


# “May it Meet with a Karmically Destined Mahākāruṅika Yogin!”—Ratna Lingpa’s Renewal of the *Maṅi*-Pill Tradition in Fifteenth Century Tibet<sup>1</sup>

James Gentry  
(Stanford University)

## 1. Introduction

 Pills and other material compounds operating at the intersection of religion and medicine have been an integral part of the Buddhist tradition throughout its history.<sup>2</sup> This paper considers one of the most enduring and popular medico-Buddhist pill traditions in the history of Tibetan Buddhism—the *maṅi* pill—by examining a pivotal chapter in its storied history: the reception and revival of the *maṅi* pill in the fifteenth century by the influential Treasure revealer and scholar Ratna Lingpa (Ratna gling pa, 1403–1479).

The Tibetan *maṅi* pill is part of an ongoing Buddhist medico-ritual tradition whose roots lie in Indian Buddhist narrative and ritual literature that was translated into Tibetan between the eighth and twelfth

---

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Jacob Dalton for his feedback on an earlier draft of this paper and for generously sharing with me the page proofs of his 2023 book, and Ana Cristina Lopes for her sound suggestions on two earlier drafts of this paper. Thanks also to Khenpo Yeshe for working through a few difficult Tibetan passages with me, and to anonymous reviews for offering several revisions. I would also like to thank Barbara Gerke, Jan van der Valk, and Calum Blaikie for organizing and inviting me to take part in the workshop “Materiality, Agency and Power: Crafting Potency in Sowa Rigpa and Ritual Practice,” held at University of Vienna in July 12-13, 2022. This workshop, where I presented a preliminary consideration of this paper, provided a particularly stimulating forum for discussion and development of many of the themes presented herein. Many thanks to all the workshop participants for such rich and lively conversation, and especially Tawni Tidwell, for generously sharing with me her expertise in Tibetan medicinal substances and resources important for their use and study, and Reinier Langelaar, for generously sharing with me his valuable work on kinship in Tibetan societies. Thanks also to Cathy Cantwell, who attended the workshop virtually, for her valuable feedback on my presentation.

<sup>2</sup> Salguero 2022.

centuries.<sup>3</sup> The pill is best known today as produced under the auspices of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso, in Dharamsala, India, and from the *maṇi rimdu* festival performed in the highlands of Nepal, as lavishly documented by Richard Kohn.<sup>4</sup> It is little known, however, that well before these two contemporary traditions were inaugurated in the seventeenth century, Ratna Lingpa was the principal revealer and propagator of the *maṇi*-pill tradition.<sup>5</sup>

Located at the interface between Tibetan medicinal and Buddhist ritual traditions that had already been intermingling for centuries, Ratna Lingpa's *maṇi*-pill revelation came embedded in a broader set of Buddhist narrative and ritual traditions and incorporated as ingredients the flesh of the bodhisattva of compassion Avalokiteśvara's emanations and other Buddhist "very special dead," along with substances more commonly used in Tibetan medicine.<sup>6</sup> Key to the manufacture and public distribution of Ratna Lingpa's *maṇi* pill is an elaborate communal ritual consecration process practiced to this day. This ritual is part of Ratna Lingpa's broader Treasure revelation known as the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* (*Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa*), featuring a tantric form of Avalokiteśvara and a seven-syllable form of his mantra.<sup>7</sup> Ratna Lingpa made a concerted effort throughout his lifetime to promote the *maṇi* pill's production, consecration, and consumption throughout Tibet as part of this ritual cycle.

The enduring popularity of Ratna Lingpa's *maṇi*-pill tradition surely derives in large part from the sustained care he devoted toward packaging and promoting it in this compelling and practicable ritual format. But its success is also in no small part attributable to the charisma, learning, and reputation of Ratna Lingpa himself, and, most crucially, how he leveraged these to form key relationships with the past. Ratna Lingpa is one of the most illustrious figures in the history of Tibetan Buddhism. The Nyingma tradition to which he belonged maintains that the *maṇi* pill is part of Tibet's larger ongoing revelatory

<sup>3</sup> The Indian pedigree of the *maṇi* pill, only briefly touched on below, will be dealt with in greater detail in my forthcoming study.

<sup>4</sup> For analysis of the *maṇi*-pill tradition of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, see Kloos (2010, 116–126). For the *maṇi rimdu* festival of Nepal, see Kohn 1985 and 2001.

<sup>5</sup> This is evinced in Karma chags med's (1613–1678) fascinating text narrating the history and benefits of Ratna Lingpa's *maṇi* pill and the ritual tradition of which it partakes, *Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa'i maṇi bum sgrub dang ril bu'i lo rgyus dang phan yon* (2010, vol. 14, 451–496). This text, together with the context of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century transformations of the *maṇi*-pill tradition, will be treated in my future study.

<sup>6</sup> I draw the phrase "very special dead" from Brown 1981, 69–85.

<sup>7</sup> The Tibetan title of this Treasure cycle, *Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa*, suggests a connection with the *maṇḍala* of the Indian Buddhist *Guhyasamājantra*, but with the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara as Mahākārunika occupying central position. This connection will be explored in my future study.

system—known as the Treasure tradition—which was set in motion by the eighth to ninth century Indian *yogin* Padmasambhava.<sup>8</sup> The Nyingma tradition claims that during his stay in Tibet serving as tantric guru to the Tibetan imperial court, Padmasambhava concealed countless scriptures and sacra to be excavated over the ensuing centuries by future reincarnations of the royal entourage whom the Indian *yogin* prophesied would serve as Treasure discoverers emerging at specific times and places to reveal particular teachings and sacra when the time is most ripe for their dispensation and practice. Ratna Lingpa was one of the most prolific prophesied Treasure revealers in the history of Tibet. He is credited with excavating from Tibet's ancient temples and natural landscape twenty-five separate Treasure revelations, consisting of a wide range of liturgical manuals, contemplative instructions, historical narratives, and material sacra, many of which have been passed down to the present.

Ratna Lingpa was also a prolific scholar in his own right. He wrote numerous erudite compositions on topics in Buddhist history, philosophy, poetry, contemplation, ritual, art, and material culture. Perhaps most important among his scholarly activities was his work as an archivist and editor of tantric scriptures. Ratna Lingpa is renowned in the annals of Tibetan tradition as instrumental in compiling the Nyingma *tantras* into a coherent canonical collection—the *Collection of Old School Tantras* (*rNying ma rgyud 'bum*)—in the wake of their nearly complete exclusion from the *Kangyur* canonical collections compiled in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the centrality of Ratna Lingpa in the history of Tibetan Buddhism and the identity of its Nyingma school to the present, there remains little research squarely focused on this figure's life, milieu, and broader influence. An ancillary goal of the present paper is to help fill this lacuna by presenting and analyzing Ratna Lingpa's diverse involvements with this influential medico-Buddhist pill tradition. But the broader aim of this paper is to contribute toward my ongoing study of the history of the *maṇi*-pill tradition in Tibet over its *longue durée*, from its origins in Indian Buddhist scriptures translated into Tibetan in the eighth century, up to the present period, by analyzing its most pivotal transformations. The present consideration fits into this larger project by assessing Ratna Lingpa's *maṇi*-pill revelations and related biographical vignettes in relation to the earlier *maṇi*-pill tradition of the Treasure revealer Guru Chökyi Wangchuk (Gu ru Chos kyi dbang phyug, 1212–1270). In so doing, it attempts to illustrate how Ratna Lingpa renewed the *maṇi*-pill tradition of his predecessor by forming

<sup>8</sup> For a traditional biography of this figure, see Tsogyal 1993.

<sup>9</sup> Harrison 1994, van der Kuijp and Schaeffer 2009, and Almogi 2020.

key continuities with the past and making some subtle but important innovations.

I examine this dynamic interplay between tradition and novelty by first considering the *maṇi*-pill tradition initiated by Guru Chöwang, particularly in terms of the legacy of its propagation and the controversies it generated in the fourteenth century. I then attempt to account for Ratna Lingpa's involvement with the *maṇi*-pill tradition in narrative depictions of his visions, dreams, miracles, and revelation episodes featuring Guru Chöwang and the *maṇi* pill. Finally, I analyze how the legacy of Guru Chöwang's *maṇi*-pill tradition found expression in Ratna Lingpa's revealed *maṇi*-pill writings themselves. I argue that Ratna Lingpa's revelation effectively rebranded Guru Chöwang's earlier revelation of the *Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* (*Thugs rje chen po yang rnying 'dus pa*) through a process of textual reuse, editing, recontextualization, and canonization, in tandem with the narrativization of related events that foreground his special relationship with Guru Chöwang and his earlier *maṇi*-pill tradition. I suggest, moreover, that Ratna Lingpa's editorial reuse of Guru Chöwang's writings/revelations was driven in some measure by the controversial reception of Guru Chöwang's *maṇi*-pill tradition during the century and half or so that separated these two figures, but more fundamentally, by the recognition that the *maṇi*-pill tradition could prove crucial in creating bonds between Tibetans across time and space that would inform a sense of kindred Tibetan identity. In this, I propose that the *maṇi* pill was promoted by Ratna Lingpa, and Guru Chöwang before him, for its potential to function as a kind of kinship substance, relating *maṇi*-pill consumers as kindred offspring of Avalokiteśvara through a combination of ritual, narrative, pill production, commensality, and an enduring behavioral regimen adopted and adhered to through the acceptance and maintenance of tantric *samaya* commitments.

In closely comparing key passages in Guru Chöwang's and Ratna Lingpa's Treasure texts and relating this comparison to their socio-religious contexts, I also aim to submit a case study for scrutiny according to the methodological observations made by Cantwell and Mayer. They have illustrated in their studies of Nyingma Vajakīlaya traditions, in particular, how the issue of continuity and/or innovation in Tibet's Treasure tradition is most fruitfully approached by combining the philological approach of comparing specific Treasure texts to their historical cognates with the socio-cultural approach of examining their wider contexts of production/revelation and reception.<sup>10</sup> Building on Cantwell's and Mayer's observations, I seek to bring another, quite

---

<sup>10</sup> Cantwell 2015a and 2020, Mayer 2015.

different example into view, one that can shed light on the history of a pill tradition that has constituted a core component of Tibetan Buddhist identity to the present. Finally, as a foundational part of my broader study of the *maṇi*-pill tradition over the course of its one-thousand year history, this study is an initial gesture toward following Barbara Gerke's lead in addressing Cathy Cantwell's call for scholars studying the connection between Buddhist ritual and Tibetan medicine to begin researching specific pill traditions and medicinal compounds in their socio-historical and ritual contexts.<sup>11</sup> Further toward this end, I provide in appendices Tibetan editions and English translations of several of the seminal literary sources of the *maṇi*-pill tradition that I discuss herein.

2. *Guru Chöwang's Maṇi Pill in the Career of Ratna Lingpa:  
The Intertwined Lives of Two Mahākāruṇika Yogins from Lhodrak*

Ratna Lingpa was born in the region of Lhodrak (Lho brag), Southern Tibet, in a small village called Drushül (Gru shul).<sup>12</sup> Based in this region throughout his life, Ratna Lingpa traveled widely throughout Ü (dBus) and Tsang (gTsang) to become renowned throughout Tibet as one of the greatest Buddhist visionaries and teachers of his day. As mentioned above, he excavated twenty-five separate Treasure revelations that included a diversity of liturgical manuals, contemplative instructions, and sacra such as statues, relics, medicinal pills, and, most significantly for the present discussion, *brahmin flesh*. Ratna Lingpa was so prolific as a Treasure revealer that he alone is said to have excavated the Treasures intended for three different prophesied Treasure revealers. He consequently also became known by the names of Shikpo Lingpa (Zhig po gling pa) and Drodül Dorjé ('Gro 'dul gling pa).<sup>13</sup> Many of his Treasures continue to be practiced to this day.

Ratna Lingpa's natal territory of Lhodrak had been a place of great importance for Buddhists since as early as the eleventh century, and perhaps since the time of the Tibetan empire in the seventh and eighth

---

<sup>11</sup> Cantwell 2015b, Gerke 2019.

<sup>12</sup> For brief biographies of Ratna Lingpa, see Dudjom 1991, 793–795, Leschly 2007b, and Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Taye 2011, 222–224.

<sup>13</sup> Ratna Lingpa's epithet of Shikpo Lingpa (Zhig po gling pa) became a point of controversy after another later Treasure revealer assumed this prophesied name, calling himself Shikpo Lingpa Gargyi Wangchuk Tsel (Zhig po gling pa Gar gyi dbang phyug rtsal, 1524–1583); the sixteenth-century Shikpo Lingpa was posthumously accused by the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobzang Gyatso (Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, 1617–1683) as having been a pretender to this prophesied identity. For more on this sixteenth-century figure and the controversy surrounding his identity as a Treasure revealer, see Gentry 2017, 56–75 and 384–408.

centuries.<sup>14</sup> Most importantly for Ratna Lingpa, it was the birthplace and home of the famed thirteenth-century Treasure revealer Guru Chökyi Wangchuk, otherwise known as Guru Chöwang, who revealed numerous Treasures in the region and founded Layag Guru Temple (La yag gu ru lha khang) there in 1250.<sup>15</sup> Growing up in such proximity to Guru Chöwang's home seems to have exerted a considerable influence on Ratna Lingpa. Ratna Lingpa is unequivocal in his autobiographical writings that he envisioned his own career as a Treasure revealer to be a continuation of Guru Chöwang's visionary revelations. As I will demonstrate below, integral to Ratna Lingpa's coming into his own as a Treasure revealer were dreams, visions, and miracles indicating that he was in fact the reincarnation, about a century removed, of Guru Chöwang's biological son Gyelsé Pema Wangchen (rGyal sras Padma dbang chen, 13<sup>th</sup> c.).

Perhaps nowhere is Guru Chöwang's influence more pronounced than in Ratna Lingpa's revelation and propagation of the brahmin-flesh *maṇi*-pill tradition associated with the propitiation of Avalokiteśvara and the recitation of his seven-syllable mantra *om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*. As an important figure in systematizing the Nyingma Treasure tradition, Guru Chöwang is credited by Tibetan historians as the first Treasure revealer to have popularized the flesh-pill by embedding its production in a major ritual-contemplative practice system.<sup>16</sup> This practice system is known as the *Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*.<sup>17</sup> As its title suggests, the cycle centers on a tantric form of Avalokiteśvara, known as the Great Compassionate One, or Mahākāruṇika, in Sanskrit. He is depicted as red in complexion, with one face and two arms, holding a crystal rosary in his right hand and a vase in his left, in sexual union with his consort and surrounded by a *maṇḍala* of other buddhas in sexual union. The *Quintessential Assembly* corpus includes a *tantra*, and a range of commentaries, narratives, contemplative practice instructions, and ritual manuals that embed the flesh in a larger framework of Buddhist history, theory, and practice.

<sup>14</sup> Lhodrak is associated with the translator, and guru of Milarepa, Marpa Chökyi Lodrö (Mar pa Chos kyi blo gros, 1002/1012–1097/1100), the Treasure revealer Nyangrel Nyima Özer (Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer, 1124–1192) and other important Buddhist figures; it is also the location of a temple said to have been built by Songtsen Gampo (Srong btsan sgam po, 7<sup>th</sup> c.; cf. Sørensen 1994, 277–278). For more on the important people, pilgrimage sites, and temples associated with Lhodrak, see 'Jam dpal brtson 'grus 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Layag Guru Temple is also known as bSam grub bde ba chen po. For short biographies of Guru Chöwang, see Dudjom 1991, 760–770, Leschly 2007a, and Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Taye 2011, 101–106. For more on his writings, revelations, and legacy, see Gyatso 1993 and 1994; and Phillips 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Karma chags med 2010, 482.4–5.

<sup>17</sup> Gu ru Chos kyi dbang phyug 1982.

With the revelation of this cycle, contemplative and ritual practices centering on this form of Avalokiteśvara became integral to the manufacture of the flesh into pills and their consecration.

The seven-times-born flesh that features in this practice system is presented as none other than the flesh of Avalokiteśvara. As this tradition has it, out of his boundless altruism for beings the bodhisattva of compassion emanated as a brahmin for seven consecutive lifetimes to render the bodily corpse of his seventh incarnation—imbued with the virtue and merit accrued to the consciousness-continuum over the course of these seven lifetimes—potent enough to benefit not just tantric Buddhist *yogins* involved in the esoteric practice of consuming transgressive substances, but the entire population of beings mired in the suffering of *samsāra*.<sup>18</sup> Regardless of its putative intrinsic potency, however, the *Quintessential Assembly* presumes that rendering the flesh most efficacious requires an extensive consecration ceremony known as a “great accomplishment” rite (*sgrub chen*). The flesh-pill great accomplishment rite of this cycle is a collective liturgical practice in which participants mix the flesh with other ingredients, most of which feature also in Tibetan medicine, form the concoction into pills, and place them inside a vase, positioned at the center of a *maṅḍala*, which serves as the focal point for the performance of tantric visualization exercises, mantra recitations, and physical gestures and transactions. The rite culminates with an initiation in which the pills are distributed for consumption.

Vital to this consecration process is the collective recitation of Avalokiteśvara’s mantra. As I will show below, Guru Chöwang attracted both fame and infamy during his lifetime by revealing Treasures that newly add the seed-syllable *hrīḥ* to the six-syllable mantra of Avalokiteśvara—*om maṇi padme hūm*—and promoting the collective recitation of this new mantra in the context of mass *maṇi*-pill consecration rituals. Given its focus on the bodhisattva of compassion and his mantra, this ritual came to be known as the “*maṇi*-pill accomplishment” (*maṇi ril sgrub*), “pill-vase accomplishment” (*ril bu bum sgrub*), or simply “vase accomplishment” (*bum sgrub*), after the vase containing the pills in the rite. It also came to be associated with the collective “one hundred million *maṇi* recitation session” (*maṇi dung phyur*) since mass intensive mantra recitation was invariably central to its consecration.<sup>19</sup>

Guru Chöwang’s revelation and propagation of the *Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* signaled a major turning point

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix I for the seminal origin narrative according to Guru Chöwang’s tradition.

<sup>19</sup> Karma chags med 2010, 451–496. For a detailed account of the *maṇi*-pill accomplishment rite, or *maṇi rimdu*, as it is performed in the highlands of Nepal, see Kohn 2001.

for the discourse and practice of the seven-times-born-flesh *maṇi* pill in Tibet. It seems that with the *Quintessential Assembly* Guru Chöwang was the first to successfully integrate the esoteric substance of seven-times-born brahmin flesh, which features in several important Indian Buddhist *tantras*, such as the *Hevajra*, *Cakrasaṃvara*, and *Kālacakra*, among others, with a popular collective ritual practice centering on the bodhisattva of compassion Avalokiteśvara and his mantra.<sup>20</sup> Guru Chöwang claimed that eating his *maṇi* pills produced and consecrated in such contexts could cure illness, purify karma, ensure rebirth in a pure land, and even bring complete awakening. Such promises, along with the addition of the seed syllable *hrīḥ* to the end of the bodhisattva's famous six-syllable mantra as a means toward those goals, were integral facets of his *Quintessential Assembly* practice system.

To be clear, however, Guru Chöwang was not the first person to interpret the seven-born flesh of Indian Buddhist *tantras* to originate with advanced bodhisattvas and their altruistic commitment to benefit all beings through giving their own bodies. In this he was following an earlier interpretative current, voiced by among others the celebrated eleventh-century Indian Buddhist scholar Abhayākaragupta in his *Samputatantra* commentary, the *Āmnāyamañjarī*. There, the Indian scholar describes seven-timers as not just beings whose purity unwittingly propels them through seven successive human rebirths.<sup>21</sup> More specifically, he states, they are bodhisattvas whose bodies become potent forces of beneficial activity through the stabilization and materialization of their bodhisattva vow and its attendant ethical conduct.

Neither was Guru Chöwang the first to bring seven-born flesh into a medical register, while nonetheless touting its potency to bring liberation through consumption. We find a medical emphasis already in the influential eleventh century *Kālacakratantra*-inspired commentary on the *Hevajratantra* called the *Hevajrapañḍārthaṭīkā*, attributed to the bodhisattva Vajragarbha and translated into Tibetan in the twelfth century. There, the flesh is figuratively glossed according to an "inner," "secret," or "definitive" meaning in keeping with Indian Āyurveda theory's conception of a seven-stage process of digestion and physiological formation, undergone by all humans, and more particularly, its most refined result, reproductive fluid, whose manipulation in the

<sup>20</sup> An argument to this effect will be presented in my extended study of this tradition. Suggesting such are Shes rab rgyal mtshan 1997, 391.6; and Karma chags med 2010, 451–496. For discussion of the Indian Buddhist tantric discourse of the seven-born-one (Skt. *saptajanma*, Tib. *skye ba bdun pa*; Skt. *saptāvarta*, Tib. *lan bdun pa*, 'khor bdun pa), see Snellgrove 2010, 71–73, 86–87; Gray 2007, 206–209, 367–369; and Gray 2005.

<sup>21</sup> Abhayākaragupta 2015 (D1198), vol. 1, 886.5/6–887.3/4. For a Sanskrit edition and English translation of the *Samputatantra*, see Dharmachakra Translation Committee 2020a.



service of awakening is the purview of tantric subtle-body yoga.<sup>22</sup> Along with providing a layering of literal and figurative senses, commentaries like Vajragarbha's extend the flesh's range of effects beyond the mundane goals of flight, longevity, healing, and so forth, to include the transcendent goal of complete awakening.<sup>23</sup>

Where Guru Chöwang seems to have been innovative was in connecting the flesh and its complex of associations specifically to Avalokiteśvara, the patron bodhisattva of Tibet, and integrating it with a popular collective ritual practice centering on the manufacture and distribution of pills consecrated by his mantra. In this, Guru Chöwang's flesh-pill practice can be best understood in the context of his broader promotion of the cult of Avalokiteśvara in Tibet. Bradford Phillips has shown how Guru Chöwang was instrumental through his revelation and dissemination of the *Maṇi Kabum* (*Maṇi bKa' 'bum*) in popularizing the cult of Avalokiteśvara and the recitation of his mantra throughout all strata of thirteenth-century Tibetan society.<sup>24</sup> When viewed in light of these wider efforts, which Phillips highlights as "more evangelistic and sociopolitical in nature" than his predecessors, Guru Chöwang's Avalokiteśvara flesh cycle emerges as a way to quite literally materialize the bodhisattva from within the Tibetan landscape.<sup>25</sup> Propagation of the collective "great accomplishment" rite, culminating with the distribution and consumption of Avalokiteśvara's body, can then be seen in part as a way to induct as wide an audience as possible into a vision of Avalokiteśvara's intimate involvement with the Tibetan populace as Tibet's destined spiritual patron. In Guru Chöwang's revelation and distribution of Avalokiteśvara's body

<sup>22</sup> Vajragarbha and Shendge 2004, 29–30, verses 23–36, 185–186, 232–233. The canonical Tibetan translation is Vajragarbha, *Kye'i rdo rje bsdus pa'i don gyi gya cher 'grel pa* (D1180), *Bstan 'gyur (dpe bsdur ma)* 1994–2008, vol. 1, 823–824, 973–974. The *Vajrapadaśārasaṅgrahapañjikā* attributed to Yaśobhadra (D1186), probably among other late *Hevajratantra* commentaries, cites Vajragarbha's commentary to offer much the same interpretation. For details about this Āyurvedic theory, see Wuja-styk 1998, 5 and 320–327; and Maas 2008, 131, 135–136, and 142.

<sup>23</sup> Echoes of this range of interpretations are evident in the one of the earliest *Hevajratantra* commentaries written in Tibetan, the *Ornament-Like Jewel* (*Rin chen rgyan 'dra*), attributed to the twelfth-century Tibetan scholar Ngok Shedang Dorjé (rNgog Zhe sdang rdo rje 1976, 153.7–154.6; 218.1–219.7); and in the Tibetan contemplative and healing tradition of *Pacifying* (*Zhi byed*) associated with the eleventh to twelfth-century Indian figure Padampa Sangyé (Thugs sras kun dga' 1979, vol. 2, 73.7–78.1). See Gentry (2022) for more details on these connections. For an insightful analysis of the range of gustatory, medicinal, and alchemical valences associated with the consumption of human bodily substances in Tibetan religion, see Garrett 2010.

<sup>24</sup> Phillips 2004, 343–346.

<sup>25</sup> Phillips 2004, 344.

throughout Tibet, the bodhisattva's salvific grace could now be felt by Tibetans of all walks of life.

It is also worth mentioning that the Treasure tradition of revealing Avalokiteśvara's emanated brahmin flesh also stands out as a particularly visceral instance of what Matthew Kapstein has described as the shift among Tibetans from the twelfth century on toward finding India, the sacred source of Tibet's Buddhist traditions, within Tibet and Tibetans.<sup>26</sup> With Guru Chöwang's *maṇi*-pill practice, the Indian Buddhist bodhisattva of compassion Avalokiteśvara could be found not only within the past lives and mindstreams of Tibet's ecclesiastical elite, as made known through their writings. He could also be discovered throughout the Tibetan landscape as well, such that his body, formed into pills, could be directly sensed on the tongues and in the mouths and stomachs of all Tibetans. This tendency toward translocating the Indic to Tibet could also help explain why Avalokiteśvara's flesh had to come in the form of the quintessentially Indian figure of the brahmin, and no one else.

That Avalokiteśvara's flesh had to be sourced from a human being born no fewer than seven consecutive generations as a brahmin forms another more specific link to India. Ronald Davidson has convincingly argued that the Buddhist cult of the seven generations of buddhas (*sangs rgyas rabs bdun*), with Śākyamuni as the present seventh and Maitreya the future eighth, resulted from the Buddhist assimilation of Sanskrit legal and ritual codes well represented in pan-Indian *Dharmaśāstra* literature, where seven successive generations was taken to be the standard for brahmanical claims of authority and purity. As Davidson outlines, "the *Dharma-śāstras* align the idea of seven generations with three basic concerns: ancestral descent, purity of lineage, and inheritance."<sup>27</sup> The Buddhist assimilation of this set of kinship connections into the seven buddhas cult finds expression in the *Prātimokṣa* and the importance placed on it and its communal recitation in ensuring the pure lineal succession of the buddhas, the teaching, and the community. Drawing attention to the kinship resonances of this connection, Davidson states, "The Vinaya in general, and the *Prātimokṣa* in particular, thus belongs to the family of the buddhas, to the monks and nuns who constitute the sons and daughters (*śākyaputra*, *śākyaduhitā*) of Śākyamuni."<sup>28</sup> He goes on to suggest that their important kinship associations helped the seven generations of buddhas serve as an important thread linking Buddhist monastic ritual practice with the Mahāyāna cult of *dhāraṇī* spells. Davidson states in summation that the

---

<sup>26</sup> Kapstein 2003, 774–776.

<sup>27</sup> Davidson 2015, 134.

<sup>28</sup> Davidson 2015, 137.

seven buddhas “were the ancestors, the progenitors of the ancestral *Prātimokṣa* that survived when the buddhas themselves did not,” and as “[c]entral to the early articulation of the *dhāraṇī* procedure (*dhāraṇī-naya*), the seven buddhas formed a bridge from the early ideology of Śākyamuni’s predecessors through the *Prātimokṣa* revelations in the Vinaya, into the Mahāyāna scriptures and the *dhāraṇī* pronouncements.”<sup>29</sup>

The figure of the brahmin as an important bridge to India and Buddhism-inflected Indian kinship conceptions might also reflect how Avalokiteśvara had already been domesticated in Tibet before Guru Chöwang’s time. The advent of the *maṇi*-pill tradition in the thirteenth century came in the wake of the popularization of a Buddhist ethnogenealogical account of the origin of the Tibetan people from the union of a monkey emanated by Avalokiteśvara and a rock-ogress emanated by Tārā.<sup>30</sup> A particularly elaborate version of this narrative is found in the *History of Buddhism* attributed to Nyangrel Nyima Özer (Nyang ral Nyi ma ’od zer, 1124–1192), the renowned Treasure revealer, scholar, and fellow Lhodrak native whom Guru Chöwang overtly emulated in his efforts to promote the cult of Avalokiteśvara.<sup>31</sup> Another crucial aspect of the domestication and popularization of Avalokiteśvara in Tibet—by Guru Chöwang, Nyangrel before him, and others active in this movement—was to cast as a further emanation of Avalokiteśvara the Tibetan emperor Songtsen Gampo (Srong btsan sgam po, c. 617–649/650), who is credited with first unifying the territory of Tibet, expanding its borders to form the Tibetan empire (circa 650–850), and introducing writing, Buddhism, law, standard units of measure, and other key facets of governance into the new imperium.<sup>32</sup>

That the *maṇi* pill was developed in the context of this rich set of associations between Avalokiteśvara, the paternal line of Tibetan ethnic identity, and Tibet’s imperial legacy strongly suggests that the pill, through its collective ritual consecration with Avalokiteśvara’s mantra

---

<sup>29</sup> Davidson 2015, 158. For English translation and discussion of the seven buddhas literature and cult in India and Tibet, see Krug 2019; Dharmachakra Translation Committee 2020b, 2021; and Nourse 2021.

<sup>30</sup> Langelaar 227–228, unpublished dissertation. Some renditions narrate the monkey as only instigated by Avalokiteśvara and do not equate the rock-ogress with Tārā. For discussion of the origin and history of this ethnogenealogy, see Sørensen 1994, 581–583.

<sup>31</sup> *Chos ’byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi’i bcud* (Nyang ral chos ’byung) 1988, 140–156. For another rendition of this account, see Sørensen 1994, 125–133. For more on the relationship between Guru Chöwang and Nyangrel Nyima Özer, see Phillips 2004 and Hirshberg 2016, 2017.

<sup>32</sup> Sørensen 1994, Phillips 2004. For more on the life, legend, and legacy of emperor Songtsen Gampo and his association with Avalokiteśvara, see Kapstein 2000, 51–65, 141–162.

and the commensality of Avalokiteśvara's flesh that followed it, was intended to produce or enhance a strong sense of kindred spirit—or, in the words of Marshall Sahlins, a “mutuality of being”—premised on shared belonging to the special people, place, history, and physical body of the bodhisattva of compassion himself.<sup>33</sup> Combined with the multitextured Indian Buddhist tantric discourse of the seven-times-born brahmin and the unmistakable link with India and Indian kinship notions it provided, Guru Chöwang's Avalokiteśvara *maṇi*-pill tradition brought together a particularly compelling configuration of symbolic and material associations that would ensure its wide appeal in the decades and centuries to follow.

From the middle of the thirteenth century to the end of the fourteenth century, Guru Chöwang's flesh-pill production and consecration rite spread to become widely practiced not only in Lhodrak, but across all of Tibet. After Guru Chöwang's passing in 1270, the dissemination of this tradition was taken up by his son Gyelsé Pema Wangchen, and later, by Pang Khenchen Özer Lama (sPang/sPung mkhan chen 'Od zer bla ma, 1295–1376), among others.<sup>34</sup> But despite concerted efforts to promote Guru Chöwang's *maṇi*-pill tradition, and the sense of collective belonging it surely fostered among Tibetans of the period, by Ratna Lingpa's time in the early fifteenth century its credibility was under attack. In the fourteenth century, polemical writings sharply critical of Guru Chöwang and his *maṇi*-pill tradition were composed and circulated throughout Tibet. Since Ratna Lingpa's involvements with the brahmin-flesh *maṇi* pill can be best understood in light to these critiques, allow us to briefly review these writings before turning to consider Ratna Lingpa's own involvement with the *maṇi*-pill tradition.

### *a. The Critical Reception of Guru Chöwang's Maṇi-Pill Tradition*

Formal literary criticisms of Guru Chöwang and his *maṇi*-pill tradition began to surface shortly after his passing. These were part of a broader current of polemical writing that targeted the general authenticity of the Nyingma school's revered scriptures and sacra.<sup>35</sup> The centuries-

---

<sup>33</sup> Sahlins 2013, 2.

<sup>34</sup> See in particular sPung mkhan chen 'Od zer bla ma's biography, '*Gran pa'i zla thams cad dang bral ba khams gsum chos kyi rgyal po spung mkhan chen 'od zer bla ma'i rnam thar 'gro blo'i mun sel* (ff 170a.3–171b.6), composed primarily by bSod nams dbang phyug during 'Od zer bla ma's later years based on notes from interviews with his main students and in consultation with 'Od zer bla ma himself.

<sup>35</sup> Karmay 1980; Karmay 1988, 121–33; Mayer 1996, 1–63, 1997; Kapstein 2000, 120–137; Raudsepp 2009; Gentry 2017, 171–290.

long process of translating scriptures and compiling them into the canonical *Kangyur* (*bKa' 'gyur*) and *Tengyur* (*bsTan 'gyur*) collections culminated in the fourteenth century with the exclusion of most of the scriptures belonging to the Nyingma school under suspicion of apocryphal authorship. Such suspicions were nothing new. Tibetans had been voicing them since the beginning of the later dissemination period (*phyi dar*) in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. But it was Butön Rinchen Drup (Bu ton Rin chen grub, 1290–1364), the fourteenth-century abbot of Shalu (Zhwa lu) Monastery, who, integrally involved in the formation of the translated scriptural canon, famously “left aside with impartiality” the vast majority of Nyingma *tantras* when codifying his influential canonical catalogues.<sup>36</sup>

It is perhaps little wonder, then, that a polemical writing attributed to Butön that attacks the authenticity of Guru Chöwang's seven-times-born flesh tradition began to circulate after Guru Chöwang's time. This polemic, generically titled *Refutation of False Dharma* (*Chos log sun 'byin*), includes a strident critique of Guru Chöwang and his seven-time-flesh practice within a broader polemic against the Nyingma Treasure tradition as a whole.<sup>37</sup> Another anti-Nyingma polemic surfaced in all likelihood prior to this Butön-attributed critique that targets very briefly and in passing the general authenticity of Guru Chöwang's revelations. This text, known similarly as *Refutation of False Mantra* (*sNgags log sun 'byin*), is attributed to the renowned thirteenth-century translator Chak Lotsāwa Chöjé Pel (Chag lotsāwa Chos rje dpal, 1197–1264).<sup>38</sup> The critical remarks voiced in these two writings find inflection in a writing about the seven-born brahmin flesh accomplishment rite composed by the illustrious Jonang scholar Dölpopa Sherap Gyeltsen (Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan, 1292–1361) between the years of 1344 and 1348.<sup>39</sup>

While the Dölpopa-attributed text seems to have been genuinely authored by him, the polemics attributed to Chak *lotsāwa* and Butön are likely forgeries.<sup>40</sup> The composition and circulation of counterfeit polemical treatises forged to appear like the writings of particularly famous translators or scholars was not unheard of in Tibet. Such forgeries seem to have been written to lend an air of authority to their criticisms and thereby heighten their intended impact of defaming a rival school, faction, or figure. Whoever composed them, the themes broached in the Chak *lotsāwa*-attributed polemic are developed further in the Butön-attributed polemic. The Chak *lotsāwa*-attributed polemic

<sup>36</sup> Bu ston 1988, 266: ...*btang snyoms su bzhag gol*.

<sup>37</sup> *Sngags log sun 'byin gyi skor* 1979, 25.5–36.3; *gter ma'i le'u*: 26.2–31.6.

<sup>38</sup> *Sngags log sun 'byin gyi skor* 1979, 2–18.2.

<sup>39</sup> Shes rab rgyal mtshan. 199? and 2001, *Bram ze sha'am skye bdun ril sgrub thabs*.

<sup>40</sup> Kapstein 2000, 253–254n35; Raudsepp 2009, 209 and 296n70.

attacks only briefly the general authenticity of Guru Chöwang's revelations.<sup>41</sup> But in so doing it cites his alleged contraction of leprosy as a factor that challenges his viability as a genuine Treasure revealer.

The Butön-attributed critique picks up on this theme of Guru Chöwang's alleged leprosy to deliver a full-scale assault on his *maṇi*-pill tradition and its brahmin flesh. These remarks occupy the majority of a short chapter devoted to attacking the general authenticity of the Nyingma school's Treasure tradition. The critiques directed specifically against Guru Chöwang's tradition take issue with the addition of a seventh syllable to the more standard six-syllable mantra of Avalokiteśvara. They also reject the authenticity of the tradition's revealed flesh, citing the depravity of their consuming Guru Chöwang's own leprosy-ridden corpse-flesh under the pretense of it being the pure flesh of a genuine seven-times born, as stipulated in the *Hevajratantra*. Finally, the polemic relates this impropriety around flesh to more general morally licentious conduct unbefitting a proper Buddhist community.<sup>42</sup> The diatribe ends with the particularly lurid rhetorical flourish of chalking up the transmission and spread of Guru Chöwang's *maṇi*-pill tradition to the circulation of the severed body parts of executed criminals.<sup>43</sup> This polemic's emphasis on the *maṇi*-pill tradition, coupled with its attribution to Butön and other details in the body of the text, suggest a fourteenth century date of composition. But despite the uncertainties about its authorship and date, the circulation of this critique illustrates that its author perceived Guru Chöwang's *maṇi*-pill tradition as a popular practice during his time and interpreted its popularity to be a threat to Buddhist decorum.

Unlike the other two polemicists, Dölpopa appears to have been a proponent of the *maṇi*-pill tradition. He therefore reserves his most critical remarks not for Guru Chöwang himself, but for his followers and how they practiced the *maṇi*-pill tradition after his passing.<sup>44</sup> Dölpopa's qualms have mostly to do with the way practitioners of the tradition in his day recited and understood Avalokiteśvara's mantra during the accomplishment practice. He specifically calls out their habit of setting the mantra recitation to melody and stubbornly insisting that it is ineffective unless the seventh syllable *hrīḥ* is added.

<sup>41</sup> For English translation and analysis of this short passage, see Martin 2001, 114; Docteur 2005, 321 and Hirshberg 2017.

<sup>42</sup> *Sngags log sun 'byin gyi skor* 1979, *gter ma'i le'u*: 26.2–31.6. Raudsepp (2009, 288) also identifies a certain Gru gu dbang phyug mentioned therein (*sNgags log sun 'byin gyi skor* 1979, 10.5) as Gu ru chos dbang, but this is more likely Gru gu yang dbang, who is credited with having revealed Hayagrīva and other fierce deity cycles. For more about this figure, see Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Taye 2011, 186–187; and Jamgön Kongtrül 2012, 233–234.

<sup>43</sup> *Sngags log sun 'byin gyi skor* 1979,

<sup>44</sup> Shes rab rgyal mtshan 199?, 389.4–390.5, 391.6–393.3; and 2011, 351–352, 353–354.

Dölpopa's call for orthopraxy in mantra recitation, while perhaps not surprising in and of itself, is remarkable for the connections it makes between sound and efficacy, on the one hand, and personal and collective effects, on the other. Not only does he blame the unfortunate lengthening of the Sanskrit mantra's phonemes from setting it to melody for its deleterious impact on producing individual "accomplished ones." He also cites the incorrect recitation of mantra as the cause of the collective environmental degradation, epidemics, and military strife that were running rampant in Tibet during his lifetime. Simply put, for Dölpopa incorrect mantra recitation, resulting from setting it to melody, blunts a mantra's efficacy and hastens the decline of the person, the Dharma, the environment, and the society.

