

**Re-reading Eva Neumaier (Dargyay)'s "bKa'-brgyad
rang-byung rang-shar, ein rDzogs chen Tantra:"
A Reflection on Mahāyoga and Visionary rDzogs chen in
Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's Eight Pronouncements System**

Stéphane Arguillère¹

(IFRAE/Inalco)

The first research publication about the Northern Treasures was Eva Neumaier-Dargyay's (1937–)² 1971 presentation of a text from the largest cycle among Rig 'dzin rGod ldem (1337–ca. 1401): the *bKa' brgyad rang byung rang shar*. This article also includes (p. 135) the first English-language account of Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's life and discoveries.³ Since fewer and fewer Tibetologists can read European languages other than English, a simple English translation of this seminal article might have been useful as a document on the earliest stages of the research on Byang gter. However, more than fifty years have passed, and much of the valuable information the 1971 article contains has either become common knowledge or has been put into a larger perspective.⁴ For this reason, it has been deemed preferable to propose a brief summary and discussion of Eva Neumaier's presentation of the text, condensing all the information it contains that is still relevant, followed by a revised edition of the Tibetan text and

¹ I would like to express my gratitude to Cécile Ducher for her meticulous proof-reading of this article and her thoughtful suggestions for improving the translation. Her requests for clarification also led me to reformulations that will undoubtedly be more suitable for the reader.

² Eva Neumaier was known as Eva Dargyay after her marriage to the Tibetologist Lobsang Dargyay (1935–1994). Her 1971 article on the *bKa' brgyad rang byung rang shar* was published before she changed her name, hence she will be called Eva Neumaier here, which is the name with which she signed the article.

³ The second oldest biography of Rig 'dzin rGod ldem in a Western language is certainly also in the same author's *The Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet* (Dargyay 1977), pp. 129–131. This is one more reason to pay homage to Eva Dargyay in the context of our Byang gter studies.

⁴ Typically, Eva Neumaier's explanations of specific rNying ma doctrines, which are much better understood today, are often based on the meaning of technical terms in more general Mahāyāna doctrine, rather than on their more specific meaning in rNying ma context.

an English translation of the text that the 1971 article presented in German. Both the edition and the English translation have been reworked on the basis of a better edition that have become available since the 1970s:⁵ the 2015 *Compilation of the Northern Treasures* in 63 volumes.⁶

This article is a tribute to Eva Neumaier's pioneering work.

A Presentation and Discussion of Eva Neumaier's 1971 Article

Eva Neumaier's article begins with a general discussion of the rNying ma doctrines in the context of late dGe lugs polemics⁷ about their authenticity and value. Her intention in describing the opinions of both Sum pa *mkhan po* (1704–1777) and Thu'u bkwan (1737–1802) is to show that "even great Tibetan scholars, who were in the midst of the events and who had access to very different sources than those available to modern scholars, could not reach a unanimous [negative] verdict." Therefore, it is "necessary to present information material so that scholars can form their own, well-founded judgment on the basis of relevant textual publications." She then goes on to present the edited

⁵ Eva Dargyay used an edition of the text contained in 'Jam mgon Kong sprul's *Rin chen gter mdzod* (mTshur phu edition). In many cases, she struggles with words that are actually misspellings or misreadings in this edition, possibly due to the poor quality of the printing.

⁶ sNga 'gyur byang gter chos skor phyogs bsgrigs.

⁷ 1908 (Calcutta) edition, and Thu'u bkwan's *Grub mtha' thams cad kyi khungs dang 'dod tshul ston pa legs bshad shel gyi me long*. This importance attributed to dGe lugs polemical literature has become surprising today since we are more aware of a fact that escaped earlier scholars: *the deep ignorance of the rNying ma materials on the dGe lugs side*, which gives us the feeling that these polemical writings are not only *biased*, but, nearly always, quite *uninformed*, based only on a few misinterpreted texts. The same feature is still salient in Samten G. Karmay's *The Great Perfection* (1989), which devotes many pages to points of the dGe lugs polemics that may sound absurd to us (e.g., confusing the rDzogs chen's *ye zhi* or its *kun gzhi* with the Vijnānavādins' *alayavijñāna*, as understood by dGe lugs doxographers). This should not be so surprising if we consider this literature from a more historical and sociological point of view: it is not uncommon that a dominant group (here, the high clergy of the dominant branch of Tibetan Buddhism), when they want to display their power to judge all dominated groups, first of all assign them to caricatural stereotypes. Earlier Tibetologists were too close to a state of things in which the dGe lugs intellectual hegemony was still functioning to merely discard these polemics are irrelevant and altogether uninformative.—These somewhat disparaging remarks on the level of knowledge that these dGe lugs pa scholars may have had of rNying ma doctrines, although globally correct, must, however, be tempered in the case of Thu'u bkwan: two entire volumes of his works devoted to *rTa mgrin gsang sgrub* give the impression of a very thorough knowledge of this cycle, very well understood in all its rNying ma terminological, doctrinal, liturgical and meditative dimensions. These traits are echoed, in the same milieu and at the same time, by the Mongolian scholar Brag ri Dam tshig rdo rje for *rTa mgrin yang gsang*, the other large Hayagrīva cycle of rNying ma origin preserved in the dGe lugs school.

and translated texts that she knows from Kong sprul's *Rin chen gter gyi mdzod chen mo*.⁸ To do this, she begins by presenting "the framework of the doctrine of rNying ma pas, into which the preceding texts are to be integrated." This is a general presentation of the rNying ma pas' nine vehicles, including their idiosyncratic classification of the tantras, contrasted with those of the gSar ma pas—a point which is now common knowledge in its essentials and does not need to be repeated here.

Within this framework, she writes (*op. cit.* p. 134): "This *bKa' brgyad rang byung rang shar* Tantra belongs to the *bskyed rim Mahāyoga* section." She then goes on to summarize the global structure of the Eight Pronouncements⁹ using Thu'u bkwan's *Chos 'byung*,¹⁰ and, on this basis, introduces the text she wishes to present.

She obviously could not be aware of the extent of the corpus to which these texts belong, which was not available in the early 1970s. As a result, Neumaier's article, more than fifty years later, feels as if she is describing a detail of the architecture of a huge cathedral without considering it in its specific context—not the rNying ma doctrines as a whole, which she summarizes, but, more specifically, Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's *gter chos*, and, within it, the *bKa' brgyad rang byung rang shar*.

The various bKa' brgyad Systems

Since a detailed description of this cycle within the context of an overview of Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's revelations as a whole will be included in Volume 2 of our forthcoming (FCHNT, spring 2026) volumes of *Northern Treasures Histories*, I will give only the most relevant elements here.

First, at the present state of research, it is difficult to unilaterally

⁸ Neumaier 1971, p. 133: "Vol. *Ba* of the mTshur phu edition. The Tantra is the seventeenth treatise in this volume, the commentary called *don khrid* is the sixteenth. I will discuss the origin and affiliation of these texts below."

⁹ In this article, "Eight Pronouncements" in romans means the classificatory structure or concept, or the general idea. In italics it refers to any specific corpus of texts.

¹⁰ Neumaier, *op. cit.*, p. 134, translating Thu'u bkwan's *Chos 'byung*: "...The most important of *bskyed rim*—it is also known as *sGrub pa bka' brgyad*, and these are: '*Jam dpal sku, Padma gsung, Yang dag thugs, bDud rtsi yon tan, Phur pa phrin las*. These are the five divisions that lead beyond this changing world. *Ma mo rbod gtong, dMod pa drag sngags* and '*Jig rten mchod stod* are known as the three divisions belonging to the changing world." The original text is found in Thu'u bkwan 1984, p. 65: *bskyed rim gyi gtso bo ni | sgrub pa bka' brgyad du grags pa ste | 'jam dpal sku | padma gsung | yang dag thugs | bdud rtsi yon tan | phur pa 'phrin las rnam la 'jig rten las 'das pa'i sde lnga dang | ma mo rbod gtong dang | dmod pa drag sngags dang | 'jig rten mchod bstod rnam la 'jig rten pa'i sde gsum zhes grags so |*.

characterize the Eight Pronouncements¹¹ as an inherent structure of Mahāyoga as a body of tantric literature, for two reasons: on the one hand, this presupposes a great deal about the unity of Mahāyoga as a whole. On the other hand, it cannot be said that all the later developments of the Eight Pronouncements belong to Mahāyoga in the narrowest sense.

Mahāyoga was introduced into Tibet during the first spread of Buddhism—sometime between the 8th and 10th centuries. The Eight Pronouncements structure is admittedly always presented in the rNying ma doxographies as inherent to Mahāyoga as such. It is far from self-obvious, however, whether the idea of this structure was present from the very beginning with all its integral parts, or whether it was later constructed as a synthesis.

More precisely, Tulku Thondup 1989 (pp. 30-31) divides the Mahāyoga in two parts, "Tantra section" and "Sādhana section," the second of which corresponds to the Eight Pronouncements.¹² It would then be clearer to say that the *practice* of the Mahāyoga consists of the Eight Pronouncements, either separately (e.g., individual sādhanas of Yamāntaka, Hayagrīva, Vajrakīla...) or as a group (as in the large cycles we call "bKa' brgyad," which combine them all). Although the overarching structure is very logical *per se*, it is quite possible that it was created in the context of a *later* combination of various traditions that were not originally intended to form a global entity or introduced together in the exact same period of time. I have shown elsewhere that the original rNying ma Yamāntaka corpus, for example, is not referred to the Eight Pronouncements.¹³ Furthermore, the scheme of the "Eight Vidyādhara" who each revealed one of the Eight Pronouncements, with Padmasambhava gathering the scattered traditions and synthesizing the whole as the ninth, may well be a simplified narrative of the fact that the various systems compiled as "the Eight Pronouncements" were originally more or less independent of one another and passed through different lineages.

The first known complete system is the *bKa' ma bka' brgyad rdzong*

¹¹ For an overview in French of the bKa' brgyad system as understood by contemporary rNying ma scholars, see Tendzin Samphel 2003.

¹² *Op. cit.*, p. 31 (slightly corrected and adapted): This second part consists of "the Scriptures of Sādhanas of the Eight Great Maṇḍalas of Deities (*sgrub pa bka' brgyad*), of which there are two kinds, the canonical (*bka' ma*) and discovered treasures (*gter ma*). The Eight Great Maṇḍalas of Deities are: (a) Yamāntaka of Body; (b) Hayagrīva of Speech; (c) Vajraheruka (Yang dag) of Mind; (d) Dütsi Chechok (*bdud rtsi che mchog*) of Virtues; (e) Vajrakīla of Action; (f) Mamo Bod-tong (Ma mo rbod gtong); (g) Jigten Chod-tod ('Jigs rten mchod bstod) and (h) Modpa Trag-ngag (dMod pa drang sngags)."

¹³ Arguillère 2024b, pp. 305-307.

'*phrang*.¹⁴ Although it is presented as belonging to the uninterrupted oral transmission (*bka' ma*)—meaning: as not being a *gter ma*—its status in this regard is altogether unclear. Its texts show that it was passed from *gTer ston* Grub thob dngos grub (d.u.) to Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1124–1192).

Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer is, as far as we can know, the key figure for the Eight Pronouncements. He revealed a very extensive cycle known as the *bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa*, which differs from later versions in that it even includes detailed doctrinal discussions of the whole of Buddhism and is thus clearly intended as a synthesis of the Dharma rather than merely a collection of Mahāyoga rituals. Later cycles, such as Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's, are more directly oriented toward ritual practice. In Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer's *bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa*, Padmasambhava emerges as the central master of all the tantric teachings, in a way that is completed by Nyang ral's grand Padmasambhava narrative, the *bKa' thang zangs gling ma*. Reading the biographies of the rNying ma masters of the following centuries, it is clear that this cycle remained central to the definition of rNying ma identity at least until the Dzungar invasion of 1717–1718 and the reorganization of rNying ma practices and doctrines by Rig 'dzin 'Jigs med gling pa (1730–1798) and his direct and indirect disciples in a context in which it is quite possible that some of the texts that were once central to the rNying ma identity had already been lost.¹⁵

A second important link in the chain of transmission and elaboration of the Eight Pronouncements is Guru Chos dbang (1212–1270), whose *gter ma* cycle *bKa' brgyad gsang ba yongs rdzogs*¹⁶ is also always

¹⁴ For the texts, see *rNying ma bka' ma shing tu rgyas pa* (*mKhan po* Mun sel [compiler], Chengdu, d.u.), vol. 67, with some elements in vol. 13. See the Fifth Dalai Lama's *Record of Teachings Received*, 1971 (Delhi, Nechung and Lhakar), vol. 2, f°196a, for this description: *sangs rgyas gnyis pa padma 'byung gnas | pañ chen dri med bshes gnyen | lo chen bai ro tsa na | gnubs ban nam mkha'i snying po ste rgya bod kyi mkhas pa mi bzhis gsang sngags theg pa mchog gi don thams cad rdzong 'phrang srog gsum du dril ba'i gdams pa | man ngag kun gyi bcud phyung ba | zab gter snying po'i chos sde | kun tu bzang po nas grub thob dngos grub kyi bar du snyan nas snyan zhal nas zhal du brgyud pa'i bka' ma nyams pa bla ma mnga' bdag chen po nas bka' gter zung 'jug chu bo gnyis 'dres su bzhugs pa'i gdams pa deng sang nyin mo'i skar ma las kyang ches cher dkon pa bka' ma bka' brgyad rdzong 'phrang du grags pa'i skor la | ...* This could mean either that the *bKa' ma rdzong 'phrang* as it stands today is pure *bka' ma*, supplemented by Nyang ral's *bDe gshegs 'dus pa*, or that Nyang ral also had a personal revelation of the *bKa' ma rdzong 'phrang*.

¹⁵ The *bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa* seem to be quite well preserved. However, many of the impressive quantity of rNying ma texts that are presented as available, or even central, in, e.g., the Fifth Dalai Lama's *Record of Teachings Received*, or that of *gTer bdag gling pa* (1646–1714), no longer exist or have not resurfaced yet. Although this has not yet been systematically researched, it seems that the first half of the 18th century was a period of massive destruction of rNying ma literature.

¹⁶ The best available edition seems to be Guru Chos dbang 1979.

mentioned among the teachings received by all rNying ma masters at least until the 18th century. Recent scholarship has focused less interest on this cycle, and it is certainly less original doctrinally—and in any case, like all the later bKa' brgyad cycles, it builds upon Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer's bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa, the systematic study of which is therefore a priority for understanding all that follows. In the general rNying ma tradition,¹⁷ Guru Chos dbang's cycle is understood to have added an Anuyoga layer to the original Mahāyoga structure. More specifically, this means that Guru Chos dbang revealed a complete set of rdzogs rim body techniques (*gtum mo*, sexual yogas...) to be included in the general apparatus.

