

The Prayer of the Eighteen Great Omens: An Autobiographical Sketch of the Life of Rig 'dzin rGod ldem through Signs, Omens, and Symbols

Jay Holt Valentine

(Troy University)

The treasure revealer Rig 'dzin rGod ldem (1337–ca. 1401), whose given name was dNgos grub rgyal mtshan, is now well known as the founding *gTer ston* of the Northern Treasures Tradition.¹ Knowledge of his life has come to us primarily by way of *The Clarifying Ray of Sunlight*, a 15th-century biography that was composed by one of his minor students, Se ston Nyi ma bzang po (b. ca. 1386), which nearly all later biographies have relied upon as their most important source.² More recently, mKhan po Chos dbyings (b. 20th c.) has put together a new biography of Rig 'dzin rGod ldem that appears in his larger work entitled *The Garland of Wondrous Tales*, which is a history of the Northern Treasures that begins with the life of the Buddha and continues through the beginning of the 21st century.³ Both of these works make use of a large variety of prophetic and biographic materials that were revealed and or written in the 14th and early 15th centuries. The source that will be examined more closely herein is an autobiographical work entitled *The Prayer of the Eighteen Great Omens*, which was written by Rig 'dzin rGod ldem himself. While an annotated translation of the complete prayer appears at the end of this article, it is preceded by a technical description of the prayer, a discussion of its placement within the literature of the Northern Treasures, and an inventory of the various available editions. This is followed by a brief analysis that examines the manner in which the prayer is

¹ For an easily accessible and digestible biography of Rig 'dzin rGod ldem, see Boord 2013.

² While there are many available editions of this text, the two that are most relevant here are: Nyi ma bzang po 1983 & 2015. For a lightly abridged paraphrase of the biography that includes some translated passages, see Herweg 1994. For a complete translation, see my forthcoming publication by Wandel Verlag: Edition Khordong, which will hopefully be released in 2026.

³ Currently, there is only one available edition of this biography: Chos dbyings 2015. A complete translation of the biography will be included in the forthcoming *Northern Treasure Histories: Volume II*.

interpreted and utilized by the authors of *The Clarifying Ray of Sunlight* and *The Garland of Wondrous Tales*.

Description of the Prayer

The complete prayer consists of a title, twenty-two verses, and a one-sentence colophon. Each stanza is composed of four lines, each with nine syllables. The first eighteen stanzas discuss the eighteen great omens mentioned in the title. Generally speaking, the first two lines of each of these stanzas are brief autobiographical accounts of something achieved or perceived by Rig 'dzin rGod ldem himself, which he presents as signs (*rtags*) of accomplishment. The third line explains how that particular sign is also an omen (*brda*) or symbol of something that will come to pass in the future. Each stanza ends with the refrain: "I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!"⁴ The nineteenth stanza acts as a sort of summary, explaining that the signs manifest when he faithfully focuses on the emanation body (*sprul sku*) of Padmasambhava and that the eighteen great omens (*brda*), in turn, are symbols (*brda*) of Padmasambhava's compassion.⁵ The final three stanzas constitute a closing, aspirational prayer to the "Victorious One" (*rgyal ba*), who is identified as Padmasambhava. The colophon announces the conclusion of *The Prayer of the Eighteen Great Omens*, which is further described as a biography of Rig 'dzin rGod ldem expressed through omens (*rnam thar brda'i sgo nas gsungs*). While the colophon does not state the name of the author, I have followed Nyi ma bzang po's lead by understanding the prayer as an autobiographical composition written by the great treasure revealer himself,⁶ which is not a stretch given the use of first-person pronouns.

Placement of the Prayer in Northern Treasures Literature

The Prayer of the Eighteen Great Omens is preserved within a text entitled *The Clearly Illuminated Ritual Practices of Thub bstan rdo rje brag e wam lcog sgar Communities*, which is a collection of liturgical prayers meant to be utilized at rDo rje brag Monastery and its affiliates. Therein, the prayer is sandwiched between two other prayers. The preceding is a

⁴ *bKa' drin dran no o rgyan rin po che.*

⁵ As the majority of the usages of "brda" in this prayer appear to refer to developments that will unfold in the future, I have mostly translated the term as "omen." The situation is more complicated in the nineteenth stanza, however, in that it offers a sort of summative interpretation of the symbolism (*brda*) of all eighteen omens (*brda*) that are foreshadowed by the corresponding eighteen signs (*rtags*).

