

# Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines

Northern Treasures Histories

Volume VI

*Historical Survival and  
Later Developments of the  
Dorjé Drak Tradition*

by  
Jean-Luc ACHARD



Edited by Marianne GINALSKI  
& Jay VALENTINE

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Jean-Luc Achard



## Introduction

Since its inception, the Northern Treasures or *Jangter* (*Byang gter*) tradition has been a unique and critically influential current within the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism, originating in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and persisting, in various forms and through several individual lines of transmission, to the present day. The core of the textual tradition of this lineage entirely relies on an initial set of revealed treasures (*gter ma*) that have been discovered by the great *tertön* Rigdzin Gödem (1337–1408) in 1366.<sup>1</sup> One of the characteristics of this lineage is that it was transmitted through its familial legacy as well as through a line of disciples who played a decisive role in shaping most of the Northern Treasures' specific features, including its doctrinal contents, its particular rituals and liturgy. Deeply rooted in the tradition of the previous *Heart Drops* (*sNying thig*) teachings,<sup>2</sup> it has from the beginning retained its own traits, which were progressively consolidated by its early and later lineage holders.<sup>3</sup>

As indicated by its specific designation, this tradition is particularly distinguished by its collections of *termas* (*gter ma*), i.e., 'hidden treasures', which were revealed in the Jang ("Northern")<sup>4</sup> district of Western Tibet, and later on in other locations. The tradition first initiated by Rigdzin Gödem was soon enriched with further treasure revelations from other masters, thus consolidating the entire doctrinal, ritual and institutional developments of this lineage.

### 1. Rigdzin Gödem and the Origins of the Northern Treasures

The Northern Treasures are traditionally said to date back to the year 1366, when Rigdzin Gödem discovered a significant corpus of concealed texts hidden in a cave on the Zangzang Lhadrak mountain, located in the region northeast of Gungthang. Distinguished by

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<sup>1</sup> See *infra* chapter 1, sections 1-3. On Rigdzin Gödem himself, see the volume II of the present series containing a complete biography of the *gter ston* translated by Jay Valentine (pp. 15-62).

<sup>2</sup> Such as the *Bi ma snying thig* and the *mKha' 'gro snying thig*.

<sup>3</sup> Even though in its Dzogchen teachings this lineage owes much to the earlier *sNying thig*, its collection of the *Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal* should not be regarded as a tributary or secondary set of Dzogchen sources since in this tradition, and despite numerous manifest borrowings, it definitely stands on a doctrinal par with the literature of the *Heart Drops* themselves.

<sup>4</sup> Byang.

anomalous feather-like protuberances on his head—and thus referred to as Gökyi Demtruchen (“The One with Vulture’s Feathers”)—, Gödem was born in Latö. He was the son of a tantric adept named Lopön Dūdül and was recognized for his precocious yogic proficiency from a very young age. Later on, he became a major *tertön* (*gter ston*), revealing esoteric teachings essentially centered on Dzogchen secret instructions, as well as tantric deities such as Vajrakīla, Avalokiteśvara, and so forth.

Through his religious activities, Gödem also played a fascinating role in the opening of hidden lands (*sbas yul*) in southern Tibet, Sikkim and possibly other places. In these secreted sanctuaries, he spread the teachings of the Northern Treasures, thus greatly enlarging the scope of their influence.

## 2. His Successors and Descendants

As mentioned above, Gödem’s treasure revelation was preserved through diverse lines of transmission, namely those of his mother, of his son, and of his direct disciples. The main lineage remains that of his son, Namgyel Gönpö, who assumed a leadership role in the tradition. During the following centuries, the Northern Treasures experienced an institutional flourishing as well as historical challenges that eventually culminated in the total destruction of their “mother” monastery, Dorjé Drak, by the Dzungar in 1717.<sup>5</sup>

Following this period of instability, important figures such as Kelzang Péma Wangchuk and others played a decisive role in revitalizing the lineage, restoring its doctrinal epicenter, and ensuring the propagation of the original treasures and the revealed literature that came to enrich it in the course of history. Since then, numerous lineage holders have contributed to the liturgical, ritual, and institutional expansion of the Northern Treasures through the composition of new works or the revelation of *termas*.

This enduring growth and doctrinal continuity are essential features that have attracted our interest in studying the actual tradition’s resilience. In order to deepen our understanding of its entire legacy, we have engaged in an academic commitment<sup>6</sup> consisting in mapping the evolution of this system through rigorous research based on a recently compiled history of the lineage by a modern author named Khenpo Chöying.

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<sup>5</sup> On rDo rje brag monastery, see chapter IV in the present volume.

<sup>6</sup> See the next paragraph.

### 3. Structure of the Present Volume

Through the various published and forthcoming volumes of this ANR project (FCHNT 2021-2026)<sup>7</sup> dedicated to the study of the Northern Treasures, we have been able to draw up a particularly complex picture of this tradition, its history, literature and, to a yet limited extent, its doctrinal approaches. The previous volumes have covered the historical developments of the lineage from its origins down to the mid-17th century, a period during which the *Jangter* underwent major changes that led to its near destruction at the hands of the Dzungar invaders, followed by a period of revival resulting in the impressive increase of monastic institutions attached to Dorje Drak.<sup>8</sup>

The present volume opens with a summary of the historical events and doctrinal development as they have been discussed in the previous volumes of this series. Chapter I thus synthesizes and recounts the events that characterize the early history of the Northern Treasures, starting with the revelation made by Rigdzin Gödem, together with the prophecies that surround the discovery itself. This chapter also discusses the specific contents of this revelation, the historical context that was prevalent at the time, perspectives on treasure revelation, as well as the obstacles that have actually shaped the very destiny of this lineage.<sup>9</sup>

This is followed by Chapter II, which contains a general history of *The Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* (*Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*), the main cycle of teachings at the core of the entire Northern Treasures and probably the most characteristic corpus of the collection itself.<sup>10</sup> This history is essentially an account of the Great Perfection

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<sup>7</sup> The support of the ANR (Agence Nationale de la Recherche) has been instrumental in providing the time and resources necessary to untangle the complex historiography of the Dorje Drak lineage.

<sup>8</sup> For a nearly exhaustive list of monasteries affiliated with the Northern Treasures, see the comprehensive table included in section 8 of Chapter IV.

<sup>9</sup> Starting with the shift that consisted in prioritizing the Southern Tibeto-Nepalese border over Central Tibet itself (despite the building of its main monastery in southern gTsang).

<sup>10</sup> Although some of the initial elements included in this chapter pre-date the events described in Chapter I, the narration given in this second chapter is a natural proto-historical development whose contents are heavily rooted in the original concealment as well as in the subsequent discovery of the earliest texts of the Northern Treasures. Even if our synthesis outwardly—and for the sake of clarity—takes for granted that the works making up this literary corpus were first hidden (by Padmasambhava) and later unearthed (by Rig 'dzin rgod ldem), we are in no position, academically speaking, to *a priori* doubt or give credit to the traditional narratives that surround these works without access to the original yellow scrolls (*shog ser*), for instance. What is certain is that Gödem likely came into possession of a large

(*rDzogs chen*) as envisioned in the cycle, and is organized in three main parts:

- the Contemplative Transmission of the Victorious Ones, describing the lineage of the Buddhas in their pure realms, with their teachings being transmitted through the state of Contemplation (*dgongs pa*), without a word being uttered or a text transcribed;
- the Symbolic Transmission of the Knowledge-Holders, namely the lineage of Vidyādhara relying upon symbols to transmit the essence of Dzogchen; and
- the Oral Transmission of Great Beings, i.e., highly realized adepts who make up the latter part of the line of transmission and include historical figures, starting with Zangpo Drakpa and Rigdzin Gödem.

The third chapter is devoted to the annotated translations of fourteen biographies of Northern Treasures lineage masters, ranging from around the late 17<sup>th</sup> century to the early decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These biographies cover a period of the spread of the Northern Treasures that received comparatively little attention from specialists in the field, while it actually concerns important developments of the tradition and highlights the life-stories of later pivotal figures of the lineage.

These biographies are followed by the description (in Chapter IV) of the various traditions and customs in usage at Dorjé Drak, the main monastery of the Northern Treasures. As indicated above, it is located in Central Tibet and was founded in 1632 by Rigdzin Ngagi Wangpo (1580–1639). It appears under the name of 多吉扎寺 (E waṃ lcog sgar) on modern Chinese maps and is located within the Gong dkar rdzong district (29°21'19"N, 91°8'4"E).

The next part (Chapter V) contains a presentation of the entire set of teachings of the Northern Treasures as they were available during the time of Setön Pema Wangchen (*ca.* 15<sup>th</sup> century), a little more than a century after the initial discovery of the treasures (*gter ma*) by

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set of texts, possibly an entire library (which would explain the borrowings from some of the early *sNying thig*, with a rewriting of texts aimed at giving the new corpus an authenticity of its own and a lineage of its own, distinct from the main lines of the *Heart Drops* themselves), although its actual form is still uncertain for us; if we are to believe the earliest historical works that describe the revelation, the texts were obtained in the form of yellow scrolls written in *ḍākinīs'* symbolic script (*mkha' 'gro brda' yig*). On the specific alphabetical script used in these texts, see Rig 'dzin rGod ldem, *dMus long mig 'byed lde mig zang zang lha brag gi gter yig mkha' 'gro'i brda yig byed tshul*, pp. 319-325. The difficulty encountered by rGod ldem and his immediate heirs in transcribing these texts into Tibetan is recurrently mentioned in the biographies of the early lineage holders.

Rigdzin Gödem. This presentation demonstrates that the corpus existing by then was already quite large and complex, clearly anticipating the constitution of an incredibly coherent body of works that definitely characterizes the progressive and rapid establishment of a fully self-sufficient school: right from its infancy, the tradition of the Northern Treasures was thus already pregnant with a literary wealth that characterizes a fully-fledged school in itself.

To illustrate the richness of this tradition, Chapter VI discusses the most important doctrinal features of the *Gongpa Zanthe* and advocates for its being definitely regarded as the special *Heart Drops* (*snying thig*) of the Northern Treasures.

After the conclusion, some complementary data are compiled in the form of individual appendixes that cover various historical and literary topics associated with the Northern Treasures. Some of this material (and large sections of Chapter I) previously appeared on the blog of our research team<sup>11</sup> and are now included in the present volume with proper pagination and footnotes that ensure accurate academic quotations and references.

As in the other volumes of this research project on the Northern Treasures, a final table of equivalences compiles all the names, titles, toponyms and other terms, given in phonetics in the volume and provides the corresponding rendering in Wylie transliteration.

All bibliographic references are compiled in a final bibliography with sources in Tibetan and in Western languages.



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<sup>11</sup> Northern Treasures Histories — Carnet de recherche du projet FCHNT (For a Critical History of the Northern Treasures, ANR — AAPG2021): <https://fchnt.hypotheses.org/>.



*PART I:*  
*HISTORY*



# Chapter I — Revisiting the Origins and Early Development of the Northern Treasures

## 1. The Proto-Historical Origins of the Jangter

**I**n the first part of his *Garland of Jewels* (*Rin chen 'phreng ba*), Sétön Péma Wangchen<sup>1</sup> briefly describes the origins of the Northern Treasures tradition, dating it back to the imperial period. He explains that in “earlier times” (*sngon gyi dus na*),<sup>2</sup> there came an emanation of Mañjuḥoṣa who manifested as a king protecting Dharma under the name of Trisong Détsen (r. 755–797). At the age of thirteen, the young prince took hold of the royal seat and started to govern the country.<sup>3</sup> Soon, his heart started to turn toward virtues and he became interested in Buddhist teachings. When he was eighteen, he financed the construction of temples (*gtsug laḡ khang*) that would lay the basis for the spread of Buddhism in the Tibetan kingdom, styled as a “region of darkness” (*mun pa'i gling*). To ensure this diffusion he decided to invite important masters from India, starting with the abbot Śāntarakṣita who was born in Zahor and whom Tibetans nicknamed “Abbot Bodhisattva”. The abbot performed the ritual for subjugating the soil (*sa 'dul*) and workers began to build the first Buddhist temple in Samyé. However, as the now famous story goes, what was built by humans during the day was destroyed during the night by ill-intentioned demons.

Since the abbot failed to succeed in the building of the temple, the king was rather displeased. To counter the situation, Śāntarakṣita advised him to invite the ācārya Padmasambhava from India. Presented as having been miraculously born from a lotus on a lake, this master was described as not covered with the impurities of the womb. He had furthermore obtained the immortal Diamond Body (*'chi ba med pa rdo rje'i sku*) and was said to be able to perform the activities of a thousand

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<sup>1</sup> For the approximative period in which Se ston Padma dbang chen lived (the early 1400's), I rely on D. Martin, *Tibetan Histories*, no. 168 (which follows G. Smith). The text itself was written during a *me mo yos* year (p. 107) which possibly corresponds to 1447 CE.

<sup>2</sup> I.e., during the imperial period, in the 8th century.

<sup>3</sup> At that time, the kingdom of Tibet was not limited to Central Tibet but embraced large parts of Central Asia, Northern China, most of the Himalayan regions, and so forth. However, this territorial extent did not endure.

Buddhas.<sup>4</sup> In India itself, he was already renowned as an Emanation Body (*sprul pa'i sku*) capable of binding the Eight Classes of Gods and Demons (*sde brgyad*) into servitude.<sup>5</sup> In reality, he was the concrete manifestation of Buddha Amitābha, living in the cave of Yari Gong in India. Thus, three envoys were dispatched with gold in order to invite him.<sup>6</sup> They met him in India and owing to the latter's aspiration prayers formulated in a previous rebirth, Padmasambhava accepted the invitation to go to Tibet.<sup>7</sup> The anachronistic date of their departure for Tibet is said to have been the 15<sup>th</sup> of the middle winter month of an Earth Male Horse year.<sup>8</sup>

While traveling through the Himalayas and Central Tibet, Padmasambhava took the opportunity to subjugate and convert local pernicious gods and spirits (*lha srin*), turning them into protectors of the faith. Then, after having reached Samyé, he performed the earth-taming (*sa 'dul*) ritual, thus fulfilling the wishes of the king. According to the narrative of *The Garland of Jewels* (*Rin chen 'phreng ba*, p. 4), beside the temple of Samyé, Padmasambhava took part in the building of a hundred Vihāras.

Around the same time, the *ācārya* Vimalamitra was also invited to Tibet and Buddhism was declared the official religion of the kingdom. This period is furthermore presented (pp. 4-5) as the one during which Vairocana, as well as the three main translators — Ka, Chok, and Zhang<sup>9</sup> — started to translate the texts they had brought back from India.

According to Sétön's classic, thaumaturgic account, Padmasambhava is said to have stayed one hundred and eleven human years in Tibet and to have travelled all over the kingdom, blessing special sanctuaries and subjugating demons. In order to benefit sentient beings, he

<sup>4</sup> With such a Body, Padmasambhava is presented as having obtained power over his life expectancy (*tshe la dbang ba*). In a stricter *rdzogs chen* context, he is counted as one of the few masters who reached the Body of the Great Transfer (*'pho ba chen po'i sku*), one of the four categories of Rainbow Bodies (*'ja' lus*).

<sup>5</sup> On these eight classes, see Samten Karmay, "Une note sur l'origine du concept des huit catégories d'esprit", *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> These three envoys were sBa mi khri zher (of Yar klung), Śākya pra ba (of the 'Chims clan), and Shud pu dPal gyi seng ge.

<sup>7</sup> His aspiration prayers associated with a previous rebirth are an explicit reference to the legend surrounding the Bya rung kha shor (Bodnath) Stūpa on which see sNgags 'chang Śākya bzang po, *mChod rten chen po bya rung kha shor gyi lo rgyus thos pas grol ba*, pp. 302-339. See the translation of this work by Adam Pearcey, "Liberation Upon Hearing — The History of the Great Jarung Kashor Stūpa", *passim*.

<sup>8</sup> P. 4: *sa pho rta dgu zla 'bring po'i tshe bco lnga*. The date is anachronistic because the addition of the element (*'byung ba*) to a year only happened after the introduction of the Kālacakra calendar in Tibet in the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>9</sup> I.e., sKa ba dPal brtsegs, Cog ro Klu'i rgyal mtshan, et Zhang Ye shes sde.

is also said to have hidden Treasures (*gter ma*) throughout Tibet, from Khyunglung Ngülkhar in the west to Longthang Drönmé in the east.<sup>10</sup>

Sétön's narrative goes on to describe Padmasambhava's activities connected to those of Śāntaraksita and king Trisong Détsen, as well as briefly discussing the purpose of the concealment of Treasures.<sup>11</sup> The specific reason for the apparition of the Northern Treasures actually anticipates later events that would cause great sufferings to sentient beings. Thus, according to his prophetic vision, Padmasambhava explained that in five hundred years from his own time, obstacles would appear in the form of demons (*bdud*) entering the heart of the king of Gungthang, Tashi Dé, as well as that of his son.<sup>12</sup> Because of that, Tibet would experience unbearable sufferings, and therefore, in order to subjugate this obstacle, Rigdzin Gödem, a *bodhisattva* of the sixth *bhūmi* (*sa drug*), would appear as an antidote.

This state of affairs is mentioned in various prophetic guides and manuals such as *The Prophecy known as the All-Illuminating Lamp* (*Lung bstan kun gsal sgron ma*), and so forth. One of these, entitled *The Noble Prophecy of the Seven Profound Teachings* (*Zab mo lung bdun gyi 'phags pa bka'i lung*),<sup>13</sup> says:

<sup>10</sup> Klong thang sgron me is located in Khams. See Se ston's discussion of the various categories of Treasures *infra* in section 8 ("A Short Note on the Classification of Treasures") of the present chapter.

<sup>11</sup> Basically, the reason Treasures were hidden was to prevent ominous signs (*ltas ngan*) from affecting beings of future generations, such as wars caused by frontier armies (*mtha' yi dngag dpung*), to provide beings with essential teachings at times when life's expectancy is short, etc. Of course, Treasures are also envisioned as solutions for substituting short lines of transmissions of teachings, ensuring stronger blessings than longer lineages potentially affected by samaya-breaking, and so forth. Actually, there are four main reasons why Treasures were concealed: 1. to prevent the teachings of the Buddhas from disappearing; 2. to prevent the corruption of the teachings (over time and through more or less qualified individuals in the lineage); 3. to prevent the deterioration of the blessing power (through potential samaya-breaking); and 4. to shorten the lines of transmissions and therefore ensure a more direct connection to the source of the teachings. On these topics, see Tulku Thondup, *Hidden Teachings of Tibet*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>12</sup> On the dates of bKra shis lde's rule, see Herweg, *The Hagiography of Rig 'dzin Rgod kyi ldem 'phru can*, p. 166 n. 421. See also Tenpa Tsering Batsang & Jay Valentine, "Rigdzin Gödem and the Kings of Mangyül Gunthang", *passim*.

<sup>13</sup> On this text, see Valentine, "Missing Texts of Historical Value to the Northern Treasure Tradition", under the update 07/01/2023. The actual quote from this prophetic text occurs in Se ston, pp. 21-22: *khyad par mang yul sku lha'i byang shar du: sa mkhar dung gi so mang 'dra ba 'byung: de mthar rgyal rigs bong thung byang sems can: bdud kyi sprul pa drug dang 'bangs kyis 'joms: de sras (p. 22) dkar dmar mdog ldan mgo zhun pa: ngang rgyud ring zhing dge ba'i sems ldan 'byung: bdud kyi sprul pa mi lus phrag dog can: de yis (=yi) byin rlabs bshan (=shan) pa nag po drug: las ngan dbang gi (=gis) 'dus nas gung thang du: rgyal po snying brtse 'khor dang bcas pa rnam: kye hud nga ro 'don zhing gri ru 'gum.*

*In particular, in the north-east of the Kulha (sKu lha) range in Mangyiil,  
An earth castle will appear, resembling (a heap of) many conch teeth.<sup>14</sup>  
In later (times, a prince of) royal lineage, short in stature and endowed  
with bodhicitta,  
Will be defeated by six demonic emanations and the populace.<sup>15</sup>  
His son, bearing a rosy complexion and a round head,  
Will come forth, having a patient character and a virtuous mind.<sup>16</sup>  
(At that time,) the “blessings” of jealous demonic emanations (appearing)  
in human form  
(Will produce) six black butchers.  
Having gathered due to bad karma, throughout Gungthang,  
(They will chase) the compassionate king, together with his retinue,  
And, howling roars of fury, they will put them to the sword.<sup>17</sup>*

In order to possibly prevent this fate, some works have been hidden that would be of help to the king himself. Thus, in *The Prophecy known as the All-Illuminating Lamp* (*Lung bstan kun gsal sgron ma*), it is said:

*The instructions required for the prince,  
Such as (the activities of) pacifying, increasing, subjugating and destroy-  
ing,  
Are hidden in Zangzang Lhadrak.  
The Index-Guide required for the prince  
Is hidden east of Riwo Trazang.<sup>18</sup>*

And:<sup>19</sup>

*As the descendants of the prince shall take hold of Gungthang,*

<sup>14</sup> This is an allusion to the name of the main Citadel of the Gung thang kings, named rDzong dkar, “the White Citadel”, most probably built in 1269-70. See, Roberto Vitali, “Historiographical Material on Early sKyid-grong”, p. 297.

<sup>15</sup> This is obviously referring to king bKra shis lde.

<sup>16</sup> This refers to Phun tshogs lde.

<sup>17</sup> This certainly echoes the murder of Phun tshogs lde which occurred in 1370. On Phun tshogs lde, see Herweg, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-169.

<sup>18</sup> Se ston, *op. cit.*, p. 22: *lung bstan kun gsal sgron ma las: zhi rgyas dbang grags (=drag) la sogs pa: lha sras dgos pa'i gdams pa rnams: zang zang lha drag la sbas: lha sras dgos pa'i kha byang ni: ri bo bkra bzang shar la sbas.* The Index-Guide is the *kha byang* text that contains details regarding the location where the *gter ma* listed in this guide are hidden, etc.

<sup>19</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 22: *lha sras gdung brgyud gung thang 'dzin pa'i dus: ri bo bkra bzang zhes pa'i shar 'dabs su: sbas pa'i rnal 'byor rgod kyi ldem phru can: brtul zhugs spyod pa'i rnal 'byor dam pa yis: lha sras gdung brgyud skyobs pa'i chos skal rnams: zang zang lha brag brag la sbas pa len: rnal 'byor de dang rten 'brel 'grig pa na: mi rabs dgu i bar du bde bar 'gyur: gal te de dang rten 'brel ma 'grig na: mi rnams snying la 'gong po glang sna 'jug: rme 'thab byed cing rgyal po mtha' la bcug: de 'dra'i dus ngan gung thang stod du 'byung:*

*Near the eastern (range) of the so-called Riwo Trazang (sanctuary),  
The hidden yogi, Gökyi Demtruchen,  
The noble yogi practicing tantric discipline,  
Will take the dharmic charges protecting the descendants of the prince  
That were hidden in the rock of Zangzang Lhadrak.  
If this yogi and the circumstances fit together,  
Happiness will spread for nine human generations.  
However, if he and the circumstances do not fit together,  
Elephantine demons will enter the heart of men:  
They will cause conflicts, the king will be pushed to the border,  
And at such a nefarious time, Gungthang will fall (to the hands of) Tö (i.e.  
Jang).<sup>20</sup>*

And as a closing statement, in the *Canonic List of the Teaching Guide* (*Lung byang bka'i them*), it is said:<sup>21</sup>

*At the end of the royal line of (the prince's) descendants,  
Gungthang will fall (to the hands) of Tö;  
Thus, in order to protect the lineage of the Dharma King,  
This Treasure trove gathered in the Four Repositories<sup>22</sup>  
Was hidden in the middle of Zangzang Lhadrak.*

The treasure sanctuary (*gter gnas*) and the deities that guard it, together with local entities, thus play a key role in the early history of the *Jangter* and are still regarded to this day as the necessary and decisive “circumstances” (*rkyen*) that condition the actual revelation. But where exactly is Zangzang Lhadrak?

## 2. The Location of Zangzang Lhadrak

### 2-1. The Identification of Zangzang Lhadrak

According to Sétön's *General Presentation of the Northern Treasures*

<sup>20</sup> This is a reference to the conquest of Gungthang by the *ta dben* king of Byang. See Herweg, *op.cit.*, pp. 268-269. *Ta dben* is a title for preceptors of Mongol rulers. See Desi Sangyé Gyatso, *Mirror of Beryl*, p. 532 n. 602. See also Petech, *Central Tibet and the Mongols*, pp. 120 *et seq.*

<sup>21</sup> P. 210: *rgyal po'i gdung brgyud tha ma la: gung thang stod du 'byung bar 'gyur: chos rgyal gdung brgyud skyobs pa'i phyir: mdzod bzhi 'dus pa'i gter mdzod 'di: zang zang lha brag sked la sbas.* This text is included in the first volume of the 2015 edition of the *dGongs pa zang thal*, pp. 209-212.

<sup>22</sup> *mDzod bzhi*, the corpus of Treasures (normally in Five Repositories) revealed by Rig 'dzin rgod ldem in Zang zang Lha brag.

(*Byang gter spyi bcings*),<sup>23</sup> the sanctuary where Rigdzin Gödem's *Five Repositories* (*mDzod lnga*) were discovered is known as a rocky mountain similar to a heap of snakes (*brag ri lto 'phye spungs 'dra*).<sup>24</sup> It is located in the north-west direction from Bulé glacier (Bu le gangs), close to a large river flowing to the north.<sup>25</sup> It is to be found north-east of rGyelthang, in a location famous for being a place where *Sadak* and *Lunyen* gather together, and where the eight categories of gods and demons (*lha srin sde brgyad*) roam. It is also styled as a mountain where abide the five classes of Tsen spirits (*btsan rigs sde lnga*). It is actually called "the Rock of the Gods" (*lha brag*) because it is a place where serpents (*lto 'phye*) present offerings to the gods. And since it is a region where the four categories of "naked earth lords" (*sa bdag zang ma*) reside, it is called "Northern Zangzang" (*byang gi zang zang*).

So, in a certain sense, the meaning of the mountain's name would be something like "The Rock of the Naked Gods" if we interpret *zang zang* as *zang ma*. Some dictionaries give *zang zang* as a variant of *zang zing* which either means something like material wealth, trouble, or unrest. Both meanings might fit if we extend the interpretation of the "wealth" to refer to the Treasures or of the "unrest" as pointing to the potentially disturbing activities of local earth lords and demons. Whatever the case may be, the tradition says that Padmasambhava saw it as a perfect place for hiding Treasures since he regarded it as a frightful location where wrathful activities were taking place, owing to the presence of numerous Yakšas (*gnod sbyin*), carnivorous animals, including meat-eating birds, and so forth.<sup>26</sup>

## 2-2. The Manner in which the Treasures were Concealed

The traditional narrative relating the manner in which the Treasures were concealed in Zangzang Lhadrak appears in *The Second Scroll of the White Whetstone* (*'Dzeng rdo dkar po'i shog dril gnyis pa*), as quoted in

<sup>23</sup> P. 9, quoting the *Lam byang gsal ba'i sgron ma* (p. 9).

<sup>24</sup> Se ston's main sources for this section of his work are the *Lam byang gsal ba'i sgron ma* and the *'Dzeng rdo dkar po'i shog dril gnyis pa*.

<sup>25</sup> Bu le gangs itself is a large mountain in lower La stod. See Wangdu & Diemberger, *Shel dkar chos 'byung*, p. 47. See also, Thubten K. Rikhey, "The Nature-Deities of Tibet", p. 136, where Bu le gangs is presented as a place inhabited by gods and demons (*lha 'dre*) according to the *Padma bka' thang* by O rgyan gling pa. See however the very same O rgyan gling pa's *dPal bka' 'dus kyi rig 'dzin brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs 'bring po*, in which Bu le gangs is described (p. 337) as an agreeable or charming secluded place (*dben gnas nyam dga' ba*). Note also that, as we shall see below, Jo bo Bu le is also the name of the Treasure Lord (*gter bdag*) to whom the original scrolls of the Northern Treasures were entrusted. His other name is Nor bu bzang po.

<sup>26</sup> *Byang gter spyi bcings*, p. 10.

*The General Presentation of the Northern Treasures.*<sup>27</sup> It basically takes the form of a dialogue between Padmasambhava and prince Mutri Tsenpo, starting as follows:

*Prince Mutri Tsenpo asked the ācārya Padmasambhava:  
Kyema! O precious master!  
At the end of times, the lineage of these sons of mine  
Will fall among the populace in Gungthang of Mangyül.  
When the royal succession nears its annihilation,  
This Treasure trove, protected by the Compassion of the ācārya himself,  
In which hidden sanctuary will it be located?  
To which oath-bound Guardians of Treasures will it be entrusted?*<sup>28</sup>

Padmasambhava had three particularly excellent Treasure troves (*khyad par 'phags pa'i gter mdzod gsum*) which he intended to hide individually, in three different places. Regarding the first location—the one that deserves our attention here—Padmasambhava is said to have made the following prophetic statement:

*In the rocky mountain similar to a heap of poisonous snakes,  
The fourfold Treasure trove protected by the king<sup>29</sup>  
Will be hidden in the belly of a black poisonous snake  
And entrusted to the four powerful Treasure Lords;<sup>30</sup>  
As to the (favorable) moment, it should be hidden at the peak of the day  
And will shine like the sun and the moon for the benefit of Mangyül.*<sup>31</sup>

The keys (*lde mig*) intended for opening the Treasures are said to have been made of various materials: the first was made of stone (*rdo*); the second, of copper; and the third, of bronze. All three were hidden in

<sup>27</sup> Pp. 10-21. The reference to the white whetstone (*'deng rdo dkar po*) goes back to the time Padmasambhava stayed on the top of Mount Ri bo bkra bzang where he summoned a red *dākinī* coming from the south-west, who offered him three white whetstones having the length of a finger span (*mtho gang pa gsum*). See *ib.*, pp. 11-12. The material from these stones served him to fashion the three keys (*lde mig*) for his main Treasures.

<sup>28</sup> P. 10: *kyee ma gu ru rin po che: bdag gi bu brgyud 'di dus tha ma la: mang yul gung thang du dmangs su 'bebs: rgyal rabs chad du nye ba'i dus su slob dpon nyid kyi thugs rjes skyob pa'i gter mdzod 'di: sba ba'i gnas ni gang na mchis: gter srung dam can gang la gtad:(...).*

<sup>29</sup> This is an oblique reference to the king of Gungthang who, in the future, shall be an important donor and supporter of rGod ldem's tradition. The fourfold Treasure trove refers to the casket that would later be revealed by rGod ldem, containing various scrolls in the four parts (i.e., directions) of the casket (and the center).

<sup>30</sup> I have been unable to find a complete list of these four Guardians so far.

<sup>31</sup> P. 12 : *brag ri dug sprul spung (=spungs) 'dra la: rgyal po skyob pa'i gter mdzod bzhi: dug sprul nag po'i lto bar sbas: gter bdag mthun chen bzhi la bcol: dus tshod nyi ma'i rtse la sbed: mang yul phyogs su nyi zla 'char.*

their specific coal clump (*sol ba'i tshas*) and hidden in Ri bo bkra bzang. Here, the main Guardian of these keys is explicitly mentioned under the name of Bulé Norbu Zangpo.

According to *The Seven Principles making up the Crucial Precepts of the Heart Drops [Teachings]* (*sNying tig*<sup>32</sup> *gnad kyi man ngag don bdun*),<sup>33</sup> the Treasure texts were placed in a square box and divided into four categories. All were written on Indian paper (*rgya shog*) and transcribed into the symbolic runes of the Dakinīs (*mkha' 'gro'i brda'i yi ge*). The scrolls were then sealed and rolled into their individual cloth covers made of precious Indian silk before being inserted in the casket (*sgrom bu*). A similar account is given in *The Three Kinds of Lamps* (*sGron ma rnam gsum*).<sup>34</sup>

At the same time that the box was hidden, numerous artifacts were also buried, such as various kinds of *phur pa* daggers,<sup>35</sup> small pieces of hair<sup>36</sup> belonging to Padmasambhava, the monk Namkhai Nyingpo, Yéshé Tsogyel, Trisong Détsen and his sons, as well as Dorjé Dūdjom. Moreover, blessed substances were added to the Treasure box, together with further scrolls containing oral instructions (*zhal gdams shog dril*).<sup>37</sup> Finally, a bronze representation of a poisonous black snake was placed on the box, serving as a seal. The whole was hidden in the middle section<sup>38</sup> of the “Rocky Mountain Looking like a Heap of Poisonous Snakes” (*Brag ri Dug sprul spungs 'dra*). At that point of his narration (p. 16), Sétön quotes from *The Lamp Clarifying the Itinerary Pathway* (*Lam byang gsal sgron*) and then again from *The Seven Principles* (p. 17), introducing details about the actual location where the Treasure was hidden and the depth to which the Treasure Revealer is supposed to dig in order to excavate it.

The hiding of the box and its accompanying implements actually took three days during which Padmasambhava and an entourage of

<sup>32</sup> The spellings *tig* and *thig* alternate regularly in this kind of literature, without particular differences between the two.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted by Se ston, p. 14.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted on pp. 14-15.

<sup>35</sup> Nearly half a dozen of them are listed, together with their “moniker”, such as the Demon Tamer of the Three Worlds (*Srid gsum bdud 'dul*), which was forged in Yang le shod out of seven kinds of iron metal by the Mon blacksmith called dPal brtsegs (see the details in *op. cit.*, p. 15-16). It was given by the latter to Padmasambhava.

<sup>36</sup> Correcting *dbu skra tshom* (p. 16) to *dbu skra tshums*.

<sup>37</sup> The contents of these instructions are not described. They were first given orally (hence their designation as “oral instructions”), before being transcribed.

<sup>38</sup> The text reads *skyed* (p. 16) which is an old reading for *sked pa*, a variant of *rked pa*, pointing to the middle part of something, as well as the waist, the base of the spine, the kidney area, and so forth. In rGod ldem's biography, the reading *sked pa* is confirmed with this meaning of “middle” (see Herweg, *The Hagiography of Rig 'dzin Rgod kyi ldem 'phru can*, p. 293).

devoted disciples engaged in the necessary rituals before entrusting the whole thing to the Treasure Lords (*gter bdag*). Thereafter, Padmasambhava gave numerous oral instructions to the king (Trisong Détsen) and his main disciples, eventually announcing his decision to leave Tibet and to travel to Ngayab Ling (Cāmaradvīpa). When the time came, a large party including the king, the abbot Śākya Sōnam, the translator Vairocana, Nub Sangyé Yéshé, Nanam Dorjé Dūdjom, and the *ḍākinī* Yéshé Tsogyel decided to accompany him back to Gungthang, Samyé and eventually Lhasa. There, on the top of Mount Hépori, Padmasambhava opened the maṇḍala of the *Drubchen Kagyé* (*sGrub chen bka' brgyad*) to his faithful devotees.

After departing from Lhasa, Padmasambhava travelled back to Gungthang where he gave his final Testament (*zhal chems*) and the famed prayer known as *The Prayer which Spontaneously Fulfills all Aspirations* (*bSam pa lhun grub ma*) to the prince Mutri Tsenpo. He assessed the results of his activities in Tibet and then, riding a ray of the sun, soared into the sky with a party of heroes and heroines who had come to escort him. According to Sétön (p. 21), Mutri Tsenpo and Nanam Dorjé Dūdjom then bid farewell to Padmasambhava and hid scrolls and cycles of practice<sup>39</sup> in the temple of Gyang in Rulak, entrusting them to the Treasure Lords Lhamo Dre'u Zhönma<sup>40</sup> and Jowo Bulé.

### 3. The Revelation of the *Gongpa Zangthel*

The cycle of the *Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* or *Künzang Gongpa Zangthel* (*Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*)—the very core of the Treasures revealed in Zangzang Lhadrak—contains several non-dogmatic narrative works explaining the history of the lineage, the contents of the collection, prophecies, and other similar texts.<sup>41</sup> At the very outset of the first volume, the collection includes an interesting short work dedicated to the story describing the actual revelation of the Treasure (*gter ma*). What is even more interesting is that it is written in the first person, which means that what we read in this text is said to have been written down directly by the *tertön*, namely Rigdzin Gödem (1337–1408).<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Among these scrolls were the numerous *kha byang*, *lam byang*, and so forth, connected to the Northern Treasures. See ston mentions also two cycles of practice (*sgrub skor*) associated with Hayagrīva and Avalokiteśvara.

<sup>40</sup> I.e., dPal ldan lha mo.

<sup>41</sup> These appear either as compositions or as revealed material. The text translated below is a composition.

<sup>42</sup> There are other similar works directly attributed to rGod ldem's hand, such as *The Symbolic Omens Appearing in Dreams, in Eight Chapters* (*mNal lam brda'i ltas le'u brgyad ma*) which is discussed by Jay Valentine in "The Visionary Dreams of Rigdzin Gödem", *passim*.