We then arrive at the time of Rig 'dzin rGod ldem. It should be noted that another major bKa' brgyad system was revealed by his contemporary O rgyan gling pa (1323–ca.1355). O rgyan gling pa's system has become rare, but the texts are probably not lost: large excerpts are included in the *Rin chen gter mdzod*. It seems that they were later re-revealed (*yang gter*).¹⁸ It should also be researched, but this is far beyond the scope of the present paper.

As an indication of the vitality of the Eight Pronouncements through the ages, we can consider the respective representation of each century in Kong sprul's selection in the *Rin chen gter mdzod*.¹⁹ Three and a half volumes (2136 pages) of the 1976 edition are devoted to the Eight Pronouncements, of which:

¹⁷ The original presentation of the Eight Pronouncements in such terms—integrating Nyang ral, Chos dbang, and rGod ldem's revelations in a unified system called *bKa' brgyad rnam gsum*—is traditionally attributed (e.g., in Rig 'dzin Padma 'phrin las' [1641–1717] practice manuals for the *Byang gter bka' brgyad*) to mNga' ris pañ chen Padma dbang rgyal (1487–1542). However, few works by this author seem to have survived, and especially no writings on this topic—which makes it difficult for us today to understand his reputation.

¹⁸ This may be Rig 'dzin Padma dbang phyug's (1720–1771) *bKa' 'dus*, contained in vol. 52-53 of CNT (*Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, 2015). This remains to be verified, but O rgyan gling pa's name appears in the CNT version of this cycle.

¹⁹ For what this method is worth. I have already used it (Arguillère 2024b) in order to get an overview of the interest about Yamāntaka among the rNying ma pas throughout history. If we compare the results obtained here with that earlier attempt, we may notice, for example, the same relative underrepresentation of Guru Chos dbang, whose historical importance, however, is beyond doubt when we consider how often his name appears in lists of teachings received by the rNying ma masters from his time onward. Kong sprul may have had a more complex agenda than simply sampling the various cycles according to their popularity over the centuries. In some cases, it is reasonable to assume that mKhyen brtse'i dbang po and himself wanted to revive cycles that had fallen into disuse because they found them *intrinsically* interesting for some (unexplained) reason (e.g. Rin chen gling pa's *A ti rdzogs pa chig chod*—see Arguillère 2024a), and ignored others because they may have felt that they did not bring anything substantially new (which might be the case for Guru Chos dbang's *bKa' brgyad gsang ba yongs rdzogs*).

- 32,5% (693 pages) belong to the 12th century (Nyang ral);
- 6,5% (140 pages) to the 13th (Guru Chos dbang);
- 19% (410 pages) to the 14th (207 pages for rGod ldem and 203 for Yar rje O rgyan gling pa [1323–ca. 1355]²⁰);
- 5% (around 100 pages) to the 15th (Padma gling pa [1450–1521] and maybe bSam gtan bde chen gling pa—“15th–16th c.” according to BDRC, but more probably mid-16th century²¹),
- 12% (259 pages) to the 17th ('Ja' tshon snying po [1585–1656], Klong gsal snying po [1625–1692], Mi 'gyur rdo rje [1645–1667], Padma bde chen gling pa [BDRC: “between 1627 and 1663”–1713]),
- And the last 25% (534 pages), to the 19th (mKhyen brtse'i dbang po [1820–1892] and mChog gyur gling pa [1829–1870]).

The proportion of the 19th-century material is not significant, as Kong sprul's tendency seems, in any case, to be:

- (1) To document the earliest extensive *gter ma* cycle, understood as the *original seed* upon which the rest grew;
- (2) To present later cycles when they are perceived as the *coronation* of a given system;
- (3) To document some cycles that are somewhat *original* or that *have become central* to some living branches of the rNying ma tradition;

²⁰ His association with the bKa' brgyad is less well known than his contribution to the legend of Padmasambhava.

²¹ “15th–16th c.” according to BDRC, but more probably mid-16th century. This *gter ston* (bdr:P4689) is not well known, but the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682) devotes a rather long discussion to his rDzogs chen cycle in his *rje btsun bsam gtan gling pa'i a ti'i chos skor gyi dkar chag theg mchog rin cen* (sic) *do shel* (in Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 2009: vol. 27, pp. 589–601). The Fifth Dalai Lama presents him as an important figure and describes his work as a fine synthesis of gSar ma and rNying ma approaches, with a somewhat Sa skya coloration, which bSam gtan gling pa seems to have inherited from his ancestors. According to the description given by the Fifth Dalai Lama (*op. cit.*, pp. 594–595), his works included responses to the anti-rDzogs chen polemics of Karma pa Mi bskyod rdo rje (1507–1554). This would place him in the sixteenth rather than the fifteenth century (as indicated in the BDRC fact sheet). Indeed, Guru bKra shis (1990: p. 446), in the brief paragraph he devotes to bSam gtan gling pa, says that he was a contemporary of 'Brug pa Padma dkar po (1527–1592). In another passage of the Fifth Dalai Lama's work (*op. cit.*, p. 598), bSam gtan gling pa is presented as a grand-disciple of Yar lungs pa Seng ge rgyal mtshan (bdr:P6515, 1345–1413) through his disciple of *mKhan chen* bSod nams rgyal mchog. This allows us to conclude that the latter's disciple *mNyang med* Sangs rgyas gling pa Nam mkha' bsod nams (bdr:P0RK1228) is in fact bSam gtan bde chen gling pa.

- (4) To complete the apparatus with revelations of either mKhyen brtse'i dbang po or mChog 'gyur gling pa and with manuals for empowerment and practice, often written (or compiled) by Kong sprul himself when he did not find them already written in a form he considered satisfactory.

From this perspective, one could perhaps interpret Kong sprul's selection to mean that, in his mind, 1. the sole basis of the whole system is Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer's *bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa*; 2. Chos dbang's *bKa' brgyad gsang ba yongs rdzogs* did not add anything very significant; 3. the system reached its perfection with rGod ldem, O rgyan gling pa, and perhaps Padma gling pa; and 4. there were further significant developments in the 17th century—either because they were truly original in some way, or because these traditions were still alive in Kong sprul's time, which was probably the case with the four selected *gter chos*, whose traditions are not extinct even today.

We can then tentatively say that the *bKa' brgyad* is a literary genre that was imposed by the genius of Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer on the basis of the earlier *bKa' brgyad bka' ma rdzong 'phrang* and that it flourished until the 16th century (63% of the total collection belongs to this formative period and we also know that mNga' ris *pañ chen* (1487–1542) was a major specialist of the Eight Pronouncements). Later centuries struggled to keep it alive because it was perceived as part of the core of the rNying ma tradition, but perhaps with some difficulty because of its excessive ritual complexity, which makes it a system more suited to the grand liturgy of well-equipped monasteries than something appropriate to personal, solitary meditative practice. This point would require further research, however, as the revelations of more recent *gter stons* such as bDud 'joms gling pa (1835–1904) present complete *bKa' brgyad* systems.

Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's bKa' brgyad rang byung rang shar

Returning now to Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's *bKa' brgyad rang byung rang shar*, it is a massive corpus (although less so than Nyang ral's *bKa' brgyad*). It is presented as having been found, along with all of God ldem's known *gter ma*, in 1366 at Zang zang lha brag. It fills four complete volumes (volumes 9-12 of the 2015 *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, a total of 174 texts, 2276 pages of dense typography). This makes it the largest cycle in the original core of the Northern Treasures, which is an indication (if not a proof) of its centrality to Rig 'dzin rGod ldem himself.

It must be remarked that the texts singled out by Eva Neumaier²² from the *Rin chen gter mdzod* selection are a tiny drop in this ocean (not even 20 pages, representing about 1% of the total) and the tantra she translated is not among the three major ones found at the beginning of the first volume.²³ Of course, this does not imply they are unimportant, as there are certainly reasons why they were chosen by Kong sprul for the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, but it must be understood that they are not considered to be the core of the entire system in the original *gter chos*.

A seeming contradiction in Eva Neumaier's article is the characterization of the tantra as "A rDzogs chen tantra" in the title of the paper and her explicit assumption (quoted above) that, since it belongs to the bKa' brgyad, it is a *Mahāyoga* tantra. In fact, the rNying ma tradition, when it later combined Nyang ral, Chos dbang and rGod ldem's Eight Pronouncement systems in a synthesis known as *bKa' brgyad rnam gsum*, tends to say that Nyang ral's *bDe gshegs 'dus pa* is more *Mahāyoga*-oriented;²⁴ that Chos dbang's *gSang ba yongs rdzogs* is more *Anuyoga*-oriented; and that rGod ldem's *bKa' brgyad rang byung rang shar* is more *Atiyoga*-oriented. In this sense, the formula "A rDzogs chen tantra" is not wrong.

The standard doctrine on this issue, as phrased by Rig 'dzin Padma 'phrin las, states that in *Mahāyoga*, the apparent world and inhabitants are meditated upon as deities, while in *Anuyoga* these deities are said to be complete inside our vajra body, and in *Atiyoga*, "they are complete in the maṇḍala of the mind."²⁵ However, although this formula suggests a mere slight shift in the interpretation of one and the same practice, it may actually refer to very different ones: for example, the *Atiyoga* version implies that either the deities are perceived as

²² Text #90: vol. 10, pp. 589-596, *sGrub chen bka' brgyad drag po rang byung rang shar gyi rdzogs rim snying tig rnam pa bcu bstan pa*, and text #91, vol. 10, pp. 597-607, *sGrub chen bka' brgyad rang byung rang shar gyi snying po gnam zhal don khrid*.

²³ Text #4: *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 9, pp. 29-175: *Drag po rang byung rang shar chen po'i rgyud kyi rgyal po* in 26 chapters plus a short conclusion about the concealment and discovery of the *gter ma*; text #5: *sGrub chen bka' brgyad rtsa ba'i rgyud rgyal tshab rang byung rang shar bsam 'phel nor bu rgya can*, same volume, pp. 177-286 (this tantra contains all the instructions for *rdzogs rim* and *rdzogs chen*, followed by all sorts of magic "activities"); text #6: *sGrub chen bka' brgyad yongs rdzogs kyi sngags rgyud rin po che'i gter rgyud*, same volume, pp. 287-302 (a mantra compendium).

²⁴ This point should be taken *cum grano salis*. The *bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa* contains quite many explanations about *Anuyoga* and *rDzogs chen*. Globally, the rNying ma pas are not fully consistent with their tendency to present *Mahāyoga* as analogous with the *gSar ma pas' pha rgyud* (and, consequently, with their idea of presenting the *Anuyoga* as an analogon of the *gSar ma pas' ma rgyud*).

²⁵ Padma 'phrin las 2015, p. 61: *de yang bskyed pa ma hā yo ga snang srid lha'i dkyil 'khor phyi dkyil du sgom pa yin te | rgyud de nyid las | snang srid yongs rdzogs gzhal yas khang chen gsal : zhes dang | a nu yo ga ltar na de dag thams cad rdo rje lus kyi dkyil 'khor la tshang bar rdzogs shing a ti yo gar thams cad sems kyi dkyil 'khor du rdzogs pa yin te | ...*

virtually present in the nature of the mind—which would be the only focus of the practice—or they appear as luminous visions.

We can be puzzled by this association of the hyper-complicated ritual structure of the Eight Pronouncements with rDzogs chen, a term that evokes Chan-like simplicity. Reading the texts, however, it becomes clear that rGod ldem's corpus contains practice instructions that are complete in terms of *rdzogs rim*-related body techniques and lead to rDzogs chen in what was recognized in the 14th century as its ultimate form: visionary, *sNying thig*-style meditation. Some texts in the corpus²⁶ contain brief but explicit instructions for *khregs chod* and *thod rgal*, understood as the apex of this immense pyramid of rituals and as the coronation of all its meditative practices. The texts translated in the 1971 article do indeed contain clear allusions to the *thod rgal* visionary practice, although this is not apparent in the German translation because the techniques and their specific terminology had not yet been described. This is evident in passages such as the following (p. 594, text edited below with the translation):

When [you are] settled [in this] without distraction, Intelligence (*rig pa*) will be caught in the Element.²⁷ (...) By applying the three [*thod rgal*] postures to this, Intelligence will blossom into the five primordial wisdoms (*ye shes lnga*).

The two texts chosen by Neumaier are a tantra and the "guidance to [its] meaning" (*don khrid*). Here is how she describes them:²⁸

These eight stages [meaning, each of the Eight Pronouncements] are explained individually in the tantra. They form the philosophical background against which the *sādhana* as it is performed in the *don khrid* is set. (...) The *don khrid* not only gives a meticulous, iconographic description of Che mchog,²⁹ but also provides the true meaning (*don*) of the emblems and forms to be realized in meditation. This is what makes it so valuable for understanding these teachings.

²⁶ For example, text #115: *Man ngag gsal ba'i sgron me*, in CNT, vol. 11, pp. 367-376, or text #127: *rTsa ba sdong po lta bu'i khrid : gyes pa yal ga lta bu'i khrid : 'bar ba me tog lta bu'i khrid : smin pa 'bras bu lta bu'i khrid thams cad 'di la tshang ngo : drag po rang byung rang shar gyi gzhung khrid lus kyi srog shing lta bu*, vol. 12, pp. 1-60.

²⁷ Meaning, in context: the *rdo rje'i lu gu rgyud* will be caught in the *dbyings kyi ra ba*.
²⁸ Neumaier 1971, p. 134.

²⁹ Che mchog He ru ka, understood as a wrathful form of the primordial Buddha Kun tu bzang po, is the main deity of the central maṇḍala in the *Eight Pronouncements*.

After a general explanation of rDzogs chen,³⁰ Eva Neumaier proceeds to describe the cycle as sampled in the *Rin chen gter mdzod*:³¹

The *Rang byung rang shar* cycle also includes a *sngon 'gro*, the prayer that prepares the mind for the celebration of the *sādhana*, along with many other texts. At the beginning it contains the *bla ma brgyud pa*, the enumeration of the masters of this particular teaching. Above all, gNubs Nam mkha' snying po should be mentioned. G. Tucci³² has clearly identified him as a master of Ch'an Buddhism. The invocation of the hierarchs is followed by meditation instructions. Unfortunately, this text has not been reproduced due to lack of space.—Another text in this cycle is the *don khrid*, the “meaningful commentary,”³³ which qualifies as a *sādhana* (*sgrub thabs*) according to its content. It not only reproduces the iconographic description, but also the meaning of the individual symbols.

