pa bcu*.

<sup>48</sup> See Rnam snang rdo rje 2013, 214 and ‘Phrin las dbang mo 2013, 184.

<sup>49</sup> Other lineages that Tshe dbang nor bu cites that were transmitted via ‘Phrin las dbang mo include, Rdzogs rim rlung sems dbyer med kyi man ngag and Thugs rje mnga’ bdag spyang ras gzigs dbang po. See Tshe dbang nor bu 2006a, 396 and Tshe dbang nor bu. 2006b, 477 and Stearns 2010, 78. She is also listed beside Tāranātha in lineage records for the transmission of ‘Phags mchog spyang ras gzigs dbang phyug gi sgrub thabs smar khrid and Thugs rje chen po’i smar khrid. See Chos kyi dbang phyug 2011, 538-540 and Rnam snang rdo rje 2013, 213-214 and Sheehy 2019, 352.

<sup>50</sup> See Sheehy 2009, 9-10.

during an encounter that she recounts in her autobiography, 'Phrin las dbang mo describes an intimate conversation that she had with Tāranātha during his final days about omens (*rten 'brel*) that he intuited about the future of the Jonangpa, and the volatile political climate that would ensue after his passing.<sup>51</sup> During this conversation, Tāranātha revealed a series of omens that had recently transpired for him, and that he believed would lead him to be reborn to benefit the Gelukpa.<sup>52</sup> As history tells, the child born in Mongolia that same year that Tāranātha died, Blo bzang Bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1635-1723)—known as 'Jam dbyangs Tulku—would soon be recognized by the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag dbang Blo bzang rgya mtsho, First Pañchen Lama Blo bzang Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1567-1662), and the State Oracle of Tibet to be the rebirth Tāranātha, the First Khal kha Rje btsun dam pa.<sup>53</sup> Later in her autobiography, 'Phrin las dbang mo wrote that she rejoiced when she heard this news of Tāranātha's rebirth in Mongolia years later, which was likely after the official confirmation in 1642.

By the spring of 1657, in her seventy-second year of life, while residing at the Ri khrod chen mo hermitage in Jo mo nang valley, she was visited by Ngag dbang Blo gros rnam rgyal (1618-1683), a next generation Jonangpa lineage-holder who was regarded as a reincarnation of Tāranātha's mother.<sup>54</sup> Blo gros rnam rgyal had recently undergone a series of visions that communicated the need for him to travel eastward, on which he sought her advice.<sup>55</sup> 'Phrin las dbang mo encouraged him and contemplated whether to join him on his journey, but decided to stay at Jonang. In August of that year, after his expedition east, Blo gros rnam rgyal and his caravan would arrive in the valley of 'Dzam thang where he would found Gtsang ba Monastery, and re-establish the central monastic seat of the Jonangpa. Then in 1664, as one of the last living disciples of Tāranātha, she visited and met with the Fifth Dalai Lama.<sup>56</sup> In her brief description of this encounter, she recounts receiving several authorization initiations (*rjes gnang*) from the Dalai Lama including White Tārā and a guruyoga, and briefly meeting Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653-1705). These historical episodes in her autobiography make it clear that certainly by the end of her life, 'Phrin las dbang mo was considered not only an elder of the Jonang order, but a mediator in the real politic of her time.

Oscillating between her recounts of historical time – including

<sup>51</sup> See 'Phrin las dbang mo 2013, 199-200 and Blo gros grags pa 1992, 59 and Blo gros grags pa, *Rje tā ra nā tha'i sku 'das*, 134-135 and Sheehy 2009, 11-12.

<sup>52</sup> See Sheehy 2009, 11-14 and Stearns 2010, 73-76.

<sup>53</sup> See Sheehy 2009, 17-21 and Karmay 2014, 9-10.

<sup>54</sup> See Sheehy 2009, 16.

<sup>55</sup> See Kun dga' 'phrin las, *Mtshungs med chos rje*, 11.

<sup>56</sup> See 'Phrin las dbang mo 2013, 210 and Sheehy 2009, 20.

conversations with Tāranātha, her real time observations of the political and social realities in which she was circumstanced – and the wondrous world of her contemplations and dreamtime visions, 'Phrin las dbang mo's writing exhibits as much a historical record of the Jo mo nang valley in the mid-seventeenth century as a sample of Tibetan visionary vernacular literature. With fluidity of composition, she seamlessly weaves her narrative of historical events that she witnessed with poetic descriptions of an interior life that are embellished with metaphors, signs, and allusions. In so doing, the literary modes of her autobiographical subjectivity operate at multiple registers that switch from reflections on candor to despondence to epiphanies to seeming nostalgia about her life circumstance to cryptic verses quoted from tantras. 'Phrin las dbang mo's writing is flowery yet not *kāvya*-influenced, but rather is distinctively written in the educated vernacular of her seventeenth century Gtsang dialect. Her autobiographical writing challenges conventions commonly associated with the auto/biographical (*rang rnam*, *rnam thar*) genre of Tibetan literature. In particular, her writing style does not conform to preconceived patterns of the outer, inner, and secret (*phyi*, *nang*, *gsang*) structure that came to frame Tibetan biographical writing. Throughout her autobiography, she presents the reader with her critical awareness, sentimentality, and testimonial in an unfiltered way that expresses the voice of her ongoing internal dialogue.

### Her Autobiographical Oneiric Life

For 'Phrin las dbang mo dream is a powerful expressive domain to tell her story. Throughout her autobiographical writing, she juxtaposes her observations of waking-time circumstance with her dreamtime, intermingling and contrasting tensions inherent to her historical consciousness with her interior oneiric life. She creatively employs dream in her writing through a variety of literary modes and devices – including uses of temporality and liminality, alternating voices, visitations, and states of mind – that ultimately contribute to the telling of her life story in a way that reflect the continuities of her interior life paralleled to the discontinuities that she experienced as a woman author in seventeenth century Tibet. Reading her dream communications, we are confronted with the linguistic and literary features that she applies to encode, decode, and interpret the semiotics of her dream space.<sup>57</sup> 'Phrin las dbang mo's autobiographical subjectivity may be read through her usage of dream and dream interpretation as one of several literary devices that she employed to author her life story. Even more so, an emphasis on her

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<sup>57</sup> See Shulman and Stroumsa 1999, 3.

dreams and oneiric life give readers insights into her autobiographical subjectivity and how she navigates her life as a yoginī – throughout both waking and dreaming. Moreover, because she writes about her dreams and provides dream reports in her autobiographical writing, she foregrounds and prioritizes the efficacy of oneiric consciousness and its influence to inform her interior narrative.

Writing about dream as a key mode of inquiry and knowledge is far from novel in Tibetan literature. Among the earliest Tibetan language manuscripts, from the caches of eighth century bundles that were unearthed at the Inner Asian cave complex at Dunhuang, we find pre-classical Tibetan texts that record and analyze the oneiric life.<sup>58</sup> Tibetans wrote prolifically about their interior world, and dream in particular finds a variety of usages within Tibetan writing: from medium states that prophesize, to devices that mobilize or alter a narrative, to metaphors for life, to portals into other worlds, to tactics for authenticating or authorizing, to means for accessing knowledge, to methods for personal yogic transformation.<sup>59</sup> One of the most well-known forms of Tibetan writing on dream is explanation about dream as a contemplative method, such as we find in dream yoga texts from the Niguma and Nāropa sixfold cycles of instructions, of which 'Phrin las dbang mo was a practitioner.<sup>60</sup> As we would expect, there is also a broad usage of dream found within Tibetan auto/biographical literature. In fact, this is so much the case that we might glean a better understanding of contemplative practice through a closer look at how dreams and other such interior narratives are utilized by Tibetan authors who wrote biography. Vice-versa, a better understanding of Tibetan auto/biography will profit from our reading contemplative writings about dream and dream practices. For the practice of writing down one's dream is integral to both self-reflection on the yogin's path as well as to the compilation and ultimate authorization of a life story. For some Tibetan writers, the two are not so separate.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> For an example of “probably one of the most ancient witnesses of such ‘literature,’” dated to the late eighth century, see Crescenzi and Torricelli 1995, 8.

<sup>59</sup> Texts on how to examine dream can be found by Indian and Kashmiri authors, preserved in the tantra section of the Bstan 'gyur. There is a short text attributed to Padmasambhava that is framed as a dialogue with the Emperor Khri srong lde bstan, imparting the guru's advice to the ruler on how to interpret his dreams. See Padma 'byung gnas, *Dregs pa spyi gnad las zhus lan*.

<sup>60</sup> She was a practitioner of the Ni gu chos drug, specifically. See 'Phrin las dbang mo 2013, 182.

<sup>61</sup> One example of autobiographical writing on dreams is the dream diary by Gu ru Chos dbang (1212-1270), who utilized dream episodes as a means to access and describe his previous lives as well as to cultivate liturgical practice. See Chos kyi dbang phyug 1979.

The key to dreams however is not so much having them or even writing about them but interpreting them. For this, we find a micro-genre of Tibetan texts that explicate methods used to examine dream (*rmi lam brtag thabs*).<sup>62</sup> Such texts are fine-tuned specifically to the analyses of signs within the life of a dream, both supporting the advancement of yogic praxis as well as contextualizing dreamtime within a storyline. What are critical in such texts are the methods described for deciphering and cracking the semiotic code of a dream.

In much Tibetan autobiographical writing on dreams, a recurrent motif is that the dream event is used to write about oneself in order to work with waking experiences, to test and blur the intra-subjective boundaries. To investigate 'Phrin las dbang mo's usage, we read a few select autobiographical dream reports that she wrote to look at some of the markers, tropes, and frames that she utilizes to mobilize her life story. 'Phrin las dbang mo writes,

In a dream one night on the twenty-fifth day, my sublime lama [Tāranātha] was giving a dharma talk to a crowded assembly. On the seating line in the monastic assembly, someone sitting there looked at me with a distressed expression and said, 'It's too hot! I can't stand it!' He got up and ran to the back of the line. Having dreamt this, I woke up. My mind was serenely blissful.

Writing a text, on the line of words that read, 'Imagine yourself in a pureland, amidst a mound of offering clouds, pristine wisdoms and so forth...' There at the end of that line, a girl whom I'd never seen before with the name of a goddess – Bde chen gsal sgron – arrived with red and yellow flowers. We ate a meal together.

By putting together both my dream last night and the waking signs, I see how these circumstances are different, yet similar. Even so, the meaning is difficult for common people to analyze. It's like a flower blooming in the rain and sun.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>62</sup> This micro-genre is part of a larger Tibetan genre on methods of analysis (*brtags thab*) that is devoted to the analysis of a variety of subjects, including gems, weapons, horses, etc. For a discussion of a *rmi lam brtag pa* texts on the examination of dreams from the Bstan 'gyur, see Young 1999, 29-31.

<sup>63</sup> See 'Phrin las dbang mo 2013, 187, "... nyer lnga'i nub gcig rmi lam du / bla ma dam pa'i [pas] 'khor mang tshad gcig la bka' chos gnang / chos gral de na bdag la mi dga' ba'i rnam 'gyur byed mi gcig 'dug pa de na re/ tsha zer mi bjod pa 'dug zer rgyab gral du bros song ba rmis/ gnyid sad pa na[s] sems bde cham me ba dang / de [dpe] cha gcig bris pa'i tshig gral la yang / rang snang zhing khams dang mchod pa'i sprin gyi phung po 'byung ba'i ye shes sogs zer ba'i mtshams der/ bde chen gsal sgron gyi me tog dmar ser dang / sngar 'driś med pa'i lha'i ming can zhig go zas 'brel byas/ mdang gi rmi lam dang dngos kyi ltas gnyis 'dzoms pas gnas skyabs tha dad 'dra ba zhig yod kyang don phal pas dpyad dka' ste/ char dang nyi ma la me tog rgyas pa bzhin no."



With this dream report, she presents a clear contrast between dreamtime and waking time. She explicitly records her dream about sitting in an assembly hall while Tāranātha is teaching and being spoken to by a disgruntled person. The first sign is the person saying that it is too hot.<sup>64</sup> The episode coupled with this dream is not a dream. 'Phrin las dbang mo is awake, sitting in her study writing a liturgy until suddenly she is interrupted by a young girl. The implicit suggestion here is that the serendipitous appearance of this girl – Bde chen gsal sgron, whose name is that of a goddess, bearing red and yellow flowers as offerings to her while she composes an offering text, is a sign – as surreal as a dream. 'Phrin las dbang mo comments that her dream and waking experiences, however different, have similarities. She sees these not as two disparate events that occurred in entirely distinct modes, but rather as markers in a symbolic universe that make-up a continuum, analogous to how rain and sun make up a flower. These are the two circumstances (*gnas skyabs gnyis*): (a) the dream (*rmi lam*) equals the rain (*char ba*) and (b) the waking signs (*dnagos ltas*) equal the sun (*nyi ma*). The two signs are the person in the assembly hall and the visitation of the young goddess-like girl. She interprets both to be positive. 'Phrin las dbang mo is problem solving. She states that such interpretations are difficult for common people to make, yet she enters into a dialogue with her oneiric consciousness, analyzing its meaning and import. By writing into her autobiography that the young goddess-like girl interrupts her while she is in the midst of writing a text, she uses this influence to be like a muse that serves as a creative force for her own literary composition. In this way, she uses dream events to serve as devices for her writing.

Whereas in the previous dream report she deciphers radical signs, in this next dream, her analysis of the dream is less determined. 'Phrin las dbang mo writes,

In another dream, a female messenger approached from the eastern direction and handed me a very sharply pointed knife. The next day, a low-caste woman handed me some food. A few days later, there was that same sharp knife from before. I cut open a belly sack and all kinds of inner organs spewed out. Some of them, I offered as torma. Two women barbecued a few more over a fire. This was all in a dream. However suspicious, there is little that I can make of this.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Why it would be “too hot” to sit close to her is a subject of further interpretation.