The narration itself is very straightforward and replete with details that give it a definite flavor of authenticity. As will be seen in the translation, extraordinary marvels and wonders are at the heart of the story, but given the nature of the event, the intervention of such elements in the narrative does not come as a surprise. As a matter of fact, the role played by atmospheric miracles and the encounters with the Guardians of the Treasure (*gter srung*) are standard *leitmotifs* occurring in such a revelatory context. Therefore, they should not be automatically dismissed as superstitions since there are numerous elements at play during the revelation of a *terma* that would easily challenge the most skeptical minds.<sup>43</sup> Many of these elements—provided they have not been produced by the imagination of the *tertön*—are impossible to analyze from a scientific perspective but would nevertheless definitely deserve to be investigated from an emic perspective. I have just mentioned two of them—atmospheric “events” and contacts with local entities<sup>44</sup>—as these are central in the text translated below, but other modalities such as prophecies, environmental disturbances, collective karma, astrological conjunctions, etc., play crucial roles before, during, and after the revelation itself.<sup>45</sup>

The last part of the text contains prophetic elements about the future of the Treasure and the fortunate ones (none explicitly named) that will come from Yangleshö in Nepal.<sup>46</sup>

The version of the text translated below is directly based on the newer edition of the *Gongpa Zanthei*, although an older xylographic edition has also been consulted.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> I am not formulating here a panegyric of some sort of the *gter ma* phenomenon, but the recurring nature of these elements during the revelation of a Treasure clearly warrants a study on its own, even if only to propose a hermeneutic interpretation of some of its components. Resorting to hackneyed arguments limiting the interpretative process to cultural representations that have no reality at all is evidently a dead-end that has deviated research into fossilized and clearly uniformed opinions. The process of revealing Treasures is far more complex, as is evidenced by the Third rDo grub chen rin po che (1865–1926)’s work on the topic, entitled *The Ocean of Wonders* (*Ngo mtshar rgya mtsho*); see the translation of this text in T. Thondup, *Hidden Teachings of Tibet*, *passim*.

<sup>44</sup> The first ones can possibly be witnessed by a third party, but not necessarily the second ones.

<sup>45</sup> In case of a *khrom gter* (“public revelation”), the behavior of those who witness the discovery is also a crucial element that can influence the actual revelation itself, to the extent of actually preventing it.

<sup>46</sup> Bdr:G01AG03004 (present-day Pharping). So far, I am not in a position to identify these figures.

<sup>47</sup> See the references under Rig ‘dzin rgod ldem in the bibliography.

[P. 1]           **The History of the Treasure Revelation**

[gTer bton pa'i lo rgyus]

[P. 2] *Namo Guru* (homage to the master!).

The ācārya Padmasambhava hid a stack of Treasure Repositories in the middle of the rocky mountain that looks like a heap of poisonous snakes.<sup>48</sup> And he concealed the key to this (Treasure) on the top of mount “Riwo Trazang.” The index and itinerary guide (of this Treasure previously) appeared from (the discovery made in) Drompa Gyang.<sup>49</sup>

On the eighth day of the waxing moon of the Snake month in the Horse year,<sup>50</sup> during the conjunction of the Puṣya constellation and the Kilaka (Jupiter) planet,<sup>51</sup> I, Ngödrup Gyeltsen,<sup>52</sup> together with a devoted retinue, went to reveal (the Treasure). At that time, at the first light of dawn, I saw a characteristic ray of light:<sup>53</sup> on top of the sun arose a ray of white light similar to a wish-fulfilling tree, coming from the eastern direction and entering Mount Riwo Trazang. (At that spot,)<sup>54</sup> I dug under a rock on

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<sup>48</sup> This is in fact a toponym, but its literal meaning is also an interesting element. Two mountains actually play a key role in the revelation of the Northern Treasures by Rig 'dzin rgod ldem: the present one (known in Tibetan as Brag ri dug sprul spungs pa 'dra ba) and Ri bo bkra bzang. As we have seen above, according to the narrative accounts widespread in the rNying ma tradition, the hiding of Treasures by Padmasambhava is believed to have happened in the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD.

<sup>49</sup> This revelation was made by bZang po grags pa (14<sup>th</sup> c.), sometime before that of Rig 'dzin rgod ldem.

<sup>50</sup> Identified as Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> April, 1366 by Herweg, *The Hagiography of Rig 'dzin Rgod kyi ldem 'phru can*, (p. 93).

<sup>51</sup> This precise timing has not been chosen at random. Not only is it specified in the *Kha byang* and other prophetic sources, but it also corresponds to the optimal time-conditions generally required for giving empowerments, special secret teachings such as rDzogs chen, retrieving *gter ma*, and so forth. See an interesting list of these requirements in Khenpo Namdrol Rinpoche, *Precious Treasury of Genuine Meaning*, vol. 4, pp. 43-44. The actual Puṣya constellation is the eighth of the twenty-eight constellations and is defined as the divine abode where Br̥haspati (i.e., Jupiter), the god of devotion and piety, teaches the devas. In traditional Vedic astronomy, the arising of Jupiter in this constellation (in particular if this occurs on a Thursday) is said to be a day of an especially auspicious nature. According to other sources, Puṣya is the sixth among the twenty-eight constellations (*nakṣatra*) of Indian astronomy. See A.K. Bag, “Astronomy in Indus Civilization”, p. 125.

<sup>52</sup> dNgos grub rgyal mtshan. This is the ordinary name of Rig 'dzin rgod ldem, and apparently, from the present context, the one he used to refer to himself.

<sup>53</sup> The translation is literal, the meaning being simply that of a “very special ray of light.”

<sup>54</sup> I.e., at the precise location where the ray of light hit the ground.

which dew<sup>55</sup> (had gathered) as if snow had fallen upon it, and inside a sealed reliquary made of stone (that was hidden there), among (pieces of) charcoal, there was a one finger-span, solid and white whetstone, which I took out.

Then, on the fourth day of the sheep month [p. 3],<sup>56</sup> during the conjunction of the Puṣya constellation and the Kilaka planet, since (Padmasambhava) had said (in the *Index*) that we were to excavate the Treasure Repository (on that precise date), I, Ngödrup Gyeltsen, together with the hermit Sangyé Tenpa<sup>57</sup> and Rigdzin Gönpö,<sup>58</sup> the three of us set out on the path (to the Treasure) and overturned extremely confusing, demonic obstacles that had occurred (on our way). We prayed to Guru (Padmasambhava) and consequently five-colored rainbows appeared in the sky in an unceasing flow.

When we arrived at the foot of the rocky mountain resembling a heap of poisonous snakes, three rainbows similar to strips of white silk appeared in a row from the south-west. For two days we searched the (actual) sanctuary in the middle of this great rocky mountain, and when we actually found the place, rainbows arose (again) in the sky.

In the evening, as we were praying in this location, the cave itself shook and trembled violently, a clear sign of the coming of the Treasure Lord. Then, at midnight [p. 4], as we were looking around the place by the light of butter lamps, (we found out that) on the first boulder located in the south-west (within the cave), there was a vajra cross. Below it (was an opening in which) I inserted the key,<sup>59</sup> and a door opened in the boulder. Inside was a very small cavern in which pebbles and charcoal had been deposited.<sup>60</sup> Once these were removed, I found a square blue stone with a silver-colored door ornament nailed to it. On top of it was a snake (statue) of light blue color with a yellow belly, approximately the diameter of an upper arm, coiling in the form of an eight-faceted gem. Its head was turned toward the south-east

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<sup>55</sup> Correcting *tshil ba* to *zil ba*.

<sup>56</sup> Sunday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1366 (Herweg, *op. cit.*, p. 94).

<sup>57</sup> Ri khrod pa Sangs rgyas bstan pa. He is presented as an uncle (*zhang po*) of rGod ldem (*ib.*, p. 91). He is identical with Bla ma Do pa ba (see *ib.*, pp. 38, 94).

<sup>58</sup> Elements regarding this personage are quasi inexistent. He appears to have been a servant, either of rGod ldem himself or of his uncle. See Schwiieger, *Die Werksammlungen Kun-tu bzañ-po'i dgoñs-pa zañ-thal*, p. xxxv.

<sup>59</sup> This key was the one found on the top of Mount Riwo Trazang, as stated at the beginning of the text.

<sup>60</sup> In Treasure caches, charcoal is often used to prevent dampness and the incursion of insects. Wax is also frequently used to seal receptacles containing treasure substances.

and in his heart were three jewel protrusions. Inside these were a scroll and a vague semblance of jewels. The whole interior of the snake appeared to be covered in gold, and jewels—the mere size of thumbs—were dangling, attached to its spine. However, since they were not mentioned in the *Index (Kha byang)*, I left them there.

Thereafter, I opened the central Treasure Repository and took out three scrolls, three phurbus, and the single brown silk piece that (had been used) to wrap them up.

From the repositories in the four directions,<sup>61</sup> I took out two mother-scrolls and two son-scrolls<sup>62</sup> on which the eight mother-and-son seed-syllables of the four female gate-keepers were drawn with medicinal dew (used as ink). In these four outer repositories were multiple jewels, as well as four turquoise stones being supports of the soul of king (Trisong Detsen),<sup>63</sup> but since they were under the watch of the Treasure Lords who told me not to take them out, I did not open (the compartment where they had been placed).

From within the key (itself), I took out seven scrolls, including an *Index of Treasures (gTer gyi kha byang)*, and so forth. I filled up its inside with a bodhi-tree,<sup>64</sup> [p. 5] as well as grains, five kinds of jewels, thus packing it fully with *terma*-substitutes.<sup>65</sup>

The breaking of the day and the revelation of the Treasure occurred at the same time. Feeling delighted, joyous, and invigorated, we took the Treasure Repositories with us and set out back on the road when, at the first light of dawn, a rainbow entered the cave, while rain fell in all directions. Wherever we went, rainbows looking like tents pitched in the sky continuously appeared as if large banners were hanging in midair (to accompany us).

As we arrived in front of Mount Riwo Trazang, rays of light coming from the waning phase of the sun arose in a ruby-colored sky in which I saw extraordinary omens appearing individually in gigantic and smaller pure visions. That very night, there was an earthquake and many wrathful omens connected to the elements.

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<sup>61</sup> The stone-chest is thus to be conceived as having a central compartment, as well as one compartment in each direction, resembling the general outer shape of a four-petaled lotus.

<sup>62</sup> Mother and son (*ma bu*) texts are often in the form of a root-text (*rtsa ba*), i.e., the mother text, and a commentary or complementary treatises, i.e., the son text or several of these.

<sup>63</sup> On turquoise soul-stone, see B. Gerke, “Engaging the Subtle Body”, pp. 197-198.

<sup>64</sup> Most evidently a drawing or some seeds of such a tree.

<sup>65</sup> *gTer tshab*. On these substitutes see Tulku Thondup, *Hidden Teachings of Tibet*, pp. 84 and 257 n. 240.

Furthermore, wherever I went, numerous trustworthy signs occurred as described in the texts. Signs appeared in accordance with the prophecies given in *The Seven Principles making up the Crucial Precepts of the Heart Drops [Teachings] (sNying tig gnad kyi man ngag don bdun)*:<sup>66</sup> as to the vulture feathers on my head,<sup>67</sup> when I reached the age of twelve and then twenty-one, some roots of my hair turned white, resembling the feathers of a vulture. At first three appeared and afterwards, five.

When I reached the age of twenty-seven, in front of Mount Riwo Trazang, I found an externally round leather bag with an oily color, as if filled with milk, which was actually saturated with liquid amṛta.

(Then,) at the age of thirty (in 1366), I revealed the great Treasure [p. 6], and in the year of the Sheep (1367), at the place where I had found the key on Mount Riwo Trazang, at the time of the new year, during the first month of spring, the seed of a fruit tree had grown on the rock (where I had found the Treasure) and (had become a full-grown tree) with its trunk, branches, leaves and fruits. On the top of this mountain appeared numerous extraordinary signs on favorable occasions and auspicious configurations of planets and stars. I (personally) saw these, and so did my devoted retinue.

In these degenerate times, these Treasure teachings have the capacity to bring a measure of happiness to the realm of Tibet. Auspicious (signs keep on) occurring at the place where the Treasure was revealed. Even in the future, Speech and Mind emanations hailing from Yangléshö in Nepal, will come in Mangyül and Kyirong, and on Riwo Trazang, they will find the self-arisen sanctuaries of practice marked with the signs of the Guru's (i.e. Padmasambhava) Body, Speech, and Mind. They will bring great benefit to transmigrating beings. It is said that, owing to the power of their karmic propensities, these teachings will spread at the frontier between Tibet and the southern regions.

The history relating how, (I), Rigdzin Gökyi Demtruchen, revealed the Treasure of the rocky mountain resembling a heap of poisonous snakes was composed in the practice place of Namolung, the Valley of the Ancient Ones.<sup>68</sup> Maṅgalaṃ!

<sup>66</sup> *dGongs pa zang thal*, vol. 3, pp. 285-303.

<sup>67</sup> The presence of these feathers in the *gter ston*'s hair is the reason he is known as Rig'dzin rGod kyi ldem 'phru can, the "Knowledge Holder Having Vulture Feathers". These feathers are among the extraordinary signs described in prophetic texts.

<sup>68</sup> gNa' mo lung. This toponym is also regularly spelt sNa mo lung, the Jasmine Valley. It is located in La stod, in the Byang myriarchy (bdr:G4815). This is rGod

#### 4. Alien and Internal Prophecies regarding Rigdzin Gödem

Sétön's brief analysis of the prophecies related to Gödem in his *General Presentation of the Northern Treasures* (*Byang gter spyi bcings*) consists of a mere, yet coherent, twofold list: first, the main prophecies that are to be found in alien *terma* literature (*gter kha gzhan nas*), i.e., outside the corpus of the Northern Treasures (*Byang gter*); and second, those that are included within that corpus. In introducing these two categories, he intends to demonstrate the manifest importance of Gödem in the Nyingma tradition as a whole, and not only within his own lineage.

##### 4-1. Prophecies made Outside the Northern Treasures

In this first category, Setön quotes seven main sources—all of *terma* origins—, some of which have supposedly been discovered prior to Gödem's birth. The first text that is quoted is *The Prophecy of the Treasure (revealed by) Küinkyong Lingpa* (*Kun skyong gling pa'i gter kha'i lung bstan*),<sup>69</sup> in which the following prophetic statement appears:

*His miraculous power will be said to fulfill the aspirations of those to be tamed;*

*This man with vulture feathers on his head  
Will retrieve all Treasure vases (from) Trazang;  
How can the summary of these be fully sufficient?*<sup>70</sup>

The next reference is that of *Orgyen Lingpa's Prophecies* (*O rgyan gling pa'i lung bstan*), in which it is said:

*The Body Emanation*<sup>71</sup> *will be Nyima Özer;*  
*The Speech Emanation will be Ngagi Wangchuk;*  
*The Mind Emanation will be Gökyi Demtru(chen);*  
*The Qualities (Emanation) will be Orgyen Lingpa; and*  
*The Activities (Emanation) will be Tseten Gyeltsen.*

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Idem's actual birthplace (see Valentine, "An Introduction to *The Chariots of Marvels*," p. 225).

<sup>69</sup> So far, I have been unable to locate this title. Kun skyong gling pa is said to have been born in 1396 or 1408 and to have passed away at the age of 82 (either in 1477 or in 1489). See Samten Chhosphe, "Kunskyong Lingpa", <https://treasuryof-lives.org/biographies/view/Kunskyong-Lingpa/2232>.

<sup>70</sup> Se ston, pp. 382-383: *rdzu 'phrul* (p. 383) *gdul bya'i re ba bskong ba zhes: rgod kyi ldem phru dbu la skyes pa ni: bkra bzang gter gyi bum pa thams cad 'byin: de rnam mdor bstan zhib tu ga la ldang* ∴. The last verse of the quatrain simply means that there would be much more to say.

<sup>71</sup> Of Padmasambhava.

*These five are Padmasambhava himself.*<sup>72</sup>

This is a quite famous presentation of five influential Treasure Revealers (*gter ston*) who embody Padmasambhava's inexhaustible wheel of ornaments (*mi zad rgyan gyi 'khor lo*), displaying his emanations in the form of manifestations of his Body, Speech, Mind, Qualities, and Activities, as all fully enlightened Buddhas would commonly do. Of the five masters that are mentioned, it should be noted that the first three are revealers of Treasures associated with the *Eight Pronouncements* (*bKa' brgyad*).<sup>73</sup> The first one is Nyang-rel Nyima Özer (1124–1192) who revealed the *Eight Pronouncements Collection known as the Assembly of the Blissful Ones* (*bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa*). The second one is Guru Chöwang (1212–1270) who discovered the *Eight Pronouncements Collection known as the Utterly Perfect Arcane* (*bKa' brgyad gsang ba yongs rdzogs*). And the third is obviously Gödem himself with his revelation of the *Natural Arising of the Self-Emergent Eight Pronouncements* (*bKa' brgyad rang byung rang shar*). I have so far been unable to identify any discovery of texts related to the *Eight Pronouncements* among the *termas* of Orgyen Lingpa and those of Tseten Gyeltsen that have survived down to our present time. Rather, it would seem that what connects them together is their discoveries of Dzogchen texts and cycles. As a matter of fact, regarding early revelations of teachings pertaining to the Great Perfection, Nyang-rel is famous for spreading the revelation of his bönpo friend Nyemo Zhuyé. This revelation consists mainly in a set of Yangti Tantras (*yang ti'i rgyud*) and Chiti Tantras (*spyi ti'i rgyud*) which are now included in the *Collection of Ancient Tantras* (*rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*).<sup>74</sup> Guru Chöwang is also famous for excavating a large corpus associated with Yangti entitled *The Equanime Union of the Buddhas* (*Sangs rgyas mnyam sbyor*). Gödem is of course primarily well-known for his revelation of the large corpus of *The Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* (*Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*) which is, for the specific Northern Treasures tradition, what the *Heart Drops* literature is for the other branches of the Dzogchen lineages among the Nyingmapas. Despite the fact that most of his revelations have not come down to us, Orgyen Lingpa is said, as far as the context of the Great Perfection is concerned, to have revealed a *Heart Drops* of

<sup>72</sup> *Id.*, p. 383: *sku sprul nyi ma 'od zer yin: gsung sprul ngag gi dbang phyug yin: thugs sprul rgod kyi ldem phru yin: yon tan o rgyan gling pa dang : 'phrin las tshe brtan rgyal mtshan yin: 'di lnga padma 'byung gnas dngos.*

<sup>73</sup> Stéphane Arguillère has highlighted this issue during the FCHNT webinar and should present the results of his research on the topic elsewhere.

<sup>74</sup> On the revelation of these *sPyi ti* works, see Achard, "Le Tantra du Précieux Amoncellement"; *id.*, "The View of spyi-ti yoga"; and *id.*, "The Base of the Natural State", *passim*.

*Padmasambhava* (*Padma snying thig*), a *Long Life Practice* according to *Dzogchen* (*rDzogs chen tshe sgrub*), as well as individual texts belonging to the doxographical categories of Ati, Chiti, and Yangti. For his part, Tseten Gyeltsen is known for having excavated a single work about *Dzogchen* entitled *The Natural Freedom of Equality according to the Great Perfection* (*rDzogs chen mnyam nyid rang grol*). To my knowledge, this work has not surfaced yet.<sup>75</sup>

The next prophetic account quoted by Setön comes from *The Prophecy known as the All-Illuminating Lamp* (*Lung bstan kun gsal sgron ma*), in which it is said:

*In the northern direction of Latö,  
A tertön with the name of "Vulture" will come.*<sup>76</sup>

This clearly refers to Gödem's birthplace, located close to Riwo Tra-zang in Latö, the vast, westernmost region of Tsang. His name is also explicitly given as *Vulture* (*rgod po*), in reference to the vulture's feathers that, as we have seen above in Gödem's direct narrative of his Treasure revelation, appeared in his hair when he was twelve and twenty-one years old.<sup>77</sup>

Next, Setön quotes the following prophetic verses from *The Lamp Clarifying the Path-Index for Nyang's Treasures* (*Myang gi gter ma lam byang gsal sgron*):

*In the eastern direction of this mountain,  
A yogi looking like a lion will appear;  
He will be one born in a Fire year  
And will live in a hidden manner.*<sup>78</sup>

The mention of the "lion" (*seng ge*) refers to Gödem's fearlessness and his status as an important Treasure Revealer. The fierce animal is also featured below in another prophecy in which it points, not to the *tertön* himself, but to his birthplace. His life lived in a concealed manner (*sbas pa'i tshul du*) means that: 1. he was a hidden yogi (*sbas pa'i rnal 'byor pa*) engaged in practices that he did not disclose publicly and 2. he reached signs of realization that he similarly kept secret. He would thus appear as an ordinary man to those who met him casually.

The next quote made by Setön is extracted from *The Testament*

<sup>75</sup> It should not be conflated with the eponymous work by Klong chen pa which belongs to his *Trilogy on Natural Freedom* (*Rang grol skor gsum*).

<sup>76</sup> *Id.*, p. 383: *la stod byang gi phyogs su ni: rgod po'i ming can gter bton 'byung*.

<sup>77</sup> See Herweg, *The Hagiography of Rig 'dzin Rgod kyi ldem 'phru can*, p. 64, *passim*.

<sup>78</sup> *Id.*, p. 383: *ri bo de yi shar phyogs nas: seng ge lta bu'i rnal 'byor pa: 'byung ba me'i lo pa gcig: sbas pa'i tshul du gnas pa 'byung* :.

known as the *Pearls of the Heart* (*Zhal chems thugs kyi thigs pa*), in which Rigdzin Gödem is prophesized in these two verses:

*Before (the mountain) named Riwo Trazang,  
A fortunate bodhisattva will appear.<sup>79</sup>*

And, in *The Crucial Threshold to the Extended Quintessential Guide* (*sNyng byang rgyas pa gnad kyi them bu*), it is said:

*On the eastern foothills of Mount Trazang,  
(Where) the boughs of a great solitary tree  
Abiding like a (powerful) lion are rare,<sup>80</sup> (he will come)  
Owing to aspiration prayers (formulated) in former lifetimes,  
And shall practice the Yidam Vajrakīla.<sup>81</sup>*

The mention of former lifetimes is essentially a reference to Gödem's previous embodiment as Nanam Dorje Düdjom who received the Vajrakīla transmission from Padmasambhava. The practice of this Yidam has been central to the tradition of the Northern Treasures since its inception. In the same quote, it is said:

*This one born in a year of the Fire element  
(Will engage in) a wrathful Conduct without obstructions.  
Having great intelligence and a sharp mind,  
His name (will indicate that he belongs) to those who accomplish the desires  
(of sentient beings)  
(Since) he shall plant the victorious banner of the Dharma.<sup>82</sup>*

The year characterized as being associated with the fire element (*me*) indeed corresponds to 1337 which is actually a Female Fire Ox year (*me mo glang*). The name showing that he will fulfill (*'grub pa*) the wishes of sentient beings is most certainly a hint at his personal name, Ngödrup Gyeltsen (*dNgos grub rgyal mtshan*), which means the "Victorious Banner of Accomplishments", accomplishments being *siddhis* through which he is said to have the capacity to concretely help

<sup>79</sup> *Id.*, p. 383: *ri bo bkra bzang zhes bya'i mdun: byang chub sems dpa' las can 'byung:*

<sup>80</sup> The actual meaning of the verses *seng ge lta bur gnas pa yi: gcig pu sdong chen yal ga dkon* is not entirely clear to me. Herweg (p. 62) has a different understanding than mine, but in my humble opinion his rendering violates the grammar of the original too severely to be considered correct.

<sup>81</sup> *Id.*, p. 383: *ri bo bkra bzang shar 'dabs su: seng ge lta bur gnas pa yi: gcig pu sdong chen yal ga dkon: tshe rabs snga ma'i smon lam gyis: yi dam rdo rje phur pa sgrub:*

<sup>82</sup> *Id.*, p. 383: *'byung ba me yi lo pa la: spyod pa drag po thogs rdugs med: blo rtsal shes rab che ba la: ming ni 'dod pa 'grub pa'i rigs: chos kyi rgyal mtshan legs par 'dzugs:*

sentient beings.

Setön's last quote comes from the famed *Seven Topics of the Crucial Precepts of the Heart Drops* (*sNying tig gnad kyi man ngag don bdun*), a Treasure revealed by Zangpo Drakpa, in which the prophecy regarding Gödem provides a conflicting date:

*On the eastern foothills of the so-called Mount Trazang,  
During an Ox year with a Water element, he who is endowed with mole  
marks  
(Will bear) the signs of these blessings of mine, (Orgyen) Padma,  
(With) vulture feathers appearing again and again on the top of his head.*<sup>83</sup>

It is important to understand that this Water Ox year does not correspond to a date of birth, which would be either 1313 CE or 1373 CE, respectively too early and too late to fit with the rest of the traditional chronology associated with Gödem's life.<sup>84</sup> Rather, it must be corrected to an Earth Ox year (*sa mo glang*, 1349 CE) which is, according to his *Biography*, the year when vulture feathers appeared in his hair at the age of twelve.<sup>85</sup>

#### 4-2. Internal Prophecies Occurring within the Corpus of the Northern Treasures

Setön uses eight different internal sources prophesizing the coming of Gödem. In the present section, I shall simply try to identify them and will defer the discussion of their contents to another study.

The first source quoted by Setön is *The Three Kinds of Lamps* (*sGron ma rnam gsum*). This text is included in the *Gongpa Zangthel* collection (vol. 1, pp. 225-262)<sup>86</sup> and has also been published under the title *Instructions Given to the Treasure Revealer—The Cycle of the Three Kinds of Lamps* (*gTer bton la gdams pa: sGron ma rnam gsum gyi bskor [= skor]*). It is included in the *Biographies of the Northern Treasures Tradition and Prophecies for the Future* (*Byang gter lugs kyi rnam thar dang ma 'ongs lung bstan*, pp. 1-47). This is a *terma* revealed by Gödem, the discoverer

<sup>83</sup> *Id.*, p. 383: *ri bo bkra bzang zhes bya'i shar 'dabs su: chu khams glang lo sme ba'i mtshan rtags can: padma nga yi byin gyis brlabs pa'i rtags: spyi bor rgod kyi ldem phru yang yang 'byung:*.

<sup>84</sup> The "wrong" reading of Se ston's quote is confirmed by the actual passage appearing in *bZang po grags pa's sNying tig gnad kyi man ngag don bdun pa*, p. 278.1. It is therefore not a mistake made by Se ston when compiling all these quotations.

<sup>85</sup> Herweg, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>86</sup> With the following title: *The Testament known as the Three Kinds of Lamps* (*Zhal chems sgron ma rnam gsum*). The title itself is followed by: "Taught by Orgyen (Padma) to the yogi [that shall] reveal the Treasures" (*gter ston gyi rnal 'byor o rgyan gyis gsungs so*, p. 225).

describing himself as a “deluded beggar” (*rmongs pa ku su lu*).<sup>87</sup> The three Lamps that make up the contents of the text are: 1. the outer Lamp of the body (*phyi ltar lus kyi sgron ma*), 2. the inner Lamp of Conduct (*nang ltar spyod pa'i sgron ma*), and 3. the secret Lamp of Awareness (*gsang ba rig pa'i sgron ma*). The first contains the prophetic narration about Padmasambhava and Gödem's incarnation (*skye brgyud*, i.e., his rebirth) close to Riwo Trazang. The second contains key elements and instructions that were compiled by Padmasambhava for the benefit of Gödem himself. The third is a dialogue between Padmasambhava on one side and Yéshé Tsogyel, Mutri Tsenpo, and Nanam Dorjé Dūdjom on the other.

The second internal work that Setön quotes is *The List of the Six Oral Transmissions* (*sNyan brgyud drug gi tho byang*), a famed text from the *Gongpa Zangthel*. Its secondary title is *The List of Precious Teachings, Similar to the Key to the Heart of Wisdom* (*Rin po che'i lung byang ye shes thugs kyi lde mig lta bu*).<sup>88</sup> Its colophon merely states it was rediscovered in Zangzang Lhadrak by Rigdzin Gödem.

The next work used by Setön is *The Entrusted Seal of the Natural Clarity of Reality according to the Cycle of the Great Compassionate One* (*Thugs rje chen po chos nyid rang gsal gyi gtad rgya*). Actually, Setön's wording is misleading. This is not a text. Rather, it is a part of chapter 4 of *The Tantra of the Natural Clarity of Reality, of the Universal Liberation of Migrating Beings according to the Wish-fulfilling Jewel of the Great Compassionate One* (*Thugs rje chen po yid bzhin nor bu 'gro ba kun grol gyi chos nyid rang gsal gyi rgyud ces bya ba*).<sup>89</sup>

After that, Setön quotes a text entitled *The Extended Quintessential Guide* (*sNying byang rgyas pa*) which corresponds to *The Crucial Record of the Extended Quintessential Guide* (*sNying byang rgyas pa gnad kyi them bu*),<sup>90</sup> a *terma* originally revealed by *gter ston* Zangpo Drakpa.

Then, he refers to *The Hook of Compassion, An Abridged Quintessential Guide* (*sNying byang bsdus pa thugs rje'i lcags kyu*), which is apparently

<sup>87</sup> P. 46 (this does not appear in the version included in the *Gongpa Zangthel*). The colophonic data do not explicitly identify him as Gödem but the lines that precede them precisely state that the doctrinal material associated with this text (if not the text itself) are concealed in the Eastern White Conch Repository (*shar dung mdzod dkar po*, p. 46 and also as mentioned on p. 3 of the text), while other sections and their related instructions are hidden in the Central Brown Rhinoceros Chest (*dbus bse sgrom smug po*, p. 35). Hence, all these are related to rGod Idem himself.

<sup>88</sup> *dGongs pa zang thal*, vol. 1, pp. 191-202.

<sup>89</sup> *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 4, pp. 51-62. This text is one of the four tantras of the *Thugs rje chen po yid bzhin nor bu* cycle which was discovered by Gödem from the “Western Red Copper Treasury” (*nub zangs mdzod dmar po*), a division of the Brown Rhinoceros Chest (*bse sgrom smug po*). The actual quote is to be found on p. 60 of this text.

<sup>90</sup> Vol. 33, pp. 143-159.

not available in its full form.<sup>91</sup>

Thereafter, he quotes *The Great Transmission of the Empowerment Flow to the Eight Pronouncements* (*bKa' brgyad kyi dbang gi chu bo babs so chen mo*),<sup>92</sup> which, as its title indicates, belongs to the system of the *bKa' brgyad*.<sup>93</sup>

The penultimate quotation made by Setön is from *The Second Scroll of the White Whetstone* (*'Dzeng rdo dkar po shog ril gnyis pa*). As one can see from its title, it is the "Second Scroll" (*shog ril gnyis pa*) which means that there should be others, or at least a "First Scroll" (*shog ril dang po*). This is indeed the case and the entire *White Whetstone* cycle<sup>94</sup> comprises actually six scrolls, as follows : 1. First Scroll, pp. 230-231; 2. Second Scroll, pp. 231-235; 3 Third Scroll, pp. 235-238; 4. Fourth Scroll, pp. 238-241;<sup>95</sup> 5. Fifth Scroll, pp. 241-243; and 6. Sixth Scroll, pp. 243-244.

Finally, the last work quoted by Setön as an internal source prophesizing the coming of Gödem is *The Prophecies of He Who Sees Everything* (*Kun tu gzigs kyi lung bstan*).<sup>96</sup> However, as far as I know, it is not included in the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, but it is quoted by Guru Tashi and the Fifth Dalai Lama without, however, specifying who the discoverer of this prophetic work is. Even if the text does not seem to be available at present, there is little doubt, from the quotes that have reached us, that it is indeed an internal source of prophecies related to the Northern Treasures.<sup>97</sup>

## 5. Apocalyptic Times and the Revelation of the Gongpa Zangthel

Still in his *General Presentation of the Cycles of Teachings of the Northern Treasures*, Setön provides a brief analysis of the period in which Rigdzin Gödem was to reveal the Treasure of the *Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* (*Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*). Basing himself on a series of prophecies, Setön uses five main sources from which he has extracted brief excerpts.

In general, *termas* are said to be revealed during particularly difficult moments in history, in the course of degenerate times and

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<sup>91</sup> See Valentine, "In search of lost histories", *passim*. So far, I have only located quotations from this work, not the text itself.

<sup>92</sup> The text is included in the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, volume 9, pp. 579-587.

<sup>93</sup> The actual quote made by Setön appears at the end of the work on p. 587.

<sup>94</sup> *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 14, pp. 229-245.

<sup>95</sup> The end of the Fourth Scroll is not explicitly marked in the text, but internal evidence shows it actually ends on the first line of p. 241.

<sup>96</sup> *Kun tu gzigs* is generally an epithet of Avalokiteśvara (sPyan ras gzigs).

<sup>97</sup> See Gu ru bkra shis, *Chos 'byung*, p. 488; Ngag dbang Blo bzang rgya mtsho, *Byang pa rig 'dzin chen po ngag gi dbang po'i rnam par thar pa*, p. 487.

situations. In traditional Tibetan context, this is often described as periods plagued with spiritual decay, a general decline in virtues, a fall of the royal (or local) Houses, internal conflicts, a general disintegration of familial structures, moral corruption and so forth. This degeneration of times is also expressed in the form of demonic manifestations, the spread of vicious behaviors, epidemics, epizootics, etc. For instance, in *The Three Kinds of Lamps* (*sGron ma rnam gsum*), the conditions requiring the revelation of Gödem's *terma* are termed as follows:

*During the age of degeneration and critical periods (associated with) this Treasure,*

*At the time when the king falls into the populace,  
When butchers become leaders of men,  
When quarrels rage between fathers and siblings,  
When divine supports<sup>98</sup> are destroyed and broken to pieces,  
When one is being deceived by beloved companions,  
When discord spreads between masters and disciples,  
When teachers are put to the sword,  
When tantrikas perform (only) village rituals,  
When foxes wear the hide of lions,  
When Gongpo spirits carol songs,<sup>99</sup>  
When scholars sell (teachings) like charlatans,  
When attachment and aversion blaze like fire,  
When human corpses are scattered<sup>100</sup> across the plains,  
A noble emanated individual (arising)  
From this Compassion of mine, (Orgyen) Pema,  
Will come before this mountain  
And, at that time, will excavate this Treasure.<sup>101</sup>*

The text thus enumerates thirteen conditions that should be understood as follows:

<sup>98</sup> See below for details.

<sup>99</sup> On 'gong po, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, pp. 283-285.

<sup>100</sup> The verb that is used is 'grem pa (spread out, display, etc.) in the original text. Funnily enough, Setön, in his *Garland of Jewels* (*Rin chen 'phreng ba*, p. 30) reads that as 'grims pa, seemingly interpreting the verse as referring to something like "zombies rambling in the flatlands".

<sup>101</sup> *sGron ma rnam gsum*, p. 36: gter 'di dus ngan snyigs ma'i dus: rgyal po dmangs su 'bebs pa'i dus : shan pas mi mgo byed pa'i dus: pha spun dme 'khrug byed pa'i dus: lha rten bshig nas brdung ba'i dus: snying brtse'i grogs kyis bsu pa'i dus: slob dpon slob ma rnyog pa'i dus: dge bshes gri ru 'chi ba'i dus: sngags pa grong chog byed pa'i dus: seng lpags wa yis gon pa'i dus: 'gong pos rgyang glu len pa'i dus: mkhas pas zog po brin pa'i dus: chags sdang me ltar 'bar ba'i dus: mi ro thang la 'grem pa'i dus: padma nga yi thugs rje las: sprul pa'i gang zag dam pa gcig: ri bo 'di'i mdun du 'byung : de dus gter 'di 'don par gyur:.

1. the fall of the king among the populace is a common event associated with the collapse of a dynasty or royal family, causing general havoc that spreads throughout society and threatens its very foundations;
2. in traditional Tibetan society, butchers are one of the lowest social categories, because in a Buddhist context they violate the abstinence from killing sentient beings; therefore, when such individuals become leaders among men, the roots of non-violence are challenged on a daily basis;
3. quarrels between fathers and siblings are indicative of disputes taking place during social unrest, especially when respect for the elders and the foundations of familial structures are rejected;
4. the divine supports that are mentioned in the quote include temples, statues, paintings, books, and all kinds of religious implements; in the view of Buddhist followers, when these supports are destroyed, it is generally by non-believers stimulated by nihilistic dogmas specific to chaotic periods such as the end of time;
5. the fact of being deceived by loved ones—whether spouses or friends—points to a time when it is impossible to trust anyone because most of the basics of morality and ethics have simply disappeared from everyday life, and vices definitely take the lion's share;
6. the discords spread between masters and disciples essentially result from the transgression of vows and the breaking of samayas characterizing times when both masters and disciples lack good fortune;
7. the killing of masters is something that happens in times of extreme chaos when barbarians set out to eradicate a tradition, usually accompanied by ethnic cleansing;
8. the reference to tantrikas mainly occupied with performing village rituals indicates a period when the study and practice of religious teachings have become scarce, while what generally remains active are the village rituals performed to obtain food and money;
9. foxes wearing the hide of lions simply refers to people behaving in ways that are deceptive, essentially in a religious context, with individuals pretending to possess realizations and capacities that are evidently beyond their grasp;
10. the event described as “Gongpos caroling songs” is a general reference to times when demons take precedence over everything, negatively influencing individuals, leading them onto wrong paths, and substituting vices for virtues in the minds of

- the common folk;
11. the mention of scholars selling their teachings like charlatans is also a common image of so-called masters who teach only for money and brag about secret teachings that, according to them, nobody else possesses, etc.;
  12. the spread of attachment and aversion is similarly a recurring feature of degenerate times, when dualistic delusions create shameful behaviors between people who would otherwise do their best to help each other; and
  13. the scattering of human corpses on the plains points to times when people do not show any respect for the deceased and simply leave their bodies exposed to the elements, without proper burial or funerary rituals.