This is followed by a reflection on the nature of tantric Buddhist deities in the vein of H. v. Guenther. Eva Neumaier's intention seems to have been to discuss the *meanings* of this whole pantheon. In Western neosotericism or neo-gnosis, the decoding of symbols plays indeed a central role, much more so than in Buddhist or Hindu Tantrism. The combination of elementary fieldwork and textual reading shows that if the Tibetans believe that full visualization will eventually bring the actual realization of what it symbolizes, they do not really believe that keeping these concepts in mind will help with their realization. Be that as it may, such a background, which may have played a role in Neumaier's 1971 approach, belongs to the field of the phenomenology of religious experience, with all its epistemological issues, and to a way of thinking that involves the search for perennial structures. The present article belongs more to the history of religions proper and to philology, albeit in a form that does not seek to oppose the search for eternal truths: it

³⁰ In the West, rDzogs chen was initially understood more or less as a *doctrine*, which it is to some extent. However, even its specific philosophical aspects were not fully perceived. Its meditative aspects, particularly those related to the visionary development (*thod rgal*), were not well grasped in the 1970s. Thus, Eva Neumaier's 1971 conception of rDzogs chen seems to be only of a self-perfected state or nature.

³¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 138. The author seems to be unaware that, although the *Rin chen gter mdzod* selection is quite large, it covers only a small part of the cycle. However, this cannot be blamed on her, considering the state of documentation in 1971. Only consulting *Records of Teachings Received* that include catalogs, such as that of the Fifth Dalai Lama, could have made her aware of this fact.

³² Neumaier 1971, p. 136, n. 21: “Tucci, 1958: *Minor Buddhist Texts, Part II*, Rome: IsMeO, p. 21.” See Van Schaik 2015, p. 167, for a note about this figure.

³³ This is how I understand the German formula “bedeutungsvolle Kommentar.” The Tibetan phrase *don khrid* rather means: commentary of the meaning.

is about describing the way in which historically situated concrete agents have captured them in their writings.

This is followed by the edition of the Tibetan text and its German translation. For the present English translation, it was considered preferable to present the Tibetan text in the footnotes, which makes it easier for the reader to check each passage. I have not systematically pointed out the corrections made in the Tibetan (which have become easy on the basis of the available editions), nor the points where my translation differs from the German one. Since the basic Tibetan edition is now the *Compilation of the Northern Treasures*, I have changed the page references accordingly.

Most of the 1971 footnotes belong to an earlier state of research, and so they have been removed. The ones I have preserved are indicated.³⁴

One aspect of the 1971 paper not discussed here is a series of interesting remarks presented in large diagrams. In these diagrams, Eva Neumaier points out discrepancies between these two texts and the *Kar gling zhi khro* regarding the systems of correspondence between the visualized aspects and elements of ordinary experience. Karma gling pa's revelations are most likely somewhat later than those of rGod ldem,³⁵ and there is no intrinsic reason to give them any normative value³⁶ (which Eva Neumaier certainly did because of this system's fame in the West when she wrote her article). Nevertheless, it would be beneficial to conduct a systematic comparison of the various rNying ma structured pantheons of peaceful and wrathful deities based on a broader corpus, including older systems (from the *sGyu 'phrul drwa ba* through the *sNying thig* systems and the successive bKa' brgyad revelations).

If readers were to compare my English translation with the German one, they would not only find discrepancies due to a different understanding of the content, but also a different appreciation of style. Eva Neumaier has obviously tried to make the text more explicit than it actually is, especially by inserting logical connections when the

³⁴ "Neumaier 1971," with page reference.

³⁵ See Cuevas 2003 on the problems of dating Karma gling pa. His short life may have been later than generally assumed: the dates 1326–1386 often given are due to a confusion of the dates of the beginning and end of the sexagenary cycle in which he was born with his own dates of birth and death. He was probably born near the end of the 1326–1386 *rab 'byung* and may have died in the early 15th century.

³⁶ The *Kar gling zhi khro* system, although completely alien to the Northern Treasures, was incorporated into the rDo rje brag liturgy, albeit late in the eighteenth century. The reasons why rDo rje brag, which had its own sufficient practice and ritual devices covering the same needs as the *Kar gling zhi khro*, adopted this system, are unknown. See Chapter 16 of vol. 1 of the FCHNT series (January 2026) devoted to the history of Northern Treasures tradition.

originals are often just a series of juxtaposed assumptions. This may be related to a perception of these texts as somewhat philosophical.

In the following translation, I have attempted to render the text's style more faithfully, including its strong tendency toward parataxis. As is well known, style is an idiolect, and the problem of literary translation is to create a system of differences with "neutral style" in the target language that is analogous to the differences that characterize the text in its original language.

I have not gone very far in this direction in terms of how the text would feel to a Tibetan reader, which would imply a reconstruction of the "horizon of expectations"³⁷ of such a reader (of Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's time? Ours? With or without the necessary specific competence to read this text?).

However, our current level of knowledge of the rNying ma literature allows us to better appreciate these texts by relating them to their specific context—earlier and contemporary rNying ma literature. For instance, Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's revelations are much closer to the raw, abrupt, and unadorned poetry of O rgyan gling pa's *Padma bka' thang* than to Klong chen pa's rhetoric, which is both finely lyrical and conceptually precise. In any case, without claiming to reproduce the effect of reading the original Tibetan text in English, I have tried to be faithful to its syntax, doing my best to respect the verbal tenses or modes and the grammatical elements (particles, verbal connectors...) or *their absence*. Similarly, I have not polished the text's style by eliminating repetitions or by using abstract terms instead of very simple and concrete ones. Therefore, the text will read much drier and sometimes more obscure in English than in German. Nevertheless, this brings us closer to the character of the translated texts—the tantra and the *don khrid*.

The first text, *The Teaching of the Ten Aspects of the Heart-Drop of the Completion Phase of The Eight Pronouncements, Self-Produced and Self-Arisen*,³⁸ is basically an allegoric or analogical explanation of the Eight Pronouncements, understood in purely rDzogs chen terms. The reason why it has ten chapters is that the "master" (*bla ma rig 'dzin*) aspect (the ninth of the Eight Pronouncements, so to say) is included, and that there is a chapter of recapitulation (*spyi dril*). The order of the chapters in the text is not the most common one and, contrary to what Eva Neu-maier seems to assume, they do not read as the successive steps of a spiritual path in any obvious way. This order is in fact connected to the structure of the nine-maṇḍala layout: center, east, south, west, north, then intermediary directions, south-east, etc. Thus, after the five

³⁷ See Hans Robert Jauss 1982.

³⁸ *sGrub chen bka' brgyad drag po rang byung rang shar gyi rdzogs rim snying tig rnam pa bcu bstan pa.*

usual Herukas corresponding to Body, Speech, Mind, Qualities and Activities, the sixth chapter is about the first of the three "worldly" aspects of the Eight Pronouncements, "Summoning and Sending out the Maṭṛkas" (*ma mo rbod gtong*). It is followed by the "master" aspect, and then we find the two last of the three "worldly" aspects: "Worldly Offerings and Praises" (*'jig rten mchod bstod*) and "The Fierce Mantras of Curse" (*dmod pa drag sngags*). The tenth and last chapter is the global synthesis. It is followed by a colophon alluding to the discovery of the *gter ma*, but in terms that are not very specific (neither Rig 'dzin rGod Idem nor Zang zang lha brag, or even which of the five repositories (*mdzod*) from which this text was extracted is explicitly named).

The second text, *The True Instructions of Sky-Face*:³⁹ *The Essence of the Great Sādhana of the Eight Pronouncements, Spontaneous and Self-Arisen*,⁴⁰ begins with a detailed description of the two main deities, male (Che mchog he ru ka) and female (gNam zhal ma). The female deity is curiously⁴¹ presented under three forms, corresponding to Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga (rDzogs chen). Their attributes are explained in connection to the ultimate View and this seems to be the reason why these instructions, which present only visualizations (and thus feel more like development phase instructions), are said to belong to the achievement phase "based upon the deity" (*lha [la] brten pa'i rdzogs rim*).

While redoing the translation in English, I was surprised to find that Eva Neumaier's edition and translation of the second text stops abruptly at the end of p. 605 of the CNT edition—i.e., at the end of the description of the deities. The last two pages are skipped without any indication of this fact or the reasons for it.⁴² It is somewhat ironical that Eva Neumaier ignored the part of the text that best justifies the title of her 1971 article as it contains more classical completion stage (*rdzogs rim*) instructions (body techniques, etc.) and the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) aspect of the practice. Although the instructions are quite allusive, this part of the text includes the verses:

³⁹ As already mentioned, gNam zhal [ma], "She with a Face of Sky," is the *yum* of Che mchog He ru ka, wrathful Samantabhadrī.

⁴⁰ *sGrub chen bka' brgyad rang byung rang shar gyi snying po gnam zhal don khrid*.

⁴¹ It is not explicit which form should be visualized in union with the male deity or where the two other ones should be visualized. These points could be clarified based on Rig 'dzin Padma 'phrin las' detailed commentary on the practice, the *Byang gter bka' brgyad rang byung rang shar gyi phrin las kyi rnam bshad rab gsal nyin byed snang ba* (CNT, vol. 44, pp. 398; henceforth, Padma 'phrin las, 2015). This extensive text deserves to be described and analyzed.

⁴² This is not due to a difference in the editions: the text is complete also in the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, which Eva Neumaier used as the basis of her translation. See e.g. *Rin chen gter mdzod*, vol. 23, pp. 165-200.

If you want to see the actual (*don*) Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra,
Fully look into the [celestial] Element.⁴³

As a fruit, the fourth vision of rDzogs chen, *chos zad*, is promised.⁴⁴ The overall conclusion relevant to our Byang gter studies is that Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's practice ideal may have been a fusion of the most advanced forms of tantrism—including both elaborate rituals with their aspects of magical action and body techniques—and visionary rDzogs chen rather than separate practices of one or the other. The extensive *bKa' brgyad rang byung rang shar*, of which the wrathful Padmasambhava cycle (*Thugs sgrub*) is somewhat of an appendix,⁴⁵ is seen as culminating in *The Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* (*rDzogs chen kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*) through a continuous, gradual ascent from a Mahāyoga-style practice to the most advanced forms of rDzogs chen.

At the present state of research, it is difficult to say to what extent the visionary rDzogs chen was already included in Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer and/or Guru Chos dbang's *bKa' brgyad* systems. What is certain, however, is that Rig 'dzin rGod ldem, in this *gter ma* revealed in 1366 (and "translated" from the *ḍākinī* script sometime before 1401, the probable date of his death) somehow goes in the same direction as the Mahāyoga-rDzogs chen synthesis achieved by Klong chen rab 'byams in the *Phyogs bcu'i mun sel* (1352), his commentary on the *gSang ba snying po*. There are no traces of communication between Klong chen rab 'byams or his disciples and Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's circle, although there is a strong hint that rGod ldem was aware of Klong chen rab 'byams' existence.⁴⁶ However, in 14th-century Tibet, this does not necessarily mean that he had access to Klong chen pa's works. What can be safely assumed is that in the same way as Rig 'dzin rGod ldem somewhat furthers Klong chen rab 'byams' synthesis of the *Bi ma snying thig* and *mKha' 'gro snying thig*, he is also presenting, in the *bKa' brgyad rang byung rang shar* cycle, a practical way to practice what Klong chen rab 'byams taught in theory in the *Phyogs bcu'i mun sel*, combining this exegesis of the *gSang ba snying po* with the *bKa' brgyad* heritage of Nyang ral and Chos dbang.



⁴³ CNT, vol. 10, p. 606: *Kun bzang dgongs pa ye shes zang thal don : mthong bar 'dod na dbyings la rdzogs par blta :*

⁴⁴ Loc. cit.: *de tshē chos nyid zad pa'i ye shes shar*.

⁴⁵ Both cycles and their interconnection are described in our forthcoming vol. 2 of *Northern Treasures Histories*. The *Thugs sgrub* is found in CNT, vol. 6 & 7.

⁴⁶ See Arguillère 2024a, pp. 94-99.

*An English Translation of the Texts Edited and Translated in the
1971 Article (with the Missing Part of the Second One)*

First Text: The Teaching of the Ten Aspects of the Heart-Drop of the Completion Phase of The Eight Pronouncements, Self-Produced and Self-Arisen

[589] Here is the teaching of the ten aspects of the heart-drop of the completion phase of The Eight Pronouncements, Self-Produced and Self-Arisen. This is the Tantra [for] Contemplating the Self-Produced and Self-Arisen.⁴⁷

In Indian language: *e mandra ro mas ni mahā sa ma ti na ma.*

In Tibetan: *Drag po rang byung rang shar chen po'i dgongs pa bstan pa zhes bya ba*

In English: "Teaching of the contemplation of the Great Wrathful Self-Produced and Self-Arisen [deities]."

Homage to the Glorious Samantabhadra [as] the Great Supreme Heruka!⁴⁸

In⁴⁹ the palace of the spontaneously established nature of the Akaniṣṭha of the Element of Reality (*dharmadhātu*), the primordial Buddha Samantabhadra dwelt together with crowds of peaceful and wrathful deities around him [in numbers] beyond imagination.

Then⁵⁰ the Lord of Secrets, Vajrapāṇi, stood up and asked: "Kye! spontaneous Buddha Samantabhadra, how is the heart of the meditation of the Eight Pronouncements?" So he asked.

⁴⁷ CNT, vol. 10, p. 589: *sGrub chen bka' brgyad drag po rang byung rang shar gyi rdzogs rim snying tig rnam pa bcu bstan pa bzhugs so : rang byung rang shar dgongs pa'i rgyud do : .* An alternative translation could be based on the understanding of *dgongs rgyud* as meaning a tantra that expresses the ultimate intention. However, in context, it rather seems to mean a tantra containing instructions for meditation (as *dgongs pa* is also an honorific for terms meaning contemplation). The pseudo-Sanskrit (?) title also leans in this direction, with its word **sa ma ti*, which certainly refers to *samādhi*. I have made no further effort to reconstruct the correct Sanskrit. In fact, the *rgya gar skad* of such texts could be anything, from an almost purely "elfic" language to a reproduction of an archaic phonetic transcription of whatever language the original corpus of the Eight Pronouncement was translated from—which needs not be Sanskrit.

⁴⁸ [590] *rGya gar skad du : e mandra ro mas ni ma hā sa ma ti na ma : bod skad du : drag po rang byung rang shar chen po'i dgongs pa bstan pa zhes bya ba : dpal kun tu bzang po che mchog he ru ka la phyag 'tshal lo : .*

⁴⁹ *'Og min chos kyi dbyings rang bzhin lhun gyis grub pa'i pho brang na : thog ma'i sangs rgyas kun tu bzang po la : 'khor zhi khro rab 'byams gyi lha bsam gyis mi khyab pas bskor nas thabs gcig tu bzhugs so : .*

⁵⁰ *De'i tshes gsang ba'i bdag po phyag na rdo rje bzhengs te 'di skad ces zhus so : kye : rang byung gi sangs rgyas kun tu bzang po : sgrub pa chen po bka' brgyad kyi : thugs kyi dgongs pa ji ltar lags : zhes zhus so : .*

[The Buddha] said:⁵¹

“Listen, Master of Secrets, Holder of the Vajra!
 How pitiful is sentient beings’ ignorance,
 [While they are] inseparable from me—the contemplation of the
 Eight Pronouncements,
 The maṇḍala of primordial wisdom. [591]
 Let⁵² all those who practice the Eight Pronouncements,
 When they engage in contemplation, do so in this way.
 Because ignorance is unceasing delusion,
 Birth, death, suffering, movements, changes,
 Being, non-being, attachment, aversion,
 —All [of these] are the [proliferating] foliage of ignorance.
 This is exactly Yama, the Lord of Death.⁵³
 Because⁵⁴ the universal basis is not [morally] determined, it is dull.
 Do not allow yourself to slip into a state of being unaware⁵⁵ and
 distracted,
 But [remain] relaxed in unaltered non-proliferation,
 With the power [of] eradicating [ordinary] consciousness.
 Since⁵⁶ you have settled in [its] vivid self-radiance,
 You will realize the fivefold primordial wisdom.⁵⁷
 Then you are freed from the demon of death
 And have overcome the deceptive illusory appearances of the phe-
 nomenal world.
 This is the contemplation of Mañjuśrī, the Body [aspect].”

