

## Tsi'u dmar po: How a Northern Treasure God Became Ecumenical

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**T**ibetan Buddhist Dharma protectors are a chimeric lot. Those deities popular enough to be propitiated by several communities or different sectarian traditions are especially prone to multiple and sometimes conflicting narrative identities, iconographic qualities, and ritual capabilities. Too often, however, the mosaic nature of these figures is diminished or elided in the face of more monolithic representations that cast the deity in a synchronic and timeless fashion. In an attempt to highlight the composite character of Tibetan protector deities, I will examine the mythic and ritual representations of the Dharma protector Tsi'u dmar po, specifically as his cult has radiated out across sectarian and monastic boundaries from his origins within the Northern Treasure (*byang gter*) tradition. Tsi'u dmar po is known most for being one of the major protectors of bSam yas Monastery, Tibet's first Buddhist monastery. However, he started out as a rNying ma deity in the sixteenth century, whose treasure literature (*gter ma*) was first rediscovered and promoted by the famous Northern Treasure master and treasure revealer mNga' ris pañ chen Padma dbang rgyal (1487-1542; BDRC: P1699) and his brother, the second rDo rje brag rig 'dzin Legs ldan rdo rje (1512-1625; BDRC: P1701). The earliest treasure literature on Tsi'u dmar po stemmed from these figures, who were responsible for revealing the bulk of it. Over the next three hundred years, the deity's ritual corpus would be adopted by the other major sectarian traditions and become codified in the nineteenth century within the nonsectarian Ris med canon as well. Although, the reasons for his rapid growth in popularity are unique to each religious community and would require a more detailed exploration of his ritual materials, as well as an intertextual study of various pertinent histories and biographies, the present article offers a bird's eye view of Tsi'u dmar po's ecumenical evolution. As such, this paper ends with a complete translation of the deity's root tantra, referred to here as the *Warlord's Tantra*.

To illustrate Tsi'u dmar po's shifting characterizations across time, I will briefly contrast three works that emphasize the deity's particular salience as he moves from his Northern Treasure milieu out into Sa skya and dGe lugs contexts, respectively. For his rNying ma origins,

Tsi'u dmar po's founding mythos is found within one of the first texts to concern the deity at length. This is the sixteenth-century treasure text, the *Warlord's Tantra*, rediscovered by mNga' ris paṅ chen. Like many Tibetan works, this text has variant titles; depending on the collection it is called the *Seven-Chapter Heart Tantra for the Capricious Spirit Citta Marpo*,<sup>1</sup> the *Seven-Chapter Heart Tantra for Red Razor*,<sup>2</sup> or the simpler – and more evocative – *Warlord's Tantra*.<sup>3</sup> The second text I will draw from is a Sa skya history of bSam yas Monastery entitled the *Wish-Fulfilling Symphony of the Captivating Gods*.<sup>4</sup> This early seventeenth-century history was composed by the Sa skya hierarch A myes zhabs Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams (1597-1659; BDRC: P791) and concerns not only the origins of bSam yas Monastery, but also the roles that Tsi'u dmar po and Pe har – the other important protector of bSam yas – play in its history. The final text discussed below is a ritual entitled the *Ten Point Sādhana*,<sup>5</sup> which was rediscovered by the famous twelfth-century rNying ma treasure revealer Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1124-1192; BDRC: P364). While it is a rNying ma treasure text, this work has had important connections to the lineage of the Dalai Lamas since the second incarnation and was especially utilized by the Great Fifth (1617-1682; BDRC: P37).<sup>6</sup> This text is likewise found in Northern Treasure ritual corpora.<sup>7</sup>

To make sense of this diverse and incongruous assortment of liturgical and historical texts, I will frame my observations using Prasenjit Duara's theory of "superscription,"<sup>8</sup> which highlights the simultaneously continuous and discontinuous nature of shared symbols. Ac-

<sup>1</sup> Tib. *gNod sbyin tsitta dmar po'i snying gi rgyud le'u bdun pa*; see Padma dbang rgyal 1985.

<sup>2</sup> Tib. *sPu gri dmar po snying gi rgyud le'u bdun pa*; see Padma dbang rgyal 1976.

<sup>3</sup> Tib. *dMag dpon gyi rgyud*. This is part of the larger title, the *Warlord's Tantra with Accompanying Sādhanas* (*dMag dpon gyi rgyud sgrub thabs dang bcas pa*) as found in the nineteenth-century *Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo*; see *ibid.* The accompanying *sādhanas* (*ibid.*, pp.312-332) are not included in this translation, as they were appended to the text much later; however, for rough translations of their contents, see Bell 2006, pp.164-179.

<sup>4</sup> The full title is the *Symphony of the Captivating Gods that Grants all Desires and Makes the Wish-fulfilling Dharma Protectors Rejoice: A Good Explanation for the Origins of the Great Monastery of Glorious and Spontaneously Present Samyé and its Guardians of the Teachings* (*dPal bSam yas lhun gyi grub pa'i gtsug lhag khang chen po bka' srung dang bcas pa'i byon tshul legs par bshad pa chos skyong yid bzhin nor bu dges par byed pa'i yid 'phrog lha'i rol mo dgos 'dod kun 'byung*); see A myes zhabs 2000.

<sup>5</sup> The full title is the *Ten Point Sādhana: A Supplication Offering for the Five King Spirits and Their Retinue* (*rGyal po sku lnga' khor bcas kyi gsol kha phrin las don bcu ma*); see Nyi ma 'od zer n.d.

<sup>6</sup> Tib. *Tā la'i bla ma 05 Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho*.

<sup>7</sup> See, for instance, *bsTan 'dzin nor bu*, pp.209-249.

<sup>8</sup> See Duara 1988.

ording to Duara, as mythic elements are exchanged across diverse social contexts, old elements take on new significance or emphases and new elements accrete to existing representations over time. Thus, different versions of a mythic complex compete and negotiate with each other within and between different groups without necessarily erasing previous versions.

In the case of Tsi'u dmar po, his rNying ma roots establish his mythic origins and ritual orientation. After the deity's initial popularization by mNga' ris paṅ chen and his brother Legs ldan rdo rje, Tsi'u dmar po's cult would quickly become part of the ritual program at rDo rje brag Monastery, the central institution of the Northern Treasure tradition. These brothers, along with the seventeenth throne-holder of the 'Bri gung bKa' brgyud school, Rin chen phun tshogs (1509-1557; BDRC: P399), traveled to bSam yas sometime around 1533 to reconsecrate the sacred site.<sup>9</sup> Around this time, mNga' ris paṅ chen discovered many treasure texts at the monastery, including the *Warlord's Tantra* and its related rites. The tantra is divided into seven chapters, with the first and seventh chapter providing the frame narrative of the wrathful tutelary deity Hayagrīva explaining to the *ḍākinī* rDo rje bde byed ma how he subjugated Tsi'u dmar po and entrusted him with protecting the Buddha's teachings. The rest of the chapters provide Tsi'u dmar po's mythic origins, the ritual preparations needed to propitiate him, and the mantric and contemplative practices necessary to direct his activities.

In terms of Tsi'u dmar po's mythic origins, I summarize what the appended tantra states as follows: In the legendary past, a Khotanese prince joined a monastery and dwelled in a forest ruled by a king. One day the king's daughter was bathing in a pool near where the mendicant prince resided. She was attacked by a poisonous snake, so the prince came to tend to her wound. However, the king's ministers secretly saw this and returned to tell the king falsely that a ruffian was having sex with the princess. This angered the king, so he ordered his servants to find the monk and kill him. When the princess returned and found out what had happened, she pleaded with her father, but to no avail. The hapless prince discovered this plot against him and fled the kingdom. However, due to this traumatic affair, he became disturbed and regressed in his practice. The prince went to Tibet, where he killed men and raped women until the king's men eventually caught up to him on a mountain path and struck him down. On the verge of death, he promised through a regressive prayer to be reborn as a terrifying spirit so he could kill the king and his ministers; as such, he was immediately reborn as Tsi'u dmar po.