When discussing the addition of a seventh syllable to the six-syllable mantra, Dölpopa states that this change first emerged with Guru Chöwang's revelations and appears to accept the innovation, in and of itself. His qualms are rather with how practitioners of Guru Chöwang's tradition insisted that the six-syllable mantra would be ineffective and disparaged others for not following suite and adding *hrīḥ*. Dölpopa counters that strictly speaking the addition of *hrīḥ* is irrelevant to the efficacy of Avalokiteśvara's mantra. He enlists as support the virtues of the six-syllable formula as extolled in the *Kāraṇḍavyūha sūtra*, adding that it is also the preferred form of the mantra in the tradition of Nyangrel Nyima Özer. Nyangrel, we might recall, was the renowned twelfth-century Treasure revealer and fellow Lhodrak native after whom Guru Chöwang patterned his revelatory career and promulgation of the cult of Avalokiteśvara.<sup>45</sup> Thus, although Dölpopa seems to have embraced the seven-born brahmin flesh of the Treasure tradition and its ritual accomplishment, he clearly could not countenance the legacy of Guru Chöwang's Great Compassionate One practice. So scathing are his remarks, in fact, that Dölpopa gives the distinct impression that he wrote his short text in large part to make his disapproval known and thereby help rectify what he perceived to be the excesses of this tradition as it was practiced in his day. Dölpopa's criticisms are also later echoed in abbreviated form by one of his main students, Nyawön Kunga Pelzangpo (Nya dbon Kun dga' dpal bzang po, 1285–1379).<sup>46</sup>

The circulation of Dölpopa's composition and the two other polemical writings introduced above, taken as a whole, demonstrates how

---

<sup>45</sup> The Tibetan translation of the *Kāraṇḍavyūha sūtra* is *Za ma tog bkod pa, bKa' 'gyur (āpe bsdur ma)* 2006–2009, vol. 51, 529–640. For a study and complete English translation of this *sūtra*, see Studholme 2002 and Roberts and Yeshe 2013, respectively. For more on the relationship between Guru Chöwang and Nyangrel Nyima Özer, see Phillips 2004 and Hirshberg 2016, 2017.

<sup>46</sup> Nya dbon Kun dga' dpal 2010, 190.

deeply uncomfortable some sectors of Tibetan society were with the popularity of Guru Chöwang's Treasures. The Butön-attributed polemic and Dölpopa's critical remarks are particularly pointed in their attacks. Together they question the legitimacy of Guru Chöwang's flesh practice, the efficacy of his seven-syllable version of Avalokiteśvara's mantra, and the viability of the *Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One's* transmission and legacy after Guru Chöwang's passing. In this, these writings give clear expression to a sense of fear and righteous indignation that Guru Chöwang's practice had introduced into Tibetan society dangerous improprieties around human flesh, through the contraction of leprosy, the unseemly circulation of dismembered limbs, or presenting polluted and inauthentic flesh as pure and authentic. Hand in hand with this, they imply, came unwelcome changes to the six-syllable mantra of Avalokiteśvara or its style of recitation, leading to moral licentiousness, personal degradation, environmental decay, social upheaval, and martial unrest.

The prevalence of such detractors and the nature of their polemics may help explain why Ratna Lingpa felt compelled to revive the tradition in the fifteenth century. It stands to reason that in the wake of these scathing criticisms Ratna Lingpa would have deemed it high time to reveal and propagate the seven-born *maṇi*-pill tradition anew, such that the warm breath of the *ḍākinīs* could be felt by his contemporaries and prevented from dissipating for posterity. And indeed, Karma Chakmé, narrating the history of the *maṇi* pill until his time in the middle of the seventeenth century, claims that Guru Chöwang's tradition was then on the verge of extinction and the *maṇi*-pill tradition could have disappeared forever had Ratna Lingpa not revived it with his own revelations.<sup>47</sup>

But there were also other developments in the century preceding Ratna Lingpa's lifetime that influenced his reception of the *maṇi*-pill tradition. The fourteenth century was perhaps the most prolific period for Treasure revelation in the history of Tibet. Several fourteenth-century Treasure revealers—such as Orgyen Lingpa (O rgyan gling pa, b. 1323), Sangyé Lingpa (Sangs rgyas gling pa, 1340–1396), and Rigdzin Gödem (Rig 'dzin rgod ldem, 1337–1409), to name only a few—unearthed brahmin-flesh pills and associated rites as part of their revelations. In 1352, moreover, fifty years before Ratna Lingpa was born in 1403, Orgyen Lingpa revealed the *Pema Kathang* biography of Padmasambhava.<sup>48</sup> It includes origin and transmission histories of the flesh that influenced how the *maṇi*-pill tradition was received thereafter. In the interest of space, however, and to discern how Guru

<sup>47</sup> Karma chags med 2010, 483.

<sup>48</sup> *chu 'brug*. U rgyan gling pa 1985, 726.



Chöwang's tradition in particular influenced Ratna Lingpa, these and other aspects of the *maṇi*-pill tradition must be set aside for now.<sup>49</sup> Let us turn instead to a consideration of how Ratna Lingpa received Guru Chöwang's tradition through an investigation of what his autobiographical and biographical corpus narrates about his involvement with Guru Chöwang and the legacy of his brahmin-flesh *maṇi* pill.

***b. Becoming a Mahākāruṇika Yogin:***

***Ratna Lingpa's Visionary Inheritance of Guru Chöwang's Maṇi Pill***

Ratna Lingpa embarked on his career as a Treasure revealer in 1429, when at twenty-seven years old he first received Treasure "guides" (*kha byang*) in dreams and visions.<sup>50</sup> He kept these visionary directives secret and only began to act on them three years later in the water-rat year of 1432. This resulted in his very first Treasure revelation, an event that initiated a steady stream of revelations over the ensuing years. The flesh of seven-times-born brahmins, together with liturgical and narrative writings relating the flesh to Avalokiteśvara, figured prominently among many of his revelations. This section presents the most significant of these revelations through analyzing the episodes narrating them in Ratna Lingpa's extensive autobiographical and biographical corpus.

When reviewing these vignettes, it becomes abundantly clear that Guru Chöwang and his *maṇi*-pill tradition crucially figure throughout. What is more, the relevant narrative episodes illustrate that discovering the flesh and its literature, and through it, forming a vital link to Guru Chöwang, were fundamental for Ratna Lingpa in coming into his own as a Treasure revealer. The aim of delving into these narrative episodes is to help contextualize Ratna Lingpa's flesh-centered revelatory writings, particularly with respect to their links with Guru Chöwang's earlier *maṇi*-pill tradition, as a prelude to assessing the revelatory writings themselves.

***Revealing Seven-Born Brahmin Flesh and the Samyema Liturgy***

According to Ratna Lingpa's autobiographical accounts, his first revelation of seven-timer flesh came in the wood-tiger year of 1434, when at thirty-two years old he excavated the corpse flesh of a seven-times-born brahmin known by the name of Stainless (*Dri med*), along with other sacra, from the throne of the Vairocana statue at Khoting temple

<sup>49</sup> For a presentation of the *Pema Kathang* flesh narrative and analysis of its literary sources and influence on the subsequent *maṇi*-pill tradition see Gentry 2022.

<sup>50</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 1, *Gu ru gter ston rat+na gling pa'i rnam thar tshigs su bcad pa rin po che'i phreng ba 'od 'bar ba*, 692.5.

(mKho mthing lha khang).<sup>51</sup> On this occasion, he also recovered from one of the temple's pillars a narrative detailing the origin and history (*lo rgyus*) of the seven-times-born brahmin flesh. But this initial revelation at Khoting temple was by no means Ratna Lingpa's first encounter with the substance. As a native of Lhodrak, Ratna Lingpa would have likely grown up well-aware of Guru Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly maṇi*-pill tradition. Moreover, he narrates in his autobiography that he formally received this and Guru Chöwang's other revelations while studying and practicing under the tutelage of Guru Vajra and Samten Lhundrup (bSam gtan lhun grub).<sup>52</sup> Ratna Lingpa had also already performed a seven-times-born flesh consecration rite when he was still thirty, two years prior to the Khoting revelation.

Nonetheless, his revelation of the flesh of the brahmin Stainless was significant for Ratna Lingpa in forging a connection with Guru Chöwang's *maṇi*-pill legacy. It was the flesh of the brahmin Stainless, along with historical narratives construing this figure as a seven-born emanation of Avalokiteśvara, that Guru Chöwang had revealed over two centuries before to form the core substance in his *Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* pill manufacturing and consecration rites. Moreover, the historiographical tradition vigorously promoted by Guru Chöwang and Nyangrel Nyima Özer before him, among others, depicts Khoting temple as a significant site for having been built by the emperor Songtsen Gampo in the seventh century as part of his efforts to pin down the demoness of the Tibetan landscape to make Tibet amenable to the establishment of Buddhism.<sup>53</sup> This connection is all the more significant when recalling that the same historiographical tradition apotheosizes the Tibetan emperor Songtsen Gampo by depicting him as an emanation of Avalokiteśvara. This makes the brahmin Stainless of Ratna Lingpa's and Guru Chöwang's flesh revelations another vital iteration, continuous with the seventh-century Songtsen Gampo, instantiating Avalokiteśvara's special ongoing relationship with Tibet and Tibetans, particularly the place and people of Lhodrak.

Ratna Lingpa went on to excavate thirteen brahmin-flesh pills at Drango Kharthap (Brag sgo mkhar thabs);<sup>54</sup> a bone from the chest of

<sup>51</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 2, *gTer 'byung chen mo*, 109.6–113.2.

<sup>52</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 1, *Gu ru gter ston rat+na'i gling pa'i rnam thar tshigs su bcad pa rin po che'i phreng ba 'od 'bar ba zhes bya ba 'gro ba ma lus pa'i re ba bskangs nas bde ba la 'god pa*, 696.3–5. Alternatively, the biographical commentary on Ratna Lingpa's verse autobiography mentions only one figure, Guruwa Drung Shenyenpa (Gu ru ba drung bshes gnyen pa, Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 1, *sPrul pa'i sku ratna gling pa'i rnam par thar pa byin rlabs rgya mtsho'i sprin phung mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan*, 128.2–3).

<sup>53</sup> Sørensen 1994, 277–278.

<sup>54</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 2, *gTer 'byung chen mo*, 129.3–131.5.

the brahmin Prahasti at Geri Drakmar (dGe ri brag dmar);<sup>55</sup> and seventy-one brahmin-flesh pills at Samyé Utsé (bSam yas dbu rtse), among others.<sup>56</sup> The Samyé revelation was also particularly significant for Ratna Lingpa. This took place in the iron-bird year of 1441, when he was thirty-nine years old. He additionally excavated on that occasion another revelation from a different spot at the Samyé temple complex that contained a seven-born *sādhana* and a related history.<sup>57</sup> This seven-born *sādhana* practice, which would later come to be known as the *Samyema* (bSam yas ma), will be discussed in greater detail below.

### *Putting the Samyema to Practice in the Production of Pills*

Ratna Lingpa was quick to implement the *Samyema* practice with the consecration of the Samyé brahmin flesh as focal point for an audience of over three thousand people. Ratna Lingpa himself narrates how shortly after its revelation he combined the flesh with other ingredients, consecrated it, and distributed it widely for consumption. Below is a translation of a select passage from this vignette.

The next morning, the pills were formed, combining into an immeasurable amount precisely thirty brahmin flesh pills, six pills of the *bodhicitta* from the master of Uḍḍiyāna and his consort, a full *zho* (*zho*) of *amṛta*, about ten pea-size pieces of Chöwang Rinpoche's flesh, and, moreover, the bones and ash remains (*gdung rus thal ba*) of the Blessed One, the bones of Dampa Sangyé, the bones of the Karmapas, the flesh of siddhas in their possession, and so forth.

About fifteen *dré* (*bre*) of seven-born was accomplished. An assembly of about one thousand people instituted a continuous session of unbroken speech. The day of the initiation, when one hundred million [recitations] had been completed, the lid of the vase containing the seven-born boiled over, a rainbow appeared, and a rain of flowers fell.

About three thousand people were conferred initiation and the pills were distributed among them. The pills were also later distributed throughout all the cardinal and intermediate directions, such that they spread everywhere—Lama Gyeltsen Pelwa (Bla ma rGyal mtshan dpal ba) from Tsawarong (Tsha ba rong pa) in

<sup>55</sup> Ratna gling pa, 2014a, vol. 2, *gTer 'byung chen mo*, 133.5–139.4.

<sup>56</sup> Ratna gling pa, 2014a, vol. 2, *gTer 'byung chen mo*, 139.4–144.4.

<sup>57</sup> Ratna gling pa, 2014a, vol. 2, *gTer 'byung chen mo*, 146.5. The entire episode can be found in *gTer 'byung chen mo*, 144.4–148.3.

Kham and Chökyi Gyeltsen (Chos kyi rgyal mtshan) from upper Kham spread them throughout upper and lower Kham; Jamyang Pelzang ('Jam dbyangs dpal bzang) and others spread them throughout Nyang (Nyang), Gong (Gong), and Rel (Rel); and Lama Umdzé (Bla ma dbu mdzad) and others from Lapchi Chuwar (La phyi chu bar) spread them throughout the Tsang (gTsang) region. Whoever received a pill was established in the pure land of the Great Compassionate One. The majesty of benefiting beings was great, such that the intention of many Treasure revealers to be of benefit to beings was fulfilled by my own greatness.

Subsequently, also, the catalyst from the accomplishment at Mentsé (sMan rtse) and the activity of its accomplishment was present in many places. I myself brought with me about two-*dré* worth and distributed it throughout the regions of Ü (dBus), Yarlung (Yar lung), Lhodrak (Lho brag), Shar (Shar), Lup (Lub), and all of Lhomön (Lho mon), such as Nyel (dMyal), Loro (Lo ro), and so forth, thus fulfilling the intent of the precious one from Uḍḍiyāna (O rgyan rin po che). I also entrusted my own pill, which was free of *samaya* breach, to a few senior disciples and encouraged them to benefit beings. There are still a few pills of breach-less flesh remaining—these will benefit beings in the future and remain for a long time.<sup>58</sup>

This vignette provides insight into several key aspects of the *maṇi* pill as Ratna Lingpa understood it. Firstly, the list of other ingredients provides a lineage of potent flesh and other bodily substances,

<sup>58</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 2, *gTer 'byung chen mo*, 142.6–144.3: *de'i nangs par ril bu sbyar te bram ze'i sha ril sum cu them pa/ o rgyan yab yum gyi byang sems ril bu drug/ a mR ta zhos gang / chos dbang rin po che'i sku sha sran tshad bcu tsam zhig/ gzhan yang bcom ldan 'das kyi gdung rus thal ba/ dam pa sangs rgyas kyi gdung rus/ karma pa'i gdung rus khong pa'i phyag na 'dug pa'i grub thob kyi gdung rus sha la sogs tshad med du sbyar te skye bdun bre bco lnga tsam zhig bsgrubs/ de tshogs pa stong tsho tsam zhig gis gsung mi 'chad kyi thun rgyun par btsugs tel' dung phyur[emend. gyur] tshar ba'i dbang gi nyin/ skye bdun bum pa'i kha tshangs khrod na yar bzhu ru ru khol/ 'ja' tshon gyi gur phub/ me tog gi char babs/ mi stong phrag gsum tsam la dbang bskur ril bu bskyes/ rjes su phyogs mtshams thams cad du'ang bkyes te khams tsha ba rong pa'i bla ma rgyal mtshan dpal ba dang / khams stod pa chos kyi rgyal mtshan la sogs kyis khams stod smad/ 'jam dbyangs dpal bzang la sogs kyis nyang gong ral gsum/ la phyi chu bar gyi bla ma dbu mdzad la sogs kyis gtsang phyogs mdo na thams cad du khyab de ril bu thob tshad thugs rje chen po'i zhing du bkod/ 'gro don gyi rnam che ste gter ston mi gcig gi 'gro don la kho bo che'am bsam pa grub/ rjes su'ang sman rtser bsgrubs pa'i phabs dang / sgrub pa'i spyod rgyu yang mang du bzhugs/ bdag rang gyis kyang bre do tsam gdan drangs te dbus phyogs yar lung lho brag shar nub/ dnyal dang lo ro la sogs lho mon thams cad la bkyes tel' o rgyan rin po che'i thugs dgongs rdzogs par byas shing / gzhan yang sel med rang gi ril bu bu chen 'ga' la gtad/ 'gro don la bskul/ da rung sku sha sel med kyi ril bu 'ga' re bzhugs tel' 'gro don phyis 'byung zhing / yun du gnas par 'gyur rol.*

stretching back to the relics of the Buddha, but also including the sexual fluids of the eighth- to ninth-century Indian tantrika Padmasambhava and his Tibetan consort Yeshé Tsogyel, the bones of the eleventh-century Indian siddha Padampa Sangyé (b. 11<sup>th</sup> c.–d. 1117), the flesh of the thirteenth-century Treasure revealer Guru Chöwang, and the bones of the successive Karmapa incarnations, among other items. The biographical corpus of Padampa Sangyé explicitly presents this eleventh-century Indian master as a seven-times-born brahmin whose flesh was powerful enough to confer liberation through eating it after his demise.<sup>59</sup> Guru Chöwang's biographical corpus likewise presents him as a seven-times-born brahmin along similar lines. The Karmapas had by the fifteenth century come to be identified as incarnations of Avalokiteśvara. Moreover, a pill tradition that likely contains fragments of the bodily remains of the successive iterations of the Karmapa incarnation line had likely developed by this time.<sup>60</sup> Ratna Lingpa's inclusion in this mixture of the Karmapas' bones effectively interprets them too as seven-times-born-brahmins manifested by Avalokiteśvara. This set of associations—the construal of seven-times-born brahmins as successive incarnations of Avalokiteśvara, emanated for seven successive lifetimes to infuse their bodies with altruistic power—is the defining feature of Guru Chöwang's *maṇi*-pill tradition. This set of associations clearly also provided the template for Ratna Lingpa's own *maṇi*-pill revelation.

Secondly, the details this episode provides about the ritual illustrate that the consecration of the pills was done primarily through collective mantra recitation. The rite let out only when one hundred million recitations was reached and corresponding sensory “signs of success” visibly manifested, such as the concoction boiling over, a rainbow forming, and a rain of flowers falling from the sky. Thirdly, measures were taken to distribute the pill as far and wide as possible, well beyond the thousands of people present at the concoction and consecration ceremony. This was done, Ratna Lingpa implies, with the assumption that whoever consumes one will be reborn in the pure land of the Great Compassionate One.

Finally, the series of actions assumes a particular vantage point on time. Taken as a whole, the series of events “fulfills the intent” of Padmasambhava, who putatively concealed the substance in the eighth century for the sake of future generations. At the same time, the flesh-pill consecration and distribution fulfill the intention of the “many Treasure revealers” prophesied to reveal and propagate the flesh over

<sup>59</sup> Thugs sras kun dga' 1979, vol. 2, 73.7–74.5; Dam pa sangs rgyas 2012–2013, vol. 1, 664.1–6. For more on Padampa Sangyé's relationship with the seven-times-born flesh tradition see Gentry 2022.

<sup>60</sup> Shes rab rgyal mtshan 199?, 387.5; Gerke 2019.

the ensuing centuries. The continued potency of the flesh, moreover, is contingent upon its human caretakers not allowing breaches of “*samaya*,” or sacred bond, to intervene in its handling and consecration. Without incurring such breaches, Ratna Lingpa's pills will bring benefit to beings for a long time to come. In this, the flesh pills create bonds between past events, present practices, and future aspirations in an iterative and recursive loop of consecration, distribution, consecration, distribution, and so on.

### *Setting the Stage for Avalokiteśvara's Secret Assembly*

Despite the great success of the proceedings dictated in the *Samyema* liturgy excavated from Samyé monastery, the very next year, in the water-dog year of 1442, when Ratna Lingpa was forty years old, he revealed from Namkechen (gNam skas can) in Lhodrak (Lho brag) another, larger set of ritual and contemplative practices that would displace the *Samyema* to become the central liturgical practice for his brahmin-flesh *maṇi* pill production and consecration. This was the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* (*Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa*). Much like Guru Chöwang's nearly identically titled Treasure cycle the *Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*, Ratna Lingpa's *Secret Assembly* revelation includes a root *tantra*, initiation liturgies, ritual manuals, contemplative instructions, historical narratives, and other writings, alongside more brahmin flesh pills. That the Treasure was from Namkechen in Lhodrak would have also been highly significant for Ratna Lingpa in forming a link with Guru Chöwang. According to Guru Chöwang's autobiographical record, Namkechen was the site of his very first Treasure revelation.<sup>61</sup>

The *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* Treasure cycle was only the first of four *Assemblies* excavated from this site on the occasion, the others being the *Secret Assembly of Hayagrīva* (*rTa mgrin gsang ba 'dus pa*), the *Secret Assembly of the Profound Path* (*Zab lam gsang ba 'dus pa*), and the *Secret Assembly of Accomplishing Longevity* (*Tshe sgrub gsang ba 'dus pa*). It is clear throughout his writings, however, that the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*, centering, like Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly*, on the form of the bodhisattva of compassion Avalokiteśvara known as Mahākāruṇika (literally, “he who has great compassion”), was singularly important for him among all his Treasure revelations for its potential to benefit beings in this degenerate age. He illustrates the importance of this Avalokiteśvara cycle for his life and religious career by narrating the revelation as presaged by a series of private dream visitations and visionary encounters,

<sup>61</sup> Gu ru chos dbang 1979, vol. 2, *gTer 'byung chen mo*, 114.5–144.3.

interwoven with collective ritual performances and miraculous events. The thread running through these narrative vignettes is Ratna Lingpa's gradual coming to terms with his own identity as the rightful revealer and propagator of this important contemplative and ritual cycle.

The sequence of events leading to this revelation was set in motion by the performance of a "Dharma-medicine accomplishment" rite, in conjunction with the great accomplishment rite for *Accomplishing the Awakened Mind* (*thugs sgrub*) held at Poser Monastery (sPo gser dgon pa) in Lhodrak.<sup>62</sup> In the wake of this ritual, he initiated a multi-day seven-times-born-flesh practice session (*skye bdun sgrub pa*) with a group of over one hundred practitioners.<sup>63</sup> As Ratna Lingpa reports it, just before dawn on the third day of the practice session, he had a vision that Avalokiteśvara appeared above the *maṇḍala* wearing white silk garments and holding a stainless crystal vase to confer initiation, in order, upon all the rows of the group.<sup>64</sup> As Avalokiteśvara did so, he could be heard saying the following lines:

Emaho!

If the essence of self-existing wisdom  
that dwells within oneself is realized,  
it will manifest in reality.

Through this supreme method,  
the utmost of substances,  
some will attain liberation in this lifetime.  
The fruition of the complete initiation will ripen at this time.

Everyone will be free from the lower realms,  
go beyond regression in three lifetimes,  
and be liberated in seven lifetimes.

May you attain the four initiations in full—  
in awakened body, speech, mind, qualities, activities, and so  
on.

*om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

<sup>62</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 1, *sPrul pa'i sku ratna gling pa'i rnam par thar pa byin rlabs rgya mtsho'i sprin phung mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan*, 209.2.

<sup>63</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 2, *Yig bdun maṇi'i gter mdzod thar par 'jug pa'i gru bo bka' yi 'bum*, 654.2.

<sup>64</sup> Ratna gling pa, 2014a, vol. 2, *Yig bdun maṇi'i gter mdzod thar par 'jug pa'i gru bo bka' yi 'bum*, 654.2–3.

*buddha sarvasiddhi hūm*<sup>65</sup>

As Ratna Lingpa narrates, “After having said this, he entrusted the vase to me, and I had the slight perception that that very deity dissolved into the seven-born vase.”<sup>66</sup>

Avalokiteśvara's short teaching is remarkable for the insights it offers into the nature of the seven-born flesh and the range of effects we can expect from eating this “utmost of substances.” The first verse, by promising that realization “will manifest in reality,” clearly implies that the flesh's potency stems from the transformation of adepts' bodies through their advanced cognition of indwelling gnosis. So powerful is this mind-body transformation that consuming their charged flesh can bring liberation in this lifetime for some rare individuals, and postmortem freedom from the lower realms and rapid advancement toward awakening for all.<sup>67</sup> “Seven lifetimes” is given here as the maximum duration before consumers reach awakening. This implies the circularity that eating the flesh of one born seven times as a special human will eventually transform the minds and bodies of consumers too into seven-born ones. At the culmination of their next seven lifetimes, their bodies can theoretically likewise serve the same liberative function, setting in motion the birth of the next generation of seven-born-ones, *ad infinitum*.

*Songs of the Great Compassionate One's Lineage and Maṇḍala*

Ratna Lingpa's culminating vision of Avalokiteśvara's dissolution into the pills prompted him to circumambulate the *maṇḍala* and sing a song describing the cosmology, Buddhology, and lineage of the seven-born accomplishment rite that he would soon reveal from Namkechen,

<sup>65</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 2, *Yig bdun maṇi'i gter mdzod thar par 'jug pa'i gru bo bka' yi 'bum*, 654.2–6: *le ma ho/ rang byung ye shes snying po can/ /rang la gnas pa de rtogs na/ /yang dag nyid du mngon 'gyur rol/ /thabs mchog rdzas kyi dam pa 'dis/ /'ga' zhiḡ grol ba tshes 'dir thob/ /dbang rdzogs 'bras bu dus 'dir smin/ /thams cad ngan song gnas las grol/ /skye ba gsum gyis phyir mi ldog/ /skye ba bdun gyis rnam grol lo/ /sku gsum thugs yon phrin las sogs/ /dbang bzhi rdzogs par thob par shog/ / om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ: buddha sarva siddhi hūm. This episode and song are also related in Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 1, *sPrul pa'i sku ratna gling pa'i rnam par thar pa byin rlabs rgya mtsho'i sprin phung mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan*, 209.2–210.2.*

<sup>66</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 2, *Yig bdun maṇi'i gter mdzod thar par 'jug pa'i gru bo bka' yi 'bum*, 654.6: *bum pa bdag la gtad nas/ lha de nyid skye bdun bum par thim pa'i thim pa'i snang ba cung zhiḡ byung ngo/*.

<sup>67</sup> For more on the notion of “liberation through tasting” (*myong grol*) and liberation through other potent sensory encounters, see Gayley 2007, and Gentry 2017 and 2019.



Lhodrak.<sup>68</sup> As the song describes it: Great Bliss (bDe chen), with Amitābha surrounded by the many buddhas of the ten directions, is the *dharmakāya* pure land. Potalaka, with Mahākāruṅika surrounded by the bodhisattvas of the families in union with their consorts, is the *sambhogakāya* pure land. Ngarap Pelri (rNga rab dpal ri), where Padmasambhava is surrounded by many *vidyādhara*s and *ḍākinīs*, is the *nirmāṇakāya* pure land. Flight through Invisible Space (Mi mngon mkha' spyod), where the only mother Tsogyel (Ma cig mTsho rgyal) is surrounded by a group of *ḍākinīs* embodying the families, is the naturally pristine pure land (*rang bzhin dag pa'i zhing khams*). Pemo Köpa (Padmo bkod pa), where Chökyi Wangchuk (Chos kyi dbang phyug) is surrounded by a group of karmically destined ones in their final rebirth, is the pure aspiration pure land. The natural pure land (*rang bzhin zhing khams*), where the Omniscient Drimé Özer (Kun mkhyen Dri med 'od zer, 1308–1364), better known as Longchenpa, is surrounded by a retinue of fortunate beings, is the pure land of actualized realization. The sun and moon on Ratna Lingpa's own crown, where his root lama sits surrounded by the Oral Lineage's Ocean of Conquerors (*bka' brgyud rgyal ba rgya mtsho*<sup>69</sup>), is the pure land of pure self-appearance. Their present location, a supreme place, where the Treasure revealer Ratna Lingpa is accompanied by many devout men and women, is the pure land of those with the requisite residual karma. Ratna Lingpa punctuates each verse of this poetic evocation with the seven-syllable mantra *om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*.<sup>70</sup>

Immediately thereafter, while continuing with the seven-times-born flesh accomplishment rite, Ratna Lingpa sang the following song for use during the practice sessions. This song, which describes in summary the *maṇḍala* of the liturgy that Ratna Lingpa would soon reveal, came to be known as the *Exhortation to Chant the Maṇi* (*Maṇi 'dzab bskur ma*). To give a glimpse into the ritual and aesthetic sensibility of the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* great-completion ceremonies, I provide a complete translation of this song.

<sup>68</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 2, *Yig bdun maṇi'i gter mdzod thar par 'jug pa'i gru bo bka' yi 'bum*, 654.6–655.1.

<sup>69</sup> The "Oral Lineage's Ocean of Conquerors" (*bka' brgyud rgyal ba rgya mtsho*) is likely a reference to the *maṇḍala* of Jinasāgara (*rgyal ba rgya mtsho*), another tantric form of Avalokiteśvara, red in complexion, popular among the Kagyüpa, "those of the oral lineage" (*bka' brgyud pa*). The connection between the iconography, practice, and transmission history of Mahākāruṅika of the *maṇi*-pill tradition and Jinasāgara will be analyzed in my future study. Here, the fact that Ratna Lingpa construes it on his own crown, surrounding his root guru, just before revealing his *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*, certainly suggests that Jinasāgara served as direct inspiration.

<sup>70</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 2, *Yig bdun maṇi'i gter mdzod thar par 'jug pa'i gru bo bka' yi 'bum*, 654.6–656.5.

*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

At the navel in the center of the *maṇḍala*  
sits the *yidam* Mahākāruṇika.  
We supplicate you. Grant your blessings!  
We chant the seven syllables in recitation melody.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

To the right side of Mahākāruṇika  
sits the supreme son, holding a gem.  
We supplicate you. Grant your blessings!  
We chant the seven syllables in recitation melody.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

To the left side of Mahākāruṇika  
sits the daughter, holding a *vidyāmantra*.  
We supplicate you. Grant your blessings!  
We chant the seven syllables in recitation melody.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

In front of Mahākāruṇika  
sits the great mother Secret Gnosis (gSang ba ye shes).  
We supplicate you. Grant your blessings!  
We chant the seven syllables in recitation melody.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

Behind Mahākāruṇika  
sits the *yidam* Maheśvara / Wangchen in union with consort  
(dBang chen yab yum).  
We supplicate you. Grant your blessings!  
We chant the seven syllables in recitation melody.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

Surrounding Mahākāruṇika  
sit the five families of *bhagavān jinas*.  
We supplicate you. Grant your blessings!  
We chant the seven syllables in recitation melody.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

On the crown of Mahākāruṇika  
sits Amitābha, sovereign of the families.  
We supplicate you. Grant your blessings!  
We chant the seven syllables in recitation melody.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

At the six locations of Mahākāruṅika  
 sit the six *bhagavān nirmāṇakāya munis*.  
 We supplicate you. Grant your blessings!  
 We chant the seven syllables in recitation melody.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

In the body of Mahākāruṅika  
 sit the 1,002 buddhas.  
 We supplicate you. Grant your blessings!  
 We chant the seven syllables in recitation melody.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

The world of the environment is the celestial palace,  
 the beings who inhabit it are Mahākāruṅika.  
 We supplicate you. Grant your blessings!  
 We chant the seven syllables in recitation melody.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

To the right sits an ocean of *dākas*.  
 We supplicate you. Grant your blessings!  
 We chant the seven syllables in recitation melody.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

To the left sits an ocean of *dākinīs*.  
 We supplicate you. Grant your blessings!  
 We chant the seven syllables in recitation melody.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

In front sits an ocean of *yidams*.  
 We supplicate you. Grant your blessings!  
 We chant the seven syllables in recitation melody.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

Behind sit Dharma protectors and guardians.  
 We supplicate you. Grant your blessings!  
 We chant the seven syllables in recitation melody.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

Sound is the awakened speech of Mahākāruṅika—  
 we supplicate you. Grant your blessings!  
 We chant the seven syllables in recitation melody.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

Thoughts are the awakened mind of Mahākāruṅika—

we supplicate you. Grant your blessings!  
 We chant the seven syllables in recitation melody.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

The elderly should do the *yidam* (or, “commit”).  
 The youth should voice disillusionment.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

This was spoken by Ratna Lingpa,  
 the *yogin* of Mahākāruṇika.  
 Let us chant the seven syllables in recitation melody.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*

Through the blessings of chanting the seven syllables  
 may *saṃsāra* be churned from the depths for the six classes  
 of beings!  
 Let us chant the seven syllables in recitation melody.  
*Oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ*<sup>71</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 2, *Yig bdun maṇi'i gter mdzod thar par 'jug pa'i gru bo bka' yi 'bum*, 656.5–659.5: /oM maNi padme hUM hrIH dkyil 'khor dbus kyi lte ba la/ /yi dam thugs rje chen po bzhugs/ /gsol ba 'debs so byin gyis rlobs/ /'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun pa bgrang / /oM maNi padme hUM hrIH thugs rje chen po'i g.yas phyogs na/ /sras mchog nor bu 'dzin pa bzhugs/ /gsol ba 'debs so byin gyis rlobs/ /'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun pa bgrang / /oM maNi padme hUM hrIH thugs rje chen po'i g.yon phyogs na/ /sras mo riglemend. rigs/ sngags 'dzin ma bzhugs/ /gsol ba 'debs so byin gyis rlobs/ /'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun pa bgrang / /oM maNi padme hUM hrIH thugs rje chen po'i mdun phyogs na/ /yum chen gsang ba ye shes bzhugs/ /gsol ba 'debs so byin gyis rlobs/ /'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun pa bgrang / /oM maNi padme hUM hrIH thugs rje chen po'i sku rgyab na/ /yi dam dbang chen yab yum bzhugs/ /gsol ba 'debs so byin gyis rlobs/ /'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun pa bgrang / /oM maNi padme hUM hrIH thugs rje chen po'i sku 'khor du/ /bcom ldan rgyal ba rigs lnga bzhugs/ /gsol ba 'debs so byin gyis rlobs/ /'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun pa bgrang / /oM maNi padme hUM hrIH thugs rje chen po'i dbu gtsug na/ /rigs bdag snang ba mtha' yas bzhugs/ /gsol ba 'debs so byin gyis rlobs/ /'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun pa bgrang / /oM maNi padme hUM hrIH thugs rje chen po'i gnas drug du/ /bcom ldan sprul sku thub drug bzhugs/ /gsol ba 'debs so byin gyis rlobs/ /'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun pa bgrang / /oM maNi padme hUM hrIH thugs rje chen po'i sku lus la/ /sangs rgyas stong dang rtsa gnyis bzhugs/ /gsol ba 'debs so byin gyis rlobs/ /'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun pa bgrang / /oM maNi padme hUM hrIH snod kyi 'jig rten gzhal yas khang / bcud kyi sems can thugs rje che/ /gsol ba 'debs so byin gyis rlobs/ /'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun pa bgrang / /oM maNi padme hUM hrIH g.yas na dpa' bo rgya mtsho bzhugs/ /gsol ba 'debs so byin gyis rlobs/ /'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun pa bgrang / /oM maNi padme hUM hrIH g.yon na dpa' mo rgya mtsho bzhugs/ /gsol ba 'debs so byin gyis rlobs/ /'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun pa bgrang / /oM maNi padme hUM hrIH mdun na yi dam lha tshogs bzhugs/ /gsol ba 'debs so byin gyis rlobs/ /'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun pa bgrang / /oM maNi padme hUM hrIH rgyab na chos skyong srung ma bzhugs/ /gsol ba 'debs so byin gyis rlobs/ /'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun pa bgrang / /oM maNi padme hUM hrIH snang tshad thugs rje chen po'i sku/ /gsol ba 'debs so byin gyis rlobs/ /'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun pa bgrang / /oM maNi padme hUM hrIH sgra grags thugs rje chen po'i gsung / /gsol ba 'debs so byin gyis rlobs/ /'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun pa bgrang / /oM maNi padme hUM hrIH dran rtog thugs rje chen po'i thugs/ /gsol ba 'debs so byin

The details of this song, depicting in shorthand what would become the *maṇḍala* of the *maṇi*-pill liturgy, foreshadows its revelation in the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*.

***The Revelation of the Secret Assembly of  
the Great Compassionate One***

In the immediate wake of singing about the revelation to come, the sequence of a Dharma-medicine great accomplishment rite, followed by visionary experiences, dreams, and miraculous events, played out once again as a portent for the revelation of the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*. This next time, however, the narrative sequence effectively interrelates the process by which Ratna Lingpa came to understand himself as a reincarnation of Guru Chöwang's son Pema Wangchen with Ratna Lingpa's sense of mission to reveal and promulgate anew the brahmin-flesh *maṇi*-pill ritual tradition initiated by Guru Chöwang. A complete translation of this episode is as follows:

He (i.e., Ratna Lingpa) then went back to Samten Ling in Lechung  
(Sle chung bsam gtan gling)  
and instituted a great accomplishment rite of *Accomplishing the  
Awakened Mind* (*thugs sgrub*), along with a "medicine accomplish-  
ment" (*smān sgrub*).

One night during that time he had a dream of a glorious mantra  
protector, who told him,

"Once the practice of the medicine *samaya* substance (*dam rdzas  
smān*) and such is done,  
practice at a place called Chöding monastery (Chos sdings dgon  
pa)  
an accomplishment practice of Avalokiteśvara together with the  
seven-born.

Whoever's stomach the seven-born falls in  
will be reborn in the pure land of Sukhāvātī (*bde ba can*)."

He then went to Lhadro monastery (Lha bro dgon pa),  
whereupon he opened at once all the statues (*sku rten*)  
from his own Treasure revelations,

---

*gyis rlobs/ 'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun pa bgrang / loM maNi padme hUM hrIH rgan pa  
rnams kyis yi dam mdzod/ gzhon pa rnams kyis kha skyo mdzod/ 'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun  
pa bgrang / loM maNi padme hUM hrIH thugs rje chen po'i rnal 'byor pa/ rat+na gling  
pas de skad lo/ 'dzab dbyangs yi ge bdun pa bgrang / loM maNi padme hUM hrIH yig  
bdun 'dren pa'i byin rlabs kyis/ 'gro drug 'khor ba dong nas sprugs/ 'dzab dbyangs yi ge  
bdun pa bgrang/ loM maNi padme hUM hrIH.*

along with the statues from the Treasure revelations of Guru Chöwang.

In particular, he took his own Guru Padmasambhava [Treasure statue] to his crown and said:

“Grant your blessings that today a clear sign is revealed about whether or not I am the rebirth of Pema Wangchen.”

Just as he supplicated with these words of truth, three crystal pellet relics (*ring bsrel*) emerged from the statue receptacle and fell rolling onto the lap of the cross-legged supreme emanation [Ratna Lingpa]—everyone assembled there saw what happened.

Then a visionary experience blazed forth for him: in the sky, on the surface of a rainbow-like giant lotus, was Guru [Padmasambhava] at the center, [Guru] Chöwang on the right lotus petal, holding a mirror and a seven-syllable wheel,

and Vajrayoginī, orange, on the left lotus petal, with a knife and skull, gracefully dancing on two wheels—he saw them there for a while before they vanished.

Subsequently, based on the urging of his students, and the urging of [the non-human Treasure protector] Genyen Khari (dGe bsnyen mkha ri) and his two servants, who showed him the map to the Treasure site and cajoled him to swiftly reveal a profound Treasure there, he knew that the auspicious circumstances were aligned for the time of revelation.

He thus disregarded the difficulties posed by the vicious *nāga*-demon Treasure protector, toxic wind, and the like, redoubled his compassionate resolve to benefit others,

and performed a public Treasure revelation to inspire confidence in disciples.<sup>72</sup>

The “public Treasure revelation” referred to here is the excavation of the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* and more brahmin flesh, along with the other three *Assemblies* and a range of additional sacra.