In the last section of the above quote, the “noble emanated individual” (*sprul pa gang zag dam pa*) is of course Rigdzin Gödem himself.

In a considerably milder, less apocalyptic tone, the next quote is extracted from *The Fourth Scroll of the White Whetstone* (*‘Dzeng rdo dkar po’i shog ril bzhi pa*), which focalizes on the issue related to the Gungthang king and describes the circumstances requiring the revelation of the Treasure as follows:

*Listen, faithful Tibetans!*<sup>102</sup>

*Generally, the manifold demonic emanations in Tibet bring suffering to sentient beings.*

*In particular, when the ancestral lineage of the kings of Gungthang is subdued by the commoners,*

*On the rocky (mountain) similar to a heap of serpents,*

*Where the four Treasure Repositories are hidden,*<sup>103</sup>

*A fortunate yogi will extract them and subdue the enemies (affecting) the Body of the king.*<sup>104</sup>

This is a general reference to the fate of the House of Gungthang,

<sup>102</sup> The locutor in this quote is Padmasambhava, addressing the prince (Mu khri btsan po), his subjects (i.e., his main disciples), and his consort (Ye shes mtsho rgyal). These are the “faithful Tibetans”.

<sup>103</sup> On these Four Treasure Repositories, see Herweg, pp. 74 and 98, as well as *infra* in section 6 of the present chapter.

<sup>104</sup> *‘Dzeng rdo dkar po*, p. 239: *nyon cig bod kyi dad pa can: spyir du bod bdud kyi sprul pa sna tshogs kyis sems can sdug la sbyor: khyad par du gung thang rgyal po’i gdung brgyud ‘bangs kyis ‘dul pa’i dus su: brag lto ‘phye spungs pa ‘dra ba la: gter mdzod bzhi sbas pa’i: rnal ‘byor las can gcig gis bton nas rgyal po’i sku dgra ‘dul bar ‘gyur ro:.* Se ston reads (p. 31) the line *gter mdzod bzhi sbas pa’i: as gter mdzod bzhi sbas pa*, which I follow here because the one who extracts the Treasures is not the one who has hidden them.

alluding to the king's decision not to officially endorse the discovery of the Treasure by refusing to provide the necessary riches that would make up the "Treasure substitutes" (*gter tshab*) that the *tertön* must put in place of the original Treasures he reveals.<sup>105</sup>

Furthermore, in *The Extended Quintessential Guide* (*sNying byang rgyas pa*), several other features are put forward, which the text describes as follows:

*As for the time of the excavation of this Treasure,  
In five hundred years in these degenerate times,  
On the peak of Mount Riwo Trazang,  
He will be wearing the hat of a human being  
While suddenly, in the valleys of Mangyiil,  
An errant army will strike like lightning  
And on the banks of the copper lake of Mangyiil,  
The earth will tremble and the soil and stones will be destroyed.*<sup>106</sup>

It is challenging to interpret this prophetic statement correctly. It occurs in a dialogue between Padmasambhava and the Prince Mutri Tsenpo regarding the actual time and circumstances that should announce the necessity to reveal the Treasure. Therefore, the context is exactly the same as that of the previous prophecy, but the actual details are completely different. Three elements should be highlighted that require clarifications:

1. the individual wearing a human hat (*mi zhwa*) is certainly Gödem himself, since there is a reference to the peak of Mount Riwo Trazang where Gödem found the *terma*; however, the precision regarding the wearing of a hat is rather puzzling;<sup>107</sup>

<sup>105</sup> This decision is said to be the very reason why his House collapsed. In fact, the Four Treasure Repositories were intended by Padmasambhava to protect the king (Herweg, p. 74) and some of these, containing *inter alia* the "four soul turquoises of the king" (*rgyal po'i bla g.yu bzhi*)—which would have guaranteed the long-life of the king—were simply left unopened (*id.*, p. 98). Regarding "substitutes for *terma*" (*gter tshab*), Tulku Thondup (*Hidden Teachings of Tibet*, p. 84) says: "The Ter-ton puts a substitute in place of an Earth *terma*. It can be religious objects, offering materials, or any kind of auspicious substances as homage to please the protectors. The substitute helps to maintain the auspiciousness of the land provided by the *terma*."

<sup>106</sup> As quoted by Setön (*Rin chen phreng ba*), p. 389: *gter 'di 'don pa'i dus tshod ni: lnga brgya dus kyi snyigs ma la: ri bo bkra bzang rtse mo la: 'gro ba mi yi zhwa skon zhing: mang yul rong du glo bur gyis: log pa'i dmag sde glog ltar khyug: mang yul bse yi mtsho 'gram du: sa g.yos byung ste sa rdo 'jig:*

<sup>107</sup> As we shall see below, the Riwo Trazang mountain will be covered by a snowcap at the time of the revelation. This is the only cross-reference I could find regarding this hat issue. See an illustration of Gödem wearing a hat (rather than being

2. the errant army (*log pa'i dmag sde*) must certainly not be a reference to the Yatshé army, with which the previous kings of Gungthang had troubles;<sup>108</sup> it might instead point to the Mongols hordes under the control of the local Sakya hierarchs who actually mesmerized the Gungthang king (Phüntsoḳ Dé) and, as mentioned above, at first prevented Gödem from obtaining the indispensable “Treasure substitutes” for his revelation;
3. the earthquake is probably a classic apocalyptic literary element since I have been unable to identify any such event around the time of the discovery (1366). However, it could definitely have been an earthquake of moderate intensity that went unrecorded at the time.<sup>109</sup>

In *The Index known as the Repository of the Treasures* (*Kha byang gter gyi bang mdzod*), the apocalyptic features essentially revolve around the gradual degeneration of spiritual practice and the endemic spread of vices and other depravities. More specifically, the actual precise period coinciding with the revelation of the Treasure is identified with the fall of the House of Gungthang. Thus, in this *Index*, it is said:

*As to the time when these Treasures should appear,  
In five hundred years (from now), the power of the Secret Formulas will vanish:*

*Holy places will be destroyed,  
And Secret Formulas will be practiced in the cities and countryside;<sup>110</sup>  
Tantrikas will perform village rituals for ordinary folk;  
As food, one will eat the life-wind (of others);<sup>111</sup>  
These will be times when good fortune will be reduced to pieces  
And when the practice of Dharma no longer has power.  
Those living religiously will be ashamed (to do so),<sup>112</sup>  
While those who greatly refrain from decency<sup>113</sup> will indulge in vices and*

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depicted with his vulture feathers in his hair) in M. Boord, “The First Dorje Drak Rigdzin, Rigdzin Godemchen Ngodrub Gyeltsen” (<https://treasuryof-lives.org/biographies/view/The-First-Dorje-Drak-Rigdzin,-Rigdzin-Godemchen-Ngodrub-Gyeltsen/P5254>).

<sup>108</sup> See D. Jackson, “The Early History of Lo (Mustang) and Ngari”, p. 44.

<sup>109</sup> An important earthquake affected Gungthang in 1505 CE, which shows that the region is not immune to such phenomena. See Ambraseys and Jackson, “A note on early earthquakes in northern India and southern Tibet”, p. 578.

<sup>110</sup> I.e., publicly without respect for the samayas of secrecy.

<sup>111</sup> I.e., one will kill sentient beings to eat them.

<sup>112</sup> This means that those practicing the teachings of Dharma will be the target of mockery and verbal persecution from non-religious individuals.

<sup>113</sup> Dictionaries render *khrel 'dzem che ba* as “very modest”, which may be incorrect here. Rather, a literal understanding of the expression gives the meaning of “[those who] greatly (*che ba*) refrain (*'dzem*) from decency (*khrel*)” which actually fits in the

experience sufferings.

In particular, one descendant of Prince Mutri Tsenpo will appear in Mangyül Gungthang,<sup>114</sup>

But he shall fall among the populace of subjects, commoners, and those engaged in accidental vices.<sup>115</sup>

At that time, in the northern country of Thoyor Nakpo,

Before the mountain known as Riwo Trazang,

A noble one born in a Fire year will appear

And will subsequently reveal the four Dharmas.<sup>116</sup>

Another work entitled *The Lamp Clarifying the Itinerary Pathway* (*Lam byang gsal ba'i sgron ma*)<sup>117</sup> describes similar events whose advent indicates that it is high time for Rigdzin Gödem to reveal his Treasure. The text says:

When the lifetime comes down to fifty years,  
 The Mongol laws will fall into decay;  
 The religious law will be entirely destroyed;  
 The power of Secret Mantras will vanish, causing the spread of Dre spirits,  
 Gö demons, and elemental entities;  
 Nobles will indulge in robbery and pillage;  
 Chieftains will gorge themselves with sweet foods;  
 Fathers and sons will engage in family feuds;  
 Companions will lure (one another);

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context of a behavior consisting in living a debauched life that leads to the constant experience of suffering. Conversely, given the context of evident degeneration in both times and conduct, this line may actually mean that *even* those who are ordinarily very modest will devote themselves to debauchery.

<sup>114</sup> This refers to king bKra shis lde, the father of king Phun tshogs lde, who would eventually provide Gödem with unfortunately meager offerings for the Treasure substitutes (*gter tshab*).

<sup>115</sup> "Those engaged in accidental vices" translates *glo bur gyi sdig spyod rnams*. This obviously points to people who may not be *constantly* engaged in vices, but who let the worst of them take over, leading to temporary or accidental revolting behaviors. Such individuals are placed within the ranks of subjects and commoners who, during prosperous times, would likely respect kingship and other social values.

<sup>116</sup> P. 389: *gter 'di rnams 'byung ba'i dus tshod ni: lnga brgya tha ma la gsang sngags kyi nus [p. 390] pa yal te: chos 'khor 'joms: gsang sngags grong yul du spyod: sngags pa skye bo'i grong chog byed: zas su srog dbugs za ba: bskal (= skal) pa dum bur rtsod pa byed: chos la spyod dbang med pa'i dus 'byung ngo: su chos byed pa ngo tsha dang: khrel 'dzem che ba rnams sdig pa sdug bsngal la sbyor: khyad par mang yul gung thang du lha sras mu khri btsan po'i bu brgyud gcig 'byung ste: bran dang 'bangs dang glo bur gyi sdig spyod rnams kyi 'bangs su 'bebs so: de'i dus su byang tho yor nag po'i yul: ri bo bkra bzang zhes bya ba'i mdun du: skyes bu me'i lo pa gcig 'byung : de'i rjes chos bzhi po thon par 'gyur ro:.*

<sup>117</sup> This is a Treasure revealed by Nyang ral (*Nyang/Myang gi gter ma*), as quoted by Setön in his *Garland of Jewels* (*Rin chen phreng ba*, pp. 389-390).

*(Only) those (prompt to) speak a lot will be exalted;  
 Monks of higher status will die poisoned;  
 Stags will be butchered;  
 Pious ones will (focus on) making profits;  
 Monks will eat meat (and drink) chang;  
 Géshés will engage into quarreling activities;  
 Tantrikas will perform village rituals;  
 Empowerments will be conferred upon terribly vicious (people);  
 Secrets will be concretely revealed (openly);  
 Frost and hail will devastate (crops) throughout the year;  
 Epidemics will spread massively (all over the country);  
 As soon as this negative period comes up,  
 This means that the time has come to reveal the Treasure.<sup>118</sup>*

Another passage from *The Lamp Clarifying the Index of the Path* provides the actual date of discovery:<sup>119</sup>

*As a snowcap covers the peak of Riwo Trazang,  
 From the north, an army will dart like lightning (throughout) the valleys  
 of Mangyiül.*

*In the country of India, the Bodhi-Tree will tilt toward the south.  
 The stūpa of Kashmir (built by) Kaniṣka will be cracked on its north-east  
 side.*

*The Swayambūnāth stūpa in Nepal will tilt toward the north.  
 Thus, omens indicating non-virtue will appear.  
 Lightning will fall from the sky on the Scarlet Rock of Samyé.  
 When such (events) happen,  
 On the Rocky Mountain Similar to a Heap of Serpents,  
 The Treasure will appear in a year of the Horse.<sup>120</sup>*

<sup>118</sup> P. 390: *tshé tshad lnga bcu la song ba'i dus su: hor khrims cha'i nyams 'gro: chos khrims bstan (= gtan) nas bshig: gsang sngags kyi nus pa yal nas 'dre rgod 'byung po dar: mi chen jag 'joms byed: sde pa ar (= mngar) zas za: pha spun nam dme byed: snying grogs kyis bslu: dpung pa su mang kha brag (= spungs su mang kha drag): che btsun dug gis 'chi: sha ra ba gri ru gsod: btsun pa tshong khye (= khe) byed: dge slong sha chang za: dge bshes 'khrug las byed: sngags pa grong chog byed: dbang sdig po che la bskur: gsang ba dngos su ston: sad ser lo la rngam: nad rims khol bur g.yo: dus ngan de lta bu byung pa dang : gter de 'don pa'i dus [391] la babs pa lags so:.*

<sup>119</sup> A slightly different version of the prophecy has been translated by Jay Valentine (in a FCHNT internal working document, 2023, p. 24).

<sup>120</sup> P. 391: *ri bo bkra bzang gi rtse la zhwa dkon (= gyon): byang phyogs nas mang yul rong kha dmag glog ltar 'khyug: rgya dkar po'i yul du byang chub kyi shing bu lho ru yo: kha che'i mchod rten ka ni ka byang shar du ral: bal po'i 'phags pa shing kun gyi mchod rten byang phyogs su yo: mi dge ba'i ltas 'byung: bsam yas kyi brag dmar la nam mkha'i thog 'bab: de lta bu byung pa'i dus su: brag ri lto 'phye spungs pa 'dra ba la: lo rta'i lo la gter 'byung par 'gyur ro:.*

The year of the Horse is indeed 1366, the year that is commonly accepted as corresponding to the date of the actual discovery by Gödem of the *Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* and other Treasures in the same site. The first verse of the quote is interesting because it explains that Mount Riwo Trazang was at the time covered with a snowcap, which would only occur in winter. However, the discovery is repeatedly said to have happened in June of this year,<sup>121</sup> a period in which the summit of Riwo Trazang is generally devoid of snow. Therefore, the snowcap appears as a particular feature indicating the unusual circumstances that generally characterize Treasure discoveries.

At the end of the section devoted to the apocalyptic period of revelation, Setön briefly discusses the general chronology of the Northern Treasures enabling him to determine its *terminus ad quo* based on the actual, datable *terminus ad quem*. Thus, he states:

*It is reported that the Great Vidyādhara (Rigdzin Gödem) appeared six hundred and twenty years after Orgyen Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) went to subjugate the Rākṣasas in the south-west. The Great Vidyādhara retrieved the Treasure in the year of the Horse (1366) when he was thirty. Thus, six hundred and fifty years after Orgyen Chenpo departed for the south-west, (Gödem) discovered his great terma.*<sup>122</sup>

Therefore, subtracting six hundred and fifty years from 1366, one obtains the year 716 CE which is probably too early since Padmasambhava is supposed to have been invited during the reign of Trisong Detsen whose rule over Tibet lasted from 755 to 797 CE according to most chronologies. However, it is interesting to remark that this calculation still remains within credible limits, contrary to what one is generally confronted with in the *terma* literature.

## 6. The Five Repositories of the Zangzang Lhadrak Discovery and Further Conditions of Revelation

As we have seen above, the *termas* revealed by Rigdzin Gödem (in Zangzang Lhadrak)<sup>123</sup> are known under the collective appellation of the “Five Repositories” (*mdzod lnga*). They were found in a chest of rhinoceros hide (*bse sgrom*) divided into five parts: a central one and four

<sup>121</sup> On June 14th, 1366 according to Herweg, p. 291 n. 303.

<sup>122</sup> P. 391: *o rgyan rin po che lho nub srin po'i kha gnon la gshegs nas/ lo drug brgya dang nyi shu nas/ rig 'dzin chen po 'byon par gsungs la/ rig 'dzin chen pos dgung lo sum cu bzhes pa rta'i lo la gter bzhes pa yin pa/ de ltar na o rgyan rin po che lho nub la gshegs nas lo drug brgya dang lnga bcu nas gter chen spyen drangs pa yin nol.*

<sup>123</sup> On Mount Zangzang Lhadrak, see *supra*, section 2 of this chapter.

sections, dispatched in the four directions. Each of these sections makes up a repository containing a specific set of teachings. Thus, according to the *Root-Sādhana of the Knowledge-Holders* (*Rig 'dzin rtsa ba'i sgrub thabs*), these teachings are organized as follows:

*In the eastern direction, within the White Conch Repository,  
There is a statue of guru Vajrasattva  
And the practice (to perform) in the mode (characterizing) pacifying (activities).*

*In the southern direction, within the Golden Yellow Repository,  
There is a (statue of) the master (in the form) of the great and glorious Heruka  
And the practice (to perform) in his wrathful form for increasing (activities).*

*In the western direction, within the Red Copper Repository,  
There is a (statue of) the master (in the form) of the Protector Amitāyus  
And the practice (to perform) in the mode of the subjugating (activities).*

*In the northern direction, within the Black Iron Repository,  
There is a (statue of) the master (in the form) of the Blood-Drinking Heruka  
And the practice (to perform) in the mode of the wrathful (activities).*

*In the central direction, within the Brown Heart Repository,  
There is a (statue of) the master (in the form) of the Emanation Body of the Knowledge-Holder<sup>124</sup>  
And the practice of secret methods.<sup>125</sup>*

The contents of the Five Repositories are not systematically described

<sup>124</sup> I.e. Padmasambhava.

<sup>125</sup> Se ston, *Byang gter spyi bcings*, pp. 408-409: *shar phyogs dung mdzod dkar po na: bla ma rdo rje sems dpa' sku: zhi ba'i tshul du sgrub pa yod: lho phyogs gser mdzod ser po nas: bla ma dpal chen he ru ka: rgyas pa khro bo'i tshul du sgrub pa yod: nub phyogs zangs mdzod dmar po na: bla ma mgon po tshe dpag med: dbang gi tshul du sgrub pa yod: byang phyogs lcags mdzod nag po na: bla ma khrag 'thung he ru ka: drag po'i tshul du sgrub pa yod: dbus kyi snying mdzod smug po na: bla ma rig 'dzin sprul pa'i sku: gsang ba thabs* (p. 409) *kyi sgrub pa yod:*. The original text is actually slightly different and reads as follows (p. 114; parts in bold show the variant reading): *shar phyogs dung mdzod dkar po na: bla ma rdo rje sems dpa'i sku: zhi ba'i tshul du sgrub thabs yod: lho phyogs gser mdzod ser po na: bla (missing: ma) dpal chen he ru ka: khro bo'i tshul du sgrub thabs yod: nub kyi zangs mdzod dmar po na: bla ma mgon po tshe dpag med: dbang gi tshul du sgrub thabs yod: byang phyogs lcags mdzod nag po na: bla ma khrag 'thung he ru ka: drag po'i tshul du sgrub thabs yod: dbus kyi snying mdzod smug po na: bla ma rig 'dzin sprul pa'i sku: gsang ba thugs kyi sgrub thabs yod:*.

in an identical manner in the various sources that mention them. For instance, in Setön's *General Presentation of the Northern Treasures* (*Byang gter spyi bcings*, p. 409)—quoting the *Seven Testaments* (*Zhal chems bdun pa*)<sup>126</sup>—, they are described as follows:

- the White Conch Repository in the eastern direction contains teachings about the Fruit (*'bras bu'i chos*) that should enable the practitioner to reach Buddhahood in a single lifetime; it comprises one root-tantra (*rtsa rgyud*) and up to 101 precepts (*man ngag*);
- the Yellow Golden Repository in the southern direction contains teachings about approach and accomplishment (*bsnyen sgrub*),<sup>127</sup> including *sādhanas* that dispel obstacles occurring during the practice of the Path; it comprises ten root-*sādhanas* of the Yidam, as well as up to 101 precepts;
- the Red Copper Repository in the western direction contains quintessential teachings associated with the specific methods of the profound Path (*zab lam*), with one root-text (*rtsa ba*) and up to 101 precepts;
- the Black Iron Repository in the northern direction contains teachings about black magic, including twenty-one *sādhanas*, as well as up to 101 precepts; and
- the Brown Heart Repository in the center contains 103 scrolls (*shog ril*) that should be given to qualified vessels but kept secret from those who broke their *samayas*.<sup>128</sup>

In addition, in the stomach of the poisonous snake statue that was among the artifacts that Gödem came across with during his revelation,<sup>129</sup> there were two *sādhanas* and a testament (*zhal chems*).<sup>130</sup>

Further details are given about the general functions of the repositories placed in the four directions in a work that is apparently no longer available, entitled *The Testament known as the Heart Quintessence* (*Zhal chems thugs kyi yang tig*).<sup>131</sup> According to Setön who quoted this

<sup>126</sup> Probably lost. See Schiller, "Das Studienbuch des 5. Yol mo sPrul sku", p. 827 n. 14.

<sup>127</sup> Approach and accomplishment are the main practices performed in the context of the Development Stage (*bskyed rim*) in Mahāyoga.

<sup>128</sup> This categorization echoes that of the unwritten oral transmission (*yi ge med pa'i snyan brgyud*) briefly mentioned below, toward the end of *The Prophetic Steps of the Transmission* that is translated at the end of this section.

<sup>129</sup> On this artefact, see section 3 above. See also, Herweg, *The Hagiography of Rig 'dzin Rgod kyi ldem 'phru can*, p. 96.

<sup>130</sup> In each of these general descriptions, texts titles are unfortunately not systematically provided.

<sup>131</sup> See Valentine, "Missing Texts of Historical Value to the Northern Treasure Tradition".

Testament in his *General Presentation of the Northern Treasures* (p. 412), the functions of these literary corpuses were explained by Padmasambhava to the king (Trisong Détsen) in the following terms:

*O King, to increase your own power,  
There is a treasury of wealth in the Red Copper Repository.  
To protect you from obstructing enemies and obstacles,  
There is the precious Treasure of black magic in the Black Iron Repository.  
To attain the supreme and ordinary siddhis,  
There is a treasury of approach and accomplishment in the Yellow Golden Repository.  
Since life is an illusion and the world a delusion,  
If you do not obtain the quintessence of the Bodhi in this life,  
It will be extremely difficult to obtain (another) human body afterwards;  
(Therefore) the method for accomplishing the quintessence of the Bodhi in this life  
Is in the White Conch Repository, which will confer you Buddhahood directly in your hands.<sup>132</sup>*

We have seen above that these teachings were excavated by Rigdzin Gödem in accordance with very specific conditions. For instance, in *The Three Kinds of Lamps* (*sGron ma rnam gsum*), the emphasis is on the fact that all signs will have to be complete during the process of revelation. This text thus says:<sup>133</sup>

*When the fortunate one<sup>134</sup> encounters these precepts,  
The blessings of Padma's Compassion will naturally arise  
And at that time the outer, inner, and secret signs will be complete;  
He shall encounter them only once, as actual signs or dreams.<sup>135</sup>*

The outer, inner, and secret signs are not discussed in this text, but they are laconically explained in *The Seven Quintessential Indexes* (*sNying*

<sup>132</sup> P. 412: *rgyal po khyed kyis mnga' thang rgyas pa'i phyir/ / zangs mdzod dmar po nor gyi bang mdzod yod/ / khyed kyid dgra bgegs bar chad bsrung ba'i phyir/ / lcags mdzod nag po drag sngags gter gyi mdzod/ / mchog dang thung mong dangos grub thob bya'i phyir/ / gser mdzod ser po bsnyen sgrub bang mdzod yin/ / tshe 'di sgyu ma 'jig rten 'khrul pa 'di/ / tshe 'dir byang chub snying po ma thob na/ / phyis nas mi lus thob pa shin tu dka' / / tshe 'dir byang chub snying po sgrub pa'i thabs/ / dung mdzod dkar po sangs rgyas lag bcangs yin/.*

<sup>133</sup> P. 409: *skal ldan man ngag 'di dang 'phrad pa'i tshe: padma'i thugs rje'i byin rlabs shugs las [p. 410]'byung : phyi nang gsang ba'i rtags de dus der rdzogs: brda dang rmi lam tshul du lan gcig mjal:.*

<sup>134</sup> I.e., Rig 'dzin rgod ldem.

<sup>135</sup> This last verse simply means that the circumstances will be met only once and that the signs will appear in a symbolic manner or during dreams.

*byang bdun pa*), which reads:

*When first encountering these precepts,  
As outer signs, rains will fall from the sky and rainbows will radiate;  
As inner signs, you<sup>136</sup> will disengage from deluded activities and experience pure visions;  
As secret signs, a faith in me will naturally arise (in you) by itself:  
As soon as these three signs are perfected within a single day,  
You shall encounter these Heart precepts (of mine), of Padmasambhava.<sup>137</sup>*

The very night these signs were completed, further extraordinary events took place. According to *The Great Symbol (brDa chen)*:<sup>138</sup>

*When contemplating Mount Trazang in the north,  
We<sup>139</sup> saw three extraordinary signs (coming) from the powerful direction (of the sun),  
Symbolizing the radiant luminous Citadel of Padmasambhava.<sup>140</sup>*

In the original history of the revelation he made in Riwo Trazang (as translated in section 3 above), the first notable sign was the display of a ruby-colored sky in which Gödem saw exceptional omens of various sizes, manifesting as pure visions. There was also an earthquake, as well as what he describes as “wrathful omens linked to the elements.” In Setön’s understanding, these omens are styled as “violent sounds” (*drag po’i sgra*). The whole event is summarized in three verses in *The Great Symbol*:

*During the evening, throughout the entire sky,  
Great wonders endowed with a wrathful power (arose),  
Symbolizing the subjugation of demonic hordes with a swift and colossal force.<sup>141</sup>*

<sup>136</sup> This is Padmasambhava addressing rDo rje bdud ‘joms, the future Rig ‘dzin rgod ldem.

<sup>137</sup> *Ib.*, p. 409: *dang po man ngag ‘di dang ‘phrad pa’i tshé: phyi rtags mkha’ la char ‘bab ‘ja’ tshon ‘tsher: nang rtags ‘khrul pa’i las ldog dag snang ‘char: gsang ba bdag la dad pa’i rang shugs skye: rtags gsum nyin zhag gcig la rdzogs pa dang : padma’i thugs kyi man ngag ‘di dang ‘phrad.*

<sup>138</sup> A longer version of the title is given in Herweg, *op. cit.*, p. 94 where he refers to it as the *brDa chen bco bryad ma* and styles it as a source that it still unidentified. The quotes come from Se ston’s *General Presentation of the Northern Treasures*.

<sup>139</sup> The speaker is Rig ‘dzin rgod ldem accompanied by his attendants.

<sup>140</sup> *Ib.*, p. 409: *byang phyogs ri bo bkra bzang mthong ba’i tshel/ ldbang gi phyogs nas ngo mtshar rtags gsum mthong/ lpadma ‘od kyi gzhäl yas gsal ba’i brdal.*

<sup>141</sup> *Ib.*, p. 410: */srod kyi dus su bar snang thams cad la/ /ya mtshan chen po drag po’i rtul shugs can//myur la stobs che bdud dpung ‘dul ba’i brda’/.*

The conditions for the revelation of the Four or Five Repositories were prophesized in several works of the *Northern Treasures* collection, starting with a very short text entitled *The Prophetic Steps of the Transmission* (*Lung byang bka'i them*s) whose translation is given immediately below. It is a particularly good example of its kind, in which Padmasambhava encapsulates in a few verses [1] the situation as it unfolded in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and [2] the later 14<sup>th</sup> century events related to the revelation of the texts and some of the restrictions that apply to a specific series of these. The text runs as follows:

The Prophetic Steps of the Transmission  
[*Lung byang bka'i them*s]

Homage to the Wisdom deities of the Three Bodies!<sup>142</sup>  
I, Padmasambhava of Oḍḍiyāna,  
Have turned the Wheel of the teachings of the Secret Formulas<sup>143</sup>  
In the barbarian kingdom of Tibet,  
Wherever there are beings to be subjugated through aspiration.

I have revealed the unified flows of the Secret Formulas,  
The vast and profound cycle of Tantras  
That brings accomplishment in a single life<sup>144</sup>  
To the sentient beings living in the present time.

At the end of five hundred years in the future,  
The disciples of the Bodhisattvas will vanish,  
The revelation of the Buddhas will reach its end,  
This being the time when the rope of Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa is cut  
off.<sup>145</sup>

In order to benefit numerous migrating beings

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<sup>142</sup> The Three Bodies are the Absolute Body (*chos sku*), the Enjoyment Body (*longs sku*), and the Emanation Body (*sprul sku*). The exalted forms that are associated with the first two are respectively Samantabhadra and Vajrasattva. In the present context, the third figure cannot be Padmasambhava since he is a *rig 'dzin* and not a divine manifestation *stricto sensu*, and since he would therefore pay homage to himself,— a practice that, while not unheard of, certainly sounds awkward. Rather, given the context of the Great Perfection, the third Body may be associated here with Vajrapāṇi or even Garab Dorje (also a human *rig 'dzin* and not a divine figure though).

<sup>143</sup> These teachings are those of Vajrayāna. More precisely, according to the tradition, Padmasambhava would have taught in Tibet instructions dealing with Mahā, Anu, and Atiyoga Tantras.

<sup>144</sup> This is generally limited to Atiyoga.

<sup>145</sup> This rope is that of the Dharma, guiding deluded saṃsāric beings to the ultimate nirvāṇic state of a Buddha.

Through the Compassion of my aspiration prayers,  
I shall appear in upper Gungthang<sup>146</sup>  
Before the last (representative) of the royal lineage.

At the place protected by the lineage of the Dharma king,  
This precious Treasure gathering the Four Repositories  
Will be hidden halfway up of the Zangzang Lhadrak (mount).

An individual possessing the karmic connection  
Will appear, coming from the eastern direction.  
At that time, the Treasure Lords should entrust him  
With this precious Treasure of mine.

The Treasure of the four collections of the Four Repositories  
Will be revealed by the coming of seven destined sons,  
But the unwritten cycle of the oral transmission  
Should not be disseminated to others.

If a few fortunate destined ones show up,  
It should be revealed by whispering it into their ears.  
But it is inappropriate to write it down.

If one is afraid of forgetting it,  
It can be copied with gold on pure blue paper,  
Inserted in one's pocket and kept hidden (there).  
It should be practiced during one's lifetime.

But when the time of death comes,  
The text should be swallowed,<sup>147</sup>  
Or purified (by being thrown into) water or fire.

If this ultimate, profound teaching of mine  
Is copied as notes on paper leaves  
By unqualified individuals and  
If they transmit it without having practiced it,  
May the Yakṣa with blood-locks  
Destroy the body and vitality of these samaya breakers!  
May the Yakṣa with a hog head

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<sup>146</sup> Manifesting as Rig 'dzin rgod ldem, the regent of this *gter ma* revelation.

<sup>147</sup> Translating literally *rang gi khong du mid* should be exactly rendered as "to be swallowed within oneself" to make sure one clearly understands that the dying yogi is meant to eat the text by chewing and swallowing it. In my understanding, this does not turn it into an artifact that liberates upon tasting (*tshor grol*), rather, it ensures that the copy of the text does not fall into the wrong hands. This last condition appears to be so important that it is actually preferable to throw the book into a river or a fire to avoid it becoming the possession of unqualified vessels.

Cut off their limbs with a razor!  
 Samaya! *Idante Naraken!*<sup>148</sup>  
 Seal! Seal! Seal! Virtues!<sup>149</sup>

### 7. Nyingma Perspective on Obstacles to the Revelation of Treasures

While the discovery of Treasures is generally regarded as a highly auspicious sign, especially for those attending a “public revelation” (*khrom gter*), as well as for the immediate environment of the Treasure site (*gter gnas*) and the local population, situations (lit. “defects”) resulting from not revealing Treasures (*ma thon pa'i skyon*) are particular causes of ominous events. Thus, when the circumstances surrounding a revelation fall under the power of demonic forces (*bdud*), the Treasure Revealer will potentially lack the specific “good fortune” necessary to carry out his revelation. From a wider perspective, this is often portrayed in apocalyptic literature as a dramatic state of affairs leading to the arising of intense sufferings for Tibet and its inhabitants. In such a context, both the “king of Tibet” (*bod kyi rje*) and the population will face dire obstacles. To illustrate this situation, in his *Precious Garland* (*Rin chen phreng ba*), Setön first quotes a passage from *The Seven Topics of the Crucial Precepts of the Heart Drops* (*sNying tig gnad kyi man ngag don bdun*), a Treasure revealed by *tertön* Zangpo Drakpa, in which it is said:

<sup>148</sup> “May they burn in hell!”

<sup>149</sup> P. 209: *Lung byang bka'i them s bzhugs so*: (p. 210) :*sku gsum ye shes lha la phyag 'tshal lo: o rgyan pad+ma 'byung gnas ngas: mtha' 'khob bod kyi rgyal khams su: smon lam gdul bya yod pa'i sar: gsang sngags chos kyi 'khor lo bskor: da lta gnas pa'i sems can la: tshe gcig grub pa'i rtags thon pa'i: rgya che gting zab rgyud kyi skor: gsang sngags chu bo 'dus pa bstan: ma 'ongs lnga brgya tha ma la: byang chub sems dpa'i gdul bya yal: sangs rgyas bstan pa dus mthar thug: 'khor 'das dpyang thag chad pa'i dus: nga yi smon lam thugs rje yis: 'gro ba mang po'i don phyir dang : rgyal po'i gdung rgyud tha ma la: gung thang stod du 'byung bar 'gyur: chos rgyal gdung rgyud skyob ba'i sar: mdzod bzhi 'dus pa'i gter mdzod 'di: zang zang lha brag sked la sbas: las 'phro yod (p. 211) pa'i gang zag gcig: shar gyi phyogs nas 'byung bar 'gyur: de tshe nga yi gter mdzod 'di: gter bdag rnams kyis de la gtod: mdzod bzhi 'i yi ge bzhi yi gter: las can bu bdun 'byung bas ston: snyan brgyud yi ge med pa'i skor: gzhan la spel bar mi bya'o: gal te las can re re tsam: 'byung srid rna bar shub bus ston: yi ge bri bar mi rung ngo : gal te brjed pas 'jigs dogs na: mthing shog dag la gser gyis bri: gong khug nang du bcug la sba: rang rang tshe 'dir nyams su long : gal te 'chi ba'i dus byung na: dpe de rang gi khong du mid: yang na chu 'am me la sbyongs: mthar thug nga yi chos zab 'di: snod ma yin pa'i gang zag gis: shog shog dag la zin bris byas: nyams su mi len lag brgyud byed: gnod sbyin khrag gi ral can gyis: (p. 212) dam nyams de yi lus srog khrol: yaksha phag mgo can gyis ni: de yi yan lag spu gris btubs: sa ma ya: i dan te na ra kan: rgya rgya rgya: dge'o.*

*If, having fallen under the power of the demons, (the tertön) lacks the good fortune to reveal Treasures,  
The Tibetan king and his people will experience unbearable sufferings.*<sup>150</sup>

The impossibility of revealing a Treasure is thus linked to: 1. the power of demons disturbing both the environment and sentient beings; and 2. the lack of good fortune affecting both the Treasure Revealer and the population that would otherwise benefit spiritually and materially from the Treasure itself.<sup>151</sup> Demons will disturb the environment by causing havoc in a wide range of areas, such as generating untimely rains and frost, hailstorms, earthquakes, mudslides, and so forth. They will also cause epizootics, lethal diseases in both cattle and humans, thus creating an imbalance in the five elements (in both their outer and inner modalities), etc.<sup>152</sup> Breaks of samayas (*dam tshig*) among those assisting the Treasure Revealer will similarly render the discovery purely and simply impossible.<sup>153</sup> Entrusting the Treasure to wrathful protectors is generally thought to ensure that demonic forces will not cause obstacles to the revelation in general or to the actual practice of those following the related tradition. As explained by Tulku Thondup,<sup>154</sup> the protectors are often the chiefs of these demonic forces, and the minor entities in their entourage generally do not disobey the orders of their rulers.<sup>155</sup>

A prophetic narrative very similar in theme to that of *The Seven Topics* is recorded in *The Lamp Clarifying the Itinerary Pathway* (*Lam byang gsal ba'i sgron ma*, a Treasure revealed by Nyang-rel) in which it is stated:

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<sup>150</sup> As quoted by Setön in his *Precious Garland* (*Rin chen phreng ba*), p. 391: *gal te bdud kyi dbang du gyur nas gter thon pa'i skal ba dang mi ldan na: bod kyi rje 'bangs bzod pa'i thabs med pa'i sdug bsngal la sbyor rol.*

<sup>151</sup> The negative influence from the demons is to be seen as the main cause (*rgyu*), while the lack of good fortune is considered a secondary cause (*rkyen*).