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<sup>9</sup> See Gu ru bkra shis 1990, p.536.

Six other pernicious spirits emanated from different parts of Tsi'u dmar po's body, such as his head, his bones, and his pus. These seven deities collectively came to be called the Seven Unruly Riders (*yan pa rkya bdun*). Because they brought ruin to the three realms, they were first subjugated by Hayagrīva. Then, in India, the great tantric exorcist Padmasambhava encountered them in a charnel ground. He retamed Tsi'u dmar po and his horsemen by manifesting the form of Hayagrīva. When Padmasambhava journeyed to Tibet he was welcomed by these deities, who came to be associated with western Tibet overall.<sup>10</sup>

According to the supplementary texts attached to Tsi'u dmar po's root tantra in the *Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo* edition, this corpus was hidden around bSam yas Monastery and in the nearby mChims phu Valley – often within a statue of Vairocana.<sup>11</sup> Beyond this, however, and a vague reference to gTsang, no real attention is given to Tibetan geography. Instead, the focus consistently stresses Tsi'u dmar po's relationship to King Khri srong lde'u btsan (742-800; BDRC: P7787), the famous Dharma King and a previous incarnation of mNga' ris paṅ chen. At multiple points, there is mention of the “noble line of Khri srong lde'u btsan” or Tsi'u dmar po as the “protective deity of Khri srong lde'u btsan.”<sup>12</sup> What this suggests is that, rather than a specific place being important to Tsi'u dmar po, it is a person – King Khri srong lde'u btsan and his line of incarnations – that he has sworn to protect and to which mNga' ris paṅ chen belongs. Given this close association, it is no surprise that Tsi'u dmar po becomes an important protector deity of rDo rje brag Monastery, since it is tied to the incarnation line associated with mNga' ris paṅ chen's brother and partner-in-revelation, Legs ldan rdo rje.

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<sup>10</sup> The mythic material on Padmasambhava can be found in the accompany *sādhana*s, see Padma dbang rgyal 1976, pp.327-328.

<sup>11</sup> See *ibid*, pp.318, 328.

<sup>12</sup> See *ibid*, pp.318, 319, 322, 331, 332.



*Tsi'u dmar po, rDo rje brag Monastery Assembly Hall, Tibet  
(Photo: Christopher Bell, 2011)*

While Tsi'u dmar po is at first most associated with the Tibetan imperium rather than to any other specific institution, this changes quickly with the Sa skya pa, who take the nascent associations the deity has with bSam yas and expand on it. According to Ariane Macdonald,<sup>13</sup> around 1570 the 23<sup>rd</sup> Sa skya throne-holder Kun dga' rin chen (1517-1584; BDRC: P460) repaired bSam yas's central temple and founded the college of Sa skya monks at the monastery, called the Rab byung grwa tshang, which was charged with organizing the annual mDo sde mchod pa festival. During this festival, the Sa skya monks propitiated Tsi'u dmar po as one of the major protector deities of bSam yas, who also spoke through the monastery's oracle. It was Kun dga' rin chen's student, A myes zhabs Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams, who wrote the *Wish-Fulfilling Symphony of the Captivating Gods*, which elaborates on bSam yas's history. However, this history heavily emphasizes the Sa skya pa in a bid to secure their place as the rightful preservers of Tibetan religious history, and it does so by using mNga' ris pañ chen's own text.

A myes zhabs begins his history by tracing a line of authority

<sup>13</sup> See Macdonald 1978, pp.1140-1141.

through the earliest Tibetan kings, the three Dharma Kings, Padmasambhava, and down to the lineage of Sa skya masters in general, as well as his teacher Kun dga' rin chen in particular. After discussing bSam yas's founding and architecture at length, A myes zhabs quotes and elaborates on content from the *Warlord's Tantra*, specifically the first and seventh chapter that frame the tantra with Hayagrīva's subjugation of Tsi'u dmar po.<sup>14</sup> A myes zhabs also quotes from one of the accompanying *sādhana*s of the *Warlord's Tantra*, one that details the encounter that the Seven Unruly Riders first have with Padmasambhava in India. All of this material is not only quoted verbatim, it is expanded upon to emphasize the explicit connection Tsi'u dmar po has with bSam yas Monastery, and by extension the Sa skya school. To provide a striking example of just one such elaboration, while the *Warlord's Tantra* never explicitly mentions the monastery, let alone the deity's connection to it, A myes zhabs's bSam yas history overtly emphasizes such a connection between the protector and the place:

Later, when the incarnated king Khri srong lde'u btsan invited the great precious master Padmasambhava to Tibet, the Seven Riders, emanations of the capricious spirit (*gnod sbyin*) [Tsi'u dmar po], welcomed him at dPal thang in mNga' ris and accompanied him until they arrived at bSam yas. When [the riders] accomplished more and more activities for favorable conditions such as this, the master said with delight, "The king of the capricious spirits rTse dmar's homeland is truly in this very place!"<sup>15</sup>

Not only does A myes zhabs have Padmasambhava arrive specifically at bSam yas rather than Tibet more broadly, but the great exorcist's equivocation about Tsi'u dmar po's country, visible in mNga' ris paṅ chen's treasure texts,<sup>16</sup> is gone and replaced with a confident proclamation that the sacred site is the deity's real home. There are many other such instances in A myes zhabs's text, and he further cements the authority of his mythic account by reiterating the events in nine-syllable poetic verse. Given the Sa skya control over bSam yas at the turn of the seventeenth century, anchoring an imperial protector deity and his cult to the monastery as an institution – through narrative and ritual mechanisms, including the mDo sde mchod pa festival – was clearly part of their larger legitimizing efforts to tie their lineage back to the dynastic age. While mNga' ris paṅ chen emphasized Tsi'u dmar

<sup>14</sup> See A myes zhabs 2000, pp.381-388.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.390.1-3.

<sup>16</sup> See Padma dbang rgyal 1976, p.328.

po's role as King Khri srong lde'u btsan's personal protector to reinforce his incarnation line, A myes zhabs emphasized the deity's connection to Padmasambhava and bSam yas Monastery to support a Sa skya-centric view of Tibetan history.

A myes zhabs's history also discusses another protector deity at length, the great king spirit (*rgyal po*) Pe har, who is the second major protector of bSam yas Monastery. However, this deity comes second to Tsi'u dmar po in the text in terms of content order, and he is at best equal to Tsi'u dmar po in importance. This fragile relationship between the two deities shifts dramatically under the burgeoning administration of the Fifth Dalai Lama in the mid-seventeenth century. While the Sa skya pa used Tsi'u dmar po at bSam yas to tie them to the Tibetan empire, the Dalai Lama would do the same with Pe har at gNas chung Monastery outside Lhasa. The lineage of the Dalai Lamas would go on to utilize an incarnational technique like mNga' ris pañ chen's by tapping into Padmasambhava's incarnation line, as well as an institutional technique like A myes zhabs's by reorienting Pe har from bSam yas to gNas chung, and eventually create satellite centers throughout Lhasa's old town around the Jo khang Temple.<sup>17</sup>

Since Pe har holds pride of place in the dGe lugs pantheon of worldly protector deities, especially for the Dalai Lamas, where does that leave Tsi'u dmar po? To turn a phrase, the dGe lugs pa effectively 'gNas chung-ized' him. Tsi'u dmar po is placed under Pe har's seventeenth-century ritual, iconographic, and mythic paradigm as a means to reorient the powerful symbols of Tibet's royal past under the lineage of the Dalai Lamas. This involves a complex series of textual adoptions and interpolations involving the two central texts of Gnas chung Monastery's liturgical corpus. The first ritual is the *Ten Point Sādhana*, the twelfth-century treasure text concerning Pe har that was rediscovered by Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer. At least four extant additions exist of this work, two of which are found in collections concerning the Northern Treasure tradition.<sup>18</sup> While all four editions of this text have intriguing differences, the two Northern Treasure versions are notable for inserting brief but important passages about Tsi'u dmar po that do not exist in the other editions. One such example is as follows:

In front of [Pe har's emanation, there is] the capricious spirit, the king of the warrior gods (*dgra lha*), the lord of life Yang le ber. His color is red [and he has] the brilliance of a thousand suns. He is fiercely wrathful, and he eats and drinks flesh, blood, and life breath (*dbugs*). Sometimes he bites his lower lip with his upper teeth, and his eyebrows and forehead are

<sup>17</sup> For a detailed exploration of this process, see Bell 2021.