⁵¹ *bKa' stsal pa : nyon cig gsang bdag rdo rje 'dzin : ye shes dkyil 'khor bka' brgyad kyi : dgongs pa nga dang dbyer med kyi : sems can ma rig snying re rje : . [591]*

⁵² *De dag bka' brgyad sgrub pa rnams : dgongs pa len na 'di ltar longs : ma rig 'khrul pa'i rgyun yin pas : skye 'chi sdug bsnal 'pho 'gyur dang : yin dang ma yin chags sdang kun : ma rig pa yi lo 'dab yin : de ka 'chi bdag gshin rje yin : .*

⁵³ The first Heruka of the Eight Pronouncements is Yamāntaka, “the one who puts an end to death.” Ignorance is described here as a state of spiritual death and the reconnection with our original condition destroys this state.

⁵⁴ *Kun gzhi lung med yin pas rmugs : dran med yengs bor ma btang zhig : spros med ma bcos lhug pa la : shes pa drungs 'don ngar dang bcas : .*

⁵⁵ The discussion with Marc-Henri Deroche on the occasion of his lecture at Inalco (13/03/2025, invited by the SFEMT) drew my attention to the use of *dran pa* in Byang gter context, already noted (in passing and about one isolated text) by Kapstein (1992). Indeed, while a search for occurrences of this term in the writings of Klong chen pa shows that it almost always has negative connotations, in the present two texts the connotations are always meliorative.

⁵⁶ *Rang mdangs sa ler bzhas pa yis : ye shes lnga po rtogs par 'gyur : de tshe 'chi bdag bdud las thar : snang srid 'khrul snang khram la thob : 'jam dpal sku yi dgongs pa yin : zhes gsungs so : grol lam gshin rje'i snying tig bstan pa'i le'u ste dang po'o : .*

⁵⁷ Given the many allusions to luminous visions in this text, these two verses could very likely be interpreted to mean that once you have settled into the “natural state,” visions of the five colors will spontaneously appear.

Thus he spoke.—*First chapter: The Exposition of Heart Drop of the Lord of Death,*⁵⁸ *the path of liberation.*

“Listen,⁵⁹ Master of Secrets, Holder of the Vajra!
 One’s own Intelligence (*rang rig*) is undefiled.
 [It is] the way of all completely pure Buddhas.
 When one does not conceptually cling to whatever appears, [592]
 In the phenomenal world devoid of I and me,
 All visible forms are appearance-and-emptiness;
 The sounds [that one] hears are empty-resonance without essence
 (*ngo bo*).⁶⁰
 Moving⁶¹ fictions are like the wind.
 Leave all this as it is, undifferentiated:
 Then you will triumph over saṃsāra.
 This is the contemplation of the Lotus Speech.”⁶²

Thus he spoke.—*Second Chapter: The Exposition of the Heart Drop of the Lotus, the Supreme Speech.*

“Listen,⁶³ Master of Secrets, Holder of the Vajra!
 Since the universal basis⁶⁴ was without mindfulness,
 The four doors fell into ignorance.⁶⁵

⁵⁸ Here, “Lord of Death” (*gshin rje*) must obviously be understood as *gShin rje gshed*, *Yamāntaka*.

⁵⁹ *Nyon cig gsang bdag rdo rje 'dzin : rang rig dri ma med pa ste : rnam dag sangs rgyas kun gyi lam : cir snang rtog pas ma [592] ded par : snang srid nga bdag med pa ru : gzugs snang thams cad snang stong yin : sgra rnams grags stong ngo bo med .:*

⁶⁰ The reason why only visual and auditive consciousnesses are mentioned here could be that in most texts, there are only pure visions and auditions (hence the very common phrase *sgra 'od zer gsum*), and no *pure* experiences connected to the three other senses, understood as connected to the ordinary material body.

⁶¹ *Dran rtog 'gyu ba rlung dang 'dra : thams cad dbyer med so mar zhog : de tshe 'khor ba zil gyis gnon : padma gsung gi dgongs pa yin : zhes gsungs so : gsung mchog padma'i snying tig bstan pa'i le'u ste gnyis pa'o .:*

⁶² In rNying ma contexts and especially in the bKa' brgyad, “Lotus Speech” (*padma gsung*) means Hayagrīva, the second of the eight Herukas.

⁶³ *Nyon cig gsang bdag rdo rje 'dzin : kun gzhi dran pa med pa yis : sgo bzhi ma rig pa ru song : sems kyang ma rig pa las byung : rtog pa sems kyi yan lag yin .:*

⁶⁴ *Kun gzhi*, in rDzogs chen (*snying thig*), can mean three things: 1. The ultimate nature of things, Intelligence (*rig pa*), is the original ground (*ye gzhi*) and the basis of arising ('*char gzhi*) of all phenomena. However, it is not called “morally indetermined” (*lung ma bstan* or *lung med*). It also cannot be “without mindfulness.” 2. *Kun gzhi lung ma bstan*, the one discussed here, is, so to say, a reification of the first moment of ignorance. 3. *Kun gzhi rnam shes*, the *ālayavijñāna* of Buddhist idealism, which either consists of all the karmic traces (*bag chags*) or is their surface of inscription.

⁶⁵ Eva Neumaier-Dargyay (Neumaier 1971, p. 146, n. 43) notes that the expression (*sgo bzhi*) is unclear but decides to translate it as a metaphor meaning “from all

Mind (*sems*) also arises from ignorance.
 Discursive constructs (*rtog pa*) are the branches of the mind.
 If⁶⁶ you want to take up the contemplation of the Perfect [Heruka of
 the] Mind,⁶⁷
 [Understand that] the fluctuations of the mind are like clouds:
 Do not block [them] or follow⁶⁸ [them, but] leave them alone.
 [In this way,] you will be purified of such subject-object discursive
 constructs
 And Intelligence [will be recognized] as self-produced and vivid.
 Leave it naturally blended with attentive awareness.⁶⁹
 Then self-produced Intelligence will arise.⁷⁰
 This is the contemplation of Yang dag [Heruka], the Mind.”

directions.” She speculates on a possible alternative spelling: *bsgo gzhi*. In the context—that of the primordial beginning of the *samsāra* in rDzogs chen—one would rather expect an allusion to the “eight spontaneously established doors” (*lhun grub sgo brgyad*). The “eight spontaneously established doors” are somehow related to the eight channels of the heart *cakra*, which are themselves related to the representation of the heart as an octagonal jewel in rDzogs chen. However, in the description of how the mind (*sems*) originally went astray into delusion, the “fall” in *samsāra* occurs through only *one* of the eight doors, not four of them. Alternatively, *sgo gsum*, the three doors (body, speech, and mind) would make sense, as a way of naming a sentient being as a whole. In a more tantric context, the *sgo bzhi* can only refer to the four doors of the maṇḍala—but what this could mean here is unclear. The occurrences of *sgo bzhi* later in the text all refer to the *sgo ma bzhi*, the door-keeper goddesses, but this does not help much either, except to suggest an alternative theory of the primordial beginning of the *samsāra*.

⁶⁶ *Yang dag dgongs pa len 'dod na : sems kyi 'gyu ba na bun 'dra : ma 'gags ma 'grod rang sar zhog : de ka'i gzung 'dzin rtog pa sangs : rig pa rang byung sa le ba : rang bzhin dran rig bsres la zhog : de la rang byung ye shes 'char : yan dag thugs kyi dgongs pa yin : zhes gsungs so : yang dag thugs kyi snying tig bstan pa'i le'u ste gsum pa'o .*

⁶⁷ Yang dag he ru ka is the third of the eight Herukas, corresponding to the mind aspect.

⁶⁸ 'Grod, not found in dictionaries, but the meaning can be conjectured from the context.

⁶⁹ This phrase, *rang bzhin dran rig bsres la zhog*, is doctrinally interesting. While modern rNying ma authors (from 'Jigs med gling pa onwards) tend to assume the importance of *dran pa* at least at the beginning of rDzogs chen meditation, this is not found in, e.g., Klong chen pa's writings, where this term is rather associated with ordinary mind (*sems*), which can only obscure the essence of *rig pa*. It should be investigated whether Rig 'dzin rGod ldem is starting something new in this regard, or is the heir of another tradition of rDzogs chen instructions. I would like to thank Marc-Henri Deroche for bringing this point to my attention by asking me (13/03/2025) about the status of *dran pa* in Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's *gter chos*.

⁷⁰ Again, one may wonder what is the difference between the mere *recognition* of Intelligence and the fact that “self-produced Intelligence will arise.” But this makes full sense in the context of instructions in the sNying thig style: first (*khregs chod*) one settles in the continuous flow of recognized Intelligence, and then (*thod rgal*) luminous visions arise. This explanation works in many passages below and will not be recalled with each of them.

Thus he spoke.—*Third Chapter: The Exposition of the Heart Drop of Yang dag [Heruka], the Mind.*

“Listen,⁷¹ Master of Secrets, Holder of the Vajra!
 Discursive constructs (*rnam rtog*) come from⁷² ignorance.
 From this come the kleśas, the five poisons.
 Sentient beings fall into the ocean of [these] five poisons.
 Leave discursive constructs in a relaxed state.
 Then, the kleśas are [their] mother, Buddha[hood].
 The five poisons have not been abandoned, but, self-arising, they
 are cleared away
 [And]⁷³ the primordial wisdom (*ye shes*) of Intelligence arises.
 There, the five wisdoms arise
 And the ocean of the five poisons becomes *amṛta*.
 The *siddhi* of immortality is attained. [593]
 This is the contemplation of Amṛta[kuṇḍalin], the Qualities.”

Thus he spoke.—*Fourth Chapter: The Exposition of the Heart Drop of Amṛta[kuṇḍalin], the Qualities.*

“Listen,⁷⁴ Master of Secrets, Holder of the Vajra!
 The consideration of I, me, object, and subject,
 Is the enemy that blocks Buddhahood, the Reality Body.
 [However,] if one recognizes self-produced Intelligence,
 The obstructive enemy is stripped [of its power and]
 The primordial wisdom [of] Intelligence develops.
 The evil obstructive enemy is liberated by the *kīla*.⁷⁵

⁷¹ *Nyon cig gsang bdag rdo rje 'dzin : ma rig pa la rnams rtog 'ong : de las nyon mongs dug lnga 'byung : sems can dug lnga'i rgya mtshor lhung : rtog pa rang shar glod la zhog : de tshe nyon mongs ma sangs rgyas : dug lnga ma spangs rang shar dengs : rang byung rig pa'i ye shes 'char : de la ye shes lnga shar ba'i : dug lnga'i rgya mtsho bdud rtsir 'gyur : 'chi ba med pa'i dngos grub thob : bdud rtsi [593] yon tan dgongs pa yin : zhes gsungs so : bdud rtsi yon tan snying tig bstan pa'i le'u ste bzhi pa'o .*

⁷² The Tibetan text, both in Neumaier 1971 (p. 141) and in *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs* 2015 (p. 592), reads *ma rig pa la rnams rtog 'ong*. Both translations (hers and mine) rather assume that the text should be read *ma rig pa las*.

⁷³ I understand the genitive *shar ba'i*, which does not make sense in context, to be a spelling error for *shar bas*.

⁷⁴ *Nyon cig gsang bdag rdo rje 'dzin : nga bdag gzung 'dzin bltas pa de : sangs rgyas chos sku'i dgra bgegs yin : rang byung rig pa ngo shes pas : dgra bgegs cham la phebs pa yin : rig pa ye shes rgyas pa dang : dgra bgegs phur pas bsgral ba yin : de tshe rtogs pa thal gyis phyung : nga bdag gzung 'dzin rtsa ba sangs : phur pa phrin las dgongs pa yin : zhes gsungs so : phrin las phur pa'i snying tig bstan pa'i le'u ste lnga pa'o .*

⁷⁵ The previous chapter was about the fourth Heruka, Amṛtakuṇḍalin, corresponding to the “qualities” (*yon tan*) aspect; this one is about Vajrakīla, the fifth Heruka, corresponding to the “activities” (*phrin las*).

Then suddenly realization arises
 And one is purified from the root of I, me, subject and object.
 This is the contemplation of Kīla, the Activities.”

Thus he spoke.—*Fifth Chapter: The Exposition of the Heart Drop of Kīla, the Activities.*

“Listen,⁷⁶ Master of Secrets, Holder of the Vajra!
 The universal basis is not defined as anything,
 [But] when you recognize [it], this is Intelligence (*rig pa*).
 It is the very essence of the universal basis.
 The omniscient primordial wisdom arises.
 Intelligence, [when] unaltered (*ma bcos*) and undistracted (*ma yengs*),
 is vividly awake (*hrig ge*), clear in its natural place.
 The unborn Body of Reality is the sky of the [main] female [deity],
 In which uncontrived primordial wisdom[s] arise.⁷⁷
 This is the contemplation of Summoning and Sending out the
 Matṛkas.”

Thus he spoke.—*Sixth Chapter: The exposition of the Path of Desire, the Heart Drop of the Matṛkas.*⁷⁸

“Listen,⁷⁹ Master of Secrets, Holder of the Vajra!
 The universal basis is everything’s birthplace;
 It is self-produced; it is primordial wisdom.
 It⁸⁰ cannot be expressed by phrases such as: “[this is] it.”

⁷⁶ *Nyon cig gsang bdag rdo rje 'dzin : kun gzhi ci yang ma nges pa : ngo shes dus na rig pa yin : de ka kun gzhi snying po yin : thams cad mkhyen pa'i ye shes 'char : rig pa ma bcos ma yengs pa : hrig ge rang sar gsal ba de : chos sku skye med yum gyi mkha' : de las 'gag med ye shes 'char : rbod gtong ma mo'i dgongs pa yin : zhes gsungs so : chags lam ma mo'i snying tig bstan pa'i le'u ste drug pa'o .*

⁷⁷ This again alludes to the arising of luminous visions in the sky. “The sky of the [main] female [deity]” (*yum gyi mkha'*) is in general a tantric euphemism for the female sexual organ. Here, however, the metaphor alluding to sexual union is applied to luminous visions (*ye shes*) arising in the spacious element (*dbyings*), so that “sky” actually means “sky.”