⁶ For the passage where he states that the prayer contains Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's own words, see Nyi ma bzang po 1983, p. 93.

short, two-stanza prayer, which—according to the colophon—was written by Rig 'dzin rGod ldem to praise his own name.⁷ *The Prayer of the Eighteen Great Omens* is followed in this collection by a larger, twenty-nine-stanza prayer to the emanated treasure revealers (*sprul sku gter ston*) that was written by Chos rgyal dbang po'i sde (1550–1603).⁸

The Editions

There are four editions (1979, 2000, 2003, 2015) of *The Clearly Illuminated Ritual Practices of Thub bstan rdo rje brag e wam lcog sgar Communities* that contain the entirety of *The Prayer of the Eighteen Great Omens* available through the Buddhist Digital Resource Center.⁹ The 1979 and 2000 editions are images of the same handwritten text, and the 2003 edition contains the same text of the prayer with no variations, although it appears to have been digitally produced and bound in the western format. The 2015 edition, which was produced digitally to replicate a traditional Tibetan book (i.e., *dpe cha*), contains a handful of variant spellings of minor significance. The translation below is based on the 1979 edition, unless otherwise indicated in the footnotes.

Analysis of the Use of the Prayer in Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's Biographies

As implied in the introduction, the following analysis is limited to an examination of just two of Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's biographies. It appears that Nyi ma bzang po was the first to make use of the prayer in a biography of the great treasure revealer. His fifteenth-century composition, *The Clarifying Ray of Sunlight*, includes twelve of the twenty-two verses of the prayer.¹⁰ While, as mentioned above, the available editions of the complete prayer are nearly identical to one another, there are numerous major and minor differences between the excerpts in *The Clarifying Ray of Sunlight* and the editions of the complete prayer. In addition, there are significant variations between the different

⁷ Rig 'dzin rGod ldem 1979, [Untitled Prayer], in *Thub bstan rdo rje brag e wam lcog sgar ba'i 'dus sde rnams kyi chos spyod rab gsal*, pp. 122-123.

⁸ Chos rgyal dBang po'i sde 1979, pp. 127-134.

⁹ The details for these editions of *The Clearly Illuminated Ritual Practices of Thub bstan rdo rje brag e wam lcog sgar Communities* are grouped together at the beginning of the bibliography below.

¹⁰ Nyi ma bzang po 1983, *passim*. It should also be noted that he only includes the first three lines of each of the extracted verses. He systematically cuts the last line of praise to Padmasambhava.

editions of the biography itself.¹¹ It appears, for example, that the 2015 edition of *The Clarifying Ray of Sunlight* has undergone some editing that is not present in earlier editions of the biography. mKhan po Chos dbyings's biography of Rig 'dzin rGod ldem, which appears within *The Garland of Wondrous Tales*, offers a unique opportunity for comparison because, while it certainly draws information from *The Clarifying Ray of Sunlight*, it is not simply a derivative of that earlier biography. In fact, one of the distinguishing elements of mKhan po Chos dbyings's composition is that it includes eighteen of the twenty-two verses, i.e., all of the verses that introduce the titular "eighteen great omens."¹² Interestingly, while mKhan po Chos dbyings must have had a complete edition of the prayer at his disposal, he has incorporated many of the variations in the twelve verses that are preserved in *The Clarifying Ray of Sunlight*. However, he has also introduced more variations to these twelve verses as well as to the six additional verses that he brought into his biography.¹³

While some of the variations of the prayer as it appears in the biographies are discussed in the footnotes to the translation below, the analysis here is focused on the order in which a specific series of events is presented in those works. Regarding the table below, note that there are no dates listed in the first column to reflect the fact that, while the group of eighteen portentous events are presented in a particular order, the prayer itself does not contain any dates. The dates in the second and third column are either directly stated or implied in the biographies themselves.

¹¹ I have published a parallel edition of *The Prayer of the Eighteen Great Omens* online that allows one to view the differences between the four complete editions of the prayer, two different editions of the partial prayer as it appears in *The Clarifying Ray of Sunlight*, and excerpts from the prayer found in *The Garland of Wondrous Tales*. See Valentine 2025: <https://fchnt.hypotheses.org/3391>.