<sup>18</sup> For the two Northern Treasure editions, see Nyi ma 'od zer 1994 and n.d.

contorted into a wrathful grimace. He wears a coat of armor and a leather helmet. He throws at the enemy the red lance in his right hand and the lasso of the martial spirits (*btsan*) in his left hand. He rides an excellent horse that is as fast as the wind, [and it is] decorated with a jeweled saddle, as well as a bridle and silken head ornaments.<sup>19</sup>

This interpolation provides the common iconographic description for Tsi'u dmar po, though he is called Yang le ber here, one of his more frequent epithets.<sup>20</sup>

The second central ritual for gNas chung Monastery is a liturgical text composed by the Fifth Dalai Lama and heavily based on the *Ten Point Sādhana*. This work is entitled the *Unceasing Adamantine Melody*,<sup>21</sup> and it contains an almost verbatim copy of the Tsi'u dmar po description from the Northern Treasure version of the *Ten Point Sādhana* quoted above.<sup>22</sup> Thus, Tsi'u dmar po was absorbed from his Northern Treasure origins into the dGe lugs cult of Pe har at gNas chung. This is not surprising, given the Fifth Dalai Lama's close familial and transmissional ties to the Northern Treasure tradition.<sup>23</sup> It merits further mention that the Great Fifth received the *Ten Point Sādhana* from his Northern Treasure root teacher Zur chen Chos dbyings rang grol (1604-1669; BDRC: P650).<sup>24</sup> In turn, he had a hand in collating, condensing, and amending a lot of mNga' ris paṅ chen's material on Tsi'u dmar po – including the root tantra – for a text still found in Northern Treasure corpora.<sup>25</sup>

The deity's significance is nonetheless diminished in the dGe lugs context, however. The surrounding text of the *Ten Point Sādhana* makes him a servant of one of the five forms of Pe har. Rather than being a central deity as he is at bSam yas, Tsi'u dmar po has been demoted and deemphasized in this predominantly dGe lugs ritual and institutional setting. This shift in Tsi'u dmar po's status from bSam yas to gNas chung is still visible today as well. While both monasteries were damaged during the Cultural Revolution, the array of deity images found at both sites, as well as their satellite temples, still speaks to the heritage of their individual pantheons. At bSam yas Monastery, the central image of the main protector temple was once Tsi'u dmar po and has

<sup>19</sup> Nyi ma 'od zer 1994, p.213.

<sup>20</sup> See Bell 2006, pp.147-149.

<sup>21</sup> The full title is the *Unceasing Adamantine Melody: A Sādhana for Presenting Prayers and Offerings to the Five Great King Spirits* (rGyal po chen po sde lnga la gsol mchod 'bul tshul 'phrin las 'gags med rdo rje'i sgra dbyangs); see Tā la'i bla ma 05 1983, pp. 12-53. See *ibid*, pp.22-23.

<sup>22</sup> See Valentine 2013, pp.215-227.

<sup>24</sup> See Tā la'i bla ma 05 1991-1995, p.615.

<sup>25</sup> See Padma dbang rgyal 1994 and n.d.



since been replaced by statues of Tsi'u dmar po and Pe har together. At bsTan rgyas gling Monastery, bSam yas's satellite in Lhasa, one finds a statue of Tsi'u dmar po at the center of the protector chapel with a smaller statue of Pe har to his left. By contrast, at gNas chung Monastery and its ritual satellites – such as dGa' gdong Monastery to the west and rMe ru snying pa behind the Jo khang Temple – Pe har and his emanations are the central deities, while Tsi'u dmar po is relegated to a secondary position or even a door guardian.



*Tsi'u dmar po, secondary statue; gNas chung Monastery. (Photo: Christopher Bell, 2007)*



*Tsi'u dmar po, door guardian mural; dGa' gdong Monastery. (Photo: Christopher Bell, 2011)*



*Tsi'u dmar po, door guardian mural; rMe ru snying pa Monastery. (Photo: Christopher Bell, 2011)*

Through the lens of Duara's theory of superscription, we see in these sixteenth- and seventeenth-century examples how Tsi'u dmar po's mythic representation has not only expanded but evolved in scope and character across sectarian lines from its Northern Treasure beginnings. His rNying ma origins evince a classic wrathful protector closely connected to the imperial incarnation line of his tantra's treasure revealer, mNga' ris paṅ chen. When adopted by the Sa skya pa, Tsi'u dmar po's vague associations with bSam yas Monastery became more pronounced and amplified to legitimize the Sa skya management of this historically and politically significant site. The dGe lugs pa, specifically through the Fifth Dalai Lama, also institutionalized Tsi'u dmar po, however, they did so by diminishing his significance in relation to their favored protector deity, Pe har. All three sectarian examples use

mNga' ris paṅ chen's treasure tantra, but to varying degrees and toward different ends. In all these instances, Tsi'u dmar po remains the same deity, yet certain qualities are foregrounded or built upon to support a different community's needs. As Duara states:

extant versions [of myths] are not totally wiped out. Rather, images and sequences common to most versions of the myth are preserved, but by adding or 'rediscovering' new elements or by giving existing elements a particular slant, the new interpretation is lodged in place. Even if the new interpretation should become dominant, previous versions do not disappear but instead come into a new relationship with it, as their own statuses and roles with what might be called the 'interpretive arena' of the myth come to be negotiated and redefined.<sup>26</sup>

As an addendum to round out the major sectarian contexts, it is worth reiterating that mNga' ris paṅ chen was close friends with a 'Bri gung bKa' brgyud throne-holder, Rin chen phun tshogs. Moreover, while earlier bKa' brgyud examples are harder to come by, a nineteenth-century text tells us that portions of the *Warlord's Tantra* made its way into the bKa' brgyud ritual corpora, and likely did so earlier.<sup>27</sup> This is also significant because the whole of the *Warlord's Tantra*, along with several exemplary *sādhana*s from mNga' ris paṅ chen's corpus, would eventually make its way into the *Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo*, the grand nineteenth-century Ris med collection of tantric literature compiled by 'Jam mgon kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (1813-1899; BDRC: P264). Over a century earlier, the *Warlord's Tantra*, along with other of mNga' ris paṅ chen's Tsi'u dmar po rites, can be found in a compilation by Sle lung bZhad pa'i rdo rje (1697-1740; BDRC: P675). This dGe lugs hierarch is famous for his collection of protector deity hagiographies entitled the *Ocean of Oath-Bound Guardians*, and his chapter on Tsi'u dmar po within this work likewise quotes at length from the *Warlord's Tantra* and its related texts.<sup>28</sup>

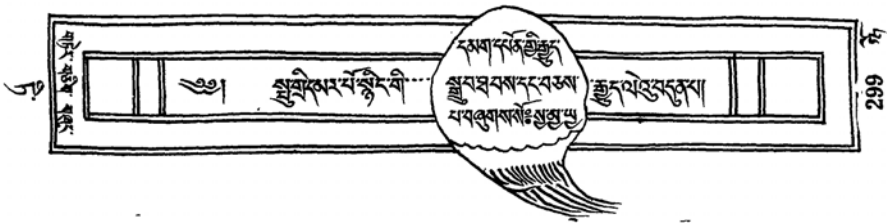
The eighteenth-century dGe lugs edition and the nineteenth-century Ris med edition form the basis of the below complete translation of the *Warlord's Tantra*. While I used the earlier *dbu med* script edition

<sup>26</sup> Duara 1988, p.780.