⁷⁸ *Ma mo rbod gtong* is the six of the Eight Pronouncements, the first of the three “worldly” ones, as it basically contains magical practices. But here, and this will be the case also for the next two “worldly” aspects, this is understood in an analogical way to mean rDzogs chen practices.

⁷⁹ *Nyon cig gsang bdag rdo rje 'dzin : kun gzhi kun gyi byung sa [CNT 2015: byung ba] ste : rang byung yin te ye shes yin .*

⁸⁰ *Tshig gis 'di ltar brjod du med : she bya rnon pos bzo rgyu med : yid kyis ched du bsgom du med : de don shes na rtogs pa yin : gzhi don rig na rig pa yin .* This paragraph is missing in Eva Neumaier’s Tibetan text and German translation.

Sharp [intellect even] cannot make it up [to be] cognitive object.
 It cannot be deliberately meditated on by mental [consciousness].
 If this is understood, this is realization.
 When one knows (*rig na*) the meaning of the basis, this is Intelligence (*rig pa*),
 Unmoved⁸¹ by [either] discursive constructs (*rnam rtog*) [or] the five poisons. [594]
 When [you are] settled [in this] without distraction,
 Intelligence will be caught in the Element.⁸²
 Although various adventitious circumstantial appearances [may] occur nebulously,
 They will be purified and disappear.
 It is [in itself] self-produced and immovable,
 But it is uncertain whether one will gain stability gradually or obtain it immediately.⁸³
 Discursive constructs and passions (*kleśa*) will be purified.
 Through implementing the three postures⁸⁴ to it,
 Intelligence will blossom into the five primordial wisdoms.
 When Intelligence matures, the fruit is obtained.
 One will have power over birthless and deathless life.
 The attainment of contemplation is Mahāmudrā.⁸⁵
 The arising of primordial wisdom[s] is Dzogchen.
 This is the contemplation of the Master Vidyādhara."

⁸¹ *rNam rtog dug lnga mi g.yo* [594] *bar : ma yengs pa ru bzhag pa de : rig pa dbyings su 'dzin pa yin : rkyen snang sna tshogs glo bur ba : bun gyis skyes kyang sangs kyiis dag : rang byung g.yo ba med pa de : rim gyis brtan pa thob pa dang : gcig char thob pa nges med pa : [CNT 2015: med nges pa :] nyon mongs rtog pa sangs par 'gyur : de la lta stangs gsum gcun [CNT 2015: bcun] pas : rig pa ye shes lnga ru rgyas : rig pa smin par [CNT 2015: smin pas] 'bras bu thob [CNT 2015: 'thob] : skye 'chi med pa'i tshe la dbang : dgongs pa longgs pa phyag rgya che : ye shes shar pa rdzogs pa che : rig 'dzin bla ma'i dgongs pa yin : zhes gsungs so : rig 'dzin bla ma'i snying tig bstan pa'i le'u ste bdun pa'o .:*

⁸² Here, the terms *rig pa* and *dbyings* do not refer to metaphysical realities, but to elements of the *thod rgal* visionary process. In the present context, *rig pa* means the "vajra chains" (*rdo rje'i lu gu rgyud*) which must be "caught" (*'dzin*) within "the enclosure of the Element" (*dbyings kyi ra ba*).

⁸³ Here I am following the text edited by Eva Neumayer, better than that of CNT.

⁸⁴ This is a direct allusion to the three body-postures and maybe the three eyes-posture of *thod rgal*.

⁸⁵ It is likely that the bKa' brgyud systems of Mahāmudrā originally integrated rDzogs chen instructions of the *sems sde* type. But after the time of Klong chen pa, it is also evident that a tendency began to use bKa' brgyud Mahāmudrā instructions in place of *khregs chod*, and to consider that only *thod rgal* was truly original in rDzogs chen. This may be the meaning of this verse and the next, although there are no clear traces of bKa' brgyud associations in the oldest sources on Rig 'dzin rGod ldem.

Thus he spoke.—*Seventh Chapter: The exposition of the Path of Desire, the Heart Drop of the Master Vidyādhara.*

Listen,⁸⁶ Master of Secrets, Holder of the Vajra!
 This gasping to “I” and “me”
 Was born from all-imagining ignorance (*kun brtag ma rig pa*).
 As the habitual tendencies of this [grasping] grew stronger,
 The benefits and harms of enemies and allies, gods and demons,
 As well as whatever manifests, appears as dual, “I” and “me.”
 Because there is no thing (*rgyu med*) for the mind to grasp,
 If one’s own non-grabbing Intelligence is left unamended,
 Discursive constructs self-liberate—delusion is destroyed.
 Then, one has liberated the worldly saṃsāra;
 The eight [types of] gods and demons are enslaved.
 Through the realization of selflessness, saṃsāra is liberated.
 This is the contemplation of Worldly Offerings and Praise.

Thus he spoke.—*Eighth Chapter: The exposition of the Heart Drop of the Worldly Arrogant [Spirits].*

“Listen,⁸⁷ Master of Secrets, Holder of the Vajra!
 Certainty about of the three-worlds saṃsāra
 Is that the basic discursive construct is hesitation (*snyems byed*).
 When doubt (*the tshom*) and dualism come, one is deluded.
 When the grasping of “I” occurs, one’s executioner has arisen.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ *Nyon cig gsang bdag rdo rje 'dzin : nga dang bdag tu 'dzin pa de : kun brtag ma rig pa las byung : de yi bag chag mthu brtas pas : dgra gnyen lha 'dre'i phan gnod dang : cir snang nga bdag gnyis su byung : sems la 'dzin pa'i rgyu med pas : 'dzin med rang rig ma btos na : rtog pa rang grol 'khrul pa 'jigs : de tshe 'jig rten 'khor ba sgrol : lha srin sde brgyad bran du 'khol : bdag med rtogs pas 'khor pa grol : 'jig rten mchod bstod dgongs pa yin : zhes gsungs so : 'jig rten dregs pa'i snying tig bstan pa'i le'u ste brgyad pa'o :*

⁸⁷ *Nyon cig gsang bdag rdo rje 'dzin : srid gsum 'khor ba'i nges pa ni : rtsa ba'i rnam rtog snyems byed yin : the tshom [595] gnyis 'dzin byung nas 'khrul : ngar 'dzin byung bas rang gshed langas : skye 'chi 'khor lo rgyun ma'i chad : 'khor ba gzhi med glo bur pa : rtsa bral yin par shes pa de : dang po shes pa'i rig pa yin : rig gnas [CNT 2015: rig nas] rang sor bzhag pa de : rig pa rang byung chen po yin : de ltar gnas na sgom pa yin : nyon mongs dug lnga rang shar dag : rang gshed rang bdud rang gis grol : dug lnga gnas 'gyur ye shes shar : dmod pa drag sngags dgongs pa yin : zhes gsungs so : drug sngags dmod pa'i snying tig bstan pa'i le'u ste dgu pa'o :*

⁸⁸ “One’s executioner” (*rang gshed*) is a common phrase in Tibetan texts of destructive magic, whether it means a spirit sent specifically to kill a designed target or whether it should be understood in the sense that something within oneself, normally designed for one’s protection, turns against the one it is supposed to protect, in a sort of auto-immune way. The hostile agent may himself suffer the same magical operation, and then “One’s executioner [becomes] a demon for himself [and] liberates himself.” Of course, the whole process is understood here in a sublimated way, as an allegory of rDzogs chen practice.

The wheel of birth and death will [then] not stop [turning].
Samsāra is ungrounded and adventitious.
Knowing that it is rootless is, first of all, the Intelligence of knowing.
To leave this intelligence that [one] has [gained] just as it is
Is Intelligence, the great self-produced [nature].
If one remains like that, this is meditation.
Passions, the five poisons, are purified on the spot.
One's executioner [becomes] a demon for himself [and] liberates himself.
The five poisons are transmuted [and] the primordial wisdoms arise.
This is the contemplation of The Fierce Mantras Cursing."

Thus he spoke.—*Ninth Chapter: The exposition of the Heart Drop of The Fierce Mantras of Cursing.*

Listen,⁸⁹ Master of Secrets, Holder of the Vajra!
Regarding the contemplation of the global synthesis of the Victors:
The universal basis is not conceived as being the fruit.
The basis is self-produced and motionless.
If it is not imbued with awareness (*dran pa*), it is actually dullness (*gti mug*).⁹⁰
Intelligence is a self-arisen clarity.
When one remains firmly on the ground of awareness (*yang dag dran pa'i sa*),
It is bright and alert, vividly still and radiant,
Like an ocean without waves,
Brilliant, limpid, lucidly clear,
Like the arising of the stars and planets in the sky.
If you remain like this, it is Dharmadhātu.
This is the contemplation of the great pervasive-extension,⁹¹
It is called birthless Dharmadhātu.

⁸⁹ *Nyon cig gsang bdag rdo rje 'dzin : spyi dril rgyal pa'i dgongs pa ni : kun gzhi 'bras bur mi 'dod de : gzhi ni rang byung g.yo med yin : dran pas ma zin gti mug dngos : rig pa rang shar [CNT 2015: rang gsal] gsal ba la : yang dag dran pa'i sa [CNT 2015: so] tshugs pas : lhang nge lhan ne lham me ba : rgya mtsho'i rlabs dang bral ba ltar : sa le sen ne yer re ba : mkha' la gza' skar shar ba ltar : de ltar gnas pas chos kyi dbyings : khyab brdal chen po'i dgongs pa yin : skye med chos kyi dbyings zhes bya .*

⁹⁰ This is the third occurrence of the idea that the difference between *ye gzhi ka dag* and *kun gzhi lung ma bstan* is the presence of *dran pa* in the former and its absence in the latter.

⁹¹ *Khyab brdal* is a specific technical term of rDzogs chen, referring to the way in which Buddha nature is present in ordinary beings.

Then⁹² the passions are uprooted.
 Even if discursive constructs suddenly arise,
 Saṃsāra has been interrupted by⁹³ rootless Intelligence.
 Now again, unchanging contemplation
 Is the absence of discursive constructs [but] is *not*⁹⁴ primordial wisdom.
 In a cloudless sky,
 [Let your] eyes and Intelligence stare wakefully, and then [596]
 For Element and Intelligence are merged,
 While inwardly experiences of emptiness arise,
 Outwardly you will see the signs of clarity.
 [There are] the signs of Intelligence and those of primordial wisdom,
 The perception of immutable certainty, and,
 Inwardly, one has attained stability.
 Appearance and emptiness are united.
 Then, one has reached contemplation.”

Thus he spoke.—*Ninth Chapter: The exposition of the Heart Drop of the Essence that is the Global Synthesis.*

This⁹⁵ completes the presentation of the contemplation of the Wrathful [Eight Pronouncements], Self-Produced and Self-Arising. *Samaya*. Triple seal: seal of profundity, seal of secrecy, seal of impartation. *Iṭhi*. The Emanation Body, the Great Vidyādhara [rGod Idem can], brought it out from the treasure [cache].

⁹² *De dus nyon mongs rtsa ba chod : rnam rtog glo bur langs gyur kyang : rtsa bral rig pas 'khor ba 'chad : de yang dgongs pa mi 'gyur ba : rtog med yin te ye shes min : nam mkha' sprin dang bral ba la : mig dang rig pa hur bton nas : [596] dbyings dang rig pa bsres pa yis : nang du ston pa'i nyams shar bas : phyi ru gsal ba'i rtags mthong 'gyur : rig pa'i rtags dang ye shes rtags : mi 'gyur nges pa mthong pa dang : nang du brtan pa thob pa yin : snang stong zung du chud pa yin : de tshe dgongs pa lon pa yin : zhes gsungs so : spyi dril snying po'i snying tig bstan pa'i le'u ste bcu pa'o :*

⁹³ I understand the genitive (in both editions) to be a misspelled instrumental.

⁹⁴ Sic in the two editions. This does not make much sense. I suspect this should be read as *rtog med yin te ye shes yin* instead of *ye shes min*. Indeed, rDzogs chen may recognize the existence of dull mental states that are devoid of discursive constructs—because the mind is immobilized—without having the quality of *ye shes* or *rig pa*—because *kun gzhi lung ma bstan* still obscures its clarity. But this idea does not seem to apply in the present context.

⁹⁵ *Drag po rang byung rang shar chen po'i dgongs pa bstan pa rdzogs so : samaya : rgya rgya rgya : zab rgya : gsang rgya : gtad rgya : iṭhi : sprul sku rig 'dzin chen pos gter nas gdan drangs pa'o : dge'o :*

*Second text: [597] The True Instructions of Sky-Face.⁹⁶
The Essence of the Great Sādhana of the Eight Pronouncements,
Spontaneous and Self-Arisen⁹⁷*

[598] <166> Homage⁹⁸ to the Sugatas, the deities of the Eight Pronouncements! In whoever is able to meditate [on] the Great Supreme Heruka, male and female, [in whom] unadulterated saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are fully complete, the qualities will be spontaneously perfect in an instant. I, Padmasambhava, [will now] give the oral instructions for this.

When⁹⁹ the two accumulations through taking refuge and generating bodhicitta have been performed, meditate on the master above the crown of your head and pray [to him]. Take the four empowerments and do the absorption in the four syllables.

From¹⁰⁰ the state of emptiness, either [perform] the fully complete sādhanā, or clearly visualize [yourself] in just one moment as the male and female [deities].¹⁰¹

As¹⁰² for [one's] body,¹⁰³ the complete [maṇḍala] mansion (*gzhal yas khang*) is clearly [visualized] in the center of the palace (*pho brang*) endowed with the five *cakras*.¹⁰⁴ [In] the universal basis, <167> the completely pure active [side] of the intellect (*rnam dag yid kyi byed pa*) is the

⁹⁶ gNam zhal [ma], "She with a Face of Sky," is, as seen above, the *yum* of Che mchog He ru ka, wrathful Samantabhadri.

⁹⁷ [597] sGrub chen bka' brgyad rang byung rang shar gyi snying po gnam zhal don khrid ces bya ba bzhugs so .:

⁹⁸ [598] bDe gshegs sgrub pa bka' brgyad lha la phyag 'tshal lo : 'khor 'das ma bcos yongs rdzogs he ru ka : che mchog yab yum sgom bar sus nus pa : skad cig gcig gis yon tan lhun gyis grub : de yi zhal khrid padma bdag gis bstan .:

⁹⁹ sKyabs 'gro sems bskyed tshogs gnyis bsags byas la : bla ma spyi bor bsgoms la gsol ba btab : dbang bzhi rdzogs byas yi ge bzhi yis bstims .:

¹⁰⁰ sTong nyid ngang las sgrub thabs rdzogs pa'am : skad cig tsaṃ las yab yum skur gsal gdab .:

¹⁰¹ These two possibilities refer to the gradual (three samādhis, etc.) or instantaneous visualization of the maṇḍala. The first system is often ascribed to the Mahāyoga and the second one to the Anuyoga, but things do not seem to be so simple in actual practice, where the frontiers between the three inner classes of tantras are often blurred.