<sup>65</sup> See 'Phrin las dbang mo 2013, 187, “*yang rmi lam du shar phyogs nas pho nya zhig gis gri rtse shin tu rno ba zhig sprad byung / sang nyin 'gar [mgar] mo zhig gi[s] zas byin/ yang zhag shas nas sngar gyi gri des grod pa zhig kha phye nang khrol sna tshogs kyis] nang khengs/ la la gtor ma la phul/ 'ga' zhig bud med gnyis kyis me btang nas 'tshos par rmis/ rtoḡ dpyad kyang cung zad byung.*”

Reflecting on her dream, 'Phrin las dbang mo states that she is suspicious (*rtog dpyad*), and that in fact, she can't derive meaning from these episodes. Reading her dream, it is not because the dream is devoid of symbols – the sharp knife and inner organs represent rich ciphers to decode – yet there is a residual ambiguity that remains a natural feature of dream, and she is forced to contend with this. Though she shows interest in decoding her own experience, and perhaps reconciling anxieties or ambiguities, 'Phrin las dbang mo points to how the dream is opaque, to such an extent that the dream does not communicate decipherable content. The reappearance of a sharp knife, inner organs as oblations; these do not make meaningful sense to her. She concludes that the dream has no message per se.<sup>66</sup> Reminiscent of features written into autobiography in modernity, we find her writing about life merely for the sake of it, yet giving it no particular meaning, makes it important. In this case, there is something mundane and thereby *more real* about the dream.

One night, before she embarks on a journey, 'Phrin las dbang mo writes,

In my dream, there appeared the head of a Brahmā on a bell, and yet in reality, there arose on the golden ground numerous appearances such as variegated images painted in black ink. Signs concerning the one who is most intimate with me [Tāranātha] were slightly reversed. Nevertheless, having carefully analyzed [the signs], no matter what the future holds, since I've arrived here, I know it will be beneficial.

Whatever the case, I must stay on the path uninterruptedly.

[On this occasion, while coming down from Dbus, Rje btsun dam pa's [i.e. Tāranātha's] mother walked with Rje btsun ma Rdo rje bu dga' [i.e. 'Phrin las dbang mo] to glorious Jonang.]<sup>67</sup>

On the night that I reached Dge steng [Monastery],<sup>68</sup> I had a dream similar to before. Honoring that, an intuitive flash suggested that there would be a solution. I gradually arrived at the Jetavana Grove at Rtag brtan gling. I performed such activities as making donations and a community tea offering.

There are a variety of means for expressing the manifestations of a dream and actual signs. Conviction was born within me with respect to signs in a dream. Even thoughts of desire and hatred were purified, a

<sup>66</sup> See Shulman and Stroumsa 1999, 9. On ambivalence in Tibetan autobiographical writings, see Gyatso 1998, 233-235.

<sup>67</sup> This is an interlinear note (*mchan*) in a third-person voice, suggesting that it was inserted. See 'Phrin las dbang mo 2013, 190. Explanation of this insertion does not appear in the *kha skongs*. Rdo rje bu dga' is abbreviated from her secret name, Ratna badzri ñi.

<sup>68</sup> A small Sa skya Monastery in the vicinity.

little.<sup>69</sup>

Albeit via a third-person narrator in the text, we again find this juxtaposition of dreamtime with real time. As 'Phrin las dbang mo is commenting on the metaphor of staying on the path, the comment is interjected that she is in fact walking with Tāranātha's mother along a path up to the hermitage in the Jo mo nang valley where they lived. Her narrative then shifts abruptly to visit Dge steng Monastery, and back to the grove at the base of Rtag brtan gling Monastery, exemplifying how she pivots across time, place, and agents in nonlinear ways.

She continues with a longer vignette,

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

When I was writing my commentary on the visualization and maṇḍala of the Kālacakra, in a dream one night, there were hordes of people taking-up weapons and going into battle.<sup>70</sup> A young lady friend said to me, 'Get up right now! Put on this outfit!' She gave me five different types of gear to wear, and handed me a full armor. After a moment elapsed, I went into battle. When I woke-up my mind was filled with disturbing thoughts again. At that same time, in a dream, someone said to me, 'You must stay for six years.' There were many such complications to examine.<sup>71</sup>

Starting this episode with a remark about how interpreting her dreams makes them worse, she goes on to describe a dream that is rich with allusions derived from the epic found in the *Kālacakra Tantra* with a direct message about what to do. She writes further,

<sup>69</sup> See 'Phrin las dbang mo 2013, 190, "*rmi lam du dril bu'i tshangs mgo 'phrul pa dang / dngos su'ang gser gyi sa gzhi la/ snag tsha'i rim o bzo dbyibs sna tshogs shar ba sogs byung / rang dang sems nye bag cig la ltas cung zad log da dung legs par dpyad pas phug ci ltar yang / da res phyin pas phan thogs par shes/ gang la yang ma chags par lam du zhugs / di skabs dbus nas mar yong ba'i dus rje btsun dam pa'i ma yum rje btsun ma rdo rje bu dga' dang mnyam du dpal jo nang du phebs pa yin] dge steng du sleb pa'i nub yang sngar gyi rmi lam/ de dang cha 'dra ba la/ de la thabs 'dra yod gyu ba yul le ba zhig byung rim pas/ yar yong nas rtag brtan gyi rgyal byed tshul du slebs/ mang ja 'gyed sogs byas/ rmi lam dang dngos ltas rnam mngon du gyur pa'i brjod sgo sna tshogs shig 'dug pa/ rmi lam sogs ltas la nges shes skyes shing / chags sdang gi blo yang cung zad dtwangs."*

<sup>70</sup> To-date, her commentary (*Ti ka*) on the Kālacakra is not known to be extant.

<sup>71</sup> See 'Phrin las dbang mo 2013, 192, "*de nas skabs shig las phran bu sgrub pa dang / zla ba gzas 'dzin dus 'dzoms pa rtog dpyad tsam dang / rim pas rmi lam 'tshub cha tsam las/ dus 'khor mngon dkyil gyi Ti ka 'bri ba'i nub cig rmi lam du/ mi mang po go mtshon thogs nas g.yul du 'gro ba/ zla bdag la bud med gzhon nu gcig na re 'phral du long / gos 'di gyon zer gos sna snga dang / go mtshon tshang ba bdag la gta'd/ de dag thogs te g.yul du 'gro ba dang / nyin par yang yid mi bde snyam pa byung / der rmi lam du khyod lo drug sdod zer ba sogs dpyad dka' ba mang du byung."*

On another occasion, while I was composing my commentary on the completion stages of the Kālacakra, a young lady appeared in my dream and said, 'Do you have someone that you can trust? Soon it will be time to send him in a different direction.' Ornamented with bones, she danced in zigzags. According to this dream, there is someone to send in the eastern direction.<sup>72</sup>

Again, a dream interrupts her writing. This time it forecasts an event. Through reading the biography of her younger contemporary Ngag dbang Blo gros rnam rgyal, we discover that this prognosticates his journey to 'Dzam thang, as mentioned above.<sup>73</sup> Abruptly, she shifts to write,

Then, after a few months had passed, I was at the old tattered house. There was no warmth from the sun, the fire wouldn't ignite, there was no water, no firewood, no milk to be found, no friends around. A vulture landed on the roof. A raven came and snatched the torma. I lost my writing utensils to pen my compositions.

Like that, the meaning of these inimical signs manifested throughout the day and night. At the same time that they came about, their meaning was that of the first of the three oral instructions. Just like the sun sets and rises again, these omens will turn positive. That's how it's explained.<sup>74</sup>

Noting these nine signs that occur consecutively, she stresses how deriving meaning from them is important. However negative each may appear to be, counter-intuitively they in fact signal optimism – like a setting sun signals its inevitable rise.

### Reflections on Her Autobiographical Subjectivity

'Phrin las dbang mo's story is told both synchronously across historical time, geographical place, and persons as well as asynchronously across

<sup>72</sup> See 'Phrin las dbang mo 2013, 192, "*yang dus 'khor gyi rdzogs rim gyi Ti ka bri ba'i skabs rmi lam du bud med gzhon nu zhig na rel khrod la blo gtad pa'i mi yod na/ dar cig phyogs gzhan du gtong ba'i dus yin zer ba dang / keng rus sogs zar zer mang po 'khrab tu byung / rmi lam ltar de shar phyogs su btang bas.*"

<sup>73</sup> See Sheehy 2009, 14-17.

<sup>74</sup> See 'Phrin las dbang mo 2013, 192-193, "*de nas zla ba kha shas nas khang ba zur ral/ nyi ma la drod med me la mi gsos/ chu med shing bu med/ 'o ma ma rnyed/ mda' [zla] bo med/ bya rgod thog steng du bab[s]/ gtor [ma] ldeb bya rog gi[s] khyer gsung[s] rtsom 'bri ba'i [ma'i] smyu gu phon cig bor/ de 'dra ba'i ltas mi legs pa nyin zhag gcig mngon sum du [tu] byung ba'i don de ni zhor byung du bka' bab gsum gyi dang po de'i don rta bdun nub nas/ slar shar ba ltar rten 'brel gsos pa'i don yin/ 'dir smras pa ...*" The three oral instructions that she refers to here were taught to her by Tāranātha, and are written earlier in the autobiography.

dreamscapes and visionary landscapes in which she is active as a concomitant agent. She operates nonlinearly through her interior lifeworld of dreams, visions, and the construal of omens that shift times, places, and agencies. These dynamics work within her autobiography at different registers to form a selfhood that is not autonomous but is rather contingent and relational.<sup>75</sup> Co-creative with the contingencies of her lifeworld, albeit the temporal, spatial, and social worlds in which she relationally inhabits and is embedded, her autobiographical subjectivity is reciprocally shaped by these very contingencies. For instance, her relational selfhood operates through a plurality of voices that narrate her life story – whether it be via an intimate conversation with Tāranātha or her interpretation of the young goddess-like girl Bde chen gsal sgron with red and yellow flowers. Her autobiographical subjectivity is shaped by these presences and their messages, even if their voice is her own interpretation, as well as the ways in which she navigates her relationality with these myriad interlocutors. While she does not encounter all of these agents in her waking consciousness, she nonetheless gives her relationship with them equal ontological importance to any agent that she encounters in her waking life. By so doing, she elicits and invites multiple dimensions of conscious lived worlds into the formation of her narrative, further complexifying her autobiographical subjectivity. In these ways, the formation of her subjectivity, both as an author and subject, is utterly contingent on the intersubjective relational dynamics in which she lives and dreams within her lifeworld – dynamics with the characters, events, and places that are other than her autobiographical agency, and yet it is these very dynamics that co-create her subjective agency.

Born into a royal family, she occupied a social life of privilege that enabled her certain affordances, including her literacy and religious life, that further shaped her social positionality. Living through the first part of the seventeenth century in south central Tibet, in the social worlds that she inhabited, she inevitably was aware of other powerful religious women exemplars, for instance, the Bsam sdings Rdo rje phag mo whose monastic seat at Bsams sdings Monastery was in the vicinity of her birthplace.<sup>76</sup> These factors are the kinds of affordances that enabled her to leverage her social positionality as well as historical circumstance, largely via the purview of her religious virtuosity, to represent herself – as an author, yoginī, consort, and tulku – identities that she draws from to shapeshift her autobiographical subjectivity.

Her historicity lends itself to questions about the authenticity of her account due to the historical reality that the Dga' ldan Pho brang

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<sup>75</sup> See Jacoby 2014, 12-14.

<sup>76</sup> Bsam sdings Rdo rje phag mo 05 Ye shes mtsho mo was her contemporary.

systematically eradicated or confiscated writings by Jonangpa authors during her lifetime. This raises questions not only about how her intended audience, which was likely the immediate and next generation Jonangpa disciples, affected her autobiographical subjectivity; but also, if her account was scripted, edited, and/or rearranged to conform to a normative account of history. The episode in which she describes a conversation with Tāranātha in which he revealed a series of omens that he believed were signs that he would be reborn to benefit the Gelukpa raises these suspicions. Because this manuscript was recopied and passed down by hand over the centuries, and not committed to block print, there is the possibility that at least sections of her story were tampered with or rewritten to alter the telling of her story. However, while there is reason for such suspicion, her creative and elliptic writing style along with vernacular language leave little doubt that her authorial narrative voice is authentic. The stylistic coherence of her autobiography argues for a single author. As excerpts translated here attest, she wrote as much to work through the obscure riddles of dreams and omens as to record her historical circumstance, and a close read of her autobiography suggests that these cannot be dis-entangled.

In what seems to be very conscious choices, 'Phrin las dbang mo works constantly to solve the riddles that are presented in her dreams as well as omens. For instance, more than once throughout her autobiography, 'Phrin las dbang mo writes-down the phrase, "*rmi lam dang dngos ltas rnam mgnon du 'gyur*" – which may be rendered more literally, "The signs that manifest in both dream and reality." Though she persists on differentiating circumstances that are dream from waking reality, she remains intentionally enmeshed within this ambiguity. As she slips lucidly in and out of hypnagogic states, and oscillates seamlessly between these modes of awareness, she seeks to discern the tensions between the real and surreal while at the same time, she blurs such boundaries. As a yoginī, waking and dreaming realities are segues in a continuum of consciousness. As an author, she thrives on the thresholds of her historical consciousness. These liminal spaces enable her to use dreams and omens as media to communicate her concerns, fears, images, and hopes so that she can interpret them. She utilizes this liminality not only to balance her private interior world with an outer abstract reality, but as a literary device that infuses her with powers to express, pivot, and spell-out her life story.<sup>77</sup> Along this liminal

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<sup>77</sup> Shulman and Stroumsa write, "By their very liminality, dreams are at the confluence of theology, cosmology, and anthropology. In a sense, they permit, where other media fail, a way of intracultural communication of great flexibility. In particular, dreams offer a constant balance between the private world of latent images, fears, and hopes, and outside reality, cosmic as well as social. Dreams present the means to reestablish the constantly shattered equilibrium between these two realms. They

continuum of waking and dream, she persistently remembers the markers that she witnesses, records new signs, decodes, and interprets. With each dream report more deeply enmeshed in the linearity of her written narrative, 'Phrin las dbang mo situates herself further in relation to a complex universe of cultural symbols and intuitions that co-create her universe from within.<sup>78</sup> Reality for her, in its multiple modalities, is codified, and she believes that code can be cracked. Her task, both as a yoginī as well as an author, is to definitively ascertain (*ngeś shes*) the signs (*ltas*).