<sup>27</sup> See Rin chen rNam par rgyal ba 1978, pp.405-406; see also Gibson 1991, pp.201-206.

<sup>28</sup> The full title of this work is the *Unprecedented Elegant Explanation Briefly Expounding the Hagiographies and Iconographies of the Ocean of Oath-Bound Guardians of the Teachings (Dam can bstan srung rgya mtsho'i rnam par thar pa cha shas tsam brjod pa sngon med legs bshad)*; see Sle lung rje drung 1976. For an extensive study on Sle lung, see Bailey 2017.

as my basis,<sup>29</sup> I drew on the *dbu can* script Ris med edition<sup>30</sup> to clarify obscurities, and especially to include, italicized in footnotes, the informative nineteenth-century interpolations and comments added by the rNying ma treasure revealer mChog gyur gling pa (1829-1870; BDRC: P564), which gives the text's transmission a pleasant symmetry. It is with this edition that the *Warlord's Tantra* has a select – and likely most popular – sample of *sādhana*s appended to it. The title page of this composite text within the *Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo* illustrates this vividly and evocatively, with the root tantra foregrounded by a heart offering to the deity that says in Tibetan, the *Warlord's Tantra with Accompanying Sādhana*s:



Title page of the Ris med edition (Padma dbang rgyal 1976, p.299)

After this title page, the contents of the seven chapters that make up the *Warlord's Tantra* proper can be summarized as follows:

1. Introduction of Hayagrīva in his blazing *maṇḍalic* palace, where he is exhorted by the *dākinī* rDo rje bde byed ma to subjugate the arrogant spirits with his *mantra*, specifically Tsi'u dmar po.
2. rDo rje bde byed ma asks for and receives from Hayagrīva the tale of Tsi'u dmar po's mythic origins, along with the Seven Unruly Riders.
3. rDo rje bde byed ma asks for and receives from Hayagrīva the ritual materials and preparations needed to subjugate Tsi'u dmar po.
4. This chapter enumerates the secret *mantra* recitations needed during the ritual.
5. This chapter provides the approach and accomplishment stages the practitioner must master, as well as the expected signs of success to observe.
6. This chapter offers a contingency plan for taming Tsi'u dmar

<sup>29</sup> See Padma dbang rgyal 1985.

<sup>30</sup> See Padma dbang rgyal 1976, specifically, pp.299-312.

- po if the above methods are not successful, as well as the proper conduct expected of him and the Seven Unruly Riders.
7. Hayagrīva concludes the tantra with the entrustment of the deities.

While the dGe lugs representation of Tsi'u dmar po may be the most dominant in and around Lhasa, in other centers and communities – such as at rDo rje brag, Sa skya, and bSam yas – alternative representations continue to hold sway. Hegemony is never absolute even if one is able to reorient or dominate the interpretive arena, and this allows multiple versions to coexist and negotiate, or even compete, with one another. In these and other instances, however, it is worth asking who such changes in representation serve and why. While the works of mNga' ris paṅ chen, A myes zhabs, and the Fifth Dalai Lama cannot be taken as indicative of the motivations for an entire sectarian community, they are nonetheless influential within their lineages and act as a starting point for delineating the many faces and facets of a divinity. With root texts like the *Warlord's Tantra* as a starting point, it is the simultaneously continuous and discontinuous nature of a Tibetan protector deity that affords different masters, sects, and monastic institutions the ability to cast such powerful and useful beings in their own image. This has allowed a figure like Tsi'u dmar po to move beyond his Northern Treasure origins and become the popular intersectorian Dharma protector that he is today.

### *The Warlord's Tantra*

[a.k.a.] *The Seven-Chapter Heart Tantra for Red Razor*

#### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

[dGe lugs: 4.1-5.5; Ris med: 300.1-301.6]

In the Sanskrit language:<sup>31</sup> *Yakṣarājasiddhigr̥vācittatantra*.<sup>32</sup> In the Tibetan language: *Heart Tantra for Red Razor, King of the Capricious Spirits*.<sup>33</sup>

Homage to the king of glorious power!<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> because it is an authentic source.

<sup>32</sup> along with the secret sign [samaya].

<sup>33</sup> The Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit title is mostly accurate, except for the deity's name, which is given as "Red Razor" in Tibetan (*spu gri mar po*) but "Attainment-Neck" in Sanskrit (*siddhigr̥vā*).

<sup>34</sup> the teacher.

Thus have I once heard:<sup>35</sup> In the highest Pure Land of the miraculous [Buddhist] teachings,<sup>36</sup> in the middle of a blazing bonfire of malicious anger, amid swelling waves of bloody lust, within a radiant<sup>37</sup> dark-red triangular *maṇḍala*, the Bhagavan – Glorious King Hayagrīva himself – [recites] his mantra to cultivate meditative stabilization, which subjugates<sup>38</sup> the three realms.

Now, at that time he resided surrounded by the horde of arrogant ones, a retinue that displayed the very nature of the five poisons of afflictive emotions.<sup>39</sup> They were countless malicious ones [like] hindering spirits (*bdud*),<sup>40</sup> savage spirits (*dmu*),<sup>41</sup> martial spirits (*btsan*),<sup>42</sup> king spirits (*rgyal po*), skeleton spirits (*ging*), and capricious spirits (*gnod sbyin*).<sup>43</sup> Various illnesses arose from their ferocity, weapons, breath, and the like, and they were about to destroy<sup>44</sup> all the worldly realms when the *dākinī* rDo rje bde byed ma<sup>45</sup> rose from her seat among the retinue and exhorted the Bhagavan, “Emaho! Mighty King Bhagavan, if the miraculous powers of the malicious arrogant ones can even destroy the three realms, you must compassionately command them!”<sup>46</sup> The Bhagavan replied, “Since<sup>47</sup> insightful wisdom did not arise in the arrogant gods and demons of the world, they were produced by the cause of delusion – the afflictive emotion of ignorance<sup>48</sup> – and the condition of an unruly seed. I will subjugate the worldly wrathful gods!<sup>49</sup> HRĪḤ PADMACANDAMAHAĀKRODHAHAYAGRĪVA HULU HULU HŪM PHAṬ.”<sup>50</sup> The arrogant ones<sup>51</sup> panicked because of this, and each<sup>52</sup> gave their life essence (*srog*) and pledged to be guardians of the [Buddhist] teachings. [Thus,] the Bhagavan bestowed life essence blessings on the top of the vicious, poisonous Razor Slash.

<sup>35</sup> *the requesting disciple.*

<sup>36</sup> *for the disciples to be tamed.*

<sup>37</sup> *powerful.*

<sup>38</sup> *the garuḍa bird that is on top of the horse’s head and...*

<sup>39</sup> Pride (*nga rgyal*; Skt. *māna*), desire (*’dod chags*; Skt. *rāga*), anger (*zhe sdang*; Skt. *dveṣa*), jealousy (*phrag dog*; Skt. *īrṣyā*), and ignorance (*gti mug*; Skt. *moha*).