¹⁰² De yi lus ni yongs rdzogs gzhal yas khang : 'khor lo lnga ldan pho brang dbus na gsal : kun gzhi'i rnam dag yid ni byed pa yab : bya ba chos ni rnam dag bzang mo yum : snang srid gzhi' bzhengs gdan la yongs rdzogs pa : 'khor 'das sku gsum ma g.yos sku gsum thugs : rang byung ye shes rang shar [599] lhun gyis grub : zhi khro rab 'byams mtshan ma'i rdzas dang bral : dran shes tsaṃ gyis sa lam nges par bgrod : ma bcos rig pa rang shar chos kyi sku : kun tu bzang po khro pa'i rang rtsal las : che ba'i che mchog kun bzang he ru ka .:

¹⁰³ The use of the non-honorific form *lus* indicates that this is about the meditator's own body, not that of the deity.

¹⁰⁴ This periphrasis seems to mean: in one's heart.

male,¹⁰⁵ and the completely pure passive side, *dharma*, is the female [Samanta]bhadrī, [appearing] fully complete on the seat of phenomenal existence arising from the Basis. Saṃsāra and nirvāṇa [do not deviate from] the Trikāya, Body, Speech, and Mind. Self-arising spontaneous pristine awarenesses [599] are spontaneously perfect: the abundance of the peaceful and wrathful [deities] is devoid of characterized substantiality (*mtshan ma'i rdzas dang bral*). The levels and paths are definitely traversed by mere attentive awareness.¹⁰⁶ Unaltered, self-arising Intelligence is Dharmakāya. From Samantabhadra's own wrathful expressive power (*khros pa'i rang rtsal*) [arises] the Heruka who is supremely great among the great, on¹⁰⁷ top of Mt. Meru, which is made up of the five elements, [in which] there is no difference between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. There are [the eight] cemeteries, a palace, the vajra enclosure, [the vajra] tent and [a circumference of] fire. In its center are a vajra rock, a lotus, the sun, the moon, the eight prostrated nāgas, and above them, <168> a lion, a tiger, a leopard, an elephant, a bear, a water buffalo, a *makara* and a great snake, [all forming] a throne, above which is a blazing ten-spoked golden wheel.¹⁰⁸ Above it, on a mat [made of] the trampled eight fierce gods, [is the Great Supreme Heruka]. His dark brown body color [symbolizes] the unaltered universal basis. [His] twenty-one heads [are] the complete qualities of the Fruit. The main central face is dark brown, the six faces above [it] are blue. The seven right heads are white, blue, white, black, blue, dark blue, and white, [600] one above the other. The seven left heads are red, green, red, green, blue, green, and red, one above the other. The twenty-one right hands hold the peaceful male [deities]; the twenty-one left hands holds the excellent female [deities]. Of the six Bhagavan

¹⁰⁵ To rephrase the explanation found in Neumaier 1971, p. 154, n. 61, in a slightly clearer way: all the elements of the maṇḍala are sublimed components of the ordinary experience. *Kun gzhi* seems to correspond to the palace itself. Then all the deities correspond to one of the eight consciousnesses with its specific objective field, starting with *manas* and it is object, *dharma*.

¹⁰⁶ This is another interesting occurrence of *dran pa*: *dran shes tsam gyis sa lam nges par bgrod* .:

¹⁰⁷ *'Khor 'das gnyis med 'byung lnga ri rab steng : dur khrod gzhäl yas rdo rje ra gur me : de dbus rdo rje brag dang padma dang : nyi zla klu brgyad bskyel ba'i steng phyogs na : seng ge stag gzig glang chen dom dang ni : ma he chu srin sbrul chen khri steng du : gser gyi 'khor lo rtsibs bcu 'bar ba'i steng : dregs pa'i lha brgyad brjis pa'i gdan steng du : sku mdog smug nag kun gzhi ma bcos pa : nyer gcig dbu ni 'bras bu'i yon tan rdzogs : rtsa zhal smug nag steng zhal drug ni mthing : g.yas pa'i zhal bdun dkar sngo dkar nag mthing : sngon po dang ni dkar [600] po rim par brtsegs : g.yon gyi zhal bdung dmar ljang mthing : ljang sku dang ni dmar po rim par brtsegs : phyag g.yas nyi shu rtsa gcig zhi ba yab : g.yon pa nyer gcig bzang mo yun rnam dang : bcom ldan thub drug g.yas gsum g.yon na gsum : sbyong gzhi sbyang byed phung khams skye mched lha : zhabs brgyad gdan la brkyang bskum bgrad cing bzhugs : rnam brjid bco brgyad chas rdzogs gar dgur ldan .:*

¹⁰⁸ In context, *'khor lo* means the circular weapon and the ten spokes are its ten points or blades.

Munis, three are in the [next] right [hands] and three in the [next] left [hands. [These] deities are the skandhas, dhātus and āyatanas, [in their aspects of] bases to be purified (*sbyong gzhi*) and means of purification (*sbyang byed*).¹⁰⁹ [He stands with his] eight legs widely spread apart on the throne—[the right ones] bent and [the left ones] extended. He is complete with the eighteen frightening attributes and the nine moods of dance.

The¹¹⁰ Great [main] female [deity], Sky-Face, Queen of the Sphere (*dByings phyug*), embraces the [main] male deity. [As a symbol of] the unaltered principle, she has one face and two arms; the dark brown color of her body [means that this] Body can transform into anything. The right [arm] embraces the male deity, the left offers him a skullcup full of blood. She embraces the Great Glorious [main] male deity, [meaning that] the Fruit is spontaneously perfect. [As a sign of] taking this as a path, she is of heavenly color.

As¹¹¹ for the first of the nine heads of the Mahāyoga [goddess],¹¹² they are blue, white, <169> yellow, red, and green,¹¹³ the colors of the five elements: [thus,] the [set] of male and female herukas of the five families is complete in the [main] female [deity]. Above, the right head

¹⁰⁹ Che mchog he ru ka has are forty-two arms, corresponding to the 42 peaceful deities among the one hundred *zhi khro lha*, 21 male and 21 female deities. The six Munis (Buddhas corresponding to the six main states in saṃsāra) are counted among them. How the next 35 items (the 5 *phung po*, the 18 *kham*s and the 12 *skye mched*) makes 34 is not explained in this text. The only possibility is that the three lists are reduced to the 5 skandhas and 12 āyatanas—17 items—multiplied by two, in order to represent the “aspects of bases to be purified (*sbyong gzhi*) and means of purification (*sbyang byed*)”—which then amounts to 34.

¹¹⁰ *Yum chen gnam zhal dbyings phyug yab dang 'khril : rtsa ba ma bcos zhal gcig phyag gnyis pa : sku mdog smug nag cir yang 'gyur ba' i sku : g.yas pa yab 'khyud g.yon pa dung dmar stob : 'bras bu lhun rdzogs dpal chen yab dang 'khril : de nyid lam gyur gnam zhal gnam mkha'i mdog :*

¹¹¹ *Ma hā yo ga dbu dgu'i dang po ni : mthing dkar ser dang dmar ljang 'byung lnga'i mdog : rigs lnga yab yum khrag thung rdzogs pa'i ma : de steng g.yas dkar g.yon dmar dbus mthing zhal : chos sku longs sku sprul sku'i ngo bor rdzogs : de steng zhal gcig mthing sngon gnam zhal ma : mkha' spyod dbyings rig 'gyur med lhun gyis grub :*

¹¹² The text is not very clear about the goddesses of Mahāyoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga. The main male deity is in union with a female deity that has just been described as one-faced and two-armed. We do not know where the other three are located. Perhaps these three aspects corresponding to Mahāyoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga are disposed in a triangle, two at the front right and left and one at the back, as for the three emanations of Yamāntaka in the main systems of 'Jam dpal tsho bdag (*ICags sdig* and *ICags 'dra*).

¹¹³ This form of the main female deity has nine heads, arranged as a pyramid with a first row of five heads with the colors of the five elements. The list of colors is probably to be understood in the order: central face, then first to the right, first to the left, second further to the right and second further to the left. A second row of three heads above (right white, left red, center blue) symbolize the three kāyas, with a final unique (dark blue) head at the top.

is white, the left one red, the middle one blue, [meaning that] in [her] essence, the Bodies of Reality, Enjoyment and Emanation are complete. Above it is a single blue-dark blue (*mthing sngon*) head—the [reason why she is called] She with a Sky Face, Khecarī¹¹⁴ [in whom] the immutable [unity] of Dhātu and Intelligence is spontaneously perfect.

[In this form, she has] eighteen arms,¹¹⁵ the first two of which hold a vajra and a skullcup. [She presents this] blood-filled skullcup [to the mouth of] Samantabhadra Heruka, the Lord of the Sugatas, [in whom] skillful means and discernment are inseparable. Her eight [other] right arms hold the eight *kaurī* [and] *matṛka*, clearly visualized as the purity of the eight consciousnesses and faculties. [601] Her¹¹⁶ eight left arms hold the eight *seng ha* and *phra men*, [representing] the purity of the four objective fields¹¹⁷ and the four times.¹¹⁸ Her four spread legs trample down the four demons [of] the four extremes, spontaneously perfected in the form (*ngo bo*) of the [four female] gatekeepers. She is finely adorned with the jewels and graveyard ornaments.¹¹⁹ The mental factors (*sems 'byung*) are spontaneously established as the crowds of her retinue of [both] action and primordial wisdom—the Powerful Ones (*dbang phyug*), the Dākinīs, the *Ging* spirits, etc.

The¹²⁰ Anuyoga [form of the] Great [main] female [deity] Sky-Face is the color of the sky. Her upper face is [that of] the wrathful Vajra Queen of the Dhātu, connected to the secret [*cakra*] of the Glorious Vajra male deity. Below it are eight heads—white, yellow, red, and

¹¹⁴ Khecara is generally the pure land of the dākinīs, but Vajravārahī as the archetypal dākinī is often called Khecarī (*mkha' spyod ma*) and I presume that this is the meaning of *mkha' spyod* in this context.

¹¹⁵ *Phyag ni bco brygad dang po rdo rje dang : thod pa khrag bkang kun bzang he ru ka : thabs shes gnyis med bde gshegs kun gyi rje : g.yas kyi phyag brygad koo ri ma mo brygad : rnam shes dbang po dag pa'i rnam par gsal .:*

¹¹⁶ [601] *g.Yon gyi phyag brygad seng ha phra men brygad : yul bzhi dus bzhi dag pa'i rnam par rdzogs : zhabs bzhi bgrad pas bdud bzhi mtha' bzhi gnon : ye shes sgo skyong ngo bor lhun gyis grub : rin chen dur khrod rgyan gyis legs par brygan : sems byung dbang phyug mkha' 'gro ging la sogs : las dang ye shes 'khor tshogs lhun gyis grub .:*

¹¹⁷ Neumaier 1971, p. 156, n. 71: “*yul bzhi* are unknown.” More than fifty years later, this has not become any clearer.

¹¹⁸ Neumaier 1971, p. 156, n. 72: “*dus bzhi* here refer to the four seasons, according to the clear information provided by Mr. Geshay Lobsang Dargyay.” However, in a rNying ma context (and there is one such occurrence below in this text), these can also be past, present, future and eternity (*dus med*).

¹¹⁹ The combination of both jewels and macabre ornaments is said in many rNying ma tantric commentaries to mean the combination of the “powerful” (*dbang*) and “wrathful” (*drag*) activities.

¹²⁰ *A nu yum chen gnam zhal nam mkha'i mdog : steng zhal khro ma rdo rje dbyings phyug ma : rdo rje dpal chen yab kyi gsang bar sbyor : de 'og zhal brygad dkar ser dmar ljang mdog : phyogs mtshams bskor ba kro ti yum chen brygad .:*

green.¹²¹ In the eight [cardinal and] intermediary directions [are] the eight great *kro ti* female deities, touching the soles of the eight feet of the Wrathful King [Che mchog he ru ka].

Her¹²² nine right hands hold Samantabhadra and the eight *kaurī*. <170> Appearances are the skillful means: [they are] united with the empty Dhātu. The nine left hands [hold] Samantabhadrī and the eight witches (*phra men*), the union of emptiness [and] discernment (*shes rab*), appearances and skillful means. The eight blazing legs [are] the eight male and female gatekeepers who purify extremisms and wrong views [and] integrate [them] into the Path. The complete graveyard [ornaments and] jewels [denote] the integration of appearances and mind as the Dhātu and the primordial awareness [of] Intelligence.

The¹²³ Atiyoga [form] of the Great [main] female [deity] Sky-Face is of blue color. She has nine heads [stacked in] three rows; the uppermost head, bluish black, is alone: [the symbol] refers to the primordial wisdom of the Dharmadhātu of the vajra family. In the middle one of the three rows of heads, the eastern¹²⁴ [face] is white, the southern one yellow, the western one red and the northern one green: the four [remaining] primordial wisdoms of the four [remaining] families. The lowest of the three rows [602] has the colors of the families in the same way.

¹²¹ The description does not seem to be complete, as we only have four colors for eight heads. This could mean that in this case there are two rows of four heads with the same colors. This works with the explanation of the *a ti yum chen* below, which has a single head above two rows of four heads, each facing one of the cardinal directions.

¹²² *Khro rgyal zhabs brgyad bar ba'i mthil la sbyor : phyag dgu g.yas pa kun bzang ko ri brgyad : snang ba thabs de stong pa'i dbyings la sbyor : g.yon pa'i phyag dgu bzang po phra men brgyad : stong pa shes rab snang ba thabs dang sbyor : zhabs brgyad 'bar ba sgo skyong yab yum brgyad : mthar 'dzin log lta rnam dag lam du sbyor : dur khrod rin chen chas rdzogs snang ba sems : rig pa ye shes dbyings dang mnyam par sbyor .:*

¹²³ *A ti yum chen gnam zhal mthing ka'i mdog : dbu dgu rim gsum steng zhal mthing nag gcig : chos dbyings ye shes rdo rje'i rig dang sbyor : rim gsum bar ma shar dkar lho phyogs ser : nub dmar byang ljang rigs bya'i ye shes bzhi : rim gsum 'og ma de bzhi [602] rigs gyi mdog .:*

¹²⁴ In a quadrangular pattern, "east" normally means front, "south" right and so forth. Although this should be modified according to the actual orientation of the deity in context, here, these terms most probably retain this conventional meaning, since a presentation that would not begin with the front and then turn clockwise would be very awkward.