<sup>152</sup> On the five outer and inner elements, see chapters 19 and 20 of *The Tantra of the Natural Emergence of Awareness* (*Rig pa rang shar gyi rgyud*; see M. Smith, *The Self-Arisen Vidyā Tantra*, pp. 131-138).

<sup>153</sup> In such cases, the traditional literature on the subject explains that the door of the Treasure (*gter sgo*) will simply vanish or the Protectors of the Treasure (*gter srung*) will render it invisible. Likewise, the surroundings of the Treasure site (*gter gnas*) might become a warzone, a region facing repeated pandemics, etc. In some instances, the very life of the *gter ston* might be at risk. The attitude of the public witnessing the revelation is also crucial. On this last topic, see S. Hanna, "Vast as the Sky", *passim*.

<sup>154</sup> *Hidden Teachings of Tibet*, p. 114.

<sup>155</sup> On these Protectors, see *ibid.*, pp. 243-244 n. 158. They are generally defined as *gter srung* (Treasure Protectors) or *gter bdag* (Lord of the Treasures); see Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, p. 254.

If, at that time, demons become victorious,  
 Sentient beings will not possess merits and consequently,  
 If the great Revealer is not endowed with the good fortune to extract  
 (Treasures),  
 Then a Chinese Gongpo spirit, known as Jungpo Nyingkün,<sup>156</sup> will come  
 to Tibet:  
 He will enter the hearts of the powerful leaders of Tibet,  
 As well as those of their armed forces.  
 In order to bring the merits of sentient beings to exhaustion,  
 The teaching of poisoned weapons will be spread by (fiends) masquerading  
 as heart-companions  
 To all those with great merits,  
 Those of great wealth, as well as  
 All those cherishing the welfare of sentient beings in general.  
 People will be given to murdering,  
 They will plunder one another's power and riches,  
 They all will strive to engage in vicious activities and  
 Non (virtuous) practices will occur suddenly.  
 Sentient beings will kill, overpower, deceive and rob one another,  
 And will engage solely in sinful deeds.<sup>157</sup>

In the view of this apocalyptic narrative, the “teaching of poisoned weapons” is nothing other than “wrong teachings” that will only bring obstacles, sins, sicknesses, and other misfortunes.<sup>158</sup> Such teachings

<sup>156</sup> “He who steals the heart-essence of the elemental forces” (“Byung po snying rkun). Elemental forces (*byung po*) correspond to the *bhūta* entities of the Indian folklore who affect sentient beings by causing imbalance in their inner elements (through sending illnesses, and so forth). On the Gongpo (*gong po*) spirits, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-285.

<sup>157</sup> As quoted by Setön in his *Precious Garland*, p. 391: *gal te de'i dus su bdud kha rgyal 'gro bas: sems can bsod nams dang mi ldan pas: gter chen thon [392] pa'i skal ba dang mi ldan na: bod du rgya'i 'gong po 'byung po snying rkun zhes pa yong ste: de bod kyi mi dbang che ba: dmag dpung che ba rnams kyi snying du zhugs te: sems can gyi bsod nams zad par byed pa'i phyir: mi bsod nams che ba: longs spyod che ba: sems can spyis don la gces pa kun la: grogs snying du rdzus pas dug mtshon gyi bstan pa dar te: srog la hur thums byed: mnga' thang longs spyod la 'phrog res byed: thams cad sdig pa'i las la brtson: mi spyod glo bur du 'gyur: sems can gcig gis gcig gsod pa dang : 'joms pa dang : bslu ba dang : 'phrog pa dang : sdig pa'i las sha stag spyod par 'gyur ro: zhes gsungs sol.*

<sup>158</sup> Wrong teachings, based on wrong or incorrect Views (*log lta*), have been the subject of intense discussions in Tibet. In general, a wrong teaching is always that of the “others” (*gzhan rnams*), who may be either Hindu heretics, Bönpos, or even Buddhists from another school of thought. Dzogchen has not been spared in this regard, sometimes with good reasons. Indeed, individuals unable to understand the distinction between Dzogchen (as a pure a perfect state) from the Dzogchenpa (as a still impure and imperfect practitioner) often deviate into wrong views, essentially by having their View fall into their Conduct (*spyod pa'i phyogs su lta ba 'chor*

may appear authentic at first, but their practice ultimately results in disasters and harm, even to those with great merits. This underscores why authenticity is crucial in the context of Treasure revelations. In general, *tertön* themselves must be authenticated by unquestionable authorities. Most of those who have studied this literary genre are familiar with the story of Chogyur Lingpa (1829–1870) visiting Kongtrül Lodrö Thayé (1813–1899) to have him check his Treasures and being subsequently sent to Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo (1820–1892) for final approval.<sup>159</sup>

From the perspective of those involved in the Treasure tradition, the tragic events described in the last part of the above prophecy definitely demonstrate the importance of *termas*, not only for spiritual purposes but also for society at large. The fact that a special location—a Treasure sanctuary (*gter gnas*)—houses a *terma* often ensures happiness and good crops for the whole region. This might be a cause of contention between locals and Treasure revealers who may be seen as thieves (*rkun ma*), since revealing a Treasure could deprive the place of its favorable status and situation. Also, Treasure Protectors (*gter srung*) and Treasure Lords (*gter bdag*), who are generally of a wrathful nature, must be respected and often demand the *tertön* to replace the *terma* with a substitute (*gter tshab*) of at least equal value. In numerous instances, the *tertön* is authorized only to “borrow” and copy the texts before returning them to their guardians. In other cases, he may become the owner of the original yellow scrolls (*shog ser*) containing the teachings and may replace them with jewels and precious substances.<sup>160</sup>

## 8. A Short Note on the Classification of Treasures

Still in his *General Presentation of the Northern Treasures*, Sétön explains the specific nature of this revelatory tradition according to eight main topics, namely: 1. where the Treasures were hidden; 2. for whom they were hidden; 3. the prophecies regarding the individuals who were to reveal them; 4. the time when they were to be revealed; 5. the defects resulting from not excavating them; 6. the qualities resulting from discovering them; 7. how they should be taught; and 8. what are their contents.

Among these topics, he first discusses the literary category of *termas*. He explains that, in general, within the system of hidden Treasures,

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*ba*). Lama Sowa (12<sup>th</sup> c.?) is quite a paradigmatic figure on this issue. See Achard, *Wrong Views about Dzogchen*, pp. 98-100.

<sup>159</sup> Orgyen Tobgyal Rinpoche, *The Life of Chokgyur Lingpa*, p. 4.

<sup>160</sup> Sometimes even just grains if the *gter ston* is poor.

there exist several categories of *Ter* (*gTer*), such as:

- great Treasures (*gter chen*),<sup>161</sup>
- minor Treasures (*gter phran*),
- arch-minor Treasures (*gter yang phran*),
- Treasures of the Heart (*thugs gter*), as well as
- Treasures connected to a profound Oral Transmission (*snyan brgyud zab mo'i gter*).<sup>162</sup>

He further adds that Treasures can also be divided according to the following groupings:

- religious Treasures (*chos gter*),<sup>163</sup>
- wealth Treasures (*nor gter*),
- material Treasures (*rdzas gter*),
- Treasures containing sacred substances (*dam rdzas kyi gter*), and so forth.

In Guru Chöwang's *Inventory Listing of the Treasure Teachings* (*gTer chos bka' rtsi them byang*), the categories of Treasures that are enumerated are:

- royal master Treasures (*rgyal po'i bla gter*),
- ordinary minor Treasures (*thun mong gter phran*),
- profound Treasures (*zab gter*),
- support-Treasures (*rten gter*),
- local Treasures or Treasures containing objects (*yul gter*), depending on how one interprets the meaning of *yul*,
- water Treasures (*chu gter*),
- wealth Treasures (*nor gter*),

<sup>161</sup> It would seem that these great Treasures are identical with the *rgyal po'i bla gter* that are mentioned in Gu ru Chos dbang's *gTer chos bka' rtsi them byang* (quoted in *Byang gter chos skor rnams kyi spyi bcings rin chen 'phreng ba*, p. 6). Later in the text (p. 7), the author quotes his own prophetic work in which he explains that great Treasures (*gter chen*) are revealed by Emanations Bodies (*sprul pa'i sku*), while minor Treasures are excavated by "fortunate ones with the proper karmic connection" (*las 'phro can*).

<sup>162</sup> *Ib.*, p. 5.

<sup>163</sup> This expression can be used and understood as "religious Treasures" when comparing it to other kinds of Treasures such as those containing material wealth or special substances. It can also be used when contrasting this particular kind of Treasures with those known as Bönpo Treasures (*bon gter*), in which case *chos gter* should be understood more precisely as Dharmic Treasures

- wood Treasures (*shing gter*),
- Dharmic Treasures (*chos gter*),
- Bön Treasures (*bon gter*), etc.<sup>164</sup>

The concealment of these Treasures is generally presented as a consequence of the limited positive karmic propensities of beings, so that the Treasures themselves were aimed at “better times”, etc., while actually starting to appear during what is known as a period of degeneration.<sup>165</sup> As a matter of fact, from a more general perspective, this concealment is viewed as ensuring the prolonged duration of the teachings of the Buddhas and as promoting the welfare of sentient beings during degenerate times.<sup>166</sup> During such times, Emanation Bodies (*sprul pa'i sku*) act as regents (*rgyal tshab*) of the Buddha’s teachings, revealing numerous Treasures and thereby prolonging the duration of the Dharma in Tibet. According to Guru Chöwang,<sup>167</sup> the specific locations where *termas* were hidden (supposedly in the 8<sup>th</sup> century) included rocky mountains (*ri brag*), temples (*gtsug lag khang*), stūpas (*mchod rten*), places marked with a specific sign (*sa mtshan*),<sup>168</sup> great trees (*shing chen*), large boulders (*pha bong*), palaces (*rgyal khab*), caverns or holes on the ground (*sa phug*), and so forth.

One should note that in Sétön’s presentation of Treasures, there is no mention of the expression *dgongs gter* in the section explaining the various categories of *termas*.<sup>169</sup> It is an interesting compound that is often misunderstood and consequently mistranslated. In Western literature, it is generally rendered as “mind treasures”<sup>170</sup> or even “mental

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<sup>164</sup> *Ib.*, p. 6.

<sup>165</sup> As compared to what is retrospectively envisioned as the “golden age” of the first introduction of Buddhism in the 8<sup>th</sup> century in Central Tibet.

<sup>166</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 5-6. Such a dark age is described as a period in the future (i.e., the future viewed from the perspective of the 8<sup>th</sup> century) when the Revelation of the Buddhas nears its end, when the negative powers of the demons (*bdud*) are strong and when non-virtuous activities spread in multiple ways (*ib.*, p. 5). In the Rangjung Yeshe dictionary (under *snyigs ma'i dus*), such a period is described as “the fourth or degenerate age of the aeon which is suited for the practice of the Unsurpassed Yogatantras”.

<sup>167</sup> Quoted on *ib.*, p. 6.

<sup>168</sup> Such signs might be a vajra, a cross or double-vajra, a svāstika, etc.

<sup>169</sup> On page 7, the verse *dgongs pa zab mo gter du sbas* (“[My] Contemplation was hidden in profound Treasures”) does not relate to *dgongs gter* but rather refers to the Contemplation state (*dgongs pa*) of Padmasambhava (not of a *gter ston*).

<sup>170</sup> See *inter alia*, A. Wallace, *Dūdjom Lingpa’s Visions of the Great Perfection*, pp. 36, 39, 92; E.P. Kunsang, *Blazing Splendor*, pp. 53, 248, etc.; O. Lavolé, *gTer ma as Timely Tradition*, p. 76; G. Dorje & M. Kapstein, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. xxv, 518, and 802; M. Akester, *The Life of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo*, p. x, 24, 35 and so forth.

treasures".<sup>171</sup> However, "mind treasures" would correspond to "*sems kyi gter*" which, as anyone well acquainted with the system of Treasures would admit, is anything but a Treasure (*gter*) retrieved from the state of Contemplation (*dgongs pa*). Rather, such a "mind treasure" would rely on passions (*nyon mongs*) affecting the ordinary mind (*sems*), instead of depending on the natural display of Wisdoms (*ye shes*) that characterizes Contemplation itself. Thus, a *dgongs gter* is a Treasure that arises in the continuum of the *tertön* while the latter remains in the state of Contemplation (*dgongs pa*), not in the contrived condition of the ordinary mind (*sems*).




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<sup>171</sup> J. Gyatso, *Apparitions of the Self*, pp. 54, 92.

## Chapter II

### The History of the *Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* as Portrayed in Jamyang Sönam Gyeltsen's *Garland of Jewels*

**T**he first volume of the *Compilation of Northern Treasures* (*Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*) contains an interesting proto-historical work dealing with the origins, revelation and early transmission of the central Treasure cycle of *Jangter* known as *The Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* (*Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*). This text has been composed by Jamyang Sönam Gyeltsen<sup>1</sup> and is entitled *The History of the Lineage, the Garland of Jewels* (*brGyud pa'i lo rgyus nor bu'i 'phreng ba*).<sup>2</sup> The narrative given in the text is rather classical but it is also a departure from similar works in terms of several details and transmission schemes. In general, the history of cycles belonging to the Precepts Section (*Man ngag sde*) of Dzogchen is organized according to three main lineages of transmission:

1. the Contemplative Transmission of the Victorious Ones (*rgyal ba dgongs brgyud*),
2. the Symbolic Transmission of Knowledge-Holders (*rig 'dzin brda rgyud*), and
3. the Oral Transmission of Great Beings (*gang zag snyan brgyud*).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On this personage, see appendix 5, "A Line of Transmission of the *dGongs pa zang thal* according to the *History of the Lineage known as the Garland of Gems*". The identification with the well-known *sa skya* master of the same name is problematic since the dates that are traditionally attributed to him (1563–1617) conflict with the chronology he himself introduces at the end of his work.

<sup>2</sup> See the bibliography *in fine* under the name of 'Jam dbyangs bSod nams rgyal mtshan.

<sup>3</sup> This is for instance the scheme followed by Klong chen pa (1308–1364) in several of his works. See *inter alia*, his *Lo rgyus rin po che'i phreng ba*, in the *Bla ma yang tig*. It is the same in the *dGongs pa zang thal*: see for example, Rig 'dzin rgod ldem, *Yid ches brgyud pa'i lo rgyus stong thun gyi spyi chings chen mo*, p. 6. According to Dūdjom Rinpoche (and the sources he uses), the three transmissions respectively correspond to the lineages of Victorious Ones, bodhisattvas, and yogins. See Dūdjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School*, p. 447. The first line of transmission is defined as "Contemplative" because it was given through the state of Contemplation (*dgongs pa*), without uttering a single word. The second line is described as "Symbolic" or

This of course also applies to the present text except that these lines of transmission are not precisely defined and do not follow with accuracy the details of the traditional history as they are for instance recorded in other *Heart Drops (sNying thig)* cycles. There are also several elements that will certainly seem unusual to readers reasonably accustomed to the “standard” histories of the Precepts Section, as we shall see below.

I have divided the following summary of Sönam Gyeltsen’s text in 10 sections, namely:

1. the Contemplative Transmission of the Buddhas;
2. the entrustment of the teachings to Garab Dorje, Indra, and Tröma Nakmo;
3. the transmission given to Mañjuśrīmitra;
4. the transmission given to Śrī Siṃha;
5. the advent of Vimalamitra, Padmasambhava, and Vairocana;
6. the entrustment of the teachings during Imperial Tibet;<sup>4</sup>
7. the initial Treasure discovery of Zangpo Drakpa;
8. Rigdzin Gödem’s revelation from Zangzang Lhadrak;<sup>5</sup>
9. the defense of the Northern Treasures; and
10. further lineage holders.<sup>6</sup>

### *1. The Contemplative Transmission of the Buddhas*

In the palace of the Absolute Space, i.e., in the utterly pure sanctuary of Akaniṣṭha, the primordial Buddha “Immutable Light”,<sup>7</sup> also known as the glorious Samantabhadra, was staying in the state of Contemplation (*dgongs pa*), free from arising, abiding and ceasing, beyond the two

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transmitted through symbols (*brdas brgyud pa*) because Knowledge-Holders (*rig ’dzin*, corresponding to the category of bodhisattvas in Dūdjom Rinpoche’s *The Nyingma School* referred to above) used specific symbols to illustrate the natural state and transmit the knowledge associated with it. Then, the third line is that of “individuals” (*gang zag*) who used oral transmission (*snyan brgyud*) to communicate that knowledge and all its related secret precepts. We will see below that other modes of transmission are used in the revealed literature. See Tulku Thondup, *Hidden Teachings of Tibet*, p. 102 *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> The sections 2 to 6 cover the Symbolic Transmission of the Knowledge-Holders.

<sup>5</sup> On Zang zang lha brag, see *supra*, chapter 1, section 2.

<sup>6</sup> The following is a detailed summary of *The Garland of Jewels*.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Od mi ‘gyur ba. This name of the primordial Buddha is like a code referring to the twofold abiding mode of the natural state (*gnas lugs*), namely Emptiness (*stong*) and Clarity (*gsal*). Thus, his “Immutable” aspect (*mi ‘gyur ba’i cha*) refers to the empty Essence (*ngo bo stong pa*) of this state, while his “Light” aspect (*‘od cha*) points to its luminous Nature (*rang bzhin gsal ba*). Samantabhadra therefore concretely embodies the two modalities of the natural state of the Mind (*sems nyid kyi gnas lugs*).

extremes of existence and non-existence.<sup>8</sup> He manifested himself in an immaterial mode, like the reflection of the moon on water, or like a rainbow shining in the sky. Absorbed in the immutable equality of his Heart,<sup>9</sup> he let the dynamism of his own Wisdom arise as the Buddhas of the Enjoyment Body, i.e., the five Clans of peaceful and wrathful Victorious Ones.<sup>10</sup> These Buddhas appeared in union with their consort and surrounded by their own Entourage.

From the state of his Compassion, Samantabhadra emanated the victorious one Mahā Vajradhara who is also known as Vajrasattva.<sup>11</sup> The latter did not stray from the state of Contemplation, in which he remained in the utterly limpid condition of Reality.<sup>12</sup> In his omniscience, he was endowed with the six kinds of foreknowledge (*mngon shes drug*),<sup>13</sup> and excelled in the methods of Compassion. The primordial Buddha Samantabhadra, in the form of the “Great Immutable Light” (“Od mi ‘gyur ba chen po) addressed him with these words:<sup>14</sup>

*You who have rendered your Wisdom of Self-Awareness<sup>15</sup> manifest  
And is known as the self-arisen Vajrasattva,<sup>16</sup>  
You are in a pure realm of the Enjoyment (Body)!*

<sup>8</sup> This state does not arise from any cause, does not abide anywhere, and does not cease in any way whatsoever. It is beyond being and non-being, transcending dualities such as existence and no existence, and so forth.

<sup>9</sup> This equality is that of the perfect balance between Emptiness and Clarity (*stong gsal*) which are entirely nondifferentiated (*dbyer med*).

<sup>10</sup> These five Clans (*rigs lnga*) are those of the Buddha (*sangs rgyas*), of the Diamond (*rdo rje*), of the Lotus (*padma*), of the Jewel (*rin chen*), and of Karma (*las*).

<sup>11</sup> The identification of Vajradhara and Vajrasattva is not an innovation of the narration given in the present text. Actually, Vajradhara should be understood as the *dharmakāya* source of Vajrasattva (himself a *sambhogakāya*). Both are the peaceful emanation source of Vajrapāṇi, their wrathful form on the level of the *nirmānakāya*. In other sources, such as the *mKha' 'gro snying thig*, Samantabhadra is considered as a *dharmakāya*, while Vajradhara is his emanation on the *sambhogakāya* level, and Vajrasattva the latter's emanation on the *nirmānakāya* level. See for instance, Padma Las 'brel rtsal, *sNying thig chen mo'i rgyab chos kyi rtsa ba*, p. 470.

<sup>12</sup> This condition is that of nondifferentiated Emptiness and Clarity (*stong gsal dbyer med*) that defines the true abiding mode of the natural state.

<sup>13</sup> There exist several lists detailing these special faculties. A frequent one enumerates: 1. the divine eye, 2. the divine ear, 3. the capacity to read the mind of other beings, 4. the capacity to remember former lives, 5. the capacity to perform miraculous feats, and 6. the capacity to exhaust all imperfections.

<sup>14</sup> P. 46: *rang rig ye shes mngon gyur pa/ /rang byung rdo rje sems dpa' zhes/ /longs spyod rdzogs pa'i zhing na yod/ /thugs sras rdo rje sems dpa' khyod/ /chos sku'i mdzod kyi sgo phye la/ /rgyud drug 'khor ba'i sems can rnams/ /dus gcig grol ba'i thabs ston cig/.*

<sup>15</sup> This modality of Wisdom (*ye shes*) is that which discerns (*rig*) its own natural state abiding as the nondifferentiation of Emptiness and Clarity.

<sup>16</sup> He is styled as self-arisen (*rang byung*) because he is not born of a cause or a matrix, an egg, and so forth. He has been spontaneously emanated by the primordial Buddha himself.

*O Vajrasattva, son of my Heart!  
Open the door leading to the Treasury of the Absolute Body<sup>17</sup>  
And reveal the Methods that shall instantaneously liberate  
The sentient beings revolving in the six destinies.<sup>18</sup>*

As soon as he had spoken these verses, from the pure realms of the Enjoyment Body, incalculable myriads of emanations belonging to the Vajra clan instantaneously manifested themselves in the pure realm of the Absolute Body and assembled before Samantabhadra, i.e., insubstantial Awareness itself. They were headed by Mahā Vajradhara, Vajrasattva and the compiler Vajrapāṇi, as well as other emanated *Bodhisattvas*. They addressed Samantabhadra in the following terms:

*Kyema!<sup>19</sup> O fully liberated Buddha Orb of Lights!  
We, your Heart-Sons of Awareness,  
And the (fortunate ones) of the retinue of the Vajra clan,  
Request the direct introduction to the authentic principle  
Of the teachings on the Vision of Manifest Reality!<sup>20</sup>  
Please establish the sentient beings revolving in the six migrations<sup>21</sup>  
In the pure realm of the Absolute Body!  
O Victorious One, we pray you to prophesize  
What kind of persons this Revelation is aimed at!<sup>22</sup>*

At that time, Samantabhadra abided in the state filled with the five-colored displays of his own Wisdom of Awareness and taught the *Tantra of the Overflowing Realization of Samantabhadra's Heart* (*Kun tu bzang po'i thugs kyi klong rdol ba'i rgyud*) containing the fifteen thousand seed-

<sup>17</sup> In this context, the expression *chos sku'i mdzod* refers to the teachings of the Great Perfection (Dzogchen).

<sup>18</sup> *rGyud drug*, literally “the six continuums”, i.e., the destinies of the gods, demigods, men, animals, hungry ghosts, and denizens of hells.

<sup>19</sup> *Kye ma* is an interjection used to draw the attention of the interlocutor.

<sup>20</sup> *Chos nyid mngon sum gyi snang ba*. This refers to special teachings of *thod rgal* in which one is introduced to the visionary nature of one's Awareness. This vision is the first of the system known as that of the Four Visions (*snang ba bzhi*) that structures the path of *thod rgal*. The three other visions are the Vision of Increasing Luminous Experiences (*nyams snang gong 'phel gyi snang ba*), the Vision of the Full Measure of Awareness (*rig pa tshad phebs kyi snang ba*), and the Vision of the Exhaustion of Reality (*chos nyid zad pa'i snang ba*).

<sup>21</sup> *Gro drug*. See note 17 above.

<sup>22</sup> P. 46: / *kye ma*/ *rnam par grol ba'i sangs rgyas 'od kyi phung po/ bdag cag rig pa thugs kyi sras/ rdo rje rigs kyi 'khor rnams* (p. 47) *la/ chos nyid mngon sum snang ba' i chos/ yang dag don gyi ngo sprod zhu/ l' gro drug 'khor ba' i sems can rnams/ chos sku' i zhing la 'god par gyis/ lbtan pa' i gang zag ji lta bu/ rgyal bas lung bstan mdzad du gsol/*.

syllables expressing the self-arisen Absolute Body.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, in order to guide beings according to their level of delusion, he taught the hundred thousand verses of the *Tantra on the Natural Liberation of Mind Itself* (*Sems nyid rang grol gyi rgyud*), which clearly explains the principles of the Base (*gzhi*).<sup>24</sup>

To have sentient beings contemplate their own Absolute Body, he taught *The Tantra that Reveals Awareness in its Natural Clarity* (*Rig pa rang gsal du bstan pa'i rgyud*) which clearly establishes the principles of the Path (*lam*) in three thousand verses.<sup>25</sup>

With his own Awareness, he taught the *Tantra Revealing Wisdom* (*Ye shes bstan pa'i rgyud*) with its four thousand verses directly revealing the Fruit (*'bras bu*).<sup>26</sup>

He then taught the *Tantra Similar to a Beacon* (*sGron me lta bu'i rgyud*), which completes the teachings that unravel the hidden precepts of the above topics, in one thousand and five hundred verses.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> This Tantra does not seem to be included in the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* editions available to me at the time of writing this note. It may be included in collections that I have not investigated yet, or be already available under another title. It might also be a mistake for the *Kun tu bzang po klong drug pa'i rgyud* which is one of the *Seventeen Tantras* (*rGyud bcu bdun*) of the tradition of Vimalamitra.

<sup>24</sup> The reference is most certainly anachronical but the only Tantra of that name that I know of is a revelation by bDe gshegs gling pa (1842–1907) who was a student of Nyag bla Padma bdud 'dul (1816–1872). This Tantra has recently been the subject of a commentary by Khang gsar bsTan pa'i dbang phyug in his *gSung 'bum*, vol. 4, pp. 171–298, under the title *Padma mkha' 'gro'i thugs thig las/ rDzogs pa chen po sems nyid rang grol gyi rgyud kyi 'grel pa ye shes 'od snang zhes bya ba*. It is followed by an abridgement entitled *rDzogs pa chen po sems nyid rang grol gyi rgyud kyi bsdu don brgyud gsum gdams mdzod phye ba'i lde mig ces bya ba, ib.*, pp. 299–308. The combined study of the root-tantra, its commentary and structural abridgement definitely shows that the root-text itself is by no means limited to the topic of the Base. Rather, it covers the entire system of Base, Path, and Fruit according to the *Man ngag sde* tradition. Note that M. Østensen mentions a commentary of this Tantra (*Sems nyid rang grol gyi rgyud kyi 'grel pa*) authored by Nam sprul 'Jigs med phun tshogs and Tā re lha mo; see Østensen, *In the Presence of the Dharmakāya*, p. 39 n. 45.

<sup>25</sup> This Tantra does not seem to be available either. There is a *Tantra of the Natural Clarity of Awareness* (*Rig pa rang gsal gyi rgyud*) in the *dGongs pa zang thal* (vol. 2, pp. 617–629). It is closer to three hundred verses than to three thousand but does indeed deal with some topics associated with the Path; its three chapters tackle: 1. the natural state of Awareness (*rig pa'i gnas lugs*); 2. the direct path of Vajrasattva (*rdo rje sems dpa'i gseng lam*); and 3. the direct introduction to one's perceptions as pertaining to Wisdom (*rang snang ye shes su ngo sprad pa*). On this text, see Chapter VI of the present volume.

<sup>26</sup> I have not been able to identify this Tantra yet. There is however a *Subsequent Tantra Revealing the Great Wisdom* (*Ye shes chen po bstan pa'i phyi ma rgyud*) in the *dGongs pa zang thal* (vol. 2, pp. 645–659), which is apparently the “continuation” (*phyi ma*) of *The Root-Tantra of Wisdom Naturally Abiding Within Us* (*Ye shes rang la gnas pa'i rtsa ba'i rgyud*), in *ib.*, pp. 631–643.

<sup>27</sup> This Tantra has not been identified yet.

He then bestowed the “seal of entrustment” (*gtad rgya*), by saying:<sup>28</sup>

*O Supreme Adamantine Emanation,  
Take hold of this secret Treasury of my Heart!  
Then, in one hundred and twenty thousand years,  
As a qualified vessel appearing in a timely manner,  
You will come as an Emanation Body to the lands of gods and men  
And all the Tantras of the Great Perfection’s precepts  
Will be entrusted to you, fortunate one! (...)*<sup>29</sup>

2. *The Entrustment of the Teachings to  
Garab Dorje, Indra, and Tröma Nakmo*

Then, Vajrasattva emanated from the sanctuary of Akaniṣṭha into the pure realms of the Enjoyment Body where he remained for sixty-one years,<sup>30</sup> absorbed in the radiant state of his own Wisdom of Awareness. He then emanated himself in the sanctuary of the Thirty-three Gods and stood on the Armolika stone, with his retinue consisting of the three groups of the Vajra clan.<sup>31</sup> He stayed there for twenty-three years, and in the abode of the gods, gave teachings on symbols (*brda*) and their meaning (*don*) to Garab Dorje,<sup>32</sup> Indra (the Lord of the Gods), and to the Protectress Tröma Nakmo.<sup>33</sup> To liberate gods, he taught symbols

<sup>28</sup> On such a seal, see T. Thondup, *Hidden Teachings of Tibet*, p. 66. See also Achar, *Le Tantra du Précieux Amoncellement*, p. 115.

<sup>29</sup> P. 47 : /mchog gi sprul pa rdo rje ste/ /thugs kyi gsang mdzod 'di long la/ /de nas lo 'bum nyi khri na/ /lha mi'i yul du sprul pa'i sku/ /dus la babs pa'i snod ldan 'byung / /man ngag rāzogs pa chen po'i rgyud/ /thams cad las can de la gtod/ (...).

<sup>30</sup> There is probably a hermeneutical interpretation of that number of years but it currently eludes me.

<sup>31</sup> *rdo rje rigs kyi sde gsum*. This expression is not listed in the dictionaries at my disposal. Given the context, I would suggest that this corresponds to three groups comprising gods (*lha*), humans (*mi*) and Protectors of the teachings (*bka' srung*). The Armolika stone mentioned here is also often spelt Amolika and is a large slab that supports Indra's throne. It is on this stone slab that Vajradhara and others have preached Dharma in the realm of the Thirty-three Gods. See *inter alia*, Martin, *A History of Buddhism in India and Tibet*, p. 373 (PDF version) n. 1212. See also, *id.*, “Ar mo” <https://lists.h-net.org/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=H-Buddhism&month=1001&week=c&msg=LTCjmKyDJGXaZRaH-vFNqVg&user=&pw=>.

<sup>32</sup> dGa' rab rdo rje is traditionally presented as having been the first human lineage holder of the Dzogchen teachings. Depending on the sources that explain his place in the line of transmission of the Great Perfection, he received these teachings either from Vajradhara, Vajrasattva, or even Vajrapāṇi. See a version of his life-story in Nyoshul Khenpo, *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems*, pp. 37-38. See also Dūdjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School*, pp. 490-494.

<sup>33</sup> She is a wrathful form of Vajravārāhī who plays an important role in the practice of *Chö* (*gCod*), in particular in the Dūdjom Tersar tradition) and in the protection of Dzogchen teachings. She is often presented as the “Lady of Cemeteries” (*dur khrod*

to Indra; to liberate men, he taught the condensed meaning of these symbols to Garab Dorje; and to fiercely protect the teachings of Dzogchen, he gave Tröma Nakmo a seal of entrustment. He also gave a seal of entrustment to Garab Dorje, addressing him with the following words:

*You, Garab Dorjé, the emanated one, perform the good of Jambudvīpa for one hundred and one human years! (Then,) in three thousand and five hundred years from now, an emanated son of the noble Mañjuśrī, bearing the name Mañjuśrī(-mitra) will come, so entrust him (with these teachings)! (...)*<sup>34</sup>

Then, the Emanation Body Garab Dorje went to the southern island of Jambudvīpa where he entrusted Mañjuśrīmitra<sup>35</sup> with the Dzogchen teachings similar to the Buddha's Body. He gave the king, his minister, and the son of a brahman<sup>36</sup> the Dzogchen teachings similar to the Buddha's Speech. Eventually, he gave the erudite Śrī Siṃha the Dzogchen teachings similar to the Buddha's Mind.<sup>37</sup>

### 3. The Transmission given to Mañjuśrīmitra

In days of old, in the country of India, the teachings of the Buddha had spread in complex ways, giving rise to the existence of numerous systems such as the eight Vehicles (*theg pa rim pa brgyad*), which are the source of all teachings, consisting of:<sup>38</sup>

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*kyi bdag mo*); see for instance, Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons*, p. 474. In the cycle of *The Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* (*Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*), she plays a crucial role as the Protectress of the lineage known as the Contemplative Transmission of the Victorious Ones (*rgyal ba dgongs brgyud*); see Turpeinen, *Vision of Samantabhadra*, p. 43.

<sup>34</sup> P. 48 : *sprul pa dga' rab rdo rje khyod mi lo brgya dang rtsa gcig bar/ l' dzam bu'i gling gi don gyis shig lda nas stong gsum lnga brgya nas/ l' phags pa 'jam dpal sprul pa'i sras/ l' jam dpal ming can 'byung gis gtod/ (...)*. The temporal periods referred to in this quote are rather puzzling, to say the least. To my knowledge, they are quite unusual when compared to other narratives associated with dGa' rab rdo rje. The same remark applies to other durations that are mentioned below.

<sup>35</sup> On this historical figure, see Nyoshul Khenpo, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>36</sup> The king is possibly Dha he na ta lo, on whom see Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 19. However, later, on p. 51, the author states that the account regarding the king, his minister and the son of a brahman mentioned here is unclear (*gsal kha med pa*) and is actually of little importance (*gal chung*). He therefore unfortunately does not provide any information on these figures.

<sup>37</sup> There is evidently a progression in the increasing subtlety of the teachings that were transmitted, those associated with the Buddha's Mind (*sangs rgyas kyi thugs*) being both essentialized and deeper than the previous ones.

<sup>38</sup> Numbers have been added to the following list to facilitate the identification of the eight Vehicles.

- the Vehicle of characteristics with its sections on monastic discipline, discourses (*mdo*), and Abhidharma, and counting [1] the Vehicle of Listeners, [2] that of Solitary Buddhas and [3] that of Bodhisattvas;<sup>39</sup>
- the Vehicle of Mantras (i.e., Tantras), with the outer Tantras consisting of [4] Kṛīya, [5] Upaya, and [6] Yoga Tantras; and
- the Secret Mantras with the cycles of [7] Mahāyoga Tantras and [8] Anuyoga Tantras, both leading to the realization of the Great Symbol (*phyag rgya chen po*).<sup>40</sup>

At that time, Garab Dorje appeared as an emanation of Vajrasattva's Mind and went before an assembly of five hundred Indian paṇḍits whom he addressed in the following manner:

*There is a teaching far superior to your Vehicles. It is more extraordinary than the mere View of union that characterizes the Great Symbol.<sup>41</sup> This superior teaching is such that if you realize it in the morning, you become a Buddha in the morning; and if you realize it in the evening, you become a Buddha in the evening. It is the quintessence of all Views, the Contemplation of all Buddhas, the supreme Peak of all Vehicles, the authentic and ultimate teaching. It is called the "Sacred Great Perfection".<sup>42</sup>*

Given that the five hundred paṇḍits were totally unable to understand what Garab Dorje was talking about, a date was decided upon for confronting him in a disputation. The actual debate took place in Vajrāsana and lasted three months during which the theories of the nine Vehicles, starting with the last of them, were discussed. According to Garab Dorje, the ninth Vehicle's name was *Atiyoga*. *Ati* is an Indic term which in Tibetan means "unborn" (*skye med*) and "self-arisen" (*rang*

<sup>39</sup> Basically, these make up the three Vehicles of the Sūtra path.

<sup>40</sup> In more traditional terms, Mahāmudrā is presented as the Fruit of Mahāyoga, while Anuyoga's Fruit is defined as Dzogchen. On the Fruit of Anuyoga, see Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation*, p. 105.

<sup>41</sup> This View is that of the union of Appearances and Emptiness (*snang stong zung 'jug*) which implies that those who acknowledge such a View contend that: 1. objects indeed appear but are in reality empty, and 2. the ultimate truth of the Mind is indeed manifest but definitely empty. Thus, the two extremes of eternalism and nihilism are avoided. One may also define this View as being that of the union of Bliss and Emptiness (*bde stong zung 'jug*), or even as that of the union of the Development and Perfection Stages (*bskyed rdzogs zung 'jug*).

<sup>42</sup> P. 49: *de la khyed kyi theg pa de las khyad par du 'phags pa/ phyag rgya chen po zung 'jug gi lta ba bas kyang ngo mtshar che ba/ nang rtogs na nang sangs rgya/ nub rtogs na nub* (p. 50) *sangs rgya ba'i chos/ lta ba thams cad kyi snying po/ sangs rgyas thams cad kyi dgongs pa/ theg pa thams cad kyi yang rtse/ yang dag don gyi chos bka' rdzogs pa chen po zhes bya ba yod do/.*

*byung*).<sup>43</sup> *Yoga* is translated as *Neljor* (*rnal 'byor*), which has a very specific meaning in Tibetan, namely: “possessing” or “enjoying” (*'byor*) the natural ease or genuine condition (*rnal*) of the primordial state.