Several features about this episode are remarkable for understanding the combined role of seven-born brahmin flesh and Avalokiteśvara in the life of Ratna Lingpa. Broadly speaking, the episode causally links the great accomplishment medicine rite with a dream visitation from a Dharma protector, Ratna Lingpa’s mandate to take up the accomplishment practice of Avalokiteśvara with the seven-born flesh-pills, his coming to terms with his identity as the reincarnation of Guru Chöwang’s son Pema Wangchen, and his revelation of the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*, which would provide a slightly revised ritual structure and liturgy through which to reimagine Guru Chöwang’s *Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* and propagate the *maṇi*-pill tradition anew. The episode is punctuated by the miracle of relics falling onto Ratna Lingpa’s lap from a revealed Treasure statue of Padmasambhava, followed by a visionary encounter with Padmasambhava, Guru Chöwang, and Vajrayoginī. This served as evidence signifying to Ratna Lingpa himself and all others present that he was indeed the reincarnation of Guru Chöwang’s son, and therefore the rightful revealer of the *Secret Assembly* from

<sup>72</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 1, *sPrul pa'i sku ratna gling pa'i rnam par thar pa byin rlabs rgya mtsho'i sprin phung mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan*, 213.4–215.2: /slar yang sle chung bsam gtan gling du phebs/ /thugs sgrub sman sgrub sbrags pa'i sgrub chen btsugs/ /de dus nub gcig dpal ldan sngags srung gzigs/ /dam rdzas sman sogs sgrub pa mthar phyin nas/ /chos sdings dgon pa bya bar spyan ras gzigs/ /sgrub pa dang ni skye bdun sbrags nas bsgrubs/ /skye bdun ril bu gang gi ltor song ba/ /bde ba can gyi zhing du skye bar gsungs/ /de nas lha bro dgon par phebs pa'i dus/ /rang gi gter nas byon pa'i sku rten dang/ /gu ru chos dbang nyid kyi gter ma yi/ /sku rten thams cad dus gcig zhal phyé zhing/ /khyad par khong gi pad+ma gu ru nyid/ /spyi bor blangs nas tshig tu 'di skad ces/ /pad+ma dbang chen sku skye bdag yin min/ /mngon rtags gsal bar de ring byin gyis rlobs/ /dmod bor gsol ba btab pa'i mod nyid la/ /sku rten de las ring bsrel gsum byon te/ /sprul sku mchog gi sku pang dkyil krung khar/ /'dril zhing babs pa der 'tshogs kun kyis mthong/ /de tshe thugs nyams 'bar zhing nam mkha' la/ /'ja' tshon lta bu'i pad sdong chen po'i khar/ /lta bar gu ru g.yas phyogs pad 'dab la/ /chos dbang me long yig bdun 'khor lo bsnams/ /g.yon gyi pad+ma'i 'dab ma'i steng du nil/ /rdo rje rnal 'byor dmar ser gri thod can/ /'khor gnyis 'gying bag gar stabs bsgyur ba'i tshul/ /lyun ring gzigs shing de rjes mi snang gyur/ /de nas slob ma rnams kyi zhu ngo dang/ /dge bsnyen mkha' ri dpon g.yog gsum gyis kyang/ /gter gnas sa mig bstan cing zab mo'i gter/ /myur du thon zhes snyan bskul phul ba yis/ /'don pa'i dus dang rten 'brel 'grig dgongs nas/ /gter srung klu bdud gdug pa che ba dang/ /rdzi dug la sogs dka' tshogs khyad bsad nas/ /gzhan la phan phyir thugs bskyed lhur blangs te/ /gdul bya yid ches bskyed phyir khrom gter mdzad/. See also the details in Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 2, *gTer 'byung chen mo*, 148.3–156.6.

Namkechen, Guru Chöwang's first Treasure site.<sup>73</sup> Taken as a whole, this sequence of events clearly illustrates that the seven-born brahmin-flesh accomplishment rite featuring Avalokiteśvara was one of the major focal points of Ratna Lingpa's identity and activities as a Treasure revealer.

### *Ongoing Flesh Revelations: Patterns and Governing Logic*

Ratna Lingpa's fascination with Guru Chöwang and his *maṇi*-pill tradition did not end with his revelation of the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*. Later that year, shortly after this pivotal revelation, Ratna Lingpa further strengthened his combined biological and incarnational ties with Guru Chöwang by traveling to Layak Guru temple, the old seat of his predecessor. There, Ratna Lingpa communicated with him in a dream vision and excavated a series of Treasures that had been previously concealed on site by Guru Chöwang himself. Predictably, more brahmin flesh featured prominently among the revelations.<sup>74</sup>

Immediately in the wake of this excavation, as Ratna Lingpa reports it, he followed a directive given to him previously in a vision by Genyen Khari, the chief non-human protector of the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* Treasure cycle, to excavate more Treasure from the Wentsa (dBen rtsa) temple close-by that was also affiliated with Guru Chöwang. There, Ratna Lingpa excavated, among other items, ten pills, "three times the size of a pea," of corpse flesh from the brahmin called He who Wears Conch Earrings (Dung gi rna can) that Padmasambhava's consort Mandharāvā found in the land of Zahor.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>73</sup> That Ratna Lingpa recognized himself as the reincarnation of this and other figures during the process of his revelations, and was not recognized by others as a child, is also suggested by the fact that the "past lives" (*'das pa'i rnam thar*) section of his biography was culled exclusively from his own Treasure revelations, and that he does not reference his recognition by others in his verse autobiography. For the relevant section of his biography, see Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 1, *sPrul pa'i sku ratna gling pa'i rnam par thar pa byin rlabs rgya mtsho'i sprin phung mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan*, 23.6–24.1: *khyung chen brag dang gung thang bsam yas kyi/ gter ma skyes rabs lung bstan dag dang ni/ lang gros zhus la sogs nas gsungs pa kun/ lphyogs su bsdoms pas skye rabs go rim ni/*.

<sup>74</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 1, *sPrul pa'i sku ratna gling pa'i rnam par thar pa byin rlabs rgya mtsho'i sprin phung mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan*, 221.2–222.1.

<sup>75</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 1, *sPrul pa'i sku ratna gling pa'i rnam par thar pa byin rlabs rgya mtsho'i sprin phung mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan*, 222.1–223.4. C.f., 223.3: *za hor yul du lha lcam man dha ras/ lrunyed pa'i bram ze dung gi rna cha can/ zhes pa'i spur sha ril bu bcu them pa*. The details here of the flesh's origin likely reflect knowledge of O rgyan gling pa's *Pad ma bka' thang*. For presentation and analysis of the *Pad ma bka' thang* flesh narrative in light of its literary sources and influence on the subsequent *maṇi*-pill tradition see Gentry 2022.



Ratna Lingpa offers some details about how he distributed the pills and used them as the centerpiece for *maṇi*-pill accomplishment rites:

A pill devoid of breach was each given as *siddhi* to Lama Repawa (Bla ma Ras pa ba), Lama Tsāripa (Bla ma Tsā ri pa), and Lopbön Gyeltsen Drakpa (Slob dpon rGyal mtshan grags pa). The rest was distributed to the main students throughout the directions. Many sessions of *maṇi* accomplishment were instituted based on the pills, establishing the beings of the degenerate age in the pure land of the Great Compassionate One.<sup>76</sup>

Here and throughout Ratna Lingpa's biographical corpus, the *maṇi*-consecrated pill of brahmin flesh is consistently presented in terms of a pure land orientation. Whoever eats it, we are promised, will travel to a pure land after death and advance rapidly toward awakening in no more than seven lifetimes, even as others with the requisite conditions in place can achieve awakening immediately upon consuming the pill. The precise postmortem destination, however, is inconsistently described throughout the literature as either Amitābha's pure land of Sukhāvati, or Mahāsukha—a distinction I will discuss below—or Avalokiteśvara's pure land of Potalaka. This fundamental ambiguity over where we can expect to live our next life upon eating the pill can perhaps be chalked up to the notion that these are understood as *dharmakāya* and *saṃbhogakāya* levels of the same pure land, as presented in Ratna Lingpa's song above. Nonetheless, having inherited this inconsistency from Guru Chöwang, Ratna Lingpa utilized it to nudge the identity of the pure land into a slightly new direction. This change of course will be analyzed below when comparing the textual revelations of Guru Chöwang and Ratna Lingpa.

Ratna Lingpa's final discovery of brahmin flesh, as he reports it, came shortly thereafter at Tramodrak (Khra mo brag).<sup>77</sup> He discovered it inside a small relic box (*ga'u*) that he excavated there from Karkong Puk (dKar kong phugs). The contents of the relic box also included Dharma medicine, and the red and white sexual fluids of Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyel. This combination of substances served as the basis for a variation on the seven-born *maṇi*-pill theme. Ratna Lingpa describes its importance as follows:

<sup>76</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 2, *gTer 'byung chen mo*, 165.5–166.1: *bla ma ras pa ba/ bla ma tsA ri pa/ gzhong kha pa/ slob dpon rgyal mtshan grags pa rnam la/ ril bu sel med re dngos grub tu gnang ngo / /gzhan phyogs phyogs kyi bu chen rnam la yang bkyes/ ril bu la brten nas ma Ni sgrub pa'i thun kha mang du btsugs nas snyigs ma'i 'gro na rnam thugs rje chen po'i zhing du bkod/.*

<sup>77</sup> For the entire episode, see Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 2, *gTer 'byung chen mo*, 170.5–178.5.

My main students and I established many accomplishment venues (*sgrub khang*) for the brahmin-flesh pills, *amṛta*, and white and red *bodhicitta*, such that the benefit for beings was accomplished everywhere throughout the center and peripheries, and [the tradition] spread and flourished. These will later serve as heritage for ensuring that the teaching does not disappear.<sup>78</sup>

The collective ethos of this concoction is readily apparent. Not only is it to be distributed as far and wide as possible. Its distribution, we are told, will also serve to ensure the longevity of the Buddhadharmā, wherever it happens to reach.

Significant here also is the inclusion of the reproductive fluids of Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyel, along with *amṛta*, elsewhere described as “Dharma medicine” (*chos sman*), which presumably refers to the *pañcāmṛta* (Tib. *bdud rtsi lnga*), or “five ambrosias,” which figure as sacrament in tantric ritual contexts. The possible relationships between these ingredients and their implications for the profile and function of the *maṇi* pill will be discussed briefly in the conclusion of this essay.<sup>79</sup> For now, perhaps it suffices to observe that in tantric Buddhist contexts the five *amṛta* are typically listed as the five ingredients of feces, urine, blood, semen, and marrow.<sup>80</sup> But what, precisely, injunctions in tantric texts to eat these substances might mean, whether they are to be taken literally, figuratively, or rather connote the realization of nondual wisdom, has been argued in the scholarly study of Buddhist Tantra.<sup>81</sup> In this instance, *amṛta* would seem to clearly refer to a material ingredient of the pill concoction.

Other episodes featuring seven-born flesh and its accomplishment abound in Ratna Lingpa's biographical corpus. Judging by their frequency, it is evident that intensive communal *sādhana* practices centering on brahmin-flesh *maṇi* pills and Avalokiteśvara was a major occupation for Ratna Lingpa throughout most of his adult life. As presented in the vignettes above, his typical pattern was to stage a “great accomplishment” rite drawn from the *Secret Assembly of the Great*

<sup>78</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 2, *gTer 'byung chen mo*, 178.2–178.4: */bram ze'i sha ril/ a mR ta byang sems dkar dmar rnam dang bu chen rnam kyis sgrub khang du ma btsugs te phyogs mtshams mtha' dbus thams cad du 'gro don dpag med grub cing dar rgyas su 'gyur to/ rjes su bstan pa mi nub pa'i btsas su 'gyur rol.*

<sup>79</sup> For further discussion of the relationship between the five *amṛtas* or ambrosias and the seven-times-born flesh, see Gentry 2022.

<sup>80</sup> Wedemeyer 2013, 106. In Indian Buddhist tantric settings, these typically feature together with the *pañcamāṃsa* (Tib. *sha lnga*), or “five fleshes,” which includes human flesh, elephant flesh, horse flesh, dog flesh, and cow flesh.

<sup>81</sup> Wedemeyer 2013.

*Compassionate One*, in conjunction with seven-born flesh-pill production and consecration delineated by the completion of one hundred million seven-syllable *maṇi* recitations among the ritualists. These were lavish and elaborate ceremonies, requiring considerable resources and time, thus prompting their occasional adaptation to the slightly truncated form of the “offering accomplishment” (*sgrub mchod*). Beginning on the first day of the fourth lunar month of the wood-ox year of 1445, when Ratna Lingpa was forty-three years old, until his death at seventy-four in 1478, he annually staged the offering accomplishment of the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*.<sup>82</sup> Additionally, he reports having staged complete one-hundred million seven-syllable recitation sessions (*yi ge bdun pa dung phyur*) thirteen times throughout his lifetime.<sup>83</sup> These rites, and many others besides, featured the production, consecration, and distribution of *maṇi* pills.

As illustrated in these details and in the episodes above, the pills attracted popular appeal. Ratna Lingpa records numbers of recipients for his consecrated *maṇi* pills in figures upwards of thirteen thousand on one occasion and a few thousand on several others.<sup>84</sup> He and his associates and acolytes, as Ratna Lingpa records, also took great measures to carry bushels of pills on their journeys throughout Tibet and the Himalayas to distribute to everyone they met with the promise that eating just one ensures rebirth in the pure land of Amitābha or Avalokiteśvara.

Guru Chöwang and his *maṇi*-pill tradition was Ratna Lingpa's primary inspiration in his popularization of this tradition. The key episodes presented above hopefully suffice to illustrate how intimately interwoven Ratna Lingpa's identity as a Treasure revealer was with the legacy of Guru Chöwang's seven-born-flesh *maṇi*-pill tradition. Strikingly, in addition to all of Ratna Lingpa's explicit references to Guru Chöwang's legacy, Ratna Lingpa's revelations occurred at many of the same locations where Guru Chöwang had also revealed brahmin flesh and associated rites. Notably, as mentioned above, Namkechen Lhodrak, where Ratna Lingpa revealed his *Secret Assembly* cycle, was the site of Guru Chöwang's first Treasure revelation. But perhaps more striking still are associations centering on Samyé temple complex. Guru Chöwang had also revealed at Samyé brahmin flesh and a brief *sādhana* centering on it. Moreover, as I will demonstrate below, Guru

<sup>82</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 1, *sPrul pa'i sku ratna gling pa'i rnam par thar pa byin rlabs rgya mtsho'i sprin phung mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan*, 226.2–3.

<sup>83</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 1, *sPrul pa'i sku ratna gling pa'i rnam par thar pa byin rlabs rgya mtsho'i sprin phung mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan*, 429.2–4.

<sup>84</sup> For the figure of thirteen thousand, see Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 1, *sPrul pa'i sku ratna gling pa'i rnam par thar pa byin rlabs rgya mtsho'i sprin phung mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan*, 197.

Chöwang's *sādhana* from Samyé was likely a source for the passage detailing the flesh's treatment in his *Quintessential Assembly tantra* revealed at Pelphukring, in Kharchu, Lhodrak (Lho brag mkhar chu dpal gyi phug rings). Perhaps it is not surprising that Ratna Lingpa's *Samyema sādhana*, named after its place of revelation, is a commentary precisely on this seven-born flesh-pill rite from Guru Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly tantra*, newly cast in the voice of Padmasambhava. More importantly, as I will also discuss below, Guru Chöwang's flesh-rite from the *Quintessential Assembly tantra* also formed the basis for the flesh's analogous treatment in Ratna Lingpa's *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*, revealed a year after Ratna Lingpa's revelation of the *Samyema*. Tracing through this literature the complex filiations of influence between Guru Chöwang's and Ratna Lingpa's diverse treatments of the seven-born flesh, particularly when viewed against the backdrop of Ratna Lingpa's biographical corpus, sheds considerable light on the delicate balance between tradition and innovation at work in the formation of Ratna Lingpa's *maṇi*-pill tradition. We turn now to an analysis of this seminal *maṇi*-pill literature.

### 3. *The Literature of the Great Compassionate One's Secret Assembly*

To recount the general features of Ratna Lingpa's *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* cycle, it centers on a form of Avalokiteśvara known as Mahākāruṇika, which literally means, "he who has great compassion." Mahākāruṇika appears in the cycle's basic *tantra*, history, liturgical descriptions, and initiation cards (*tsak li*) as bright red in complexion, adorned with jewel ornaments, with one face and two arms, holding in his right hand a rosary and a lotus at the level of his heart, and in his left hand the lotus's stem and a vase filled with ambrosia on his lap. He is depicted, moreover, in union with his consort Secret Gnosis, or Sangyema (gSang ye ma), short for She who is Endowed with the Glow of Secret Gnosis (gSang ba ye shes mdangs ldan ma). She is pictured as bright red in complexion, youthful, adorned with jewelry, embracing Mahākāruṇika with a lotus and a knife in her right hand and a long-life vase in her left held at the level of his ears, smiling, with flowing hair. The couple is surrounded in a *maṇḍala* by several other buddhas in sexual union that resemble them. And several other details, such as buddha Amitābha above their heads and buddhas filling their bodies, also figure according to the description in Ratna Lingpa's song reviewed above. Also as presented above, collective "great accomplishment" rites featuring this configuration of Mahākāruṇika and his *maṇḍala*, and the uninterrupted recitation of his seven-syllable mantra *oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ hrīḥ*, was Ratna Lingpa's preferred venue for concocting and consecrating brahmin-flesh *maṇi* pills. We have also seen

how Ratna Lingpa staged communal one hundred million seven-syllable *maṇi* mantra recitation rites (*maṇi dung phyur*) as an integral facet of his *maṇi*-pill great accomplishment practices, delineating the length of these rites in terms of the number of days it takes to chant the requisite number of mantras.

In these and several other respects, Ratna Lingpa's *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* is patterned closely after Guru Chöwang's earlier *Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*. Not only does Ratna Lingpa's *Secret Assembly* feature the seven-syllable form of Avalokiteśvara's mantra developed by Guru Chöwang in the *Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*. It also shares the same basic iconographic features and preserves the former's brahmin-flesh *maṇi*-pill focus, incorporating mostly all the same ingredients. Perhaps the most striking similarity is that the foundational *tantra* of Ratna Lingpa's *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* (*Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgyud*) has as its tenth chapter a nearly verbatim version of the instruction about the manufacture and consecration of brahmin-flesh pills that we find embedded in chapter six of the foundational *tantra* of Guru Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*, entitled the *Secret Tantra of Supreme Wisdom-Awareness* (*Thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa ye shes rig pa mchog gi gsang rgyud*).<sup>85</sup> Despite all these similarities, when closely comparing Ratna Lingpa's cycle with that of his predecessor Guru Chöwang, several subtle but significant shifts come to the surface. An examination of these variations in light of the criticisms that Guru Chöwang's cycle faced in the fourteenth century point toward a concerted attempt on the part of Ratna Lingpa to revise and repackage Guru Chöwang's tradition for a new audience.

### a. Narrative and Iconographic Shifts

One of the most striking differences is the narrative framework of their respective origin stories. These can be observed not only in the opening chapter of their foundational *tantras*, but also in their historical surveys, which are presented as revelations that surfaced together with their respective *tantras*.<sup>86</sup> Starting with the location (*gnas*) of the *tantra*, Guru

<sup>85</sup> See Appendix V for a comparative edition and translation.

<sup>86</sup> Gu ru chos dbang 1982, *Thugs rje chen po'i bstan pa bka' babs kyi lo rgyus*, 1–26, and *Thugs rje chen po thams cad kyi yang snying 'dus pa ye shes rig pa mchog gi gsang rgyud*, 27–76; Gu ru chos dbang date unknown, *Thugs rje chen po'i bstan pa bka' babs kyi lo rgyus chen mo*, pdf. 5–29, and *Thugs rje chen po thams cad kyi yongs snying 'dus pa rig pa ye shes mchog gi rgyud*, pdf. 43–86; Ratna gling pa 1977–1979, vol. 6, *Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa las: lo rgyus yid bzhin nor bu*, 7–22, and *Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgyud*, 23–78; Ratna gling pa 2013, vol. 12, *Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa las: lo rgyus yid bzhin nor bu*, 253–266, and *Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgyud*,

Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly tantra* and history locate the original teaching of this *tantra* in buddha Amitābha's western pure land of Blissful (Tib. bDe ba can, Skt. Sukhāvati).<sup>87</sup> In Ratna Lingpa's revealed *tantra* of the *Secret Assembly*, however, the name of Amitābha's western pure land shifts to Great Bliss Lotus Array (Tib. bDe chen padmo'i bkod pa, Skt. \*Mahāsukhapadmavyūhā), whereas in its history this is shortened to Great Bliss (Tib. bDe ba chen po).<sup>88</sup> The Tibetan term supplied for Sukhāvati in Guru Chöwang's cycle is the standard *bde ba can*, "endowed with bliss," or "blissful," which is homophonous in several Tibetan dialects with *bde ba chen*, or "great bliss," that we find in Ratna Lingpa's cycle. Georgios Halkias has drawn attention to a conflation between "blissful" and "great bliss" in Tibetan pure land-related literature, tracing its origin to the late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century writings of Drikung Kyopa Jikden Sumgön ('Bri gung skyob pa 'Jig rten gsum mgon, 1143–1217).<sup>89</sup> Halkias astutely speculates that this shift could have originated from the Chinese translation of Sukhāvati as "supreme bliss" (Chin. *ji le* 極樂); a simple scribal error of *chen*, "great," for *can*, "endowed," due to their being homonyms in several Tibetan dialects, which then came to be reproduced in later texts; or from a conscious effort to connect the pure land of Blissful with the tantric emphasis on the use of physical pleasure to reach the soteriological goal of awakening, which is often set apart from mundane bliss through its designation as "great bliss," or *mahāsukha*. The case at hand points specifically to the third of Halkias's proposals—an intentional shift to better relate the pure land with a more sensual tantric ethos.

That the shift from "blissful" to "great bliss" was intentional and not the result of an accidental scribal error is suggested by the consistency of this variation across the extant versions of Guru Chöwang's and Ratna Lingpa's respective revelations. More indicative still of a conscious transformation is a corresponding intensification of sexual language and imagery typical of tantric Buddhism in Ratna Lingpa's cycle as compared to Guru Chöwang's earlier revelation. The tantric character of the teaching itself (*bstan pa*), which comes labeled as a *tantra* (*rgyud*), already explicitly signals a tantric setting. But when considering the teacher of the *tantra* (*ston pa*), for instance, in Guru Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly tantra* we find a relatively simple depiction of Amitābha (here, sNang ba mtha' yas) that broadly

---

205–251; Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 5, *Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa'i lo rgyus yid bzhiin nor bu*, 11–25, and *Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgyud*, 27–73.

<sup>87</sup> Gu ru chos dbang 1982, 6.2–3 and 28.3; Gu ru chos dbang date unknown, pdf. 9.1–2 and 44.4–5.

<sup>88</sup> Ratna gling pa 1977–1979, vol. 6, 8.4 and 24.4; 2013, vol. 12, 254.4 and 206.4; 2014a, vol. 5, 12.4 and 28.3–4.

<sup>89</sup> Halkias 2013, 148–149.

resonates with what is familiar to us from Mahāyāna accounts—he is depicted as seated alone, within a swirling effulgence of limitless light, in the meditative absorption of “taming beings.”<sup>90</sup> In Ratna Lingpa’s *Secret Assembly*, however, Amitābha (here, ‘Od dpag med) is seated on a sun and moon seat, at the center of a thousand-petal lotus, situated on a throne, in union with a consort named Sangchen Pema Wangchukma (gSang chen padma dbang phyug ma, lit., “Great Secret Lotus Lady”).<sup>91</sup>

The retinue, or audience (*‘khor*) for the teaching reflects still further changes. According to Guru Chöwang’s *Quintessential Assembly tantra*, Amitābha emanates his retinue from his own body, speech, and mind by emanating the five buddha families of the Great Compassionate One out of a five-color light radiating from his awakened body; six further forms of the Great Compassionate One from six light rays of his awakened speech; and the Great Compassionate One Avalokiteśvara, in union with his consort, together with their offspring, and the 1,002 buddhas of this Fortunate Eon, from the infinite light rays of his awakened mind. Then, the *tantra* narrates, out of the crown of Amitābha’s head emerges a red form of the Great Compassionate One of immutable family, who is empowered to serve as leader of the world; from his throat issues Padmasambhava, who is empowered to uphold the lotus family; from his heart is emanated Hayagrīva, here called the Glorious Supreme Horse (dPal rta mchog), who subjugates all of appearance and existence; from the tip of his nose is emanated Vajradharma (rDo rje chos), who is set up as the requester of the teaching; and from his navel is emanated the mother Pāṇḍaravāsīnī Lady of the Dance (Gos dkar mo gar gyi dbang mo), who encapsulates as many retinue members of the lotus class as there are grains of sand.<sup>92</sup> Also mentioned in this *tantra*’s opening narrative frame are countless further emanations of those emanations and that they all playfully dally in the delights of the five sense pleasures, like reality merging with reality. The chapters of the *tantra* unfold as the buddha Amitābha’s replies to a series of questions posed by this entourage, led by their designated spokesman Vajradharma. In marked contrast to the florid details of the *tantra* itself, the history revealed as part of Guru Chöwang’s cycle dials back on the tantric imagery by simply saying of the entourage in Sukhāvātī that “aside from appearance of brother and sister bodhisattvas, there is not even the name of man and woman.”<sup>93</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Gu ru chos dbang 1982, 28.3; Gu ru chos dbang date unknown, pdf. 44.5.

<sup>91</sup> Ratna gling pa 1977–1979, vol. 6, 25.3; 2013, vol. 12, 207.2; 2014a, vol. 5, 29.2.

<sup>92</sup> Gu ru chos dbang 1982, 29.1–302; Gu ru chos dbang date unknown, pdf. 44.6–45.6.

<sup>93</sup> Gu ru chos dbang 1982, 7.3; Gu ru chos dbang date unknown, pdf. 10.2: *byang sems lcam dral cha lugs las: skyes pa bud med ming yang med*:

Ratna Lingpa's *Secret Assembly tantra* presents a different but overlapping set of images for the emergence and identity of the *tantra*'s audience.<sup>94</sup> After relating that Amitābha in union with his consort are surrounded by infinite bodhisattvas of the lotus family, it goes on to relate how Amitābha emanated from his forehead Mañjuḥṣa, as the *vidyādhara* of awakened body; from "the lotus of his tongue" Avalokiteśvara, as the *vidyādhara* of awakened speech; and from his heart Vajrapāṇi, as the *vidyādhara* of awakened mind. It then narrates how the sixteen bodhisattvas, the 1,002 buddhas, the six sages, the five buddha families, and the *maṇḍala* of fierce deities, such as lotus *heruka* and others were also present. The time when the *tantra* was taught, moreover, is related, true to many Buddhist *tantras*, as the time beyond time, "at the culmination of the permanent continuum," or, as the history revealed with this cycle relates, "the time of enjoying the essence of self-arisen wisdom beyond beginning and end."<sup>95</sup> The narrative frame of Guru Chöwang's revelation includes no such details about time. Ratna Lingpa's *tantra* unfolds as Amitābha's replies to a series of questions posed by Avalokiteśvara himself, who serves here as the spokesperson for the audience, instead of Vajradharma. The history revealed with this cycle relates additional details about the audience of the *tantra* that subtly differentiate it from Guru Chöwang's cycle. According to this history, for instance, the audience in Great Bliss is populated not just with women serving as consorts, but with a broader range of other women characters, such as goddesses, wrathful ladies, and *dākinīs*.<sup>96</sup>

As evinced by this cursory review of the opening narrative frame of their main *tantras*, the details of the location, teacher, retinue, teaching, and time—the five excellences that constitute a Buddhist scripture's opening narrative framing—are all coordinated to paint a resolutely tantric pedagogical setting. Already in Guru Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly* we find tantric sexual imagery introduced into the description of Sukhāvātī that distinguishes it markedly from its mainstream Mahāyāna corollary, even as it retains the same name. In the *Quintessential Assembly*, Avalokiteśvara appears in sexual union with a consort and there are "brother and sister" bodhisattvas present, whereas the Mahāyāna pure land of Blissful is famously populated by only men, regardless of their sex in previous lifetimes. The shift in Ratna Lingpa's cycle to the pure land of Great Bliss Lotus Array develops this theme

<sup>94</sup> Ratna gling pa 1977–1979, vol. 6, 25.3–26.2; 2013, vol. 12, 207.3–208.2; 2014a, vol. 5, 29.3–30.3.

<sup>95</sup> Ratna gling pa 1977–1979, vol. 6, 26.1–2 and 9.2; 2013, vol. 12, 208.2 and 255.2–3; 2014a, vol. 5, 30.2–3 and 13.2.

<sup>96</sup> Ratna gling pa 1977–1979, vol. 6, 8.5–9.2; 2013, vol. 12, 255.1–2; 2014a, vol. 5, 29.3–30.3.



further to present the location as a resolutely esoteric dimension of the Mahāyāna Blissful, where even the buddha Amitābha resides not alone, but in sexual union with a consort. Ratna Lingpa's *tantra* also introduces a more diverse cast of female characters and other details, about time, for instance, that more vividly evoke a tantric set of images. Instead of modeling itself after the renunciatory ideal of male monastic celibacy, or even equivocating in this regard, as in Guru Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly*, Ratna Lingpa's *Secret Assembly* unabashedly proclaims the tantric ideal of the accomplished *yogin* and *yoginī* as its governing ethos.

Iconographical shifts follow along similar lines. Ratna Lingpa's revelation depicts the Great Compassionate One as identical to what we find in Guru Chöwang's revelation, except for one glaring difference: in Ratna Lingpa's *Secret Assembly* the Great Compassionate One holds in his right hand a lotus, in addition to the rosary, and in his left hand the lotus's stem, in addition to the vase of ambrosia.<sup>97</sup> The addition of the lotus to both the name of the pure land and to the iconography is apropos of the lotus-family emphasis of the cycle as a whole. But when coupled with the sexual connotations of "great bliss" and "lotus array," and the inclusion of more female characters in the entourage, we get the distinct sense that Ratna Lingpa's revisions point toward a heightened sensualizing of the pure land. In sum, although the move toward the tantricization of Sukhāvātī is already noticeable in Guru Chöwang's inclusion of Avalokiteśvara's sexual union and other details that play no part in the Mahāyāna Sukhāvātī, Ratna Lingpa accentuates this shift further by renaming the pure land and revising the images and iconography in subtle but clearly recognizable ways.

### **b. The Literary Sources of the Early *Maṇi*-Pill Tradition**

Comparative assessment of the passages in Guru Chöwang's and Ratna Lingpa's respective writings and revelations that explicitly discuss the seven-born-flesh *maṇi* pill reveals a similarly nuanced interplay of continuity and innovation. The appendices provide preliminary draft editions and English translations of some of the most significance texts and passages. But to better assess these appendices, a comparative review of the relevant seven-born *maṇi*-pill literature is in order, starting with Guru Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly*.

---

<sup>97</sup> This feature appears throughout the cycle. See the appendices for details.

*Flesh in Guru Chöwang's Quintessential Assembly*

As mentioned above already, the short *Explanation of the Accomplishment of Seven-born Flesh*, in Guru Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly tantra*, was a foundational text for the early *maṇi*-pill tradition. The *Explanation* is embedded deep in the *tantra's* sixth chapter, titled a *Collection of Rites for Taming Beings*, where it appears as the sixth among the chapter's seven rites.<sup>98</sup> Interestingly, this section also appears twice as a stand-alone text elsewhere in the versions of Guru Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly* revelation I consulted. In one instance, the stand-alone version is explicitly presented in its colophon as "extracted" (*bkol ba*) from the larger *tantra*. Its title is given as an *Explanation of the Means of Accomplishment of Seven-born Flesh Pills for Guiding Beings in this Age of Strife*, from the *Secret Tantra of the Great Compassionate One's Quintessential Assembly*.<sup>99</sup>

The status of the second stand-alone instance of this text is more ambiguous. This version is framed not as an extract from the *tantra*, but as an independent composition.<sup>100</sup> It includes a colophon that reads:

Requested of lord Guru Chöwang  
by the persistent Khampa.  
May it benefit transmigrators!  
I dedicate it to all beings without exception!<sup>101</sup>

Given the details of this colophon and dedication, which is quite distinct from what we find in Treasure colophons, it is tempting to construe it as an authorial colophon. Complicating this observation some, however, is that the text opens with *ḍākinī* script and is marked throughout, including in this colophon, with Treasure punctuation (*gter tsheg*) typical of revelations and not original compositions.

<sup>98</sup> Gu ru chos dbang 1982, *sKye bdun shas bsgrub bshad*, 59.3–61.1, in 'Gro ba 'dul ba las tshogs kyi le'u ste drug pa'o, 52.2–70.3, in *Thugs rje chen po thams cad kyi yang snying 'dus pa ye shes rig pa mchog gi gsang rgyud*; Guru chos dbang date unknown, pdf 71.7–73.5, in *Thugs rje chen po thams cad kyi yongs(sic!) snying 'dus pa ye shes rig pa mchog gi gsang rgyud*. The seven rites are listed at the beginning of chapter six (52.4) as follows: 1) *ganācakra*, 2) protection, 3) accomplishing longevity, 4) constructing the three-fold receptacles, 5) consecration, 6) accomplishing the flesh of the seven-born, and 7) stages of the path.

<sup>99</sup> Gu ru chos dbang date unknown, pdf. 516–519, *Thugs rje chen po thams cad kyi yongs (sic!) snying 'dus pa'i gsang rgyud las rtsod dus skye bo drangs pa'i phyir: skye bdun sha ril bsgrub thabs bshad*.

<sup>100</sup> Gu ru chos dbang date unknown, pdf. 459–462, *Thugs rje chen po yongs snying 'dus pa'i skye bdun bsgrub thabs*.

<sup>101</sup> Gu ru chos dbang date unknown, pdf. 461.7–462.1: 'gro mgon gu ru chos dbang la: thugs rus can kyi khams pas[lemend. pa'i] zhus: 'gro ba rnam la phan gyur gcig: sems can ma lus la bsngo:

Whatever the case, we can surmise from the details of these two stand-alone versions that this passage, which comes in the *tantra* embedded in chapter six, enjoyed a life of its own probably already during the lifetime of Guru Chöwang. More importantly, the variations between the colophons of the two stand-alone versions raise the important question of whether what we find in the *tantra's* sixth chapter might have in fact originated as a writing composed by Guru Chöwang that found its way into the revealed *tantra* later, only to be extracted from the *tantra* and presented on its own once again, but then as an extract from a revealed *tantra* source-text. The Treasure punctuation and *dākinī*-script opening of the version with an authorial colophon would then have to be explained as the result of a *post-facto* scribal intervention made with knowledge of the *tantra* and its attribution as a Treasure revelation.

Complicating this picture further, we find yet another version of the seven-born-flesh accomplishment rite with considerable variations within a larger commentary on the *Collection of Rites* called the *Source of All Aims*.<sup>102</sup> This text, according to Guru Chöwang's autobiographical record, was revealed from the Aryapalo temple at Samyé only after the *Quintessential Assembly* was revealed at Pelgyi Pukring, in Kharchu, Lhodrak.<sup>103</sup> Moreover, the passage in question makes reference to the *Quintessential Assembly* by directly mentioning as the framework for the practice the *tantra* and "means of attainment" that had been "concealed at Kharchu, Lhodrak." The colophon of the *Source of All Aims* provides a revealing vantage point onto its redaction and compilation:

This came from inside the leather box (*bse sgrom*) revealed from Aryapalo temple at Samyé (bSam yas arya pa lo'i gling) by the Treasure revealer from Lhodrak, Chökyi Wangchuk (Lho brag Chos kyi dbang phyug). The yellow scroll was copyedited three times. Later it was arranged in the *Collection of Rites* of the *Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* Dharma cycle that had been brought forth as Treasure from Pelgyi Pukring, in Kharchu, Lhodrak (Lho brag mkhar chu dpal gyi phug rings).<sup>104</sup>

By this account, the *Collection of Rites* that makes up the sixth chapter of the *Quintessential Assembly tantra* was retroactively edited based on

<sup>102</sup> Gu ru chos dbang 1982, 382.1–385.1, in *Thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa'i las tshogs dgos pa kun 'byung*, 381–402.

<sup>103</sup> Gu ru chos dbang 1979, 174.7.

<sup>104</sup> Gu ru chos dbang 1982, 402: *lho brag gter ston chos kyi dbang phyug gis: bsam yas arya pa lo'i gling nas: bse sgrom ston pa'i nang nas byon pa'o: shog ser la lan gsum zhu thug byas: de rjes lho brag mkhar chu dpal gyi[emend. gyis] phug rings nas thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa'i chos skor gter nas gdan drangs pa'i las tshogs su bsgrigs pa lags par gda'o:*

this subsequent revelation from Samyé. This would seem to mean that the *Source of All Aims* was in some part the source text for the sixth chapter of the *Quintessential Assembly tantra*. The reference to the *Quintessential Assembly tantra* and means of accomplishment in the text itself also suggest as much. Moreover, this version is terser than the other Guru Chöwang-related witnesses and comparison reveals that although it broadly parallels the others in terms of structure and content, and shares with them many lines and terms verbatim, there are enough distinctions to construe it as a separate but deeply intertextual writing. Unfortunately, thus far I have only been able to locate a single version of this text. Appendix II presents an edition and translation of this lone witness.

Guru Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly* cycle also includes a word-by-word commentary on the brief means of accomplishment. This commentary is embedded in another text devoted to elaborating on the seven-fold *Collection of Rites* that constitutes the fundamental *tantra's* sixth chapter.<sup>105</sup> In this, it presents itself as a commentary specifically on the version we find in the *Quintessential Assembly tantra*. Its glosses, however, reflect some of the terminology unique to the *Source of All Aims* version. This suggests that the brief *Source of All Aims* version of the seven-born accomplishment served as a source text for the seven-part commentary as well. Apropos of the thematic number seven, the commentary on accomplishing the flesh of the seven-born divides the passage from the fundamental *tantra* into seven sections: 1) assessing the seven-born, 2) the method of concocting pills, 3) the actual method of accomplishment, 4) receiving *siddhis*, 5) acting for the benefit of others, 6) requisite commitments, and 7) the virtuous benefit. In citing the *tantra*, moreover, the commentary provides another witness to the source text, even as its commentarial glosses are drawn in part from the *Source of All Aims* later revealed separately at Samyé. This combination might have sprung from an attempt to bridge these different treatments toward better contextualizing the seven-born accomplishment rite within the *Quintessential Assembly* cycle. Appendices III and IV present a Tibetan edition and English translation of this commentary.

Guru Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly* importantly also includes a short but fascinating history of the flesh of the brahmin Stainless Essence (Drimé Nyngpo, Dri med snying po), or Stainless, who was introduced earlier.<sup>106</sup> This figure is purportedly the Indian brahmin, or

<sup>105</sup> Gu ru chos dbang 1982, 189.3–196.5, in *Thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa'i las tshogs bdun pa*, 157–196; Gu ru chos dbang date unknown, pdf. 326–331.7, in *Thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa'i las tshogs bdun*, pdf. 299.1–334.1.

<sup>106</sup> Gu ru chos dbang date unknown, pdf. 455–457, *Drang srong dri med snying po'i lo rgyus*.