¹² mKhan po chos dbyings 2015, *passim*.

¹³ As the edition(s) of the prayer that was used by mKhan po Chos dbyings is unknown, one cannot be perfectly sure that the variations were introduced by this author or if they were present in his edition(s) of the prayer. However, it does seem that the variations were introduced by mKhan po Chos dbyings to help clarify certain opaque phrases in the complete prayer.

Table 1 – A Comparison of the Order of Events

<i>The Prayer of the Eighteen Great Omens</i>	<i>The Clarifying Ray of Sunlight</i>	<i>The Garland of Wondrous Tales</i>
3. Extraction of the Keys at bKra bzang	Extraction of the Keys at bKra bzang (1366) ¹⁴	3. Extraction of the Keys at bKra bzang (1366)
10. Extraction of Treasure at Zang zang lHa brag	4. Extraction of Treasure at Zang zang lHa brag (1366)	4. New Year Signs at Mt. bKra bzang, where the Three Treasures Came Together (1367 or later)
17. Observing Signs in Mang yul sKyid grong	11. New Year Signs at Mt. bKra bzang, where the Three Treasures Came Together (1367)	11. Extraction of Treasure at Zang zang lHa brag (1366)
18. New Year Signs at Mt. bKra bzang, where the Three Treasures Came Together	12. Observing Signs in Mang yul sKyid grong (ca. 1370)	18. Observing Signs in Mang yul sKyid grong (between 1366 and 1371)

It appears that the authors of the biographies had a difficult time rectifying the events described in verse eighteen with the events as they were mapping them out in their biographical compositions. Perhaps as a result, Nyi ma bzang po reversed the order of the final two verses that he incorporated into the biography, while mKhan po Chos dbyings moved the eighteenth verse of the prayer all the way back to the 4th position. Nyi ma bzang po pairs the verse in question with a fuller account of the signs witnessed at Mt. bKra bzang during the New Year celebrations of 1367 and a declaration that during his lifetime one could still witness such signs at this sacred location.¹⁵ The prayer itself does not explicitly state the cause of the signs, but it is implied that the spectacular event—the ripening of plants in the dead of winter—resulted from the bringing together of “three treasures” (*gter gsum*) at the summit of the mountain. However, it is not clear which three treasures are being referenced. Nyi ma bzang po clarifies in *The Clarifying Ray of Sunlight* that the signs were witnessed at the spot where the treasure keys were extracted, thus he strongly implies that the three treasures referenced by the prayer are in fact the three treasure keys. Additionally, the placement of the event in the biography implies that the sign—out-of-season fruition of vegetation—was also a biproduct of the “fruition” of Rig ’dzin rGod ldem’s exploits at Mt. bKra bzang, where he established a practice center, started mastering his treasure cycles, and began receiving devotees after extracting the treasures at

¹⁴ I have not given this event a number here because the corresponding passage from the prayer was not included by Nyi ma bzang po, despite the fact that the event itself is described in detail in the biography.

¹⁵ Nyi ma bzang po 1983, pp. 102-103.

Zang zang lha brag.

mKhan po Chos dbyings also appears to understand the stanza as referring to the three treasure keys, which is why he moved the verse to the fourth position, much closer to the verse that more clearly describes the discovery of the keys. It is clear from the way that he presents the verse, however, that he does understand it as referring to signs that would occur at some point in the future, perhaps during the New Year of 1367 or later. Nevertheless, the placement of the passage is still potentially misleading, particularly if “the three treasures” does not refer to the three keys.

As reflected in Table 1, both biographies end this sequence of events with Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's journey to sKyid grong in the Kingdom of Mang yul gung thang to find an additional treasure site, because the prophetic guides actually indicate that there are three treasure sites—one at Zang zang lha brag, one in Mang yul, and another at Yang le shod in Nepal—that could be discovered by the prophesied treasure revealer, his future incarnations, or other Padmasambhava-related emanations.¹⁶ While the existence and contents of the three treasuries are discussed at length in *The Clarifying Ray of Sunlight*,¹⁷ they are only hinted at in passing in *The Garland of Wondrous Tales*.¹⁸ However, neither biography offers any details about the recovery of treasures from the second or third sites.¹⁹ It is implied that while he saw the predicted environmental signs, his exploits in Mang yul were disrupted by the death of his patron, King Phun tshogs sde (r. 1365–1370), which ultimately led to his departure for the concealed lands in the border region in the north of present-day Sikkim.²⁰