While they were debating the theories about the various Vehicles, Mañjuśrīmitra stepped out from the assembly of the five hundred paṇḍits and called out Garab Dorje:

*Since the other paṇḍits are unable to refute you on the topic of the View (lta ba), I shall now debate with you. Should I win this debate, it will mean that you are a demonic emanation, so your tongue will be cut off and you will be banished to the borderlands. Should you be victorious, I will not be able to bear the ripening of having deprecated the unsurpassable teaching on the Fruit ('bras bu). Therefore, I will confess this in front of you and then right away cut my tongue with a razor. Then, you paṇḍits, shall all follow his teachings!*<sup>44</sup>

He then prayed to the Three Jewels<sup>45</sup> and engaged in the debate whereupon Garab Dorje eventually won. The ācārya Mañjuśrīmitra made his confession and, drawing a razor, was about to cut off his tongue, when Garab Dorje stood up and said: “Throw that razor away!” He went on saying:

*Mañjuśrīmitra, do not cut off your tongue but accept this Revelation of mine!*

*Proceed with distinguishing the specific Views*<sup>46</sup>

*And you will not find any contentions in the principles of Dzogchen.*

*From now on, cultivate these principles of the Great Perfection*

*And you shall be freed from the downfalls of the complete ripening (of*

<sup>43</sup> Actually, in Sanskrit *ati* means something like “supreme”, “higher”, “extreme” (not in the sense of one of the two extremes but in the sense of an ultimate superiority) and translates into Tibetan as *shin tu* (extremely, exceedingly, higher, etc.).

<sup>44</sup> P. 50: *da khyed paN+Di ta gzhan gyis rtsod pas lta ba'i skabs 'dir mi thub pas/ nga yis rtsod par bya'o nga rtsod pa rgyal na kho bdud kyi sprul pa yin pas/ kho'i lte chod la mtha' la spyugs shig /kho rgyal na ngas 'bras bu bla na med pa la bskur pa btap pa'i rnam smin bzod par mi nus pas/ kho'i drung du nga yis bshags pa byas ma thag /nga'i lce spu gris chod cig /khyed rnam kho'i bstan pa la zhugs shig/. In India, the custom in a debate was that the loser would have to adopt the tradition upheld by the winner.*

<sup>45</sup> Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha.

<sup>46</sup> I.e., the conditioned Views of the eight lower Vehicles, and the unconditioned View of Dzogchen. The reason the firsts are defined as conditioned is because they rely entirely on the conditioned mind (*sems*) and lack the direct introduction to Awareness (*rig pa ngo sprod*). Conversely, the View of Dzogchen is considered as being unconditioned because it fundamentally relies on the prerequisite of receiving this direct introduction and on experiencing concretely the discerning Awareness (*rig pa*) of the natural state (*gnas lugs*). Since in Dzogchen all practices are meant to be performed within the state of Awareness, by-passing this compulsory experience is simply impossible.

causes)!<sup>47</sup>

This is how Garab Dorje imparted the teachings of the Great Perfection to Mañjuśrīmitra.

#### 4. The Transmission given to Śrī Siṃha

Afterwards, the ācārya Garab Dorje revealed the precious treasury that had been concealed in his Mind in the form of the “six sections of the teachings of the Great Perfection displaying Manifest Reality” (*chos nyid mngon sum du rdzogs pa chen po chos sde drug*) and taught them to Śrī Siṃha.<sup>48</sup> When transmitting the seal of entrustment (*gtad rgya*) to him, Garab Dorje said:

*O Son of noble clan! Śrī Siṃha, you who bear the name of Zilnön Sengge, Resplendent Lion! For three thousand human years, you have remained in Jambudvīpa! I entrust you with all the precepts of the Great Perfection, of the quintessence of all the noble teachings of the Buddha’s Revelation.*<sup>49</sup>

He added that, in the future, three heart-sons will appear in the country of Tibet,<sup>50</sup> and that he should entrust them with the Dzogchen teachings of the Body, Speech, and Mind of the Buddhas. He left immediately after saying this, heading for Akaniṣṭha’s sanctuary.

#### 5. The Advent of Vimalamitra, Padmasambhava, and Vairocana

After he received the transmission from Garab Dorje, Śrī Siṃha spent five hundred years living in a grove in central India. During that whole

<sup>47</sup> P. 51: ‘jam dpal bshes gnyen lte ma gcod nga yi bstan pa khyod kyis zungs/ lta ba la shan ‘byed pa la/ |rdzogs chen don la rtsod pa med/ |phyin chad rdzogs chen don blangs pas/ |rnam par smin pa’i nyes ltung bral/. The transcendence of causes and fruits (*rgyu ‘bras las ‘das pa*) is a special feature frequently used to characterize the teachings of Atiyoga.

<sup>48</sup> On Śrī Siṃha, see Nyoshul Khenpo, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40. The six sections of teachings (*chos sde drug*) might reflect a series of instructions and texts included in the *dGongs pa zang thal* but, given the various collective sets within this cycle, identifying potential candidates remains conjectural. However, see Schwieger’s masterwork, *Die Werksammlungen Kun-tu bzañ-po’i dgoñs-pa zan-thal*, pp. 2 and 52.

<sup>49</sup> P. 51: rigs kyi bu zil gnon sengge’i ming can shrI sing ha khyod/ mi lo sum stong ‘dzam bu’i gling du gnas/ |bstan pa’i dan chos kun gyi snying po ste/ |rdzogs chen man ngag thams cad khyed la gtad/.

<sup>50</sup> They are not all born in Tibet but according to traditional narratives *actually* met in Tibet. These three heart-sons are Padmasambhava (of Oḍḍiyāna), Vimalamitra (of India), and Vairocana (of Tibet).

time, he remained absorbed in the principle of the Great Perfection.<sup>51</sup> On one occasion, the Indian erudite Vimalamitra<sup>52</sup> came to him. Seeing that he was a suitable vessel for the teachings of the Great Perfection, Śrī Siṃha gave him the seal of entrustment, explaining all the secret precepts.

After a hundred years had passed, Orgyen Padmasambhava<sup>53</sup> approached Śrī Siṃha who immediately saw that the great ācārya was a suitable vessel for the transmission of the seal of entrustment and the secret oral teachings of Dzogchen. Yet again, a hundred years later, the Tibetan monk Vairocana became a disciple of Śrī Siṃha and also received the seal of entrustment, together with the secret precepts.<sup>54</sup>

Śrī Siṃha exhorted each of them to diffuse the secret teachings of Dzogchen in both India and Tibet, both countries in which they would themselves have several heart-sons (*thugs kyi bu, thugs sras*). He considered his disciples to be the emanations or heart-sons of Vajrasattva (for Vimalamitra), Amitābha (for Padmasambhava), and Vairocana (for Vairocana).<sup>55</sup> After urging them to find qualified vessels for their transmission, he remained absorbed in the state of Contemplation, experiencing the unceasing display of the five lights that symbolize the five Wisdoms.

#### 6. The Entrustment of the Teachings during Imperial Tibet

In the past, the three ācāryas (Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, and Vairocana) had formulated aspiration prayers to be reborn in Tibet in order to spread the Dharma there.<sup>56</sup> Among the numerous disciples they had in India and Tibet, the most important who received their complete transmission were the Dharma king Trisong Détsen (r. 755–797) and the ḍākinī Yéshé Tsogyel.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>51</sup> This principle (*don*) is that of the nondifferentiation of Emptiness and Clarity (*stong gsal dbyer med*).

<sup>52</sup> On Vimalamitra, see Nyoshul Khenpo, *ib.*, pp. 40-41. See also, Flemming, "Vimalamitra — One or Two?", pp. 19-26.

<sup>53</sup> The literature discussing Padmasambhava is too voluminous to be listed here. For a condensed presentation, see Nyoshul Khenpo, *ib.*, pp. 41-48.

<sup>54</sup> On Vairocana, see the chapter entitled "The Legend of Vairocana" in Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, pp. 17-37. See also Hanson-Barber, *The Life and Teachings of Vairocana, passim*, and Ani Jinpa, *The Great Image*.

<sup>55</sup> In Tibetan, their names are clearly distinguished: the translator is called Bee ro tsa na, whereas the Buddha of whom he is an emanation is named rNam par snang mdzad.

<sup>56</sup> This should definitely remind readers about the Legend of the Great Stūpa, on which see Dowman, *The Legend of the Great Stupa*.

<sup>57</sup> It is difficult to say whether or not Ye shes mtsho rgyal was an actual historical figure. Her biography dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century but she clearly appears in the

One day, as the three masters were meditating in a cave at Chimphu near Samyé, Trisong Détsen had a vision of seven Ḍākinīs who prompted him to seek teachings from these ācāryas. He prepared extensive offerings from China, India, and Tibet, and made a request, pleading with these masters to consider taking Tibet and its red-faced inhabitants under their compassion. He specifically requested that they reveal a teaching superior to Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, which would encapsulate the actual quintessence of all Dharma instructions. He said:

*I beg you to give me the profound key points that will enable me to encounter the spontaneous realization of Samantabhadra's Mind, a teaching that enables one to obtain Buddhahood in a single day and night, and that is in itself sufficient to see, look at and realize. I offer you my body, speech, and mind as supports (for this request). I pledge to never go against whatever you shall teach. I offer you my devotion with an unpretentious mind. I therefore request you to bestow upon me a noble teaching that is sufficient to encounter and that does not take long to purify obscurations and gather the accumulations!*<sup>58</sup>

Maintaining the same viewpoint, and having realized that the time had come, the three ācāryas conferred over the matter and came to the conclusion that it would indeed be excellent to teach the king the ultimate stage of all Vehicles, the teaching that transcends causes and fruits as well as hopes and fears, the actual Contemplation of all Buddhas, the quintessence of Dzogchen, the Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra (*Kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa zang thal*), the Heart Treasury of Vajrasattva (*rDo rje sems dpa'i thugs kyi bang mdzod*).<sup>59</sup>

Yéshé Tsogyel also received these teachings directly from Padmasambhava and integrated them in her own heart. The three ācāryas

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early *bKa' thang* literature, including the *bKa' thang zangs gling ma* by Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1124–1192).

<sup>58</sup> P. 55: *mthong dang bltas dang rtogs pas chog pa yi/ nang nub gcig la sangs rgyas thob pa'i chos/ kun tu bzang po'i thugs kyi klong brdol ba'il/ 'phrad chog zab mo'i gnad cig bdag la zhu/ bdag gi lus ngag yid gsum rten du 'bul/ 'ci gsung bka' las mi 'da' ngag dam bca' / yid la zol zog med pa'i mos gus 'bul/ 'sgrub pa sbyangs dang tshogs bsags yun mi dgos/ 'phrad pas chog pa'i dam chos bdag la zhu/*. The obscurations to purify are the obscurations caused by passions and the obscurations to knowledge. The accumulations that must be gathered are those of merits and Wisdom. In Dzogchen lore, simply cultivating the knowledge of the natural state without artifices enables one to purify obscurations and gather the accumulations. This is the reason for the king's request.

<sup>59</sup> If the *Kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa zang thal* is evidently here both a collection of texts and a category of teachings (pointing to the general *Man ngag sde* literature), the *rDo rje sems dpa'i thugs kyi bang mdzod* refers exclusively to a category, as no cycle of this name exists to my knowledge.

then revealed these teachings to their respective disciples and set about hiding Treasures for the benefit of future beings.

In particular, Padmasambhava mentioned that a perfectly qualified vessel for the teachings of the Great Perfection would appear at a distance of about eight yojanas in the northwest of the glorious Samyé monastery.<sup>60</sup>

For the sake of this individual, Padmasambhava concealed teachings in Zangzang Lhadrak, in the northern region, and more precisely on a mountain that resembled a heap of poisonous snakes.<sup>61</sup> Then, in Chimphu, the ācārya revealed the teachings of the Great Perfection by imparting the quintessence of these instructions through symbolic and ultimate empowerments, along with their entrustment seal. In addition, he gave his final *Testament* (*Zhal chems*) in which he prophesied the advent of his disciples endowed with the proper karma for rediscovering his *Terma* teachings.<sup>62</sup>

Subsequently, the three masters were asked by king Trisong Detsen and his sons to give numerous prophecies, teachings, and their *Testaments* (*Zhal chems*) for the benefit of Tibet and its people.

Thereafter, Padmasambhava journeyed to Zangzang Lhadrak where he hid an unbelievable amount of Treasures for the good of the royal dynasty and the Tibetans.<sup>63</sup> The Oḍḍiyāna master is generally depicted as having concealed Treasures of Dharma teachings, wealth, precious substances, etc., throughout Tibet, but he is particularly said to have hidden this very profound and vast cycle of teachings in Zangzang Lhadrak. He made the prophecy that the fortunate one destined to retrieve it would be someone born in a Fire year (*me'i lo pa*), on the eastern slope of Mount Riwo Trazang.<sup>64</sup>

When Padmasambhava hid the Treasure in Zangzang Lhadrak, Nanam Dorje Dūdjom<sup>65</sup> inquired about the appropriate time when the *terma* should be retrieved, the methods for extracting it, and so forth. After answering his disciple, the ācārya entrusted the protection of the Treasure to the Guardians of the Teachings (*bka' srung*), as well as to

<sup>60</sup> Given the context, this prophetic statement is obviously about Rig 'dzin rgod ldem.

<sup>61</sup> Dug sbrul spungs pa 'dra ba (often abbreviated as dug sbrul spungs 'dra). See Herweg, p. 168, etc. See above, pp. 24, 26, 29, etc.

<sup>62</sup> The so-called *Testament of Padmasambhava* is included, in various different versions, in several collections of Treasures. The one that is relevant here is *The Testament known as the Precious Nail* (*Zhal chems rin chen gzer bu zhes bya ba*), which is included in the cycle of *The Natural Emergence of the Self-Arisen Primordial Purity* (*Ka dag rang byung rang shar*; see bibliography under Rig 'dzin rgod ldem).

<sup>63</sup> These were to constitute the collections of the Northern Treasures (*Byang gter*).

<sup>64</sup> This fire year corresponds to the Female Fire Ox (*me mo glang*), i.e., 1337 AD.

<sup>65</sup> He was one of Padmasambhava's twenty-five disciples. As his name indicates, he belonged to the sNa nam clan. On this personage, see the fascinating paper by Angowski, "The rDo rje in the Details" (full references in bibliography *in fine*).

four powerful local entities<sup>66</sup> that are under the command of the Protectors.

### 7. *The Initial Treasure Discovery of Zangpo Drakpa*

As to the manner in which the Treasure was retrieved, in a cave of mount Śrī,<sup>67</sup> there lived a beggar known as the hermit Zangpo Drakpa, who followed the Dakpo Kagyü tradition and meditated single-pointedly on the meaning of the Great Symbol (Mahāmudrā).<sup>68</sup> In a dream, a man wearing a shawl of white silk<sup>69</sup> appeared to him, holding a bamboo cane. He told Zangpo Drakpa:

“Master, you are definitely someone who knows the practice of the Dharma. This is truly remarkable. Know that in the eastern direction there is a temple called the Temple of Drompa Gyang. There you shall find a Treasure that will bring happiness to Tibet. At the threshold of its main entrance door, there is a key required to unlock further Treasures. On this door will be the letter *cha*. Since in the past you made a pure aspiration prayer, you must get there at any cost on the eighth day of the following month.”

However, upon awakening, Zangpo Drakpa did not show any interest in the dream and remained absorbed in meditative equipoise.

<sup>66</sup> They are known as the *bod kyi mthu bo che sde bzhi* (p. 56). They should probably be clearly distinguished from the *mthu bo che mi bzhi* mentioned in the Nyang ral’s *Zangs gling ma* biography of Padmasambhava (*Rin chen gter mdzod*, vol. 1, p. 24) since these are not Tibetans but of Indian origins.

<sup>67</sup> This important mountain is located in La stod. It has caves that have been used by retreatants for centuries. See the praises to the mountain by Mi la ras pa in Stagg, *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*, pp. 155-157.

<sup>68</sup> The Dwags po bka’ brgyud tradition dates back to sGam po pa (1079–1173), one of the main disciples of the hermit Mi la ras pa (1052–1135). Also known as “the Doctor of Dwags po” (Dwags po lha rje), he gave his name to this branch of the bKa’ brgyud pa school. His doctrinal approach is interesting because it brings together several systems alien to the bKa’ brgyud tradition, such as a set of instructions belonging to the bKa’ gdams pa school, as well as a series of precepts borrowed from the Khams (*Khams lugs*) tradition of the Mind Section (*Sems sde*) of rDzogs chen. See Trungram Gyatrul Rinpoche Sherpa, *Gampopa, the Monk and the Yogi: His Life and Teachings, passim*; see also Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche, *The Instructions of Gampopa, A Precious Garland of the Supreme Path*; Tenzin Bhuchung, *Gampopa’s Mahāmudrā: View, Meditation, Conduct*. His most famous work is certainly *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation (Thar pa rin po che rgyan)*, which has been translated numerous times in various languages. See *inter alia*, Gampopa, *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation, The Wish-fulfilling Gem of the Noble Teachings, passim*.

<sup>69</sup> The white shawl is often regarded in Tibet as a sign indicating that the one wearing it is either a simple lay tantrika (*sngags pa*), or a *gter ston*. On the dressing code and haircuts of tantrikas, see Joffe, *White Robes, Matted Hair*, *passim*. See also *id.*, “The White-Robed, Dreadlocked Community”.

Later, while fetching alms in Langkhor,<sup>70</sup> he met a meditator named “He who Meditates while Dreaming” (*mnal lam la bsgom*) and they discussed their respective experiences. Zangpo realized that this man was actually very special and generated faith in him. The latter stated:

“We now have a dharmic connection, so practice in accordance with my guidance. Since a terrible ocean of suffering is about to befall Tibet,<sup>71</sup> to counter that, there is a Treasure hidden in the temple of Drompa Gyang. Retrieving it would constitute a particularly beneficial circumstance for the country. At the moment, the *Inventory Listing* (*Kha byang*) and the *Essential Listing* (*sNyng byang*) are in my possession. Take them and go retrieve the Treasure for the benefit of sentient beings! Then, when we meet again, I shall give you whatever teaching you desire!”

Following the exhortation of the meditator, Zangpo Drakpa went to the Tsang region and arrived at the portico of the Gyang temple. According to the information contained in the two *Listings*, he carefully measured the ground and started to dig until he found a clay reliquary (*rdza'i ga'u*), which contained a single scroll (*shog ril*). Following the indications of this first scroll, during the last summer month of the male Water Tiger year (*chu pho stag*, 1362 AD) he discovered more Treasure caches and was able to extract fifty-five scrolls, the foremost of which were eight scrolls intended for the Gungthang king. These scrolls indicated that in Jang,<sup>72</sup> in the eastern direction of Zangzang Lhadrak, a qualified individual will come to retrieve the Treasures hidden there. He is portrayed as someone who will reveal a Treasure aimed at protecting the Gungthang king, thus initiating a period of peace and happiness in Tibet.

One of the Treasure scrolls he revealed contained a prophecy stating that the Zangzang Lhadrak *terma* was to be discovered in a Horse year (which, due to the context, corresponds to 1366, *me pho rta*). So, on the first month of the Snake year (1365, *shing mo sbrul*), he formulated

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<sup>70</sup> A place located in the region of Ding ri (see Martin, *Tibetan Proper Name Index*, p. 327). There used to be a monastery built by Pha Dam pa sangs rgyas there, with its famed “Dam pa nga ‘dra ma” (“Looking like me, Dampa”) statue. See Jackson, *A Saint in Seattle*, p. 149.

<sup>71</sup> This is a prophetic statement regarding the civil war about to ravage Central Tibet and adjacent provinces (to a lesser extent).

<sup>72</sup> I.e., the region of Byang ngam ring, “the original epicenter of the Northern Treasure Tradition” (Valentine, “Introduction to the Contents of this Special Issue,” p. 26). On this region, see Gung thang bsTan ‘dzin nor bu, *gTsang la stod byang ngam ring gi rig gnas lo rgyus*, *passim*. See an interesting list of all local monasteries with their names, the identification of their founders, the dates of their foundation and general locations in *id.*, pp. 505-507.

aspiration prayers and gave the special set of eight scrolls to one of his disciples, named Sönam Wangchuk.

8. *Rigdzin Gödem's Revelation from Zangzang Lhadrak*<sup>73</sup>

Traveling to Yeru, and heading toward Jang, Sönam Wangchuk, following the instructions of his master (Zangpo Drakpa), came to a place where he met with a great master named Darzang.<sup>74</sup> The latter informed him that the person he was looking for was known as Ngödrup Gyeltsen, i.e., Rigdzin Gödem himself. Sönam Wangchuk resumed his search and having found out where Gödem lived, eventually met him. Thus, on the eighth day of the first autumn month of the Snake year, Sönam Wangchuk gave Rigdzin Gödem the yellow scrolls as well as oral instructions (*zhal gdams*).

Gödem himself is presented as a heart-son (*thugs sras*) of the great ācārya Padmasambhava and as an emanation of Nanam Dorje Dūdjom, appearing in Tibet in the age of degeneration. He was born in 1337 AD (*me mo glang*) and following prophecies from the Victorious Ones, he soon manifested signs of blessing, such as vulture feathers growing in his hair.<sup>75</sup>

His *siddhi* was to proceed with the discovery of the Treasure hidden in Zangzang Lhadrak and practice it for the sake of migratory beings. His revelation occurred when he was thirty years old, on the eighth day of the waxing part of the month of the Snake in the Male Fire Horse year (1366 AD), when the constellation of Puṣya and the planet Jupiter were in conjunction.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>73</sup> This section of the original text relies heavily on the *Biography of Rigdzin Gödem* composed by Nyima Zangpo. Some parts have the exact same wording, but in some instances, Sönam Gyeltsen has obviously simplified the manner events are recorded in the *Biography*. It covers elements that we have already seen in Chapter I but for the sake of the coherence in the continuity of the narration, I have summarized the events described in the text rather than bluntly omit them due to potential redundancy.

<sup>74</sup> In his inspiring work on the biography of Rigdzin Gödem (forthcoming), Valentine has shown that this lama Dar bzang was actually the root-master of Do pa Sangs rgyas bstan pa, otherwise known in that biography as Bla ma Do pa ba. The latter was none other than rGod ldem's own uncle (Herweg, *The Hagiography of Rig 'dzin Rgod kyi ldem 'phru can*, p. 38, 94, etc.). He also appears under the name Ri khrod pa Sangs rgyas bstan pa.

<sup>75</sup> See Herweg, *op. cit.*, p. 11 n. 34. As we have seen above (Chapter I, section 3, pp. 32-33), rGod ldem himself describes these feathers as white hair locks that started to grow on his head when he was twelve and then when he was twenty-one.

<sup>76</sup> Herweg (*ib.*, p. 64) identifies it with Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> April, 1366. This actually seems to be wrong. The snake month is traditionally the second Tibetan month of the year. The 8<sup>th</sup> day of the second month is actually a Wednesday. Therefore, the date corresponding to the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the snake month of the male Fire Horse should be Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1366. This would need a confirmation from a specialist

As he went to retrieve the Treasure key described in *The Essential Listing* (*sNying byang*) indicating that it was hidden on top of mount Riwo Trazang, at the first light of dawn, he initially saw white rays of light arising in the sky and then, when the sun arose, he witnessed the apparition of white rays coming from the east and piercing the peak of mount Trazang. He went there and started to dig under a rock on which some snow had fallen. As a result, he was able to retrieve a perfectly sealed stone casket that was filled with charcoal. Inside, he found a white whetstone key, shaped like a small pillar and about a span in length.

Then, on the fourth day of the Sheep month,<sup>77</sup> when the Puṣya constellation was in conjunction with the planet Jupiter, Gödem set out toward the Treasure site along with the hermit Sangyé Tenpa (Lama Dopawa) and Rigdzin Gönpö. On their way, they met with demonic obstacles which they removed by singing prayers to the master (i.e., Padmasambhava). As they continued their invocatory chants, they eventually arrived on the top of the rocky mountain known as “the Mount Similar to a Heap of Poisonous Snakes” (*Brag ri dug sbrul spungs ‘dra*)<sup>78</sup> while countless five-colored rainbows filled the sky. Numerous other inconceivable signs occurred, starting with the appearance of three rainbows that looked like silk scarves stretching from the southwest.

For two or three days, Gödem and his two assistants searched for the actual Treasure site on the mountain and when they finally found it, numerous signs appeared, such as the displays of rainbows in the sky and sounds signaling the coming of the Treasure Lords (*gter bdag*). Then, after midnight, Gödem used a butter lamp to explore the area and found a rock southwest of the site that was marked with a vajra cross. He located an opening under the rock, inserted the white whetstone key into it, and unlocked a doorway opening onto a small cavity. Looking inside, he saw that it was filled with river rocks which he promptly cleared away, revealing a square blue stone with nine doors. These doors were sealed with silver-colored ornaments, and above the stone was a pale blue snake statue, with a yellow belly, about the size of a forearm, coiled in the shape of an octagonal jewel. Its head was facing south and in its heart were three more jewels.

From the square stone, Gödem took out a scroll and several jewels. He noticed that the abdomen of the snake glowed, as if painted with a

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of these calculations though, since it is exclusively based on the Phugpa calendar, which differs from other systems (Tshurphu, etc.).

<sup>77</sup> A sheep month (*lug gi zla ba*) corresponds to the fourth month of the Tibetan year (i.e. May- June). The fourth day of the Sheep month of the Fire Horse should correspond to Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1366).

<sup>78</sup> See *supra* note 60.

golden dye, while its joints had tiny gemstones stuck into it. However, as we saw in Chapter I, since there was no indication about all these in the *Inventory Listing* (*Kha byang*), he decided to leave them there.

Then, he opened the central section of the Treasure chest itself<sup>79</sup> and found three scrolls and three phurbus, all wrapped in brown silk. From the Treasure's sections facing the four directions, he retrieved two mother-and-son scrolls each.<sup>80</sup> From the four doors of the chest, were eight seed-syllables rubbed with medicinal substances, from which he extracted eight mother-and-son texts. On the outer rim of the Treasure chest were various gems, as well as the turquoise-soul for a king<sup>81</sup>, and so forth, but these were in the care of the Treasure Lord who told him not to retrieve them and so he left them there. From within the key itself, Gödem revealed seven scrolls, including an *Inventory Listing of Treasures* (*gTer gyi kha byang*). As Treasure replacements (*gter tshab*), he filled the key with grains and various kinds of jewels, and at dawn, he removed the Treasure and started to make his way back to the camp he and his assistants had temporarily settled below the actual Treasure site. With the first light of day, rainbows entered the cave and a heavy rain started to fall in all directions. Wherever they went with the Treasure, rainbows kept appearing like tents or stripes of light stretching across the sky.

When they finally arrived in front of Mount Riwo Trazang, he saw rays of light that came from the waning phase of the sun arise in a ruby red sky. Numerous other wondrous signs appeared, manifesting in visions of all sizes. That same night, there was a powerful earthquake and many terrifying omens. Thus, wherever they went, they clearly witnessed signs occurring as described in the prophetic texts.

### 9. *The Defense of the Northern Treasures*

In this section of the text, Sönam Gyeltsen brings in a series of criticisms against a number of unnamed individuals whom he portrays as having meager merits and as having actually turned their back on the Path of Liberation for the foreseeable future. He describes them as

<sup>79</sup> Before that, in this narration, there is no indication of a Treasure chest with a central section and four further parts in the four directions. We must surmise that this chest is to be identified with the square stone-box or was placed below or next to it. The author is rather vague here, and the description of the event is also unclear in *The Biography* itself.

<sup>80</sup> As seen in Chapter I (p. 31, n. 62), the expression "Mother-and-son[s] scrolls" (*shog ser ma bu*) means a root-text (the mother) and its commentary(ies) or complements (the son[s]).

<sup>81</sup> *rGyal po'i bla g.yu*. This refers to the turquoise gem that is said to protect kings and ensure their longevity. On this topic, see Karmay, "The Soul and the Turquoise", *passim*. See also, Gerke, "Engaging the subtle body", p. 199.

extremely stupid, fundamentally ignorant, and as unsuitable vessels for the profound teachings of the Dharma. Regrettably, we are not given the names of these individuals or their religious affiliation, but what is certain is that they do not advocate for the authenticity of the *terma* tradition.<sup>82</sup> According to Sönam Gyeltsen, these people argue that the empowerment lineage of these Treasures has been cut and is therefore not valid anymore. In addition, according to the author, they consider that the great Vidyādhara (Rig 'dzin chen po), i.e., Gödem himself, is not an authentic master, and so forth.

In Sönam Gyeltsen's opinion, their arguments are best analyzed and refuted by studying the profound principles actually put forward in the revelatory teachings, and by consulting the text entitled *The Refutation* (*rTsod zlog*).<sup>83</sup> This text contains a list of Emanation Bodies (*sprul sku*) of highly revered figures of the Empire (8<sup>th</sup> c.), as well as a brief account of Rigdzin Gödem himself. Given its title, it is evidently aimed at contradicting arguments made by individuals who purposefully misinterpret the teachings of the Treasure tradition.

To refute their objections regarding the continuity of the transmission, Sönam Gyeltsen explains that these teachings<sup>84</sup> have been handed over following six lines of transmissions, namely:

1. the Contemplative Transmission of the Victorious Ones (*rgyal ba dgongs brgyud*);
2. the Symbolic Transmission of the Knowledge-Holders (*rig 'dzin brda'i brgyud*);
3. the Oral Transmission of Great Beings (*gang zag snyan khung du*)

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<sup>82</sup> The period during which bSod nams rgyal mtshan wrote his history of the Northern Treasures is like the golden age of *gter ma* revelations in general. However, already by that time, there were also numerous voices that raised concern about these texts and considered them as forgeries. Some Sa skya advisers in the following of the Gung thang kings were clearly against the revealed literature. Despite sharing their school affiliation, bSod nams rgyal mtshan does not value their opinion and is instead an enthusiastic proponent of the *gter mas*, at least those of the Northern Treasures he is connected to. However, his statements in this section of the text clearly show that there were groups or individuals hostile to the *gter ma* tradition, their main reason for casting doubt upon the revelatory literature as a whole being that they regarded it as entirely made up by the *gter stons* and devoid of an uninterrupted line of transmission. This so-called lack of continuity in the lineage is actually the subject of the author's defense of the Northern Treasures, as we will now see.

<sup>83</sup> There are actually two works to take into account here: 1. *The Refutation Enunciated at Mount Riwo Trazang* (*rTsod zlog ri bo bkra bzang du gsungs pa*), and *The Short Refutation* (*rTsod zlog chung ba*). See bibliography under "Anonym". According to Turpeinen (*Vision of Samantabhadra*, pp. 29 and 248), the first of these was written by an unnamed disciple of Rig 'dzin rGod ldem, while the author of the second is simply unknown.

<sup>84</sup> Of the Northern Treasures and those of the *gter ma* tradition in general.

- brgyud*);
4. the Transmission given through the Blessings of Compassion (*thugs rje byin rlabs kyi brgyud*);
  5. the Transmission of the Seal of Entrustment to the Dākinīs (*mkha' 'gro gtad rgya'i brgyud*); and
  6. the Transmission of Empowerment through prayers (*smon lam dbang bskur gyi brgyud*).<sup>85</sup>

For Sönam Gyeltsen, the mere existence of these lines of transmission is the definite proof that the continuity of the teachings has not been broken. In a sense, there is an interruption in the transmission of the *terma* in the physical world due to specific unfavorable circumstances preventing their diffusion.<sup>86</sup> But the transmission between figures such as Padmasambhava in the 8<sup>th</sup> century and Treasure revealers of the post-dynastic period is seen as uninterrupted in the state of Contemplation (*dgongs pa*). Sönam Gyeltsen insists that it is extremely difficult to find a master entirely knowledgeable in the lore of Sūtras and Tantras, and that even if one finds such a *lama*, he cannot compare with the ācārya Padmasambhava, who is at the source of the hidden Treasures. Consequently, in the author's eyes, the nature of the revealed literature is not comparable to that of any tradition that is rooted in ordinary individuals who are not of the same caliber as Guru Rinpoche himself.

Sönam Gyeltsen also addresses criticisms leveled at Rigdzin Gödem that deny him the status of an "authentic being" (*tshad ma'i skyes bu*), implying that, as a *tertön*, he must necessarily be a fraud.<sup>87</sup> The question may probably sound legitimate to polemicists since in some prophecies, Gödem is presented as exhibiting controversial behavior, or a wild temper,<sup>88</sup> which does not necessarily align with the projections elaborated by doctrinaire simpletons about what a qualified spiritual master should be like. Regardless, for the author, the *tertön's* conduct is consistent with the principles taught in the cycles of Treasures (*gter skor*) revealed by him. Moreover, taking a broader view, he estimates that rGod ldem does not contradict the teachings found in the Sūtras and Tantras either. It would also appear that through his

<sup>85</sup> On these systems of transmissions (including further categories), see Thondup, *Hidden Teachings of Tibet*, pp. 102-107. See also the important discussion of these six kinds of transmission (known as the *brgyud pa drug ldan*) in Klong chen pa, *Zab don rgya mtsho'i sprin*, p. 421-424.

<sup>86</sup> This is one of the reasons justifying the existence of *gter ma* in the first place.

<sup>87</sup> On the topic of false Treasures (*gter rdzun*), see Thondup, *Hidden Teachings of Tibet*, pp. 154-157.

<sup>88</sup> This is quite a redundant description of Treasure revealers in general, but it does not imply that these are actual traits or specific behavioral features of these individuals.

activities Gödem concretely performed the good of sentient beings, a fact that, in Sönam Gyeltsen's eyes, can be evidently appreciated by learned ones. Therefore, the author feels compelled to ask how fools who are bent on partiality and only seek fame and renown can understand all these genuine characteristics? The latter, in his opinion, are clearly to be associated with the deeds of Buddhas and therefore cannot be questioned by unrealized individuals.<sup>89</sup>

As further evidence that the line of transmission is in no way interrupted, Sönam Gyeltsen reports a dream that Gödem is said to have had some four years after his revelation of the Treasures.<sup>90</sup> Thus, during the last month of autumn in the year of the Iron Dog, Gödem was engaged in a strict retreat on Mount Riwo Trazang, when one day at dawn, he had a dream in which he was on the peak of Mount Trazang, inside a tent of five-colored lights, wearing a white silk cloak. He was experiencing an agreeable feeling of cheerful joy when he began to hear a deep, melodious sound that echoed in his ears for a long time. Two men approached him from opposite directions, and one of them told him:

*Emaho! How marvelous!  
In this great sanctuary of Riwo Trazang,  
This precious source of all qualities,  
Your many disciples have spread throughout the ten directions.  
Due to the diverse intellectual capacities of sentient beings  
The people of Tibet have seen this life of yours,  
Ô Knowledge-Holder, in different ways.<sup>91</sup>  
Because of praises and blames caused by attachment and aversion,  
(Adverse) circumstances and obstacles have been extremely abundant.  
If you aspire to perform the good of pure beings,  
Your karmic connections from the past will activate  
On the border of Lhokha and Mön  
Where your disciples will prosper, so please go there!<sup>92</sup>*

After listening to this speech, Gödem who was still dreaming, felt

<sup>89</sup> The disdainful tone is clearly apparent in the author's wording.

<sup>90</sup> This should be in 1370 AD (a Male Iron Dog year, *lcags pho khyi*).

<sup>91</sup> In other words, some have developed faith in him while others have not.

<sup>92</sup> P. 64: *e ma hof ri bo bkra bzang gnas chen 'dir/ /yon tan kun 'byung rin po che/ /gdul bya sna tshogs phyogs bcur rgyas/ /sems can blo sna mang ba yis rig 'dzin khyed kyi rnam thar 'di/ /bod kyi mi yis sna tshogs mthong / /chags sdang gnyis kyis bstod smad kyis/ /rkyen dang bar chad shin tu mang / /dag pa 'i 'gro don byed 'dod na/ /lho kha mon gyi sa mtshams su/ (p. 65) sngon gyi las 'phro sad nas kyang / /gdul bya rgyas pas gshegs par zhu/*. The issues with the Gung thang kings and the doubts generated about the validity and authenticity of his revealed Treasures were particularly salient circumstances that prompted rGod ldem to travel south and open hidden lands (*sbas yul*).

deeply saddened and plagued by intense doubts as to what he should do next. He recalled the spiritual qualities of Mount Riwo Trazang and could not decide whether to stay or leave. He prayed to Padmasambhava and, at some point, a yogi wearing a large hat and a brown robe sat beside him and said: “You are a son of a noble clan, so you must decide without delay whether to stay or depart. You now have a large following of disciples in Tibet, yet, the full ripening of your destiny is to go to the borders of southern Tibet.” He then gave him the following heart-advice (*snying gtam*) regarding doubts and hesitations:

*Outer and inner circumstances are delusions,<sup>93</sup>*

*So know that whatever manifests is like a cloud or a mist.<sup>94</sup>*

*If intense thoughts of suffering affect you, cast off the treacherous path of hopes and fears, and let your uncontrived consciousness abide completely in its natural condition!*

*If distracting circumstances abound, turn your attention inward and renounce engaging dualistically in activities!*

*Do not corrupt your Awareness of all that arises, but sustain it naturally without grasping!*

*If your mental continuum is disturbed by situations and doubts, and if you don't know what to do, cast these away and address a prayer to the master in the natural state of Awareness!*

*The understanding that will thereafter arise will not be corrupted by discursive thoughts, and your doubts will be eradicated! This is the advice of my heart.<sup>95</sup>*

Having spoken thus, the tantrika transformed into a five-pronged golden vajra, which Gödem grasped in his hand prior to waking up. He also had further dreams of many Knowledge-Holders, such as ācāryas Śrī Siṃha, Vimalamitra, and others, who are chronicled in the

<sup>93</sup> Outer circumstances (*phyi rkyen*) are external, “physical” events that occur in the material world. Inner circumstances (*nang rkyen*) are mental events, experiences, and so forth. All these are illusory manifestations (*sgyu ma'i snang ba*).