[such as] *Hānubakṣu*.

<sup>40</sup> [such as] *Legs pa*.

<sup>41</sup> [such as] *the Seven Riders*.

<sup>42</sup> *like a heap of sesame seeds.*

<sup>43</sup> *with arrows and weapons.*

<sup>44</sup> Lit. “Adamantine Bliss-producing Woman.”

<sup>45</sup> *the time of taming having come.*

<sup>46</sup> *the ultimate truth of.*

<sup>47</sup> *false self-perception.*

<sup>48</sup> Padma dbang rgyal 1985, p.5.3-4: ‘jig rten drag po bdag gis dbang du bsdud/; Padma dbang rgyal 1976, p.301.3-4: ‘jig rten dregs pa’i sngags bdag gis/ dbang du bsdu/. The former makes more sense, so I am translating this section as such.

<sup>49</sup> *the fierce root mantra.*

<sup>50</sup> *completely.*

<sup>51</sup> *of the malicious arrogant ones [such as] the Seven Emanating Riders.*

This is the first chapter, the introduction within the *Heart Tantra for Red Razor, King of the Capricious Spirits*.<sup>53</sup>

### Chapter 2: Lineage

[*dGe lugs*: 5.5-8.2; *Ris med*: 301.6-305.4]

Next the *ḍākinī* rDo rje bde byed ma exhorted the Bhagavan accordingly, “Alas!<sup>54</sup> Great Glorious and Mighty Form [Hayagrīva]! Regarding the Seven Riders<sup>55</sup> – malevolent capricious spirits who possess primordial wrath, power, and might – first, what are the causes and conditions of their [past] karma? [Second,] by what corrective measure were they truly tamed?”

The Great Glorious God replied, “Regarding the Seven Riders<sup>56</sup> – malevolent capricious spirits – long ago in the age of perfection,<sup>57</sup> in the last days of [Buddha] Kaśyapa’s teachings, to the north of the southern continent Jambudvīpa, in a jeweled pure land<sup>58</sup> of joy and happiness, [there was] a father gSang ba, the King of Khotan,<sup>59</sup> a mother named Utpala rgyan, and their son ’Phyor ba, the prince of Khotan. The son was moved by faith,<sup>60</sup> so he received *pratimokṣa* vows as the monk Candrabhadra. While he was dwelling in a forest, there was a princess named Ma byin,<sup>61</sup> the daughter of King Dharmāśrī,<sup>62</sup> in a city of that region. She was blissfully resting in a bathing pond<sup>63</sup> when she was attacked by a vicious poisonous snake.<sup>64</sup> The monk saw this with his own eyes, so he spread a fragment ointment [over the wound] and saved her. He [also] rubbed it on [areas of] her body that were not at risk.<sup>65</sup> Two cruel ministers who relished in licentious talk saw this and relayed this [supposedly] perverse activity to their lord.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>53</sup> *this is, in truth, a secret tantra.*

<sup>54</sup> *she entreated.*

<sup>55</sup> *manifesting as martial spirits.*

<sup>56</sup> *manifesting as martial spirits.*

<sup>57</sup> *that has past (rdzogs ldan; Skt. kṛtayuga).* This is the first of four eras in the Indo-Tibetan cosmological timeline. The three that follow are the *gnyis ldan*, *sum ldan*, *rtsod ldan* (ages possessing half virtue, a third virtue, and strife, respectively).

<sup>58</sup> *in Khotan, the Dark Willow Grove.*

<sup>59</sup> *King of Khotan.* To keep the seven-syllable meter, the original line has *li rje*, while mChog gyur gling pa clarifies with the fuller note, *li yul gyi rje’o*.

<sup>60</sup> *he intended to practice the Dharma.*

<sup>61</sup> *possessing a beautiful form.*

<sup>62</sup> *called Glory of the Dharma (chos kyi dpal).* mChog gyur gling pa is providing the Tibetan equivalent to the name in the text, which consists of Tibetan letters transliterating the Sanskrit name.

<sup>63</sup> *bathing.*

<sup>64</sup> *which had come from within the forest.*

<sup>65</sup> *for fear of it spreading in the future.*

<sup>66</sup> *they said, “a ruffian who jealously disparages monks is having sex with the King’s daughter!”*

The king became enraged and summoned his servants and attendants, and they<sup>67</sup> set out to kill the monk. Then the princess told them her account [of what happened],<sup>68</sup> but the ministers and attendants did not listen to her words. Because of this, she maliciously made an evil prayer<sup>69</sup> and<sup>70</sup> committed suicide by jumping off a cliff.<sup>71</sup> The monk heard of this and was sent off,<sup>72</sup> so he rode a golden powerful one<sup>73</sup> and fled. Because of vicious negative thoughts, he<sup>74</sup> regressed in his [religious] practice. He made it to Mount [Kailash]<sup>75</sup> in the Land of Snow [Tibet], and in the domain of the king there,<sup>76</sup> the monk<sup>77</sup> killed the men and raped the women.

Then one day,<sup>78</sup> the king exhorted his best soldiers<sup>79</sup> and they killed 'Phyor ba – the Khotanese prince<sup>80</sup> – with swords. With perverse thoughts<sup>81</sup> he prayed, "In my next life of this eon,<sup>82</sup> I furiously desire to become a vicious capricious spirit. May I become the executioner<sup>83</sup> of all sentient beings!" [The monk] declared thus, and instantly at mChong ri zangs mtsho<sup>84</sup> in the west, a blood red egg was born among the horde of malicious arrogant ones<sup>85</sup> to the fierce-faced lord of the savage spirits, named Legs pa,<sup>86</sup> the lord of the martial spirits,<sup>87</sup> Zla ba thod dkar,<sup>88</sup> and their sister, the red-faced capricious spirit.<sup>89</sup> The egg

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<sup>67</sup> soldiers.

<sup>68</sup> [she told] her father that a poisonous snake appeared [and that the monk] applied medicinal musk.

<sup>69</sup> "I will be reborn into the world as the consort of 'Phyor ba, the Khotanese prince, and I will become your executioner!" The Tibetan is as follows: *ra li sras 'phyor pa'i yum srid du skyes la khyed kyi gshed por gyur*. The *ra* which begins this interpolation is difficult to decipher and thus left untranslated here; it may refer to 'Phyor ba's clan.

<sup>70</sup> having prayed.

<sup>71</sup> she leapt from a rocky crag.

<sup>72</sup> by a friend.

<sup>73</sup> a horse.

<sup>74</sup> the venerable monk.

<sup>75</sup> the source of lake Manasarovar.

<sup>76</sup> a relative of Dharmasrī.

<sup>77</sup> poisoned and...

<sup>78</sup> the Khotanese prince thought, "I am ashamed!" and fled.

<sup>79</sup> many combed the mountains [for him].

<sup>80</sup> with many weapons.

<sup>81</sup> a fierce rage having risen at the moment of his death.

<sup>82</sup> which is the very same as Śākyamuni's teachings.

<sup>83</sup> of the ruling king and his ministers.

<sup>84</sup> Lit. "Agate Mountain, Copper Lake."

<sup>85</sup> tormented by attachment.

<sup>86</sup> Lit. "Excellent One."

<sup>87</sup> forefather of all the martial spirits.

<sup>88</sup> Lit. "White Skull Moon."