The sequence of events in *The Prayer of the Eighteen Great Omens*, conversely, culminates with the signs of out-of-season ripening at Mt. bKra bzang, where “the three treasures” have come together, which occurs after he observed the signs in Mang yul. As the prayer does not mention his journey to the concealed lands, it presumably only reflects the events of his life up to his return to Mt. bKra bzang after visiting Mang yul. In this context, it seems a little more likely that the autobiographical prayer is referring to three treasures (not treasure keys) that were discovered at three different locations and then subsequently

¹⁶ The three treasuries are mentioned throughout the prophetic guide; see Rig 'dzin rGod ldem 1983, *passim*. For a discussion of the identity of the prophesied treasure revealer(s), see *ibid.*, pp. 329-330. For further discussion of the three prophesied treasuries, see Valentine 2024, pp. 157-161.

¹⁷ Nyi ma bzang po 1983, pp. 76-77.

¹⁸ mKhan po Chos dbyings 2015, p. 93.

¹⁹ As far as can be judged so far from a study of the colophons of the tradition, it does not appear that Rig 'dzin rGod ldem extracted treasures from these two sites.

²⁰ See Nyi ma bzang po 1983, pp. 103-105 and mKhan po Chos dbying 2015, pp. 108-109.

brought together at Mt. bKra bzang. Yet, it is very unlikely that Rigdzin Gödem extracted the treasures of Mang yul, and it is even more unlikely that he extracted the treasures at Yang le shod as there is no record of a journey to Nepal. Thus, it appears that the identity of the three treasures that were gathered at Mt. bKra bzang as well as the fate of the second two treasures will remain as unsolved mysteries for the foreseeable future, about which one can only speculate.²¹

*The Prayer of the Eighteen Great Omens*²²

དང་པོ་བྱང་ལྷུ་མཚོག་ཏུ་བྱུགས་བསྐྱེད་ནས། ། ལས་འཕྲིའི་སྟོབས་ཀྱིས་ལུས་ལ་བཀའ་རྟགས་བྱོན། །

བྱིན་གྱིས་བརྒྱབས་པའི་སྤྲས་སུ་ལུང་བསྟན་བད། ། བཀའ་རིན་པོ་འཇོ་རྒྱན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །

Having first set my mind on supreme enlightenment,
The declared signs²³ [later] appeared on my body because of the
strength of my residual karma.

That was an omen [indicating that I am] the prophesied blessed
son.

I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

²¹ Herweg 1994, p. 104, asserts that “the three treasures” refers to “all the items that were found together [at Mt. bkra bzang] with the key to the treasure of Zang zang lha brag.” This makes some sense as Nyi ma bzang po 1983, pp. 92-93, describes the discovery of a key, a branch from the tree of enlightenment, and seven scrolls all together at Mt. bKra bzang, which could presumably be counted as “three treasures.” While Herweg’s hypothesis should not be disregarded, I would expect that if the passage was meant to refer to three treasures “revealed at” (or perhaps “concealed at”) bKra bzang, then the prophecy could have stated that, despite its terseness. Instead, the verb *’dus* (in the complete prayer) and *’dzoms* (in the excerpt as it appears in the biographies) seems to imply that the three treasures that were discovered at multiple locations were brought together at the summit of Mt. bKra bzang. This suggests to me that the passage is referring to three treasures that were revealed at Zang zang lha brag (and perhaps two other locations) and that were later gathered at the practice center at Mt. bKra bzang. That being said, it is clear from elsewhere in Nyi ma bzang po’s biography that Rig ’dzin rGod ldem discovered a *nāga* jewel at Mt. bKra bzang in 1361 (pp. 68-69) and that there were in fact three keys concealed by Padmasambhava at Mt. bKra bzang (1983, pp. 156-157), presumably all together, but perhaps at three locations that represent the eye, tongue, and heart of the mountain (1983, p. 79-80). Thus, it is possible that the verse in question is in fact referring to treasures that were discovered at three different locations at Mt. bKra bzang that were later gathered at its summit.