Recognizing the expressivity of dreams, she employs this expressiveness to capture the themes, obsessions, and choices that she records in telling her life story. As she does so, and by providing prognostic clues to how she interprets the terrain of her dreams according to her own semi-otic maps, she navigates in ways that give her reader a fuller understanding of herself as a dreaming subject. In Tibetan autobiographical writing on dreams, a recurrent motif is that the dream event is used to write about oneself in order to work with waking experiences, to at once exercise authorial agency and test the permeability between dreaming and the waking real. As cited in her dream episodes translated here, there is a range of encoded dream communications, some she interprets on the spot while others remain opaque or are only made meaningful by events later in her autobiography. Though there are episodes that do, on some occasions, her dream reports do not showcase the miraculous such as her capacity to communicate with nonhuman interlocutors, including protective deities or *ḍākinīs*, but are rather mundane. Nonetheless, as we have seen, these episodes too serve to be important media for grounding her narrative.

'Phrin las dbang mo can however be read not only for the historical value or even import of the content of her life writing, but also for the literary modes and virtues that she employs as an author. As exemplified by instances chosen from her writing, she reflexively facilitates her autobiographical subjectivity through her writing in ways that test and blur the intra-subjective boundaries of dreamtime and historical time. Caught in the turbulent transition of the Jonangpa, at a moment of historical precarity, as authors do, 'Phrin las dbang mo writes to negotiate her experience. As she writes her dreams and omens, her dreams and omens help her to navigate her historical change. With this in mind, 'Phrin las dbang mo can be read not merely for the value of her content, but as a Tibetan *belletrist* by giving attention to the particular aesthetic qualities, literary modes and virtues that define her writing style, as well as to the particular literary features that compel her composition.

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accomplish this essential task in different ways, always directly related to the individual religious cultures." See Shulman and Stroumsa 1999, 6.

<sup>78</sup> See Shulman and Stroumsa 1999, 3.

As an author and subject of her writing, she embodies her literary sensibilities, her sense of selfhood, and the boundaries that lie therein. It is her very own vision of herself that not only imbues her complex symbolic world with the intra-cultural meaning in which she participates as a dreamer, but that she communicates as an author. As she witnesses a dream, commits it via language to text, and interprets it, 'Phrin las dbang mo is participating in a universe of intra-cultural forms and Tibetan religious values. She is also however textualizing her dream, giving her intuition and imagination literary texturing. In so doing, she actively involves herself both as a yoginī in the interiority of her self-transformation as well as an author in the process of her self-representation. In this eternal dialectical loop – to herself, from herself – she lives in a regulated mode of reception that reiterates her visceral Buddhist sense of self – interpenetrated by non-self elements, not collective or metaphorical, ultimately dissolvable.<sup>79</sup> In such a way, her dreams speak not only to the composition of her autobiographical writing, but also to the composition of herself as a yoginī. For 'Phrin las dbang mo, the practice of authorship is transformative.

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<sup>79</sup> See Gyatso 1998, 229-231.



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## Compte-rendu

**Toni Huber. 2020. *Source of Life: Revitalisation Rites and Bon Shamans in Bhutan and Eastern Himalayas*, Volume 1-2. Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, Denkschriften der philosophisch-historischen Klasse, Band 518 (Veröffentlichungen zur Sozialanthropologie, Band 24); ISBN: 978-3-7001-8269-6. Vol 1: pp. xiii–xv, 1-640; vol II: pp. 1-499; incl. 333 plates, 39 Figures (graphs, plans), and 18 maps.**

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(Vienna)

The object of this study, a social and cultural phenomenon I generically term the Srid-pa'i lha cult, is focused upon a tangible and perennial preoccupation of communities of Himalayan subsistence farmers: maintaining viability for themselves and their most important animals in the face of the fundamental precariousness of life.  
(Huber, *op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 13)

**W**ith *Source of Life*, Toni Huber presents an impressive work. It covers the results of his longstanding anthropological and Tibetological studies on peasant communities in the eastern Himalayas, i.e. eastern Bhutan and the adjacent region of what is called the Mon-yul Corridor in western Arunachal Pradesh (India). The work, divided into two volumes with a total of over 1100 pages, is largely the result of fundamental research. Methodologically, this means the presentation of an immense richness of ethnographic data combined with text (including Old Tibetan documents) and an in-depth (and geographically broad) comparative analysis with the aim of identifying a scarcely known ritual tradition based in this area and its manifold historical, cultural and linguistic contexts.

Volume I comprises four out of the five major sections (Parts I-V) and forms the more descriptive part of the work. The focus is on the documentation of a series of calendric festivals as they are still practised in the eastern Himalayas and which the author summarises as “revitalisation festivals dedicated to the Srid pa'i lha deities”, the latter corresponding to the *lha* known in Old Tibetan contexts as *Phyva lha*, i.e. the leading meta-human beings, which are described in the present regional context as “ancestor-progenitor beings regarded as the source of life” (Vol. 1, p. 1).<sup>1</sup> In addition to the actual description of the festi-

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<sup>1</sup> The author wishes to emphasise (Vol. I, p. 81) that the principal deities of the Srid pa'i lha cult are not to be confused with those classified as the *srid pa chags pa'i lha*

vals (in Part IV), there is a presentation and discussion of central elements of this Srid pa'i lha cult in the preceding parts (Parts I-III)—from cosmology, to the most important *lha* of the life-giving rituals to the ritual specialists, the “*bon shamans*”, their techniques and corresponding phenomena in the field of material culture.

Volume II contains the final section (Part V), divided into five chapters (chaps. 14-18), with the significant heading *Comparative Soundings in the Ancestral Past*, in which comparative material is presented and discussed in connection with various questions—with the intention to “explore possible ways in which the contemporary Srid pa'i lha cult came into existence” (Vol. I, p. 1). This also includes a new discussion on the ethnolinguistic identity and prehistory of the Tibeto-Burman speakers of the eastern Himalayas, whose ancestral heritage points to a close relationship with populations that are far away along the eastern margins of the Tibetan Plateau, namely the groups known as Qiang and Naxi. Indeed, while the first trace in the identification of Srid pa'i lha leads to Tibet (or southern Central Tibet, where the Tibetan kingship originated), there is a “non-Tibetan plateau content of the cult” (Vol. II, p. 146), which relates to similarities with the cultures of communities of the extended eastern Himalayas, whose identification only makes it possible to explain the whole of the Srid pa'i lha tradition.

Both volumes have an informative introduction, and the individual sections of the study are concluded by reflections in which interim results and certain conclusions are discussed. At the end of the volumes are the endnotes, in addition, Volume II has a larger appendix, which contains tables, photographic representation of manuscripts, and various illustrations (Appendix A-M), followed by a good index, which summarises personal names, place names and terms. Numerous photographs, graphs and maps are included in the main text and accurately illustrate the issues described.

I consider it as helpful and also methodologically reasonable to have the individual sections in Volume II preceded by (altogether four) separate chapters labelled “hypothesis”, at a place where the issues regarding the origins and the more exact historical genealogy of certain elements of the Srid pa'i lha tradition are presented. At the same time, these chapters address the study's central questions.

First, this concerns the assessment that the “*bon*” rites as an essential part of the Srid pa'i lha cult can be seen as a phenomenon largely separate from Bon (the G.yung drung Bon), at least it is none that repre-

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*dgu* (“nine gods of the world that came into existence”) in Buddhist sources, although it seems to be clear that they share the same underlying cosmological history.

sents a mere side development of this 11<sup>th</sup>-century Tibetan religion. In principle, such assessments can also be found in the literature with regard to other peripheral “*bon* traditions” of the Himalayas, but in the given case the extensive material allows a more precise comparative examination of the provenance of the rites and their narratives. Here a quote at the beginning of the “hypothesis chapter” on *bon* / Bon:

The Srid-pa’i lha cult dedicated to mundane goals<sup>2</sup> and maintained by a range of local, autonomous *bon* shamans for the benefit of their own communities is neither a survival of any “ancient” and ostensibly “original” “Bon religion”, nor an epiphenomenon of the salvation religion calling itself g.Yung-drung Bon. Rather, the earlier agents who developed the cult were inheritors of non-Buddhist/non-Indic rites and narratives first evident in Old Tibetan and early Classical Tibetan manuscripts dating both prior to, and shortly after, an eleventh century watershed period. They combined this inheritance with other cultural materials and developed the cult along its own trajectories as they saw fit (Vol. II, p. 7).

A central part of the study is the correlating of the local traditions to a set of rituals, the written evidence of which is dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century—namely manuscripts from the well-known “Dga’ thang ’Bum pa Collection”, which was made available in 2007,<sup>3</sup> and the illustrated manuscripts described as *Ste’u* and *Sha slungs*, whose specifics and partial parallels to even older text material have already been the subject of studies by John Bellezza.<sup>4</sup> The peculiarity of the current work is that the meticulous comparisons enable it to free these old textual traditions much from their isolation and to concretise them, something that with restrictions also succeeds with respect to the Old Tibetan documents treated in this context (esp. PT 1060). The author’s thesis that the (*bon*) rites of the Srid pa’i lha worship complex represent variants of ritual traditions that existed in southern Central Tibet 1000 years ago is convincingly underpinned by comparative analyses (chap. 16).

<sup>2</sup> For this phrase, see below.

<sup>3</sup> Pa tshab Pa sangs Dbang ’dus and Glang ru Norbu Tshe ring (ed.). 2007. *Gtam shul dga’ thang ’bum pa che nas gsar du rnyed pa’i bon gyi gna’ dpe bdams bsgrigs*. Lhasa: Bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang.

<sup>4</sup> Bellezza, John V. 2013. *Death and Beyond in Ancient Tibet: Archaic Concepts and Practices in a Thousand-Year-Old Illuminated Funerary Manuscript and Old Tibetan Funerary Documents of Gathang Bumpa and Dunhuang*. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. However, this work has not been further considered by the author, for reasons that he only briefly explains in a note; Vol. 1, p. 568, n. 86. For an early presentation of these manuscripts, see the exhibition catalogue: Klimburg-Salter, Deborah, Linda Lojda, and Charles Ramble (eds.). 2013. *Bon – Geister aus Butter: Kunst und Ritual des alten Tibet*. Vienna: Museum für Völkerkunde.

Regarding the *Ste'u* and *Sha lungs* manuscripts, the author also adds that “these old ritual manuscripts have exactly the form of small, hand-made booklets as used today by *bon* shamans practising in the cult, and their respective texts even share certain orthographic peculiarities in common” (Vol. I, p. 38; Vol. II, App. J, p. 302ff.).<sup>5</sup>

According to another central thesis, essential parts of the “*bon*-identified material” of the Srid pa'i lha cult came together with family (or “clan-”) migrations from southern Central Tibet to the valleys of north-east Bhutan, with population groups of the Shar Dung (well-known from the studies by the Bhutan historians M. Aris and J. Ardussi) as the main agents for these cultural transfers. This chapter (chap. 16 in Vol. II, p. 85ff.) also includes a new look at the historical composition of the communities of the Srid pa'i lha tradition, where information from ethnography and local documents (such as the highly informative (linguistically hybrid) lineage origin and migration text *Lha'i gsung rabs*) significantly supplement or expand the previous, purely text-based knowledge (especially that provided by the 17<sup>th</sup> century *Rgyal rigs*).<sup>6</sup> Particularly fascinating in this migration history is the encounter with lineages, who are known as leading lines of the Tibetan royal dynasty; we find these not only among the migrated “clans” of the Srid pa'i lha communities (such as the Khu and Se), but also among groups that migrated in the other direction, from south to north, according to tradition, as early as the beginning of the Spu rgyal Dynasty.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The author further explains that these texts (*Dga' thang 'Bum pa* and the *Ste'u* and *Sha lungs* manuscripts) “are the oldest known examples of such mundane rites discovered at any location directly upon the actual Tibetan Plateau” (Vol. I, p. 38); he does not include documents from Dunhuang in this calculation, because the oasis is situated outside the Tibetan Plateau system. Distinctions of this kind between the plateau land and Dunhuang in connection with age determination of texts or other qualifications can be found more than once in the book (e.g. Vol. I, p. 76), but are not always entirely comprehensible to me. It should be clear that the content of the documents kept in Dunhuang did not necessarily have anything to do with this oasis city and military outpost, but the collections naturally included texts or copies of texts also from completely different parts of the empire.

<sup>6</sup> Aris, Michael. 1986. *Sources for the History of Bhutan*. Vienna (Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, Heft 14). Ardussi, John. 2007. Notes on the *Rgyal Rigs* of Ngawang and the clan history of eastern Bhutan and Shar Mon, in: Prats, R. (ed.), *The Pandita & the Siddha*. Dharamsala: Amnye Machen Institute, 1-11; see Huber in Vol. II, p. 415 of the present publication for further references.

<sup>7</sup> Huber here refers to the well-known story given in the *Can lnga* text *Yi ge lha gyes can* (in *Mkhas pa Lde'u chos 'byung*) of the three feather-covered Mon boys, which are said to have met the progenitor king Gnya' khri btsan po at a place in southern Tibet before they settled in different areas of Lhokha and became ancestors of famous “clans” (i.e. the Lho, Gnyags (= Rngegs), Myang; Vol. II, p. 112f., p. 146; Vol. I, p. 576). The author's identification of this Mon outfit as apparently belonging to the Srid pa'i lha culture is extremely exciting.