<sup>94</sup> I.e., immaterial and ungraspable.

<sup>95</sup> P. 65: *phyi nang gi rkyen thams cad 'khrul pa yin pas/ ji ltar snang ba sprin dang na bun lta bur shes par gyis/ sdug bsnal gyi rtog pa drag po byung na/ re dogs kyi 'phrang bskiyur la/ ma bcos pa'i shes pa rang lugs su cham me zhog/ g.yeng byed kyi rkyen mang na blo sna nang du khug la bya byed kyi 'dor len spong / ci shar gyi rig pa ma bslad par 'dzin med byung rgyal du skyongs/ rkyen snang the tshom gyis sems kyi rgyud dkrugs te ci yang byed mi shes par rdzi 'bor na rig pa rang lugs kyi ngang nas bla ma la gsol ba thob/ rjes su shar ba'i blo gros rnam rtog gis ma bslad pa de sgro 'dogs gcod pa snying gtam yin (p. 66) gsung/. This heart advice is of the level of *khregs chod* practice, exhorting rGod ldem to remain in the knowledge of the natural state, so that by cultivating it without artifices, answers to his doubts may naturally arise without obstacles.*

text entitled *The Dreams in Eight Chapters (mNal lam le'u brgyad)*.<sup>96</sup> In Sönam Gyeltsen's eyes, this unequivocally demonstrates that the transmission of the teachings has not been interrupted. Of course, he is aware that this is a matter that is difficult to trust or to believe in for those who lack the spiritual good fortune necessary to penetrate it, but he adds that for those who are qualified vessels for such teachings, it is unquestionably a trustworthy source, arguing that, for devotees, it concretely belongs to the domain of activities (*spyod yul*) of the Buddhas themselves. By making this statement, he implies that those who do not trust this system of revealed teachings are in fact illiterate skeptics.<sup>97</sup>

### 10. Further Lineage Holders

Having established that the line of transmission of the Northern Treasures revealed by Gödem is uninterrupted and genuine, Sönam Gyeltsen proceeds to confirm this authenticity by referring to lineage holders who immediately followed Gödem in the line of transmission and studied under him.<sup>98</sup> He references *The Index Listing the Six Categories of Profound Oral Transmissions (sNyan brgyud zab mo sde drug gi tho byang)*, which states:

*From the slopes of the Tsanglha (Mountain), two men will come,  
Offering the noble Dharma with faith.*<sup>99</sup>

<sup>96</sup> This is *The Symbolic Oneiric Omens in Eight Chapters (mNal lam brda'i ltas le'u brgyad ma)*, in *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 1, pp. 7-17) whose composition is directly attributed to Rig 'dzin rGod ldem. See Valentine's discussion of these dreams in volume 2 of the present series, pp. 201-222.

<sup>97</sup> This is indeed a strong defense of the *gter ma* literature at a time when it is competing with the *bKa' ma* tradition within the rNying ma school and with gSar ma points of view regarding canonicity. However, it would seem that the critics of the revealed Treasures were unaware of the existence of a similar tradition in India. On this topic, see Mayer, "Schrödinger's Treasures", *passim*. On a related issue, see also, *id.*, "Were the Gsar-ma-pa Polemicists Justified in Rejecting Some rNying-ma-pa Tantras?", and *id.*, "Rethinking Treasures (Part One)".

<sup>98</sup> For the full lineage, see *infra* in appendix 5.

<sup>99</sup> P. 66: *gtsang lha'i mgul nas dam pa'i chos/ | dad pas 'bul ba mi gnyis byung/*. The passage in the original text corresponds to *The Index Listing the Six Oral Transmissions (sNyan brgyud drug gi tho byang)* in which it reads as follows (p. 200): *gtsang lha'i 'dabs na zab mo'i chos: dad pas 'bum ba'i mi gnyis 'byung:*. On the Tsang lha mountain or glacier of Tsang lha (gTsang lha'i gangs), see Ehrhard, "Editing and Publishing the Master's Writings", p. 146, who describes it as "located in dPal mo dpal thang, a vast plain in the Gung thang region in south-western Tibet". The gTsang lha mountain is the sanctuary of an important local deity known as gTsang lha phu dar and is "located about 20 kilometers southwest of bZang bzang" (*Bellezza, Divine Dyads*, p. 47). See also *id.*, p. 77 n. 57. "bZang bzang" is, of course, the same as Zang zang lha brag.

Sönam Gyeltsen identifies these two individuals as the precious Lord (*rje rin po che*) Sönam Zangpo and the great Knowledge-Holder (*rig 'dzin chen po*) Namkha Drakpa. Both masters studied under Rigdzin Gödem's tutelage and received his transmissions. In particular, they listened several times to the transmission of *The Heart Practice of Guru Drakpo* (*Gu ru drag po thugs sgrub*), which belongs to the Northern Treasures.<sup>100</sup>

At this point, Sönam Gyeltsen's narration becomes somewhat confused. He refers to a date he characterizes as the fifty-fourth year following the revelation of the Treasures and identifies it as a "male Iron Dragon year" (*lcags pho 'brug gi lo*). However, fifty-four years after the revelation, Gödem has already been dead for twelve years, since the date of revelation is 1366. So  $1366 + 54 = 1420$ , which is also not a male Iron Dragon year but rather a male Iron Rat year (*lcags pho byi*).

Be it as it may, Sönam Gyeltsen states that Namkha Drakpa received numerous transmissions from "the great *tertön*" (*gter ston chen po*), i.e., Gödem himself, including *The Heart Drops of the Master* (*Gu ru'i thugs sgrub*), and a long-life practice (*tshe sgrub*), among others.<sup>101</sup> If we follow the sequence of events as the author presents them, Gödem informed his disciple Namkha Drakpa that he possessed a special and profound teaching on Manifest Reality (*chos nyid mngon sum*).<sup>102</sup> He also told him that he had noticed his qualifications as a talented copyist, and that numerous yellow scrolls from the Treasure cycle (*gter skor shog ser*) still needed to be transcribed.<sup>103</sup> However, due to Namkha's other commitments, the transmission could not happen and Gödem eventually passed away.

The *tertön*'s son, Namgyel Gönpo was the next lineage holder, along with Lama Dorje Pel who was Gödem's own nephew (*dbon po*). The Lord (*rje*) Sönam Zangpo studied with Namgyel Gönpo and had a disciple named Tokden Chönyi Shérab who also became a lineage holder

<sup>100</sup> It is included in vols. 6-8 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*. Note that it was directly associated with the *dGongs pa zang thal* in the mind of bSod nams rgyal mtshan, and this is confirmed by an edition of the *dGongs pa zang thal* that has been published together with the *Thugs sgrub* cycle. See *infra* in appendix 2.

<sup>101</sup> The author's chronology is, to say the least, baffling.

<sup>102</sup> This is a reference to the Dzogchen practice of *thod rgal* during which one contemplates the Vision of Manifest Reality (*chos nyid mngon sum gyi snang ba*), the first of the Four Visions (*snang ba bzhi*) characterizing that special path of Clear-Light (*'od gsal*).

<sup>103</sup> The verb used here is "translate" (*bsgyur*) which may also mean "transform" from *dākinī* symbolic script (*mkha' 'gro'i brda yig*) into Tibetan script (*bod yig*). This short detail is fascinating because it implies that it actually took decades to transcribe the entire set of scrolls Rig 'dzin rgyod ldem revealed. It is even possible that he passed away before the entire series were transcribed. It also clearly demonstrates that such revelations in their complete form may be the produce of a collective effort (although this is of course far from being always the case).

in this line of transmission.

Sönám Zangpo appears to be a key lineage holder of the Treasures revealed by Gödem since he himself received the transmission from Namgyel Gönpo, Lama Nyizang, Lopön Chöbarwa and other direct disciples of Gödem. Later on, Sönám Zangpo became the master of Lama Dampa Chökyi Gyeltsen Pelzangpo who himself was Sönám Gyeltsen's root-master (in other religious lineages).

Sönám Gyeltsen received the transmission in Déchen Chöding, forty-three years after the discovery in Zangzang Lhadrak. He identifies this year as a Male Wood Horse (*shing pho rta*), but this corresponds to 1414 AD, which is actually forty-eight years after the revelation. During the transmission, he received all empowerments and guidance (*dbang khrid*), along with complementary teachings (*rgyab chos*), and so forth.

In conclusion, Sönám Gyeltsen introduces himself as a Sakyapa, going by the full name of Jamyang Sönám Gyeltsen Pelzangpo. He mentions in passing that he studied at the feet of the aforementioned, later masters, particularly Rigdzin Namkha Drakpa. He states that seventy-four years after the discovery of the Treasure (1366),<sup>104</sup> from the Female Earth Sheep year (1439) down to the female Iron Bird (*lcags mo bya*, corresponding to 1440), he received the complete empowerments of the Treasure, in their elaborate (*spros bcas*), non-elaborate (*spros med*), extremely non-elaborate (*shin tu spros med*), and totally non-elaborate (*rab tu spros med*) forms, together with the Heart Empowerment (*thugs dbang*) and the Empowerment to the Dynamism [of Awareness] (*[rig pa'i] rtsal dbang*), etc.<sup>105</sup>

In terms of practice guidance (*khrid*), he received all the yogic manuals centered upon Primordial Purity (*ka dag*) and Manifest [Reality] (*mngon sum*), which respectively deal with the instructions on Trekchö (*khregs chod*) and Thögel (*thod rgal*). Combining all these transmissions, he actually received the entire set of Tantras (*rgyud*), major works (*gzhung*) and precepts (*man ngag*). From Lama Chökyi Gyeltsen and Namkha Drakpa, he received countless cycles of teachings and became a lineage holder of the specific Treasures revealed by Gödem.

<sup>104</sup> 1366 + 74 = 1440 which is a male Fire Monkey year (*lcags pho spre'u*). In fact, if he refers to the discovery of Zangpo Drakpa in 1365, then 1365+74 = 1439 which is a Female Earth Sheep year (*sa mo lug*) that fits with the explanation he is about to give.

<sup>105</sup> These texts are all included in the vol. 1 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, pp. 305-406, together with further empowerments rituals that the author most certainly received, such as *The Commentary* (pp. 407-425) on the *Rig pa rtsal gyi dbang* (pp. 385-406), *The Empowerment on the View of the Definitive Meaning* (*Nges don lta ba'i dbang*, pp. 427-436), *The Empowerment on the Talisman That Liberates Through Wearing* (*bTags grol gyi dbang*, pp. 437-442), *The Precepts on Empowerments* (*dBang gi man ngag*, pp. 443-462), and so forth.

In his closing statements, he declares that, in his opinion, the “older teachings” (*chos rnying pa*)<sup>106</sup> are corrupted by the words of ordinary beings, and that masters compose their own teachings that are then repeatedly copied, suggesting that numerous errors are added to these works by successive scribes, thus altering the blessings that accompany the Dharma. He goes on to explain that it is precisely because of these unfortunate conditions that Padmasambhava concealed innumerable Treasures (*gter kha*) in which the topics of the teachings, together with their specific words and meaning, remain uncorrupted and in which blessings are powerful. In particular, these Treasures abound in profound teachings on Manifest Reality (*chos nyid mngon sum*), i.e., the core of Dzogchen secret instructions.<sup>107</sup>

Sönam Gyeltsen also complains about so-called scholars who, in reality, have no knowledge of the profound key-points of the teachings. Many of them hold sectarian opinions and seek fame, calling themselves “gurus”. Essentially, in his view, such people neither know any cycle of teachings (*chos skor*) nor practice the oral instructions (*gdams ngag*). According to him, they are neither monks nor lay people, neither Buddhists nor Bönpos, they merely sow discord around them. His own master told him: “We do not act in this way. We do not disregard causes and effects. We practice the oral instructions as they have been enunciated in the teachings.”<sup>108</sup>

In his concluding summary about himself, and as a series of closing statements regarding his brief history of the Northern Treasures, Sönam Gyeltsen characterizes his birth as an auspicious one, having had the opportunity to be born at a time when the Buddha’s teachings were still flourishing. Additionally, he had the good fortune to follow the guidance of several authentic masters and to receive the transmission of numerous instructions of the Secret Mantras (*gSang sngags*). Through his practice, he was able to realize the quintessence of the Single Awareness (*rig pa nyag gcig snying po*), i.e., the direct, non-discursive knowledge of the natural state, and was directly introduced to the naked vision of Manifest [Reality] (*mngon sum gcer mthong*). He attributes his understanding of these principles to his benevolent masters, closing his work with the following short poem:

*Kyeho! All phenomena of Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa are like oneiric illusions.  
Free from affirming and negating, from accepting and rejecting, from  
hopes and fears,*

<sup>106</sup> Which one must certainly identify with the *bKa’ ma* teachings.

<sup>107</sup> This is indeed the case of *The Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* (*Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*).

<sup>108</sup> P. 70: ‘u rang de ‘dra mi byed/ rgyu ‘bras khyad du mi gsod/ chos nas ji ltar gsungs pa’i gdams ngag nyams su len pa lags so/ (...).

*I do not see Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa as two (different states).<sup>109</sup>  
 In empty and luminous Awareness devoid of dualistic grasping,  
 I do not see Buddhas and sentient beings as two (different conditions).<sup>110</sup>  
 Abiding in my uncontrived natural state,  
 I do not see any View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruit  
 That can be found by searching for something existing outside (this state):  
 I see the Suchness that cannot be seen.<sup>111</sup>  
 Seeing and not seeing are mere designations that have no labeling basis.  
 If one can perfectly remain, undistracted and uncontrived,  
 In this Suchness that transcends the limitations of existence and non-existence,  
 Everything becomes the Absolute Space, and the mind is serene.  
 Svasti (So be it)! Lakṣma (Auspices)! Ithi (Done)!<sup>112</sup>*



<sup>109</sup> On a conventional level, Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa are indeed different and actually opposite representations, the first being conditioned while the second is definitely not. However, in the perspective of the ultimate meaning, they are just mere lexicographic designations which have no reality of their own.

<sup>110</sup> Following the same style of reasoning, sentient beings experience dualistic thoughts and delusion into Saṃsāra whereas Buddhas experience the unceasing flow of Awareness and realization into the state of Nirvāṇa. However, when one abides on the stage of ultimate Buddhahood, Buddhas and sentient beings are mere conceptions and designations devoid of tangible reality.

<sup>111</sup> Suchness is the nondifferentiation of Emptiness and Clarity which is discerned (*rig*) by the state of Awareness (*rig pa*). It is not something that can be seen as if it were an object of the visual sense.

<sup>112</sup> P. 71: *kye hoḥ 'khor 'das chos kun rmi lam sgyu ma 'dra/ |dgag sgrub spang blang re dogs bral ba la/ |'khor ba myang 'das gnyis su ngas ma mthong | |rig pa gsal stong gzung 'dzin bral ba la/ |sang rgyas sems can gnyis su ngas ma mthong | |ma bcos gshis kyi ngang du bzhugs pa la/ |logs na yod pa btsal nas rnyed pa yi/ |lta sgom spyod 'bras 'dug pa ngas ma mthong | |ma mthong ba yi de nyid mthong ba yin/ |mthong dang ma mthong tha snyad gdags gzhi med/ |yod med mtha' las 'das pa de nyid la/ |ma yengs ma bcos legs par gnas gyur na/ |thams cad chos dbyings yin pas blo bde'ol/ |swa sti/ |lakṣma/ |ithi/*



*Part II:*  
*Biographies*



## Chapter III

### Lineage Holders from the late 17<sup>th</sup> to the early 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries

#### 0. Introduction

**A**fter the golden age marked by the revelation of the first cycles of the Northern Treasures, there followed a long period spanning from Kün pang Dönyö Gyeltsen (late 14<sup>th</sup>/early 15<sup>th</sup> century) to Rigdzin Kelzang Péma Wangchuk (1719–1770) that can be characterized as a trajectory of consolidation, institutionalization, and diffusion of the teachings previously revealed. This period was regularly enriched with new revelations integrated within the tradition itself. Over these four centuries, the lineage evolved from a tightly knit network of family-related patriarchs into one of the primary pillars of the Nyingma School centered at several religious institutions spread throughout Tibet. By the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, Ngari Panchen (1487–1542) established his residence at what was to become Dorjé Drak, the main monastery of the tradition. Later on, during the 17<sup>th</sup> century (in 1632), Rigdzin Ngagi Wangpo (1580–1639) moved it to its present location and became one of its most influential throne-holders.

#### *The Era of Dissemination (15<sup>th</sup> century)*

This period begins with Kün pang Dönyö Gyeltsen, a direct disciple of the founder Rigdzin Gödem (1337–1408). This early phase was defined by the fragmentation of the lineage into three distinct streams: the "Mother" lineage (held by Gödem's consort), the "Son" lineage (held by his son, Namgyel Gönpo), and the "Disciple" lineage (headed by Kün pang).

Kün pang was pivotal in transmitting the teachings of the Northern Treasures to the polymath Thangtong Gyelpo (1361–1485), thereby ensuring the survival of the tradition beyond the founder's immediate family and the circle of his early direct disciples.<sup>1</sup> During this century, the tradition lacked a central monastic headquarters and instead relied on hermits and itinerant practitioners in the Latö Jang region of Western Tibet.

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<sup>1</sup> On Thang stong rgyal po, see *inter alia* Stearns, "King of the Empty Plain".

*The Era of Consolidation (16th century)*

In the 16th century, the lineage began to coalesce around the figures of Ngari Pañchen Péma Wangyel (1487–1542) and his brother, the Second Rigdzin, Lekden Dorjé.<sup>2</sup> These masters worked to reunify the scattered streams of transmission.<sup>3</sup>

While Péma Wangyel enriched the corpus with the discoveries of newer cycles of teachings, Lekden Dorjé played an instrumental role in gathering various scattered texts and oral lineages, paving the way for a concretely unified “Northern Treasures” identity.

This period marked a decisive shift from “hidden”, local practice to a more public and widely renowned status within Tibet.

*Institutionalization at Dorje Drak (17th century)*

As seen above, the most significant transformation occurred under the Third Rigdzin, Ngagi Wangpo, when he moved Thubten Dorjé Drak Monastery to its present location. This shifted the tradition's epicenter from the remote western steppes to the heart of Tibetan religious life in Central Tibet.<sup>4</sup>

His successor, the Fourth Rigdzin, Péma Trinlé (1641–1717), further systematized the rituals and liturgy, thereby expanding the monastery's influence. He enjoyed the official patronage of the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682), integrating the rituals of the Northern Treasures into the ceremonial life of the newly established Tibetan state. It was during that time that the tradition reached its zenith of both political and religious prestige.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> His dates are still a matter of debate. He is presented by some as the younger brother of mNga' ris pañ chen whereas others consider him as the oldest of the two. He was actually recognized as the second Knowledge-Holder (*rig 'dzin gnyis pa*) of the lineage (i.e., the second Rig 'dzin rGod ldem).

<sup>3</sup> Their biographies synthesized by Khenpo Chöying are included in the forthcoming volume 4 of the present series. In the meantime, on mNga' ris pañ chen, see H. Einhorn, [https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Ngari-Panchen-Pema-Wanggyel-/TBRC\\_P1699](https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Ngari-Panchen-Pema-Wanggyel-/TBRC_P1699). See also Sukhanova, “The Life and Identity of mNga' ris Pañ chen Padma dbang rgyal (1487–1542)”, *passim* and Achard, “The Heart Drops of Samantabhadra (*Kun bzang snying tig*) as revealed by mNga' ris pañ chen (Padma dbang rgyal, 1487–1542)”, pp. 133-137. On Legs ldan rdo rje, see Samten Chhosphe, “The Second Dorje Drak Rigdzin, Lekden Dorjé” (<https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Lekden-Dorje/P1701>).

<sup>4</sup> Ngag gi dbang po's biography will be included in volume 4 of the present series.

<sup>5</sup> Padma phrin las' biography will be included in volume 5 of the present series.

*Destruction and Renewal (Early 18th century)*

The period spanning from the late 14<sup>th</sup> century to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century concludes with a dramatic cycle of destruction and rebirth. In 1717, the Dzungar Mongols invaded Tibet, targeting Nyingma institutions. Dorjé Drak was razed to the ground, and the Fourth Rigdzin (Péma Trinlé) was executed along with numerous Nyingma hierarchs.<sup>6</sup>

Rigdzin Kelzang Péma Wangchuk (1719–1770), the Fifth Rigdzin, was born into the aftermath of this tragedy. His tenure was not one of expansion, but of systematic restoration. He devoted his life to rebuilding Dorjé Drak from the ashes and recovering the scattered texts and artifacts that had been hidden by devoted monks and practitioners in various places to protect them from the havoc wrought by the Dzungars. By the time of his death, he had successfully re-established the Northern Treasures as a functioning institution, definitely securing its legacy for the modern era.

At the risk of sounding somewhat dramatic, one might venture to describe this period in the evolution of the *Jangter* lineage as a journey from the alpine solitudes of the high-altitude sanctuaries located in the Jang region to Central Tibet, where, having survived near-total destruction, it eventually re-emerged as an enduring monastic order.<sup>7</sup>




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<sup>6</sup> On the Dzungar invasion, see Tenpa Tsering, “Reflection on the Dzungar Persecution”, *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> Except for the life-story of Rig ‘dzin Gar dbang rdo rje (which was composed by Kong sprul Blo gros mtha’ yas), the original author of the biographies translated in the pages of this chapter is Khenpo Chöying.

## 1. Rigdzin Garwang Dorjé (1640–1685)

**R**igdzin Garwang Dorjé was a revered master of the Northern Treasures tradition who played a key role in the development of this lineage through the revelation of numerous cycles of teachings that are still extant today. The instructions included in these revealed works are mostly centered upon the system of the Great Perfection (Dzogchen), emphasizing the direct experience of the natural state through various meditative techniques. His spiritual heritage has spread beyond the Northern Treasures, to various Nyingma lines of transmission, thus leaving a lasting impact on the school of the Ancients. His legacy even endures throughout time and space, with several academic studies dedicated to his lineage<sup>1</sup> and several of his works translated into Western languages.

The biography that is translated below was written by Kongtrül Lodrö Thayé (1813–1899) and included in his *Lives of a Hundred Treasure Revealers* (*gTer ston brgya rtsa'i rnam thar*, pp. 618–620) within *The Collection of Precious Treasures* (*Rin chen gter mdzod*). It does not go into much detail, and its final section is actually devoted to his next incarnation, Chöwang Dorje Dzinpa, who most probably lived during the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. As is often the case, Kongtrül intervenes at the end of the biography to discuss the cycles of instructions associated with this *tertön* that have survived down to his time.

### *Kongtrül's Biography of Rigdzin Garwang Dorjé*

“[Garwang Dorjé] was an emanation of Nyak Lotsāwa, [Nanam Dorje] Düdjom, and Namkhai Nyingpo (all three 8<sup>th</sup> century figures). He was renowned as Garwang Dawa Gyaltzen, or according to his secret name, Pema Garwang Tsel.<sup>2</sup> He was born in a place called Yam, in

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<sup>1</sup> To date, the most important one is certainly N. Solmsdorf, *Treasure-Traditions of Western Tibet — Rig-'dzin Gar-dbang rdo-rje snying-po (1640–1685) and His Activities in Mang-yul Gung-thang* (see the bibliography for full references). This remarkable work covers both his life and his revelations (*gter ma*).

<sup>2</sup> gNyags Lo tsā ba, sNa nam rDo rje bdud 'joms, and Nam mkha'i snying po are three of the twenty-five disciples of Padmasambhava. gNyags Lo tsā ba's name was Jñānakumāra, a famous translator of the imperial period, said to have dabbled in black magic, as well as in important translations such as that of the *Guhya garbha* (as an assistant of Vimalamitra), and so forth. sNa nam rDo rje bdud 'joms was originally a minister at the court of emperor Khri srong lde btsan (r. 755–797) and was dispatched with a few others to invite Padmasambhava in Tibet. He was the main individual to whom Padmasambhava entrusted the teachings on Vajrakīla (rDo rje phur ba). Nam mkha'i snying po was a direct disciple of Śāntarakṣita but also studied with Padmasambhava, receiving from him the Heruka cycle of

Nubri, in the Gungthang (region) of Ngari.<sup>3</sup> From his early age, he was capable (of accomplishing) many kinds of extraordinary (feats). In particular, (one day), as he was performing the approach and accomplishment (practices) of the Great Compassionate One (belonging to) the treasure of Rigdzin Dūdül Dorjé,<sup>4</sup> on the turtle-like rock shelter of the Musé Rock in his hermitage, three naked Wisdom Dākinīs adorned with bone ornaments (appeared), exhorting him with chants and symbolic mudrās (to have him pay attention to them). He felt elated and, without his feet touching the ground, jumped onto a rock looking like a black snake ready to dart. (At that time,) the three aforementioned Dākinīs as well as the local Lords of the Soil and Treasures Lords exhorted him (to reveal the *Terma* hidden close by).

Following (their command), he first miraculously reached the side of a large boulder that humans were unable to attain and got hold of an *Index of Treasures* (*gTer gyi kha byang*). (Using it as a guide,) he revealed the cycle of *The Mirror of Vajrasattva's Heart*<sup>5</sup> (*rDor sems thugs kyi me long*) that had been previously sealed as a “re-concealed treasure” (*yang gter*) by the great Knowledge-Holder Gökyi Demtruchen in the hidden land of Kyimo Lung.<sup>6</sup> He (largely) propagated it, and the flow of its empowerments, reading transmission, and instruction-guidance has not decreased down to the present day, resulting in immense benefits for beings.

Furthermore, from the washroom of the Noble Vati (Temple),<sup>7</sup> as indicated in *The Heart Drops of the Three Roots of Chenrezig* (*sPyan ras*

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teachings. Gar dbang rdo rje's name as Zla ba rgyal mtshan was given to him by his adoptive mother when he was two (Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu, *The Treasure-Lake of Blessings*, p. 106). It is said that when he came out of his mother's womb, he wore his umbilical cord (*lte thag*) as if it were a meditative belt (*sgom thag*) wrapped around his body (*op. cit.*, p. 106).

<sup>3</sup> On Yam/g.Yam, see Solmsdorf, *op. cit.*, p. 35 n. 43. Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu gives a completely different and fuller version of the toponym, including district, etc., as: *mnga' ris nub ri sku thang mnyal* (p. 105).

<sup>4</sup> gTer ston Rig 'dzin bDud 'dul rdo rje, 1615–1672. He is one of the very few *gter ston* involved in the revelation of works belonging to the *sPyi ti yo ga* category, together with his disciple Klong gsal snying po (1625–1692), etc.

<sup>5</sup> The text says “cycles” (*skor rnam*s) but there was only one cycle discovered on that occasion.

<sup>6</sup> It is included in vol. 16 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*. See also Gar dbang rdo rje, *rDo rje sems dpa' thugs kyi me loñ : a cycle of Buddhist practice focusing upon a revealed form of Vajrasattva*, <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW24035>.

<sup>7</sup> This actually refers to the ‘Phags pa lha khang in sKyid rong, hosting the famed Avalokiteśvara statue known as Arya Vati bzang po. Cf. Solmsdorf p. 30. On the statue itself, see the impressive study by Franz-Karl Ehrhard, *Die Statue und der Tempel des Arya Va-ti bzang-po*, *passim*.

*gzigs rtsa gsum snying thig*),<sup>8</sup> he discovered numerous profound treasures, including dharma (texts) such as *The Utterly Secret and Immaculate Oral Transmission of Padmasambhava* (*Padma'i snyan brgyud yang gsang dri med*),<sup>9</sup> *The Profound Pearls known as the Natural Clarity of the Absolute Space* (*Zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal*),<sup>10</sup> *The Adamantine Dagger* (*rDo rje phur pa*),<sup>11</sup> as well as (treasures in the form of) supports,<sup>12</sup> sacred substances, etc. (During that same period), his miraculous powers and pre-cognitions arose without limitations.

The realization of the Lord (Garwang Dorje) himself was examined by the Great Fifth (Dalai Lama, 1617–1682) to whom an envoy was sent, asking about (Garwang's) actual condition.<sup>13</sup> Questions (on this topic) were even put to Rigdzin Terdak Lingpa (1646–1714). (Both eventually) became convinced that he was an authentic Treasure Revealer and allowed him to strive impartially for the benefit of beings. He became indisputably renowned and performed vast activities for the welfare of migrating beings.

His subsequent incarnation was the omniscient Chöwang Dorje Dzinpa, who was born as the son of the great adept Nyida Longsel.<sup>14</sup> He studied at the feet of Rigdzin Terdak Lingpa and the latter's brother (Lochen Dharma Śrī, 1654–1717), residing quite a long time in Mindröl Ling. (There,) he studied Sūtras, Tantras, as well as (outer and inner) sciences, thus developing his knowledge (in a significant manner). Owing to this, he prepared ritual arrangements for the revealed teachings of his former incarnation (i.e., Garwang Dorje), and spread them on a large scale. He then moved to Sangchö Pema Lhünding, north of the Tsangpo, where an uninterrupted line of holders of this lineage

<sup>8</sup> This cycle is the same as the *Thugs rje chen po rtsa gsum snying thig*. See Gar dbang rdo rje, *rDor sems thugs kyi me lon and Thugs rje chen po rtsa gsum snyin thig*, Darjeeling, 1984. See Solmsdorf, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-228.

<sup>9</sup> This cycle is also known as the *Utterly Secret and Unsurpassable Oral Transmission of Padmasambhava* (*Padma'i snyan brgyud yang gsang bla med*) and as the *Heart Drops of the Victorious Three Roots* (*rTsa gsum rgyal ba'i thugs tig*). For a description of this cycle, see Solmsdorf, *Treasure-Tradition of Western Tibet*, pp. 236-240.

<sup>10</sup> See the extensive analytical description of this cycle in Solmsdorf, *ib.*, pp. 245-255.

<sup>11</sup> This most certainly refers to the cycle known as the *Phur pa's Slashing Razor* (*Phur pa spu gri reg gcod*), on which see *id.*, pp. 241-24

<sup>12</sup> I.e. statues or painting, etc., which are "supports" (*rten*) for ritual and meditative practices.

<sup>13</sup> Such an investigation is rather frequent in the milieu of *gter ston*. It is aimed at verifying the authenticity of the Treasure revealer and the texts he has brought forth.

<sup>14</sup> Nyi zla klong gsal (bdr:P1914) was a disciple of Gar dbang rdo rje. He is the author of a short work containing an abridged narrative of the lineage of the yogi Dzābīra (Dzā ha bīr, \*Geber) included in the *Rin chen gter mdzod*. See his *Zab chos 'ja' lus 'od phung grang grol las/ Bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar nor bu'i do shal zhes bya ba, Rin chen gter mdzod*, vol. 31, pp. 79-90.

resides to this day.

Through the benevolence of my lord and master,<sup>15</sup> I have also received *The Profound Pearls known as the Natural Clarity of the Absolute Space* (*Zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal*), *The Heart Drops of the Three Roots Associated with the Great Compassionate One* (*Thugs rje chen po rtsa gsum snying thig*), the series of teachings on Vajrasattva (*rdor sems kyi chos sde*),<sup>16</sup> as well as the sublimating and liberating (instructions) of the long-life practice (known as) *The Adamantine Knot* (*rDo rje rgya mdud*).<sup>17</sup>

His *Profound Pearls* (*Zab tig*), as well as Drimé Lhünpo's *Ultimate Pearls* (*Don tig*)<sup>18</sup> and Taksham's *Contemplative Assembly Liberating All Beings* (*dGongs 'dus 'gro ba kun sgrol*)<sup>19</sup>—no matter whether they have a cycle of Tantras or not—are identical in terms of topics and practice and, therefore, it seems to me appropriate to combine them (in a single system) unifying the three lineages.

Moreover, even though Jatsön Nyingpo (1585–1656) did not finalize the transcription of his own *Heart Drops*,<sup>20</sup> I heard from the mouth of my lord and master that it had a meaning similar to (Garwang Dorje's) *Natural Clarity of the Absolute Space* (*Chos dbyings rang gsal*)."

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Guru Tashi's version of Garwang Dorje's biography (*Gu bkra'i chos 'byung*, pp. 580–581) is slightly different: in the first part, he places great emphasis on the prophetic statements about Garwang Dorje, quoting

<sup>15</sup> The speaker is Kong sprul himself. His "lord and master" was 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang po (1820–1892), on whom see Matthew Akester, *The Life of Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo*, *passim*.

<sup>16</sup> This is an evident reference to the *rDor sems thugs sgrub* cycle of teachings.

<sup>17</sup> Included in vol. 16 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>18</sup> Dri med lhun po was born in Kong po in 1352 and started discovering treasures at the age of thirteen. Among his revelations of rdzogs chen works, one should mention his *Contemplative Assembly of the Buddhas* (*Sangs rgyas dgongs 'dus*), his *Sole Knowledge of the Profound Principle that Liberates from Everything* (*Zab don gcig shes kun grol*), his *Profound Pearls known as the Natural Freedom of Contemplation* (*Zab tig dgongs pa rang grol*), and his *Ultimate Pearls known as the Liberation of All Beings* (*Don tig 'gro ba kun grol*). See Dom po Thub bstan rgyal mtshan, *rNying ma'i gsung 'bum dkar chag*, p. 172.

<sup>19</sup> Taksham is actually sTag sham Nus ldan rdo rje (b. 1655), famous under the *gter ston* name of bSam gtan gling pa. He revealed a great variety of works, including teachings on *Yang ti* yoga. The cycle referred to here is known in its fuller form as the *Heart Drops of the Arcane*, the *Contemplative Assembly of All Beings according to the Great Perfection Teachings* (*bKa' rdzogs chen po dgongs 'dus 'gro ba kun grol gsang ba'i snying thig*).

<sup>20</sup> Without more elements to identify this *Heart Drops* title, it is difficult to ascertain which cycle Kong sprul refers to. Since we are in the context of rDzogs chen, this may refer either to 'Ja' tshon snying po's *dKon mchog spyi 'dus*, his *rTa phag yid bzhin nor bu*, or even his *Bla grub hūm nag snying thig sangs rgyas lag bcang*. However, given the nature of the instructions that are compared with those of the *Chos dbyings rang gsal*, the best candidate should be the *rTa phag yid bzhin nor bu* which covers the same specific *khrid* instructions taught in the context of *thod rgal* practice.

several examples of these. Thus, according to him, Garwang Dorje was one of the five main regents (*rgyal tshab*) of Padmasambhava and was regarded as an emanation of Dorjé Düdjom. He is also described as a Treasure Revealer who excavated texts that had already been discovered by Rigdzin Gödem and later re-hidden by him for future revelation. These twice-revealed *termas* were said to dispel the evil influence of *dam sri* spirits affecting the line of the descendants of the Prince of Gungthang (Phüntsock Dé, 1338–1370). In one of these prophetic texts, Garwang Dorje is described as a “yogi meditating on the Great Perfection” (*rdzogs chen sgom pa'i rnal 'byor*), his connections with the system of Dzogchen being quite visible in the cycles of teachings he himself revealed.

The main event that Guru Tashi narrates is that of a vision of the three naked Dakinīs that Garwang Dorje experienced, as seen above, while he was engaged in the approach and accomplishment (*bsnyen sgrub*) practice of Avalokiteśvara according to the revelations made by Düdül Dorjé. The *tertön* was also exhorted by several other local entities<sup>21</sup> to reveal treasures. Once, even a red deer led him to a large rock where Garwang found some “indexes of treasures” (*gter gyi byang byang*) after which he traveled to Kyimo Lung where he revealed the cycle of *The Mirror of the Heart of Vajrasattva* (*rDor sems thugs kyi me long*), as well as *The Utterly Secret and Immaculate Oral Transmission of Padmasambhava* (*Padma'i snyan brgyud yang gsang dri med*) and other works.