*r̥ṣi* emanation of Avalokiteśvara whose corpse served as an important material source for the seven-born brahmin-flesh *maṇi* pill in Tibet, once it was dismembered in India, and the Indian Buddhist adept and progenitor of the Treasure tradition Padmasambhava brought a piece to Tibet and ritually accomplished and concealed it in multiple locations there. Appendix I provides the Tibetan of the sole witness of this short text that I have been able to locate, along with an English translation.

### *Tradition and Innovation in Ratna Lingpa's Secret Assembly*

The picture that can be gleaned from perusing Ratna Lingpa's seven-born literature is no less complex. As mentioned already above, Ratna Lingpa's Treasure revelation, the *tantra* of the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*, has as its tenth chapter what appears to be a revision of the seven-born flesh-pill accomplishment text that appears thrice (or four or five times, when we include the *Source of All Aims* and the seven-part commentary) in Guru Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly* and its fundamental *tantra*. Ratna Lingpa's version is found in his revealed *tantra* under the title *Chapter 10: Accomplishment of the Supreme Seven-Born*.<sup>107</sup> The many variations between Ratna Lingpa's and Guru Chöwang's versions are readily discernible in the comparative edition and translation of these texts provided in Appendix V. For reasons addressed above, this edition does not include Guru Chöwang's *Source of All Aims* version, which is presented separately in Appendix II. The most significant differences reflected in Appendix V, aside from their titles and colophons, can be summarized as follows:

- 1) **Framing:** Owing to their different bibliographical locations, Guru Chöwang's and Ratna Lingpa's versions vary significantly in terms of their framing. The framing of Guru Chöwang's passage differs slightly from witness to witness. But whether embedded in chapter six of the *Quintessential Assembly tantra*, an extract from the *tantra*, or an independent composition, all witnesses share the unceremonious opening: "I will now explain the accomplishment of seven-born flesh." In the stand-alone witnesses, a few characters of *ḍākinī* script precede this line, and in one of these we find the additional phrase "for the sake of leading beings in the age of strife, from the *Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*." Ratna Lingpa's version, on the other hand, as the entire tenth

<sup>107</sup> Ratna gling pa 1977–1979, vol. 6, 69.5–6; Ratna gling pa 2013, vol. 12, 244.1; Ratna gling pa, 2014a, vol. 5, 66.3–4: *skye bdun mchog gi sgrub pa'i le'u ste bcu pa'o*:

chapter of the *Secret Assembly tantra*, is in all witnesses cast within the dialogical context of buddha Amitābha's reply to his entourage's question:

Teach us, the entourage,  
a method for effortlessly attaining awakening  
through eating an amazing supreme substance.

- 2) **Assessment Procedure and Criteria:** Guru Chöwang's text is explicit in its opening lines about the need for an "assessment" (*brtag pa*) process to determine who qualifies as a seven-born, whereas Ratna Lingpa leaves this term out and weaves the criteria into the opening verses. Both Guru Chöwang and Ratna Lingpa boil down the criteria of a seven-born—a topic that receives elaborate treatment in Indian Buddhist *tantras*—to the recollection of seven successive lives as a person "endowed with the Dharma" (*chos ldan*). Ratna Lingpa's text adds to this formulation the detail of having the "leisures and opportunities" (*dal 'byor*) that define for Buddhists the "precious human birth" required as a precondition for practicing the Dharma. One version of Guru Chöwang's text, moreover, includes the additional intriguing details about how a seven-born can be identified by gathering the local children in the public market, reflecting their faces in a mirror, and investigating which children's faces cast seven reflections.
- 3) **Ingredients:** Guru Chöwang's text includes the ambiguous substance of "medicine" (*sman*) as an ingredient in the pill concoction. Ratna Lingpa's version replaces medicine with wheat flour as a suitable alternative to rice flour for mixing the ingredients into pills. Both versions include *amṛta*—sometimes called "Dharma medicine"—as a separate substance, leaving it open as to what precisely Guru Chöwang's "medicine" might otherwise refer to. Moreover, the liquid used to knead the dry concoction into pills is in Guru Chöwang's text the "queen's golden breast milk" (*btsun mo gser kyi nu zho*). This is probably an epithet for the medicinal substance *thar nu*.<sup>108</sup> Ratna Lingpa's

<sup>108</sup> Dga' ba'i rdo rje (2002, 216–217) and Karma chos 'phel (1993, 205–207) both list "golden snake milk" (*gser sbrul 'o ma*) and "dripping breast milk" (*nu zho 'dzag*) or "queen with dripping breast milk" (*nu zho 'dzag pa'i btsun mo*) among the alternative names for *thar nu*. Ye shes bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1971, 149) lists "milk dripping queen" (*'o 'dzag btsun mo*) among its list of epithets. According to Dga' ba'i rdo rje (2002, 216), *thar nu* is the plant known in Latin as *Euphorbia nemato-cypha*. According to Karma chos 'phel (1993, 205), it is known in Latin as *Euphorbia kozlowii*

version names *thar nu* directly, instead of its more obscure epithet, and adds that it should be combined with the urine of a fully ordained monk, a detail missing from Guru Chöwang's treatment. Other than these distinctions, the ingredients are identical.

- 4) **Ritual Accomplishment Procedure:** Guru Chöwang's text is explicit that the vase containing the flesh pills should go in the middle of the *maṇḍala* of the Great Compassionate One. Ratna Lingpa mentions the *maṇḍala* but refrains from specifying. Further along these lines, Guru Chöwang's version frames the contemplative procedure to be observed in the ritual as "the observation of the meditation on the Great Compassionate One" and is explicit that each pill should be visualized as the "complete form of the Great Compassionate One." Ratna Lingpa's version leaves out these details, preferring instead to state more openly that "each pill" should be visualized as the "deity," without directly specifying which one. However, Ratna Lingpa's version adds a line stipulating meditation on the radiation and absorption of light rays, a detail missing from Guru Chöwang's version. Guru Chöwang's version specifies that at least five *yogins* should hold the *dhāraṇī* cord during the ceremony, even as it is careful to add that the more holders there are the better. Ratna Lingpa's version, however, leaves out the minimum number of five and only advocates the more-the-merrier sentiment. Differences are noticeable with the mantra as well. Guru Chöwang's version calls the main mantra to be recited during the accomplishment the "quintessence" (*yang snying*), whereas Ratna Lingpa's version calls it the "king of *vidyās*" (*rig pa'i rgyal po*). More significantly, Guru Chöwang's "quintessence mantra" is Avalokiteśvara's seven-syllable mantra *oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ hrīḥ* with the addition of *arapacamita hrdaya svāhā*. Ratna Lingpa's version reduces this down to the seven-syllable mantra alone.
- 5) **Signs of Success:** Guru Chöwang's version of this passage includes "seeing auspicious signs and portents," in addition to the emergence of light, smoke, sound, and fragrant scent, as indications that the pills have been successfully consecrated. Ratna Lingpa's version, for its part, replaces "auspicious signs

---

*prok*. Both are species of the genus *Euphoria* commonly called "spurge" in English, after its use as a purgative, and identifiable by its poisonous milky white or yellow sap.

and portents" with "auspicious dreams." Moreover, Guru Chöwang's version states that *siddhis* should be received once such signs emerge, whereas Ratna Lingpa's version omits this line.

- 6) **Initiation and Benefits:** Both versions mention that a culminating initiation should be performed. But while Guru Chöwang's version specifies in one line that this should happen by means of the pill vase, Ratna Lingpa's version offers three additional lines, which are absent from Guru Chöwang's version. These lines stipulate that during the initiation three pills should be given, administered with a dilute of urine, and pill consumers should generate the image of the deity and imagine while eating the pills that the deity as pill indivisibly dissolves into the deity as consumer. Both versions conclude this section with a simple three-line verse articulating the benefit of eating a *maṇi* pill. This short verse came to be the most widely cited passage from these source materials by practitioners of the *maṇi*-pill tradition over the centuries. Ratna Lingpa's version reads as follows:

Whoever's stomach a pill should fall in  
will never part from Avalokiteśvara,  
no matter the lifetime or birthplace.

- 7) **Commitments:** Both versions prescribe commitments, or *samaya*, to subsequently observe based on having received the culminating initiation, but the details differ. In Guru Chöwang's version we are told to observe the training of the Great Compassionate One, that is, to act for the welfare of others, putting their needs above our own—then, it promises, contact with the supreme substance will suffice. Ratna Lingpa's version, on the other hand, includes the line about altruism, but alternatively adds the recitation of the seven-syllables and the generic "observation of *samaya*," without naming the Great Compassionate One. Moreover, Ratna Lingpa's version replaces the line about the supreme substance with the promise that observing the commitments will enable initiates to stir up *saṃsāra* from the dregs on behalf of all beings.

As discussed in some detail above, the year before Ratna Lingpa revealed the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* tantra from Namkechen, Lhodrak in 1442, he excavated a brahmin-flesh means of



accomplishment text (*sgrub thabs, sādhana*) from Samyé temple.<sup>109</sup> This liturgy, otherwise known as the *Samyema*, presents itself as a commentary on Guru Chöwang's earlier writing/revelation/edition. But it also departs considerably from the structure of the seven-section commentary of the *Quintessential Assembly* and introduces subtle changes in imagery and terminology that would only find full expression in Ratna Lingpa's *Secret Assembly tantra* revealed a year later. Structurally, for instance, rather than follow the seven-fold division of Guru Chöwang's commentary, the *Samyema* practice text is ordered according to four divisions: 1) assessment, 2) accomplishment, 3) initiation, and 4) bringing benefit to others. The subtle but significant changes the *Samyema* reflects in imagery and terminology can be observed in the Tibetan edition and English translation of this text presented in Appendices VI and VII. These changes foreshadow the text of the *Secret Assembly tantra*, even as the *Samyema* presents itself as a commentary on Guru Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly*, cast in the authorial voice of Padmasambhava. Most significant are shifts in the accomplishment and initiation sections. The accomplishment procedure, for example, which starts with the ingredients and process for producing the pills, foreshadows the *tantra* by listing the urine of a virtuous monk as the ideal liquid for kneading the pills. But the most significant shift away from Guru Chöwang's treatment here is the expansion of iconographic details of the liturgy, specifically the addition of the lotus and its stem as items held in the hands of the Great Compassionate One, as well as description of his consort and her full name: She who is Endowed with the Glow of Secret Gnosis (gSang ba ye shes mdangs ldan ma). Furthermore, among the signs of ritual success listed here is auspicious dreams, just as we see in the *Secret Assembly tantra*. The initiation section, moreover, includes the optional expansion of the ceremony to three repetitions—a detail missing from Guru Chöwang's version—and additionally foreshadows the *Secret Assembly* by stipulating that each pill be administered together with a urine wash.

Ratna Lingpa's *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* also includes its own commentarial ritual manual titled the *Wish-fulfilling Gem: A Liturgy for Accomplishing the Seven-Born*.<sup>110</sup> Not only does this liturgical commentary, whose colophon presents it as the "aim" or "meaning" of the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One tantra*, gloss the seven-born accomplishment rite practice instruction according to how it appears in the *Secret Assembly tantra's* tenth chapter. It

<sup>109</sup> Ratna gling pa 2013, vol. 11, 173–179, *Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa las skye bdun sgrub pa*; Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 5, 413–419, *Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa las: skye bdun gyi sgrub thabs bsam yas ma*.

<sup>110</sup> Ratna gling pa 2013, vol. 11, 163–172, and Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 5, 403–411, *sKye bdun sgrub pa'i cho ga yid bzhin nor bu*.

also provides additional structural details and procedural guidelines for the practical implementation of this chapter in the broader context of the *Secret Assembly* cycle. In this, its structure differs markedly from both Guru Chöwang's seven-part commentary and Ratna Lingpa's *Samyema*. Appendices VIII and IX below, which present a Tibetan edition and English translation of this brief work, enables detailed comparison. Roughly speaking, however, the *Wish-fulfilling Gem* departs from its precedents by organizing the *Secret Assembly*'s tenth chapter according to the standard tripartite division of preliminary, main part, and conclusion. Within this rubric, it demarcates several subdivisions. Preliminary, for instance, includes the three subsections of location, assessment of the substance, and concocting the pills; the main part, the procedure of accomplishment, is further divided into the preparations of demarcating the practice boundary and other preliminaries, preparing the vase, and the sequence of observations for the practice itself; while the conclusion includes the initiation, and a teaching on the virtues and fruits that can be expected from the performance.

The *Wish-fulfilling Gem*, in addition to citing the tenth chapter of the *Secret Assembly* tantra, also mentions at key junctures the *Secret Assembly* "liturgy" (*las byang*), "accomplishment practice framework" (*sgrub khog*), "miniature icon cards" (*tso ka li*), and a mantra recitation guideline, specifying how these texts should figure in the seven-born accomplishment rite to structure it, provide its liturgical and iconographic content, and guide the proper recitation of its mantras, respectively.<sup>111</sup> The liturgy and practice framework are surely the *Lotus Garland* liturgy and the *Essence of the Master from Uḍḍiyāna's Awakened Mind* accomplishment practice framework, respectively, two texts that we also find among the main revelations of the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*.<sup>112</sup> The liturgy details the contemplative visualizations and accompanying verses and mantras for chanting during the main sessions of the great accomplishment. Whereas the framework is a more elaborate writing that outlines in detail the structure and logistical specifications of the great accomplishment rite, filled in with additional liturgical verses for chanting during the performance. The mantra recitation guideline is referenced with the title the *Intent of Recitation*.<sup>113</sup> This short text prescribes how each of the mantras that figure in the liturgy should be recited and the contemplative visualizations that

<sup>111</sup> For the miniature icons cards, see Ratna gling pa 2014b.

<sup>112</sup> The liturgy is Ratna gling pa 2013, vol. 12, 161–194; and Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 5, 229–263, *Las byang pad+ma'i phreng ba*. The ritual practice framework is Ratna gling pa 2013, vol. 11, 97–162; and Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 5, 165–228, *sGrub khog o rgyan chen po'i thugs bcud*.

<sup>113</sup> Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 5, 285–288, *Thugs rje chen po'i 'dzab dgongs gnad kyi gzer thig*.

should accompany each recitation session. In the interest of space, presentation of these texts in appendices and analysis of how they fit with the root-text passages and commentaries discussed above will have to await another paper. But in sum, by cueing practitioners to utilize these texts, the *Wish-fulfilling Gem* liturgical commentary effectively integrates the seven-born-flesh pill practice within the broader *Secret Assembly* cycle. In framing them within a broader liturgical context, moreover, it also renders the terse instructions of the *tantra's* tenth chapter more easily practicable, and thus more emendable for teaching, performance, and transmission in new settings.

Unlike the *Secret Assembly tantra's* tenth chapter, which is framed as a teaching given by Amitābha to Avalokiteśvara and his entourage, the *Samyema*, *Wish-fulfilling Gem*, liturgy, practice framework, and recitation guideline are all cast in the voice of Padmasambhava. This voicing marks these as Treasure revelations that were putatively excavated at Samyé in 1441, in the case of the *Samyema*, and at Namkechen in 1442, along with the rest of the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* cycle, in the case of the others. The colophon of the practice framework, however, alternatively states that Ratna Lingpa only copied the yellow scrolls to redact this text in the “year of the dragon” (*brug lo*), which would have been the year 1448 at the earliest, around six years after its initial revelation, although the years of 1460 or 1472 cannot be ruled out entirely.<sup>114</sup> The temporal distance separating the revelation and redaction of the *Samyema*, the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One tantra* and associated texts, and the practice framework text gives the impression that revealing and/or drafting these texts, and compiling them into a coherent practice tradition was a sustained effort on the part of Ratna Lingpa, one that occupied his energies for a good portion of his adult life. The survey above of the narrative episodes in Ratna Lingpa's biographical corpus detailing his involvement with the seven-born brahmin flesh provides ample confirmation that Ratna Lingpa's formation of his own *maṇi*-pill vase-practice tradition indeed involved a concerted endeavor that spanned several years.

An important detail that further suggests Ratna Lingpa's sustained involvement in curating this tradition is that the *tantra* also appears under the slightly revised title of the *Secret Tantra of the Great Compassionate One* in the Tsamdrak (mTshams brag) edition of the *Collected Tantras of the Nyingma School* collections.<sup>115</sup> There, however, the *tantra* is stripped of its Treasure punctuation (*gter tsheg*), colophonic attribution, and any other information marking it as a Treasure revelation,

<sup>114</sup> Ratna gling pa 2013, vol. 11, 162; Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 5, 228.

<sup>115</sup> *Rnying ma rgyud 'bum* 1982, vol. 32, 376.7–378.4, in *Thugs rje chen po gsang ba'i rgyud*, 343.7–384.4.

aside from a few terms in chapter colophons and the opening title section that gives the language of Uḍḍiyāna as a source language. These crucial elisions of its Treasure markings nonetheless leave intact a section of the colophon stating that “Padmasambhava translated it himself based on an Indian text (*rgya dpe*) in the *dākinīs*’ symbolic language.”<sup>116</sup> This alteration to the colophon might indicate a deliberate effort to obfuscate the *tantra*’s putative origin in Ratna Lingpa’s revelation the *Secret Tantra of the Great Compassionate One*. This suggestion becomes more compelling when recalling that Ratna Lingpa is credited with having been instrumental in the compilation of the *Collected Tantras of the Nyingma School* canon, in response to the rejection of most Nyingma *tantras* from inclusion in the *Translated Word* or *Kangyur* canon during the fourteenth century.

Intriguingly, Guru Chöwang’s *Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One tantra* is also included in the Tsamdrak edition of the *Collected Tantras of the Nyingma School* under the title of the *Secret Tantra of Supreme Wisdom Awareness, the Quintessential Assembly of all Great Compassionate Ones*<sup>117</sup> This *tantra* too has been shorn of its Treasure punctuation. However, it retains its Treasure colophon, stating, “This was translated and catalogued by the master of Uḍḍiyāna Padmasambhava himself at Khoting temple (‘Kho mthing). Ithi. May it meet with a fortunate emanation of the Great Compassionate One! In a brown leather box under the Pel Pukring *maṇḍala*, a tham! Seal! Seal! Seal! Revealed from Treasure by the Treasure revealer Chöwang.”<sup>118</sup> Clearly there was not the same imperative to elide from this *tantra* its putative origin in the revelation of Guru Chöwang. Why this was the case remains a mystery.

### ***Intertextual Bonds across Generations: A Synoptic Analysis of the Literature of the Early Maṇi-Pill Tradition***

When we pan out to consider these textual developments and their relationships together, a complex but discernible pattern begins to emerge. Starting with Guru Chöwang, it is not entirely clear from our evidence whether his short seven-born flesh accomplishment emerged

<sup>116</sup> *Rnying ma rgyud ’bum* 1982, vol. 32, 384.4: /gsang ba’i rgyud ’di u rgyan chen pos / mkha’ ’gro dha ka’i rgya dpe las sgra rang ’gyur du mdzad do/.

<sup>117</sup> *Rnying ma rgyud ’bum* 1982, vol. 32, *Thugs rje chen po thams cad kyi yang snying ’dus pa ye shes rig pa mchog gi gsang rgyud*, 205.1–243.1.

<sup>118</sup> *Rnying ma rgyud ’bum* 1982, vol. 32, 242.6–243.1: o rgyan gyi mkhan po pad+ma ’byung gnas kyis lho brag ’kho mthing lha khang du sgra rang ’gyur du bsgyur te dkar[emend. kar] chag la phab pa/ IthI skal ldan thugs rje chen po’i sprul pa dngos cig dang phrad par shog cig /dpal gyi phug rings[emend. rengs] dal ’og bse smug por a thaM rgya rgya rgya gter ston chos dbang gis gter nas gdan drangs pa’o//.

first as an original composition, a revelation, or a combination of both—the product of editorial activity based on revelation. If it originated as a stand-alone composition, as one colophon suggests, it would have been newly construed as a revelation through its insertion in the sixth chapter of the *Quintessential Assembly tantra*, where it received commentarial attention in conjunction with the *Collection of Rites* as a whole, only to be excerpted once again, as another colophon records, to circulate independently. However, it is perhaps more likely based on the evidence considered above that it originated as part of the *Source of All Aims* revelation excavated from Samyé, and then served as a source text for editing and arranging the *Collection of Rites* that constitutes the *Quintessential Assembly tantra's* chapter six. In this case, both stand-alone versions would be later excerpts from this chapter, regardless of their different colophons.

Whatever its origin, it is clear that this seminal passage briefly detailing the nature and treatment of seven-born flesh circulated independently, probably as early as Guru Chöwang's own lifetime, and that its independent circulation was the result of a combination of revelation, editorial work, and/or authorship, likely on the part of Guru Chöwang himself, done in tandem with his literary efforts to redact his *Quintessential Assembly* revelations into formats most suited for performance and transmission. Most importantly, it would seem that Guru Chöwang's short passage constitutes in germinal form the basic textual source of Tibet's *maṇi*-pill tradition.

As for Ratna Lingpa, it is abundantly evident that a major impetus behind his Avalokiteśvara cycle was to reinvigorate the brahmin-flesh *maṇi*-pill tradition initiated by Guru Chöwang. He did so not only by narrating dreams, visions, and miracles demonstrating his close past-life connections with Guru Chöwang. He also excavated Treasures from several of Guru Chöwang's past Treasure sites, in which the teachings revealed share striking textual resonances that reflect the spatial symmetry of Guru Chöwang's and Ratna Lingpa's shared revelatory activity there. Most important for Ratna Lingpa in this regard were the locations of Samyé and Namkechen, key sites for his revelation of both brahmin flesh and associated rites.

The *Samyema*, revealed at Samyé by Ratna Lingpa a year before the *Secret Assembly tantra* was revealed at Namkechen, presents itself as a commentary on the seven-times brahmin-flesh passage of Guru Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly tantra*. Nonetheless, however, it also partially shifts the tradition to prefigure the tenth chapter of Ratna Lingpa's *Secret Assembly tantra* that would only surface the next year by incorporating key terms and images unique to the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One avant la lettre*. The *Samyema* means of accomplishment thus provides a pivotal vantage point midway in the

process of this crucial passage's transformation from Guru Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly* to Ratna Lingpa's *Secret Assembly*.

Notwithstanding several uncertainties that remain, a series of transformations, spanning the lifetimes of Guru Chöwang and Ratna Lingpa, nonetheless starts to come into view. To summarize the trajectory of this process:

- 1) The seminal passage on the seven-born flesh accomplishment in chapter six of the *Quintessential Assembly tantra* emerged as the product of Guru Chöwang's combined revelatory, editorial, and perhaps also authorial activity, as he revised and collated the *tantra's* sixth chapter in consultation with the *Source of All Aims* revelation.
- 2) Guru Chöwang excerpted the practice from the sixth chapter of the *tantra* to constitute its own stand-alone text.
- 3) Ratna Lingpa made efforts to reimagine Guru Chöwang's *maṇi*-pill tradition by:
  - a. revealing the *Samyema* commentary on Guru Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly* seven-born accomplishment rite from Samyé, where Guru Chöwang himself had earlier revealed his own *Source of All Aims*; and by
  - b. subtly shifting the language and imagery of this commentary to prefigure his own analogous revelation of the *Secret Assembly tantra* a year later.
- 4) Ratna Lingpa presented a lightly revised version of the Guru Chöwang accomplishment practice, whose nascent formation is already evident in the *Samyema*, by rebranding it as the tenth chapter of his newly revealed *tantra* of the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*, sourced in a conversation between Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara in an esoteric rendition of the pure land of Blissful called Great Bliss Lotus Array.
- 5) Ratna Lingpa's revelation reflects a revision of the language, imagery, and iconography of its source to accord with and accentuate further the pronounced tantric ethos of the rite.
- 6) Ratna Lingpa recontextualized it with several other revealed texts, cast in the authoritative voice of

Padmasambhava, such as a commentary, liturgy, iconographic cards, broader ritual framework, and mantra recitation guidelines, rendering it more easily practicable and transmittable.

- 7) Finally, given Ratna Lingpa's putative role in the compilation of what became the *Collected Tantras of the Nyingma School*, it is tempting to surmise that Ratna Lingpa himself could have had some role in presenting this *tantra* not as his own Treasure revelation, but as a work transmitted from India and translated into Tibetan by the Indian master Padmasambhava himself. However, without the confirmation of Ratna Lingpa's catalogue to his own collection, which has been lost in the intervening centuries, this suggestion remains only a tantalizing conjecture.

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

This consideration of Ratna Lingpa's fifteenth-century revelation and propagation of the Avalokiteśvara-focused seven-times-born-flesh *maṇi*-pill tradition has traced its origin to the life and legacy of the thirteenth-century Treasure revealer Guru Chökyi Wangchuk. Doing so has called for an assessment of the features of Guru Chöwang's *maṇi*-pill tradition in light of wider efforts to promote the cult of Avalokiteśvara in Tibet and the controversial reception of the pill in the fourteenth century, alongside a survey of Ratna Lingpa's personal involvement with Guru Chöwang's *maṇi*-pill tradition as narrated in his biographical corpus. This broader context has helped inform a comparative analysis of the overlapping *maṇi*-pill ritual oeuvres of these two Mahākāruṇika *yogins* from Lhodrak. The combination of cultural-historical and philological approaches in studying a range of polemical, narrative, and liturgical literature across the writings and revelations of two of the most illustrious Treasure revealers in Tibetan history has yielded several observations. Foremost among them is the picture it helps us paint of how and why Ratna Lingpa's *maṇi*-pill revelation came into being.

Based on the evidence presented here, Ratna Lingpa's *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One maṇi*-pill tradition came not only from Ratna Lingpa's unique visionary genius. Nor did it originate solely from his inheritance and careful editorial curatorship of Guru Chöwang's *maṇi*-pill-related texts. It was rather the product of a recursive and iterative process, in which ritual-contemplative practices centering on sacra triggered visions, dreams, and miracles, which led to the material excavation of flesh and bones of the Buddhist special dead,

along with Buddhist scriptures teaching ritual-contemplative practices centering on these sacra, whose implementation led in turn to further guiding visions, dreams, and miracles, and so on. This iterative loop of practices, visions, and revelations prompting more practices, visions, and revelations, and so on—in which textual redaction, transmission, pill manufacture, and collective ritual performance were equally important—is expressive of a recursive relationship with time, identity, and scriptural production that has implications for the process by which Guru Chöwang's and Ratna Lingpa's *maṇi*-pill writings were produced and received. For Ratna Lingpa in particular, this meant that revealing, redacting, editing, and contextualizing the components of the *maṇi*-pill tradition involved in equal measure visionary recollection and prophecy; scriptural citation, reuse, and revision; and the pragmatic mandate to make the practice viable and easily transmissible for the changing expectations of his contemporary peers, practitioners, and consumers. In this, the lines between scriptural revelation, curatorship, commentary, and authorship are blurred considerably, as are the boundaries between past, present, and future times and identities.<sup>119</sup>

In keeping with this recursive relationship between time and scriptural production, Ratna Lingpa's imperative to reinvigorate Guru Chöwang's *maṇi*-pill tradition, and the precise manner by which he did so, was also likely in no small measure influenced by the scathing criticisms it suffered throughout the fourteenth century. The polemical attacks in the *maṇi*-pill liturgy of Dölpopa Sherap Gyeltsen and the *Rejection of False Dharma* attributed to Butön Rinchen Drup, as presented above, give voice to a pronounced disquiet among Tibetan intellectuals active then about the flesh, the mantra, and the ritual of Guru Chöwang's *maṇi*-pill tradition. The critique of Dölpopa in particular, who took issue with the *maṇi*-pill consecration practice tradition after Guru Chöwang's passing, and especially its style of mantra recitation, could have given Ratna Lingpa the added impetus to contextualize his newly revealed version of the *maṇi*-pill ritual with texts that offer clearer guidelines on how to recite the mantra and perform the liturgy for his and future generations.

None of this, however, addresses the more fundamental question of why the *maṇi* pill was so important for Ratna Lingpa, Guru Chöwang before him, and huge swathes of the Tibetan populace up to the present period; and why, for that matter, it was also an object of such vehement opposition for others. Key to understanding the *maṇi* pill's enduring importance in Tibet is inquiring into the broader material

---

<sup>119</sup> For an excellent review of recent work in Buddhist Studies on intertextuality and textual reuse that analyzes cases for comparison, see Wallace 2016.



cultural context in which it has been practiced. How Ratna Lingpa went about his revival of Guru Chöwang's tradition—his blurring of boundaries between revelation, editorial curatorship, commentary, authorship, time, identity, etc.—offers clues into this material cultural context by raising the question of how the *maṇi* pill has more broadly functioned in the formation and maintenance of bonds, across a range of different registers.

This returns us to an issue broached in the introduction of this paper: whether the *maṇi* pill might function in Tibetan societies as a kind of kinship substance, whose shared consumption can reorder relationships according to an expanded sense of patrilineal descent and affinity. It was presented above how Ratna Lingpa's *maṇi*-pill tradition, and Guru Chöwang's before it, aggregate through narratives, rituals, and material compounds a particular sense of Tibetan ethnic identity, landscape, and history featuring shared affinity with Avalokiteśvara as the original father and enduring protector of Tibet and its people. When we pause to consider further how the *maṇi*-pill tradition also brings into play images and processes foregrounding procreation, reproduction, feeding, harvesting, cultivating, and other features of relatedness, the *maṇi* pill emerges as a significant example of how notions of kinship might be broadened with recourse to models of relatedness that are not limited to the familiar dichotomy of either biological procreation or socio-cultural code. Suggesting itself in this regard are currents in anthropological kinship studies introduced by the likes of David Schneider, Roy Wagner, Marilyn Strathern, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Janet Carsten, and Marshall Sahlins, among several others.<sup>120</sup> Though by no means homogenous in their aims and orientations, these scholars have shared a tendency to illustrate through specific case studies the co-constitution, porosity, or interanimation of material substance and code of conduct, nature and nurture/culture, biology and society and other structural pairs that have tended to be treated as mutually exclusive and distinct. How might the *maṇi* pill contribute to this direction of research?

Among this group of thinkers, I have found Sahlin's concept of "mutuality of being" and Carsten's work on blood and relationality to be particularly promising inroads for consideration. Sahlins argues that only by defining kinship broadly as " 'mutuality of being': people who are intrinsic to one another's existence—thus 'mutual person(s),' 'life itself,' 'intersubjective belonging,' 'transbodily being,' and the like,"

---

<sup>120</sup> The break from classic kinship theory was perhaps most famously articulated in Schneider 1984; it is summarized well with reference to subsequent developments in Sahlins 2013. Good examples of some of the directions taken based on this basic critique are Wagner 1977, Strathern 1988, Carsten 2000 and 2004, Sarah Franklin and Susan McKinnon 2001, and Viveiros de Castro 2009.

can we account for the “variety of ethnographically documented ways that kinship is locally constituted, whether by procreation, social construction, or some combination of these.”<sup>121</sup> Moreover, long before Sahlin's 2013 publication, Janet Carsten called for researchers to abandon preconceptions about what constitutes kinship to instead ask the question: “how do the people we study define and construct their notions of relatedness and what values and meanings do they give them?”<sup>122</sup> Carsten has since brought this question to bear on the issue of what constitutes kinship substance through a series of studies of blood and relationality. Carsten's work on blood has analyzed how it functions by way of conversion, transformation, and flow to form bonds between seemingly disparate discursive and physical elements, connecting, often in unpredictable and uncontainable ways, features of nature, culture, and society in hybrid networks of materiality and meaning.<sup>123</sup> She contends that functioning in a similar way are ghosts, money, and other such items whose intensive transaction, mercurial materiality, and heavily-laden metaphorical character cause them to gather associations as they flow through and connect a wide range of discursive and material domains.

Ratna Lingpa's *maṇi* pill also forms, expresses, or embodies relatedness, across space and time, on several different levels—materially, ritually, socially, and spiritually. Materially, it is significant that the *maṇi* pill and its main active ingredient—the flesh of a seven-times-born one—is consistently construed as a “*samaya* substance” (*dam rdzas*), a term than can be rendered as “oath,” “commitment,” or even “bond” substance. For the *maṇi*-pill tradition this means a few things. Most simply, it signals that the pill is first received and consumed together with oaths in the context of the tantric initiation performed at the culmination of the consecration ritual. The *samaya* oath incumbent upon those who receive and consume a *maṇi* pill is, in its most basic formulation, to observe the “training in Avalokiteśvara” by constantly reciting his seven-syllable mantra and benefiting beings by putting their welfare above one's own. While maintaining this oath would be no small feat, it is a far cry from the strict injunction to secrecy that more typically marks the reception and observation of tantric *samayas*.

However, a key implication of construing the *maṇi* pill as a *samaya* substance is that in eating it initiates are ingesting the embodiment of the *jñāna*, or wisdom, of Avalokiteśvara (along with all other buddhas and bodhisattvas). Jacob Dalton brilliantly outlines in his recent study of the early history of tantric Buddhist ritual manuals how *samaya*

---

<sup>121</sup> Sahlins 2013, 2.

<sup>122</sup> Carsten 1995, 236.

<sup>123</sup> Carsten 2001, 2011, 2013, 2019.

came to signal in Mahāyoga contexts a drop of seminal fluid—the “sacramental *bodhicitta*”—a metaphor for and a material embodiment of the “awakened mind” of all buddhas.<sup>124</sup> As “the culmination of sexual yoga in the context of both *sādhana* and initiation,” Dalton illustrates, it “embodied and instilled in its recipient an experience of awakening.”<sup>125</sup> Dalton explains further how imbibing the supreme *samaya* of *bodhicitta* occurs foremost at the finale of the secret initiation, when initiates consume the sexual fluids of the guru and consort in union, and imagine that it descends through their body to enter the lotus at the heart, thereby signaling union with the buddhas’ awakened wisdom.<sup>126</sup>

A similar dynamic is observable in the *maṇi*-pill liturgies presented in the appendices below. The ritual process, imagery, and governing ethos of the *maṇi*-pill ritual directly mimics the secret initiation of Mahāyoga as described by Dalton. And as witnessed in the narrative vignettes from Ratna Lingpa’s biographical corpus and the summaries of his and Guru Chöwang’s Treasure texts presented above, the pill can also include as ingredients the red and white sexual fluids, or *bodhicitta*, of past gurus such as Padmasambhava and his consorts, either separately, or as part of the “Dharma medicine” of the five-fold *amṛta*. Furthermore, in likewise promising that some can expect awakening immediately upon consuming it, the *maṇi* pill has been foundational for the conception of “liberation through tasting” (*myong grol*), an important facet of a broader stream of theory and practice in Tibet that proposes immediate awakening, at the apex of a range of other, more provisional medical and postmortem effects, through only sensory contact with particularly potent sensory objects.<sup>127</sup> Several of the texts in the appendices describe the *maṇi* pill of the seven-born flesh, sometimes alongside other techniques, as capable of granting the awakening of “buddhahood without practicing” (*ma bsgrubs sangs rgyas*), a variation on the expression “buddhahood without meditation” (*ma bsgoms sangs rgyas*) that more typically describes liberation through the senses practices.<sup>128</sup> In this and other ways the production and consumption of the *maṇi* pill can be seen as an adaptation and extension of the secret initiation into the public sphere of the Tibetan populace.

---

<sup>124</sup> Dalton 2023, 163. For more on the tantric notion of *bodhicitta* as seminal fluid, see also Dalton 2004.

<sup>125</sup> Dalton 2023, 163.

<sup>126</sup> Dalton 2023, 163–164.

<sup>127</sup> For more on liberation through the senses practices in Tibetan Buddhism, see Gayley 2007, and Gentry 2017 and 2019.

<sup>128</sup> For more on the promise of “buddhahood without meditation” and its connection with liberation through the senses, see Gentry 2017 and 2019.

Further in this vein, *maṇi*-pill rituals register a fundamental anatomical ambiguity that might also have implications for the pill's extension into broader contexts of usage. It can be witnessed in the *maṇi*-pill ritual texts included in the appendices that in addition to requiring initiates to imagine that the substance forever resides in the *heart* in the form of Mahākāruṇika and consort, as reflected in the Mahāyoga rituals featuring the *bodhicitta* drop studied by Dalton, *maṇi*-pill ritual texts also include the promise that whoever's *stomach* the pill touches will attain awakening, never part from Mahākāruṇika, or be reborn in his pure land. This shift from heart to stomach, and with it, from an imaginary location to a physiological one, might also have something to do with the extension of the *maṇi* pill's bond forming capacities beyond the strictly esoteric framework of the secret initiation, and into the more public physiological domains of medicine and alchemy.<sup>129</sup>

It might sound counterintuitive to speak of bond formation in a Buddhist context. It is, after all, the severance of the bonds of attachment that tie us to continuous uncontrolled rebirth in *saṃsāra* that stands out as the final goal of Buddhist practice. It has been well observed, however, that tantric Buddhist practice ideally transforms such bonds not by rejecting them, but by the formation of new bonds, bonds that closely mimic kinship ties and reproductive processes with the aim of recoding them with alternative awakened values.<sup>130</sup> In this, tantric practice aims to purify and transform such bonds, with the ultimate aim of gaining control over the process of death, rebirth, and re-death.<sup>131</sup>

It is helpful to recall in this connection that the term *tantra* (*rgyud*) itself means thread, continuity, and lineage, on both the spiritual and biological levels. Moreover, the tantric path begins with finding a guru, patterned after and referred to as a spiritual parent, whose initiation signals death to the initiate's previous identity and rebirth into a new family line of human gurus and awakened beings. The ritual mechanics of tantric initiation and the daily *sādhana* practice it permits are often patterned directly after the process of death, conception, gestation, and birth, replete with sexual and reproductive language and imagery. The secret initiation introduced above, second in what became a standard set of four initiations, in which the initiate consumes the sexual fluids of the parent guru and consort, is crucial to this process and its recoding of reproductive and associated kinship ties.

---

<sup>129</sup> I thank Jake Dalton for sharing this astute observation with me.

<sup>130</sup> Mills 2003, 124–126, 140.

<sup>131</sup> For traditional Tibetan presentations of how this dynamic is intended to function, see Jigme Lingpa, Patrul Rinpoche, Getse Mahapandita and Dharmachakra Translation Committee 2006, and Shechen Gyaltap IV and Kunkyen Tenpe Nyima 2012.

But when we trace back further the material constituency of the pill through conceiving of its relational, bond-forming capacities, another logic more connected with standard Mahāyāna thought and practice surfaces. It is the mind-body continuum of the seven-times-born bodhisattva—the *maṇi* pill's primary active ingredient—that serves as its most foundational bond. This bond is what enables bodily flesh to transform into a powerfully efficacious substance through the sustained practice of ethical conduct, in conjunction with the realization of indwelling wisdom, over the course of seven successive lives. Moreover, that this could only occur over the course of seven consecutive lifetimes, and no fewer, recalls pan-Indian *Dharmaśāstra* kinship and legal conceptions linking ancestral descent, purity of lineage, and inheritance that had been assimilated to Indian Buddhist contexts through the seven buddhas cult to form an important bridge between Vinaya and *dhāraṇī* literature and ritual.<sup>132</sup>

When we trace this bond back further still, moreover, it was the original oath of Avalokiteśvara in particular, binding him to forever serve all beings, even with the gift of his emanated body, that served as an important source of seven-born flesh for Ratna Lingpa and Guru Chöwang before him. The bodhisattva's altruistic vow set in motion the possibility for other would-be seven-born ones. Judging by the *samaya* incumbent upon its initiate-consumers, receiving and consuming the *maṇi* pill is clearly intended to produce a similar resolve, one that can only be as transformative as Avalokiteśvara's when it has likewise transmuted the body into a materialization of pure altruism. Here a gradualist Mahāyāna paradigm figures, but only awkwardly so, as the overall tantric framing also emphasizes Avalokiteśvara's radical and sudden transformational capacity, thus theoretically at least extending this possibility to consumers.