In addition to this southern Central Tibet component of the Srid pa'i lha history, the author differentiates a second, geographically broader cultural stratum, which in the research area is represented by the East Bodish-speaking Mon groups ("Mon clans"). These are the starting point for an exciting journey into the "trans-Himalayan ethnography", geographically into the "extended eastern Himalaya" and beyond, where linguistic and other similarities of cultural patterns and practices with Qiangic and Naic languages speaking populations (in western Sichuan and northwest Yunnan) can apparently only be explained by common ancestral roots – the basis for an attempt to determine the identity of these bearers of the Srid pa'i lha tradition more closely (Vol. II, chap. 16, 17; p. 85ff., 149ff.). The same chapters take up the old discussion (inspired by the classical Tibetan historiography itself) about the origin of the Tibetans, as it was first conducted among western scholars by R. Stein,<sup>8</sup> a discussion in which the Qiang has been identified as one of the major proto-Tibetan population components (with the Tibeto-Burman Qiang arguably not necessarily related to the "Qu'iang" of the older Chinese historiography).<sup>9</sup> The identification of the Tibetan Dmu / Rmu (the name of the heavenly bride-giver lineage and at the same time of the place from where the progenitor king travelled to Earth) as related to Qiang *mu*, which denotes the sky, represent one of the better known examples, and leads right into the heart of the Srid pa'i lha cult, whose rites are ultimately anchored in a geography of the sky.<sup>10</sup> In these contexts we find the perhaps most exciting parts of the work: the description and comparative analysis of the manifold cultic representations of the cosmic space addressed in the rituals – from variants of the famous sky cord (*dmu thag*) to the figure of the clever messenger bat of the gods and the shamanic travels (each cartographically documentable) in the direction of the source of life, all of

<sup>8</sup> Stein, Rolf. 1961. *Les tribus anciennes des marches Sino-tibétaines: légendes, classifications et histoire*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France; for Huber's principal assessment of this work, which has been widely cited to this day, see Vol. 1, p. 7f.

<sup>9</sup> See here the somewhat controversial discussion by Beckwith, in: Beckwith, Christopher. 2009. *Empires of the Silk Road*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 375-76; cf. also Huber's remarks in this connection, in Vol. I, p. 6f., p. 222.

<sup>10</sup> As for *mu*, in addition one may refer here to the well-known Mu ra, which one finds as the name for the place of the Tibetan royal tombs in 'Phyong rgyas. Not only *mu* but also the name part *ra* is documented as a Tibetan-Burmese root, with the meaning of "to come", "to get to" (Joanna Bialek, personal communication 4.3.2019). Mu ra, which is usually read as the "enclosure (*ra ba*) of (D)mu", may thus originally have meant something like "arrival in heaven" – a suitable description of the place where in the course of the tumulus burial the kings and other members of the royal family went to heaven or were ritually taken to the heavenly paradise. Although not documented in Old Tibetan sources, this term, *mu ra*, could actually be of a quite old, possibly pre-imperial history, with the roots in southern Tibet, the region where also the Spu rgyal kingship originated.

which accompanied by endless references to corresponding elements from the field of material culture and the symbolic classifications of the natural environment.

The question of the Qiangic component in the early Tibetan history (or the history of southern Central Tibet) also includes a discussion about the famous colossal stone towers, which are known to be found in settlements of Qiangic languages speaking populations in the Qinghai-Sichuan border area, and which are seen in a narrower historical context with the externally similar structures in eastern Lhokha – in Nyang po (with the oldest structures, dated to the third century CE),<sup>11</sup> Kong po, and also in Lho brag (the pre-14<sup>th</sup> century home of the aforementioned Shar Dung)

The known sites and distribution zone of these multi-storied siege or defensive towers appear to mark the traces of one particular set of ancestral populations who spread out across, or who migrated over the south-eastern Tibetan Plateau lands in between the highland regions of western Sichuan and IHo-brag in southernmost Central Tibet (Vol. II, p. 223).

The author sees this dissemination in correspondence with the central position, which *mkhar* (stronghold) takes as a term in the rituals of the Srid pa'i lha worship, as if the rituals were addressing precisely this specific tradition of tower building (Vol. II, p. 132-33). Yet, given the (not least toponymically abundant) evidence of a much larger presence of *mkhar* in the entire central Tibetan region (in the ritual and architectural context), one may be sceptical about the causal restriction to this Qiangic ethno-cultural component, not least since the distribution area of these specific tower buildings, in my view, is not that clearly definable.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> A publication of the radiometric measurement data mentioned in Darragon 2015 is missing, as also noted by Huber (Vol. II, p. 401). (Darragon, Frederique. 2015. On the ancient cross-shaped towers of Nyangpo and Kongpo in eastern Central Tibet, *Journal of Comparative Cultural Studies in Architecture* 8: 34-50).

<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that within the Lhokha area there are comparable towers in high density also in Gnyal (modern Lhun rtse County, east of Gtam shul / Lho brag), and also further west in the Khang dmar district, but I am not sure whether there is the same (ethno)historical background as the author assumes for the tower sites he mentions. (In Gnyal the towers are associated with the spread of the Chos rgyal Bya ba, one of the regional post-imperial descendants of the Yar lung dynasty. For the tower distribution in Gnyal, see the map "The ancient district of Gnyal", at [www.oeaw.ac.at/tibetantumulus-tradition/maps/gyo-ru-left-horn/](http://www.oeaw.ac.at/tibetantumulus-tradition/maps/gyo-ru-left-horn/)). And even with the *so kha* towers from Upper Yar lung and many similar *mkhar* structures in Central Tibet locally known as Bya khyung 'bab sa it often seems difficult to distinguish their outer form from the Nyang po or Lho brag towers. Moreover, it seems that

One specific characteristic of the Srid pa'i lha culture, which I find particularly worth mentioning, is the absence of a "mountain cult"; this relates not only to the ethnographic reality of the research areas, but also to the larger space that the Dga' thang 'Bum pa manuscripts and the *ste'u* and *sha slungs* rites refer to:

[mountains are] completely absent from the central ritual concerns expressed in any manuscript from dGa'-thang and the *Ste'u* and *Sha slungs* manuscript as well (Vol. II, p. 82).

The mountains (especially the summit zones) are apparently not a place of "source of life", at least not an explicit addressee in the rituals and virtual shamanistic journeys, where other parts of the landscape (river course) come to the fore, and above everything is the sky (or its uppermost, usually 13<sup>th</sup>, level) where the actual ancestral origin is located (Vol. II, p. 81-82).

Huber combines these observations with a more general scepticism about earlier (pre-Buddhist) forms of mountain worship in Tibet, as has been common opinion in the western literature since Samten Karmay's studies at the latest,<sup>13</sup> that scholar who made the "strongest appeal so far for a widespread and ancient "notion of the ancestral mountain" as being something quintessentially "Tibetan"" (Vol. II, p. 82). In concrete terms, for the Srid pa'i lha areas, this means that the *lha* at the centre of the revitalisation rituals—above all 'O de Gung rgyal ("the most prominent and universal deity identity occurring in the cult of Srid-pa'i lha"), his "son", the *lha'i bu* Gu se Lang ling (Gur zhe),<sup>14</sup> and the deity *lha* Tshangs pa<sup>15</sup>—are not associated with any

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the usual attribution of the function of the stone buildings as "defence tower" is not always true, at least not for the Nyang po towers, according to the local information available to me (cf. Hazod, G. 2006. The land of Shing-khri btsan-po: a survey of ancient Nyang-po in eastern Central Tibet, unpubl. paper, i.e. written version of the paper held by the author at the IATS conference, Bonn 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Karmay, Samten. 1996. The Tibetan cult of mountain deities and its political significance, in: Blondeau, Anne-Marie and Ernst Steinkellner (eds.), *Reflections on the Mountain: Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalaya*. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 59-75.

<sup>14</sup> This *lha* deity known from the *Rgyal rigs* chronicle (and Aris' studies related to it; above fn. 6) is plausibly associated by the author with the Dakpa- and Dzala-speaking Mon groups of the research area, with further distant relationship to Qiangic and Naic languages speaking groups (Vol. II, p. 146f.).

<sup>15</sup> The author refers here to the *lha* Tshangs pa of the origin account of the Rlangs Lha gzig family (in the *Rlangs kyi po ti bse ru rgyas pa*, Lhasa 1986) as the possible template of this Srid pa'i lha deity, and emphasises that in this account as in the Srid pa'i lha tradition there is no allusion to the Buddhist identification of Tshangs pa

mountain in the vicinity of the research areas. Huber calls them placeless deities. This observation appears to be rather unusual compared to the situation in Central Tibet and adjacent “Tibetan” regions,<sup>16</sup> but on the other hand it is not entirely unknown for peripheral areas.<sup>17</sup> With ‘O de Gung rgyal, it is the well-known case that this famous Phyva god (known as the “father” of all the *lha* or territorial gods of Central Tibet; below fn. 21) is at the same time associated with a mountain, i.e. the ‘O lde Gung rgyal mountain range in the ‘Ol kha district on the border with Dvags po, an identity that Huber questions. The mountain association of a deity named ‘O lde Gung rgyal is a later Buddhist story (13<sup>th</sup> / 14<sup>th</sup> cent.), he says, and this mountain deity cannot be derived from the ‘O de Gung rgyal of the Old Tibetan texts and has nothing to do with the eponymous deity of the Srid pa’i lha tradition either (Vol. I, p. 87; and esp. fn. 48-49 for details concerning this issue).

It may be true that we still know too little about what exactly defined the “mountain cult” in pre-Buddhist Tibet and a critical look can certainly help to find a more precise determination in this respect; yet in all I see no reason to question the very early ritual significance of the mountains in Tibet (or more precisely Central Tibet—the old Bod), at least not in the form in which we find this questioning expressed in

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(= Brahṃā), but rather the old Tibetan ancestral context of this Phyva god Tshangs pa is addressed (Vol. I, p. 93). The non-Buddhist function of this deity is indeed clearly illustrated in the presented rituals; on the other hand, the identity of Tshangs pa as Brahṃā in the Rlangs origin account is indirectly mentioned, in the form of the “turquoise-winged white goose” (*ngang dkar g.yu gshog*), the mount of the Brahṃā, with whom the ancestral figure Mang ldom Stag btsan was travelling (*Rlangs, op. cit.*, p. 12.19). And also the form Tshangs pa Gdong bzhi as the *lha* Tshangs pa is often called in the Srid pa’i lha accounts (Vol. I, p. 54, 93, 261) seems to refer to the Brahṃā (i.e. the “four-faced Tshangs pa”), or the alternative form (Tshangs pa) ‘Dungje’ (Vol. I, p. 540: fn. 78) is a corrupt rendering of Tshangs pa Dung thod can, the conch-decorated form of Brahṃā in the tradition of Lower Yar lung, the area where the whole Rlangs story was fabricated. Cf. Hazod, G. Forthcoming. The ‘stranger-king’ and the temple – the Tibetan ruler image retained in post-imperial Buddhist environments: the example of the *lha* of Khra ‘brug (Yar lung, Central Tibet).

<sup>16</sup> Huber himself quotes examples from the Himalayan region of the often-observed situation that together with the migration of people usually also the representative deities (*pho lha*) used to “migrate” and to settle down in the new home (Vol. I, p. 101), and thus having become “place gods”.

<sup>17</sup> With certain restrictions, one can refer here to the situation in Ladakh, cf. Dollfus, Pascale. 1996. No sacred mountains in Ladakh? In: Blondeau, Anne-Marie and Ernst Steinkellner (eds.), *Reflections on the Mountain. Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalaya*. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 3-23.

one of the recent discussions.<sup>18</sup> Noteworthy are new data from the field of archaeological (and archaeo-astronomical) surveys in Central Tibet, in connection with the alignment of burial mounds in Mu ra (above fn. 10), which indicate that ancient *lha* mountains in the districts of Central Tibet and also mountain sanctuaries, which are primarily known from the Buddhist tradition, apparently served as reference points in geomantic practices as early as the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE.<sup>19</sup> In my opinion, the imperial deities involved in divination, the “source of prognosis” as Dotson has described them, should be seen in a similar context.<sup>20</sup> In these documents, which Huber also quotes, ‘O de Gung rgyal appears in tandem with famous (imperial) mountain / territorial deities such as Thang la Ya bzbur and Yar lha Sham po as well as a dozen of other place deities classified as *yul lha* or *lam lha* (IOL Tib J 740, ll.1-171), and there is actually no reason not to see the ‘O de Gung rgyal of these lists similarly as a place god, i.e. to identify him with the mountain in Ol kha (cf. also Dotson, *op. cit.*, p. 24-25).<sup>21</sup> In my opinion, it is no contra-

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. here M. Walter’s critical “mountain cult” reflections in which he, for example, doubts that the *lha dgu* and *sku lha* of the late 8<sup>th</sup> century-Khri Srong lde btsan edict had anything to do with mountains. Walter, Michael. 2009. *Buddhism and Empire: The Political and Religious Culture of Early Tibet*. Leiden: Brill, 230ff. The problem has been recently addressed by the author of this review: Hazod, G. 2019. ‘There is scarcely a peak in Tibet which would not be regarded as the abode of a mountain-god or goddess’ – Some notes on Nebesky-Wojtkowitz’ classification of Tibetan mountain deities based on recent historical-ethnographic research in Central Tibet; paper held at the Symposium in memoriam of René Nebesky-Wojtkowitz “Exploring Himalayan Cultural Heritage”, Weltmuseum Vienna, Nov. 2019. It has been demonstrated that the representative *lha* of the ancient Central Tibetan chiefdoms, as far as identifiable, all refer to mountains, and there is no reason not to regard this association as old, if not dating from the time of the founding of this regional rules (in later history addressed as *rgyal phran* or minor principalities). They are no doubt part of the *bod yul gyi sku lha dang lha dgu* evoked as witnesses for the oath ceremony in the context of the Khri Srong lde btsan edict (*Mkhas pa’i dga’ ston*, Beijing ed. 1986, p. 371.22-23). For the *sku lha* (= *sku bla*), see most recently Dotson, Brandon. 2019. Gods and souls in Tibet: The etymologies of *sku bla* (paper held at the IATS Paris 2019); cf. also Bialek, Joanna. 2018. *Compounds and Compounding in Old Tibetan*. Marburg: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, p. 233, *et passim*.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Romain, William F. 2019. Tombs of the Tibetan kings: geomantic entanglements with sacred mountains (online publication ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1177-248X>).