²² I am very thankful for the help received during the translation process from the following FCHNT team members: Jean-Luc Achard, Tenpa Tsering Batsang, Cécile Ducher, and Stéphane Arguillère. Of course, any mistakes are entirely my own.

²³ Here I understand “*bka’ rtags*” to refer to signs (*rtags*) that were verbalized (*bka’*) by Padmasambhava in the prophecies. Thanks to Jean-Luc Achard for his help with this passage.

ཉི་མའི་རྩེ་ལ་རི་རྒྱལ་ཤར་འདབས་ནས། །རྟེན་འབྲེལ་འཛོམ་པའི་བདུད་རྩི་ཚུ་མིག་རྟེན། །

དངོས་གྲུབ་འབྲུང་བའི་རྟགས་དེ་ལོན་པའི་བད། །བཀའ་རིན་པོ་མོ་ལྷན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །

When the sun peeked,²⁴ on the eastern slope of the King of Mountains,

I found the spring of nectar, which brought together the auspicious circumstances.

That sign of my coming attainment was an omen [indicating my] maturity.²⁵

I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

རི་མའི་རྩེ་ལ་གཏེར་ཆེན་ལྗེ་མིག་རྟེན། །དོ་མཚར་མད་དུ་124བྱུང་བའི་རྟགས་གསུམ་མཐོང་། །

དོན་ཆེན་ཐེ་ཚོམ་མེད་པར་འགྲུབ་པའི་བད། །བཀའ་རིན་པོ་མོ་ལྷན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །

At the summit of the mountain, I found the keys for the great treasures.

I saw three amazing and wondrous signs.

That was an omen indicating that I would undoubtedly accomplish a great purpose.

I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

བྲག་རི་དུག་སྐྱུལ་སྐྱུངས་འདྲར་བྱོན་པའི་ཚོ། །ལོག་པའི་བདུད་རྩམས་གཤོལ་འདེབས་དག་པོ་བྱེད། །

སྲོན་གྱི་ལས་འཕྲོས་བདུད་རྩམས་ལུལ་བའི་བད། །བཀའ་རིན་པོ་མོ་ལྷན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །

When I was travelling to the rocky mountain that resembles a heap of snakes,

Repelling māra-spirits ferociously discouraged [my progress]

That was an omen [indicating that] I would tame māra-spirits because of my residual karma from past [lives].

I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

ནམ་མཁའ་སྤྲིན་མེད་ཤིན་ཏུ་དུངས་པ་ལ། །ཚ་གང་སྤྲོན་མེད་ཉི་མའི་འོད་ཟེར་འཕྲོ། །

ཚོས་སྐྱ་སྤྲིན་བྲལ་ནམ་མཁའ་ལྷ་བུའི་བད། །བཀའ་རིན་པོ་མོ་ལྷན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །

In an extremely pure, cloudless sky,

Rays of sunlight shone without the flaws of warmth or

²⁴ This phrase, "*nyi ma'i rtse la*," generally refers to dawn, or more specifically, the moment that the very top (i.e., the peak) of the sun emerges (or peeks out) from the horizon or from behind a mountain, as is often the case in Tibet. One can imagine that at such a moment a narrowed beam of sunlight might illuminate a specific spot wherein lies hidden treasure. A similar phenomenon might also occur as the sun sets in the evening. Thanks to Tenpa Tsering Batsang for his help with this passage.

²⁵ *Lon pa*.

coolness.²⁶

That was an omen [indicating that] the reality body is like a sky free from clouds.

I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

བར་སྐྱང་འཇམ་ཚེན་འབར་བས་གང་བ་ལ། །ལ་དོག་སྐྱ་ལྡེ་མ་འདྲེས་སོ་སོར་གསལ། །

ལོངས་སྐྱ་མཚན་དང་དབེ་བྱད་ལྡན་པའི་བད། །བཀའ་དྲིན་དྲན་ལོ་ཨོ་རྒྱན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །

In the atmosphere, which was filled with the blaze of rainbow light,

Each of the five colors appeared distinctly.

That was an omen [indicating that] the enjoyment body is endowed with major and minor marks.