The¹²⁵ four Bodies¹²⁶ and the five pristine awarenesses are the five blood-drinkers. [She is holding] a vajra [in her right hand] and a skull-cup [in the left, symbolizing] the non-dual union of the Element and Intelligence. The *kau[rī]* and *seng* [*ha ma* she holds in her] right and left [hands] refer to objects, consciousnesses and faculties.¹²⁷ The four legs are the four primordial awarenesses¹²⁸ endowed with the four immeasurable [thoughts].¹²⁹ The deep meaning is the mode of being of the eighteen emptinesses.¹³⁰ The primordial awareness of Intelligence devoid of extremes is spontaneously perfect. This is the unborn naturally pure miraculous [manifestation arising] from the non-dual playful [union] of the Great Glorious male and female [deities].

In¹³¹ order to tame the world, on the boundary of Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa, on the top of the [strata of] space, wind, blood, the great earth, and Mt. Meru,¹³² there is the fully complete [assembly of] the Great Glorious One. <171> Under their feet, the hell worlds are complete without exception [as] masses of fire and air. The *preta* and the animals are complete [as] water and earth. In the middle of Mt. Meru, on the four continents, the world of desire, the basis [of the existence] of gods and humans, is complete without exception. From the waist of Mt. Meru to the summit of existence, the World of Form with its seventeen levels is complete. At its boundaries, at the summit, the four levels of

¹²⁵ *sKu bzhi ye shes lnga 'byon khrag 'thung lnga : rdo rje thod khrag dbyings rig gnyis med sbyor : g.yas g.yon ko seng yul shes dbang po sbyor : zhabs bzhi chad med bzhi ldan ye shes bzhi : stong nyid bco brgyad gnas lugs zab mo'i don : mtha' bral rig pa'i ye shes lhun gyis grub : dpal chen yab yum gnyis med rol pa las : skye med rang bzhin dag pa'i cho 'phrul yin .*

¹²⁶ Neumaier 1971, p. 158, n. 82: “*sku bzhi: chos sku, longs sku, sprul sku, ngo bo nyid kyi sku.*”

¹²⁷ This obscure phrase becomes clear if one refers to the explanation of the attributes of the *Anuyoga* form above.

¹²⁸ Neumaier 1971, loc. cit., n. 86: “*ye shes bzhi: the usual ye shes lnga, but without chos dbyings ye shes.*”

¹²⁹ Neumaier 1971, loc. cit., n. 85: “*snying rje, byams pa, dga' ba, btang snyoms.*”

¹³⁰ Although the explanation of the symbolism of the legs is interposed, this seems to refer to the eighteen arms.

¹³¹ *'Jig rten 'dul phyir 'khor 'das mtshams nyid du : mkha' rlung khrag dang sa chen ri rab steng : dpal chen yongs rdzogs 'dag pa'i zhabs 'og na : me rlung 'khrugs pa dnyal kham ma lus rdzogs : sa chu gnyis la yi dwags dud 'gro rdzogs : lhun po'i sked na gling bzhi sa steng du : 'dod kham lha mi'i brten yul ma lus rdzogs : lhun po'i sked pa nas ni srid rtse'i bar : gzugs kham gnas rigs bcu bdun rdzogs pa'i mtshams : rtse la gzugs med mu bzhi ma lus rdzogs : de steng dpal gyi pho brang 'og min zhing .*

¹³² This is a tantric transposition of the Abhidharma cosmology: the “great earth”—the world as flat disc—rests on a whirlwind, itself grounded in space. It carries the great ocean—here transformed into a sea of blood—and, in its midst, Mt. Meru. After describing the central male and female deities and the three goddesses of the three inner classes of tantras, the text discusses the whole assembly before returning (if I understand correctly) to the main central deity.

the Formless World are complete without exception. Above this [all] is the palace of the Glorious One, the pure land of Akaniṣṭha.

On¹³³ the vajra rock of the immovable universal basis are piled the lotus flowers of the assimilation of the two truths and dependent [origination, corresponding] the accomplishment of the vehicles of the Śrāvakas and the Pratyekabuddhas. [Che mchog he ru ka stands] on the sun of ultimate bodhicitta, on the surface of which is the moon disk of superficial¹³⁴ bodhicitta: he has fully accomplished the vehicle of the bodhisattva[’s] pāramitās. Above it are the eight *nāgas* who uphold the precepts of ritual purity, [meaning that] he has fully accomplished the View and Conduct of the Kriyā [tantras]. [603] Above it is a throne made of eight stacked animals, [symbolizing the fact that] he has fully accomplished the Upa¹³⁵ [tantras, in which] View and Conduct are combined. The fact that he has attained the goals of the trainings [of these outer vehicles is symbolized by] the ten-spoked wheel of the ten bhūmis, and as for the bhūmis and paths [that are] the fruit, fully complete and unmixed, [of the] eight [lower] vehicles that he overwhelms with his splendor, [they are represented by] the eight arrogant gods that he tramples.

Embodiment (*bdag*)¹³⁶ of the purified five poisons [as] <172> the five pristine awarenesses, the great sovereign[s],¹³⁷ spontaneously perfect, are dark brown [and] blue. [Because] he overwhelms the eight

¹³³ *Kun gzhi mi g.yo rdo rje brag steng du : bden gnyis rten 'brel thugs chud pad sdong brtsegs : nyan thos rang sangs rgyas pa'i theg pa rdzogs : don dam byang sems nyi ma rgyas pa'i khar : kun rdzob byang sems zla ba'i dkyil 'khor steng : byang sems phar phyin theg pa ma lus rdzogs : de steng klu brgyad gtsang sbra'i chos 'dzin pa : kri ya don kyi lta spyod [603] ma lus rdzogs : de steng byol song brgyad kyi khri khri brtsegs pa : lta spyod 'dres pa u pa yongs rdzogs pa'o : de dag rnam kyi slob pa'i mthar thugs pa : sa bcu'i chos kyi 'khor lo rtsibs bcu pa : ma 'dres yongs rdzogs 'bras bu'i sa lam ni : theg brgyad zil gnong dregs pa'i lha brgyad brdzis .*

¹³⁴ *Kun rdzob kyi byang sems.* This term refers to the two aspects of “aspiration” and “engagement” (*smon 'jug*) as opposed to “absolute bodhicitta” (*don dam byang sems*) which refers to the realization of the true nature of phenomena. The translation is admittedly problematic, but no better alternative could be found; the other options create more problems than they solve.

¹³⁵ The way the Caryā Tantras are called in rNying ma terminology.

¹³⁶ *Dug lnga dag pa ye shes lnga yi bdag : khyab bdag chen po lhun rdzogs smug mthing mdog : mtha' brgyad zil gnong zhabs brgyad lha brgyad brdzis : yid chos rnam dag kun bzang yab dang yum : rtsa ba'i phyag gis thugs kar bsnol thabs 'dzin .*

¹³⁷ The logical connection with the previous phrase is not obvious. *Khyab bdag* denotes a deity that is beyond the distinction of the five families. Here, it refers to the main deity. However, the reference to colors (“dark brown [and] blue”) suggests that “the great sovereign” means both the male deity Che mchog he ru ka and the female deity gNam zhal ma. But then the text returns only to Che mchog (eight legs, etc.). It is unclear in context which deity is being described, as the manual attributes do not seem to match with the list above.

extremes¹³⁸ with his splendor, his eight feet trample the eight gods. With his main arms crossed in front of his chest, he holds Samantabhadra the male and female [main deities, who are] the purified mental [consciousness, *yid*] and [its objects,] dharmas.

The purity of the five [aggregates]—Consciousness,¹³⁹ Form, Sensation, Feeling, and Formations—is the five lower right arms. The purity of the five [elements]—Space, earth, water, fire, and air purified—is the five lower left arms marked by the five mudrās. Vairocana, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi, etc., [signify] the five primordial awarenesses of which [he] is endowed. [Samanta]bhadrī,¹⁴⁰ Buddhalocanā, Māmakī, Pāṇḍarāvasinī, and Tārā, etc., [are] the possession of the power¹⁴¹ of the five families. The purity of the five poisons is the [set of] the male and female [forms of the] five families, which are complete [in him].

Below,¹⁴² [the eight next right arms hold] Kṣitigarbha, Ākāśagarbha, Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāṇi, Maitreya, Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin, Samantabhadra, and Mañjuśrī, [the] eight [great bodhisattvas]. They are the four consciousnesses and the [four associated] faculties (*dbang po*) of the eye, ear, nose, and tongue.

The¹⁴³ eight [next] left [arms hold] Lāsyā, Mālā, Gītā, Nṛtyā, Dhūpā, Puṣpā, Ālokā, and Gandhā, which are forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile objects, and the four times purified. This completes the eight male and [eight] female Bodhisattvas.

¹³⁸ Neumaier 1971, p. 159, n. 92): “These are the following eight double terms, which are individually resolved into the eight *mtha'*, the extremist views: *skye 'gag mtha' gnyis, rtag chad kyi mtha' gnyis, yod med kyi mtha' gnyis, 'gro 'ong gyi mtha' gnyis...*”

¹³⁹ *rNam shes gzugs sogs 'du shes 'du byed lnga : rnam par dag pa de 'og g.yas pa lnga : mkha' sa chu me rlung lnga rnam dag pa : de 'og g.yon pa'i phyag rgya lnga yis 'dzin : rnam snang mi bskyod rin 'byung snang mtha' yas : don grub la sogs ye shes lnga dang ldan : kun bzang spyan ma mā ki kos dkar mo : srol ma la sogs rigs lnga'i dbang dang ldan : dug lnga dag pa rigs lnga yab yum rdzogs :*

¹⁴⁰ Kun bzang. One would rather expect Dhātviśvarī (dByings phyug ma) in this position.

¹⁴¹ *Rig lnga'i dbang* could mean: the empowerment of the five families. But, in context, *dbang* more likely refers to the fact that these fact goddesses are called *dbang phyug ma, ṅsvari(s)*.

¹⁴² *De 'og g.yas brgyad sa snying nam mkha'i snying : 'jig rten dbang phyug phyag na rdo rje dang : byams pa sgrub sel kun bzang 'jam dpal brgyad : mig dang rna ba sna lce rnam shes dang : dbang po rnam bzhi rnam par dag pa'o :* It is admittedly difficult to understand the visualization, especially since this description does not seem to match the one found above in the same text.

¹⁴³ *g.Yon pa'i brgyad na sgeg phreng glu gar dang : spos dang me tog mar me dri chab ma : gzugs sgra dri ro reg [604] dang dus bzhi rnam : rnam par dag pa sems dpa' yab yum rdzogs :*

In the¹⁴⁴ [next] four right and four left arms, eight in all, [are, to the right] the four wrathful kings—gatekeepers [that represent] the purified body consciousness, [body] faculty,¹⁴⁵ objects of touch, and tactile consciousness: Yamāntaka, <173> Prajñāntaka, *Padmāntaka, and *Karmāntaka:¹⁴⁶ the purified [set of] the body consciousness.¹⁴⁷ Not in his right but in his left arms [he holds] the four female gatekeepers [that represent] the purification of eternalism, nihilism, [the view of a] self¹⁴⁸ and [that of] characteristics: Ankuṣī, Pāṣī, Śṛṅkhalā, and Gaṇṭā.

The¹⁴⁹ remaining six main deities that abides in the basis, in whom the four immeasurable [dispositions] are complete are, to the right: Indra [Kauśika],¹⁵⁰ Vemacitra and Śākyamuni, these three, which are the purity of the mental factors (*sems byung*) of pride, jealousy, and desire. To the left: *Dhruvasiṃha, Jvālāmukhadeva, and Dharmarāja, the purity of stupidity, avarice, and hatred. Thus the six pāramitās are complete.

With¹⁵¹ his twenty-one heads, the ten ordinary bhūmis and the special eleven unsurpassable bhūmis are complete. With his sixty-three

¹⁴⁴ De 'og g.yas g.yon bzhi bzhi brgyad rnam na : gshin rje shes rab padma las mthar byed : lus kyi rnam shes dbang po reg bya dang : reg shes dag pa khro rgyal sgo ba bzhi : g.yas min [CNT 2015: g.yas yin, less plausible] g.yon na lcags kyu zhags pa ma : lcags sgrog dril 'khrol sgo ma chen mo bzhi : rtag chad bdag dang mtshan 'dzin dag pa'o .:

¹⁴⁵ There is clearly something wrong here in the text, as *lus kyi rnam shes* and *reg shes* are basically the same thing. But as body as the organ of touch is missing, we can easily reconstruct the series of four: 1. body, 2. touch-faculty, 3. tangible qualities, and 4. tactile consciousness.

¹⁴⁶ Yamāntaka and three *mthar byed* deities (*gshin rje shes rab padma las mthar byed*). There are occurrences of Prajñāntaka in Buddhist tantric literature, but I am not so sure about *Padmāntaka and *Karmāntaka, the Sanskrit names of which were constructed on the same model.

¹⁴⁷ There is clearly something wrong here as explained above.

¹⁴⁸ The *Rin chen gter mdzod* edition (p. 173) reads *dag* instead of *bdag* in CNT. The latter is more likely in context.

¹⁴⁹ *Tshad med bzhir rdzogs gzhir gnas rtsa ba'i lha : lhag ma drug gi g.yas na brgya byin dang : thag bzang śā kya thub pa gsum bzhugs pas : sems byung na rgyal phrag dog 'dod chags sbyong : g.yon na sen ge rab brtan kha 'bar ma : chos kyi rgyal pos gti mug ser sna dang : zhe sdang sbyong mdzad pha rol phyin drug rdzogs .:*

¹⁵⁰ These are the "Six Munis," the enlightened emanations that are active in each of the six classes of beings.

¹⁵¹ *Nyer gcig dbu yis thun mongs sa bcu dang : khyad par bla med sa chen bcu gcig rdzogs : spyen mig drug cu rtsa gsum bgrad pa yis : bdud dang log lta zil kyis mnan byas te : ji ltar ji snyed chos kun ma sgribs gzigs : snyan shal bzhi bcu rtsa gnyis rab yangs pas : phyi nang chos kun ma lus yongs rdzogs gsan : shangs dbugs bzhi bcu rtsa gnyis zan thal bas : gzungs 'dzin rtag pa sdud cing gzhil bar byed : mche ba rnon po bzhi bzhis zhal kun mdzes : sa lam kun la mtha' bzhis rtsad nas gcod : spyi gtsug rnam par dag pa rdo rjes mdzes : rang byung ye shes rang [605] shar lhun gyis grub : dur khrod 'bar ba'i chas chen bco brgyad gsol : ma 'dres bco brgyad sangs rgyas chos rnam rdzogs : gza' klu bdud kyi mgur [sic for mgul] chus dregs pa 'dul : rus rgyan pha rol phyin drug lam kyi chos : rgyal ba'i yum chen yab drug mnyam par sbyor : gzig sham khrel dang ngo tsha la sogs pa : 'phags pa'i nor bdun yongs rdzogs lhun gyis grub .:*

eyes gazing, demons and wrong views are overwhelmed by splendor, and he sees all things without obscurations, [both] *as they are* and *as many as they are*.¹⁵² With his forty-two ears wide open, he hears all the internal and external phenomena without exception. The forty-two nostrils [are the quality of] transparency:¹⁵³ they collect the discursive constructs and hold them [inside]. Each face is adorned with the four sharp canines that cut off the four extremes at their roots in all the bhūmis and paths. <174> The completely pure top of [each of his] heads is adorned with a vajra. The self-arising of spontaneous pristine awareness [605] is spontaneously perfected. He is wearing the eighteen great attributes of the flaming cemeteries, [symbolizing the fact that] the eighteen unmixed characteristics of a Buddha (*sangs rgyas chos*) are all complete [in him].¹⁵⁴ Because [he wears] planetary spirits, nāgas and mārās as chest ornaments,¹⁵⁵ he subdues the arrogant [spirits]. The bone ornaments are the elements of the path (*lam gyi chos*)—the six Pāramitās. The great female [partners] of the Victorious ones are united with the six male deities. They wears the leopard skin loin-cloth, [symbolizing] shame¹⁵⁶ before himself and before others. The fully complete [set] of the seven noble treasures¹⁵⁷ is spontaneously perfected [in him].