<sup>20</sup> Dotson, Brandon. 2007. Divination and law in the Tibetan Empire: the role of dice in the legislation of loans, interest, marital law and troop conscription, in: Kapstein, Matthew and B. Dotson (eds.), *Contributions to the Cultural History of Early Tibet*. Leiden: Brill, 3-77.

<sup>21</sup> The mountain with the striking pyramidal snowy peak is located at the intersection between the northern and southern parts of Central Tibet, on both sides clearly visible from quite far away – perhaps the actual origin for the deity’s attribution as “father” – father of the district *lha-s*, a genealogical classification widespread at least since the 11<sup>th</sup> century. In ‘Ol kha, the ritual landscape with its (partly ruined)

diction if the same deity appears as “placeless” deity elsewhere, which, as demonstrated by Huber, has no abode other than the sky (Vol. I, p. 82), from where it used to ritually descend to Earth without staying here permanently.

These two issues, which I have briefly picked out, the *mkhar* and the mountain cult issue, only form two side aspects in this so extensive study, and they represent two of the many examples where the ethnography of this previously little-known Himalayan tradition repeatedly leads us to core areas of the early Tibetan culture, often with suggestions from the author to reconsider traditional positions in the light of new evidence.

In the final “Reflection” chapter, at the end of the second volume, the author has summed up this situation very well:

There is no doubt the Srid-pa'i lha cult is somewhat unique compared with other cultural phenomena within its wider surroundings. So much of its content can be shown to preserve components and traces of ancient rites, narratives, cosmology and models, albeit sometimes transformed and reused. Some of this material we can securely document as far back as the eleventh century era in the same geographical region, while other aspects are attested in earlier pre-eleventh century Old Tibetan documents. Certain specialised ritual uses of the sacred plant Ephedra<sup>22</sup> offer an excellent example of very ancient cultural patterns being continued within the Srid-pa'i lha cult and its precursor ritual culture known from nearby gTam-shul, but for which we currently have no other ethnographic and historical evidence from elsewhere across the historical Tibetosphere (Vol. II, p. 241).

Finally, the work provides a theoretical contribution. Huber sees the concept of “mundane rites” (short for “rites for mundane goals”), which characterises the cult of Srid pa'i lha, as an alternative to “folk religion”, “nameless religion”, “pagan rituals” and other common expressions in the literature that refer to the close interweaving of ritual and community outside the world dominated by salvation religion. Inspired by Maurice Bloch's notion of the ‘transcendental social’,<sup>23</sup> the author understands “mundane rites” as an alternative approach to “religion”, which similar to “tradition” etc. “fails to do justice to the cult's

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'O lde Gung rgyal-oriented *yul lha* sites also speaks in favour of an old tradition of the deity's association with this mountain, although it is true that the various *rgyal phran* catalogues only list the *srin* of 'O yul (= 'Ol kha) and not the *lha*.

<sup>22</sup> For ephedra (*mtshe*), one of the core components of the early Tibetan rituals, see the highly informative presentation and discussion in Vol. I, p. 137f., Vol. II, 35f.

<sup>23</sup> Bloch, Maurice. 2013. Why religion is nothing special but is central; book chapter in: Bloch, M., *In and Out of Each Other's Body: Theory of Mind, Evolution, Truth, and the Nature of the Social*. London: Paradigm Publishers, 23-40.

characteristics" (Vol. I, p. 15):

Ultimately, none of these expressions are entirely adequate to describe rites encompassed by the cult, nor those practices recorded in the much older ritual texts from which the cult's content is derived. I thus introduce the new expression 'rites for mundane goals' or shorter 'mundane rites' to describe the cult and cognate phenomena. [...] All such 'mundane rites', past and present, lack any reference to or association with soteriological claims or 'ultimate' horizons for human existence. Particularly in this latter sense, rites for mundane goals must be considered as non-religious in the contexts I am investigating (Vol. I, p. 14).

Similar considerations can be found in current discussions about religion in early Tibetan societies,<sup>24</sup> and in fact it seems that "religion" is not an appropriate concept for describing phenomena like the Srid pa'i lha cult, simply because in this context the religious cannot be defined as a category separate from everyday social life. With regard to traditional Tibet, however, one also observes certain limits in the usability of such methodological division between organised religion (book religion) and the popular-religious traditions (in whatever form the latter are specifically described), since, and this is not new, the older world of the everyday (mundane) rituals has been largely incorporated in the programmes of the great religions—a topic which needs not to be further pursued here.<sup>25</sup>

To conclude, there are hardly any comparable publications from the recent past in the field of Tibetan and Himalayan studies; in fact, it seems it has rather gone out of fashion to produce such extensive, fundamental research-oriented work in this research field.<sup>26</sup> The basis for this has been laid by the more than 30 field research visits (between 2002 and 2014; Vol. I, p. 7), the realisation of which (with the coping of the enormous logistical and bureaucratic expenses etc.), have to be regarded as an exceptional achievement.

Noteworthy are also the form and outward appearances of the book: it is stylistically brilliant (as is known from previous publications

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<sup>24</sup> I refer here to the conference recently held in Vienna (Nov. 2018) entitled "The Social and the Religious in the Making of Tibetan Societies. New Perspectives on Imperial Tibet". The publication of the conference proceedings (ed. G. Hazod, C. Jahoda and M. Fermer) is planned for 2020, or early 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Some new reflections in this respect are to be found in the introduction to the aforementioned conference proceedings (fn. 24).

<sup>26</sup> An exception from the closer research environment is M. Oppitz's extensive shaman drum study—often cited in the present work in connection with the numerous overlaps in the field of the eastern Himalayan ethnography. Oppitz, Michael. 2013. *Morphologie der Schamanentrommel*, 2 vols. Zürich: Edition Voldemeer Zürich.

by the author) and as far as I can tell the text has hardly any typos or other formal errors. And not least the book was made as a high-quality production, made in offset print on best paper, bound in hardback, it gives one a pleasure to leaf through it. These external qualities are only appropriate for a work that will undoubtedly endure as standard in the field of Tibetan studies and Himalayan ethnography.





## Compte-rendu

**Cantwell, Cathy, *Dudjom Rinpoche's Vajrakīlaya Works: A Study in Authoring, Compiling, and Editing in the Tibetan Revelatory Tradition* (with a chapter by Robert Mayer), Sheffield: Equinox, 2020. ISBN: 978-1-78179-762-4 (xii, 396 pp., 6 figures).**

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**T**his is a very detailed and thorough study of Dudjom Rinpoche's works on Vajrakīlaya, an important tantric deity of Tibetan Buddhism, by Cathy Cantwell, one of the foremost scholars of Tibetan tantric ritual, whose expertise spans both anthropological and philological approaches to Tibetan religion. The subject of the book, Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje Rinpoche (1904-1987), was a towering figure in the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism. As a highly respected lama and prolific scholar, he was instrumental in preserving and transmitting the Nyingma spiritual and cultural legacy at a time when the latter was in danger of extinction.

By examining Dudjom Rinpoche's contributions to the Vajrakīlaya corpus he inherited as part of his lineage, as well as his own treasure (*gter-ma*) revelations on the subject, this study sheds much light on the dynamics of literary production within the treasure tradition. The author provides a careful and detailed analysis of numerous concrete examples of ritual, iconographic and textual variation amongst a wealth of related sources, and shows how passages from previous tantric revelations are quoted, rearranged and expanded within new configurations that, far from overshadowing the source revelation as might be expected, tend to imbue the latter with renewed vitality by ensuring that it is carried on by new generations of practitioners. This study thus invites us to rethink the categories of 'author', 'editor' and 'compiler' in the light of the rich web of intertextuality that characterizes the Tibetan treasure tradition, and to appreciate the matrix of concerns – ritual requirements, lineage affiliation, social embeddedness, etc. – that shape the production of this kind of literature.

The book, which opens with an introduction, consists of fourteen chapters. The first of these is written by Robert Mayer and highlights the theoretical issues that serve as a backdrop to many of the findings later explored in the book. The succeeding chapters (and the introduction) are all written by Cathy Cantwell. The second chapter deals with

Tibetan Buddhist conceptions of identity, the understanding of which is necessary in order to appreciate the whole ethos of the treasure tradition. Chapters 3 to 13 examine Dudjom Rinpoche's various contributions to the Vajrakīlaya heritage; the chapters are roughly organized chronologically in the order in which Dudjom Rinpoche worked on the different materials in turn, though as Cantwell notes (p. 26), a stylistic evolution is not obvious, something that is not altogether surprising given this codified genre of ritual literature which tends to downplay individual panache. Chapter 14 is the book's conclusion and brings together the various threads taken up and analysed in the previous chapters.

The introduction itself already makes several very important points; one of these concerns the way that tantric rituals are held to function. From an emic perspective, the more inner aspects of the ritual, such as the meditation and visualizations, are deeply intertwined with their performative aspects. It is not just that the performance of the ritual reflects and supports the meditation, but the mere performance of the ritual, especially if carried out with devotion in the context of a group practice accompanied by a master and more accomplished practitioners, is held to have a deeply transformative effect on the minds of the participants, even if they have not trained in meditation. One can therefore speak of a ritual meditation or meditative ritual interchangeably in this context (pp. 8f). A further point concerns the conservative nature of the treasure tradition, which in this respect differs little from other forms of Tibetan literature. Contrary to popular imaginings of the treasure revealer (*gter-ston*) as an inspired genius giving voice to a personal creative vision, it can be stated quite unequivocally that the revelation of tantric practices as treasure is rarely innovative, as it rather seeks to re-present a timeless heritage slightly reworked to fit new circumstances (pp. 12f). A third point emphasized by Cantwell is the social dimension of the redaction of treasure texts. There is often a significant amount of time that elapses between the actual revelatory event and the redaction of the specific texts making up the treasure revelation. It is the requests of the revealer's disciples that provide the impetus and circumstances to write the concrete texts of a particular treasure corpus (pp. 17f).

Following the introduction, the first chapter, which is written by Robert Mayer and represents an expanded and updated version of an article previously published in the *JIASB*,<sup>1</sup> provides some very useful background to the broader theoretical issues that are tackled in the

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<sup>1</sup> Mayer, Robert, 'gTer ston and Tradent: Innovation and Conservation in Tibetan Treasure Literature', in *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vols.36-37, 2013-2014, pp. 227-242.

book. Mayer draws attention to the modular nature of Tibetan tantric literature, underlining the fact that when a treasure revealer produces a treasure text he will not be writing out of thin air, but will be drawing on a vast repertoire of codified phrases and passages, many of them committed to memory, that he can rearrange to weave a new text (pp. 39f). Moreover, several of the genres of Tibetan tantric literature, notably the *rNying-ma rgyud-'bum*, the transmitted literature (*bka'-ma*) and the treasure revelations, share the same modules of text (pp. 44), which we see reappearing in slightly new constellations.

The theoretical foundation being thus laid, Cantwell is free to guide her readers through the intricacies of tantric composition in Tibet. She does this skilfully by beginning her study with an exploration of self-identity in the context of Tibetan Buddhism, the subject of the book's second chapter. This is a very important topic in seeking to understand the treasure tradition, since the latter involves the idea that the revealer of a spiritual treasure is the reincarnation of a line of previous masters (typically going back to one of the twenty-five disciples of Padmasambhava, the 8th century adept credited with establishing tantric Buddhism in Tibet) and that the treasures he reveals in this life were bequeathed to him by Padmasambhava in the 8th century. In this chapter, Cantwell contrasts the somewhat fierce and unconventional character of Dudjom Lingpa (1835-1904), a visionary self-made lama who was Dudjom Rinpoche's immediate predecessor, with the mild-mannered Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje. The latter, as a highly respected incarnation, received an elite religious education and had little need either to establish his authority in the face of opposition or to engage in arduous retreats, as his innate talents and abilities manifested effortlessly. By contrast, Dudjom Lingpa drew his religious authority from visionary encounters he had during meditative retreats, and was not always accepted by the established monastic hierarchies. The contrast between both figures serves to highlight the fact that such differences in style and emphasis between two successive incarnations of the same master are quite acceptable by Tibetan standards. In this case, an important element in Dudjom Lingpa and Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje's self-understanding concerns their identity as Padmasambhava's disciple Khye'u-chung Lotsawa and their connection to the wrathful form of Padmasambhava called Dorje Drolö, as well as their association with Dudul Dorje (1615-1672), their common predecessor, who is famed for opening the hidden land of Pemako, the birthplace of Dudjom Rinpoche.

With the third chapter we enter in earnest the textual studies that make up the backbone of this book: the chapter considers Dudjom Rinpoche's work on the *Phur-bu bdud-dpung zil-gnon*, a Vajrakīlaya revelation by Drakngak Lingpa alias Dudjom Namkhai Dorje (1871-*ca.*

1929). In his late teens, Dudjom Rinpoche was invited to Drakngak Lingpa's centre in Devikoṭa in Pemako in order to bestow the empowerments of the *Rin-chen gter-mdzod*, a massive collection of treasure texts compiled by Jamgön Kongtrul (1813-1899), which takes several months to grant in full. This marked the first time that Dudjom Rinpoche bestowed this collection of empowerments, a duty which he was to fulfil ten times during his life. On this occasion, Drakngak Lingpa requested Dudjom Rinpoche to write a framework text (*khog-dbub*) for his Vajrakīlaya revelation, which was being put down in writing at that very time, Dudjom Rinpoche occasionally acting as a scribe for Drakngak Lingpa's revelations. As a genre, a framework provides necessary instructions and inserts ritual recitations required in the context of a communal major evocation session (*sgrub-chen*). In writing the framework text for Drakngak Lingpa's revelation, Dudjom Rinpoche follows the template of Terdak Lingpa's (1646-1714) framework for Guru Chöwang's (1212-1270) *Yang-gsang spu-gri*.