Moreover, the purity of ethically transformed flesh, indicated most conspicuously by the name of its paradigmatic exemplar, Avalokiteśvara's emanated brahmin called Stainless, or Stainless Essence, further illustrates that in the case at hand its formation into pills, consecration, and consumption are a close continuation of the Mahāyāna ethos of the bodhisattva. This theme of the flesh's purity is dominant even as the discourse of the seven-timer's flesh is sourced from the transgressive and antinomian injunctions of the *tantras*, and transgressive tantric valences continue to figure throughout. From a general Mahāyāna perspective, however, bodhisattvas, as buddhas in training, are called upon to perfect their physical bodies through the practice of ethical conduct, while the culmination of their training in generosity is marked by the ability to sacrifice their bodies to serve as sustenance

---

<sup>132</sup> Davidson 2015.

and medicine for those in need.<sup>133</sup> In a similar vein, the perfected bodies of buddhas and bodhisattvas serve after their demise as relics for the faithful, not only to commemorate them after their passing as exemplars of awakened activity and to help cultivate others toward that same end, but also to transmit transformational blessings through their ongoing presence in reliquary shrines.<sup>134</sup>

Temporally, preserving the continuity of ethical and contemplative training over the course of seven successive lifetimes, and recalling these past lifetimes with confidence, is another related iteration of the concept of bond and relationality that features in the *maṇi*-pill tradition. For Ratna Lingpa in particular, important in this regard was establishing an incarnational and kinship bond with Guru Chöwang by understanding himself as a reincarnation of his son Pema Wangchen. Recall how in Ratna Lingpa's narration of his revelation of the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* he publicly authenticated his identity as the reincarnation of Guru Chöwang's son Pema Wangchen on the eve of this revelation through a display of miracles in which relics were produced from a statue of Padmasambhava. Publicly demonstrating this important link with Guru Chöwang, and by means of nothing other than the miraculous manifestation of bodily relics, was evidently what secured for him the authority to reveal this Treasure cycle and redact it as a close continuation of Guru Chöwang's previous *maṇi*-pill ritual. It also enabled everyone connected with the pill, either through manufacture, consecration, distribution, or consumption, to connect through it to the golden age of the Tibetan empire, beginning with Songtsen Gampo *cum* Avalokiteśvara's foundation of the Tibetan empire and initial patronage of Buddhism, up to when Padmasambhava brought the flesh to Tibet, hid it throughout the landscape, and prophesied which members of the imperial court would reveal which Treasure caches, where, and when.

Ratna Lingpa and Guru Chöwang's incarnational kinship bond was no doubt prefigured by their regional territorial bond as fellow natives of Lhodrak. Ratna Lingpa likely grew up steeped in the Lhodrak Treasure-revealing culture of Guru Chöwang, who, for his part, had been inspired by another fellow Lhodrak Treasure-revealing native before him, Nyangrel Nyima Özer.<sup>135</sup> That Lhodrak was home to three generations of the most influential Treasure revealers in Tibetan history permits us to speak of this region as one of the most important cultural

---

<sup>133</sup> For more on the bodhisattva's bodily transformation through Buddhist training and the associated narrative traditions of giving the perfected body to bring benefit to beings, see Mroczek 2007 and Ohnuma 2007, respectively.

<sup>134</sup> Martin 1992, 1994; Trainor 1997; Germano and Trainor 2004.

<sup>135</sup> For Guru Chöwang's relationship with Nyangrel, see Phillips 2004 and Hirshberg 2016, 2017.

zones for the Treasure tradition as a whole—a veritable Treasure-culture heartland. Moreover, in addition to Lhodrak serving as the site of concealment and revelation of the flesh and its associated texts, some of the botanical ingredients used in the pill, such as *thar nu* and *rtag ngu*, were likely harvestable locally in Lhodrak, just as they are today.<sup>136</sup> Pill manufacture, like pill revelation, thus deepened relationships between the landscape, Treasure revealers, ritual experts, and wider public of the Lhodrak region. And yet, despite the centrality of Lhodrak in these developments, the relationships formed there between place, person, and pill were also clearly transposable across regions, as the popularity of the *maṇi* pill of Lhodrak spread throughout all of Tibet, despite its detractors.

As outlined above, Ratna Lingpa's incarnational and regional ties to Guru Chöwang and Lhodrak went hand in hand with the formation of close textual and ritual bonds to Guru Chöwang's earlier *maṇi*-pill tradition. Ratna Lingpa was compelled to rejuvenate Guru Chöwang's tradition for new audiences through excavating a revelation of his own. Yet, to strike the appropriate balance between timeliness and tradition—to in effect form new bonds without breaching old ones—Ratna Lingpa's revelation reused, revised, and recontextualized Guru Chöwang's *maṇi*-pill tradition through a process that involved a combination of visions, revelations, editorial work, authorship, pill manufacture, and contemplative and ritual practice.

The collective practice of the *maṇi*-pill tradition was crucial for forming another bond: the socio-religious bond connecting Avalokiteśvara, as the patron bodhisattva of Tibet, to Tibetans as a people, and through the bodhisattva's flesh, to one another as well. Despite its critics, in the century preceding Ratna Lingpa's revelation, the *maṇi* pill was by all indications a very popular ritual tradition with an overwhelmingly collective dimension. Its wide appeal can be attributed in part to the pill's function as a body-speech-mind amalgam—a composite of potent bodily flesh, mantra, and contemplative mastery—worked into and through the body by means of repeated collective ritual performances culminating with consumption. Simply put, in eating the *maṇi* pill, consumers are personally incorporating the material concentrate of Avalokiteśvara's altruistic salvific and healing power, a composite of his body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities. And they are doing it together! Distributing the pill widely to all sectors of Tibetan society enables consumers from all walks of life to join in Avalokiteśvara's being and his collective identity with Tibet and Tibetans, just as it defines for Tibetans proper ethical comportment with respect to one another. As witnessed in the Dölpopa critique in particular, this

---

<sup>136</sup> Karma chos 'phel 1993, 205–207, 406–411.

collective sense of bond in Tibet links the fortunes of Tibet and its people with the appropriateness, legitimacy, or ethical value of their collective practices. With the welfare of the Tibetan people hanging in the balance, promoting the consumption and assimilation of Avalokiteśvara's body—a body of compassion, replete with beneficial power, and prepared with knowledge—can be seen as a way to promote the social and religious bonds necessary to secure and maintain the public good. What better way to ensure the collective benefit of beings in this degenerate age than to have them embody and train in the ideal of Avalokiteśvara's impartial and boundless compassion, a course of conduct inaugurated by sharing in his flesh?

Finally, it should not be overlooked that eating the pill promises postmortem effects above all—its consumption forms a future-life bond with a pure land, ensuring immediate rebirth in either Sukhāvati or Potalaka. From the springboard of the pure land, beings can then be assured of reaching the ultimate goal of complete awakening, characterized by stainless and immutable “great bliss.” This future-oriented pure-land ethos has implications for the *maṇi* pill's ostensive medicinal profile. As a pill that incorporates substance such as *thar nu*, *rtag ngu*, and other materials in common use in Tibetan medicine, alongside the charged flesh of the special dead, the *maṇi* pill could, we might imagine, be oriented also toward ameliorating physical conditions in this lifetime, and not just preparing for the next. And indeed, in the earlier tradition of Guru Chöwang's *maṇi*-pill tradition, particularly in the pill-rituals staged by one its main propagators in the fourteenth century, Pang Khenchen Özer Lama, the *maṇi* pill is sometimes used explicitly for healing and other this-worldly aims, although otherworldly and ultimate soteriological aims are often mentioned in tandem.<sup>137</sup> This pure-land orientation also has implications for the *maṇi* pill's seemingly contradictory promise to grant awakening instantly upon eating it. What point are its potential postmortem effects if it is supposed to deliver awakening right here and now? Fundamental to the *maṇi* pill is its encapsulation of these tensions between the pragmatic and the soteriological, the this-worldly and the other-worldly, sudden awakening and gradual awakening, and more.

This examination of the *maṇi*-pill tradition has amply illustrated that *maṇi* pills indeed do function much like blood as a kind of fluid kinship substance, flowing, both materially and discursively, across the porous membranes between body and mind, nature and nurture, individual and society, this world and the next, the mundane and the ultimate to bring about conversions and transformations across these

---

<sup>137</sup> In addition to this figure's biography, mentioned briefly above, see also Özer Lama's *Ril bu thab bzang*, in Ratna gling pa. 2014a, vol. 3, 625–630.



and other domains. This blurring of boundaries between what counts as material substance, on the one hand, and socio-cultural code, on the other, has ramifications not only for what constitutes kinship. It also raises questions about the strict demarcation between the material and the socio-cultural in other domains, such as Tibetan medicine, for instance, and Buddhist ritual, among others. It also brings into focus the function of *maṇi* pills to galvanize and embody a particular cultural formation of Tibetan identity, one premised on the mutual interrelationship between Tibetan ethnicity, landscape, history, geopolitical integrity, and the bodhisattva of compassion Avalokiteśvara and his pure land, in this world and the next. The cultural force of encapsulating this cluster of ideas, materials, and practices into a single pill might go a long way toward explaining why Ratna Lingpa revived the *maṇi*-pill tradition in the fifteenth century and it continues to thrive to this day.

## Appendices

### Literary Sources for the Study of the *Maṇi*-Pill Tradition in Tibet

The following nine appendices present Tibetan editions and English translations of six texts, in multiple versions, that have served as foundational literary sources of the *maṇi*-pill tradition in Tibet. Appendices I-IV are drawn exclusively from Guru Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*. Appendices I and II each present Tibetan and English together, whereas Appendix III is the Tibetan edition and Appendix IV its English translation. Appendix V is a comparative edition of multiple versions of the text discussed above that appears with several variations in both Guru Chöwang's *Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* and Ratna Lingpa's *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*. Appendices VI and VII are a Tibetan edition and English translation, respectively, of a text found only in Ratna Lingpa's *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*. It cites nearly in its entirety the text presented in Appendix V, sometimes according to Guru Chöwang's version and sometimes according to Ratna Lingpa's version. To register this variant intertextuality in the Tibetan edition of Appendix VI, the words and phrases found only in Guru Chöwang's version are underlined and the words and phrases found only in Ratna Lingpa's version are in bold typeface. Appendices VIII and IX are a Tibetan edition and English translation, respectively, of a text found only in Ratna Lingpa's *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* which cites the texts in Appendix V, but with much greater fidelity to Ratna Lingpa's version. Each Tibetan edition is preceded by a list of the versions consulted and their designated sigla. Variant

readings are recorded negatively, that is, only readings not selected for inclusion in the corresponding edition are noted, unless the variation is significant enough to warrant special mention. The symbols + and – are used to signal when a given reading constitutes an “addition” to (+) or a “subtraction” from (–) what appears in the corresponding edition.

## Appendix I

*The History of the Sage Stainless Essence*  
*Drang srong dri med snying po'i lo rgyus*  
 Tibetan Text and English Translation

Edition: *Drang srong dri med snying po'i lo rgyus* (Gu ru chos dbang, date unknown, *Thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa*, pdf. 455–457).

thugs rje chen po la phyag 'tshal lo:

Homage to the Great Compassionate One!

drang srong dri med snying po 'di:  
 thugs rje chen po'i yang sprul yin:  
 bram ze skye bdun nges par brgyud:  
 skye ba tha ma lnga brgya thub:

This sage Stainless Essence  
 is a re-emanation of the Great Compassionate One.  
 He has surely passed consecutively through seven lifetimes as a brahmin.  
 In his final birth he lived for 500 [years].

de bar rig pa'i gnas lnga 'byongs:  
 bal yul yang bur sku 'das pas:  
 spur ni dum bu lngar bgos te:

During that time, he mastered the five fields of knowledge.  
 When he passed away in Yangbu, in the land of Nepal.  
 his corpse was divided into five pieces.

bi ma la mi tras phyag g.yas khyer:  
 rgya gar yul du slar log go:

Vimalamitra carried away his right arm

and returned to the land of India.

phyag g.yon ha shang tsan hes khyer:  
rgya nag yul du 'gro don 'phel:

Heshang Tsenhe (Chin. Jianhe?) carried away his left arm  
and multiplied the benefit of beings in the land of China.

rkang g.yas mnga' bdag phyag tu phul:

His right leg was offered to the sovereign.

rkang g.yon nam snang thugs kar sbas:

His left leg was hidden in the heart of the Vairocana [statue].

rgal tshigs nang rol bcas pa la:  
u rgyan bsgrubs te de nyid du:  
'gro don rgya chen de tshe 'grub:

With the spine, and the internal organs,  
the master of Uddiyāna performed accomplishment,  
and right there and then, vast benefit for beings was brought about.

dbu dang thugs la lo gcig bsgrub:  
ril bu'i gter kha bcu gsum sbas:  
'di ni thugs kyi ril bu ste:  
phyi rabs las can don du sbas:

With the head and heart, he performed accomplishment for one year.  
He hid thirteen Treasure caches of pills.  
This, the pill of his heart,  
was hidden for the sake of the karmically destined in future genera-  
tions.

'di nyid las can rnyed pa'i tshe:  
man ngag bzhin du lo gcig gam:  
zla ba gsum du bsgrub ste gso:  
de nas 'gro don ci 'phel bya:  
the tshom can la mi byon no:

When the karmically destined discover this  
they should revive it by performing accomplishment with it  
for one year or three months, according to the pith instructions.

Then they should multiply it as much as possible for the benefit of beings.

It will not come into the possession of doubters.

ril bu su yi ltor reg pa:  
thams cad 'phos te byang chub thob:

Everyone whose stomach the pill touches  
will transfer and attain awakening.

bkra shis:

Auspicious!

e ma ho:  
bram ze dri med sha ril de:  
su zhig sprod cing tshangs de nyid:  
smon lam tha ma'i grub thob yin:

Emaho!

Whoever gives and fills others with  
the pill of the brahmin Stainless's flesh  
is a siddha who has [fulfilled] their final resolve.

thugs rje chen po'i dkyil 'khor du:  
'di bsgrub thugs rjes bsnyen bsgrub pa:  
bdag gzhan 'gro don rgya chen 'grub:  
phyi ma bde ba can du skye:

Those who accomplish this, performing the *mantra* approach with  
compassion

in the *maṇḍala* of the Great Compassionate One,  
will bring about vast benefit for themselves and others.  
They will be reborn in Sukhāvati in their future lives.

'di yi ya mtshan rtags mchog ni:  
zos thog bshal na sdig sgrib chung:  
nan tan byed na lan gsum btang:  
lan gsum gyis yang ma dag na:  
zla gcig thugs rje chen po bsgrub:  
de ni nges par buddha brnyen:

The supreme sign of its wonder

is that if [your bowels are] purged upon eating it, negative deeds and obscurations diminish.

If you [must] persist, administer it three times.

If you are still not purified even after three times, practice the Great Compassionate One for a month.

With this you will surely attain buddhahood.

sa ma ya gu hye:

samaya guhye

gu ru chos dbang gi khyad chos:  
las ldan khams pa la gnang ba e ma ho:

This is a special Dharma of Guru Chöwang given to the karmically destined Khampa. Emaho!

bdag rgyal sing ge'i khyad chos ithi: bkra shis:

This was a special Dharma of I, king Siṃha.<sup>138</sup> ithi. Auspicious!

gnyis zhus so

Copied twice.

## Appendix II

*The Source of All Aims:*

*The Collection of Rites*

*from the Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*

*(or Pith Instructions: The Source of All Aims)*

*Thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa'i las tshogs dgos pa kun 'byung*  
Tibetan Text and English Translation

Edition: *Thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa'i las tshogs dgos pa kun 'byung* (Guru Chos kyi dbang phyug, *Thugs chen yang snying 'dus pa'i chos skor*, 381–402, Paro Bhutan: Kyichu Temple, 1982, 1 v., 382.1–385.1)

<sup>138</sup> King Siṃha, otherwise known as Siṃha Śrī, was construed by Guru Chöwang to be one of his previous incarnations as a king of Zahor (Hirshberg 2017, 68 and 73).

thugs rje chen po phyag 'tshal lo:

Homage to the Great Compassionate One!

man ngag dgos pa kun 'byung las:  
 bram ze skye bdun la sogs te:  
 chos ldan skye bdun sha dag la:  
 bla med byang chub bsgrub pa spyad:

From *Pith Instructions: The Source of All Aims*,  
 the seven-born brahmin and so forth, are as follows:  
 partaking of the flesh of one born seven times with the Dharma  
 accomplishes unexcelled awakening.

de yang chos ldan skye bdun des:  
 mi yi skye ba bdun po dran:  
 thugs rje'i dbang gis<sup>139</sup> nga yin smra:  
 de yi sha blangs legs par skams:

As for that, those born seven times with the Dharma  
 should recall seven lifetimes as human,  
 and acknowledge, "I am by the power of compassion."  
 Take their flesh and dry it well.

skye bdun sha chen sran tshad la:  
 gzang drug gla rtsi a mR ta:  
 sman dang 'bras phyed phul dang sbyar:  
 grub thob sha chen rtag tu ngu:

With a pea-size chunk of great seven-born flesh,  
 mix in a hand-full each of the six excellent substances,<sup>140</sup> musk, *amṛta*,

<sup>139</sup> emend. gi

<sup>140</sup> The six excellent substances are 1) nutmeg/mace/jasmine, 2) bamboo pith/ manna/ silica, 3) saffron, 4) cloves, 5) large cardamon, and 6) small cardamon (*dzA ti snying hi bzang po/ cu gang glo ba'i bzang po/ gur gum mchin pa'i bzang po/ li shi srog rtsa'i bzang po/ smug(=sug) smel mkhal ma'i bzang po/ ka lo la mtsher pa'i bzang po bcas drug/*). Interestingly, four of the six—nutmeg, saffron, large cardamon, and small cardamom—are phonetic renderings of the Sanskrit terms *jāṭī*, *kuṅkuma*, *sūkṣmailā*, and, *kākoli*, respectively; whereas of the two remaining substances, bamboo pith and cloves, the former, *cu gang* in Tibetan, is likely a phonetic rendering of the Chinese *zhú shēng* (竹筴, Tib. *cu gang*), as the Sanskrit is *vaṅśa rocanā*; and the latter, *li shi* in Tibetan, seems like a phonetic rendering from Chinese, but the Chinese for cloves is typically *dīng xiāng* (丁香). The Sanskrit for *li shi* is *lavaṅga*, leaving no clear and obvious corollary. As for the grouping of *bzang po drug*, or *bzang drug*,

medicine, and rice flour.

[Include also] the great flesh of a siddha and *rtag tu ngu*.<sup>141</sup>

de rnams legs sbyar ril bu yang :  
 sran tshad bye snyed bum par blug:  
 yang snying 'dus pa'i dal dbus bzhag:  
 gzungts thag lnga'i ji snyed gdags:

Mix these together, then form pills,  
 the size of a pea, as many as there are grains of sand, and put them in  
 a vase.

Place it at the center of the *Quintessential Assembly maṇḍala*.

Fasten to it as many as five *dhāraṇī* cords.

ji srid bzungts 'dzin mang na mchog:  
 rang khang gsum rim dbub la bzhag:  
 dkyil 'khor sgrub mchod gzhung bzhin bya:

The more who hold the *dhāraṇī* cord the better.

Erect a three-tier structure for its own enclosure and place it inside.

Perform *maṇḍala* accomplishment service according to the liturgy.

de nas ril bu'i dgos sgrub kyang :  
 yang snying 'dus pa'i rgyud bzhin bya:  
 lar ba rtsa ba'i bsgrub thabs ni:  
 lho brag mkhar chur bsdams/sbas pa yis:  
 rgyud dang sgrub thabs bzhin shes so:

Then, for the essential accomplishment of the pills,  
 perform it according to the *tantra* of the *Quintessential Assembly*.  
 Generally, the foundational means of accomplishment

---

it only appears twice, as *bzang drug*, in translated Tibetan canonical literature (of the sDe dge canon): once in the *Kangyur*, in the *tantra* D458; and once in the *Tengyur*, in the very short medical text D3043. This could suggest a Tibetan or Chinese provenance for this grouping.

<sup>141</sup> Dga' ba'i rdo rje (2002, 279–280) lists *rtag tu ngu* and *rtag ngu* as alternative names for 'od ldan, and identifies it as *Saxifraga egregia*, or *Saxifragaceae*. Karma chos 'phel (1993, 406–411) also identifies *rtag ngu* as another name for 'od ldan, but alternatively identifies it as *Drosera peltata* Smith var. *Inuata* (Buch.-Ham) C.B. Clarke): ming gzhan/ bdud rtsi 'od ldan dang / rtag tu ngu / 'od ldan rgyal po/ bcud ldan rgyal po sogs zer/. Karma chos 'phel states there are five kinds, all of which grow in Lho brag. It mostly grows in places with grassy meadows and high humidity, such as Lho brag mkhar chu, Kong po'i sa khul, sMan gling, sPo yul, and other such places. It is also used in *bcud len*, even by Ratna gling pa himself. *Drosera* is more commonly called “shield sundew” or “pale sundew.”

is according to the *tantra* and means of accomplishment  
that was concealed at Kharchu, Lhodrak.

de ltar ril bu bsgrub tshar nas:  
'gro ba gzhan don byed pa'i tshe:  
gdul bya'i snod ni sbyangs bdag gces:  
de gang zhe na gong bzhin du:

Once the accomplishment of the pills is done,  
when acting for the welfare of other beings,  
purify the disciple-vessels and cherish them more than oneself.  
If you wonder how, do as before:

dkyil 'khor sgrub rdzas legs bshams te:  
zhag bdun nyer gcig kha gso te:  
gdul bya rnams la khros kyang bya:  
tshogs kyi 'khor lo dus drug bskor:

Arrange well the *maṇḍala* and accomplishment substances,  
and restore [the practice] for seven or twenty-one days.  
Bathe the disciples.  
Turn the wheel of communal feast during the six times.

om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ:  
yig bdun bzlas pa rgyun mi bchad:  
skabs su skye bdun sngags kyi<sup>142</sup> gso:  
arapacamita hṛdaya svāhā:

om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ—  
recite these seven-syllables without interruption.  
On occasion restore the seven-born with the mantra  
arapacamita hṛdaya svāhā

sngags re bzlas bzhin ril bu rnams:  
thugs rje chen po zhi tsher bsam:

While reciting each mantra,  
vividly imagine that the pills are the Great Compassionate One.

sgrub tshar bum dbang 'dis skur te:  
om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ:  
padma tathāgata abhiṣiṅca hrīḥ āḥ:

---

<sup>142</sup> emend. kyi



When the accomplishment is finished, confer the vase initiation with this:

om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ  
padma tathāgata abhiṣiṅca hrīḥ āḥ

de nas ril bu ltor gtor tshe:  
gdul bya'i snying dbus zla ba'i steng:  
ril bu thugs rje dngos byon bzhugs:  
bsam zhing dam tshig bsrung ba ni:

Then, when dispensing the pills, imagine that the pills are actually the Great Compassionate One, who enters and abides at the center of disciples' hearts on a moon disk. Thinking such, the commitment to be observed is as follows:

om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ:  
de nyid bzlas brjod rgyun mi bcad:  
bdag bas gzhan gces 'gro ba'i don  
thugs rje chen po'i bslab pa bsrungs:

Reciting without interruption that very om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ, and cherishing others more than oneself for the benefit of beings is the training of the Great Compassionate One to be observed.

ril bu su yi ltor song tshad:  
spyen ras gzigs dang 'bral mi srid:  
'phags pa'i sprul dngos dang 'phrad par shog:

Everyone in whose stomach a pill falls will never part from Avalokiteśvara. May it meet with an actual emanation of the Noble One.

syam: myam: yyam:  
rgya rgya rgya:

[General colophon of *Source of All Aims* (pdf 402): lho brag gter ston chos kyi dbang phyug gis: bsam yas arya pa lo'i gling nas: bse sgrom ston pa'i nang nas byon pa'i: shog ser la lan gsum zhu thug byas: de rjes lho brag mkhar chu dpal gyis phug rings nas thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa'i chos skor gter nas gdan drangs pa'i las tshogs su bsgrigs pa lags par gda'o: dge'o:]

[This came from inside the leather box (*bse sgrom*) revealed from Aryapalo temple at Samyé (bSam yas arya pa lo'i gling) by the Treasure revealer from Lhodrak, Chökyi Wangchuk (Lho brag Chos kyi dbang phyug). The yellow scroll was copyedited three times. Later it was arranged in the *Collection of Rites* of the *Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* Dharma cycle that had been brought forth as Treasure from Pelgyi Pukring, in Kharchu, Lhodrak (Lho brag mkhar chu dpal gyi phug rings). Virtue!]

### Appendix III

*sKye bdun sha bsgrub,*  
in *Thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa'i las tshogs bdun pa*  
Tibetan Edition

Sigla Editions

- P *Thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa'i las tshogs bdun pa* (Guru Chos kyi dbang phyug, *Thugs chen yang snying 'dus pa'i chos skor*, Paro Bhutan: Kyichu Temple, 1982, 189.3–196.5)
- A *Thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa'i las tshogs bdun* (Guru Chos dbang, *Thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa*, date unknown, BDR # W8LS16401, pdf. 326–331.7)

om maṇi pad me hūm hrīḥ

thugs rje chen po yang<sup>143</sup> snying 'dus pa'i las tshogs:

skye bdun sha bsgrub pa'i<sup>144</sup> rim<sup>145</sup> pa la bdun te:

[1] dang po skye bdun brtags pa dang :

[2] ril bu sbyar thabs dang :

[3] bsgrub pa'i thabs dngos dang :

---

<sup>143</sup> yongs A

<sup>144</sup> kyi P

<sup>145</sup> rims P

[4] dngos grub blang<sup>146</sup> ba dang :

[5] gzhan don<sup>147</sup> bya ba dang :

[6] dgos kyi dam tshig dang :

[7] dgos ched yon tan dang bcas pa'o:

[1] dang po skye bdun<sup>148</sup> brtags pa'i rims pa ni:

rgyud las:

brtags pa skye bdun gang yin des:  
mi yi skye ba<sup>149</sup> bdun po dran:

zhes<sup>150</sup> pas:

'dir ni chos ldan skye ba bdun pa dgos ste: chos ldan skye ba bdun pa  
yin phan chad<sup>151</sup> thugs rje'i<sup>152</sup> dbang gis<sup>153</sup> nga ni skye ba bdun pa'o:  
nga'i sha la sems can gang<sup>154</sup> sus longs spyod<sup>155</sup> tshad sangs rgya<sup>156</sup>  
bar 'gyur ro: zhes lung yang ston pas:

de'i ro blangs te<sup>157</sup> sha rnam legs par bskam:

khyad par du snying dang klad pa med du mi rung<sup>158</sup> ngo<sup>159</sup>:

[2] gnyis pa ril bu sbyar thabs ni:

rgyud las:

---

<sup>146</sup> blangs A

<sup>147</sup> + du P

<sup>148</sup> + la A

<sup>149</sup> – ba P

<sup>150</sup> ces A

<sup>151</sup> + : A

<sup>152</sup> + chen po'I A

<sup>153</sup> gi A, P

<sup>154</sup> + gis A

<sup>155</sup> spyad P

<sup>156</sup> rgyal P, sangs rgya A

<sup>157</sup> + : A

<sup>158</sup> rungs A

<sup>159</sup> – ngo A

skye bdun sha ni<sup>160</sup> sran tshad la<sup>161</sup>:

zhes<sup>162</sup> pas:

snying dang klad pa yin na sran tshad<sup>163</sup>: byin po bya'i<sup>164</sup> sgong gang  
ni phabs<sup>165</sup> kyi tshul: phrod kyi skyobs<sup>166</sup> sbyor du<sup>167</sup> bzang<sup>168</sup> po<sup>169</sup>  
drug: gla rtsi: a mR ta: grub thob sha chen sngo rtag tu ngu: 'bras kyi  
phye de rnams phul gang tshad du sbyar ro<sup>170</sup>:

rgyud las kyang :

rgyal rigs bu chung<sup>171</sup> bya rgod sha:<sup>172</sup>  
yod par gyur na skyobs su btang :<sup>173</sup>

ces pa ni:

mkha' spyod bsgrub na rgyal rigs skye ba bdun pa'i sha dang :<sup>174</sup>  
bya rgod mgo snying 'byar ba'i thabs rgyud gzhan nas gsal:<sup>175</sup>

'dir bla med byang chub bsgrub pa la yod na'ang skyobs yin: med  
na'ang ched du btsal<sup>176</sup> mi dgos pa'i tshig go:

yang rgyud las:

sbyor thabs des<sup>177</sup> 'dres rdzogs par sbyar<sup>178</sup>:

---

<sup>160</sup> ril A

<sup>161</sup> las A

<sup>162</sup> ces A

<sup>163</sup> - : P

<sup>164</sup> byil A, bye P

<sup>165</sup> phab A

<sup>166</sup> - skyobs A

<sup>167</sup> + btang A

<sup>168</sup> bzangs A

<sup>169</sup> - po A

<sup>170</sup> - ro A

<sup>171</sup> + kyang P

<sup>172</sup> + dang : bya rgod mgo snying sbyor ba'i thabs rgyud gzhan na gsal: P

<sup>173</sup> missing this line P

<sup>174</sup> missing this line P

<sup>175</sup> displaced above, see note 30 P

<sup>176</sup> rtsal P

<sup>177</sup> de'i A

<sup>178</sup> sbyangs P

zhes<sup>179</sup> pa ni: skye bdun ril<sup>180</sup> sran tshad re dang : sman dang : 'bras  
 phye phul gang sbyar ba de bzhin no:<sup>181</sup> sha thams cad la<sup>182</sup> des 'dres  
 bas: de ltar bsres nas sbru ba'i chu ni:

dge 'dun mgo nas<sup>183</sup> mtshal chu<sup>184</sup> legs g.yu<sup>185</sup> thon pa la bskos te:  
 bdu<sup>186</sup> ba'i khu bas sbrus te<sup>187</sup>: ril bu sran ma<sup>188</sup> 'bring po tsam re<sup>189</sup>  
 grangs bye ma<sup>190</sup> snyed<sup>191</sup> sogs<sup>192</sup> grangs med du byas<sup>193</sup> la bskam ste:  
 bum pa bzang po bkang ste: dar dmar pos bkab ste:<sup>194</sup> dkyil 'khor dbus  
 su bkod<sup>195</sup>: dar khang gsum rim su dbub<sup>196</sup>:

[3] gsum pa bsgrub pa'i thabs dngos la drug ste:

[3.1] rnal 'byor pa du<sup>197</sup> bsgrub pa dang :

[3.2] bsgom bya'i ting 'dzin dang :

[3.3] bzlas pa'i snying po dang :

[3.4] ril bu grub pa'i brtags dang :

[3.5] snod<sup>198</sup> sbyong tshe'i snying po gdags pa dang :

[3.6] snod dag pa'i rtags so:

[3.1] dang po rnal 'byor pa du<sup>199</sup> bsgrub pa ni:

---

179 ces A

180 tshil A

181 – no: P

182 – la P

183 na P

184 mtshal chu P

185 g.yul P

186 brdung P

187 la P

188 tshad P

189 + re P

190 ma A

191 + tsam P

192 tshogs P

193 sbyar P

194 - bkang ste: dar dmar pos bkab ste: P

195 dgod P

196 dbug go P

197 emend. dus A, P

198 gnod P

199 emend. rnal 'byor dus A, P

rgyud las:

rnal 'byor lnga yis<sup>200</sup> gzungs thag bzung :  
ji srid bzungs<sup>201</sup> 'dzin mang na mchog:

ces pas:

dkiyl 'khor<sup>202</sup> gyi phyogs bzhir gzungs<sup>203</sup> thag bzhi la gsung mi chad<sup>204</sup>  
re re gzugs<sup>205</sup>: slob dpon gyis<sup>206</sup> gzungs thag bzung<sup>207</sup> te lngas bya  
ba'am: ji srid du gzungs<sup>208</sup> 'dzin mang na shis pa ste: bsgrub mched  
rnams bzhi bzhis thun kha re re<sup>209</sup> bzlas<sup>210</sup> ste: pad ma gsung<sup>211</sup> bsgrub  
pa yin phyir bzlas pa la 'bas par bya'o:

[3.2] bsgom bya'i ting nge 'dzin ni:

rgyud las:

thugs rje cher bsgom<sup>212</sup> dmigs pa ni:  
ril bu re re dag la yang :  
thugs rje chen po'i sku<sup>213</sup> rdzogs bsam:

zhes pas:

spyir yang snying 'dus pa'i bsnyen khog nas phyung ba:<sup>214</sup> 'di dag las  
tshogs bsgyur ba yin pas: sgrub<sup>215</sup> pa po du yod rnams rang rang thugs  
rje chen por bsgom la thugs ka'i<sup>216</sup> 'od zer yar 'phros: bde bar<sup>217</sup> gshegs

---

<sup>200</sup> emend. yi A, P

<sup>201</sup> emend. gzung A, P

<sup>202</sup> dal A

<sup>203</sup> bzung P

<sup>204</sup> 'chad P

<sup>205</sup> gzug A, gzugs P

<sup>206</sup> emend. gyis A, P

<sup>207</sup> emend. bzungs A, P

<sup>208</sup> bzung P

<sup>209</sup> – re P

<sup>210</sup> bzung P

<sup>211</sup> gsang A

<sup>212</sup> sgom P

<sup>213</sup> skur P

<sup>214</sup> – ba in phyung ba A, pyir yongs snying bsgrub pa'i bsnyen sgrub chen mo'i bsgrub  
khog nas phyung ba: P

<sup>215</sup> bsgrub P

<sup>216</sup> kha'i P

<sup>217</sup> – bar P

pa<sup>218</sup> mchod: mar 'phros 'gro drug gi las sgrub sbyangs te: tshur 'dus<sup>219</sup>  
ril bu'i tshogs la thim<sup>220</sup> pas: ril bu bye snyed re re la yang: thugs rje  
chen po re re bsam par bya'o:

[3.3] bzlas pa'i snying po ni:

rgyud las:

yang<sup>221</sup> snying 'di bzlas bsgrub par bya:  
om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ:  
arapacamita<sup>222</sup> hr̥daya svāhā:

zhes<sup>223</sup> bzlas shing bsgrub po:

[3.4] grub pa'i rtags ni:

ril bu'i bum pa las 'od byung da dang : yang na bsgrub gnas  
su<sup>224</sup> 'ja' 'od 'bar ba dang : ril bu la du ba dang sgra snyan pa dang :<sup>225</sup>  
dri zhim pa yang 'byung ngo:

rgyud las kyang :

'od dang du ba sgra dang dri:

ces pas:

lha dang lha mo'i gzugs mthong ba'am<sup>226</sup>: lhas<sup>227</sup> char gyi rgyun 'bebs  
pa'am: bum pa'i 'bru kha 'bus te skye ba dang : me tog gi char pa  
dang : 'jig rten<sup>228</sup> dge ba'i ltas<sup>229</sup> bkra shis pa dang de<sup>230</sup> gang mthong  
yang rung ngo:<sup>231</sup>

---

<sup>218</sup> – pa P

<sup>219</sup> – 'dus P

<sup>220</sup> thims P

<sup>221</sup> yongs P

<sup>222</sup> arapacamiti P

<sup>223</sup> ces: P

<sup>224</sup> – su P

<sup>225</sup> – pa dang : A

<sup>226</sup> ba A

<sup>227</sup> lha yi A

<sup>228</sup> – 'jig rten P

<sup>229</sup> las P

<sup>230</sup> de dag P, dang de A

<sup>231</sup> dge ba'i las bkra shis pa de dag gang byung kyang rung: gang mthong kyang rung  
ngo : P

[3.5] de nas<sup>232</sup> gdul bya'i snod<sup>233</sup> sbyong<sup>234</sup> phyir tshe'i snying po gdags pa ni:

rgyud las:

om āḥ hūm svāhā:  
mūm lām mām pyām tām  
padma tathāgata mahāpañca  
om āyujñāna mahāpunye tiṣṭha om:

'di ni thun bzhir yang<sup>235</sup> snying dang sbrel te brgya stong tsam re<sup>236</sup> bzlas pas:

[3.6 snod dag pa'i rtags]

lus ngag gi<sup>237</sup> sgrub pa zad rtags su zhen rtog dang bral: rmi lam du lus la bshal byung ba<sup>238</sup> dang : rnag zag pa: khrag 'thon<sup>239</sup> pa dang :<sup>240</sup> skyugs pa dang :<sup>241</sup> nyi ma shar ba la sogs pa<sup>242</sup> dang : bud med kyi tshogs kyi bsnyen bkur byed pa dang : lo tog 'bru<sup>243</sup> bcud<sup>244</sup> btsas ma<sup>245</sup> la sogs pa<sup>246</sup> 'byung ngo :

[4] bzhi pa dngos grub blangs pa<sup>247</sup> ni:

zhag grangs dang sgrub<sup>248</sup> pa tshar ba'i tho rangs khar tshogs dang dngos grub kyi rdzas sna tshogs dang : chang dang bdud rtsi a mR ta dang : sha'i<sup>249</sup> ril bu zhad gcig kyang sbyar te: dngos grub bskul ba'i<sup>250</sup> tshig gzhung ltar sbyar ba'am: 'on te bdud rtsi'i a mR ta de nyid ngo

---

<sup>232</sup> de nas P, des A

<sup>233</sup> gnod P

<sup>234</sup> sbyangs P

<sup>235</sup> yongs A

<sup>236</sup> du P

<sup>237</sup> gis A

<sup>238</sup> byas pa P

<sup>239</sup> thon A

<sup>240</sup> khrag 'thon pa: P

<sup>241</sup> : P

<sup>242</sup> – la sogs pa P

<sup>243</sup> 'bras P

<sup>244</sup> – bcus P

<sup>245</sup> btsa' ba P

<sup>246</sup> – pa P

<sup>247</sup> bslang ba'i gnad A

<sup>248</sup> bsgrub A

<sup>249</sup> sha la A

<sup>250</sup> – ba'i P



bo bde gshegs kun kyi rang bzhin la rnam pa bdud rtsir dkar mer gyis<sup>251</sup> bsam ste:

kāya siddhi om̐:  
vākka siddhi āḥ:  
citta siddhi hūm̐:  
padma<sup>252</sup> siddhi phala hoḥ:

ces<sup>253</sup> brjod la btung bas lus phyi gzhal yas la<sup>254</sup>: nang don snying rnam thugs rje chen po'i lha tshogs su bsam mo:

[5] snga pa gzhan don du dbang bya ba'i rim<sup>255</sup> pa ni:

rgyud las:

de nas gzhan don spyod pa'i tshe:  
gdul bya sbyang<sup>256</sup> phyir khru kyang bya:  
zhag bdun kha gso rjes gnang<sup>257</sup> sbyin:  
ril bu'i<sup>258</sup> bum dbang 'dis bskur ro:

ces<sup>259</sup> pas sngon la dbang gi bum pas dbang bskur zhing khru nas phyung ste:<sup>260</sup> gdul bya dag pa gser snod lta bur byas la: de rjes bcud mchog seng ge'i 'o ma lta bu'i ril bu'i bum dbang<sup>261</sup> bskur ba ni<sup>262</sup>:

om̐ maṇi padme hūm̐ hrīḥ:  
padma tathāgata abhiṣiṅca hrīḥ āḥ:

ces<sup>263</sup> pas bum pa<sup>264</sup> spyi bor bzhag pas: lus gzhal yas khang du snying pad+ma<sup>265</sup> 'dab<sup>266</sup> drug pa'i lte bar: zla ba'i steng du ril bu thugs rje

---

<sup>251</sup> gyi A

<sup>252</sup> ? A

<sup>253</sup> zhes P

<sup>254</sup> khang A

<sup>255</sup> rims P

<sup>256</sup> sbyangs P

<sup>257</sup> gnong A

<sup>258</sup> bu A

<sup>259</sup> zhes P

<sup>260</sup> sngon la dbang bskur nas khru nas dbyungs te: A

<sup>261</sup> + spyi bor A

<sup>262</sup> + 'di skad do: A

<sup>263</sup> zhes P

<sup>264</sup> – bum pa P

<sup>265</sup> pad ma A

<sup>266</sup> 'dab ma A

chen por gsal ba de la: gzhal yas khang sgo gdangs par<sup>267</sup> gsal ba'i nang  
na mar mid pa byang chub lam la byon te: snying dbus su lhag gis  
byon nas: byang chub snying po ma thob bar du mi 'bral bar<sup>268</sup> yun gyi  
lhar bzhugs par bsam la<sup>269</sup> ril bu re re<sup>270</sup> mid do:

[6] drug pa dam tshig bsrung ba ni:

rgyud las:

bdag las gzhan gces 'gro ba'i don  
thugs rje chen po'i bslab pa bsrung<sup>271</sup>:

ces<sup>272</sup> pas:<sup>273</sup> de ltar dbang rdzogs ril bu ltor song phan chod: mi 'di:<sup>274</sup>  
zhes bya ba thugs rje chen por 'gyur ba yin pas: rgyal dmangs<sup>275</sup> rgyal  
sar phyung<sup>276</sup> ba<sup>277</sup> dang 'dra ba yin pas: rgyal sa bzung nas rgyal  
srid<sup>278</sup> rgyal khirms skyong ba dang mtshungs par<sup>279</sup> thugs rje chen  
po'i bslab pa'i dam tshig bdag bas<sup>280</sup> gzhan gces kyi sems bskyed dang  
ldan pas: phyir<sup>281</sup> 'gro don ci nus la 'bas pa dang : nang du thugs rje  
chen po'i sgoms<sup>282</sup> rab rgyun<sup>283</sup>: 'bring thun bzhi: tha<sup>284</sup> ma nyin re mts-  
han re la bskyed rdzogs lan<sup>285</sup> re bsgom<sup>286</sup> zhing snying po gang 'grub  
mi gcod<sup>287</sup> par bzlas so:

[7] bdun pa dgos ched yon tan thob<sup>288</sup> tshul ni:

rgyud las:

- 
- 267 pa A  
268 – bar P  
269 – la A  
270 – re P  
271 bsrungs P  
272 – pas P  
273 zhes P  
274 – 'di: P  
275 rgyal dmangs P, rmangs A  
276 phungs A  
277 pa A  
278 – rgyal srid A  
279 pas: A  
280 pas P  
281 phyir P, spyir A  
282 bsgoms P  
283 + pa P  
284 mtha' P  
285 len P  
286 bsgoms P  
287 chags A  
288 'byung A

ril bu su yi<sup>289</sup> ltor song na:  
 tshe rabs gang dang gar skyes tshad<sup>290</sup>:  
 spyen ras gzigs dang 'bral mi srid:  
 rdzas mchog reg chog<sup>291</sup> ngo mtshar che:

ces<sup>292</sup> pas: de kho na bzhin du<sup>293</sup> bsgrubs pas: ngo mtshar mchog 'grub  
 pa'o:

yang<sup>294</sup> snying 'dus pa'i las tshogs:

skye bdun byang chub btsan thabs su bsgrub pa'i rims pa'o:<sup>295</sup>

:gu ru dharma shwa ri'i khyad chos:<sup>296</sup>

sa mi pa ta:<sup>297</sup>

ithi:<sup>298</sup>

#### Appendix IV

*The Seven-Stage Seven-Born Flesh Accomplishment  
 from the Collection of Rites  
 in the Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One  
 Translation*

om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ

[From] the *Collection of Rites*, the stages of accomplishing the flesh of the seven-born are seven-fold:

1. Assessing the Seven-Born
2. The Method of Concocting Pills

---

<sup>289</sup> su'i P

<sup>290</sup> kyang A

<sup>291</sup> mchog P

<sup>292</sup> zhes P

<sup>293</sup> – du P

<sup>294</sup> yongs A

<sup>295</sup> + rdzogs so: ithi: guhya: A

<sup>296</sup> gu ru rin po che chos kyi dbang phyug gis khyad chos: A

<sup>297</sup> missing P

<sup>298</sup> missing P

3. The Actual Method of Accomplishment
4. Receiving Siddhis
5. Acting for the Benefit of Others
6. Requisite Commitments
7. The Virtuous Benefit

### 1. The Stage of Assessing the Seven-Born

The *tantra* states:

The assessment is that those who are seven-born should recall seven lifetimes as human.