<sup>89</sup> These three lines vary widely between the two editions, making an accurate understanding Tsī'u dmar po's parentage difficult, while also acting as a vivid exam-

burst,<sup>90</sup> and the malicious capricious spirit Tsi'u dmar [po]<sup>91</sup> arose violently from within it. Due to his great malicious thoughts of attachment and hatred,<sup>92</sup> six vicious martial spirits arose from his body: [1] the black hindering-martial spirit<sup>93</sup> formed from his head, [2] the god-martial spirit<sup>94</sup> formed from his white bones, [3] the cliff-martial spirit<sup>95</sup> formed from his body heat and radiance, [4] the defiling-martial spirit<sup>96</sup> dBal thogs<sup>97</sup> formed from his blood, [5] the serpent-martial spirit<sup>98</sup> formed from his puss, and [6] the red sword-martial spirit<sup>99</sup> formed cleanly from his flesh, sinew, and bowels.

From their dwelling place at Gri thang dmar po,<sup>100</sup> [these spirits] craved sword fights and slaughtered everyone. They consumed the life forces (*bla*)<sup>101</sup> of the three worlds for food and brought these three realms to ruin. Because of this, through the power of his ancient connection to compassion, the subjugating emanated form of Avalokiteśvara<sup>102</sup> glared furiously and roared with rage. The arrogant ones<sup>103</sup> and their retinue came into his presence and said: "Alas! Great Glorious God of Gods, we and our retinue listened to the commands of the matricide warrior [Rudra]. Since we will offer the essence of our<sup>104</sup> life forces, reveal to us our allotted work and share of food."

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ple of the ambiguities and discrepancies that are common among deity genealogies. The dGe lugs edition (Padma dbang rgyal 1985) has "gdong drag dmu rje legs pa zhes/ btsan rje zla ba thod dkar dang/ sring mo gnod sbyin gdong dmar la/," which suggests the polyandrous, and even incestuous, relationship reflected in my translation. The later Ris med edition (Padma dbang rgyal 1976) has "gdung drag rmu rje legs pa las/ btsan rje zla ba thod dkar gyi/ sras mo gnod sbyin gdong dmar ma/." The most notable difference between the two is the substitution of *sring mo* ("sister") for *sras mo* ("daughter"), and the genitive particle that precedes it, suggesting that Tsi'u dmar po's mother is the daughter of Zla ba thod dkar, not his sister, and that her sole partner is Legs pa.

<sup>90</sup> [he arose] *violently from within an ocean overflowing with flesh-eating spirits (srin).*

<sup>91</sup> *the martial spirit lord.*

<sup>92</sup> *Because of his prayer of sincere anger.*

<sup>93</sup> *with a black-headed heron.*

<sup>94</sup> *with a face on his body.*

<sup>95</sup> *of the red ridge.*

<sup>96</sup> *immediately.*

<sup>97</sup> Lit. "Hindering dBal Spirit." The Ris med edition (Padma dbang rgyal 1976, p.304.4) has *rtsal thog*, meaning "Mighty Lightning."

<sup>98</sup> *who had previously been a king.*

<sup>99</sup> *who is also everlasting.*

<sup>100</sup> Lit. "Red Plain of Swords." In the Ris med edition, mChog gyur gling pa adds the commentary: *All sentient beings were conquered by these [spirits], and they each abided pervading all realms.*

<sup>101</sup> *of all sentient beings.*

<sup>102</sup> *since the ordained master is Avalokiteśvara.*

<sup>103</sup> *the seven riders.*

<sup>104</sup> *individual.*



Then they offered their life force essence.<sup>105</sup> Their allotted work was directed toward protecting the Buddha's teachings. Their share of food granted them the flesh, blood, and life breath [of the enemy].<sup>106</sup> Because of [Tsi'u dmar po's] past actions and karmic traces,<sup>107</sup> the consort of the Seven Unruly Riders, who is superior to all the hindering spirits of royal lineage, is the goddess sister<sup>108</sup> Ekajāti.

This is the second chapter, revealing [Tsi'u dmar po's] stream of births within the *Heart Tantra for the Capricious Spirit Red Razor*.

### *Chapter 3: Ritual Materials and Preparation*

[dGe lugs: 8.2-9.2; Ris med: 305.4-307.1]

Then the *ḍākinī* again exhorted [the Bhagavan]: “Alas! Great Glorious and Mighty Form, regarding the malicious Seven Unruly Riders, what are the stages of practice<sup>109</sup> for these warrior gods of all yogis?”

The Bhagavan replied: “For the *sādhana* of these malicious capricious spirits, the *mantrika* endowed with the [proper] view and conduct should perform the mantric recitation of Mighty Hayagrīva. In a place suitable for malevolent red rock martial spirits,<sup>110</sup> on the last Friday [of the month],<sup>111</sup> make a *maṇḍala* at the martial spirits' abode. Anoint a raised sacrificial box with blood. Mix excrement in with the heart's blood of a man and horse killed by the sword and make a *liṅga* effigy. Put soot<sup>112</sup> on the [spirit's] 'bone-element' name.<sup>113</sup> Bind [the effigy] with the red cursed cord<sup>114</sup> of the martial spirits. On a barley dough [effigy of a] dark red mule,<sup>115</sup> [place the effigy of the martial spirit] in a manner of apprehending [the enemy]<sup>116</sup> and brandishing [a weapon].<sup>117</sup> On a red martial spirit fortress a hand-span high, you will place the red horse of the martial spirit [as well as] red arrows. [Also] fasten [to the effigy] red silk flags, iron wings, and a tiger-skin quiver.

<sup>105</sup> for protection (Skt. *rakṣa rakṣa*).

<sup>106</sup> of those who destroy the teachings.

<sup>107</sup> of being originally killed by the king.

<sup>108</sup> because of the princess's original prayer.

<sup>109</sup> This is understood as summoning the deities for purposes of propitiation.

<sup>110</sup> regarding the place where they manifest.

<sup>111</sup> [when] Mars is rising.

<sup>112</sup> with sword[-drawn] blood.

<sup>113</sup> inside the effigy. 'bone-element' (*rus khams*) refers to the patrilineally-inherited element associated with a being since their birth; see Maurer 2020, pp.104-110.

<sup>114</sup> a thread of colored wool.

<sup>115</sup> smeared with colored powder. Both texts have *gong gsum sa dmar*, which I am reading as a misspelling of *rkang gsum pa dmar*, for red mule.

<sup>116</sup> using the red horse of the martial spirits.

<sup>117</sup> a weapon. This is the most common iconographic appearance for Tsi'u dmar po; astride his mount, he binds an enemy below with his lasso and threatens or pierces them with his spear.

Pour various jewels and grains, as well as fragrant incense, into a satin pouch and tie it [to the effigy]. In a leather or copper vessel, combine barley with the blood of a *bheta*,<sup>118</sup> then fill it with three hearts of the [offering] object<sup>119</sup> and the six excellent substances.<sup>120</sup> In an authentic red Chinese pot, grind jewels down for the porridge of various grains.<sup>121</sup> Having prepared the seven red food offerings of the martial spirit, you should adorn them with red flesh and blood. Then draw a suppressed and struck *liṅga* effigy on the heart and shoulder blade of a red rhinoceros. On the highest story of the completed fortress, smear excellent copper stag horns<sup>122</sup> with vermillion. This is the outer support of the malicious capricious spirit."<sup>123</sup>

This is the third chapter, expounding the materials and ritual preparations within the *Heart Tantra for Red Razor, King of the Capricious Spirits*.