Next, the fourth chapter turns towards Dudjom Rinpoche's contributions to the *Yang-gsang spu-gri* of Guru Chöwang, highlighting his involvement, beyond the treasure lineages with which he was immediately associated, with the foundational traditions of tantric praxis in the Nyingma school. In this regard, Dudjom Rinpoche's dedication to preserving the wider textual heritage of the Nyingma treasures and transmitted literature owes much to the exemplars of Terdak Lingpa and of his scholarly younger brother Lochen Dharmasrī (1654-1717). The Mindroling monastery which they established was to have a lasting impact on the Nyingma tradition as a whole, not the least through the convening of ritual gatherings which attracted the major Nyingma masters of the day and thus contributed to the ritual integration of an otherwise rather decentralized tradition.<sup>2</sup> Cantwell makes the important point (p. 97) that a key factor in this ritual integration is played by the sacred pledges (Skt. *samaya*) that bind the participants in such gatherings among each other and that are physically embodied in the sacramental substances consumed during the rituals. In the case of the *Yang-gsang spu-gri*, Dudjom Rinpoche's (and indeed our) knowledge thereof was mediated by the works of Terdak Lingpa and Lochen Dharmasrī – it seems that in the 19th century, when Jamgön Kongtrul compiled the *Rin-chen gter-mdzod* collection, the *Yang-gsang spu-gri* was only known through the contributions of the Mindroling brothers, and it is even conceivable that its texts had already been lost by the 17th century, so that Terdak Lingpa himself may have had to rely on earlier compilations that were already removed from the original revelation

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Dalton, Jacob, *The Gathering of Intentions: A History of a Tibetan Tantra*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2016, pp. 115-119.

(p. 101). Dudjom Rinpoche's contributions to this cycle consist of three sets of notes (*zin-bris*), mainly written in 1926 when he was a young man. The notes were originally taken while observing a major evocation session (*sgrub-chen*) held at Mindroling monastery, and were later edited and elaborated on with the aim of ensuring the continuity of the Mindroling conventions of ritual performance and of introducing them to the communities under Dudjom Rinpoche's spiritual direction. Such notes are intended as a navigation tool to aid practitioners find their bearings among the various practice texts that are recited during extensive sessions of communal ritual.

The fifth chapter is about Dudjom Rinpoche's work on Dudul Dorje's Vajrakīlaya revelation, popularly known as the *gNam-lcags spu-gri*. Apart from his work on this cycle, Dudjom Rinpoche also composed texts for Dudul Dorje's Avalokiteśvara cycle, the *Nam-mkha'i rgyal-po*, and for his cycle devoted to Padmasambhava (*bla-sgrub*), the *dGongs-pa yongs-'dus*. It is interesting to observe (p. 126) that Dudjom Rinpoche's inserts for Dudul Dorje's Vajrakīlaya are drawn from his own *gNam-lcags spu-gri* (on this title, see below), whereas earlier he had relied on Dudul Dorje's Vajrakīlaya revelations when compiling his *gNam-lcags spu-gri* cycle.

The sixth chapter looks at Dudjom Rinpoche's important contributions to Dudjom Lingpa's Vajrakīlaya cycles. Dudjom Lingpa revealed three cycles regarding the deity Vajrakīlaya: (1) the *Thugs-sgrub gsang-ba'i rgya-can*; (2) the *bDe-gshegs snying-po*; and (3) the *Dag-srang ye-sheś drwa-ba*. Dudjom Rinpoche's magnum opus on Vajrakīlaya, his *gNam-lcags spu-gri* (a title derived from the popular name of Dudul Dorje's cycle, p. 121), is devoted to Dudjom Lingpa's *Thugs-sgrub gsang-ba'i rgya-can*. In discussing the production of these textual cycles, Cantwell makes some very interesting observations regarding the religious context of treasure revelation. She notes in particular that Tibetan masters are steeped from their youngest age in a process of internalizing vast quantities of liturgies, often written in versified form, which are regularly chanted and in many cases memorized deliberately. These verses are recited audibly during meditative rituals, so that they are internally associated with the visualizations performed as part of the evocations (Skt. *sādhana*). In such an environment, it is quite possible for a revelation to at once genuinely flow forth from the inner experience of the individual visionary and incorporate parts of the textual heritage in which s/he is steeped (p. 144, p. 353). In the case of the *Thugs-sgrub gsang-ba'i rgya-can*, it was put down in writing several years after the initial revelation, so Dudjom Lingpa's continued immersion in the rituals and visions of Dudul Dorje's tradition would have naturally shaped the revelatory output.

In the textual study that constitutes the core of the chapter, Cantwell points out that there is little text shared in common between Dudjom Lingpa's two major Vajrakīlaya cycles, the *Thugs-sgrub gsang-ba'i rgya-can* and the *bDe-gshegs snying-po*; the latter mainly consists of short texts focusing on the ultimate level of meaning (pp. 151f). Dudjom Rinpoche's work on the *bDe-gshegs snying-po*, which was done when he was twenty-two years old, extracts and combines several of the short texts in order to create a ritual manual (*las-byang*), a daily practice (*rgyun-khyer*) – which is particularly internalized in character – and a secondary ritual (*smad-las*) (p. 154). Regarding the *Dag-snaang ye-shes drwa-ba*, Cantwell provides a thorough discussion of the cycle's distinctive origin myth for the barberry sticks that are placed around the oblation (*gtor-ma*) to make a fence (pp. 157-160).

The seventh chapter concentrates on Dudjom Rinpoche's *gNam-lcags spu-gri*, the name of his work on Dudjom Lingpa's *Thugs-sgrub gsang-ba'i rgya-can*. The chapter's narrower focus is on the ritual manual (*las-byang*), which makes good sense, since this manual is used as a central feature of communal practices within the Dudjom tradition. It is interesting to note that whereas Dudjom Lingpa's ritual manual is lacking even in crucial components of the visualizations for the generation phase and for the *mantra* repetition, these elements are supplied by Dudjom Rinpoche, mainly by relying on and reworking other parts of Dudjom Lingpa's revelation (pp. 166f), as well as by drawing on Dudul Dorje's revelations. Dudjom Rinpoche's contributions include extensive elucidatory comments, which are drawn from the wider heritage of the transmitted literature; these are typically not marked by the orthographic device of the *gter-tsheg*.

The eighth chapter pursues this focus on the *gNam-lcags spu-gri* by examining the medicinal accomplishment (*smān-sgrub*) manual which Dudjom Rinpoche wrote for this cycle in 1937. The text gives detailed instructions for the preparation and consecration of sacred pills during a major evocation session (*sgrub-chen*). It is based on a similar, though more general, manual by Terdak Lingpa, and differs in its length and complexity from the manuals of Dudjom Lingpa and Dudul Dorje; the latter are unsuited for elaborate monastic settings, but are intended to be performed by a single practitioner, or else by a master and a few attendants. The case in point is particularly interesting, for we witness a kind of 'mixing and matching' from a number of revelations to which Dudjom Rinpoche was closely connected. Of course, as the author is careful to underline, this is quite different from the practice of 'mixing and matching' usually discussed in the sociology of religion, where it

designates a syncretic mixing from very disparate contexts made possible by the globalized nature of the modern religious marketplace.<sup>3</sup> In the case of Dudjom Rinpoche, on the contrary, the textual material that is 'mixed and matched' is drawn from closely related revelations of conducive family (*gter-kha rigs-mthun*) (p. 210).

The book's ninth chapter presents an overview of Dudjom Rinpoche's other texts comprising the *gNam-lcags spu-gri*. This includes ritual texts as well as commentaries and instructions. Among the ritual texts can be counted a longevity practice (*tshe-sgrub*), texts for the guardian deities, a daily practice (*rgyun-khyer*), an evocation framework (*sgrub-khog*), a secondary ritual (*smad-las*), etc. Some of these ritual texts, such as the evocation framework and the secondary ritual, share a similar structure with parallel texts from other cycles (p. 217, p. 225). The commentarial texts include a propitiation handbook (*bsnyen-yig*) for the primary ritual (*stod-las*), pith instructions for the secondary ritual and a commentary on the yogic practices of the channels and winds (*rtsa-rlung*).

The tenth chapter turns to Dudjom Rinpoche's own Vajrakīlaya revelations, the *sPu-gri reg-phung*. Given Dudjom Rinpoche's deliberate decision to focus his energies on consolidating previous treasures and the heritage of the transmitted literature rather than on the production of new revelations, the treasures which he did reveal are revered for being particularly pithy and well-structured. The accounts of the *sPu-gri reg-phung* make it clear that it is a very profound instruction bequeathed to Dudjom Rinpoche through the direct mind transmission of Yeshe Tsogyal, Padmasambhava's mystical consort, but also (as is typical for tantric teachings) that it is part of a much larger cycle. This implies that Dudjom Rinpoche exercised a degree of choice in deciding which portions of the revelation to commit to writing. The corollary of this is that while the *sPu-gri reg-phung* has the main practice texts, its auxiliary rituals share text with other cycles, being particularly dependent on the *gNam-lcags spu-gri* (pp. 262f). Unlike with Dudjom Lingpa's Vajrakīlaya revelations, however, the root text (*rtsa-gzhung*) of the *sPu-gri reg-phung* itself follows a well-structured order. It is noteworthy that when the initial pithy verses of the root revelation are expanded by the revealer himself to make a practice manual, the entire resultant text comes to be regarded *as though* it were revealed text. In this particular case (though this is no universally applicable rule!), this

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Altglas, Véronique, *From Yoga to Kabbalah: Religious Exoticism and the Logics of Bricolage*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014; Altglas, Véronique, 'Exotisme religieux et bricolage', in *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, vol.167, July-September 2014, pp. 315-332; and Sinha, Vineeta, "'Mixing and Matching': The Shape of Everyday Hindu Religiosity in Singapore", in *Asian Journal of Social Science*, vol.37:1, 2009, pp. 83-106.

is reflected by the fact that the expanded text too is marked by the *gter-tshag* (p. 253, p. 265). It is also of interest that if the verses of a closely connected lineage revelation are deemed to be especially beautiful, they can be incorporated into the text of a ritual even if their content doesn't exactly fit the new context. An example is provided by Pema Lingpa's fulfilment ritual (*bskang-ba*), which is used in both the *gNam-lcags spu-gri* and the *sPu-gri reg-phung* (p. 263).

The eleventh chapter is about Dudjom Rinpoche's work on Pema Lingpa's (1450-1521) Vajrakīlaya revelations. These contributions were written when Dudjom Rinpoche was in his late forties to mid-fifties, at a time when he was a mature scholar and master widely versed in a number Vajrakīlaya lineages. Cantwell's discussion of the reasons behind Dudjom Rinpoche's writing of Vajrakīlaya texts for the Pema Lingpa tradition is especially interesting, for it illustrates the dynamics of literary production in the context of the treasure tradition as a whole. The reasons in this case can be summarized as follows: (1) involving a high-status lama such as Dudjom Rinpoche is held to infuse the lineage with fresh blessings; (2) asking him to compose metrical texts has practical advantages, in that it makes the recitation of the texts easier; and (3) aligning the texts with the widely spread Mindrolling ritual procedures means that they can be easily slotted in during communal practice sessions (pp. 273-276). Taking as an example the evocation framework (*sgrub-khog*) which Dudjom Rinpoche composed for Pema Lingpa's *Yang-gsang srog-gi spu-gri*, it can be said that while there is a degree of standardization involved in such a procedure, this does not exclude the preservation of distinctive parts of Pema Lingpa's own more idiosyncratic formulations, though they are integrated within a more familiar overall pattern. What is witnessed in the examples analysed by Cantwell is that over the course of generations, the presentation of a revelation may change quite significantly, and such subsequent representations of a prior revelation may owe much to cycles other than the one being represented (p. 291). This repackaging of tantric cycles helps to ensure their continued vitality over time and can best be seen as a response to the needs of the wider religious community (p. 292, p. 294).

The twelfth chapter represents an initial foray into contextualizing Dudjom Rinpoche's and his team's editorial work on Pema Lingpa's *Collected Works*, a project sponsored by the Bhutanese royal family at a time when the Tibetan literary and religious heritage was greatly endangered by the Chinese Communist invasion of Tibet and the devastation caused in the wake of the Cultural Revolution. Though a team effort, the end product is attributed to the master as chief editor (p. 325). While the latter may not have much of a role in the day-to-day



business of collating and editing the various texts, he will be responsible for blessing the project as a whole and for helping to gather various manuscript sources through his widespread connections (p. 363). A further consideration is that ordinary scholars may not have the authority to emend the revealed text, whereas the masters in charge of a treasure lineage, particularly its doctrinal custodians (*chos-bdag*), are not at risk of corrupting the original revelation, since it is believed that their wisdom enables them to discern what in the text is genuine and what is not. It is therefore even considered to be their duty to clean up unconventional spellings, etc., if these obscure the meaning of the revealed text (pp. 305f).

The thirteenth and penultimate chapter discusses Dudjom Rinpoche's contributions to Zilnön Namkhai Dorje's (b. ca. 1873/4) *Yang-gsang phrin-las bcud-dril*. Zilnön Namkhai Dorje, whom Dudjom Rinpoche met when he was twenty-one, was particularly important in the latter's spiritual development, both in granting him the Dzogchen mind transmission during the empowerment of Jamgön Kongtrül's secret practice of Dorje Drolö, and in giving him prophecies that confirmed his status as a revealer and unlocked his innate abilities. Dudjom Rinpoche's contributions to Zilnön Namkhai Dorje's revelations concern the *Yang-gsang phrin-las bcud-dril* and the '*Chi-med srog-thig*. Regarding the former in particular (the focus of the chapter), it is apparent that Dudjom Rinpoche felt a personal sense of responsibility for this revelation, for he wrote contributions for this cycle in Nepal during the late 1970s, long after his encounters with the master and without being prompted to do so by his students.

The fourteenth chapter represents the conclusion to the study. This is followed by an exhaustive bibliography and an index.