¹⁵² This alludes to the two forms of a Buddha's omniscience: perceiving all things *ji lta ba*, in their ultimate nature, and *ji snyed pa*, in their phenomenal details.

¹⁵³ *Zang thal* means active transparency (the ability of light to pass through transparent bodies) and, by analogy, the capacity of solid bodies to pass unhindered through other solid bodies.

¹⁵⁴ Neumaier 1971, pp. 161-162, n. 103: "These 18 properties are divided into four groups: two groups of six properties and two groups of three properties: A. *rtogs pa ma 'dres pa drug*: 1. *sku la 'khrul ba mi mnga' ba*; 2. *gsung cha cho med pa*; 3. *thugs dran pa nams pa med pa*; 4. *thugs mnyam par ma bzhas ma mi mnga' ba*; 5. *srid pa dang myang 'das tha dad pa nyid kyi 'du shes mi mnga' ba*; 6. *so sor ma brtags pa'i btang snyoms mi mnga' ba*.—B. *spyod pa ma 'dres pa drug*: 1. *'dun pa nyams pa mi mnga' ba*; 2. *brtson 'grus nyams pa mi mnga' ba*; 3. *dran pa mi mnga' ba*; 4. *ting nge 'dzin mi mnga' ba*; 5. *shes rab mi mnga' ba*; 6. *rnam par grol ba las mi mnga' ba*.—C. *phrin las ma 'dres pa gsum*: 1. *'od 'gyed pa sogs sku'i phrin las*; 2. *sems can gyi bsam pa dang mthun par 'doms pa'i gsung gi phrin las*; 3. *thugs kyi phrin las*.—D. *ye shes ma 'dres pa gsum*: 1. *'das pa*; 2. *ma 'ong ba*; 3. *da ltar byung ba la ma chags ma thogs pa'i ye shes*. (Cf. Tibetan Tripitaka bKa' 'gyur, vol. 39, p. 80.1.4.)."

¹⁵⁵ Neumaier 1971, p. 162, n. 104: "*mgur chu*: *mgur* is probably a spelling mistake for *mgul*; *chu* could stand for *chings*." The first correction is correct, but the second is not: *mgul chu* exists with the sense of "chest ornament." The three beings represent respectively the negativities of the sky (*gza'*, "planets"), of the underworld (*klu*, "serpents") and of the intermediary space (*bdud*, "demons").

¹⁵⁶ In a good sense: pudor, awareness of what one is doing, decency...

¹⁵⁷ Neumaier 1971, loc. cit., n. 105: "*Phags pa'i nor bu bdun*: *dad pa*, *tshul khirms*, *gtong ba* (*sbyin pa*) *la sgom pa*, *thos pas rgyud khrol ba*, *khrel yod*, *ngo tsha shes*, *shes rab phun sum tshogs pa*."

Meditate¹⁵⁸ clearly, with undistracted awareness (*dran pa*), on the Venerable Lord of All, the Great Glorious One, Male and Female. Do not [allow yourself to] be distracted [from them, but] constantly practice dhyāna (*bsam gtan*). During one session,¹⁵⁹ meditate on the deity. During [the next] session, think of it (*yid la bya*).¹⁶⁰ During [the third] session, [chant] the secret mantra and meditate (*gyer sgom*) on it by combining [this] with the deep recitation of the profound *hūṃ*. During [the fourth] session, generate divine pride (*lha'i nga rgyal*) by remembering the purity [of the various aspects of the visualization].

If¹⁶¹ you meditate firmly for one month, six months, or twelve months,¹⁶² you will fully attain the spontaneously perfected qualities of the Vidyādhara of Complete Maturation, the Vidyādhara that have Power over Life, the Vidyādhara of the Mahāmudrā and the Spontaneously Perfected Vidyādhara. This is the deity-connected achievement phase that must be integrated with the view of clarity and emptiness free from grasping.¹⁶³

Now,¹⁶⁴ having <175> fully taught¹⁶⁵ deity yoga, [let me, Padmasambhava, present] the achievement phase of letters based on the channels. The body is the channels, and the channels are the letters. The letters are skillful means and discernment inseparable, the unborn

¹⁵⁸ *Kun gyi rje btsan dpal chen yab yum la : dran pas ma yengs gsal bar bsgom bya ste : de la ma yengs rtag du bsam gtan bya : thun gcig lha bsgom thun gcig yid yul bya : thun gcig gsang sngags don la gyer sgom dang : zab ma hūṃ gi dzab bzlas spel bar bya : thun gcig rnam dag dran pas nga rgyal bskyed : 'khor ba 'di yin myang 'das pa 'di : bdun brgya nyer lnga dpal chen sku la rdzogs : bde gshegs dkyil 'khor kun kyi bdag nyid do .*

¹⁵⁹ Neumaier 1971, *loc. cit.*, n. 106a): "Time unit of the meditation exercise, ca. four hours."

¹⁶⁰ *Yid la bya* commonly means "memorize." The visualization is so complicated indeed that it makes sense that, if the first session is devoted to an attempt to keep the whole image as clear and stable as possible, the second one may be devoted to review the details of the whole maṇḍala (of which we have seen only the main deities) and try to memorize each of them.

¹⁶¹ *Zla gcig drug dang bcu gnyis rab sgom na : rnam smin tsho dbang phyag chen rig pa 'dzin : lhun grub yon tan ma lus thob par 'gyur : de ni lha la brten pa'i rdzogs rim ste : gsal stong 'dzin bral lta bas zin bar bya :*

¹⁶² The time required to obtain the accomplishments is commonly presented as depending on the capacities of the practitioners: superior, middle, or inferior.

¹⁶³ Eva Neumaier's edition and translation abruptly stops here with the words: *sGrub chen bka' brgyad rang byung rang shar gyi snying po gnam zhal don khrid*, which are the title of the text and do not belong here. I have edited and translated the missing part.

¹⁶⁴ *De nas lha yi rnal 'byor rab bstan nas : rtsa la brten pa yi ge'i rdzogs rim ni : lus ni rtsa yin rtsa ni yi ge ste : yi ge thabs shes dbyer med skye med aḥ : aḥ ni stong dang mi stong gnyis med rdzogs : dbugs la brten pa rlung [606] ni rdzogs rim ni : 'byung 'jug gnas gsum 'bru gsum rang grol te : om āḥ hūṃ ngam gsang ba hūṃ gi sgrar : rgyud du dran pas bskyangs na gsung 'dzin ni : rtag pa rang grol skye ba'i rtsa ba chod : grags stong 'dzin med lta bas zin par bya .*

¹⁶⁵ *Rin chen gter mdzod* (p. 175, l. 1) reads *brtan*, but this makes less sense in context.

letter *ah*. *Ah*¹⁶⁶ includes empty and non-empty [realities] without duality.

As for the [yoga] based on breath, [this is] the achievement phase [associated with] winds. Exhaling, inhaling, and holding [breath] with the self-liberated three syllables: if you are continuously aware of *om̐ āḥ hūṃ* or of the sound of secret *hūṃ*, and if you maintain [this awareness], the discursive constructs [will be] self-liberated and the root of birth cut off. Let [this] be integrated with the ungrasping view of [the inseparability of] sound and emptiness.

As¹⁶⁷ for the achievement phase of the *biṅḍu* based on the vital fluids (*bcud*), the bliss born in body, speech and mind is the flaming and dripping primordial wisdom—the subtle drops (*phra thig*) of inner heat (*gtum mo*). Block the lower wind¹⁶⁸ and carry (*bskyal*) it toward the *ham̐* at the top of your head. The pure part (*dwangs ma*) of the body's vital fluids (*bcud*) will disappear in its own place. Let [this] be integrated with the ungrasping view of [the inseparability of] bliss and emptiness.

As for¹⁶⁹ the achievement phase of bodhicitta,¹⁷⁰ the complete purity of one's own mind: bliss is completely and spontaneously present in the *nirmānakāya*, [which is the aspect of the] body. [It is] the first joy [during] the great vase empowerment.¹⁷¹ Clarity is completely and spontaneously present in the *sambhogakāya*. [It is] supreme joy during the supreme secret empowerment.¹⁷² Non-conceptuality is completely and spontaneously present in the *dharmakāya*, [which is the

¹⁶⁶ *A* in *Rin chen gter mdzod* (p. 175), although it is *Ah* at the previous occurrence. There is some confusion due to the *gter ma* punctuation.

¹⁶⁷ *bCud la brten pa thig le'i rdzogs rim ni : lus ngag yid la skyes pa'i bde ba ni : 'bar 'dzag ye shes gtum mo phra thig yin : 'og rlung bsdams la spyi bo'i ham̐ la bskyal : lus bcud dwangs ma rang rang gnas su thim : bde stong 'dzin med lta bas zin par bya :*

¹⁶⁸ Could be plural, it is impossible to tell from the text without more context. Thanks to Cécile Ducher for this remark.

¹⁶⁹ *Rang sems rnam dag byang sems rdzogs rim ni : bde ba sprul sku lus la lhun grub rdzogs : dga' ba dang po bun pa'i dbang chen yin : gsal ba longs sku dag la lhun grub rdzogs : mchog tu dga' ba gsang ba'i dbang mchog go : mi rtog chos sku yin te shes rab ye shes so : dbyer med ngo bo nyid kyi dus gsum dang : dus med sgo gsum 'bral med lhun cig skyes : ngo bo nyid sku bzhi pa'i dbang chen rdzogs :*

¹⁷⁰ Although this paragraph contains a recapitulation of the four empowerments, this is the practice associated with the third, *shes rab ye shes dbang* (sexual yoga). The connection with the four empowerments is that the four joys are attained when the vital constitution (*khams*) ascends and descends through the four cakras, from the navel to the top of the head. It is these four stages that are associated here with the four empowerments. I thank Cécile Ducher for helping me to rephrase my translation in a way that makes much better sense.

¹⁷¹ The vase empowerment is the first empowerment of the superior tantras, connected with the development phase.

¹⁷² The second empowerment of the superior tantras, connected to the achievement phase "based on one's own body."

aspect of] mind (*yid*). It is no-joy during the primordial awareness-discernment [empowerment].¹⁷³ Their indivisibility is the very essence of the the coemergent [joy,] inseparable from the three doors of the three times and eternity. <176> It is the svabhāvīkākāya, which is perfected during the great fourth empowerment.

If¹⁷⁴ you want to see the actual (*don*) *Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra*, fully gaze in the [celestial] Element.

Conclusions about the *view* have come to an end and philosophical standpoints are complete without confusion: they are perfected in the summit of A ti.

*Meditation*¹⁷⁵ with an object [a focus], without an object, intellectual mindsets, and the eight [lower] vehicles, unmixed and self-luminous: they are perfected in the essence.

All pure and impure individual *conducts* are complete and unmixed with regard to what is [to be] adopted and [what is to be] abandoned: they are naturally perfected.

Ripe and unripe *fruits* as well as mental phenomena are complete is the unsurpassed meaning: They are perfected in the great [realization] beyond concepts.

Granting and non-granting of *empowerment* as well as the progressives dharmas are complete at the summit of the infinite wisdom empowerment.

All *Samayas*, those obtained, kept, damaged and not damaged, are complete in what is originally kept undamaged and does not have to be [actively] kept.

Then, all is assimilated in the condition of the unaltered complete Heruka, Che mchog male and female.

Having condensed the cream (*bcud*) of the ocean of tantras of the Secret Mantra, <177> I, Padmasambhava, have composed for the sake of sentient beings this profound treasure of the true oral guidance (*zhal gyi don khrid*) of Sky-Face, a path that quickly leads to unsurpassable complete Enlightenment. Samaya! Triple Seal!

Take care¹⁷⁶ [that this should not] fall into the hands [of those who are] not [proper] recipients [or do] not [keep] samayas. *Guhya* :

¹⁷³ This is *prajñā-jñāna*, the name of the third empowerment of the superior tantras, connected to the achievement phase "based on another person's body."

¹⁷⁴ *Kun bzang dgongs pa ye shes zang thal don : mthong bar 'dod na dbyings la rdzogs par blta : yid dpyod 'dzin pa'i lta ba nub par 'gyur : de tshe chos nyid zad pa'i ye shes shar : lta ba thag chod mthar brten grub mtha' rnam : ma 'dres yongs rdzogs a ti'i rtse mor rdzogs .:*

¹⁷⁵ I would like to thank Cécile Ducher for her sensible suggestions for reformulating my translation. In its current form, it is much more readable than its original version.

¹⁷⁶ *sNod med dam med lag tu shor ra re : gu hya : mantra kha tham : dug sprul spungs pa'i khog pa nas : ye shes gsal ba'i gter phyung ngo : rgya rgya rgya .:*

mantra kha tham : From within the mass of poisonous snakes, [this] treasure of clear primordial wisdom was extracted. Triple Seal !¹⁷⁷

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¹⁷⁷ Although this colophon and the way the text is edited in CNT clearly show that the edited and translated portion of the text is perceived as a complete whole, in the *Rin chen gter mdzod* edition, the text continues on the same page with further completion phase instructions: *bKa' brgyad rang byung rang shar gyi rdzogs rim lnga pa* (pp. 177-185) and then *sGrub chen bka' brgyad kyi rdzogs rim khrid gzhung ye shes zang thal* (pp. 185-200). The first text is akin to *Guhyasamāja's* five stages, while the second text contains brief yet comprehensive rDzogs chen (*snying thig* style) instructions. These texts are also included in CNT, but they do not appear to constitute an integrated whole with the text translated here. This understanding of the *rdzogs rim-rdzogs chen* sequence would be interesting to compare with its equivalents in Klong chen pa's *gSang ba snying po*-related works.

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