#### Chapter 4: Mantras

[*dGe lugs*: 9.2-9.6; *Ris med*: 307.1-308.2]

Now recite this series of secret mantras accordingly: “OM PAD-MACANDAMAHĀKRODHAHAYAGRĪVA<sup>124</sup> HULU HULU HŪM PHAṬ. OM RAKṢA RAKṢA *snying la*<sup>125</sup> HŪM HŪM. ŚŪLAGRĪVA<sup>126</sup> TRISŪLA HRIN HRIN JAḤ JAḤ. OM MUKṢA MUKṢA<sup>127</sup> JAḤ. CITTA CITTA *sod. lcebs te thibs sod. snying khrag dun dun. btsan* JALAYA. *srog* JALAYA.<sup>128</sup> ŚATRŪM *srog* LAYA. ŚATRŪM *dbugs* LAYA. *myur* TRĪLA BHYO BHYO. YATRI YATRI<sup>129</sup> THUṀ THUṀ *rbad.* CATRI CATRI *rbad.* CALAYAM CALAYAM *rbad.* JALAYA JALAYA *rbad.*

<sup>118</sup> make a blue horse tinged with crimson as well as a red-stone knife[-murdered] spirit with crimson flesh. The transliterated term *bheta* likely refers to a vow-breaker, from the Sanskrit “to cleave, violate.”

<sup>119</sup> sheep.

<sup>120</sup> Bamboo pitch (*cu gang*), saffron (*gur gum*), clove (*li shi*), nutmeg (*dza ti*), cardamon (*sug smel*), and Chinese cardamom (*ka ko la*).

<sup>121</sup> the five precious jewels; gold (*gser*), silver (*angul*), turquoise (*g.yu*), coral (*byu ru*), and pearl (*mu tig*).

<sup>122</sup> affix red banners [to them].

<sup>123</sup> after attending [to the spirit] and ritually slaughtering [the offerings], through the medium of the *liṅga*, you will serve [the remains] in order to propitiate [the spirit].

<sup>124</sup> this is the [tutelary] deity to approach.

<sup>125</sup> this is not the principal [deity].

<sup>126</sup> request the martial spirits of the retinue and such to appear.

<sup>127</sup> the accomplishment.

<sup>128</sup> This line is not in the *Ris med* edition.

<sup>129</sup> [ritually] slay [the spirit].

YAM YAM RAM RAM KHAM KHAM LAM LAM. TRIYA TRIYA ŚA-  
MAJAYA. *snying la* BHYO thun BHYO. OM *srog*<sup>130</sup> RULU RULU *sha*.  
*bla sha bla sha* PHAṬ. *blab hats* MUYA *rbad*. OM KĀYAVAJRACARAT-  
HANG. VĀGAVAJRACARATHANG. CITTAVAJRACARAT-  
HANG.<sup>131</sup> LAM LAM *srog* CALA *khrag thibs*.<sup>132</sup> KHAM KHAM<sup>133</sup> *sny-*  
*ing la thum ril*. RAM RAM<sup>134</sup> *shag rbad*. YAM YAM<sup>135</sup> NRI *srog breng*  
*breng* MĀRAYA *rbad*.<sup>136</sup>

“When you inhale inward, your own life essence is interrupted.  
[When] you expel outward, you harm all living beings. Therefore,<sup>137</sup>  
[the spirit must] offer [their life essence] at the site of the effigy.”

This is the fourth chapter on the mantras within the *Heart Tantra for Red Razor, Great King of the Capricious Spirits*.

### Chapter 5: Characteristics and Stages of the Approach and Accomplishment

[*dGe lugs*: 10.1-10.4; *Ris med*: 308.2-309.4]

Then the Bhagavan expounded the stages of the approach and accomplish-  
ment and the stages of the signs: “The oath-bound yogic practition-  
er, having first obtained the meditative warmth of the [tutelary]  
deity, [should] perform and recite for twenty-one days [or] three  
weeks. First, during the times for the approach, approach the Great

<sup>130</sup> Because these are the mantras for summoning the [spirit’s] life force, recite the accomplish-  
ing mantras hundreds and hundreds [of times] in the mornings and evenings.

<sup>131</sup> This cuts at the essence of [Red] Razor [with] a ritual dagger.

<sup>132</sup> This cuts at the essence of [Red] Razor with the elements.

<sup>133</sup> [the element] of water.

<sup>134</sup> [the element] of fire.

<sup>135</sup> [the element] of wind.

<sup>136</sup> Given that this string of mantras is a dense, and often confusing, compilation of  
Sanskrit and Tibetan words and seed syllables, the following is an approximate  
translation: OM lotus moon, great wrathful Hayagrīva, alas, alas HŪM PHAṬ. OM  
protect, protect in one’s hearts HŪM HŪM. JĀH JĀH. Iron-necked trident HRIN  
HRIN JĀH JĀH. OM snare, snare JĀH. Slay the heart, the heart. Slay the throng of  
suicides. A portion, a portion of heart’s blood. Martial spirits JĀLAYA. Life essence  
JĀLAYA. The enemy’s life essence LAYA. The enemy’s life breath LAYA. Thrice  
quickly BHYO BHYO. Going, going, be dispatched THUM THUM. Hidden, hid-  
den, be dispatched. On the wind, the wind, be dispatched. In the water, the water,  
be dispatched. Wind wind, fire fire, water water, earth earth. Thrice, thrice pacify  
and conquer. For the heart BHYO a portion BHYO. OM life essence RULU RULU  
flesh. Life force and flesh, life force and flesh PHAṬ. [With] a mouthful, be dis-  
patched MUYA. OM field of the body’s adamantine movements, field of the  
speech’s adamantine movements, field of the mind’s adamantine movements.  
Earth, earth – the dense blood that moves the life essence. Water, water – the round  
sheath on the heart. Fire, fire – completely dispatches. Wind, wind – the life essence  
is annihilated and, fluttering, is dispatched to MĀRA.

<sup>137</sup> having [performed] the two approaches, command [the spirit] and.

Mighty Divinity [Hayagrīva] in the day and enumerate the life essences of the martial spirits at night. Periodically proffer the effigy as an offering.<sup>138</sup>

Then, during the times for the accomplishment, one should summarize the approach and accomplishment in the day, and at night perform the accomplishment alone, as well as ascribe and invoke the life force mantra. Even if the concentrated blood dissipates in nine [or] seven days after slaying [the effigy],<sup>139</sup> finish the arrow<sup>140</sup> that splits the essence<sup>141</sup> of the element and throw the magical weapons of mustard seeds (*thun zor*) and blood (*khraḡ zor*).<sup>142</sup> [Also] send off the effigy of the martial spirit form and the mule.

“Then, as for the stages of the signs: A ruler<sup>143</sup> born to the matrilineal line of royal ministers; a horseman with a leather shield and clanging cymbals passing the peak of Red Rock [behind bSam yas];<sup>144</sup> the sun and moon<sup>145</sup> rising; blue wolves roaming about – these should be known as signs divine and human. Battles being waged and savage beasts roaming the distant mountains; enemy fortresses being destroyed<sup>146</sup> and prisoners being captured; clothes and jewelry stolen and animals slaughtered – these should be known as

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<sup>138</sup> The following indented portion is found in the Ris med edition but not in the earlier dGe lugs edition. While the latter is older and would suggest that this material was a later addition, much like the interpolations, the dGe lugs text makes much less sense without it. For instance, this line ends with *g.yo ba dang* in the dGe lugs edition and *bstab* in the Ris med edition, with the latter term making much more sense in the context of the effigy (*liṅga*) being discussed. By contrast the following extra content from the Ris med edition ends on *g.yo ba dang*, suggesting that the scribe of the dGe lugs edition skipped a folio side while copying the text and continued to complete the line with the start of the next side. This likely, and not unheard of, scenario also makes the current line of verse 9 syllables long in the dGe lugs edition, which stands out abruptly from the near universal 7-syllable meter used in the text. Finally, given that this chapter concerns both the approach and accomplishment stages as well as the stages of the signs, the former section would be greatly diminished and the latter almost nonexistent without the indented content that follows.