Here, it must be someone with seven births endowed with the Dharma. And once it is determined to be someone with seven births endowed with the Dharma, they also have to prophecy as follows: "Through the force of my compassion I have taken seven births. All beings who enjoy my flesh will reach buddhahood."

Thus, take the corpse of such a person and dry the flesh well. It is specifically the heart and the brain that are indispensable.

### 2. The Method of Concocting Pills

The *tantra* states:

With a pea-size chunk of seven-born flesh

If it is the heart or brain it can be pea-size; [but for] the whole [corpse] it should be a full chicken-egg in size—this is the proper way of the catalyst (*phabs*). As a protective conjunction for health, a hand-full each of the six excellent substances, musk, ambrosia, the flesh of a siddha, *rtaḡ tu ngu*, and rice flour should be mixed in.

The *tantra* also states:

If you have the flesh of a young boy of royal caste and a vulture, include them in as support.

The method of combining the flesh of a seven-born of royal caste and the head and heart of a vulture to accomplish flight appears in another *tantra*.

Here, the lines mean that to attain unexcelled awakening these can serve as support if you have them, but need not be specially sought after if you do not have them.

The *tantra* further states:

Mix them completely together through the method of combining.

This means that for each pea-size seven-born pill, a hand-full each of medicine and rice flour should likewise be combined. These are to be mixed with all the flesh. Then, once these have been mixed together in that way, the liquid for kneading it is as follows:

It is to be kneaded with the liquid of the perspiration from the head of a monk—appointed for his ability to produce a fine turquoise-like [perspiration]—boiled and reduced.

Innumerable pills, as many as there are grains of sand, and so forth, should be formed, each the size of a medium-size pea. Dry them, fill a vase with them, cover the vase with red silk, place it in the middle of the *maṇḍala*, and erect a three-tier silk enclosure [above it.]

### 3. The Actual Method of Accomplishment

- 3.1 How Many *Yogins* Should Practice
- 3.2 The Meditative Absorption to be Cultivated
- 3.3 The Essence [Mantra] for Recitation
- 3.4 The Signs that the Pills have been Accomplished
- 3.5 The Essence [Mantra] to be Appended when Purifying the Vessel
- 3.6 The Signs that the Vessel has been Purified

#### 3.1 How Many *Yogins* Should Practice

The *tantra* states:

Five *yogins* should hold the *dhāraṇī* cord.  
[But] the more holding the *dhāraṇī* cord the better.

Without interrupting recitation, four *dhāraṇī* cords are to be held in the four quarters of the *maṇḍala*. With the master holding the *dhāraṇī* cord, this makes five. But it is also more auspicious the more who hold the *dhāraṇī* cord. But a group of at least four practice siblings should recite

during each session. As this is the accomplishment of lotus speech, they should strive in recitation.

### 3.2 The Meditative Absorption to be Cultivated

The *tantra* states:

The visualization for meditating on the Great Compassionate One is as follows:

For each and every pill  
imagine the complete body of the Great Compassionate One.

Generally, the extracts from the mantra approach framework of the *Quintessential Assembly* govern the *Collection of Rites*. Thus, all the practitioners present should meditate on themselves as the Great Compassionate One, imagine that from their chests at the level of their heart light-rays radiate upward, making offerings to the bliss-gone ones, and light-rays radiate downward, purifying the karma and obscurations of the six classes of beings. Then, they should imagine that when the light-rays are absorbed back they dissolve into the collection of pills, such that each and every one of the pills, as many as there are grains of sand, is also the Great Compassionate One.

### 3.3 The Essence [Mantra] for Recitation

The *tantra* states:

Perform the accomplishment reciting this mantra:

oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ hrīḥ  
arapacamita hṛdaya svāhā:

Practice while reciting it.

### 3.4 The Signs of Accomplishment

Light will come forth from the pill-vase. Or rainbow-light will blaze forth in the practice venue. Or smoke, melodious sound, and fragrant scent will emerge with the pill.

The *tantra* also states:

Light, smoke, sound, and fragrant scent.

You might also see the form of a god and goddess. The gods might send down a shower of rain. The grain in the vase might bloom and grow. Or you might see a rain of flowers or some other auspicious portent of virtue in the world.

### 3.5 The Essence [Mantra] to be Appended when Purifying the Vessel

It is stated in the *tantra*:

om̐ āḥ hūm̐ svāhā  
 mūm̐ lām̐ mām̐ pyām̐ tām̐  
 padma tathāgata mahāpañca  
 om̐ āyujñāna mahāpuṇye tiṣṭha om̐

Add this to the essence [mantra] and recite it one hundred thousand times in each of the four sessions.

### [3.6 The Signs that the Vessel has been Purified]

As signs that obscurations of body and speech are exhausted, you will be free of fixating thoughts. In dreams, your body will be washed, sweat will pour out, blood will come out, you will vomit, a sun will rise, and so forth, you will be revered by a group of women, and crops, grains, harvests, and so forth will appear.

## 4. Receiving *Siddhis*

At the brink of dawn, after the accomplishment and its requisite number of days is finished, combine only a single flesh pill with various *gaṇacakra* and *siddhi* substances, beer, and ambrosia-*amṛta* and mix it together according to the liturgical verses for requesting *siddhi*. Or vividly imagine that that very ambrosia-*amṛta* mixture is the nature of all *sugatas* in essence, and the ambrosia in form. Then say:

kāya siddhi om̐  
 vākka siddhi āḥ  
 citta siddhi hūm̐  
 padma siddhi phala hoḥ

Then drink it imagining that through doing so the outside of your body becomes a celestial palace and your internal organs and heart become the divine assembly of the Great Compassionate One.

## 5. The Stage of Conferring Empowerment for the Benefit of Others

The *tantra* states:

Then, when acting on behalf of others,  
 bath disciples to purify them,  
 restore [the practice] for seven days, give them the permission  
 blessing,  
 then confer [initiation] with this initiation pill-vase.

After having first been conferred initiation with the initiation vase, bathed, and brought out, the disciples have been purified, like a golden vessel. Thereafter they can be conferred the pill-vase initiation, which is like the supreme contents, the milk of a lioness, as follows:

oṃ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ  
 padma tathāgata abhiṣiṅca hrīḥ āḥ

Once this is said, the vase is to be placed on your head, and you are to imagine the following while swallowing each pill: Visualize that the body is a celestial mansion, and at the heart inside is a six-petal lotus with a moon disk at its center and a pill atop the moon in the form of the Great Compassionate One. As you swallow [the pill] down inside the visualized open entrance to the celestial palace, it traverses the path to awakening. And once it has clearly arrived at the center of the heart, imagine that [the pill qua the Great Compassionate One] will remain there as the deity, inseparable from you, for as long as it takes to reach the platform of awakening.

## 6. Observing Commitments

The *tantra* states:

Observe the training of the Great Compassionate One,  
 of cherishing others more than yourself for the benefit of beings.

Once the initiation is complete and the pill has entered the stomach, the person, whoever it is, becomes the Great Compassionate One. This is like a commoner who accedes to the throne—having claimed the throne, they must uphold the royal law of the state. The commitment for the training in the Great Compassionate One is to have the altruistic mindset of cherishing others more than oneself, and, with it, externally



strive as much as possible for the welfare of beings, and internally cultivate the meditation of the Great Compassionate One—at best, continually; second best, for four sessions [a day]; and at least, to meditate on generation and completion [stages] once in the daytime and once in the evening—and recite the essence [mantra] as much as possible.

#### 7. How the Virtuous Benefit is Attained

The *tantra* states:

Whoever's stomach a pill should fall in,  
will, no matter the lifetime or birthplace,  
never be separate from Avalokiteśvara.  
Such is the great marvel of the supreme substance with which  
contact will suffice.

Thus, by practicing it precisely like this, the supreme wonder will be attained.

[From] the *Collection of Rites of the Quintessential Assembly*, [this was] the *Stages of Accomplishing the Seven-Born for Abrupt Awakening*, a special teaching of Guru Dharmesvara.

samipata

ithi

### Appendix V

The Seven-Born Accomplishment Rite in  
the *Tantra of the Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One* and  
the *Tantra of the Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*  
Comparative Edition and Translation

| Sigla  | Editions   |
|--------|--|
| S-RL-d | <i>Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgyud</i> (Ratna gling pa, <i>Ratna gling pa'i gter chos</i> , Darjeeling: Taklung Tsetrul Pema Wangyal, 1977–1979, 19 v., vol. 6, 67.4–69.6)            |
| S-RL-l | <i>Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgyud</i> (Ratna gling pa, <i>gTer chos/ Ratna gling pa</i> , Lha ldan: Ratna gling pa'i dpe rnying bsdu sgrig khang, 2013, 27 v., vol. 12, 242.3–244.2) |

- S-RL-s *Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgyud* (Ratna gling pa, *gTer chos*, *gSer rta snubs zur dgon*: sNga 'gyur rnying ma dpal bla med gsang chen gnubs zur dgon, 2014, 21 v., vol. 5, 64.5–66.4)
- S-NGB-tb *Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgyud* (*rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, mTshams brag dgon pa'i bris ma, 1982, 46 v., vol. 32, 376.7–378.4)
- S-NGB-pt *Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgyud* (sNga 'gyur rgyud 'bum *phyogs bsgrigs*, 59 v., vol. 44, 422.3–423.6)
- Y-CW-p *Thugs rje chen po thams cad kyi yang snying 'dus pa ye shes rig pa mchog gi gsang rgyud*, Gu ru Chos dbang (Guru Chos kyi dbang phyug, *Thugs chen yang snying 'dus pa'i chos skor*, Paro, Bhutan: Kyichu Temple, 1982, 1 v., 59.3–61.1)
- Y-CW-a1 *Thugs rje chen po thams cad kyi yongs(sic!) snying 'dus pa ye shes rig pa mchog gi gsang rgyud*, Gu ru chos dbang (Guru Chos dbang, *Thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa*, BDRC # W8LS16401, pdf 71.7–73.5)
- Y-CW-a2 *Thugs rje chen po yongs snying 'dus pa'i skye bdun bsgrub thabs*, 'Gro mgon Gu ru Chos dbang (Guru Chos dbang, *Thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa*, BDRC # W8LS16401, pdf 459–462)
- Y-CW-a3 *Thugs rje chen po thams cad kyi yongs snying 'dus pa'i gsang rgyud las rtsod dus skye bo drangs pa'i phyir: skye bdun sha ril bsgrub thabs bshad*, (Guru Chos dbang, *Thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa*, BDRC # W8LS16401, pdf 516–519)
- Y-NGB-tb *Thugs rje chen po thams cad kyi yang snying 'dus pa ye shes rig pa mchog gi gsang rgyud*, gTer ston Chos dbang (*rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, mTshams brag dgon pa'i bris ma, 46 v., vol. 32, 229.2–230.5)
- Y-NGB-pt *Thugs rje chen po thams cad kyi yang snying 'dus pa ye shes rig pa mchog gi gsang rgyud*, gTer ston Chos dbang (sNga 'gyur rgyud 'bum *phyogs bsgrigs*, 59 v., vol. 44, 287.2–288.3)

de nas bcom ldan rigs bdag la:

Y] missing line

'dus pa'i 'khor gyis<sup>299</sup> yang zhus pa:

Y] missing line

Then, the assembled entourage once again asked  
the Blessed One, the Sovereign Lord:

<sup>299</sup> gyi S-RL-d, S-NGB-pt

rtsol med ngo mtshar mchog gi rdzas: Y] missing line  
 zos pas sangs rgyas 'thob<sup>300</sup> pa'i thabs: Y] missing line  
 bdag bdag 'khor la bka' stsol cig: Y] missing line

“Teach us, the entourage,  
 a method for effortlessly attaining awakening  
 through eating an amazing supreme substance.”

bcom ldan 'das kyis<sup>301</sup> bka' bstsal<sup>302</sup> ba: Y] missing line

The blessed one replied:

ngo mtshar de nyid sgrub pa la<sup>303</sup>: Y] missing line  
 byang chub sems ldan rnal 'byor gyis: Y] missing line  
 'gro don 'khor ba dong sprug thabs: Y] missing line  
 dal 'byor chos ldan mi lus ni: Y] missing line  
 bdun ni brtsegs mar blangs<sup>304</sup> pa yi<sup>305</sup>: Y] missing line  
 nges par yid ches ldan<sup>306</sup> pa yi<sup>307</sup>: Y] missing line

“To accomplish that very marvel,  
 a method for a *yogin* with *bodhicitta*  
 to stir up *samsāra* from the dregs for the sake of beings  
 is the human body of one with leisures, opportunities, and the  
 Dharma,  
 who is resolutely confident  
 of having assumed such a body for seven successive lifetimes.

Y-CW-a2] five characters of ḍākinī script

Y-CW-a3] four characters of ḍākinī script

Y-CW-a3] thugs rje chen po thams cad kyi yongs  
 snying 'dus pa'i gsang rgyud  
 las rtsod dus skye bo drangs pa'i phyir:

<sup>300</sup> thob S-RL-d, S-RL-l, S-NGB-tb

<sup>301</sup> kyi S-RL-d

<sup>302</sup> stsal S-RL-d, S-RL-l, S-NGB-pt

<sup>303</sup> na S-RL-d, S-RL-l, S-RL-s

<sup>304</sup> blang S-RL-l

<sup>305</sup> yis S-RL-d, S-RL-s

<sup>306</sup> bden S-NGB-pt

<sup>307</sup> de'i S-RL-d, S-NGB-tb, S-NGB-pt

For the sake of leading beings in the age of strife,  
from the *Quintessential Assembly of the Great Com-*  
*passionate One,*

**Y all versions begin body]**

de nas skye bdun sha<sup>308</sup> bsgrub<sup>309</sup> bshad:<sup>310</sup>

I will now explain the accomplishment of seven-  
born flesh.

de nyid rtag<sup>311</sup> bsgrub 'gro don bya:

One should bring benefit to beings by regularly ac-  
complishing exactly this.

brtags<sup>312</sup> pa skye bdun gang yin des<sup>313,314</sup>  
mi yi skye ba bdun po<sup>315</sup> dran:<sup>316</sup>  
de yang chos ldan skye<sup>317</sup> bdun<sup>318</sup> pa'i<sup>319</sup>:

The assessment is that those who are seven-born  
should recall seven lifetimes as human.  
Their seven lifetimes should also have been en-  
dowed with the Dharma.

ro blangs<sup>320</sup> sha rnams legs par<sup>321</sup> bskams<sup>322</sup>:

---

<sup>308</sup> sha'i Y-CW-a2

<sup>309</sup> bsgrub pa Y-CW-a2

<sup>310</sup> skye bdun sha ril bsgrub thabs bshad: Y-CW-a2

<sup>311</sup> rtag Y-CW-p, Y-CW-a1, Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt; rtags Y-CW-a3; brtags Y-CW-a2

<sup>312</sup> rtag Y-CW-p, Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>313</sup> des Y-CW-p, Y-CW-a1, Y-NGB-tb; de Y-CW-a2; te T-CW-a3

<sup>314</sup> brtags pa 'du tshogs khrom gseb tu: yul chos ma phog khye'u bsogs: drang srong tshe nus gdong kun byugs: de la dur lung? bstan byas te: dung long? nang du byad bdun 'char: Y-CW-a3. Conjectural translation: "The assessment is to bring together the children who have not been impacted by the Dharma locally into the middle of the public market, rub *drang srong tshe nu* all over their faces, and show them a mirror—seven faces will appear in the mirror [if they are seven-born]."

<sup>315</sup> pa Y-CW-p

<sup>316</sup> mi yi skye bdun nges par dran: Y-CW-a3

<sup>317</sup> bdun Y-CW-a3

<sup>318</sup> bdun Y-CW-a1, Y-CW-a2, Y-NGB-tb; ba Y-CW-p; ldan Y-CW-a3

<sup>319</sup> pa'i Y-CW-a1, Y-CW-a2, Y-CW-a3, Y-NGB-tb; yi Y-CW-p

<sup>320</sup> langs S-RL-d; blang Y-CW-a3, Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>321</sup> – par Y-CW-p, Y-CW-a2, Y-CW-a3, Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>322</sup> bskam S-RL-d, S-RL-l, S-RL-s; skams te Y-CW-p, Y-CW-a3; bskam te Y-CW-a2, Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt; skam te Y-CW-a1

grub thob<sup>323</sup> gnas chen dge ba'i sar<sup>324</sup>:

Take the corpse [of such a person] and dry it well.  
At a virtuous place where *siddhas* dwelled,

khang sar<sup>325</sup> dkar zhal<sup>326</sup> gru bzhi'i<sup>327</sup> nang:

Y] thugs rje chen po'i dal  
dbus su<sup>328,329</sup>:

dkiyl 'khor<sup>330</sup> bum pa chas ldan<sup>331</sup> nang :  
skye bdun sha skam<sup>332</sup> sran tshad la:  
bzang drug gla rtsi a mR ta:<sup>333</sup>

Inside a new house with white walls and four corners,  
[Y: at the center of a *maṇḍala* of the Great Compassionate One]  
inside a *maṇḍala* and in a vase with accoutrements,  
with a pea-size chunk of dry seven-born flesh,  
mix in a hand-full each of the six excellent substances, musk, ambrosia,

grub thob sha chen rtag du ngu:<sup>334</sup>  
gro'am<sup>335</sup> 'bras<sup>336</sup> phye phul gang sbyar<sup>337</sup>:  
rgyal rigs bu chung bya rgod sha:<sup>338</sup>  
yod na skyobs<sup>339</sup> su sbyar<sup>340</sup> byas te:

Y] yod par gyur na  
skyobs su btang<sup>341,342</sup>:

<sup>323</sup> pa'i S-RL-l

<sup>324</sup> dge gnas su Y-CW-p, Y-CW-a1, Y-CW-a2, Y-CW-a3, Y-NGB-tb, Y-CW-a2, Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>325</sup> gsar S-RL-d, S-RL-l, S-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-tb, S-NGB-pt, Y-NGB-pt; par Y-CW-a2

<sup>326</sup> gsal Y-CW-p, Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>327</sup> bzhi Y-CW-a1; brtsegs pa'i Y-CW-a3

<sup>328</sup> bzhengs pa'i Y-CW-a3

<sup>329</sup> + yi dam gang yin dal dbus su: Y-CW-a3

<sup>330</sup> rin chen Y-CW-p, Y-CW-a1, Y-CW-a2, Y-CW-a3, Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>331</sup> bzang po'i Y-CW-a3

<sup>332</sup> rnams S-RL-d; ni Y-CW-p, Y-CW-a1, Y-CW-a2, Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt; ril Y-CW-a3

<sup>333</sup> missing line Y-CW-a3

<sup>334</sup> missing line Y-CW-a3

<sup>335</sup> sman dang Y-CW-p, Y-CW-a1, Y-CW-a2, Y-CW-a3, Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>336</sup> ri Y-CW-a3

<sup>337</sup> la S-RL-l; byar Y-NGB-pt

<sup>338</sup> missing line Y-CW-a3

<sup>339</sup> skyabs S-NGB-pt

<sup>340</sup> sbyor S-RL-d, S-RL-l

<sup>341</sup> gtong Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>342</sup> missing line Y-CW-a3

Y] sbyor thabs  
des<sup>343</sup> 'dres<sup>344</sup> rdzogs par  
sbyar<sup>345,346</sup>

the flesh of a siddha, *rtaḡ tu ngu*,  
and wheat or rice flour.

If you have the flesh of a young boy of royal caste and a vulture,  
mix them in as support.

Y] Mix them completely together  
through the method of combining.

dge slong dri chu thar<sup>347</sup> nu<sup>348</sup> sbyar: Y] btsun mo gser gyi nu  
zhos sbrus<sup>349,350</sup>  
ril bu<sup>351</sup> sran tshad<sup>352</sup> grangs<sup>353</sup> med sbyar: Y] ril bu bye snyed  
grangs med grub<sup>354</sup>  
mchod bstod tshogs 'khor dpag med bya<sup>355</sup>: Y] tshogs<sup>356</sup> mchod<sup>357</sup> du  
mas<sup>358</sup> lha rnams mchod:

Mix in the urine of a monk and *thar nu*.<sup>359</sup>  
Mix this together into innumerable pea-size pills.

<sup>343</sup> de Y-CW-a1, Y-CW-a2

<sup>344</sup> rjes Y-CW-a2, 'dre Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>345</sup> bya Y-CW-a2

<sup>346</sup> des 'dres sha rnams rdzogs par sbyar: Y-CW-a3

<sup>347</sup> mthar S-NGB-pt

<sup>348</sup> Bu S-RL-l

<sup>349</sup> sbru Y-CW-p, Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>350</sup> missing line Y-CW-a3

<sup>351</sup> lu S-NGB-tb

<sup>352</sup> bye rnyed Y-CW-a2

<sup>353</sup> drang S-NGB-pt

<sup>354</sup> ril bu bye rnyed grangs med grub: Y-CW-a2; ril bu grangs med ji snyed grub: Y-CW-p, Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt; ril bu grangs med ji snyed sgrubs: Y-CW-a1; ril bu sran tshad bye snyad grub: kha rgyan gzungs thag spyi dang mthun: Y-CW-a3

<sup>355</sup> byas S-RL-l

<sup>356</sup> tshog Y-NGB-pt

<sup>357</sup> tshogs mchod Y-CW-a1, Y-CW-a2; mchod tshogs Y-CW-p, Y-CW-a3

<sup>358</sup> ma'i Y-CW-a2

<sup>359</sup> Here, Y reads instead *btsun mo gser gyi nu zho*, "queen's golden breast milk." This is likely an epithet for *thar nu*. "Karma chos 'phel (1993, 205–207) gives "golden snake milk" (*gser sbrul 'o ma*) and "breast-milk dripping queen" (*nu zho 'dzag pa'i gtsun mo*) among the alternative names for *thar nu*. Whereas Ye shes bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1972, 149) lists "milk dripping queen" among its list of epithets. According to Karma chos 'phel (1993, 205), *thar nu* is the plant known in Latin as *Euphorbia kozlowii* *prok.*, a species of the genus *Euphorbia* commonly called "spurge" in English, after its use as a purgative, and identifiable by its poisonous milky white or yellow sap.

Do immeasurable offerings, praises, and *gaṇacakras*.

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | Y] rnal 'byor lnga yis <sup>360</sup><br>gzungs <sup>361</sup> thag bzung <sup>362</sup> : |
| ji srid gzungs <sup>363</sup> 'dzin mang na rab <sup>364</sup> : |  |
|  | Y] thugs rje cher bsgom <sup>365</sup><br>dmigs pa ni: <sup>366</sup>                      |
| ril bu re la'ang lha re bskyed:                                  | Y] ril bu re re dag la<br>yang <sup>367</sup> :  |
| 'od zer 'phro 'du'i ting 'dzin gyis: <sup>368</sup>              | Y] thugs rje chen po'i <sup>369</sup><br>sku <sup>370</sup> rdzogs bsam: <sup>371</sup>    |
| rig pa'i rgyal po 'di bzla'o <sup>372</sup> :                    | Y] yang <sup>373</sup> snying 'di<br>bzlas bsgrub par <sup>374</sup> bya:                  |

[Y: Five *yogins* should hold the *dhāraṇī* cord.]

The more holding the *dhāraṇī* cord the better.

Generate the image of each pill as the deity.

With the meditative stabilization of radiating and absorbing light rays  
recite this king of *vidyās*:

[Y: The visualization for meditating on the Great Compassionate One is as follows:  
For each and every pill imagine the complete body of the Great

<sup>360</sup> lnga yis Y-NGB-tb; lnga'i Y-CW-a1, Y-CW-a2, Y-CW-p, Y-CW-a3

<sup>361</sup> gzung Y-CW-p

<sup>362</sup> gzungs Y-CW-p

<sup>363</sup> gzung S-RL-d, S-RL-s, Y-CW-p

<sup>364</sup> rabs S-RL-d; mchog Y-CW-a1, Y-CW-a2, Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>365</sup> bsgom Y-NGB-tb; sgom Y-CW-p; dgongs Y-CW-a1, Y-CW-a2, Y-CW-a3

<sup>366</sup> thugs rje chen po bsgom pa'i dmigs pa ni: Y-CW-a1

<sup>367</sup> ni Y-CW-a1

<sup>368</sup> missing this line S-RL-l

<sup>369</sup> po Y-CW-a1

<sup>370</sup> skur Y-CW-p, Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>371</sup> inverts order of previous four lines: ril bu re re dag la yang; thugs rje chen po'i sku rdzogs bsam: rnal 'byor lnga yi gzungs thag bzung: lo'am zla ba lnga gsum brgya: Y-CW-a3

<sup>372</sup> bzlas so S-RL-d, S-RL-l, S-NGB-tb, S-NGB-pt

<sup>373</sup> yongs Y-CW-a1

<sup>374</sup> par Y-CW-a1, Y-CW-a3, Y-NGB-tb; pa Y-CW-a2, Y-CW-p

## Compassionate One.]

om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ<sup>375</sup>

Y-CW-p adds] indeterminate ḍākinī script:

Y-CW-a1 adds] a ra pa tsa mi ta hriH da ya: indeterminate ḍākinī script:

Y-NGB-tb and Y-NGB-pt add] a ra pa tsa mi ta hri da ya svA hA

'od dang sgra dang du ba dang : Y] 'od dang du ba sgra dang  
dri<sup>376,377</sup>  
dri bzang<sup>378</sup> rmi lam bzang po yi<sup>379</sup>: Y] mtshan ltas<sup>380</sup> bzang<sup>381</sup>  
mthong sngags 'di spel:<sup>382</sup>  
de ltar byung na sngags 'di spel: Y] missing line

If light, sound, smoke,  
fragrant scent, or an auspicious dream should occur,  
add this mantra:

[Y: [When there is] light, smoke, sound,  
or fragrant scent,  
or you see auspicious signs and portents,  
add this mantra.]

om aḥ hūm svāhā:  
mūm lām mām<sup>383</sup> pyam<sup>384</sup> tām<sup>385</sup>:

<sup>375</sup> moves the longer mantras to append the seven-syllable mantra: om aḥ hūm svāhā: mūm lām mām pyam tām: sarva tathāgata mahāpañca: om āyujñāna mahāpunye tiṣṭha om. Adds line: gsung mi chad par rgyun par bzlas: Y-CW-a3

<sup>376</sup> 'od dang du ba rnga sgra dang Y-CW-a1

<sup>377</sup> different sequence: 'od dang du ba sgra dang dri: indeterminate ḍākinī script: a ra pa tsa mi ta hriH dA ya svA hA: Y-CW-a2

<sup>378</sup> bzangs S-NGB-tb, S-NGB-pt

<sup>379</sup> sman rnams bzang po'i ltas S-NGB-tb, S-NGB-pt

<sup>380</sup> bltas Y-CW-p

<sup>381</sup> adds the hyper-metrical syllable, nas Y-CW-a2

<sup>382</sup> connects this line with additional instructions for the initiation: mtshan ltas bzang po byung ba'i tshe: gdul bya'i tshogs me tog thogs: bsgrub pa po la gsol 'di'i gdab: na mo thugs rje'i bdag po dgongs: bdag sogs 'khor ba'i sems can rnams: bla med byang chub thob bya'i phyir: thugs rjes bdun[emend. bdud?] rtsi'i dbang bskur zhu: thugs rje chen po spyan ras gzigs: yi dam du yang bzung bar bgyi'o: zhes brjod me tog 'bul bar bgyi'o: bla mas slob bus spyi gtsug tu: ril bu'i pho brang bzhag byas te: Y-CW-a3

<sup>383</sup> mūm lām mām S-NGB-pt, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>384</sup> pyam S-RL-l, S-NGB-pt, Y-NGB-pt; pya Y-NGB-tb

<sup>385</sup> tām S-RL-l, Y-CW-a2, S-NGB-pt, Y-NGB-pt; ta S-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-tb



sarva tathāgata mahāpañca:  
om̐ āyujñāna mahāpuṇye<sup>386</sup> tiṣṭha<sup>387</sup> om̐:

Y] de la rtags byung dngos grub  
blangs<sup>388,389</sup>

de nas gzhan don spyod pa'i phyir<sup>390,391</sup>  
gdul bya sbyang<sup>392</sup> phyir khruṣ kyang<sup>393</sup> bya:<sup>394</sup>  
zhag bdun<sup>395</sup> kha gso rjes gnang<sup>396</sup> sbyin<sup>397,398</sup>

[Y: Once signs have emerged re-  
ceive the siddhis.]

“Then, to act on behalf of others,  
bath disciples to purify them,  
restore [the practice] for seven days, then give them the permission  
blessing.

de nas dbang bskur rim pa ni: Y] ril<sup>399</sup> bu'i bum dbang 'dis<sup>400</sup>  
bskur ro<sup>401,402</sup>

“Then comes the procedure for conferring initiation:

om̐ maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ sarva<sup>403</sup> tathāgata abhiṣiñca hrīḥ<sup>404</sup> āḥ<sup>405</sup>

<sup>386</sup> mahāpuna S-NGB-pt

<sup>387</sup> titha S-NGB-pt

<sup>388</sup> blang Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>389</sup> missing line Y-CW-a3

<sup>390</sup> tshe Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>391</sup> de nas gzhan don byed pa'i tshe: Y-CW-p, Y-CW-a1; de nas ril bus gzhan don  
spyod pa'i tshe: Y-CW-a2; missing line Y-CW-a3

<sup>392</sup> sbyong S-RL-s, Y-CW-a1; sbyangs S-RL-d, Y-CW-a2

<sup>393</sup> yang S-RL-d, S-RL-l, S-NGB-tb, S-NGB-pt

<sup>394</sup> missing line Y-CW-a3

<sup>395</sup> brgya S-NGB-tb, S-NGB-pt

<sup>396</sup> snang S-NGB-tb

<sup>397</sup> bzhin S-NGB-tb, S-NGB-pt

<sup>398</sup> missing line Y-CW-a3

<sup>399</sup> rim Y-NGB-tb

<sup>400</sup> 'dir Y-CW-a1, Y-CW-a2, Y-CW-a3, Y, CW-p; 'dis Y-NGB-tb

<sup>401</sup> – ro Y-CW-a2

<sup>402</sup> missing line Y-CW-a3

<sup>403</sup> padma Y-CW-a2

<sup>404</sup> – hrīḥ Y-CW-a3; hri S-NGB-pt, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>405</sup> a S-NGB-pt, Y-NGB-pt; + ces brjod slob bus spyi gtsug tu: 'phags pa bzhugs bsam  
snying ka ru: hrīḥ las ye shes me 'bar bas: phyi nang sgrib sbyangs nyams 'bar  
bsam: dar phyar dung 'bud rol mo bsgrags: tshogs kyi 'khor lo cher bskor zing: ril  
bu zos na mi dge mtshams: dge spyad ril bu'i snying po rnam: bzlas brjod gtso  
bor sus byed pa: mi dge bcu dang mtshams med lnga: sdiḡ sgrib kun byang nad  
gdon zhi: ngan song gnas thar rgyal sras thob: Y-CW-a3

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| dbang dus <sup>406</sup> ril bu gsum yang sbyin:                                     | Y missing line] |
| lha bskyed dri chu'i <sup>407</sup> chu bsdebs <sup>408</sup> gtong <sup>409</sup> : | Y missing line] |
| lha la lha thim dbyer med bsam <sup>410</sup> :                                      | Y missing line] |

“During initiation also give three pills.  
Generate [the image] of the deity, administer with a dilute of urine,  
and imagine that deity dissolves into deity, indivisibly.

ril bu su yi ltor song<sup>411</sup> ba<sup>412</sup>:  
tshe rabs<sup>413</sup> gang dang<sup>414</sup> gar skyes kyang<sup>415</sup>:  
spyan ras gzigs dang 'bral mi srid:

“Whoever's stomach a pill should fall in  
will never part from Avalokiteśvara  
no matter the lifetime or birthplace.

|   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| bdag bas <sup>416</sup> gzhan gces 'gro don spyod <sup>417,418</sup>  |                                    |
| yig bdun <sup>419</sup> bzlas shing dam tshig bsrung <sup>420</sup> : | Y] thugs rje chen po'i             |
|   | bslab pa bsrung <sup>421,422</sup> |
| thams cad 'khor ba dong nas sprug:                                    | Y] rdzas mchog reg                 |
|   | chog <sup>423</sup> ngo mtshar     |
|   | che <sup>424,425</sup>             |

<sup>406</sup> 'dus S-NGB-tb

<sup>407</sup> chus S-RL-d, S-RL-l, S-NGB-tb, S-NGB-pt

<sup>408</sup> sdebs S-RL-d, S-NGB-tb, S-NGB-pt; sdeb S-RL-l

<sup>409</sup> stang S-RL-D; btang S-RL-l, S-NGB-tb

<sup>410</sup> par S-RL-l

<sup>411</sup> reg Y-CW-a3

<sup>412</sup> nas Y-CW-p, Y-CW-a3, Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt; na Y-CW-a1, Y-CW-a2

<sup>413</sup> skye ba Y-CW-p, Y-NGB-Tb, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>414</sup> nas Y-CW-a3

<sup>415</sup> tshad Y-CW-p, Y-CW-a2, Y-CW-a3, Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>416</sup> las Y-CW-a2; pas S-RL-l, Y-NGB-tb, Y-CW-p, Y-NGB-tb, S-NGB-pt

<sup>417</sup> ba'i don Y-CW-a1, Y-CW-a2, Y-CW-p, Y-NGB-tb

<sup>418</sup> skye ba dran cing thos[emend. thob] pa 'dzin: yon tan bsngags pa'i tshad las 'das:

de phyir mchog gi rin chen po che: skye ba bdun pa'i sha ril yin: 'di la the tshom

skyes tshad ni: de yi byang chub rgyang thag bsrings: bskur btab gyur na mnar

med 'gro: de phyir mkhas pas spyod shes bya'o: rgyal ba kun gyis rab tu bsngags:

rdzas kyi rgyal po reg chog 'di: sbyar thabs gsang ba de kho na'o: Y-CW-a3

<sup>419</sup> brgya S-NGB-tb, S-NGB-pt

<sup>420</sup> srung S-RL-l; bsrungs S-NGB-tb

<sup>421</sup> srung Y-NGB-tb, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>422</sup> missing line Y-CW-a3]

<sup>423</sup> mchog Y-CW-p, Y-NGB-pt

<sup>424</sup> che'o Y-CW-p

<sup>425</sup> missing line Y-CW-a3

Act on behalf of beings, cherishing others more than yourself,  
recite the seven syllables, and observe the samayas,  
and you will stir up *samsāra* from the dregs for all."

ces bka' bstsal<sup>426</sup> to:

Y missing line]

Thus did he say.

thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgyud las: skye bdun mchog gi  
sgrub pa'i le'u ste bcu pa'o:

Y missing chapter colophon]

This was Chapter Ten: *The Accomplishment of the Supreme Seven-Born*,  
from the *Tantra of the Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*.

samaya:<sup>427</sup>

rgya rgya rgya:<sup>428</sup>

kha tham:<sup>429</sup>

Commitment!