Among the numerous treasures revealed by Garwang Dorje, one of the most fascinating is certainly his famed *Profound Pearls known as the Natural Clarity of the Absolute Space* (*Zab tig Chos dbyings rang gsal*). The cycle was found in 1669 in the Jamtrin temple in Mangyül and marked Garwang Dorje's first treasure revelation.<sup>22</sup> The entire cycle is based on a root-tantra entitled *The Ultimate Tantra known as the Liberating Vision of Wisdom* (*Don rgyud Ye shes mthong grol*). All other works included in this collection are actually based on short sections that are quoted from this Tantra and extensively explained in specific individual texts. The scope of the cycle is truly impressive, covering the entire Path of liberation, including rarely seen Dzogchen instructions such as the famed six instructions-guidance (*khrid*) of Thögel (*thod rgal*) practice.<sup>23</sup>



<sup>21</sup> Some of them demonic (*bdud rnams*)!

<sup>22</sup> See Solmsdorf, *Treasure-Traditions of Western Tibet*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>23</sup> These six instructions are : 1. Dark Guidance (*nag khrid*), 2. White Guidance (*dkar khrid*), 3. Variegated Guidance (*khra khrid*), 4. Red Guidance (*dmar khrid*), 5. Yellow Guidance (*ser khrid*), and 6. Fire Guidance (*me khrid*). See Gar dbang rdo rje, *Zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal*, vol. II, pp. 139-226.

## 2. Zurchen Choktrül Ngawang Sönam

Zurchen Choktrül's exact date of birth is apparently still unknown but according to the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC), he was born around 1670.<sup>1</sup> He is variously known as Zurchen Choktrül, the "Supreme Emanation of Zurchen" (Chöying Rangdröl, 1604–1669), or Zurtrül (Zur sprul) in a shorter form. His ordination names are Ngawang Künga Sönam, Chokdrub Tenpai Gyeltsen, or more simply Künga Sönam.<sup>2</sup> There is still very little information available about this master.<sup>3</sup>

**Z**urtrül Ngawang Künga Sönam was recognized as the immediate incarnation of the Omniscient Zur, Chöying Rangdröl (1604–1669),<sup>4</sup> by the great Fifth Dalai Lama (Lobsang Gyamtso, 1617–1682) who gave him the name Ngawang Künga Sönam.

Zurtrül stayed at Dorjé Drak and completed his studies through listening and reflecting.<sup>5</sup> During Rigdzin Péma Trinlé's fifty-eighth year,<sup>6</sup> he took novice vows from Rigdzin Petrin<sup>7</sup> himself and received the practice name Ngawang Künga Sönam Péma Thegchok Tendzin. He became Rigdzin Péma Trinlé's sole inner heart-son and, as clearly stated in the latter's autobiography, received profound teachings from him as if filling a vase to the brim. He is thus greatly praised in Péma Trinlé's autobiography in which the latter states (in reference to his disciple):

*I have firmly planted the victory banner of the (Buddha's) Revelation and therefore, even if I die of old age, I will have no regrets and my mind*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/P7900>. He apparently did not survive the massacres orchestrated by the Dzungar invaders in Central Tibet in 1717. Therefore, with all due caution, his dates can be given as *ca.* 1670–*ca.* 1717.

<sup>2</sup> In Rig 'dzin Padma phrin las's *Rab dkar shel gyi me long* (vol. 2, p. 1098), the longest form of his name appears as Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nam Padma Theg mchog bstan 'dzin dpal bzang po.

<sup>3</sup> See for instance some elements briefly related in Valentine, *The Lords of the Northern Treasures*, p. 231.

<sup>4</sup> On Zur chen Chos dbyings rang grol, see volume 5 of the present series (in progress).

<sup>5</sup> Listening (*thos*) and reflecting (*bsam*) are two of the three knowledges (*shes rab gsum*), with meditation (*sgom*) as the third. On this topic, see Achard, *Le Sūtra des Trois Etudes, passim*.

<sup>6</sup> This should be 1699. Rig 'dzin Padma phrin las lived from 1641 to 1717. His biography is included in volume 5 of this series. On this master, see also Ch. Ramble, "Sources tibétaines pour l'étude de l'origine et la soumission de vampires (sri)", p. 341. As will be seen below, in that same year Zur sprul took the vows of a fully ordained monk from him.

<sup>7</sup> Pétrin (Pad phrin) is simply the condensed form of Rigdzin Péma Trinlé's name.

*will (on the contrary) be happy!*<sup>8</sup>

In the Female Earth-Hare year (1699), known as the “Intoxicated Year”<sup>9</sup> of the twelfth calendrical cycle, Zurtrül took the vows of complete ordination in the midst of a large assembly of devoted monks, including the abbot Lobzang Péma Trinlé,<sup>10</sup> and others. During the enabling empowerment<sup>11</sup> of the Eight Teachings on peaceful and wrathful deities (*Zhi khro bka’ brgyad*), it is said that the supreme emanation of Zurchen<sup>12</sup> was enthroned as the Vajra Regent.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, there are still writings left about the Northern Treasures that were composed at the behest of Zurchen Choktrül (himself).<sup>14</sup> In the verses from the middle section of *The Sublime White Crystal Mirror* (*Rab dkar shel gyi me long*), the autobiography of Rigdzin Péma Trinlé, it is said:

*By offering these profound teachings  
In the manner of filling a vase of nectar to the brim,  
To the Emanation Body who is the incarnation of master Zurchen,  
I think you will be pleased and that it will restore the precious Revelation  
of the Ancient Translations.*<sup>15</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Planting the victory banner of the Revelation means that Padma ‘phrin las has fully trained and educated his foremost disciple, so that the destiny of his lineage appears to him to be in good hands. He can therefore die with the confidence that the tradition of the Northern Treasures is not going to disappear after him. However, his disciple, Zur chen mchog sprul himself, in all likelihood died the same year as him (in 1717), at the hand of the Dzungars.

<sup>9</sup> *Myos ldan*. This is the *pramathin* year of this cycle. In ancient Indian astronomy, this actually corresponds to the thirteenth year of a full cycle of sixty years. See N. Chidambaram Iyer, *Brhat-Saṁhitā of Varāha-Mihira*, 1884, chap. 8, § 33-34.

<sup>10</sup> He is the same as Rig ‘dzin Padma ‘phrin las. See bdcrc: <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/P657>.

<sup>11</sup> *Nus dbang*. There are five empowerments of this kind. See Kunsang, *The Light of Wisdom*, vol. II, p. 147 n. 27 for a short enumeration.

<sup>12</sup> This emanation is, of course, Zur sprul himself (as his name indicates). His nickname thus became Zur chen mchog sprul (“The Supreme Emanation of Zur chen [Chos dbyings rang grol]”) from that time onwards.

<sup>13</sup> In this context, this therefore makes him the head of Zur chen Chos dbyings rang grol’s lineage and one of the main hierarchical authorities in rDo rje brag.

<sup>14</sup> On one such work, see Everding, *Tibetische Handschriften und Blokdrucke*, p. 123.

<sup>15</sup> Since Padma Phrin las died at the hands of the Dzungars in 1717, unless this quatrain is an anachronistic stanza added to his autobiography in reference to the havoc wrought by the Mongol invaders at that time and in the following years (which resulted in the near disappearance of the entire Ancient Tradition), it is most likely an allusion to the gradual decline of the rNying ma tradition prior to these tragic events.

Thus, as this quote indicates, it is clear that (Péma Trinlé) held Zurchen Choktrül in the highest regard. Subsequently, the latter's next incarnation was the one renowned as Gyelsé Tulku of Dorje Drak.<sup>16</sup> During periods when the great Rigdzin was not residing (at the monastery),<sup>17</sup> it was customary for the Gyelsé Tulku and Chuzang Tulku (18<sup>th</sup> c.) to serve alternately as regents.



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<sup>16</sup> His dates are still unknown, but he most certainly lived during the later part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This would demand further investigation.

<sup>17</sup> This is a reference to Rig 'dzin sKal bzang Padma dbang phyug (1719–1776), who had not yet been enthroned at that time.

### 3. Drubwang Péma Shényen (18th century)

**T**he main personal disciple of the great Knowledge-Holder Kel-zang Pema Wangchuk<sup>1</sup> was Drubwang Péma Shényen, who was born into the clanic lineage of the Lord Nyang(-rel Nyima Özer, 1124–1192). From his young age, the karmic traces of a holy man awakened in him (and led him) to attend (the teachings of) a hundred spiritual masters. He thus received an ocean-like set of teachings on Sūtras and Tantras, in the manner of a vase being poured into another vase, and became a holder of the entire Revelation (of the Buddhas).

Inspired by a strong aversion (for conditioned existence), he practiced his austerities in holy places visited and blessed by many holy masters in the past, such as caves and empty valleys without a living soul. He single-mindedly exerted himself (in formal meditation) in a similar way to what is described in Milarépa's life story, raising the victory banner of the practice that consists in the union of the Development and Perfection Stages.

In particular, he devoted himself uninterruptedly to the practice of *The Natural Emergence of the Self-Arisen Primordial Purity (Ka dag rang byung rang shar)*<sup>2</sup> according to the Great Perfection system of the Northern Treasures and consequently contemplated in a manifest and naked manner the Suchness of all phenomena. Moreover, he earnestly engaged in the practice of the Development and Perfection Stages of countless Yidams characterizing the four or six categories of Tantras,<sup>3</sup> and thus directly beheld the face of numerous Yidams. He displayed many signs of accomplishments, such as binding to his service numerous Lords of Treasures and Dharma Protectors, including the Glorious

<sup>1</sup> The third throne holder of rDo rje brag and the fifth Rig 'dzin (i.e., incarnation of Rig 'dzin rgod ldem). See his biography in volume 4 of the present series.

<sup>2</sup> This is a short cycle appended to the *dGongs pa zang thal*. See Turpeinen, *Vision of Samantabhadra*, p. 37 *passim*. For a practice manual of the *Ka dag rang byung rang shar*, see Arguillère, "Histoire des manuels du *dGongs pa zang thal*", p. 204 *et seq.* For the complete description of the cycle, see Achard, "Rig 'dzin rgod ldem gter nas bton pa'i rdzogs pa chen po ka dag rang byung rang shar spyir bstan dang khog dbub skor", <https://fchnt.hypotheses.org/1896>. See also *infra* appendix 6 and Chapter 20 of volume II of the present series.

<sup>3</sup> The classification in four categories of Tantras is characteristic of the gSar ma schools, discussing Kriyātantra, Caryātantra, Yogatantra, and Yoganiruttaratantra. The classification in six categories is specific to the rNying ma tradition with Kriyātantra, Caryātantra (or Upayatantra), Yogatantra, Mahāyogatantra, Anuyogatantra, et Atiyogatantra.

Guardian of the Tantras (Ekadzāti), and Yidzhin Norbu, a Protector of the teachings of the Northern Treasures,<sup>4</sup> as well as having them perform whatever activities he entrusted them, without obstacles. He also installed countless disciples on the Path of ripening and liberation.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout Central Tibet (Ü) and Tsang, his unparalleled miraculous powers and capacities enabled him to displace *Dre* and *Srin* demons,<sup>6</sup> starting with those causing madness, while he protected numerous transmigrating beings from harmful sufferings caused by these same *Dre* and *Srin* demons.<sup>7</sup>

On all occasions, he worked extensively for the benefit of beings to be tamed, through the four basic activities of a *bodhisattva*<sup>8</sup> such as, at best, making offerings of all the material goods in his possession to the pure realms of the Three Jewels, and at worst, satisfying (beings) with gifts consisting in anything they need, such as (riches) for the destitute and (medicine) for those tormented by illnesses, etc.

Following a prophecy he received in vision from the venerable Tārā, he built numerous temples, as well as supports for the Body, Speech, and Mind of the Buddhas.<sup>9</sup> He founded many meditative colleges and communities of monks maintaining utterly pure ethics and training.

He extensively and respectfully practiced: 1. the scriptural teachings of the precious Revelation of the Victorious Ones by way of explaining and listening, and 2. the teachings of realization by way of intense activities of meditation practices.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> His name is mGon po Yid bzhin nor bu and belongs to the category of “Protectors of the Teachings” (*bstan srung*). See his description *inter alia* in Rig ‘dzin Padma phrin las, *Byang gter mgon po bstan srung yongs rdzogs kyi dbang chog zab don snang ba zhes bya ba*, pp. 75-98.

<sup>5</sup> Ripening (*smin pa*) refers to empowerments that ripen the mind of the vessel receiving the transmission, whereas liberation (*grol ba*) refers to the precepts whose practice liberates this vessel.

<sup>6</sup> I.e., forcing them to move away from the places they used to perform their evil activities.

<sup>7</sup> These two demonic groups are sometimes described as *ogres* and *vampires*. I am not sure that these equivalences are entirely accurate. On the first group, see Bell, *Tibetan Demonology*, pp. 11-12; and on the second, see *id.*, pp. 15.

<sup>8</sup> *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa bsdu dngos bzhi*. The expression *bsdu dngos bzhi* is the abridged form of *bsdu ba'i dngos po bzhi*, i.e., the four things (*dngos po bzhi*) necessary to gather (*bsdu ba*) [disciples]. These four things are: 1. donations (i.e., to receive such donations), 2. caring discourse (avoiding divisive speech), 3. intentional activity (acting sensibly), and 4. being in agreement (avoiding conflict).

<sup>9</sup> In general, supports of the Body (*sku*) are statues; supports of Speech (*gsung*) are texts; and supports of the Mind (*thugs*) are stūpas.

<sup>10</sup> The scriptural teachings (*lung gi chos*) and the teachings of realization (*rtogs pa'i chos*) are two ways of categorizing the Buddha's various dharmas. The scriptural teachings concretely refer to the Three Baskets (*sde snod gsum*, i.e., Sūtras, Abhidharma, and Vinaya), while the teachings of realization concern the Three Trainings (*bslab pa gsum*, i.e., ethics, meditative absorption, and sublime knowledge).

In brief, this noble master maintained a Conduct in harmony with all the Sūtras and Tantras, upholding a View as high as the sky while protecting the subtleties of the cause and effect of karma as precious as his own eyes.<sup>11</sup> He reached a high level of accomplishment by relying on the extraordinary profound path of the Vehicle of the Quintessential Clear-Light of the Great Secret.<sup>12</sup> It has been explained that because the name of the great lord of accomplished ones, Péma Shényen Jikdrel Choklé Nampar Gyelwai Dé, had become so meaningful, his fame resonated like thunder. Thus, he perfected the two benefits and (after his death) departed for the palace of Lotus-Light on the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain.<sup>13</sup>

When the remains of his body were cremated, five kinds of relics appeared, installing numerous beings on the stage of actual faith.<sup>14</sup>

Among the direct disciples of this master were many (notable) individuals such as Rigdzin Khamsum Zilnön, the sixth incarnation in the line of Rigdzin Chenpo (Gödem), Khordong Péma Künzang Yéshé, *alias* Shérab Mébar, and so forth. (Actually,) the master's main direct disciple who belongs to the authentic close line of transmission from Khorlö Dong or Khangdong monastery in Kham was the renowned Shérab Mébar of Kham. The latter's personal disciple was Khordong Terchen Nüden Dorjé, whose main disciple was Sangdzin Gönpö Wangyel, *alias* Khangdong Lama Gönwang. His main disciples were the sons of his own clan, i.e., the two brothers Choktrül Tsültrim Zangpo and Choktrül Gyurmé Dorjé. Tsüllo's<sup>15</sup> disciple was Nénang Orgyen Tendzin *alias* Gyello. As to the latter's main disciples, the biographies of those who came in succession down to Nénang Yéshé Dödül—who is still alive—<sup>16</sup> will be briefly discussed below.



<sup>11</sup> This is a reference to a statement frequently put in Padmasambhava's mouth, saying that his View was as high as the sky, yet his attention to karmic retribution was finer than flour. See dPal sprul rin po che, *Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*, p. 146.

<sup>12</sup> The expression "Vehicle of the Quintessential Clear-Light of the Great Secret" (*gsang chen 'od gsal snying po'i theg pa*) refers to the system of the Great Perfection (rDzogs chen).

<sup>13</sup> The two benefits are the benefit for others (through the display of the Form Bodies, *gzugs sku*) and the benefit for oneself (through the realization of the Absolute Body, *chos sku*). The Lotus-Light palace (Padma 'od) is Padmasambhava's sanctuary on Zangs mdog dpal ri mountain.

<sup>14</sup> I.e., generating in them an intense state of faith in and devotion for Padma bshes gnyen.

<sup>15</sup> Tsüllo (Tshul lo) is the regular nickname of mChog sprul Tshul khrims bzang po.

<sup>16</sup> At the time of Khenpo Chöying's writing this biography.

#### 4. Rigdzin Khamsum Zilnön

The sixth incarnation of the great Rigdzin (Gödem) was Künzang Gyurmé Lhündrup Dorjé, *alias* Rigdzin Khamsum Zilnön (1775–1810). From this point onward (in the history of the lineage), I<sup>1</sup> was unable to establish in detail the succession of the great *vidyādhara*s of Dorjé Drak and the biographies of the lineage masters, because I could not find any reference materials (about these). In short, I have established them by basing myself on the writings of the Lord of Refuge (Taklung) Tsétrül Rinpoché (1926–2015)<sup>2</sup> and Khenpo Lodrö Zangpo (1924–1986), etc. Thus, regarding the sixth incarnation of the great Rigdzin, Künzang Gyurmé Lhündrup Dorje, *alias* Rigdzin Khamsum Zilnön, in *The Biographical Supplication* (*rNam thar gsol 'debs*), it is said:<sup>3</sup>

*To the emanation of the supreme Nirmāṇakāya who, in the future,  
Will be reborn into a royal lineage, similar to the Sāla species,<sup>4</sup> etc.,  
To the master who clearly reveals all things of any kind and nature  
To be accepted or rejected, I address my supplication!*

As stated in this quatrain, Khamsum Zilnön, the sixth incarnation of the great Rigdzin, was born into a royal lineage similar to the *Sāla* tree, and took rebirth in the region known as Sertok, near the Chakla kingdom of Dartsédo.<sup>5</sup> The King of Chakla and his monks carefully assisted him and performed the rite of installing him on the throne of his former incarnations (after which) he was placed upon the golden throne of Dorjé Drak.

<sup>1</sup> The locutor is Khenpo Chöying, the author of the history of the Northern Treasures.

<sup>2</sup> His full name was bShad sgrub phrin las Nyin byed bzang po. See his biography *infra*, in section 13 of this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> I have been unable to locate this text (and its precise quote) in the sources available to me.

<sup>4</sup> *Shorea Robusta*. On this tree (its description, classification, usage, etc.), see the excellent study by Anne Mathiez, *Le Sal: Shorea Robusta* (Gaertn.) (Dipterocarpacees), *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> Dartsédo (Kangding, 康定) is the town in which the second rDo rje brag monastery (known as mDo rDo rje brag) was built (see *infra*, chapter IV, section 7). It is associated with the local royal clan of lCags la. During my stay there in 1992, traces of the damages of the Cultural Revolution and of a recent fire were still visible in the monastery itself (which has been fully restored since then).

He followed numerous spiritual masters and mentors, including Péma Shényen, the lord of the accomplished ones,<sup>6</sup> as well as Péma Thegchok—the great abbot of Chakla<sup>7</sup>—, etc., and thoroughly perfected the three (knowledges consisting in) listening, reflecting and meditating.<sup>8</sup> It is explained that he also received pure visions, prophecies, as well as New Treasures, as stated in *Guru Tashi's History of the Dharma* (*Gu bkra'i chos 'byung*):

*These days, the precious supreme incarnation performs many extraordinary deeds such as remaining at his monastic seat where he explains and propagates the Buddha's teachings, engaging in practice, revealing profound New Treasures, and so forth. He abides as the glory (illuminating both) the Revelation (of the Buddhas) and transmigrating beings, which is truly excellent.*<sup>9</sup>

The two direct disciples of this master were Chuzang Namkha Longyang,<sup>10</sup> and Jigmé Pawo, the *tulku* of Péma Shényen. That being so, even though his activities in the three spheres<sup>11</sup> were extraordinary, he did not live very long and departed for another realm at the age of thirty-five.




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<sup>6</sup> See the previous section of this chapter.

<sup>7</sup> ICags la mkhan chen. In other sources, he is presented as a prince (*rgyal sras*) of the ICags la kingdom. See Reb gong pa 'Jigs med bsam grub (ed.) in his *dKar mdzes khul gyi dgon sde so so'i lo rgyus gsal bar bshad pa*, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> I.e., listening (*thos*) to teachings during formal transmission (or reading by oneself), reflecting (*bsam*) on the meaning of these teachings, and meditating (*sgom*) on their principles.


<sup>9</sup> Gu ru bKra shi, *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung*, p. 697.

<sup>10</sup> See the next section.

<sup>11</sup> There are various lists of these three spheres. I believe that the one most relevant to the present context concerns: 1. exegetical activities (*bshad pa*), 2. personal practice (*sgrub pa*), and 3. accomplishments of activities (*las*, pacifying, increasing, subjugating, and destroying) for the sake of the teachings and sentient beings.

## — The Succession of the Chuzang lineage —

## 5. Chuzang Rinpoché Namkha Longyang (18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> c.)

he Emanation Body of Chuzang Rinpoché, Namkha Longyang, was a direct disciple of the sixth incarnation of the great Knowledge-Holder.<sup>1</sup> He is the one mentioned in the following abstract of *The Prayer to the Lineage Masters of Dorjé Drak* (*rDo rje brag gi bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs*), saying:

*To the holder of the tradition of the Adamantine Quintessence of the Definitive Secret,*<sup>2</sup>

*The supreme Lord of the profound yoga of the Two Stages,*<sup>3</sup>

*The Revealer of the Sublime Path of instructions on ripening and liberating,*<sup>4</sup>

*To the eminent Namkha Longyang, I send my supplication!*<sup>5</sup>

The first incarnation of this master, known as Chöjé Durtrö Relpa, built a hermitage called Chuzang Déchen Jampa Ling, in Tsang Panam.<sup>6</sup> Regarding his subsequent rebirths, his second incarnation was Künzang Tendzin; the third was Kelzang Gyamtso; the fourth was Chuzang Kunga Zangpo; and the fifth was thus that of Chuzang Namkha Longyang. This Lama is included within the lineage masters of Dorjé Drak and had a great importance for the lineage itself. He became the tutor of both the seventh incarnation of the Great Knowledge-Holder, Ngawang Mingyur Lhündrup Dorjé, and of the eighth incarnation, Kelzang Péma Wangyel.<sup>7</sup>

In *The Mirror Illuminating the Ultimate Clarity, A History of Thubten*

<sup>1</sup> Namely Rig 'dzin Khams gsum zil gnon (see the previous section).

<sup>2</sup> I.e., the teachings of the Great Perfection, regarded as the core of the entire system of the Buddha's teachings in general and of the Northern Treasures in particular.

<sup>3</sup> The Development Stage (*bskyed rim*) and the Perfection Stage (*rdzogs rim*), the two stages of the tantric path.

<sup>4</sup> As we have already seen in this volume (p. 103 n. 5), ripening (*smin*) refer to empowerments (*dbang*) that ripens the mind, while liberating (*grol*) refer to secret instructions (*man ngag*) that lead to liberation.

<sup>5</sup> An., *sNgo mtshar bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs byin rlabs bdud rtsi sprin phung zhes bya ba*, pp. 109-110.

<sup>6</sup> <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/G2174>.

<sup>7</sup> See the sections 7 and 8 of the present chapter.

*Dorjé Drak Monastery (Thub bstan rdo rje brag dgon gyi lo rgyus don gsal snang ba'i me long)*, authored by Khenpo Lodrö Zangpo, it is said:

*Chuzang Dorjé Chang himself was the main direct disciple of the sixth Knowledge-Holder (Khamsum Zilnön). He became the master and tutor of the seventh and eight incarnations of the latter, as well as the administrator of the monastic center (of Dorjé Drak). He rebuilt the Zangdok Pelri temple at the top (of the monastery), and below, where a waterfall overlooks the Tsangpo (river), on the left banks, he restored the Avalokiteśvara Temple (housing the statue) of Mahādeva and some of its emblems.*

*Furthermore, he predicted that the Rinchen Ling statue from the Gautama Chöchok Yongphel Temple would later be erected. It should also be added that he lived to the age of sixty-nine and that he was extremely kind to Dorje Drak monastery.*

As stated in this quote, he was a master who displayed an extreme kindness toward (the tradition of) Dorjé Drak.

The sixth incarnation (of his *tulku* line) was Künga Rinchen; the seventh was Chuzang Drimé Loden; the eighth was Chuzang Tulku Péma Ngédön Drimé Lodrö; and the ninth was Kelzang Namdak Dorjé.<sup>8</sup>




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<sup>8</sup> The biography of this last *sprul sku* is given in the next section. Khenpo Chöying evidently decided to connect the biography of sKal bzang rnam dag rdo rje to that of the latter's first incarnation, at the risk of totally disrupting the chronological order of the lineage masters.

## 6. Chuzang Rinpoché Kelzang Namdak Dorje

Now, as to the ninth incarnation,<sup>1</sup> Chuzang Rinpoché Kelzang Namdak Dorjé was born in the south, in Chongyé, near Tramdruk in Yoru, within the uninterrupted family line of the Nepalese Vasudhara. His father, Tséwang Namgyel, belonged to the special tantrika lineage of Ngödrub Ding,<sup>2</sup> while his mother, Chödrön, came from the line of the House of Hor. He was born as their son on the Female-Bird year of the sixteenth Tibetan cycle, corresponding to 1934 in the Western calendar, in the Chongkhang estate. He was unanimously recognized as an emanation of his previous embodiment by the fifth Réting Tulku, Gyeltsab Réting Rinpoché, a.k.a, the supreme Thubten Jampel Yéshé Tenpai Gyeltsen, by Dzatrüü,<sup>3</sup> and by the 90th throne holder of Ganden, Jampa Chözang.

When he was five years old, in the fifth month of the Earth-Tiger year (1938), officials and their large entourage from Chuzang Ladrang, Dorjé Drak monastery, Yardrok Taklung, and Drak-ra Ladrang installed him on the throne of Dorjé Drak and gave him ordination vows. The abbot of Dorjé Drak in office (at that time) performed the ceremony of cutting the first hair of Gyelsé Tulku (i.e., Chuzang Rinpoché) and bestowed upon him the name Kelzang Tendzin Namdak Dorjé.

Then, at Dorjé Drak, he began learning to read and write from Gégen Rabyé and others, and memorized rituals according to the practice lineage of the Knowledge-Holder of Northern Dorjé Drak. He further attained the highest mastery in the arts of (ritual) dance, chanting, and drawing maṇḍalas.

As clearly described in the supplement to this master's biography written by the Great Kathok Rigdzin, the manner in which he turned the wheel of reading, listening and reflecting is as follows:<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of the Chu bzang *sprul sku*.

<sup>2</sup> dNgos grub lding/sdings. On this place see M. Akester, "The Rediscovery of dNgos grub sdings", *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu, 1867–1940.

<sup>4</sup> The wheel of reading, listening, and reflecting (*klog pa thos bsam gyi 'khor lo*) is one of the "three wheels of abandoning and reading" (*spang klog 'khor lo gsum*), which consists of : 1. the wheel of reading, listening, and reflecting, basically describing the training a master underwent, the transmissions he received, etc.; 2. the wheel of Meditation on renunciation (*spong ba bsam gtan gyi 'khor lo*), describing the practices he engaged in during specific retreats, and so forth; and 3. the wheel of persistent activities (*bya ba nan tang gyi 'khor lo*), also known as the wheel of the karma associated with his activities (or wheel of karmic deeds, *bya ba las kyi 'khor*

From his uncommon root-master, namely the lord of the lineage Bané Tulku Gyelo, *a.k.a.* Shédруб Gyeltsen, he received:

- the major empowerment of the *Sūtra Gathering Contemplation* (*dGongs pa 'dus pa mdo*);
- the main empowerment of the peaceful and wrathful deities according to the *Net of Illusions* (*sGyu 'phrul*);
- empowerments and reading transmissions amounting to nearly forty volumes of teachings and supplements from the two lineages—from Dokham and Ü—of the Northern Treasures;<sup>5</sup>
- the cycle of teachings (revealed by) Khordong Tertön;<sup>6</sup>
- the cycle of Treasures (discovered by) Nyakla Sögyel;<sup>7</sup>
- the reading transmission of most of the *Collected Works* of Do Shukjung Tulku, Tsültrim Zangpo;<sup>8</sup>
- *The Thirty-Seven Practices of the Sons of the Victors* (*rGyal sras lag len*);
- *The Entrance into the Conduct of a Bodhisattva* (*sPyod 'jug*);
- *The Great Guidance on the Three Vows* (*sDom gsum khrid chen*);
- *The Gradual Path of Secret Formulas* (*gSang sngags lam rim*);<sup>9</sup>
- *The Precepts known as the Garland of Views* (*Man ngag lta phreng*);<sup>10</sup>
- the guidance on the *General Principles of the Guhyagarbha* (*gSang snying spyi don*);<sup>11</sup>
- the *Life-Entrustment of Tsering Ma*, according to the *Longchen Nyingthik*;<sup>12</sup> as well as
- *The Life-Entrustment* according to the Kham tradition of Gaṇapati, and so forth.

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*lo*), which essentially relates how he taught the Dharma, how he spread the teachings, and where, etc.

<sup>5</sup> The lineage of dBus corresponds to that of rDo rje brag in Central Tibet, whereas the lineage from mDo khams is mDo rDo rje brag in Dar rtse mdo, in Khams. See Chapter IV.

<sup>6</sup> A.k.a. Nus Idan rdo rje (1802–1864). For a short biography of this master, see Arguillère, “Khordong Terchen Nuden Dorje”.

<sup>7</sup> See the description of his works in Achar, *Pema Thugtik*, pp. 93-99.

<sup>8</sup> See the bibliography *in fine* under sPrul sku Tshul lo.

<sup>9</sup> This is a corpus of short works that were revealed by Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1124–1192). They are included in volume 60 of the Sechen edition of the *Rin chen gter mdzod*.

<sup>10</sup> See the detailed study and translation of this important work in Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, pp. 137-174.

<sup>11</sup> See the bibliography *in fine* under Klong chen pa.

<sup>12</sup> 'Jigs med gling pa, *Tshe ring ma'i srog dbang byin pa'i skor*, *gSung 'bum*, vol. 8, pp. 363-373.

From the fifth Gotsa Choktrül, Jamyang Khyenrab Gyamtso (1920–1971?), he received the complete empowerments and reading transmissions of the *Longchen Nyingthik*, as well as the complete six volumes dedicated to the cycle of Shinjé Tsédak, according to the revelations of Gya Zhangtrom.

From Drong-ngur Chöjor Gyamtso, born into the So clan, he received the *Collected Writings* of Lélung Rigdzin Zhépai Dorjé. Then, from Drong-ngur Mapham Rinpoché, he received the complete *Liberation through Hearing in the Bardo* (*Bar do thos grol*), including empowerments and reading transmissions of the *Peaceful and Wrathful Deities* (revealed by) Karma Lingpa. He also received numerous cycles of teachings from the Old Kadam tradition and from the Kagyü (lineages).

From Gotsa Khengen, Thekchok Tendzin, he received the empowerments and reading transmissions of the complete lines of transmission from both the Kham and Ü lineages of the Northern Treasures.

From Gotsa Péma Gyurmé Gyamtso, he received the guidance on the *Oral Advice from Master Samantabhadra* (*Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*), as well as the *Collected Works* of Peltrül Rinpoché.

From Sera Khangsar Rinpoché, he received the *Guhyajñāna* collection of Lélung Zhépai Dorjé, the *Cakrasaṃvara* volume together with its profound Path of Methods.

From his own uncle hailing from Ngödrub Ding, Künga Jigmé Zilnön, he received the empowerment and reading transmission of the [Black] *Yamarī* (*gShin rje kha thun*) cycle from the teachings of the latter's father, those of *Yama Lord of Life* (*Tshe bdag*), and the complete set of teachings on Yamāntaka by the fifth Dalai Lama.

Thereafter, he went to India and followed the Lord of Refuge, Dodrub Rinpoché,<sup>13</sup> as his main master, receiving from him countless empowerments and reading transmissions of *The Oral Tradition of the Ancient Translations* (*sNga 'gyur bka' ma*),<sup>14</sup> *The Repository of Precious Treasures* (*Rin chen gter mdzod*),<sup>15</sup> *The Four Classes of Heart Drops* (*sNying*

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<sup>13</sup> I.e., the fourth rDo grub chen rin po che, also known as Thub bstan phrin las dpal bzang po (1927–2022).

<sup>14</sup> A collection of Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga tantras and related works purportedly dating back to the imperial period and transmitted in an uninterrupted manner. This collection was first compiled by gTer bdag gling pa (1646–1714) and his brother Lo chen Dharma Śrī (1654–1717). See its basic structure in Thondup, *Hidden Teachings of Tibet*, pp. 184–185.

<sup>15</sup> A large collection of *gter ma* compiled by Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (1813–1899). See its structure in *id.*, pp. 186–188. See also the website dedicated to this collection here: [https://rtz.tsadra.org/index.php/Main\\_Page](https://rtz.tsadra.org/index.php/Main_Page).

*thig ya bzhi*),<sup>16</sup> *The Seven Treasures of Longchenpa* (*Klong chen mdzod bdun*),<sup>17</sup> the nine volumes of Jigmé Lingpa's (*Collected Works*),<sup>18</sup> the *Collected Writings of Dodrubchen III, Tenpai Nyima* (1865–1926),<sup>19</sup> as well as *The Six Volumes of Jatsön Nyingpo* (*'Ja' tshon pod drug*),<sup>20</sup> and so on.

As to the manner in which he practiced the wheel of Meditation on renunciation,<sup>21</sup> he based himself on the root text of *The Quintessence known as the Crucial Lamp* (*Yang tig gces sgron*)<sup>22</sup> and perfectly accomplished the five hundred thousand preliminaries of the Northern Treasures by means of *The Five Nails*,<sup>23</sup> excepting Guru-Yoga.

In Dorjé Drak (in exile), he practiced *The Secret Moon* (*Zla gsang*) of

<sup>16</sup> This collection regroups four cycles, namely: 1. the *Bi ma snying thig* (see Achard, *Bima Nyinthik*: [http://www.wikidz.artremy.com/wiki/Bima\\_Nyinthik](http://www.wikidz.artremy.com/wiki/Bima_Nyinthik)), 2. the *mKha' 'gro snying thig* (*id.*, *Khandro Nyinthik*: [http://www.wikidz.artremy.com/wiki/Khandro\\_Nyinthik](http://www.wikidz.artremy.com/wiki/Khandro_Nyinthik)), 3. the *Bla ma yang tig* (*id.*, *Lama Yangtik*: [http://www.wikidz.artremy.com/wiki/Lama\\_Yangtik](http://www.wikidz.artremy.com/wiki/Lama_Yangtik)), and 4. the *mKha' 'gro yang tig* (*id.*, *Khandro Yangtik*: [http://www.wikidz.artremy.com/wiki/Khandro\\_Yangtik](http://www.wikidz.artremy.com/wiki/Khandro_Yangtik)), the last two being compositions by Klong chen pa (1308–1364). Another cycle by Klong chen pa, the *Zab mo yang tig* (*id.*, [http://www.wikidz.artremy.com/wiki/Zabmo\\_Yangtik](http://www.wikidz.artremy.com/wiki/Zabmo_Yangtik)), is often added to the collection.

<sup>17</sup> These are: 1. *The Treasury of Absolute Space* (*Chos dbyings mdzod*), 2. *The Treasury of Philosophical Tenets* (*Grub mtha' mdzod*), 3. *The Treasury of the Natural State* (*gNas lugs mdzod*), 4. *The Treasury of Precepts* (*Man ngag mdzod*), 5. *The Wish-fulfilling Treasury* (*Yid bzhin mdzod*), 6. *The Treasury of Topics* (*Tshig don mdzod*), and 7. *The Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle* (*Theg mchog mdzod*). See Klong chen pa, *Klong chen mdzod bdun*, [purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW2KG232485](http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW2KG232485).

<sup>18</sup> See *Kun mkhyen 'jigs med gling pa'i gsung 'bum*, ed. by Sonam T. Kazi, Gangtok, 1970-1975, 9 volumes. [purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW1KG10193](http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW1KG10193).

<sup>19</sup> There are several editions of his *Collected Works*. See *inter alia*, [purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW23907](http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW23907).

<sup>20</sup> This is the collective name of 'Ja' tshon snying po (1585–1656)'s works, which exist in several versions. See *inter alia*, *'Ja' tshon pod drug*, ed. by Taklung Tsetrul Pema Wangyal, 1979-1982, 8 volumes.

<sup>21</sup> *spong ba bsam gtan gyi 'khor lo*. Cf. note 4 above. See the illuminating explanation of these three wheels in A. Kretschmar, *Drops of Nectar*, vol. 1, p. 117 n. 836.