I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

ལྷོ་རྒྱབ་མཚམས་ནས་འཇམ་ཚེན་རྒྱ་བའི་མདོག་ །གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་ན་རྒྱན་ཆད་མེད་པར་འབྱུང། །

སྐུལ་སྐྱ་འགྲོ་བའི་དོན་ལ་དགོངས་པའི་བད། །བཀའ་དྲིན་དྲན་ལོ་ཨོ་རྒྱན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །

When I prayed [to Padmasambhava], the colors of the web²⁷ of rainbows

Appeared uninterruptedly from the southwest.

That was an omen [indicating that] emanation bodies are intended to benefit migratory beings.

I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

ཕྱོགས་བཞིའི་སྟེང་འོག་ས་རྣམས་ལེགས་པར་བཅོལ། །ཤེ་ཚོམ་མེད་པར་གནས་དེ་རྟེན་པའི་ཚོ། །

བྲག་ཕྱག་འགུལ་ཞིང་གཏིར་125བདག་འབྱོན་པའི་བད། །བཀའ་དྲིན་དྲན་ལོ་ཨོ་རྒྱན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །

[I] searched well in the four directions, above, and below,

When I, without a doubt, found the [treasure] site,

The cave quaked, and that was an omen [indicating that] the

²⁶ While the translation of this prayer is my own, I did check to see how Claude Sonnet 4 would translate the prayer. This one line of verse is the only one that I consciously adjusted in response to Claude’s translation. Here is how Claude rendered the entire stanza: “In the sky, cloudless and utterly clear, | The sun’s rays shine without the flaws of heat or cold. | This symbolizes the dharmakaya like the cloudless sky— | I remember your kindness, precious Orgyen” (Translation by Claude Sonnet 4 (Anthropic), June 5, 2025. Personal communication via Claude.ai interface). I had originally translated the second line as “Emanating flawless rays of warm sunlight and cool moonlight,” but I ended up liking Claude’s suggestion that the heat and coolness were the flaws in this context and thus reworked my translation as presented above.

²⁷ Here I followed the variation contained in the excerpt as it appears in Chos dbyings’ biography (2015, p. 95). He replaced *zla ba* (moon, month, spouse, etc.) with *drwa ba* (web, net, etc.).

treasure protector would [soon] arrive.
I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

དུས་དང་གཟུང་སྐར་འཛོམ་པའི་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་འགྲིག། །སྲ་བའི་བྲག་ལ་ཡངས་པའི་སློམ་ཕྱེ། །
བཀའ་བཞིན་བསྐྱབས་ན་ཅི་བསམ་འགྲུབ་པའི་བད། །བཀའ་དྲིན་དཔྱད་མོ་ལྷན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །
The auspicious circumstances of the convergence of time, plan-
ets, and stars were appropriate, [so]
I opened the broad portal in the hard stone.
That was an omen [indicating that] if I practice according to the
teachings, I will accomplish whatever I can conceive.
I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

དུག་སྐྱུལ་ནག་པོའི་ནང་ནས་བྱུང་མོང་གི།¹²⁸ །དངོས་གྲུབ་མཚོན་མཁའ་འགའ་ཙམ་བྱོན། །
ལས་གྱི་བར་ཆད་སེལ་བྱེད་པོ་ཉའི་བད། །བཀའ་དྲིན་དཔྱད་མོ་ལྷན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །
From inside the poisonous black snake,
Came a few common precepts [that would result in] rapid attain-
ment.
That was an omen [indicating that] I would dispel obstacles on
the path [and act as] a messenger.
I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

བསེ་སྐྱོམ་སྐྱུག་པོའི་ནང་ནས་ཟབ་མོའི་གཏེར། །སྐྱ་གསུང་གྲགས་ཀྱི་ཚབ་ཏུ་མཛོད་ལྡུལ་བྱོན། །
སྤྱིགས་དུས་སྐྱུལ་སྐྱུའི་བསྟན་པ་དར་བའི་བད། །བཀའ་དྲིན་དཔྱད་མོ་ལྷན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །
From within the dark brown leather box, came the profound
treasure,
The five-fold treasury that represents [Padmasambhava's] body,
speech, and mind.
That was an omen [indicating that] in the degenerate times, the
teachings of the emanation will spread.
I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

བདག་དང་ལས་ཅན་འཁོར་རྣམས་སྐད་ཅིག་ལ། །ཉམས་དགའ་བག་འོ་རིག་པ་རར་དང་ལྡན། །
བར་ཆད་བསལ་ནས་དངོས་གྲུབ་འབྱུང་བའི་བད། །བཀའ་དྲིན་དཔྱད་མོ་ལྷན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །
Instantly, I and my retinue of fortunate ones were
Joyous and cheerful and endowed with sharp insight.