The book is of such high academic quality that one would be hard-pressed to find any faults with it. Typographical errors and other inadvertencies are few and far between: 'Pemoko' (p. 94) for Pemako; 'female yogi' (p. 234) would be better rendered as yoginī; the very literal translation 'Innate Wheel Vows' (p. 329) for Cakrasaṃvara (Tib. lHan-skyes 'Khor-lo sdom-pa) is a bit opaque – 'Innate Restraining through the Wheel', or perhaps 'Innate Restraining Wheel' would be closer to the sense;<sup>4</sup> 'experiential experience' (p. 356) seems somewhat inelegant. Furthermore, some readers might take issue with the policy of giving website references within the main text rather than in a footnote (e.g. p. 59, p. 70, p. 73).

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Sanderson, Alexis, 'The Śaiva Age: The Rise and Dominance of Śaivism During the Early Medieval Period', in Einoo, Shingo (ed.), *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*, Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture, 2009, pp. 41-349, esp. p. 166.


Yet such minor quibbles should not distract from the immense value of this study, which is a model of thoroughness and of clarity of presentation. For although this is a very erudite book, the logical organization of the material and the use of phonetic renderings of Tibetan names, along with the English translations of the titles of the Tibetan works being discussed, makes this invaluable study accessible to a non-specialist readership as well. Furthermore, the author has taken pains to give the Tibetan passages under discussion in Tibetan script (rather than transliteration) in the footnotes, which means that the younger generation of English-speaking Tibetans may also benefit from this work of modern Tibetology. What is more, the author's extensive familiarity with the different genres of Tibetan tantric ritual, both in their textual and performative dimensions, has enabled her to render the technical ritual terms with great precision, a precision that will assist future scholars and translators dealing with this highly specialized type of literature. In sum, the detailed case studies presented in this book provide a wealth of material for a more nuanced understanding of the processes of authorship and revelation within the Tibetan tantric tradition. There is much to be learnt from and to ponder in this book, both for academic scholars of Buddhism, of Tibetology and of Religious Studies, and for those with a more general interest in Buddhism and Tibet.



Compte-rendu

**Knowledge and Context in Tibetan Medicine, edited  
by William McGrath, Brill's Tibetan Studies Library, vol.  
43, Brill, 2019, 372 pages. ISBN 978-90-04-40149-5.**

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his collection of ten articles emerged in response to desiderata in the study of Tibetan medicine, which called for comprehensive contributions to help remedy the relative scarcity of detailed analytical research on Tibetan medical traditions, or Sowa Rigpa (*gso ba rig pa*).<sup>1</sup> Since then, scholars of Tibetan medicine have made great strides to expand on the available interpretative—instead of encyclopedic—knowledge of Sowa Rigpa, and some significant lacunae, such as the study of the origins and textual history of the *Four Tantras* (*rgyud bzhi*), have seen considerable progress.<sup>2</sup> The present volume aims to provide critical analysis and contextualization of Tibetan medical knowledge across different historical periods, with the aim to further account for the composite, variegated and dynamic nature of the Tibetan medical tradition (p. viii). To this end, the ten chapters which are derived from the panels on Tibetan medicine at the Fourteenth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies in Bergen (IATS 2016) provide a rich and multifaceted collection on the history and lived realities of Tibetan medicine, bringing to the fore the complexity, diversity, and extensive scope of the Tibetan medical tradition, both past and present.

In response to another desideratum suggested by Blezer et al.—a recommendation to juxtapose contemporary historical and anthropological research on Tibetan medicine that accounts for the diverse social, political, and economical contexts where Sowa Rigpa is practiced—the volume also seeks to integrate ethnographic expertise and historical disciplines. This pursuit of dissolving disciplinary boundaries to enrich academic research is commendable, and McGrath

<sup>1</sup> Henk Blezer et al., “Brief Outlook: Desiderata in the Study of the History of Tibetan Medicine,” in *Soundings in Tibetan Medicine: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Mona Schrempf (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 427–438.

<sup>2</sup> See Yang Ga, “The Sources for the Writing of the Rgyud Bzhi, Tibetan Medical Classic” (Harvard University, 2010); see also William McGrath, “Buddhism and Medicine in Tibet: Origins, Ethics, and Tradition” (University of Virginia, 2017), 124 ff.

elaborates on the strengths of this approach in his introduction:

Indeed, ethnography without philology or archeology is the description of a lived reality that is bereft of history, and philology without ethnography is an isolated truth without obvious relevance for the present day. Challenging the entrenched boundaries of history and anthropology, the present volume focuses upon context—historical and contemporary—in order to explore the vicissitudes of semantics and the complex relationship between medicine and religion in Tibet. (ix-x).

However, this promise of combining both philological and anthropological perspectives in order to construct a fuller picture of the pluralism that characterizes the Tibetan medical tradition is only partially fulfilled as only two of the ten chapters are based on ethnographic fieldwork, and the majority of the chapters rely solely on textual sources.

The chapters that best exemplify the broader goals of the volume laid out in the introduction (pp. vii-xv) are the concluding two chapters that integrate philological work with ethnographic methods. Susannah Deane's chapter "Madness and the Spirits: Examining the Role of Spirits in Mental Illness in the Tibetan Communities in Darjeeling" (pp. 309-336) challenges elite perspectives on Tibetan medicine by problematizing the essentialist and monolithic view of the Tibetan medical tradition that has remained dominant after the establishment of 'orthodoxy' in the 17th–18th century.<sup>3</sup> Deane discusses Tibetan discourses of the role of spirits and deities in mental illness (*sems nad*) among the Tibetan community in Darjeeling, West Bengal, illustrating the broad spectrum of approaches towards health and healing in ethnically Tibetan contexts, which does not necessarily prioritize consulting Tibetan medical practitioners (*amchi*). While the importance of religious practitioners is well-attested to as part of the Tibetan 'healthcare system', Deane's chapter points out important hierarchies regarding the spiritual power of various types of spirit-mediums, who are often integrated into the Buddhist framework within the Tibetan medical horizon although not holding any formal religious position. However, the contemporary context of the Tibetan community in Darjeeling exemplifies significant shifts in the Tibetan medical landscape: while the rituals performed by spirit-mediums are often the preferred therapeutic choice, Deane reports that there were no longer any working Tibetan spirit-mediums during her fieldwork in Darjeeling. However, there was a thriving Nepali spirit-medium tradition in place (*jhānkri* and *mata-ji*), who enjoy an ambivalent reputation among Tibetans; some Tibetans perceive the Nepali spirit-medium tradition to

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<sup>3</sup> Blezer et al., 429.

be very similar to that of the Tibetan spirit-mediums, whereas others argued that the Nepali *jhānkri* and *mata-ji* were of little use in dealing with Tibetan spirits. Deane's case studies delineate the challenges presented by cultural and medical pluralism in health-seeking behavior, which in the Tibetan context in Darjeeling manifests as the adherence to long-standing explanations of spirit causation in a context that is devoid of preferred treatment options. The chapter also reveals some tension between the Tibetan medical information codified in the *Four Tantras* and lay Tibetans' understanding of mental illness related to various spirit entities. As Deane accurately points out, patients are often pragmatic in their health seeking behavior and utilize a range of different treatment modalities, including Tantric Buddhist expertise, Nepali spirit-mediums, biomedicine, and ritual intervention and blessings from well-regarded Buddhist masters.

Barbara Gerke's chapter "Material Presentations and Cultural Drug Translations of Contemporary Tibetan Precious Pills" (pp. 337-368) discusses the transformation of Tibetan medical concepts by investigating how the pharmaceuticalization of Sowa Rigpa has impacted the visual and textual representations of precious pills or *rinchen rilbu* (*rinchen rilbu*, often described as a kind of panacea endowed with spiritual qualities). Gerke emphasizes that the therapeutically highly valued but heterogeneous formulas for precious pills have emerged from various historical and textual contexts, and warns against homogenizing tendencies to portray Sowa Rigpa and its pharmaceutical products. Gerke's analysis of the commodification of precious pills (Jikmé's Old Turquoise-70 in particular) shows important contemporary contextual variations regarding the effects of increasing pharmaceuticalization of Sowa Rigpa: the precious pills manufactured in Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) typically omit terminology, epistemologies, and etiologies specific to Sowa Rigpa in order to appeal to a largely Chinese-speaking clientele, while in the Tibetan diaspora in India elements from Tibetan identity and Buddhism are routinely incorporated in the presentation and packaging of *rinchen rilbu*. Gerke argues that the cross-cultural commodification of precious pills driven by financial gain may undermine their therapeutic value, and lead to uninformed overuse of *rinchen rilbu* as tonics and supplements, while the "Tibetanness" of the product is utilized in diverging ways both in TAR and in the diaspora to present precious pills as "authentically" Tibetan.

Henk Blezer's chapter "A New Sense of (Dark) Humor in Tibet: Brown Phlegm and Black Bile" (pp. 3-58) also discusses the transformation of Tibetan medical concepts by summarizing his investigations of the Tibetan medical category of so-called "brown phlegm" (*bad kan smug po*) disorders that build on the hypothesis that "brown phlegm" may in fact be of Greco-Arab ("black bile") origin. While the

cosmopolitan influences on the Tibetan medical tradition are well-attested to in earlier scholarship, Blezer's close look at the history of ideas related to "brown phlegm" in Tibet—which involves tracing possible points of contact and locating Greco-Arab sources that may have impacted Tibetan epistemes—is gesturing towards some much needed specificity to enable better understanding of the nature of cross-cultural pollination in Tibetan medicine and alleviates some chronologic uncertainties in the development of Sowa Rigpa. Blezer's detailed study places particular emphasis on textual analysis of the *Four Tantras*, the *Fourfold Collection* (*'bum bzhi*), and the *Moon King* (*sman dpyad zla ba'i rgyal po*), as well as examples from Greco-Arab medical writers such as Rufus of Ephesus (late 1st century) and Galen of Pergamum (130–200). While there seems to be significant overlap between *melancholia hypochondriaca* discussed by the Greco-Arab writers and "brown phlegm" disorders described in Tibetan medical literature, Blezer notes that the actual historical connections remain elusive, and that it is only safe to say that non-modern Tibetan historiographical sensibilities have constructed a consensus concerning the impact of Greco-Arab medical knowledge systems on various early Tibetan medical compendia.

Yang Ga's contribution "A Preliminary Study on the Biography of Yutok Yönten Gönpo the Elder: Reflections on the Origins of Tibetan Medicine" (pp. 59-84) discusses the long debated and somewhat sensitive topic of the historicity of Yutok Yönten Gönpo the Elder (*g.yu thog rnying ma yon tan mgon po*). Yang Ga examines the views of traditional and modern Tibetan scholars as well as Western scholars, and critically analyzes the author, the date of composition, and the contents of the best known biography of Yutok the Elder redacted by Darmo Menrampa Lozang Chödrak (*dar mo sman rams pa blo bzang chos grags*, 1638–1710), the personal physician of the Fifth Dalai Lama. Yang Ga's historical-critical assessment of available sources shows that it is unlikely that Yutok the Elder's biography is a reliable historical document as it is most likely produced in the sixteenth century or later on the basis of biographies of Yutok the Younger, and that the historicity of the Elder is therefore doubtful.

The third chapter by Tony Chui ("'Secret Medicine' in the Writings of Sanggyé Gyatso: the Encoded Esoteric Material of Therapeutics", pp. 85-110) discusses esoteric medical ingredients found in Desi Sangye Gyatso's (*sde srid sangs rgyas rgya mtsho*, 1653–1705) *Extended Commentary* (*man ngag lhan thabs*) on the *Instructional Tantra* (*man ngag rgyud*). Chui's chapter contributes to the ongoing debate about whether transgressive ingredients should be interpreted literally or figuratively, a question that has broader relevance to the study of both Tibetan medicine and Buddhist Tantra. The *Extended Commentary* has

been shown to have been included in the medical curriculum at the Chagpori (*lcags po ri*) medical college in Lhasa, and therefore provides important information on the transmission of Tibetan medical knowledge during the late seventeenth century, while also shedding light on the extensive scope of Tibetan medicine and its overlap with esoteric practices and tantric Buddhist conceptualizations of illness and healing held and propagated by Desi Sangye Gyatso—materials which are seldom found in the root text of the *Four Tantras*. Chui describes the encrypted "secret medicines" (*gsang sman*) scattered throughout the *Extended Commentary*, as well as the keys to decrypt the recipes that are found in separate texts. This chapter also offers possible explanations as to why Desi Sangye Gyatso may have felt the need to conceal the "secret medicines": Chui suggests that the primary purpose of this encoding of medical knowledge was to bolster the reputation of Chagpori, which henceforth was said to hold privileged and exclusive medical knowledge beyond the standard *Four Tantras*.

Katharina Sabernig's chapter "Visceral Anatomy as Depicted in Tibetan Medicine" (pp. 111-139) offers a comparison of anatomical nomenclature of depictions in the *thangka* paintings commissioned by Desi Sangye Gyatso to accompany his commentary on the *Four Tantras*, the *Blue Beryl* (*baidūrya sngon po*), medical paintings from Atsagat Monastery in Buryatia, and modern Tibetan medical and anatomical publications. Based on these sources from the late seventeenth century to the present, Sabernig demonstrates the development of anatomical depictions and nomenclatures of internal organs in the Tibetan cultural area. This chapter is particularly fruitfully read in conversation with the work of Frances Garrett and Janet Gyatso on debates over theoretical and empirical anatomical knowledge in Tibet,<sup>4</sup> and it raises further questions related to anatomical accuracy, the relationship between empirical anatomy and idealized anatomy in Tibet, views on embryonic development, as well as the perceived functions of the viscera. Sabernig provides illustrative examples of the transformation of Tibetan medical nomenclature of internal organs over time, and the gradual integration of biomedical anatomical knowledge that needs to be negotiated with classical Tibetan iconography and Tantric Buddhist understandings of "subtle" anatomy.