<sup>139</sup> [This being of] *the three – approaching, accomplishing, and slaying.*

<sup>140</sup> *of the session for slaying.*

<sup>141</sup> *OM KĀLAVAJRA and so forth.*

<sup>142</sup> See Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1998, pp.356-357.

<sup>143</sup> *a lord.*

<sup>144</sup> *at a place where people do not wander.*

<sup>145</sup> *many [times].*

<sup>146</sup> *which delights him [Tsi'u dmar po].*

signs of warfare. Lights,<sup>147</sup> sounds, and shaking;

Doors being knocked on and houses cracking; effigies moving and fleeing;<sup>148</sup> the jangling of a<sup>149</sup> bridle and clopping of<sup>150</sup> hooves arising – these should be known as the inner signs. A weapon piercing oneself; a jackal biting – these are the signs of warding off. Because of this, recite the counter measures.”

This is the fifth chapter, expounding the stages of the approach and accomplishment, as well as the stages of the signs, within the *Heart Tantra for Red Razor, King of the Capricious Spirits*.

**Chapter 6: Essential View and Conduct**  
[dGe lugs: 10.4-11.3; Ris med: 309.4-310.5]

Then [Bhagavan] explained thoroughly and definitively: “If the capricious spirit opposes you, draw the eight-spoked three-fold wheel [of Dharma] on cotton cloth or birch bark paper with vermillion, shellac, poison, and blood. At the center [place] the five grains<sup>151</sup> endowed with protective mantras;<sup>152</sup> on the spokes write the eight fierce syllables;<sup>153</sup> and on the edge write the protective mantras of the three Bud-dhas bodies<sup>154</sup> and the quintessential *samaya* vow. Bind the structure in a rolled up red banner [with] the mantra for Rosewood Dagger Hayagrīva. If he is not captured even with that, reverse the order of the essential syllables. Even the martial spirits, hindering spirits, and Seven Emanating Riders arise from me and appear as manifestations.<sup>155</sup> One should know them as my own mind – indivisible and ultimately perfect as one.

“As for the stages of conduct and the *samaya* vow: renounce the meat<sup>156</sup> of powerful illusion, do not distribute the chief weapons,<sup>157</sup> and do not lay out bear- and tiger-[skins] as mats.<sup>158</sup> Do not kill the force<sup>159</sup> of the sharp-pointed mantra, do not obstruct the path<sup>160</sup> [with] one’s

<sup>147</sup> quaking,

<sup>148</sup> and falling apart.

<sup>149</sup> horse.

<sup>150</sup> horse.

<sup>151</sup> Barley (*nas*), rice (*'bras*), wheat (*gro*), peas (*sran*), and millet (*so ba*).

<sup>152</sup> OM TRI HŪM PHAṬ PHAṬ.

<sup>153</sup> [PADMA]CANDAMAHĀKRODHA; lit. “lotus moon, great wrathful one.”

<sup>154</sup> VAJRARĀJATHANG; lit. “field of the adamantine king.”

<sup>155</sup> One should know they do not exist elsewhere.

<sup>156</sup> The meat of a hooved red horse and a donkey.

<sup>157</sup> which killed monks long ago.

<sup>158</sup> Renounce the desire to be the son of a widow.

<sup>159</sup> Do not display the weapons.

<sup>160</sup> Do not deal with martial spirits in a place that harms martial spirits.

own anger, and do not break the turquoise arrow of longevity.<sup>161</sup> Do not blow air [over] charcoal stones,<sup>162</sup> do not give a dedication of misty vapor,<sup>163</sup> and do not be untimely with your promises. If one does not have the security [for their debts], you cannot exploit them.<sup>164</sup> An unguarded *samaya* vow wrecks the consecration. By not approaching the [tutelary] deity, one opposes me.”

This is the sixth chapter on the essential view and conduct within the *Heart Cakra Tantra for Red Razor – the Butcher King – Ruler of the Capricious Spirits*.

### Chapter 7: Transmission

[*dGe lugs*: 11.3-12.3; *Ris med*: 310.5-312.2]

Then [Bhagavan] explained this tantric transmission: “The *Va-jradākinīyoginīs*, gods and demons among the worldly arrogant ones, and those assembled as my retinue are apparent<sup>165</sup> but empty, like a wavering illusion; they are arranged by the conceptual thoughts of ignorance and arrogance. If one wants to practice because malicious capricious spirits – these Seven Riders – guard the [Buddha’s] teachings, casually losing sight of the<sup>166</sup> objects of attachment and aversion, they who possess [excessive] confidence in their view will [only] accomplish the complete abandonment of compassion. If one [selectively] adopts or rejects [whatever practices they wish], they will die, and if the offerings lapse,<sup>167</sup> it will cause misfortune – shooting an arrow without a target<sup>168</sup> harms the retinue. The provisions for the protectors of the Secret Tantra teachings are the offerings for the ‘givers of harm.’<sup>169</sup> The gods who bestow excellence on oneself<sup>170</sup> and the thousand swift martial spirits are the butchers who take the life essence.

Because [its transmission lineage] is completely connected, this is called “tantra;” because it cuts off appearances, this is called “razor;” because it teaches through slaying, this is called “red;” and because it consecrates, this is called “heart.” To this guardian of the teachings and your retinue, I entrust you to gather as attendants.”<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Do not kill jackals.

<sup>162</sup> Do not desire crows.

<sup>163</sup> Do not deviate from the hearth.

<sup>164</sup> They must be known as my own mind.

<sup>165</sup> to see.

<sup>166</sup> five.

<sup>167</sup> Dedicate the food offerings on the full and new moon days when it is time to practice.

<sup>168</sup> not connected to an effigy.

<sup>169</sup> The etymology [for capricious spirits].

<sup>170</sup> [in the form of] assistance.

<sup>171</sup> when you emanate wherever.

Having spoken thus, the entire retinue circumambulated [the Bhagavan] many times and praised him [as follows], “HŪM. We pay homage and praise [you], laughing, neighing Hayagrīva! [You] Lotus Speech – the Supreme Speech of All the Victorious [Buddhas]! [You] splendid form [that arises] from HRĪ – the emanation of the Dharma lords Amitābha, Vajradharma,<sup>172</sup> and Avalokiteśvara!” Having proclaimed thus, they all abided in the innate nature of realization. Regarding the subject of this very tantra, the *dākinī* [rDo rje bde byed ma] wrote down these miraculous words. After swearing an oath [to act] as guardians of the teachings, the Seven Arrogant Riders were entrusted with their own abode.

This is the seventh chapter on the entrustment within the *Heart Cakra Tantra for [Red] Razor, the Butcher King of the Capricious Spirits*.<sup>173</sup> Thus ends the *Tantra for Tsi'u dmar po*,<sup>174</sup> *King of the Capricious Spirits*, and this contemplation on these martial spirits, the Seven Emanating Riders. SAMAYĀ. Seal, seal, seal!

### Colophon

[dGe lugs: 12.3-12.4; Ris med: 312.2-312.3]

This was revealed from a treasure [text] by the Venerable mNga' ris paṅ chen.<sup>175</sup>

[From Sle lung] bZhad pa'i rdo rje's class of volumes [concerning] martial spirits.<sup>176</sup>

May it be virtuous!<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> *in four aspects*.

<sup>173</sup> This line describing the seventh chapter is slightly misplaced in the dGe lugs edition, found as it is at the very end, after the colophon, and written in the 'khyug cursive script.

<sup>174</sup> *This is actually his secret name*.

<sup>175</sup> *It was copied from a little yellow scroll*. This is the only interpolation found in the dGe lugs edition; it is not present in the Ris med edition.

<sup>176</sup> Understandably, this line is only found in the dGe lugs edition, written in the 'khyug script.

<sup>177</sup> Tib. *dge'o*; this final expression is only found in the Ris med edition.

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