²⁸ Both Nyi ma bzang po (1983, p. 96) and mKhan po Chos dbyings (2015, p. 97) ad-
just the final part of this line to read *thun mong gter*, which makes it clear to me that
the *thun mong* can be read as modifying *man ngag*, which is a treasure.

That was an omen [indicating that] having cleared away obstacles, attainment will arrive.
I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

ནམ་ལངས་དུས་ན་ཕྱོགས་མཚམས་ཚར་གྱིས་གང་། །གནས་དེར་ཉི་མའི་ཕྱེལ་འཇའ་འོད་ཟུག
ལྷགས་རྗེ་ཐབས་མཁས་ལས་འཕྲོ་འཛོམ་པའི་བད། །བཀའ་རིན་པོ་མོ་ལྷན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །

At daybreak, all directions were filled with rain.
When the sun peeked, rainbow light penetrated that sacred site.
That was an omen [indicating that] my compassion, skillful means, and residual karma would converge.
I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

གཏིར་ཆེན་གང་དུ་126ཕྱོད་པའི་ས་ཕྱོགས་སུ། །གནས་ས་བར་སྤང་ཐམས་ཅད་འཇའ་ཡིས་གང་། །
རྒྱལ་བའི་ལྷགས་རྗེས་ལས་འཕྲོ་འཛོམ་པའི་བད། །བཀའ་རིན་པོ་མོ་ལྷན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །

In the lands, wherever the great treasure went,
The sky, the earth, and the atmosphere were all filled with rainbows.
That was an omen [indicating that] the compassion of the Victorious One and my residual karma²⁹ would come together.
I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

བྱང་ཕྱོགས་རི་བོ་བཀྲ་བཟང་མཐོང་བའི་ཆེ། །དབང་གི་ཕྱོགས་སུ་ངོ་མཚར་རྟགས་རྣམས་ཤར། །
ཡུལ་འོད་ཀྱི་གཞལ་ཡས་གསལ་བའི་བད། །བཀའ་རིན་པོ་མོ་ལྷན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །

When I saw Mt. bKra bzang in the north,
Wondrous signs arose from the direction of power.³⁰
That was an omen [indicating that] the palace of lotus light would become manifest.
I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

ཡ་མཚན་ཆེན་པོ་དྲག་པོའི་བརྟུལ་ལྷགས་གྱིས། །སྤྱར་ལ་སྤོབས་ཆེ་བདུད་དཔུང་ལྷལ་བའི་རྟགས། །
རྒྱ་ཆེན་འབྱུང་བ་དྲག་པོའི་འཕྲིན་ལས་བད། །བཀའ་རིན་པོ་མོ་ལྷན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །

The great marvels were signs [resulting from]
The quick taming of intensely powerful hordes of māra-spirits

²⁹ The excerpt as it appears in the biographies all contain slight variations in comparison to the editions of the complete prayer. Here I have decided to follow a variation found in mKhan po Chos dbyings' composition (2015, p. 101), which reads "rgyal ba'i thugs rje las 'phro."

³⁰ Generally, "dbang gi phyogs" refers to either the east or northeast because of its association with Indra's place of dwelling.

by means of wrathful conduct.

That was an omen [indicating that my] wrathful enlightened activity would be extensive.

I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

མང་ཡུལ་སྐྱིད་བོད་ཕྱོགས་སུ་བྱོན་པའི་ཚོ། །ལུང་བསྟན་གཏེར་གྱི་ས་རྟགས་རི་ལྟ་བུ། །

དོ་མཚར་རྟགས་རྣམས་མཐོང་བས་ཡིད་ཆེས་བད། །བཀའ་རིན་པོ་ལོ་རྒྱན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །

When I arrived in the sKyid grong region of Mang yul,

I saw the wondrous signs as the prophesied treasure landmarks.

That was an omen [indicating that I should have] confidence.