Tawni Tidwell's chapter is an ambitious attempt to align the biomedical notion of cancer with analogues in Sowa Rigpa ("The Modern Biomedical Conception of Cancer and Its Many Potential Correlates in the Tibetan Medical Tradition", pp. 140-198). Tidwell's chapter

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<sup>4</sup> Frances Garrett, *Religion, Medicine and the Human Embryo in Tibet* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Janet Gyatso, *Being Human in a Buddhist World: An Intellectual History of Medicine in Early Modern Tibet* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

illustrates the increasing interest in research and clinical engagement between biomedicine and the Tibetan medical tradition, and echoes the pressures on Tibetan medical practitioners to demonstrate science and biomedical proficiency in efforts to exhibit the empirical soundness of Sowa Rigpa and garner legitimacy in international contexts. Tidwell's nosological analysis strives to preserve historical, theoretical and etiological distinctions of Euro-American and Tibetan medical illness categories, while simultaneously endeavoring to address the need to use accurate, nuanced, and specific translations for disease concepts and paradigms. Tidwell seeks to expand the integrative mapping of biomedical cancer previously proposed by Menpa Samten (*sman pa bsam gtan*) that relied on Tibetan medical categories such as *dréné* ('*bras nad*) and *drétren* ('*bras skran*) as cognates of biomedical notions of cancer and other neoplasms. Utilizing the *Four Tantras* and its commentaries as an analytic base, Tidwell draws upon the additional categories of *méwel* (*me dbal*), *surya* (*surya*), and other conditions described as "metabolic disruptions of nutritional essence" (*dwangs ma ma zhu ba*) in order to propose a more extensive mapping of the broader scope of biomedical cancers and neoplasms into the nosological framework of Tibetan medicine.

Tsering Samdrup's chapter "The Nine-Fold Magical Cord Cycle: Investigating '*Phrul gyi the gu brgu skor*, a Wartime Medical Manual" (pp. 199-217), provides an intriguing look into an early Tibetan medical text dealing primarily with traumatology or wound healing practice (*rma dpyad*). The text is presumably recorded before the twelfth century based on the archaic characteristics of the manuscript and absence of later Tibetan medical knowledge systematized post-*Four Tantras*. Since there are few extant medical texts from the Tibetan imperial period (*btsan po'i rgyal rabs*), Samdrup's philological analysis and contextualization of *The Nine-Fold Magical Cord Cycle* is a valuable contribution to the study of this early period of Tibetan medicine, although the chapter is based on a digital copy of a recently discovered manuscript that does not allow for precise dating. Based on his philological analysis, however, Samdrup suggests that the manuscript appears to be a compilation that derives from multiple sources and origins, but the core instructions of the text may have been composed during the imperial period. As attested to in studies of the Tibetan medical manuscripts found in Dunhuang, ritual aspects of healing have long been a staple of the Tibetan medical tradition. However, *The Nine-Fold Magical Cord Cycle* also integrates rituals with other types of medical therapies, and sheds light on the early professional organization of medical practitioners. According to the text, the individuals involved in ritual performance for the sick or injured are the "ritualist physician" (*sman bon*) and the "wound healer" (*rma mkhan*), who apparently worked in



tandem but had specific roles to play in the process of healing. By discussing the nuances of early medical practices and social relations in Tibet, Samdrup's article aligns well with the broader goal of the volume—challenging traditionalist or essentializing readings of Tibetan medical history.

Chapter 7 presents Carmen Simioli's study "Knowledge, Imagery, and the Treatment of Communicable Disease in the *Vase of the Amṛta of Immortality: A Preliminary Analysis of a Nyingma Medical Corpus*" (pp. 218-260), which explores epidemics and infectious disease by analyzing the influence of the theories and practices of Buddhist Tantric medicine on Tibetan medical tradition. In particular, Simioli focuses on analyzing the textual traditions from the tenth to the late seventeenth century that played a crucial role in codifying Tibetan epidemiological view of the causes of "epidemic fevers" (*rims tshad*) and "infectious diseases" (*gnyan nad*). Simioli's study illustrates the comprehensive scope of Tibetan medical systems, which are closely linked with complementary literature related to alchemy (*bcud len*, Skt. *rasāyana*), iatrochemistry (*dngrul chu'i grub pa'i bstan bcos*, Skt. *rasasiddhiśāstra*), and the application of ritual activities relating to demonology (*las la sbyor ba*). *The Vase of Amṛta* is placed within the context of *Seminal Heart* (*snying thig*) literature that relates to the broader category of *Mahāyoga-tantra*. Simioli's intervention shows that *The Vase of Amṛta* represents an attempt at codifying and systematizing diverse medical theories and practices into a cohesive and comprehensive body of knowledge, while remaining thoroughly esoteric in character as illustrated by the use of metaphorical language and the scattering of vital information throughout the text. Among its other merits, Simioli's contribution provides a solid basis for further research on the historical connections between "accomplishing medicine" (*smān sgrub*s) literature of the Nyingma tradition and canonical Tibetan medical sources.

William A. McGrath's chapter "Tantric Divination and Empirical Diagnosis: a Genealogy of Channel *Prasenā* Rituals in the Tibetan Medical Tradition" (pp. 261-308) analyzes the emergence of the specific nomenclature of *prasenā* divination and channel examination in the *Four Tantras* and the Drangti lineage of Tibetan medicine in order to contextualize some of the historical processes that impacted the development of the instructional repertoire of the Tibetan medical tradition. Investigating the dialogue of evidence-based diagnosis and divine revelation within the early Tibetan medical tradition is a crucial undertaking, since in the absence of reliable notions of historical human agency many of the available documents are recast as the primordial teachings of fabled figures such as the Emanated Sage Rigpé Yeshé, the Indian Sage Nāgārjuna, or the "father" of Tibetan medicine, Yutok Yönten Gönpö (p. 301). Despite its relative prevalence in Tibetan

literature (the *locus classicus* being the early seventh century *Questions of Subāhu*, 'phags pa dpung bzang gis zhus pa zhes bya ba'i rgyud, Skt. *subāhupariṣcchā*), the diverse body of oracular practices of *prasenā* divination that are performed to evoke divine revelation of past, present, and future, have received meager scholarly attention to date. "Channel *prasenā* rituals" (*rtsa'i pra sgrub*) are said to provide divine sight in order to intuitively sense appropriate treatment methods, for instance, and have been transmitted in Tibet from at least the twelfth century onward. Despite being long rooted in scholastic learning and empirical observation, McGrath illustrates how the diagnostic system of the Tibetan medical tradition incorporates a palette of loosely related or even contradictory methods, such as the empirical observation of symptoms and divinatory techniques for the attainment of clairvoyance and communication with the divine closely associated with ritual healing. Moreover, the chapter shows how these seemingly opposing modes of diagnosis and divination came to be transmitted in conjunction, and how these methods were ultimately reconciled and incorporated in the orthodoxy of Tibetan medicine. Tracing the genealogy of the transmission of *prasenā* rituals complicates the traditionalist reading of the place of the *Four Tantras* in the Tibetan medical tradition, and allows for formulating a more nuanced understanding of Tibetan medical history that is characterized by active interchange, assimilation, and adaptation across diverse intellectual contexts. McGrath's chapter also addresses questions related to medical teaching lineages by discussing the Drangti lineage of Tibetan medicine, which allows for a more balanced understanding of the development of the Tibetan medical tradition as a whole.

Although issues related to terminology around the term "Tibetan medicine" itself have been raised elsewhere,<sup>5</sup> it would not have been out of place to devote some attention to related questions in this volume since many of the chapters deal with the importance of appropriate and context specific nomenclature; only Deane and Gerke explicitly acknowledge the contextual diversity within the culturally variegated Tibetan medical tradition, and Gerke opts to use the somewhat more neutral and increasingly standardized term "Sowa Rigpa" in lieu of "Tibetan medicine". Overall cohesion of the book would have also benefited from more careful copy editing in order to weed out some inconsistencies in nomenclature (e.g. the *rgyud bzhi* are rendered both as *Fourfold Tantra* and as *Four Tantras*).

Despite significant differences in research targets and temporal focal points, the guiding principle of investigating the transfigurations

<sup>5</sup> Most notably in Sienna R. Craig and Barbara Gerke, "Naming and Forgetting: Sowa Rigpa and the Territory of Asian Medical Systems," *Medicine Anthropology Theory* 3, no. 2 (2016): 87–122.

of medical concepts across various dimensions of the Tibetan medical tradition remains a constant throughout the volume. However, while the introduction acknowledges the rich abundance of Tibetan medical texts beyond the textual corpus of the *Four Tantras* and its exegetical literature, the chapters are still largely anchored in the textual foundation provided by the *Four Tantras*. Therefore, there still remains plenty of ground to be covered in order to further challenge the monolithic and persistently traditionalist perspectives concerning Sowa Rigpa, from both text-historical and ethnographic perspectives.

As a whole, *Knowledge and Context in Tibetan Medicine* is an important contribution to the maturing field of academic research on Tibetan medicine and an essential resource for specialists in the field. The publication is a successful response to the call to extend the boundaries of contemporary research on Tibetan medicine by offering novel approaches that improve our understanding of the complex history of Tibetan medicine, and the pluralism that characterizes the etiological, epistemological and therapeutic horizons of Sowa Rigpa practitioners today.



## Compte-rendu

**Katia Buffetrille, *L'âge d'or du Tibet (XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles)*, Paris (Les Belles Lettres), 2019. 311 pp. ISBN 978-2-251-44974-6.**

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**T**he political and social transformation of Tibet in the 17th and 18th centuries was far-reaching, resulting by the end of the 18th century in the consolidation of Manchu power over large parts of the Tibetan Plateau, including the territory of the Tibetan government having Lhasa as its capital and the Dalai Lama at its head. Numerous scholars have published studies of various aspects of these centuries, during which Tibet took shape in what might be called the 'pre-modern' period until the Chinese takeover in 1951. An important publication in this connection is Françoise Pommaret (ed.), *Lhasa, lieu du divin : la capitale des Dalai-Lamas au XVIIe siècle*, Genève (Olizan), 1997; English translation, *Lhasa in the Seventeenth Century*, Leiden (Brill), 2002. Katia Buffetrille's book brings all this research together in a compact, up-to-date volume, not restricting the perspective to Lhasa and Central Tibet or other territories governed by the Dalai Lamas.

*L'âge d'or du Tibet* is organized thematically into ten topics: History, Geography, Political and Administrative Organization, Society and Economy, Concepts of Time, Religion, Intellectual Life, The Arts, Leisure, and Private Life. At the end of the volume there are biographical sketches of 25 individuals who are frequently referred to, either because of their crucial involvement in the religious or political events in the period in question, or because they have left behind eyewitness accounts of those events, prominent among the latter being the Italian Jesuit Ippolito Desideri (1684-1733) who spent five years (1716-1721) in Lhasa and its vicinity, and the British representatives of the East Asia Company George Bogle (1746-1781) and Samuel Turner (1759-1802) who both visited Shigatse in the second part of the 18th century. By making extensive use of the accounts of Tibet which these European observers left behind, Buffetrille provides the reader with first-hand insights and observations which the Tibetan sources alone could not have supplied. However, the author also makes ample use of Tibetan and Chinese sources from the period in question. There is a rich bibliography, to a large extent divided into the topical sections listed above, but with the addition of a list of

sources relating to missionaries, traders, and travellers (including Muslims and Armenians), and, finally, useful indexes.

The greater part of the book's first section, that on "History," provides a particularly clear overview – concise, but not over-simplified – of a period in Tibetan history that was particularly complex. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Tibetan protagonists from the secular as well as the religious spheres vied for power, sometimes in alliance with and at other times in bitter opposition to Mongol princes and Manchu emperors of China. In only twenty pages, Buffetrille guides the reader through the convolutions of civil wars, religious rivalries, invasions and political intrigue with admirable succinctness, achieving, in the opinion of the present reviewer, a pedagogical *tour de force*.

Another interesting section, part of the chapter devoted to "Geography", deals with "Lhasa, a Cosmopolitan City", which presents, one by one, the non-Tibetan groups which at different times made Lhasa their home: Muslims (including Sufis), non-Muslim Indians, Newars from Nepal, Armenians, and Roman Catholic missionaries, including Jesuits who visited Lhasa as early as 1661. Buffetrille thereby refutes the widespread notion of Lhasa being "the forbidden city", inaccessible to foreigners. While this epithet may have been justified with reference to 19th century Lhasa, it would be entirely misleading in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The chapter on "Religion", while giving only a summary introduction to Buddhist doctrine (available in countless other publications), is all the more informative with regard to the social role of monasteries, rituals, pilgrimages, and 'popular religion', i. e. local religious practices only partly or superficially influenced by Buddhism. Likewise the Tibetan language, script, paper production, book-printing techniques, and literary genres are presented in a way that highlights the complexity and originality of Tibetan literary culture. Finally, the author is to be commended for the chapters on "Leisure" and "Private Life" which deal with topics that are seldom discussed in general expositions of Tibetan history and culture, including a section, "Sexuality", that does not shy away from discussing incest and homosexuality.

The illustrations are abundant and well chosen. Not surprisingly, relevant illustrations from contemporary sources are not easy to find, but they are supplemented by drawings (and only in a few cases photographs) from later sources. The decision to rely largely on prints and line drawings is a highly felicitous one, as the result is clarity and crispness which reproduction of photographs all too often fail to deliver. There is no methodological problem with using such illustrations dating from the 19th century, as Tibet's meeting with modernity only happened in the following century, and Lobsang Tenzin's admi-

rable line drawings (first published in R. A. Stein, *La civilisation tibétaine*, Paris, 1962) convey a timeless image of Tibet.

*L'âge d'or du Tibet* can be read as a monograph providing a rich and informative presentation of Tibet in the 17th and 18th centuries. However, it can also be used as a mini-encyclopaedia in which numerous topics, events and persons can be searched by anyone in need of specific and precise information. While the volume fits seamlessly into the prestigious series "Guide Belles Lettres des Civilisations" in which it is published, it is to be hoped that it will be translated and published in other languages as well, as there is a universal need for authoritative and nuanced books on Tibetan history.