Seal! Seal! Seal!

Silence!

Y-CW-a2 colophon]

'gro mgon gu ru chos dbang la:

thugs rus can gyi khams pas[emend. pa'i] zhus:

'gro ba rnam la phan gyur gcig:

sems can ma lus la bsngo:

Requested of lord Guru Chöwang  
by the persistent Khampa.  
May it benefit transmigrators!

<sup>426</sup> stsal S-RL-d, S-RL-l

<sup>427</sup> missing S-NGB-tb, Y-CW-a1, Y-CW-a2, Y-CW-p, Y-CW-a3

<sup>428</sup> relocates in colophon, see below S-NGB-tb, Y-CW-a1, Y-CW-a2, Y-CW-p] missing, Y-CW-a3]

<sup>429</sup> missing S-NGB-tb, Y-CW-a1, Y-CW-a2, Y-CW-p, Y-CW-a3

I dedicate it to all beings without exception!

Y-CW-a3 colophon]

ces thugs rje chen po yong 'dus snying 'dus pa ye shes rig pa  
mchog gi gsang rgyud las bkol ba:

ithi:

rgya rgya rgya:

ithi:

las can snying gis bu dang 'phrad par shog:  
rtsod ldan dus su 'gro don 'phel bar shog:

gnyis zhus so //

Extracted from the *Secret Tantra of Supreme Wisdom-Awareness of the Quintessential Assembly of the Great Compassionate One*.

So it was said!

Seal! Seal! Seal!

So it was said!

May it encounter a karmically destined heart son!  
May it multiply the welfare of beings in the age  
of strife!

It was copyedited twice.

## Appendix VI

*The Samyema: A Means of Accomplishment of the Seven-Born*  
Tibetan Edition

| Sigla  | Editions   |
|--------|--|
| S-RL-l | <i>Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa las skye bdun sgrub pa</i> (Ratna gling pa, <i>gTer chos/ Ratna gling pa</i> , Lha Idan: Ratna gling pa'i dpe rnying bsdu sgrig khang, 2013, 27 v., vol. 11, 173–179)                                  |
| S-RL-s | <i>Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa las: skye bdun gyi sgrub thabs bsam yas ma</i> (Ratna gling pa, <i>gTer chos</i> , gSer rta snubs zur dgon: sNga 'gyur rnying ma dpal bla med gsang chen gnubs zur dgon, 2014, 21 v., vol. 5, 413–419) |

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <u>Underline</u> | Words and phrases found only in Guru Chos dbang versions |
| <b>Bold</b>      | Words and phrases found only in Ratna gling pa versions  |

[brda yig]

bdag 'dra pad+ma 'byung gnas kyis:  
 skye bdun sgrub pa'i man ngag mchog:  
 zab dril don bsdu bstan par bya<sup>430</sup>:  
 de la spyi don bsdu ba<sup>431</sup> bzhi yis bstan:

[1] brtag [2] bsgrub<sup>432</sup> [3] dbang bskur [4] gzhan don bya:

[1] brtag thabs skye bdun gang yin te<sup>433</sup>:  
**dal 'byor** grub thob skye ba bdun:  
**nges par** blangs<sup>434</sup> shing dran pa ste:

ngo mtshar can te<sup>435</sup> legs blangs<sup>436</sup> nas:  
 mkha' spyod rig 'dzin sha bsgrub<sup>437</sup> dang :  
 bla med byang chub mchog bsgrub<sup>438</sup> ste:  
 gnyis las 'di ni mchog bsgrub<sup>439</sup> bo<sup>440</sup>:

sha nyid blangs te ma rul bar<sup>441</sup>:  
 legs par bskams<sup>442</sup> te<sup>443</sup> gcig<sup>444</sup> tu<sup>445</sup> bya:  
 de ni brtag pa'i rim pa'o:

---

<sup>430</sup> bya'o S-RL-l

<sup>431</sup> missing bsdu ba S-RL-l

<sup>432</sup> sgrub S-RL-l

<sup>433</sup> de S-RL-l

<sup>434</sup> blang S-RL-l

<sup>435</sup> de S-RL-l

<sup>436</sup> blang S-RL-l

<sup>437</sup> sgrub S-RL-l

<sup>438</sup> sgrub S-RL-l

<sup>439</sup> sgrub S-RL-l

<sup>440</sup> pa'o S-RL-l

<sup>441</sup> ba S-RL-l

<sup>442</sup> skam S-RL-l

<sup>443</sup> ste S-RL-l

<sup>444</sup> rtsis S-RL-s

<sup>445</sup> su S-RL-s

gnyis<sup>446</sup> pa bsgrub pa'i rim pa ni:  
 de yang bkra shis dben gnas su:  
 bsgrub<sup>447</sup> khang phyi dkar nang dkar<sup>448</sup> ba:  
 che zhing nyams dga'i gnas bcas te:

**dkyil 'khor** 'dab drug sgo khyud rdzogs:  
 phyi nang gsang gsum mchod tshogs bsham:  
 sku gsung thugs rten rgyan tshogs dgram<sup>449</sup>:

skye bdun sha ni sran tshad la<sup>450</sup>:  
 bzang drug gla rtsi a mR ta:

grub thob sha ni tshogs tshad dang :  
 byin rlabs rdzas dang rtag tu ngu:  
sman dang dbang lag 'bras phye ni:  
 phul re phul re<sup>451</sup> sbyar bar bya:

rgyal rigs bu chung bya rgod kyi:  
 sha yang yod na theb rtse<sup>452</sup> re:  
 skyobs<sup>453</sup> su sbyor<sup>454</sup> na bzang bar bshad:

de nas rtogs<sup>455</sup> ldan grub thob dang :  
**khirms ldan dge slong dri chus sbyar**:  
 ril bu mnyam<sup>456</sup> zhing dpag med bya<sup>457</sup>:  
 mtshal dang skyer pa'i khaṅḍa dang :  
 gur gum sbyar te kha dog bsgyur<sup>458</sup>:

rin chen bum pa mtshan<sup>459</sup> ldan la:  
 gu gul bdug<sup>460</sup> shing bgegs bskrad bya:  
 ril bus bkang ste<sup>461</sup> kha rgyan dang :

---

<sup>446</sup> gsum S-RL-s

<sup>447</sup> sgrub S-RL-l

<sup>448</sup> dmar S-RL-s

<sup>449</sup> bskyed S-RL-l

<sup>450</sup> nang S-RL-l

<sup>451</sup> te S-RL-s

<sup>452</sup> tshigs S-RL-l

<sup>453</sup> skabs S-RL-l

<sup>454</sup> sbyar S-RL-l

<sup>455</sup> rtog S-RL-s

<sup>456</sup> snyam S-RL-s

<sup>457</sup> byas S-RL-l

<sup>458</sup> sgyur S-RL-l

<sup>459</sup> tshad S-RL-l

<sup>460</sup> btugs S-RL-s

<sup>461</sup> te S-RL-l

mgul chings gzungs thag rdo rje sogs:  
 chas mams legs par rdzogs byas te:  
 bum rdzas nyer lnga dag kyang blug<sup>462</sup>:

dkiyl 'khor dbus su bzhugs su gsol:  
 tshad med bzhi po sngon song nas:  
 khru byas sems bskyed sdom pa bzung<sup>463</sup>:  
 thugs rje chen po'i las gzhung bsrang:<sup>464</sup>  
 bla rdzogs la<sup>465</sup> sogs<sup>466</sup> gzhan yang bya:  
 dus bzhir mchod tshogs 'byor tshad 'bad:

dnogs gzhi bskyed rim dmigs pa ni:  
 rang nyid thugs rje chen por bsgom:  
 zhal gcig phyag gnyis sku mdog dmar:  
 phyag g.yas **pad** phreng thugs kar 'dzin:

phyag g.yon **pad sdong** bdud<sup>467</sup> rtsi<sup>468</sup> bum<sup>469</sup>:  
 rdo rje dkiyl krung rang 'dra'i yum:  
 gsang ba ye shes mdangs ldan ma:  
 mnyen<sup>470</sup> lcug<sup>471</sup> 'khril ldem<sup>472</sup> dbyer med bsam<sup>473</sup>:

spyi gtsug rigs bdag thugs kar ni:  
 zla steng<sup>474</sup> hrñh la yig drug bskor:  
 bum pa bhrūm las gzhal yas khang :  
 pho brang yongs rdzogs chen por bsgom:

bum nang ril bu re re yang<sup>475</sup> :  
 bdag nyid kho na<sup>476</sup> ci 'drar bskyed:  
 ye shes 'gugs<sup>477</sup> bstim drag tu bya:

---

<sup>462</sup> sgrub S-RL-l

<sup>463</sup> gzung S-RL-s

<sup>464</sup> bsrings S-RL-s; inserts mchan bu before this line: yang snying 'dus pa'i gsang  
 ba 'dus pa rgyal ba rgya mtsho S-RL-l

<sup>465</sup> thugs S-RL-l

<sup>466</sup> gsum S-RL-l

<sup>467</sup> thugs S-RL-l

<sup>468</sup> kar S-RL-l

<sup>469</sup> bsname S-RL-l

<sup>470</sup> gnyen S-RL-l

<sup>471</sup> lcugs S-RL-l

<sup>472</sup> zhing S-RL-l

<sup>473</sup> bsgom S-RL-l

<sup>474</sup> sdeng S-RL-s

<sup>475</sup> la'ang S-RL-l

<sup>476</sup> nar S-RL-l

<sup>477</sup> bkug S-RL-l

ril bu dam tshig ye shes su<sup>478</sup>:  
dbyer med thugs rje chen por bsgom:

gzungs thag phyogs bzhir 'then par bya:  
**sgrub byed** <sup>479</sup>**rnal 'byor mang na mchog:**  
yang snying 'di ni<sup>480</sup> bsgrub<sup>481</sup> par bya:

om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ

ril bu bsgrub sngags kyi dmigs thun:

dkyil 'khor lha tshogs rnam kyi sku las 'od zer bsam gyis mi khyab pa byung: bdag lhar gsal ba'i gnas gsum du thim:

yang bdag dang dkyil 'khor gyi lha tshogs rnam kyi sku las 'od zer bsam gyis mi khyab pa 'phros: snod kyi 'jig rten lha'i gzhal yas khang rang snang bde ba chen por gyur: bcud kyi sems can thams cad rtsa gsum gyi lha tshogs su gyur: sgra grags pa thams cad kyang gsungs sngags kyi rang sgrar gyur bar bsgom:

yang 'od zer 'phros pas rgyal ba'i zhing kham rab 'byams nas: bla ma rig 'dzin sangs rgyas byang sems dkyil 'khor gyi lha tshogs: tshe la dbang ba'i drang srong rig 'dzin mkha' 'gro chos skyong rnam kyi thugs ka nas: mchog dang thun mong gi byin rlabs 'o ma'i rgyun ltar dkar nar gyi bkug nas: thugs rje chen po yab yum gyi spyi bor thim: sku lus gang : yab yum sbyor mtshams nas bdud rtsi babs: sgrub rdzas ril bu dang dbyer med du 'dres par bsam zhing.<sup>482</sup>

om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ  
arapacamita hrdaya<sup>483</sup> svāhā<sup>484</sup>

de tshe rtags kyi rim pa yang:  
'od dang du ba sgra dang dri<sup>485</sup>:  
zhal mthong dag snang dpag med 'byung:  
mtshan rtags rdzogs nas sngags ring<sup>486</sup> sbrel:

---

478 su S-RL-l

479 rnam S-RL-s

480 yis S-RL-l

481 sgrub S-RL-l

482 missing this entire prose section after the mantra S-RL-l

483 emend. hrīḥdaya S-RL-s

484 missing this line of mantra S-RL-l

485 ni S-RL-l

486 'di S-RL-l



om̄ āḥ hūm̄ svāhā:  
 mūm̄<sup>487</sup> lām̄ mām̄ pyām̄<sup>488</sup> tām̄:  
 sarva tathāgata:  
 mahāpañca om̄ āyujñāna mahāpuṇye tiṣṭha om̄:

rgyal ba rigs lngas<sup>489</sup> ye shes sku lngar<sup>490</sup> sbyor:  
 ye shes bdud rtsi sngags kyis<sup>491</sup> 'chi med tshe:  
 rnam rtog bag chags sbyong zhing mngon sangs rgyas:  
**rmi lam** dag tu rtags **bzang**<sup>492</sup> 'byung bar nges:

thugs rje chen po 'khor ba myang 'das sbyong<sup>493</sup>:  
 skye bdun ril bu<sup>494</sup> ma bsgrubs<sup>495</sup> sangs rgyas 'thob<sup>496</sup>:  
 bdun nam bcu gcig nyer gcig dag tu bsgrub:  
 tshogs 'khor bya zhing dngos grub dag kyang bskul:

rjes kyi rim pa bstan pa ni:

[3] **de nas bum pa'i dbang bskur**<sup>497</sup> bya:

om̄ āḥ hūm̄<sup>498</sup>

don gyi ye shes kun rgyas<sup>499</sup> kyang<sup>500</sup>:  
 ma rig gzung<sup>501</sup> 'dzin bag chags 'thas:  
 ngo mtshar rmad byung mchog gi rdzas:  
 bag chags rnam rtog sbyong byed cing :  
 'di yis<sup>502</sup> mngon par sangs rgyas 'thob:  
 rnam grol ye shes mchog thob shog:

om̄ maṇi padme hūm̄ hrīḥ:

---

<sup>487</sup> mūm̄ S-RL-s

<sup>488</sup> pām̄ S-RL-l; pyām̄ S-RL-s

<sup>489</sup> lnga S-RL-l

<sup>490</sup> lnga S-RL-l

<sup>491</sup> kyi S-RL-l

<sup>492</sup> bzang rtags S-RL-l

<sup>493</sup> sbyor S-RL-s

<sup>494</sup> snying po S-RL-s

<sup>495</sup> emend. sgrubs

<sup>496</sup> thob S-RL-s

<sup>497</sup> adds hypermetrical syllable, bar S-RL-l

<sup>498</sup> missing mantra S-RL-l

<sup>499</sup> rgyal S-RL-l

<sup>500</sup> yang S-RL-l

<sup>501</sup> gzungs S-RL-l

<sup>502</sup> yi S-RL-l

sarva tathāgata abhiṣiṅca hrīḥ<sup>503</sup> āḥ:

rang nyid dam tshig sems dpar<sup>504</sup> bsgom:  
ril bu ye shes sems dpar<sup>505</sup> bskyed:  
dam tshig ye shes dbyer med par:  
thugs rje chen por bdag gyur bsam:

ril bu re ni **dri chu**<sup>506</sup> yis<sup>507</sup>:  
**phul** te lto stong<sup>508</sup> btang<sup>509</sup> bar bya:  
 rgyas par byed na **dbang lan**<sup>510</sup> **gsum**:  
**ril bu lan gsum sbyin par bya:**

[4] de nas gzhan don spyod pa'i tshe:  
 ril bu sus<sup>511</sup> 'dod gong ltar 'tshogs:  
 gdul bya sbyang<sup>512</sup> phyir khru kyang bya:  
 zhag ni gsum bdun lnga la sogs:  
 sgrub pa kha gso rjes gnang<sup>513</sup> sbyin:<sup>514</sup>

dug lnga<sup>515</sup> sku gsung thugs su bsgyur<sup>516</sup>:  
 ma bsgrubs<sup>517</sup> sangs rgyas ngo mtshar che:  
 de nas 'gro ba yongs la spel:

thugs rje chen po'i sdom pa<sup>518</sup> dang<sup>519</sup>:  
 bskyed rim phog la yig bdun bzla<sup>520</sup>:  
 sdom pa lam khyer<sup>521</sup> rnam gsum yin:

de nas yon tan bshad pa ni:

---

<sup>503</sup> missing hrīḥ S-RL-l

<sup>504</sup> dpa' S-RL-l

<sup>505</sup> dpa' S-RL-l

<sup>506</sup> bzang S-RL-l

<sup>507</sup> chus S-RL-l

<sup>508</sup> ru S-RL-l

<sup>509</sup> btang S-RL-l; gtang S-RL-s

<sup>510</sup> lag S-RL-s

<sup>511</sup> su S-RL-l

<sup>512</sup> sbyangs S-RL-s

<sup>513</sup> has hypermetrical, pa'ang S-RL-l

<sup>514</sup> has extra line: snang sku grags gsung dran rtog thugs: S-RL-l

<sup>515</sup> gsum S-RL-l

<sup>516</sup> 'gyur S-RL-l

<sup>517</sup> emend. sgrub

<sup>518</sup> dang S-RL-l

<sup>519</sup> bskyed S-RL-l

<sup>520</sup> bzlas S-RL-l

<sup>521</sup> sbyor S-RL-l

yang snying 'dus pa'i rgyud dag las:

**ril bu su yi ltor song ba:**  
**tshe rabs gang dang gar skyes kyang :**  
 spyan ras gzigs dang 'bral mi srid:

ces pas ril bu sus thob pa:  
 thugs rje chen po'i zhing du 'gro:  
 'di la the tshom mi 'tshal te:

ma bsgrubs<sup>522</sup> sangs rgyas 'thob thabs lnga:

sngon sbyangs las sad rtogs grol dang :  
 rang byung rgyud mchog btags grol dang :  
 mtshan ldan pad can rtsa yi<sup>523</sup> gnad:  
 gsang lam zab mo 'pho ba dang :  
 ngo mtshar rdzas mchog skye bdun no:

de phyir 'di spyad<sup>524</sup> skye bu la:  
 byang chub sems ldan mchog tu gces<sup>525</sup>:  
 ril bu gces spras cher byas te:  
 'gro don dpag med rgya chen spyod:

snying nor mig 'bras zab mo'i gter:  
 bsam yas dbu rtse'i khri la sbas:

lnga bcu kha ral dus kyi tshe:  
 las can gcig dang 'phrad nas kyang :  
 'gro kun 'khor ba dong sprug shog:

|                        |            |                       |
|------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| samayā: <sup>526</sup> | kha tham:  | guhya: <sup>527</sup> |
| rgya rgya rgya:        | [brda yig] | ithi:                 |

bsam yas dbu rtse'i khri nas gter ston ratna gling pas bton pa'i gter  
 ma lags so/ /<sup>528</sup>

<sup>522</sup> sgrub S-RL-1

<sup>523</sup> rtsa'i S-RL-1

<sup>524</sup> spyod S-RL-1

<sup>525</sup> skyes bu mchog S-RL-1

<sup>526</sup> sargya margya yargya S-RL-1

<sup>527</sup> gu hye S-RL-1

<sup>528</sup> sprul sku rat+na gling pas bsam yas dbu rtse nas gdan drangs pa'o: S-RL-1

## Appendix VII

### *The Samyema: A Means of Accomplishment of the Seven-Born* Translation

I, Padmasambhava,  
will teach, in a summary encapsulating the profound [points],  
the supreme pith instructions for accomplishing the seven-born.  
I will teach it in four summary topics:

[1] assessment, [2] accomplishment, [3] initiation, and [4] bringing  
benefit to others.

[1] The means of assessment concerns what a seven-born is:  
it is someone who has certainly assumed and recalls  
seven births with the leisures and opportunities, in which they have  
attained accomplishment.

As this is astounding, once they are carefully received,  
their flesh can accomplish the *vidyādhara* of flight  
and it can accomplish supreme unsurpassable awakening—  
among these two [goals], this one accomplishes the supreme.

Take their flesh, and before it rots,  
dry it well and bring it together.  
That was the stage of assessment.

[2] Second is the stage of accomplishment:  
In an auspicious and remote place,  
construct the dwelling of a practice venue,  
white outside and white inside, large and pleasant.

Form a complete *maṇḍala* with six petals, doors, and perimeter.  
Lay out outer, inner, and secret feast offerings.  
Arrange receptacles of awakened body, speech, and mind, and an as-  
sortment of adornments.

Mix with a chunk of seven-born flesh the size of a pea  
the six excellent substances, musk, *amṛta*,  
the flesh of *siddhas*, as much as can be gathered,  
blessed substance, *rtaḡ tu ngu*,

medicine, *dbang lag*,<sup>529</sup> rice flower—  
a handful of each.

If you also happen to have  
the flesh of a young boy of royal caste and a vulture,  
it is said to be better if mixed in as support.

Then, mix in the urine of a realized siddha  
and that of a disciplined monk.  
Form an immeasurable number of pills of equal size.  
Color them by combining saffron  
with vermilion and a concentrate (*khaṇḍa*) of *skyer ba*.<sup>530</sup>

Take a vase of proper specifications, made of precious materials,  
drive obstructors away by scenting it with frankincense.  
Fill it with the pills and deck it out well with the accoutrements  
of a spout adornment, a neck band, a *dhāraṇī* cord, a *vajra*, and the rest.  
Also pour into it the twenty-five vase substances.<sup>531</sup>

Request it to sit in the middle of the *maṇḍala*.  
First do the four immeasurables,  
Then cleanse, generate *bodhicitta*, and take vows.  
Go through the entirety of the liturgy of the Great Compassionate One.

<sup>529</sup> Dga' ba'i rdo rje (2002, 255) and Karma chos 'phel (1993, 163–165) list this as an abbreviation for *dbang po lag pa*. Dga' ba'i rdo rje identifies it as *Gymnadenia orchidis* Lindl. Karma chos 'phel identifies it as Himalayan march orchid (*Gymnadenia crassinervis*) and describes its use in *bcud len* practice. It seems to translate the Sanskrit *indrahasta* (c.f. Monier Williams).

<sup>530</sup> *skyer ba'i khaNDa*. *Skyer ba* is likely *skyer pa*, which Dga' ba'i rdo rje (2002, 117–118) identifies as *Berberis jamesiana* Forrest et W.W. Sm, and Karma chos 'phel (1993, 113–116) identifies as *Berberis dasystachya* Maxim.

<sup>531</sup> Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo (2002: 1398–1399) lists the twenty-five substances under the heading "twenty-five vase substances" (*bum rdzas nyer lnga*) as follows: The five precious substances (*rin po che lnga*) of 1) gold (*gser*), 2) silver (*dngul*), 3) coral (*byu ru*), 4) pearl (*mu tig*), and 5) copper (*zangs*); the five medicines (*smān lnga*) of 6) Himalayan march orchid (*dbang lag*; *Gymnadenia crassinervis*, cf. Karma chos 'phel 1993, 163), 7) raspberry (*kantākāri*, *kaṇḍakari*, *Rubus idaeopsis* focke, cf. Karma chos 'phel 1993, 104), 8) heart-leaved moonseed (*sle tres*, emended from *sle khres*; *Tinospora cordifolia*, cf. Karma chos 'phel 1993, 103), 9) bamboo manna/silica (*cu gang*), and 10) sweet flag (*shu dag dkar po*; *shu* is corrected from *sha*; *Acorus gramineus*, cf. Karma chos 'phel 1993, 157); the five fragrances (*dri lnga*) of 11) camphor (*ga bur*), 12) musk (*gla rtsi*), 13) nutmeg (*dza ti*), 14) saffron (*gur gum*), and 15) sandal (*tsandan*); the five grains (*'bru lnga*) of 16) barley (*nas*), 17) wheat (*gro*), 18) sesame (*til*), 19) pulse (*sran ma*), and 20) rice (*'bras*); and the five essences of 21) salt (*lan tshwa*), 22) sesame oil (*til mar*), 23) butter (*mar*), 24) raw sugar (*bu ram*), and honey (*sbrang rtsi*).

Also perform others, such as Guru, Great Perfection (*bla rdzogs*), and so forth.

Try to make as many offerings as you can afford throughout the four time periods.

The main practice, the visualization of the generation stage, is as follows:

Meditate on yourself as the Great Compassionate One.

Imagine you have one face, two hands, and a red complexion, holding in your right hand a lotus and a rosary at your heart, and in your left hand a lotus-stem and vase of ambrosia, and that you are cross-legged, in indivisible union with your consort resembling you,

She who is Endowed with the Glow of Secret Gnosis (gSang ba ye shes mdangs ldan ma),

who is graceful, pliant, lithe, and supple.

At your crown is the lord of the family,  
at your heart is a moon supporting the syllable hrīḥ, surrounded by the six syllables.

Meditate that the vase, from the syllable bhrūm, becomes a celestial mansion,  
a palace, perfectly complete.

Generate [the mental image] that each pill inside the vase is also in the exact same image as yourself.

Emphatically summon the wisdom [beings] and dissolve them [there].

Meditate on the pills as the Great Compassionate One in an indivisibility of *samaya* and wisdom [beings].

Pull the *dhāraṇī* cord into the four directions.

The more *yogins* practicing the better.

Accomplish the following essence [mantra]:

om māṇi padme hūm hrīḥ

The session-visualization for the mantra-accomplishment of the pills is as follows:

An inconceivable flood of light rays emerges from the bodies of the divine assembly of the *maṇḍala* and dissolves into the three places of yourself visualized as the deity.

Then, an inconceivable flood of light rays radiates from yourself and the body of divine assembly of the *maṇḍala*. Meditate that the world of the environment transforms into a celestial mansion of self-manifesting great bliss; all the beings that inhabit it transform into the divine assembly of the three roots; and all sounds too transform into the self-resounding of the *dhāraṇī* mantra.

Imagine next that light rays again radiate forth, and summon from the hearts of the gurus, *vidyādhara*s, buddhas, bodhisattvas, the divine assembly of the *maṇḍala*, and from the hearts of the sages, *vidyādhara*s, *ḍākinī*s, and *dharmapāla*s with mastery over lifespan—throughout the infinite buddha realms—the supreme and common blessings, in the form of a straight white stream, resembling a stream of milk, and that it dissolves into the crown of the Great Compassionate One and consort. Imagine that it fills their bodies and ambrosia [over]flows out from their point of union, mingling indivisibly with the accomplishment substance of the pills. [Then chant:]

om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ  
arapacamita hrīḥdaya svāhā

As for the kinds of signs [that can appear] at that time:  
light, smoke, sound, fragrance,  
and pure visions of encountering the face can immeasurably occur.  
Once the portents and signs have occurred, lengthen the mantras by  
adding:

om āḥ hūm svāhā  
mūm lām mām pyām tām  
sarva tathāgata mahāpañca om āyujñānamahāpunye tiṣṭha om

By means of the five buddha families, one is joined with the five wisdom bodies.

By means of the wisdom ambrosia mantra, [one attains] deathless lifespan,  
purifies concepts and their habitual patterns, becomes manifestly awakened,  
and is certain have auspicious signs in dreams.

The Great Compassionate One purifies *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.  
The pill of the seven-born brings awakening without practice.  
Practice it for seven, eleven, or twenty-one [days].  
Perform a *gaṇacakra* and then request the *siddhis*.

Now for the teaching on the concluding stage:

[3] Next perform the initiation of the vase [by first reciting the following]:

om āḥ hūm

Although true wisdom is fully perfected,  
ignorance, dualistic fixation, and habitual patterns are solidified.  
May the amazing and astounding supreme substance  
purify habitual patterns and concepts.  
Through it may we reach manifest awakening  
and attain liberation and the highest wisdom.

om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ  
sarva tathāgata abhiṣiṅca hrīḥ āḥ

Meditate on yourself as the *samaya* being,  
engender the image of the pill as the wisdom being,  
and imagine that you become the Great Compassionate One  
of *samaya* and wisdom indivisible.

Offer each pill with urine  
and administer it on an empty stomach.  
If you do it in more detail, the initiation can happen three times,  
and you should give the pill three times.

[4] Then, when acting on behalf of others,  
gather as before whomever wants a pill,  
bathe disciples to purify them.  
For three, seven, or five days  
restore the practice, and then confer the permission blessing

Transform the three poisons into awakened body, speech, and mind.  
Then spread to all beings  
the amazing buddhahood without practicing.

Reciting the seven syllables  
while yoking the generation stage  
to the vow of the Great Compassionate One  
is the three-fold manner of integrating the vow onto the path.

Now, to explain its virtues:  
It is said in the *Quintessential Assembly tantra*:



Whoever's stomach the pill falls in  
will never part from Avalokiteśvara  
no matter the lifetime and wherever they are born.

Thus, whoever acquires a pill  
will travel to the pure land of the Great Compassionate One—  
of this there need be no doubt.

Means of attaining awakening without practicing are five-fold:

liberation through realization from awakening the karma of former  
training,  
liberation through wearing a supreme self-arisen *tantra*,  
the crucial point of the channels with a qualified [lady] with a lotus,  
the secret profound path of transference, and  
the amazing supreme substance of the seven born.

Therefore, beings who implement it  
should be revered as supreme among those with *bodhicitta*.  
Highly value the pill,  
and widely implement it beyond measure.

This profound Treasure, [as vital as one's] essential wealth and eyes,  
was hidden Samyé Utsé (bSam yas dbu rtse).  
During the era when people lose their teeth at fifty,  
may a karmically destined one encounter it  
and churn up the depths of *samsāra* for all beings.

samayā: kha tham: guhya: rgya rgya rgya:....ithi

This is a Treasure revealed by the Treasure revealer Ratna Lingpa from  
Samyé Utsé throne (bSam yas dbu rtse'i khri).

## Appendix VIII

*Wish-fulfilling Gem: A Ritual for Accomplishing the Seven Born*  
Tibetan Edition

| Sigla | Editions   |
|-------|--|
| L     | <i>sKye bdun sgrub pa'i cho ga yid bzhin nor bu</i> (Ratna gling pa, <i>gTer chos/ Ratna gling pa</i> , Lha ldan: Ratna gling pa'i |

dpe rnying bsdu sgrig khang, 2013, 27 v., vol. 11, 163–172)

S *sKye bdun sgrub pa'i cho ga yid bzhin nor bu* (Ratna gling pa, *gTer chos*, gSer rta snubs zur dgon: sNga 'gyur rnying ma dpal bla med gsang chen gnubs zur dgon, 2014, 21 v., vol. 5, 403–411)

[brda yig]

byams pa'i mgon la phyag 'tshal lo:

bdag 'dra o rgyan pad ma<sup>532</sup> yis:  
ma 'ongs 'gro ba'i don ched du:  
ngo mtshar skye bdun sgrub pa yi:  
cho ga'i rim pa bstan par bya:

'di la sbyor dngos rjes gsum ste<sup>533</sup>:  
[1] sbyor ba sngon 'gro<sup>534</sup> la gsum ste:

[1.1] gnas bya ba:  
[1.2] rdzas brtag pa:  
[1.3] ril bu sbyar<sup>535</sup> ba'o:

[1.1] dang po ni bkra shis pa<sup>536</sup> yid dang mthun pa'i gnas su: bsgrub<sup>537</sup>  
khang phyi dkar la<sup>538</sup> nang dkar<sup>539</sup> ba: rgyar gang yang rung ba: chu  
zheng du gab pa<sup>540</sup> shin tu legs par byas te:

rgyud las:

khang gsar<sup>541</sup> gkar zhal gru bzhi'i nang:

zhes so:

[1.2] gnyis pa rdzas brtag pa ni:

---

<sup>532</sup> pad+ma L

<sup>533</sup> dang L

<sup>534</sup> + dngos S

<sup>535</sup> sbyar L

<sup>536</sup> – pa L

<sup>537</sup> sgrub L

<sup>538</sup> – la L

<sup>539</sup> dmar S

<sup>540</sup> – : S

<sup>541</sup> par S

nges par skye bdun du nges pa'i<sup>542</sup>: dal 'byor grub thob skye bdun  
brtsegs<sup>543</sup> mar blangs shing: bar du gzhan gyis ma chod pa: bram ze la  
sogs gang yang rung ba dang : khyad par du bram ze dri med snying  
po dang : dung rna can dang : bram ze lo bhi pa<sup>544</sup> dang : bod yul kun  
tu o rgyan bdag gis sbas pa rnams ni mchog go:

gzhan yang skye mtha'i byang chub sems dpa'<sup>545</sup> srid pa tha ma pa'i  
spur sha dang : bde bar gshegs pa'i gdung la sogs pa rnams so:

de lta bu'i sha de blangs nas: ma rul ma sum<sup>546</sup> pa legs par bskams<sup>547</sup> te  
tshags<sup>548</sup> su bya'o:

[1.3] gsum pa ril bu sbyar ba<sup>549</sup> ni:

gong gi rdzas sran ma tsam re la: bzung drug dang : gla rtsi dang : a  
mR ta dang : dbang lag dang : rtag tu ngu:<sup>550</sup> 'bras phye phul re sbyar  
ro:

de du<sup>551</sup> tsam<sup>552</sup> sbyor yang 'dres shes<sup>553</sup> par bya'o:

de dag gi skyobs su<sup>554</sup> grub thob gang zag dam pa tshad ldan yin nges  
pa'i gdung : ring bsrel:<sup>555</sup> spur sha dang : gzhan yang rgya bod kyi byin  
brlabs rten<sup>556</sup> khyad par can dang : rgyal rigs kyi bu chung nad ngan  
gyis<sup>557</sup> ma shi ba'i sha dang : bya rgod kyi sha rnams yod na skyobs su  
dum re sbyar: med kyang chog go:

---

<sup>542</sup> ni L

<sup>543</sup> brtseg S

<sup>544</sup> wa L

<sup>545</sup> byang chub sems dpa' S, bud med L

<sup>546</sup> sung L

<sup>547</sup> skam L

<sup>548</sup> rtsigs L

<sup>549</sup> pa S

<sup>550</sup> -: L

<sup>551</sup> dus L

<sup>552</sup> ci tsam L

<sup>553</sup> par L

<sup>554</sup> +: L

<sup>555</sup> -: L

<sup>556</sup> - rten L

<sup>557</sup> pas :

rdzas de dag grub thob rtogs ldan dang : dge slong khirms gtsang gi chu dang : thar nu 'o mas sbyar nas: ril bu sran tshad dpag med bye snyed du byas te:<sup>558</sup> mtshal dang gur gum gyis kha dog bsgyur ro:

[2] gnyis pa dngos gzhi<sup>559</sup> ji ltar bsgrub pa'i rim pa la yang<sup>560</sup> gsum ste:

[2.1] dang po ni: gsang 'dus kyi sgrub khog nas ji ltar byung ba ltar du: sngon 'gro phyi nang gi mtshams bcad<sup>561</sup>: lta gon la sogs rgyas par<sup>562</sup> gzhung ltar bya'o:

[2.2] sgos kyi sbyor ba<sup>563</sup> bum pa chen po dkar ram dmar ba la rigs lnga'i phyag mtshan bri: gu gul dang thun gyis<sup>564</sup> brab: bgegs bskrad byas la ril bu blug<sup>565</sup>: bum rdzas nyer lnga spyi dang mthun<sup>566</sup> par bya: kha rgyan mgul chings sna lnga: kha tshang<sup>567</sup> la gsang 'dus kyi tsa ka li<sup>568</sup> thams cad gzugs so: gzhan yang cho ga'i rim pa rgyan dang rdzas thams cad sgrub khog dang las byang dang<sup>569</sup> sprete rgyas par bya'o:

[2.3] gsum pa sgrub byed dmigs pa'i rim pa ni:

bdag nyid thugs rje chen po bskyed rim ltar:<sup>570</sup> gsal ba'i thugs kar zla ba'i dal gyi lte bar hrñh dang mtha' la<sup>571</sup> yi ge drug pa gsal ba las 'od 'phros: bde chen nas ye shes pa spyang drangs la<sup>572</sup> gnyis med du bstim: stong pa'i ngang las bhrūm bum pa<sup>573</sup> las ye shes kyi gzhal yas khang : sgo drug rta babs thams cad rdzogs pa: ye shes kyi rang snang las grub pa rgya che 'phang<sup>574</sup> du<sup>575</sup> mtho bar bsam<sup>576</sup>:

---

558 – ril bu sran tshad dpag med bye snyed du byas te: L

559 – dngos gzhi L

560 – yang L

561 – bcad S

562 – rgyas par L

563 – bar S

564 – gyis L

565 emend. bsgrub S, sgrub L

566 'thun S

567 tshangs L

568 tsa kli L

569 du L

570 – : S

571 mar L

572 – la S

573 bum pa bhrūm S, bum pa bhrūm L

574 dpang L

575 – du L

576 bsgom S

nang gi ril bu dpag med re re la yang : bdag nyid thugs rje chen po  
 ji 'dra ba re re bzhin bsgom: de dag dam tshig pa re re la thugs srog  
 hrīḥ dang : bdag gi hrīḥ las 'od 'phros bde ba can dang : po ta la nas ye  
 shes pa spyang drangs nas dam tshig pa ril bu re re la yang bstim mo<sup>577</sup>:

de nas gzungs thag 'dzin pa<sup>578</sup> mang du byas nas: gzungs thag phyogs  
 mtshams thams cad du 'then la: snang srid thams cad thugs rje chen  
 po'i zhing dang sku ru bsam<sup>579</sup> la: 'dzab dgongs lta bu<sup>580</sup>: bum nang<sup>581</sup>  
 thams cad dang : mdor na snang srid thams cad yi ge bdun pa'i sngags  
 sgra bung ba tshang zhis pa ltar du di ri ri<sup>582</sup>: u ru ru bzla<sup>583</sup> zhing<sup>584</sup> :  
 ngag bcad: le lo dang : chang dang : gnyid dang : gnam spangs te<sup>585</sup>  
 nyin mtshan du thun gyi rgyun btsugs te<sup>586</sup> legs par bzla'o<sup>587</sup>:

de tshe rtags kyi rim pa yang : 'od dang : du ba dang : dri bzang<sup>588</sup>  
 dang : lha'i zhal mthong ba dang : nyams spro ba: byin chags pa  
 dang<sup>589</sup> :dkyil 'khor mchod rdzas rnams bkrag mdangs bzang ba: rmi  
 lam du yang nyi zla shar ba: gos dkar<sup>590</sup> gon pa: rnga rdung<sup>591</sup> :  
 dung 'bud<sup>592</sup>: dar phyar: khros byed: chos 'chad: sems can srog skyob:  
 gru pa byed: zam btsugs: nam mkhar 'phur ba la sogs 'byung: dngos  
 su yang gtor ma dang<sup>593</sup> bum pa khol ba la sogs rtags khyad par can  
 byung na: rgyal ba rigs lnga'i snying po: sku lnga ye shes lnga ru sbyor  
 ba dang : phung po'i bdud bcom nas tshe'i rig 'dzin sgrub par byed  
 pa'i snying po 'di sham bur byas te di<sup>594</sup> ri ri bzla'o<sup>595</sup>:

om̄ āḥ hūm svāhā:  
 mūm<sup>596</sup> lām mām pyām<sup>597</sup> tām:

- 
- 577 – mo L  
 578 gzungs thag 'dzin pa S, gzung 'dzin L  
 579 bsgom L  
 580 lta bu L, ltar du S  
 581 + gi lha S  
 582 – di ri ri L  
 583 bzlas L  
 584 shing L  
 585 + : L  
 586 + : L  
 587 bzlas so L  
 588 + po L  
 589 – dang S  
 590 + po L  
 591 brdung ba L  
 592 + pa L  
 593 + : L  
 594 ti L  
 595 bzlas so L  
 596 mūm S  
 597 pām L, pyām S

sarvatathāgata mahāpañca om āyujñānamahāpuṇye tiṣṭha  
om:

zhes sgrub khog las byung ba ltar: skabs su<sup>598</sup> byin dbab pa dang<sup>599</sup> :  
dngos grub blang<sup>600</sup> ba sogs 'phrul<sup>601</sup> dmigs shes par bya'o:

de ltar yig bdun dung phyur ram: bye ba bdun<sup>602</sup> la sogs<sup>603</sup> dus dang<sup>604</sup> :  
zhag grangs la sogs them par bya zhing : skabs su nyul le bskrad pa la  
sogs bya zhing : 'dzab la thang lhod med par 'bad do:

[3] spyi don gsum pa mjug tu<sup>605</sup> dbang bskur par bya ste:

bum pa ril bur bcas<sup>606</sup> pa thugs rje chen po dngos su<sup>607</sup> mos pa snying<sup>608</sup>  
rus pa'i gting nas byas la: mched rnams 'phan<sup>609</sup> dang : gdugs dang :  
rgyal mtshan dang : na bza' dang : spos dang : mda' dang<sup>610</sup> : me long  
dang<sup>611</sup> : tshogs dang : spyang gzigs<sup>612</sup> rol mo'i tshogs dpag med 'byor  
tshad thogs nas sgrug khog ltar byin 'bebs dang<sup>613</sup> bstod pa byas la:  
thams cad dal la<sup>614</sup> bskor zhing dngos grub len pa'i gsol 'debs thugs  
dam gnad nas bskul pa 'di bya'o:

hrīḥ

ma skyes<sup>615</sup> chos dbyings spros dang bral ba las<sup>616</sup>:

thugs rje'i rnam 'phrul yid bzhin nor bu ltar<sup>617</sup>:

byams mgon thugs rje'i lha khyed<sup>618</sup> dgongs su gsol:

bdag cag ma rig las ngan sdig po che:

---

598 + byin rlabs su L

599 las L

600 blangs S

601 'khrul L

602 – 'bum L

603 – la sogs S

604 – : S

605 + : L

606 bu L

607 + bskyed la S

608 + khung S

609 'phen L

610 dar L

611 – dar L

612 + : L

613 + : L

614 – la L

615 bcas L

616 la L

617 dang L

618 khyod L

khams gsum 'khor ba'i gnas su gtan 'khyams shing :  
rigs drug 'khor ba'i 'dam las<sup>619</sup> thar dus med:

mtha' med yun du nyam thag 'di 'dra myong :  
byams mgon thugs rje'i spyan gyis ma gzigs sam:  
'di la mgon po'i<sup>620</sup> thugs rjes phyag rkyongs<sup>621</sup> la:  
thar pa'i lam du 'dren par mdzad du gsol:

rang gi rnam smin sdug bsngal rgyun spyod<sup>622</sup> na:  
'phags pa'i thugs rjes bdag la ci zhig bya:  
thabs mkhas thugs rje'i zhags pa mchis lags na:  
da lta nyid du 'dren par mdzad du gsol:

ma gdung bu la brtse ba ji bzhin du:  
thugs dam ma g.yel thugs rje dbang gi lha:  
las ngan mtha' zad 'khor ba dong sprugs<sup>623</sup> nas:  
mgon po khyod kyī zhabs drung 'dren du gsol:

zhes snying<sup>624</sup> rus pa'i gting nas bya:

ru<sup>625</sup> dra'i smre bshags kyang bya'o:

mjug chog gsol ba btab pa rnams dbang bum bskur ltar bya zhing rjes  
rgyas par bum dbang ltar dbang rdzogs par bya:<sup>626</sup>

sgos nyer bsdus su bskur ba ni:

hūm:  
rang byung thugs rje'i dbang gi lha:  
dung phyur bye ba dpag med bzhugs:  
lha dbang lus la bskur ba yis:  
thugs rje chen po'i sku thob shog:

om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ:  
sarva tathāgata abhiṣiṅca om:

---

<sup>619</sup> 'dam las S, gnas la L

<sup>620</sup> pos L

<sup>621</sup> rkyang L

<sup>622</sup> gcod L

<sup>623</sup> sprug L

<sup>624</sup> + khung S

<sup>625</sup> rU S

<sup>626</sup> mjug chog gsol ba btab pa rnams dbang bskur ltar bya'o: rjes rgyas par bum dbang  
gzhung ltar rgyas par bya'o: L

'gag med rdo rje tshangs pa'i dbyangs<sup>627</sup>:  
 yan lag rgya mtsho'i chos sgra sgrog<sup>628</sup>:  
 gsung dbang ngag la bskur ba yis:  
 thugs rje chen po'i gsung thob shog:

gong gi sngags sham du:<sup>629</sup> abhiṣiṅca āḥ

smra bsam brjod med spros bral thugs:  
 phyogs dus rgyal ba'i thugs rdo rje:  
 thugs dbang sems la bskur ba yis:  
 thugs rje chen po'i thugs thob shog:

sham bur:<sup>630</sup> abhiṣiṅca hūṁ:

don gyi ye shes kun rgyas kyang :  
 ma rig gzung 'dzin bag chags 'thas:  
 ngo mtshar rmad byung mchog gi rdzas:  
 bag chags rnam<sup>631</sup> rtog<sup>632</sup> sbyong byed cing :

'di<sup>633</sup> yis<sup>634</sup> mngon par sangs rgyas thob:  
 sku gsung thugs yon phyin las dang :  
 thams cad ma lus dbang thob nas<sup>635</sup>:  
 rnam grol ye shes mchog thob shog:

yig bdun sham bur: sarva tathāgata abhiṣiṅca hrīḥ āḥ

zhes dbang<sup>636</sup> bskur la:<sup>637</sup> bum pa gnas bzhir gtugs shing : dbang re  
 bzhin bdag dam tshig pa: ril bu ye shes sems dpar<sup>638</sup> bskyed nas dri  
 chu<sup>639</sup> phul te: ril bu gsum spyin dam tshig ye shes dbyer med du gyur:  
 bdag thugs rje chen po'i ngo bor gyur pa'i<sup>640</sup> nges shes bskyed do:

---

627 gsung S

628 sgrogs L

629 -: S

630 -: S

631 rnams L

632 rtogs L

633 'dis L

634 ni L

635 shog S

636 - dbang L

637 -: L

638 pa, - sems dpar L

639 chu'i L

640 par S



rjes su yang las can rnam lo re bzhin zhag bdun la sogs 'tshogs te:  
bsgrub<sup>641</sup> pa<sup>642</sup> kha gso zhing .<sup>643</sup> dbang dang rjes gnang sbyin dus  
spyod lam<sup>644</sup> kun tu gong gi bskyed rim ldan pas yig bdun bzlas:

gzhan la yang lung sbyin:<sup>645</sup> maṇi bskul: rgyal khams thams cad maṇi  
bskul: ril bu bkye'o<sup>646</sup>:

rjes yon tan dang 'bras bu bstan pa ni:

gsang 'dus rgyud las:

ril bu su yi ltor song ba:  
tshe rabs gang dang gar skyes kyang :  
spyan ras gzigs dang 'bral mi srid:

bdag las gzhan gces 'gro don spyod:  
yig bdun bzlas<sup>647</sup> zhing dam tshig srungs<sup>648</sup>:  
thams cad 'khor ba dong nas sprug:

zhes pas:

ma bsgrubs<sup>649</sup> thabs kyis<sup>650</sup> sangs rgyas 'thob<sup>651</sup> pa la bzhi ste: rgyud  
btags grol: phyag rgya pad+ma can: gsang lam 'pho ba: dam rdzas  
skye bdun te:

dper na mthep dang gzhu'i nus pas mda' pha rol na 'gro ba dang : gru  
dang mnyan pa'i rtsol bas chu bo sgrol ba ltar:<sup>652</sup> nges par spyan ras  
gzigs kyi drung du skye bar 'gyur ro:

gsang 'dus rgyud don skye bdun sgrub pa'i thabs:  
ma 'ongs don du o rgyan pad+mas ngas:  
chos dang dam rdzas gnam skas brag la sbas:  
ma 'ongs dus mthar las can gcig dang 'phrad:

---

<sup>641</sup> sgrub L

<sup>642</sup> – pa L

<sup>643</sup> – : L

<sup>644</sup> – lam L

<sup>645</sup> – : L

<sup>646</sup> spel lo: L

<sup>647</sup> bzla S

<sup>648</sup> srung L

<sup>649</sup> sgrub L

<sup>650</sup> kyi L

<sup>651</sup> thob L

<sup>652</sup> – : L

snyigs ma'i 'gro ba 'khor ba dong sprug shog:

sa ma ya: rgya rgya rgya: [brda yig]

sprul sku rat+na gling pa'i gter ma'o:<sup>653</sup>

## Appendix IX

### *Wish-fulfilling Gem: A Ritual for Accomplishing the Seven Born* Translation

Homage to the lord of love!

I, Padmasambhava,  
for the sake of future beings,  
will teach the ritual procedure  
for accomplishing the amazing seven-born.

It is threefold: [1] the preparation, [2] the main part, and [3] the conclusion:

[1] The preliminary preparation is [also] three-fold:

- [1.1] securing a place
- [1.2] assessing the substance
- [1.3] forming the pills

[1.1] First, in a place that is auspicious and agreeable, very adeptly make a practice house, white outside and white inside, of any size, whose dimensions are equally proportionate.

The *tantra* states:

inside a new square structure with white plaster walls.

[1.2] Second, the assessment of the substance

It can be a brahmin, or anyone else, who has assumed seven lives in succession, without any other lifetime intervening, as a *siddha* with the leisures and opportunities, and who ascertains those seven lives with

---

<sup>653</sup> +/bkra shis dpal 'bar 'dzam gling rgyas gyur gcig S

certainty. Specifically, the brahmins Stainless Essence (*Dri med snying po*) and He who Wears Conch Earrings (*Dung rna can*), the brahmin Lobhipa, and everything concealed by me, the master of Uḍḍiyāna, all throughout Tibet, is supreme.

Moreover, it is the corpse flesh of bodhisattvas in their final existence and final birth, the bones of the Sugata, and the like.

Having procured such flesh, dry it well, without letting it rot or become rancid, and shred it.

[1.3] Third, forming the pills

For each pea-size piece of the aforementioned substance, mix in a hand-full each of the six excellent substances, musk, *amṛta*, *dbang lag*, *rtaḡ tu ngu*, and rice flour.

However much of this you concoct, you should know that it has been mixed [well].

As support for these, add in the bones (*gdung*), pearl relics (*ring bsrel*), and corpse flesh of a *siddha*—someone who surely was a bonafide sublime person—as well as extraordinary Indian and Tibetan blessings receptacles, the flesh of a child of royal caste who did not die from a terminal illness, and the flesh of a vulture. If you happen to have these, mix in a piece of each as support. But being without these will also suffice.

Combine these substances with the urine of a realized *siddha*, the urine of a pure monk, and *thar nu* milk. Make a countless number of pea-size pills, as many as there are grains of sand, then color them with vermilion and saffron.

[2] Second, the main part, the procedure for how to accomplish [the pills], has three [subdivisions]:

[2.1] First, do the preliminaries of demarcating the external and internal boundaries, the preparatory phase, and so forth, in detail, according to the liturgy, just as it appears in the accomplishment structural framework (*sgrub khog*) of the *Secret Assembly*.

[2.2] As a specific preparation, draw the hand implements of the five families on a big red or white vase. Pelt it with power substances,

together with frankincense [smoke]. [Thereby] drive away obstructors and then insert the pills. Make the twenty-five vase substances according to the general specification. Fasten an adornment to its spout and a five-color band around its neck. On a lid with small holes insert all the miniature icon cards (*tsa ka li*) of the *Secret Assembly*. Moreover, do it elaborately, connecting all the stages of the procedure, the adornments, and the substances with the accomplishment structural framework (*sgrub khog*) and the liturgy manual (*las byang*).

[2.3] Third, the procedure of the visualization that effects the accomplishment is as follows:

Visualize yourself according to the generation stage of the Great Compassionate One. Visualize that at your heart is a moon disk, at the center of which is the syllable *hrīḥ*, surrounded by the six syllables. Light radiates from it, invites the wisdom being from Great Bliss, and merges them indivisibly with you.

Meditate that from the state of emptiness there emerges the vase, in the form of the syllable *bhrūṃ*. It transforms into a celestial mansion wisdom, complete with six gates and porticoes. It is formed from the self-manifestation of wisdom, vast and lofty in height.

Meditate that each of the innumerable pills inside are also identical to yourself in the form of the Great Compassionate One. In each of these *samaya* beings is the heart-lifeforce of the syllable *hrīḥ*. From them, and from *hrīḥ* in one's own [heart too] radiates light that invites the wisdom beings from *Sukhāvātī* and *Potalaka* and dissolves them in each of the pills.

Then, with many *dhāraṇī*-cord holders, pull the *dhāraṇī* cord into the cardinal and intermediate directions while imagining that all of appearance and existence is the land and awakened body of the Great Compassionate One. Recite, and otherwise refrain from talking, according to the *Intent of Recitation* (*'dzab dgongs*)—*dī ri ri* and *u ru ru*—like the sound of a beehive, such that everything inside the vase and, in sum, all that appears and exists, is the seven-syllable mantra. Recite well, establishing a continuity of sessions throughout the day and night, refraining from laziness, alcohol, sleep, and chatter.

As for the sequence of signs that can occur at that time: there can be light, smoke, fragrant scent, visions of the faces of deities, exultation, majesty, the *maṇḍala* and offerings substances becoming lustrous and fine; and, in dreams, the sun and moon rising, wearing white clothes,

beating a drum, blowing a conch, hoisting a banner, washing, preaching the Dharma, protecting beings, rowing, erecting a bridge, and flying in the sky, among others. There can also occur things in actuality, like the oblation and vase boiling over, and so forth.

If extraordinary signs like these occur, add to the end, and recite like *di ri ri* this essence [mantra]—it is the essence [mantras] of the five bud-dha families, conjoined with the five awakened bodies and five wis-doms, and [the essence mantra] for destroying the demon of the aggre-gates and thereby attaining the *vidhyādhara* [level of mastery] over lifespans:

om̐ āḥ hūm̐ svāhā  
mūm̐ lām̐ mām̐ pyām̐ tām̐  
sarva tathāgata mahāpañca om̐ āyujñānamahāpunye tiṣṭha om̐

You should know how to occasionally visualize dynamic transfor-mations, such as the bringing down of blessings, the receiving of sid-dhis, and the like, as they appear in the accomplishment structural framework (*sgrub khog*).

In this way complete the duration, number of days, and so forth for one hundred million recitations, seventy million recitations, or the like, of the seven syllables.

Occasionally drive out the *nyulé* and so forth and make efforts to en-sure that the recitation is neither too rigid not too loose.

[3] The third topic is the initiation to be conferred at the end

Imagine that the vase and its pills are the Great Compassionate One in person, and while maintaining this belief from the very depths of your heart, bring down the blessings and perform praises, according to the accomplishment structural framework (*sgrub khog*), while the siblings hold up an immeasurable assembly of pendants, parasols, banners, fabrics, incense, arrows, mirrors, feast offerings, gifts, and music, as much they can afford. Everyone should circumambulate the *maṇḍala* and perform this supplication for receiving *siddhis* that beseeches [the Great Compassionate One] through appealing to the vital point of his pledge:

hrīḥ  
From the unborn expanse of reality, free of elaboration,  
emanation of compassion, who is like a wish-fulfilling gem,

lord of love, deity of compassion, we beseech you to  
consider us.

We ignorant sinners with bad karma  
have endlessly wandered throughout the land of *saṃsāra*,  
with its three realms  
and have never been free from the swamp of *saṃsāra*, with  
its six classes.

Experiencing such torment as this for so very long—  
won't you look upon us with your compassionate gaze, lord  
of love?  
Out of your compassion, oh lord, extend to us your hand!  
We beseech you to lead us to the path of liberation!

If we constantly undergo suffering as the ripening of our  
own actions,  
what good to us is your compassion, noble one?  
If you have the lasso of skillful means and compassion,  
we beseech you to guide us this very moment!

Like a mother's fierce love for her child,  
do not disregard your pledge, divine lord of compassion!  
We beseech you to churn up *saṃsāra* from its depths to bring  
an end to our bad karma,  
and drag us before your feet, oh lord!

Chant this from the very depths of your hearts.

Also do the confession of Rudra's lamentation.

The supplicators should do the concluding rite according to the initiation vase (*dbang bum*) and then afterwards do the complete initiation in detail according to the vase initiation (*bum dbang*).

Specifically confer it during the dissolution as follows:

hūm  
Self-arisen divine lord of compassion  
you are present in immeasurable tens and hundreds of  
millions [of forms].  
By conferring on my body the lord of deities  
may I attain the awakened body of the Great Compassionate  
One!

om maṇi padme hūm hrīḥ  
sarva tathāgata abhiṣiṅca om

With your ceaseless vajra brahmā speech,  
you resound the Dharma with its ocean of divisions.  
By conferring upon my speech your awakened speech,  
may I attain the awakened speech of the Great  
Compassionate One!

Add to the end of the previous mantra sarva tathāgata abhiṣiṅca hrīḥ  
āḥ

Your inconceivable and ineffable awakened mind, free of  
discursive thought,  
is the vajra awakened mind of the Jinas throughout space  
and time.  
By conferring upon my mind the power of your awakened  
mind,  
may I attain the awakened mind of the Great Compassionate  
One!

Add to the end of the previous one abhiṣiṅca hūm.

Although true wisdom is fully perfected,  
ignorance, dualistic fixation, and habitual patterns are  
solidified.  
May the amazing and astounding supreme substance  
purify habitual patterns and concepts.

Through it may we reach manifest awakening!  
May we attain all the initiations without exception  
of awakened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities!  
May we attain liberation and the highest wisdom!

At the end of the seven syllables add sarva tathāgata abhiṣiṅca āḥ.

While conferring the initiation touch the vase to the four parts of the  
body. With each initiation, generate [the image of] yourself as the *sa-*  
*maya* being and the pill as the wisdom being, and offer the pill with  
urine. Having given three pills, the *samaya* and wisdom beings become  
indivisible. Engender confidence that you have transformed into the  
essence of the Great Compassionate One.

Thereafter, as well, those with the requisite karma should assemble each year for seven days, or the like, restore the practice and, when giving the initiation and permission blessing, recite the seven syllables while observing the aforementioned generation stage [visualization] throughout all activities.

Give the reading transmission to others as well. Encourage them in the *maṇi*. Encourage the whole country in the *maṇi*. And distribute the pills.

Finally, is the teaching on the virtues and fruits:

The *tantra* states:

Whoever's stomach a pill should fall in,  
will never part from Avalokiteśvara  
no matter the lifetime or birthplace.

Act on behalf of beings, cherishing others more than yourself,  
recite the seven syllables, and observe the *samayās*,  
and you will stir up *saṃsāra* from the dregs for all.

Thus, there are four techniques for attaining buddhahood without practicing:

[1] the liberation through wearing *tantras*, [2] a *mudrā* with a lotus, [3] the secret path of transference, and [4] the *samaya* substance of the seven-born.

Just as, for example, an arrow travels afar through the power of thumb and bow, and a river is crossed with a boat and an oarsman's effort, so too will we surely be reborn in the presence of Avalokiteśvara.

This means of accomplishment of the seven-born, the meaning of the  
*Tantra of the Secret Assembly* (*gsang 'dus rgyud don skye bdun sgrub pa'i thabs*),

was concealed by me, the master of Uḍḍiyāna, for the sake of posterity,  
among the Dharma teachings and *samaya* substances at Namkedrak  
(gNam skas brag).

May it encounter a karmically destined one in the future, at the end of  
time,  
and churn up *saṃsāra* from the depths for beings of the degenerate age!

*samaya*: seal seal seal:



This is a Treasure of the emanation body Ratna Lingpa.

May auspiciousness and glory blaze forth and spread through the world!

### Works Cited

- Abhayākara Gupta. 2015. *Dpal yang dag par sbyor ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po'i rgya cher 'grel pa man ngag gi snye ma, Srī Samputātantarājaṭikāmnāyamañjarī* (Tōh. 1198). Rare and ancient Tibetan texts collected in Tibetan regions series, vol. 1. Chengdu: Sichuan Nationalities Publishing House.
- Almogi, Orna. 2020. *Authenticity and Authentication: Glimpses behind the Scenes of the Formation of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon*. Indian and Tibetan Studies 9. Hamburg: Department of Indian and Tibetan Studies, Universität Hamburg.
- Bka' 'gyur (dpe bsdur ma)*. 2006–2009. Krung go'i bod rig pa zhib 'jug ste gnas kyi bka' bstan dpe sdur khang. 108 volumes. Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang.
- Brown, Peter. 1981. *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bstan 'gyur (dpe bsdur ma)*. 1994–2008. Krung go'i bod rig pa zhib 'jug ste gnas kyi bka' bstan dpe sdur khang. 120 vols. Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa'i dpe skrun khang.
- Bu ston rin chen grub. 1988. *Bu ston chos 'byung (Bde bar gshegs pa'i bstan pa'i gsal byed chos kyi 'byung gnas gsung rab rin po che'i mdzod)*. Beijing: Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang.
- Cantwell, Cathy. 2015a. "Different Kinds of Composition/Compilation Within the Dudjom Revelatory Tradition." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 36/37: 243–280.
- Cantwell, Cathy. 2015b. "The Medicinal Accomplishment (*sman sgrub*) practice in the Dudjom Meteoric Iron Razor (*gnam lcags spu gri*) tradition: Reflections on the ritual and meditative practice at a monastery in Southern Bhutan." *Journal of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies* 8: 49–95.
- Cantwell, Cathy. 2020. *Dudjom Rinpoche's Vajrakīlaya Works: A Study of Authoring, Compiling, and Editing Texts in the Tibetan Revelatory Tradition*. Sheffield & Bristol: Equinox.
- Carsten, Janet. 1995. "The Substance of Kinship and the Heat of the Hearth: Feeding, Personhood, and Relatedness among Malays in Pulau Langkawi." *American Ethnologist* (May, vol. 22, no. 2): 223–241.
- Carsten, Janet, ed. 2000. *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Carsten, Janet. 2001. "Substantivism, and Antisubstantivism." In *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*, edited by Sarah Franklin and Susan McKinnon, 29–53. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Carsten, Janet. 2004. *After Kinship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carsten, Janet. 2011. "Substance and Relationality: Blood in Contexts." *Annual Review of Anthropology* (40): 19–35.
- Carsten, Janet. 2013. "Introduction: Blood Will Out." In *Blood Will Out: Essays on Liquid Transfers and Flows*, edited by Janet Carsten, 1–23. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Carsten, Janet. 2019. *Blood Work: Life and Laboratories in Penang*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Dalton, Jacob P. 2004. "The Development of Perfection: The Interiorization of Buddhist Ritual in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32: 1–30.
- Dalton, Jacob P. 2023. *Conjuring the Buddha: Ritual Manuals in Early Tantric Buddhism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Dam pa sangs rgyas. 2012–2013. *Zhi byed snga phyi bar gsum gyi chos skor phyogs bsgrigs*, 13 vols. Kathmandu: Ding rig lang skor gtsug lag khang.
- Davidson, Ronald M. 2015. "Studies in *Dhāraṇī* Literature III: Seeking the Parameters of a *Dhāraṇī-piṭaka*, the Formation of the *Dhāraṇīsaṃgrahas*, and the Place of the Seven Buddhas." In *Scripture: Canon:: Text: Context, Essays Honoring Lewis Lancaster*, edited by Richard K. Payne, 119–80. Berkeley, CA: Institute of Buddhist Studies and BDK America, Inc.
- Dharmachakra Translation Committee. 2020a. *Emergence from Samputa* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh381.html>). (*Samputōdbhava*, Toh. 381). 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.
- Dharmachakra Translation Committee. 2020b. *Seven Buddhas*. (<https://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-068-004.html>). 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.
- Dharmachakra Translation Committee. 2021. *Detailed Account of the Previous Aspirations of the Seven Thus-Gone Ones*. (<https://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-087-008.html>). 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.
- Dga' ba'i rdo rje. 2002 [1995]. *'Khrung dpe dri med shel gyi me long*. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.
- Doctor, Andreas. 2005. *Tibetan Treasure Literature: Revelation, Tradition, and Accomplishment in Visionary Buddhism*. Ithaca and Boulder: Snow Lion Publications.

- Dudjom Rinpoche Jikdrel Yeshe Dorje. 1991. *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*. Translated by Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- Franklin, Sarah and Susan McKinnon, eds. 2001. *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Garrett, Frances. 2010. "Tapping the Body's Nectar: Gastronomy and Incorporation in Tibetan Literature." *History of Religions*: 300–326.
- Gayley, Holly. 2007. "Soteriology of the Senses in Tibetan Buddhism." *Numen* 54: 459–499.
- Gentry, James. 2017. *Power Objects in Tibetan Buddhism: The Life, Writings, and Legacy of Sokdokpa Lodrö Gyeltsen*. Leiden & Boston: Brill.
- Gentry, James. 2019. "Liberation Through Sensory Encounters in Tibetan Buddhist Practice." *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no. 50 (June): 73–131.
- Gentry, James. 2022. "Why Did the Cannibal King Fly? Tantric Transformations of an Indian Narrative Tradition in Tibet." *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no. 64 (July): 84–135.
- Gerke, Barbara. 2019. "The Buddhist–Medical Interface in Tibet: Black Pill Traditions in Transformation." *Religions* 10, 282.
- Germano, David and Kevin Trainor, ed. 2004. *Embodying the Dharma: Buddhist Relic Veneration in Asia*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Gray, David. 2005. "Eating the Heart of the Brahmin: Representations of Alterity and the Formation of Identity in Tantric Buddhist Discourse." *History of Religions* 45, no. 1: 45–69.
- Gray, David. 2007. *The Cakrasamvara Tantra (The Discourse of Śrī Heruka) (Śrīherukābhīdhāna): A Study and Annotated Translation*. New York: The American Institute of Buddhist Studies at Columbia University in New York, co-published with Columbia University's Center for Buddhist Studies and Tibet House US.
- 'Gran pa'i zla thams cad dang bral ba khams gsum chos kyi rgyal po spung mkhan chen 'od zer bla ma'i rnam thar 'gro blo'i mun sel. Date unknown. BDRC# W1GS58280.
- Gu ru Chos kyi dbang phyug. 1979. *Gu ru chos dbang gi rang rnam dang zhal gdams*. 2 vols. Paro: Ugyen Tempai Gyaltzen.
- Gu ru Chos kyi dbang phyug. 1982. *Thugs chen yang snying 'dus pa'i chos skor*. 1 vol. Paro, Bhutan: Kyichu Temple. BDRC# W20268.
- Gu ru Chos kyi dbang phyug (Gu ru Chos dbang). Date unknown. *Thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa*, BDRC # W8LS16401.
- Gyatso, Janet. 1993. "The Logic of Legitimation in the Tibetan Treasure Tradition." *History of Religions* 33, no. 2: 97–134.
- Gyatso, Janet. 1994. "Guru Chos-dbang's gTer 'byung chen mo: An Early Survey of the Treasure Tradition and its Strategies in Discussing Bon Treasure." In *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Sixth*

- International Association of Tibetan Studies Seminar*, edited by Per Kvaerne, vol. 1, 275–287. Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture.
- Gyatso, Janet. 1996. "Drawn from the Tibetan Treasury: The Gter-ma Literature." In *Tibetan Literature*, edited by José Ignacio Cabezón and Roger Jackson, 147–169. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Gyatso, Janet. 1998. *Apparitions of the Self: The Secret Biographies of a Tibetan Visionary*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Halkias, Georgios. 2013. *Luminous Bliss: A Religious History of Pure Land Literature in Tibet*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Harrison, Paul. 1996. "A Brief History of the Tibetan bKa' 'gyur." In *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, edited by José Cabezón and Roger Jackson. Ithaca: Snow Lion, pp. 70–94.
- Hirshberg, Daniel. 2016. *Remembering the Lotus-Born: Padmasambhava in the History of Tibet's Golden Age*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications.
- Hirshberg, Daniel. 2017. "A Post-Incarnate Usurper? Inheritance at the Dawn of Catenate Reincarnation in Tibet." *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no. 38, Février: 65–83.
- Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Taye. 2011. *The Hundred Tertöns: A Garland of Beryl, Brief Accounts of Profound Terma and the Siddhas Who Have Revealed It*, translated by Yeshe Gyamtso. New York: KTD Publications.
- 'Jam dpal brtson 'grus. 2010. *Lho brag gnas yig*. Par gzhi dang po. 1 vol. Pe cin: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.
- Kapstein, Matthew. 2000. *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation, and Memory*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kapstein, Matthew. 2003. "The Indian Literary Identity in Tibet." In *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, edited by Sheldon Pollock, 747–802. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Karma chags med. 2010. *Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa'i maṇi bum sgrub dang ril bu'i lo rgyus dang phan yon*. In *mKhas grub karma chags med kyi gsung 'bum*. 60 vols, vol. 14, 451–496. Nang chen rdzong: gNas mdo gsang sngags chos 'phel gi dpe rnying nyams gso khang.
- Karma chos 'phel. 1993. *bDud rtsi sman gyi 'khrungs dpe*. Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang.
- Karmay, Samten. 1980. "An Open Letter by Pho-brang Zhi-ba-'od." *The Tibet Journal* Vol. 3: 1–28.
- Kloos, Stephan. 2010. "Tibetan Medicine in Exile: The Ethics, Politics and Science of Cultural Survival." Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, San Francisco and Berkeley.

- Kohn, Richard J. dir. 1985. *Lord of the Dance/Destroyer of Illusion*. Sky Walker Productions.
- Kohn, Richard J. 2001. *Lord of the Dance: The Mani Rimdu Festival in Tibet and Nepal*. Albany: SUNY.
- Krug, Adam. 2019. "Buddhist Medical Demonology in *The Sūtra of the Seven Buddhas*." *Religions* 10, 255; doi:10.3390/rel10040255.
- Langelaar, Reinier. 2021. "Bones and Thrones: Genealogy, Community and Kinship in the Post-imperial Tibetan Highlands." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.
- Leschly, Jacob. 2007a. "Guru Chowang," *Treasury of Lives*, <http://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Guru-Chowang/5588>.
- Leschly, Jacob. 2007b. "Ratna Lingpa," *Treasury of Lives*, <http://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Ratna-Lingpa/7164>.
- Lingpa, Jigme, Patrul Rinpoche, Getse Mahapandita and Dharmachakra Translation Committee. 2006. *Deity, Mantra, and Wisdom: Development Stage Meditation in Tibetan Buddhist Tantra*. Ithaca and Boulder: Snow Lion Publications.
- Maas, Philipp A. 2008. "The Concepts of the Human Body and Disease in Classical Yoga and Āyurveda." *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens / Vienna Journal of South Asian Studies*: 125–162.
- Martin, Daniel. 1992. "Crystals and Images from Bodies, Hearts and Tongues from Fire: Points of Relic Controversy from Tibetan History." In *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Narita 1989*, edited by Shōren Ihara and Zuihō Yamaguchi, vol. 1, 183–191. Narita-shi, Chiba-Ken, Japan: Naritasan Shinshoji.
- Martin, Daniel. 1994. "Pearls from Bones: Relics, Chortens, Tertons and the Signs of Saintly Death in Tibet." *Numen* 41: 273–32.
- Martin, Daniel. 2001. *Unearthing Bön Treasures: Life and Contested Legacy of a Tibetan Scripture Revealer*. Leiden. Brill.
- Mayer, Robert. 1996. *A Scripture of the Ancient Tantra Collection: The Phur-pa bcu-gnyis*. Oxford: Kiscadale Publications.
- Mayer, Robert. 1997. "Were The gSar ma pa Polemicists Justified in Rejecting Some rNying ma pa Tantras?" In *Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, edited by Ernst Steinkellner, 618–32. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, vol. II.
- Mayer, Robert. 2015. "gTer ston and Tradent: Innovation and Conservation in Tibetan Treasure Literature." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 36/37 2013/2014: 227–242.
- Mills, Martin. 2003. *Identity, Ritual and State in Tibetan Buddhism: The Foundations of Authority in Gelukpa Monasticism*. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon.

- Mrozik, Susanne. 2007. *Virtuous Bodies: The Physical Dimensions of Morality in Buddhist Ethics*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nourse, Benjamin J. 2021. "Translating the Cult of the Book: Publishing and Performing the Fifth Dalai Lama's *The Wish-Fulfilling King* from Lhasa to Beijing." *East Asian Publishing and Society* 11: 34–67.
- Nya dbon Kun dga' pal. 2010. *gZhi lam 'bras gsum las brtsams pa'i dris lan yid kyi mun sel*. In *'Od gsal rgyan gyi bshad pa*, 135–293. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.
- Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer. 1988. *Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud (Nyang ral chos 'byung)*. Lhasa, PRC: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang.
- Ohnuma, Reiko. 2007. *Head, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood: Giving Away the Body in Indian Buddhist Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Oliphant, Charles Jamyang. 2015. "Extracting the Essence: *Bcud len* in the Tibetan literary tradition." Unpublished PhD thesis, Oxford University.
- O rgyan gling pa. 1985. *Padma bka' thang shel brag ma*. Rewalsar, distt. Mandi, H.P., India: Zigar Drukpa Kargyud Institute.
- Phillips, Bradford. 2004. "Consummation and Compassion in Medieval Tibet: The Maṇi Bka' 'bum chen mo of Gu ru Chos-kyi dbang-phyug." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia.
- Ratna gling pa. 1977–1979. *Ratna gling pa'i gter chos*. 19 vols. Darjeeling: Taklung Tsetrul Pema Wangyal.
- Ratna gling pa. 2013. *Ratna gling pa'i chos gter*. 27 vols. Lha ldan: Ratna gling pa'i dpe rnying bsdu sgrig khang.
- Ratna gling pa. 2014a. *gTer chen ratna gling pa'i gsung 'bum mun sel gron me*. 21 vols. gSer rta gnubs zur dgon, PRC: sNga 'gyur rnying ma dpal bla med gsang chen gnubs zur dgon.
- Ratna gling pa. 2014b. *Ratna gling pa'i chos gter kyi tsakli*, 3 vols., vol. 1. gSer rta gnubs zur dgon: sNga 'gyur rnying ma dpal bla med gsang chen gnubs zue dgon.
- Raudsepp, Kadri. 2009. "Dating and Authorship Problems in the Sngags log sun 'byin Attributed to Chag lo tsā ba Chos rje dpal." In *Contemporary Visions in Tibetan Studies*, edited by Brandon Dotson, Kalsang Norbu Gurung, Georgios Halkias, and Tim Myatt, 281–297. Chicago: Serindia Publications.
- Roberts, Peter Alan with Tulku Yeshe. 2013. *The Basket's Display*. <https://read.84000.co/translation/toh116.html> (*Kāraṇḍavyūha*, Toḥ. 116). 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha., 2013.
- Rnying ma rgyud 'bum (mtshams brag dgon pa'i bris ma)*. 1982. 46 vols. Thimphu: National Library, Royal Government of Bhutan.
- Sahlins, Marshall. 2013. *What Kinship Is – And Is Not*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

- Salguero, Pierce C. 2022. *A Global History of Buddhism and Medicine*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Schneider, David. 1984. *A Critique of the Study of Kinship*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Shechen Gyaltsap IV and Kunkyen Tenpe Nyima, trans. Dharmachakra Translation Committee. 2012. *Vajra Wisdom: Deity Practice in Tibetan Buddhism*. Boston: Shambhala Publications.
- Shes rab rgyal mtshan, Dol po pa. 199?. *Bram ze sha'am skye bdun ril sgrub thabs*. In *gSung 'bum/ Shes rab rgyal mtshan ('Dzam thang)*, 8 vols., vol. 2, 385–397. PRC, 'Dzam thang.
- Shes rab rgyal mtshan, Dol po pa. 2011. *Bram ze sku sha'am skye bdun ril bus grub thabs*. In *gSung 'bum shes rab rgyal mtshan (glog klad par ma)*, Par gzhi dang po, 13 vols., vol. 9, 349–358. Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa'i dpe skrun khang.
- Snga 'gyur rgyud 'bum phyogs bsgrigs*. 2009. 59 vols. Edited by gZan dkar 03 Thub bstan nyi ma and 'Gro 'dul rdo rje. Par gzhi dang po par thengs dang po. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.
- Sngags log sun 'byin gyi skor*. 1979. Thimphu, Bhutan: Kunsang Tobgyel and Mani Dorji.
- Snellgrove, David. 2010. *The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study*. Hongkong: Orchid.
- Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan. 1975. *Collected Writings of Sog-bzlog-pa Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan*. 2 vols. New Delhi: Sanji Dorji.
- Sørensen, P.K. 1994. *Tibetan Buddhist Historiography: The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies. An Annotated Translation of the XIVth Century Chronicle rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Studholme, Alexander. 2002. *The Origins of Om Mañipadme Hūṃ: A Study of the Kāraṇḍavyūha*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Thugs sras Kun dga'. 1979. *Zhi byed snga bar phyi gsum gyi skor*. 5 vols. Thimphu, Bhutan: Druk Sherik Parkhang.
- Trainor, Kevin. 1997. *Relics, Ritual, and Representation: Rematerializing the Sri Lankan Theravada Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tsogyal, Yeshe. 1993. *The Lotus-Born: The Life Story of Padmasambhava*, translated by Eric Pema Kunsang, edited by Marcia Binder-Schmidt. Boston: Shambhala Publications.
- Vajragarbha and Malati L. Shendge. 2004. *Ṣaṣṭhasrikā-Hevajra-ṭīkā: a critical edition*. Delhi: Pratibha Prakashan.
- van der Kuijp, Leonard W. J. & Kurtis R. Schaeffer. 2009. *An Early Tibetan Survey of Buddhist Literature: The bsTan pa rgyas pa rgyan gyi nyi 'od of bCom ldan ral gri*. Harvard Oriental Series 64. Cambridge,

- MA: The Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Harvard University.
- Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo. 2009. "The Gift and the Given: Three Nano-Essays on Kinship and Magic." In *Kinship and Beyond: The Genealogical Model Reconsidered*, edited by Sandra C. Bamford and James Leach. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Wagner, Roy. 1977. "Analogic Kinship: A Daribi Example." *American Ethnologist* 4: 623–42.
- Wallace, Vesna. 2016. "Thoughts on Originality, Reuse, and Intertextuality in Buddhist Literature Derived from the Contributions to the Volume." *Buddhist Studies Review*: 227–233.
- Wedemeyer, Christian. 2013. *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism: History, Semiology, and Transgression in the Indian Traditions*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wujastyk, Dominik. 1998. *The Roots of Āyurveda: Selections from Sanskrit Medical Writings*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India.
- Ye shes bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan. 1971. *Dri med shel phreng nas bshad pa'i sman gyi 'khrungs dpe mdzes mtshar mig rgyan*. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture.
- Zhe sdang rdo rje. 1976. *brTag pa gnyis pa'i 'grel pa rin chen rgyan 'dra*. Thimphu, Bhutan: Kunzang Topgey.