I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

རི་བོ་བྱ་བཟང་གཏེར་གསུམ་འདུས་པའི་ཕྱེར། །ལོ་གསར་འབྲུགས་པའི་དུས་སུ་ལོ་ཉོག་སྐྱིན། །

གནས་དེར་དད་ལྡན་ཅི་བསམ་འབྲུབ་པའི་བད། །བཀའ་རིན་པོ་ལོ་རྒྱན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །

At the summit of Mt. Trazang where three treasures came together,

During the cold of the New Year, plant life bore fruit.

That was an omen [indicating that] one with faith will accomplish whatever is conceived at that sacred location.

I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

དད་པའི་བྲུགས་ཀྱིས་སྐུལ་སྐུ་བྱན་པའི་ཚོ། །དོ་མཚར་རྟགས་རྣམས་འབྲུག་མེད་དཔེ་127ཡིས་བསྟན། །

དེ་ཕྱིར་བད་ཆེན་བཙོ་བརྒྱད་བྲུགས་རྗེའི་བད། །བཀའ་རིན་པོ་ལོ་རྒྱན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །

When with strong faith I remembered the emanation,

Wondrous signs were shown [to me] through [these] unforgettable examples.

Thus, the eighteen great omens are symbols³¹ of [Padmasambhava's] compassion.

I remember your kindness, Precious One of Oḍḍiyāna!

སྐྱིགས་མའི་དུས་འདིར་དམག་དཔུང་འབྲུག་ཚོད་དང་། །ཆགས་སྲུང་འབྲུག་སེམས་ལོག་ལྟ་དར་བའི་ཚོ། །

རང་བསྟོད་གཞན་སྲོད་དྲིགས་པའི་ཁོང་ཁེངས་འདི། །རྒྱལ་བའི་བྲུགས་རྗེས་ཞི་དུལ་ལྡན་པར་མཛོད། །

In this degenerate time [of] armies and wars,

When attachment, aversion, jealousy, and wrong views are spreading,

³¹ As mentioned in a previous note, in order to reflect the complexity of this stanza and its relationship to all eighteen of the preceding verses, I found it appropriate to render the second usage of *brda* here as "symbols," while everywhere else I have translated it as "omens."

May this prideful one, he who haughtily praises himself and disparages others,
Be gentled through the compassion of the Victorious One (i.e., Padmasambhava)!

མངས་རྒྱས་བསྟན་པ་དང་ཞིང་རྒྱས་པ་དང་། །སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་བདེ་སྲིད་ལྡན་པ་དང་། །
བདག་གི་བསམ་པའི་དགེ་བ་སྟོབས་ཆེན་འདི། །རྒྱལ་བའི་ཐུགས་རྗེས་ལྷུང་དུ་འགྲུབ་པར་མཛོད། །
May the teachings of the Buddha spread and flourish, and
May all sentient beings be endowed with joy and happiness, and
May these virtuous and powerful aspirations of mine
Quickly be perfected through the compassion of the Victorious One!

བདག་འདྲ་སྐྱེ་བ་འདི་དང་ཕྱི་མ་ལ། །འགོ་དོན་རྒྱ་ཆེན་འབྱུང་བའི་མཐུ་ལྡན་ཞིང་། །
ཡུལ་འབྱུང་གནས་རྒྱལ་བའི་ཞལ་མཐོང་ནས། །སྐྱེ་གསུང་ཐུགས་ཀྱི་དངོས་གྲུབ་བདག་ལ་སྟོལ། །
In this and later lives, may I and those like me,
Possess the power to greatly benefit migratory beings, and
Having seen the face of the Victorious One, Padmasambhava,
May he bestow on us³² the attainments of body, speech, and mind!

གཏྱར་བཏོན་རིག་འཛིན་ཆེན་པོའི་རྣམ་ཐར་བཟའི་སྟོན་སྒྲུང་ས་བའི་གསོལ་འདེབས་བཟུང་ཆེན་བཙོ་བརྒྱད་
ཚོགས་སོ། ། ཐཱ།

This completes *The Prayer of the Eighteen Great Omens: A Biography of the Great Treasure Revealer and Awareness Holder Expressed Through Omens*.

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The Prayer of the Eighteen Great Omens

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³² Here I have read *bdag* as a plural due to the usage of *bdag 'dra* in the first line of the stanza.

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