<sup>22</sup> This text is included in vol. 43 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, as well as in vol. 12 of the *Rin chen gter mdzod* (Sechen ed.). The original work was composed by Phrin las rab rgyas (a.k.a., Zur chen Chos dbyings rang grol) and commented on by Padma phrin las; see Arguillère, "Histoire des manuels de pratique du *dGongs pa zang thal*," p. 225 *et seq.*

<sup>23</sup> These *Nails* refer to: 1. taking Refuge and generating *bodhicitta* (*skyabs 'gro sems bskyed*); 2. releasing the grasping at a self (*bdag 'dzin bkrol ba*); 3. the purification of obscurations and the confession (*sgrib sbyangs bshags pa*); 4. the reflection on impermanence urging [renunciation] (*bskul 'debs mi rtag pa*); and 5. the Guru-Yoga (*bla ma'i rnal 'byor*). See appendix 6 in *fine* of the present volume. See also Arguillère, *Manuel de la transpiration immédiate*, pp. 139 *et seq.* For more details, see Tulku Thondup, *A Commentary on the Northern Treasures Accumulation Praxis known as The Five Nails*, *passim*.

Longevity Lord Yamantaka,<sup>24</sup> while in Dharamsala, he performed the combined practice of *The Six Luminous Rays of White Tārā* (sGrol dkar 'od zer drug sbrags sgrub pa).<sup>25</sup> In the practice sanctuary of the Tiger Peak (sTag rtse) in Sikkim, he dedicated a seven-week retreat to accomplishing *The Inner Practice of the Heir of the Knowledge-Holders* (Nang rig 'dzin gdung sgrub),<sup>26</sup> *The Secret Practice of Dorjé Draktsel* (gSang sgrub rdo rje drag rtsal),<sup>27</sup> completing it with one hundred days of a series of combined practices of Phurba. I<sup>28</sup> have discussed here a mere fraction of what he engaged in, such as the continuous daily meditations on *The Combined Practices of Phurba*<sup>29</sup> and that of Longevity Lord Yamantaka,<sup>30</sup> which he performed every day, etc.

Now, regarding the wheel of karmic deeds which illustrates the manner in which he taught and disseminated the noble Dharma, he conferred all kinds of empowerments, reading transmissions and teachings, spreading them throughout Dorjé Drak, Yamdrok Taklung, Chuzang Hermitage, Dorjé Drak in Dartsédo, Ba Drubpa monastery, and so forth. When he traveled to India, to the Lord of Refuge Dilgo Khyentsé Rinpoché (1910–1991), Zhéchen Rabjam (b. 1967) and others, he gave:

- the empowerments and reading transmissions of *tertön Lérab Lingpa's Fully Perfected Assembly* (Yongs rdzogs 'dus pa),<sup>31</sup>
- *The Three Quintessential Principles of the Mother Tantras* (Ma rgyud snying po don gsum),<sup>32</sup> as well as the empowerment and

<sup>24</sup> On this collection of works commonly known as the corpus of the *gShin rje tshé bdag*, see *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 18-27. On this cycle, see Arguillère, "Yamāntaka Among the Ancients".

<sup>25</sup> This is a cycle of teachings that originates from Ba ri lo tsā ba (1040–1111), who initiated his own tradition (*ba ri lugs*) connected to Tārā. Ba ri was a master of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158).

<sup>26</sup> This is a *gter ma* revealed by Rig 'dzin rgod ldem. It is included in vol. 5 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>27</sup> The whole collection of original revelations and complementary compositions is included in volumes 6-8 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>28</sup> The locutor is Khenpo Chöying.

<sup>29</sup> The teachings associated with this Phur pa practice are included in volume 13 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>30</sup> See note 24 above.

<sup>31</sup> In volumes 4 and 5 of *The Collected visionary revelations and textual rediscoveries* (*gter chos*) of Las-rab-glin-pa, alias Ņag-bla Bsod-rgyal (1856-1926). See the bibliography in *fine* for full references.

<sup>32</sup> This is a short cycle of four works that were revealed by Byang bdag bKra shis stobs rgyal. It is included in vol. 35 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, pp. 137-143 under the collective title of *Ma rgyud snying po don gsum gyi bla ma phyi nang gsang ba de kho na nyid dang bcas pa'i sgrub thabs gter gzhung ma*. As can be seen in this volume 35, the original texts have been supplemented with works from: 1. 'Gyur

- reading transmission of the *Extraordinary Secret* (*gSang ba rmad byung*);<sup>33</sup> and
- the manual of *The Transparent Contemplation* (*dGongs pa zang thal*) authored by Shukjung Tulku Tsültrim Zangpo, etc.<sup>34</sup>

To the Lord of Refuge Taklung Tsétrül Rinpoché (1926–2015), he offered a few cycles of teachings and instructions from Tulku Tsüllo. In Hongkong, he gave the cycle of the God of Wealth according to the Northern Treasures.<sup>35</sup>

In 2000, he set foot in Taiwan and took permanent residence in a center he had founded, named Jangter Dodrak Chötsok (“The Northern Treasures Religious Association of Dorjé Drak”). For about seven years, he gave empowerments and reading transmissions of *The Liberation of All Beings* (*Gro ba kun grol*)<sup>36</sup> in the Center of the New Treasures of Dödjom Rinpoché, as well as *The Practice of the Heir of the Knowledge-Holders* (*Rig ’dzin gdung sgrub*),<sup>37</sup> and the complete teachings on the God of Wealth from the Northern Treasures.

He traveled to the Rigdzin Drubdé center following the Kathok tradition, as well as to the Zangdok Pelri center in Taichung,<sup>38</sup> where he gave numerous empowerments, reading transmissions and precepts to those who formulated requests and those attending the teachings in large and small groups.

To summarize briefly, he sent the Tulku of Dokham Dorjé Drak,

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med padma mchog grub, *Ma rgyud snying po don gsum gyi las byang khrigs su bsdebs pa*, pp. 121-136; 2. Lung rtogs bstan pa’i nyi ma (a direct disciple of bKra shis stobs rgyal), *sNying po don gsum rgyun khyer*, pp. 145-146; and 3. gNyang rigs bDe chen stobs rgyal, *Ma rgyud snying po don gsum gyi dbang chog nag ’gros su bkod pa skal ldan shing rta’i rgyun bzang zhes bya ba*, pp. 147-166.

<sup>33</sup> This is a cycle of *gCod* teachings appended to the *dGongs pa zang thal*. It is added to the latter cycle because the *gSang ba rmad byung* was discovered at the same Treasure site (Zang zang lha brag) from the same Brown Chest of Rhinoceros Hide (*bse sgrom smug po*); see Rig ’dzin rGod lIdem, *gSang ba rmad byung gi chos ’byung gleng gzhi zhes bya ba*, in *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 3, p. 384. The *gCod* cycle included in this collection (vol. 3) covers pp. 375-498.

<sup>34</sup> See the translation by Tulku Thondup, *Boundless Vision, All-Good Boundless Vision – A Manual of Dzogchen Changter Yoga*, *passim*. See also a French translation in Arguillère, *Manuel de la transparution immédiate*, *passim*.

<sup>35</sup> See the *Dzam bha la dkar po’i nor sgrub rin chen spungs pa* revealed by rGod lIdem (*Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 7, pp. 659-665); this is the root-text on which numerous works were elaborated (included in volume 8 of the same collection).

<sup>36</sup> This is the main Avalokiteśvara cycle included in the Northern Treasures. It is based on *The Tantra of the Universal Liberation of all Beings, the Wish-fulfilling Gem of the Great Compassionate One* (*Thugs rje chen po yid bzhin nor bu ’gro ba kun grol gyi rgyud*, in *sNga ’gyur byang gter chos skor phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 4, pp. 1-31).

<sup>37</sup> As we have seen above (n. 26), it is a revelation made by Rig ’dzin rGod lIdem himself.

<sup>38</sup> These are important *rNying ma* centers in Taiwan.

along with his children, to Taiwan to perform a fasting ritual aimed at encouraging virtuous activities. He requested that the manuscript of the (cycle of) *The Powerful Conduct of the Bodhisattoas* (*Byang chub spyod dbang*)<sup>39</sup> from the Northern Treasures be obtained, translated into Chinese, and printed together with its (associated) ritual. He (also) explained how ceremonial scarves inscribed with auspicious signs and old books should be prepared and manufactured. Accordingly, the Kathok Rigdzin Practice Center prepared the (necessary) prerequisites, printing one thousand books containing the daily liturgy (of this cycle) and making as many ceremonial scarves inscribed with (auspicious) signs. (The master) was requested to confer empowerments, which he promised to grant with extremely great delight.

Not long after, he visited the Kathok Rigdzin Practice Center: to all who came (for the event), he instructed them not to forget the destined deity on which their flower had fallen (during the empowerment), and displayed a photograph of Dodrak Rigdzin Chenmo. During the teachings he gave (at that time), he placed this photograph among the offerings and recited uninterrupted prayers toward it.

He gave (transmissions) one after the other, starting with the reading transmission of *The Sublime Clarification of the Daily Practice of Dorjé Drak* (*rDo brag chos spyod rab gsal*),<sup>40</sup> as well as:

- the cycle of *The Liberation of All Beings by the Great Compassionate One* (*Thugs rje chen po 'gro ba kun grol*) connected to the empowerment of the one-thousand Buddhas;<sup>41</sup>
- *The Powerful Conduct of the Bodhisattoas* (*Byang chub spyod dbang*) twice;
- the great empowerment of the three collections of *Kagyé* (*bKa' brgyad rnam gsum*);<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> On this cycle, see Schiller, “Das Studienbuch des 5. Yol mo sPrul sku,” p. 869, n. 102. See also *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 14, pp. 163-219.

<sup>40</sup> This is a collective work whose latest version seems to be the *rDo rje brag e wam lcoq sgar 'dus sde rnam kyī chos spyod rab gsal*, Delhi, 2003.

<sup>41</sup> As seen in note 34 above, the *Thugs rje chen po 'gro ba kun grol* cycle is included in volume 4 of the *Byang gter chos skor phyogs bsgrigs* collection. However, I was unable to locate any empowerment ritual of the one thousand Buddhas related to this cycle in the whole collection.

<sup>42</sup> These three collections are the *bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa* revealed by Myang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1124–1192), the *bKa' brgyad yongs rdzogs* discovered by Gu ru Chos dbang (1212–1270), and the *bKa' brgyad rang byung rang shar* excavated by Rig 'dzin rGod ldem (1337–1409). There is also an extensive medicine practice (*sman sgrub*) authored by Theg mchog bstan 'dzin (mGo tshwa mkhan chen, 20<sup>th</sup> c.) entitled *The Splendid Path Rejoicing the Victorious Ones* (*rGyal ba dgyes pa'i lam bzang*, *Byang gter chos skor phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 57, pp. 289-330) that styles itself as a “medicine practice

- *The Solar Rays Explaining the Kagyé* (*bKa' brgyad rnam bshad nyi zer*);<sup>43</sup>
- the two *Guidance Manuals* (*Khrid yig*) by Menlungwa;<sup>44</sup>
- *The Recitation Manual* (*bsNyen yig*) by Rigdzin Péma Trinlé;<sup>45</sup>
- *Mipham's Explanation* (*Mi pham rnam bshad*);<sup>46</sup>
- the great empowerment for the three Phurba-Razors (*phur ba spu gri rnam gsum*);<sup>47</sup>
- *The Recitation Manual* (*bsNyen yig*) by Yölmowa;<sup>48</sup>
- the three *Recitation Manuals of Phurba* (*Phur ba'i bsnyen yig*) by Shukjung Tulku Tsültrim Zangpo;<sup>49</sup>
- the extensive empowerment of Yamāntaka Lord of Longevity;<sup>50</sup>
- *The Guidance Manual* (*khrid yig*) of the Fifth Dalai Lama and of Mipham;<sup>51</sup>
- *The Layout of the Stūpa for the Lord of Longevity* (*Tshe bdag mchod rten gyi thig rtsa*);<sup>52</sup>

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of the three categories of *bKa' brgyad*" (*bKa' brgyad rnam gsum gyi sman sgrub*) but actually combines the teachings of Rig 'dzin Padma 'phrin las and sKal bzang Padma dbang phyug, together with the *bKa' brgyad rang shar* and the *bKa' brgyad gsang rdzogs* (p. 330).

<sup>43</sup> The only text that I know of with the title of *bKa' brgyad rnam bshad* is a work by 'Ju Mi pham (1846–1912), but its ornamental title is not *Rays of Light* (*Nyi zer*) but rather *Quintessence of Accomplishments* (*dNgos grub snying po*; see below). In this context, *Nyi zer* cannot be a reference to Myang/Nyang ral.

<sup>44</sup> On *sMan lung ba* (*Mi bskyod rdo rje*, 13<sup>th</sup> c.), see *rJe btsun sman lung pa chen po'i rnam thar dad pa'i 'jug ngogs*, *sNa 'gyur byang gter chos skor phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 48, pp. 323-332. I have not been able to identify the two *Guidance Manuals* (*Khrid yig khag gnyis*), but given the Mahāyoga context (with the preceding mention of the *bKa' brgyad*), this may refer to his *General Principles of the Guhyagarbha Tantra* (*gSang snying rgyud kyi spyi don*) and his *Infinite Luminous Rays – Summary of the Glorious Guhyagarbha Tantra* (*dPal gsang ba snying po'i bsdus don 'od zer mtha' yas*). This needs to be confirmed.

<sup>45</sup> Most probably *The Rays of the Moon – Recitation Manual of Avalokiteśvara according to the Northern Treasures* (*Byang gter spyen ras gzigs kyi bsnyen yig zla ba'i 'od zer*, in *op.cit.*, vol. 62, pp. 93-99), which Rig 'dzin Padma phrin las signs as Shākya'i dge slong Pad phrin Ma ni ba (p. 99). The text was written in Gong dkar rDo rje gdan, at the behest of his disciple bsTan dzin chos 'phel (from Don grub gling in La stod).

<sup>46</sup> Evidently not the *bKa' brgyad rnam bshad* referred to in note 43 above.

<sup>47</sup> There exist several lists of these *Razors*. See Cantwell & Mayer, "The Creation and Transmission of a Textual Corpus in the Twentieth Century", p. 71 n. 18.

<sup>48</sup> He is known as Yol mo sprul sku and bsTan 'dzin nor bu (1598–1644).

<sup>49</sup> See *sPrul sku tshul khriims bzang po'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 3, pp. 1-206.

<sup>50</sup> There are about seventeen texts of various lengths that are empowerments associated with the cycle of Yamāntaka in the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs* (vols. 18-26), but not a single one of them appears to be a *dbang rgyas pa*.

<sup>51</sup> The abridged titles are too vague to permit identification of these manuals.

<sup>52</sup> Two works can potentially correspond to this *Layout*, namely *The Beacon Clarifying the Layout* (*Thig rtsa gsal ba'i sgron me*, *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 19, pp. 313-316),

- *The Practice of the Iron Castle* (*lCags mkhar lag len*);<sup>53</sup>
- *The Dorjé Phalam* (*rDo rje pha lam*) being the poison empowerment (*dug dbang*) connected to Hayagrīva, which he gave twice;<sup>54</sup>
- the condensed empowerment of *The Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* (*Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*);<sup>55</sup>
- its guidance (*khrid*) authored by Shukjung Tsültrim Zangpo;<sup>56</sup>
- the guidance known as *The Ornaments of Samantabhadra's Contemplation* (*Kun bzang dgongs rgyan*) or *Extracting the Essence of the View of the Great Perfection* (*rDzogs chen lta ba dmar 'byin*);<sup>57</sup> and
- the explanation, together with its reading transmission, of *The Great Guidance on the Definitive Ascertainment of the Three Vows* (*sDom gsum rnam nges khrid chen*).<sup>58</sup>

On these occasions, he exhorted (his disciples) to recite the Hundred-Syllable-Mantra<sup>59</sup> one hundred million times, and about two hundred (practitioners) accepted to do so. More than six hundred people pledged to fast on various occasions and about one hundred pledged to make uninterrupted offerings at the nine times (of the day) for the rest of their life. Furthermore, he gave extensive empowerments, reading transmissions, together with guidance, for *The Four Categories of Heart Drops Teachings of the Great Perfection* (*rDzogs pa chen po snying thig ya bzhi*)<sup>60</sup> to more than one hundred persons assembled there. He also gave the reading transmission of *The Seven Treasures* (*mDzod bdun*)

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which indicates on its title page that there are two layout texts associated with this cycle, and *The Layout of the Black Stūpa* (*mChod rten nag po'i thig rtsa*, *ibid.*, vol. 19, pp. 497-501). The first one is a *gter ma* (without colophon or attribution), while the second is an unsigned composition.

<sup>53</sup> Not located yet.

<sup>54</sup> This probably refers to either to the *Dug dbang rdo rje'i pha lam gyi snyan brgyud rtsa ba* (in *ibid.*, vol. 13, pp. 527-532) or the *Byang bdag dbang po'i sdes mdzaa pa'i dug dbang rdo rje'i pha lam bsnyen thabs* (*ib.*, pp. 533-540).

<sup>55</sup> There is no such title within the *dGongs pa zang thal* collection.

<sup>56</sup> See S. Arguillère, *Manuel de la Transparution Immédiate*, 2016, and Tulku Thondup, *Boundless Vision*, 2018.

<sup>57</sup> This is a work by sPrul sku Tshul lo, on which see Arguillère, "Histoire des manuels de pratique du *dGongs pa zang thal*", p. 252.

<sup>58</sup> The root-text on *The Definitive Ascertainment of the Three Vows* is of course the famed work authored by mNga' ris paṇ chen (Padma dbang rgyal, 1487–1542). Its *Great Guidance* (*Khrid chen*) is still to be identified.

<sup>59</sup> This is the long Vajrasattva mantra.

<sup>60</sup> <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW12827>.

and *The Trilogy on Natural Ease* (*Ngal gso skor gsum*).<sup>61</sup>

In the small chamber of Kathok Rigdzin Tulku, he gave with great benevolence numerous empowerments and readings transmission such as:

- the ritual practice of the Lord of Longevity (Tshe bdag); the practice of Yamāntaka crushing the Kikang enemies;<sup>62</sup>
- the empowerment to the longevity practice known as *The Iron Trunk* (*lCags sdong ma*);<sup>63</sup>
- the empowerment and guidance on the longevity practice known as *The Swirling Ambrosia* (*bdud rtsi 'khyil ba*);<sup>64</sup>
- the *Longchen Nyingthik* volume on Za Rāhula,<sup>65</sup> or the empowerment and reading transmission of *The Poisonous Razor of Za Rāhula* (*gZa' bdud dug gi spu gri*) as well as the guidance on how to perform offerings while traveling;<sup>66</sup>
- the practice of the black Dö rituals;<sup>67</sup>
- the reading transmission of the entire Guardians of the Revelation of the Northern Treasures;<sup>68</sup>
- the reading transmission for the practice of Gönpö Lekden according to the Kham tradition;<sup>69</sup>
- *The Biographies of the Ocean of Oath-Bound Gods* (*Dam can rgya*)

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<sup>61</sup> Both *The Seven Treasures* and *The Trilogy on Natural Ease* are works by Klong chen pa (1308–1364). See the bibliography *in fine* for references.

<sup>62</sup> *Ki kang* are spirits of some sort, sometimes described as nāgas or as earth lords (*sa bdag*).

<sup>63</sup> There are several empowerment rituals connected to the *lCags sdong ma* cycle, including works consisting of notes (*zin ris*) and others of a more elaborated nature. These works are included in volumes 43 and 60 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>64</sup> Texts from this cycle are included in vol. 33 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>65</sup> The translation is tentative since I don't know any "volume" (*pod*) dedicated to gZa' bdud in the *Klong chen snying thig*. One may think that *klong chen* refers to Klong chen pa, however he has not produced any volume dedicated to gZa' bdud either. The expression may refer to Klong chen pa's previous embodiment as Padma Las 'brel rtsal (1291–1315?), who indeed discovered two volumes centered upon the rituals and practice of this deity. These are included in vol. 28–29 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>66</sup> These texts are most obviously those included in vol. 28–29 of the *Byang gter* compilation mentioned in the previous note.

<sup>67</sup> On these rituals, see Blondeau 1990. There is a *mdos nag* ritual included in the *Byang gter* compilation and associated with gZa' Rāhula: *gZa' rgod chen po'i bskang gso mdos nag*, in *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 28, pp. 63–71. The text was recovered by sPrul sku Tshul rdor (i.e., Padma Las 'brel rtsal, 1291–1315?) from the lDang lha phra mo Rock (p. 71). Other *mdos* rituals connected to the Northern Treasures can be found in vol. 53 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>68</sup> These works are included in volumes 12, 45, and 61 of the *Byang gter* compilation.

<sup>69</sup> mGon po legs ldan is a form of Mahākāla, often riding a lion.

- *mtsho'i rnam thar*) by Lelung Zhépai Dorjé;<sup>70</sup>
- the Tsi'u Marpo cycle of teachings;<sup>71</sup>
- Tulku Tsüllo's teachings on mind training (*blo sbyong*),<sup>72</sup> as well as the reading transmission and guidance on *The Garland of Views being the Precepts of Guru [Padmasambhava] (Gu ru'i man ngag lta phreng)*;<sup>73</sup>
- the *dhāraṇīs* and biography of Dodrubchen Rinpoché (*rdo grub gzungs rnam*);
- as well as a series of spiritual songs on the View (*lta mgur*), and so forth.

He further gave three “snow-hats” intentionally prepared<sup>74</sup> as well as a mala, a manuscript copy in Rinpoché's own handwriting of *The Guidance Manual of the Transparent Contemplation (dGongs pa zang thal khrid yig)*, precious pills dating from the time of the thirteenth Gyelwang Rinpoché (i.e., the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama),<sup>75</sup> the throat-dagger of the Nepalese Vasudhara (belonging to the tantrika lineage of) Ngödrub Ding, and the soul-stone (*bla rdo*) of the eight categories (of Gods and Demons) used among his descendants and formerly belonging to the Nepalese Mönlam Sengé.<sup>76</sup> He encouraged and exhorted (his disciples) to maintain, protect and spread his dharma lineage. He said that the old printed works of the Chöchö Nénang temple in Dorjé Drak should be (widely) disseminated, as they were authentic sources. Through great effort, he commissioned one thousand copies to be printed at his own expense. Through his actions, he performed great waves of activities that benefited the Revelation (of the Buddhas) in general and (this Northern Treasures lineage) in particular.

Now, as to the way he peacefully entered the Wheel of the inexhaustible ornaments of the Absolute Space,<sup>77</sup> it is as follows:

In 2009, he arranged to meet the Dodrak Kyabgön Rigdzin Chenmo

<sup>70</sup> Sle lung rje drung bZhad pa'i rdo rje, *Dam can bstan srung rgya mtsho'i rnam par thar pa cha shas tsam brjod pa sngon med legs bshad*, vol. I & II, Leh, 1979.

<sup>71</sup> There exist numerous individual works about Tsi'u dmar po throughout Tibetan literature. In the context of the *Byang gter* collection, these can be found in volumes 32 and 57. There is no precision in the narration about the provenance of these teachings centered around Tsi'u dmar po.

<sup>72</sup> This certainly refers to his *Blo sbyong sbyor ba bdun ma'i dmigs khrid zab lam sgo 'byed*, in his *gSung 'bum*, vol. 9, pp. 35-218.

<sup>73</sup> This is the *Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba'i dgongs don rtogs sla'i bsdu's 'grel blo gros 'dab stong 'byed pa'i nyi snang*, in his *gSung 'bum*, vol. 4, pp. 287-368. On the *Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba*, see *supra* note 10 of the present section.

<sup>74</sup> For the occasion of all these transmissions.

<sup>75</sup> Thub bstan rgya mtsho, 1876-1933.

<sup>76</sup> See M. Akester, *op.cit.*, *passim*.

<sup>77</sup> I.e., the manner in which he passed away.

at the International Buddhist Congress in Taiwan. On the evening of April 1<sup>st</sup>, a joyous gathering and banquet took place at the historic Yenhren Grand Hotel. (On that occasion,) Chuzang Rinpoché offered to Kyabgön Rigdzin Chenmo his money and personal belongings. As soon as he left and went to the outer guesthouse, Chuzang Rinpoché shed tears but said repeatedly that this would not be the last time he would meet this senior master, this Lord of the Revelation.<sup>78</sup>

During the sixth month, he fell ill and the (practitioners) at the Kathok Rigdzin Practice Center performed numerous ceremonies for “stability of life”,<sup>79</sup> carrying out many *tshethar* rituals.<sup>80</sup> Gönjang Rinpoché consulted Do Drubchen (1924–2022) and had extensive rituals for “stability of life” accomplished.

Then, on the twelfth day of the eighth month, Kathok Rigdzin Tulku, Orgyen (a monk from Gönjang), together with Yangchenma (the daughter of Jadrel Rinpoché<sup>81</sup>) were invited: he made a list of all the items he had to offer and gave orders so that they should be distributed accordingly. He then handed his testament to Kathok Rigdzin Tulku, as well as manuscript letters to Dodrak Kyabgön Rigdzin Chenmo, Do Drubchen, Jadrel Sangyé Dorjé, etc. Afterwards, he advised them (to recite) a quatrain in the form of an aspiration prayer (for his own benefit).

On the 14<sup>th</sup>, he reviewed his testament and the list of items he had to offer. Making his mind, he said: “I would be happy if (now) I were to offer them such clear explanations.<sup>82</sup>”

On the 19<sup>th</sup>, at 4:00, he phoned Dodrak Kyabgön Rigdzin Chenmo and they spoke for about fifteen minutes, after which he said: “We, from Dorjé Drak, have this Lord teaching the equal flavor of the eight dharmas and thus have great merits. When I saw eminent masters who were only concerned with worldly grandeur, my faith and respect for Kyabgön Rigdzin Chenmo greatly increased. Now that I have been born into this teaching of his<sup>83</sup> and that I will die without having to dispel any (breaks) in samaya, I feel that a good fortune has befallen me.”

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<sup>78</sup> I.e., rDo brag Rig ‘dzin chen mo.

<sup>79</sup> These rituals belong to the *zhabs brtan* genre, and aim to stabilize the longevity of a master while gathering the circumstances conducive to furthering his activities for the sake of the teachings and sentient beings.

<sup>80</sup> *Tshe thar* is a type of ritual during which animals destined for slaughter are purchased and then liberated. It is said to create favorable circumstances for the longevity of those on whose behalf it is performed.

<sup>81</sup> Bya bral Sangs rgyas rdo rje (1913–2015).

<sup>82</sup> In reference to the explanations contained in his Testament.

<sup>83</sup> *Khong gi bstan zhabs su skyes*. This means that Chu bzang rin po che feels fortunate to have obtained a human body and to have made a connection with this lineage of sKyabs mgon Rig ‘dzin chen mo.

On the 26<sup>th</sup>, he phoned Do Drubchen Rinpoché and said: “If we don’t meet again in this life, please focus on meeting me in the next! And when the time comes, please give me the *lung* for the transference (of consciousness) and do not cast me out of your mind!”

Then, on the 27<sup>th</sup>, he chanted his complete daily recitation in the morning and evening and said: “I have taken the bodhisattva vows, made confessions and have maintained my vows in an authentic manner.” In the afternoon, when a few students came before him, he said: “Jampel Ku, Péma Sung, Yangdak Thuk, Phurba Trinlé, and Damchen Dorjé Lekpa, etc., have come. The arrangements have been made. Thank you very much!”<sup>84</sup> He (then) said to Kathok Rigdzin Tulku: “I wish to go to your monastery! But you should refrain from complicated preparations as there will be nothing for you to do!”, and so (Rigdzin Tulku) promised to serve him according to his wishes.

On the 28<sup>th</sup>, (Chuzang Rinpoché) went to the retreat center, saying that he needed to recite *The Daily Practice known as the Natural Liberation of Karmic Traces (Chos spyod bag chags rang grol)*<sup>85</sup> and proceeded to do so in the company of Kathok Rigdzin Tulku. He mentioned that at present, aside from a slight cough, he does not feel any pain and is actually joyful!

On the 30<sup>th</sup>, he asked everyone to bring three pure (i.e., white) ceremonial scarves and as soon as they were presented, he melodiously chanted the mantra of Péma Thötrenge Tsel<sup>86</sup> and then offered one of these silk scarves to each of the Absolute, Enjoyment, and Emanation Bodies. Then, raising them high, he declared: “May the world not be destroyed by disease, famine and warfare! May the Three Realms<sup>87</sup> liberate as the pure fields of the Three Bodies!” He (then) greeted all the attendants, shaking hands with each of them, and said: “Thanks a lot! All is well now. I will not forget you in this life, the next, and the Bardo! I pray that you perfect the Dharma in this lifetime.” He added: “As today is the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the Tibetan calendar, let’s make a nice feast offering!” And as he was practicing according to the teachings, multiple rainbows arose in the sky above the practice-room.

In the evening, upon the Dalai Lama’s arrival in Taiwan, (his entourage) decided not to request a formal audience with (the latter) so as not to cause him any exhaustion. Instead, a letter was

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<sup>84</sup> He is having a vision of his main Yidams and is expressing his gratitude for the arrangements of his own funerals.

<sup>85</sup> This is a famed work discovered by Karma gling pa and included in the *Zab chos zhi khro dgongs pa rang grol*.

<sup>86</sup> Padma Thod phreng rtsal is a wrathful form of Padmasambhava. It is in this emanated manifestation that Padmasambhava is said to have conquered the *rākṣasas* after his stay in Tibet.

<sup>87</sup> The Desire Realm, the Form Realm, and the Formless Realm.

immediately submitted. The main point was to request prayers for the passing of Dodrak Chuzang Tulku<sup>88</sup> and he himself said that simply being able to deliver the letter was sufficient. Carrying the letter and the “support of dedication”,<sup>89</sup> Kathok Rigdzin Tulku immediately went to the airport and handed them directly to (His Holiness’) personal secretary.

During the night, he read *The Beams of Light of the Direct Introductions to the Six Bardos* (*Bar do drug gi ngo sprod kyi zer thag*) from the writings of Kyabjé Zenkar Rinpoché Thubten Nyima (b. 1943) and formulated aspiration prayers.

On August 31<sup>st</sup>, at 7:20 in the morning, his two attendants inquired about his health and Rinpoché smiled, bowing his head to indicate he was feeling fine. He asked the monk Orgyen: “Bring me a tea with milk!” But as soon as the monk reached the kitchen, Rinpoché looked at his two attendants, made a gesture, and uttered a sound resembling “A-ḥam”, passing away while maintaining a dignified posture.

Immediately afterward, Kathok Rigdzin Tulku recited *The Direct Introduction to the Bardos* (*Bar do ngo sprod*), *The Liberation-through-Wearing* (*bTags grol*), *The Sūtra on the Wisdom of the Time of Death* (*‘Da’ ka ye shes kyi mdo*), and so forth. As he was proceeding with a clarification of the state of realization, extremely auspicious circumstances manifested, such as a pure sky, and so forth. He then phoned Dodrak Kyabgön Rigdzin Chenmo, Dodrub Rinpoché, Zenkar Rinpoché, Péwar Rinpoché, and others. The event was immediately reported to Gongsu Kyabgön Chenpo (the Dalai Lama) through his main personal secretary, Ngawa Tsegyam. As soon as the activities such as releasing (Rinpoché’s) Mind were completed,<sup>90</sup> his remains were carried to the temple.

At the request of Gönjang Rinpoché, some twenty abbots and Tulkus from Pelyül Monastery were invited. When they carried out the funerary rites (lit. “ceremony of the remains,” *gdung mchod*) according to the Minling Dorsem tradition,<sup>91</sup> numerous auspicious signs visible by all occurred, such as rainbows arising every day from multiple directions, flowers of the four seasons blossoming at once throughout the surroundings, while a wonderful fragrance permeated

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<sup>88</sup> I.e., his own passing.

<sup>89</sup> *bsNgo rten*, i.e., dedication gifts and offerings made by the entourage of a deceased person.

<sup>90</sup> *Thugs dam dkrol ba*. The term *thugs dam* refers both to a period and to a meditative state in which the mind of the deceased remains absorbed immediately after death. During this time, there is little, if any, sign of bodily decomposition. Once the period concludes, the mind of the deceased is actually transferred either to a pure realm, or to a favorable rebirth, among other possibilities.

<sup>91</sup> *sMin gling rdor sems*, a cycle of teachings centered upon Vajrasattva and revealed by gTer bdag gling pa (1646–1714).

both the interior and exterior (of the temple). The required activities such as the offerings for the funerary ritual, etc., were performed by Kathok Rigdzin Tulku, Gönjang Rinpoché, Khen Rigdzin, and others. More than five hundred remains and relics of various colors were offered to build a reliquary in the mother monastery of Dorjé Drak in Tibet. Seven multicolored relics, along with some bone remains, were taken by Gönjang Rinpoché to build a great reliquary in Sikkim. From the ashes of his body, several thousand relics were obtained, which still continue to increase.

The funerary rites were (also) performed at the mother monastery of Dorjé Drak and at Gönjang, (on the basis of the cycle of) *The Great Compassionate One Liberating all Beings* (*Thugs chen 'gro ba kun grol*), while in the Kathok Rigdzin Practice Center, they performed *The Manifest Joy of Vajrasattva* (*rDor sems mngon dga'*) for forty-nine days.

The supreme Dodrak Kyabgön Rigdzin Chenpo directed his focus on preparing a prayer for the prompt return (of Rinpoché) and determined that the support of his rebirth, Nyima Zhönu, would be found in a perfect place.

This biography was written in response to a request formulated by Kathok Rigdzin Chenmo residing in Taiwan.



## 7. Ngawang Mingyur Lhündrub Dorjé, the Seventh Rigdzin Chenpo (1810–1844)

**R**egarding the seventh Rigdzin Chenpo, Ngawang Mingyur Lhündrub Dorjé, *The Prayer to the Lineage Masters of Dorjé Drak* (*rDo brag bla ma brgyudpa'i gsol 'debs*) says:

*To the expert in all Sūtras and Tantras showing kindness to beings,  
To the regent of Padmasambhava, the vajra holder of a divine caste,  
Dressed in the three religious robes<sup>1</sup> and holding the vajra and the bell,  
To Ngawang Jampel,<sup>2</sup> I address my supplication!*

This Knowledge-Holder was born at Namsé Ling in the Mönkhar region<sup>3</sup> and was installed on the religious throne of Dorjé Drak.

His family possessed a very fine handwritten *Kanjur*, which brought him good fortune.<sup>4</sup>

He pursued extensive studies and became renowned as an extremely learned person, emerging as a great *paṇḍit* expounder of the five sciences.<sup>5</sup>

It is said that his main tutor in the specific tradition of the Northern Treasures was Chuzang Rinpoché Namkha Longyang.<sup>6</sup>

Sources record that he compiled the request prayers of Dorjé Yudrönma,<sup>7</sup> and that (within his tradition) there exists a long-life

<sup>1</sup> The shawl, the robe, and the shirt.

<sup>2</sup> This is a secondary name of the 7<sup>th</sup> Rig 'dzin chen po incarnation.

<sup>3</sup> On Mon mkhar, see Martin Vernier, "The Forgotten Citadel of Stok mon mkhar," *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no. 27, 2013, pp. 81-102. rNam sras gling is also the site where Rig 'dzin Padma phrin las was born in 1641. See Valentine, *The Lords of the Northern Treasures*, p. 192. In *ib.*, pp. 196-197, referring the reader to Gyurme Dorje (2005), sMon mkhar rNam sras gling is described as "a large seven-story manor in Dranang (Gra nang) County (...)."

<sup>4</sup> Owning such a copy is traditionally said to bring good fortune, dispel obstacles and even ensure prosperity for the family in possession of it. Having a printed version of the *Kanjur* is said to provide similar benefits, but possessing a handwritten copy indicates that his family certainly was, or had once been, wealthy.

<sup>5</sup> These are grammar, logic, philosophy, medicine, and crafts.

<sup>6</sup> See his biography in this chapter, section 5.

<sup>7</sup> rDo rje g.yu sgron ma is a peaceful female protector, often described as a beautiful worldly deity, while also serving as a guardian of the Dzogchen teachings. See Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, *The Longsal Divination of Dorje Yudronma*, *passim*.

practice, which was a contemplative treasure (*dgongs gter*) from his former and later incarnations,<sup>8</sup> that was included in the *Rinchen Terdzö*.<sup>9</sup>

He passed away before completing his (prophesized) lifespan, departing for another realm at the age of twenty-five. (Other sources) also say that he died at the age of thirty-four.



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<sup>8</sup> *sku gong 'og*.

<sup>9</sup> I have not been able to locate this work in the sources currently available to me.

## 8. Kelzang Péma Wangyel, the Eighth Rigdzin Chenpo (1848–1880)

**R**egarding the Eighth Rigdzin Chenpo, Kelzang Péma Wangyel, the *Lineage Prayer of Dorjé Drak* (*rDo brag brgyud 'debs*) says:

*To the Companion of the Sun, the fortunate and fourth supreme guide,<sup>1</sup>  
To the incomparable holder of the immaculate tradition of Péma Kara,<sup>2</sup>  
To the twofold emanation (of these two abiding as) non-dual,  
To the powerful king of the Knowledge-Holders, I send my prayers!*

This eighth incarnation was born in the Earth-Monkey year (1848) of the fourteenth cycle in a place called Yaktö in Lhodrak, into the family lineage of Lhodrak Marpa Rinpoché.<sup>3</sup> (At the time), the main tutor (of the lineage) was Chuzang Namkha Longyang—the rebirth of Chuzang Péma Ngawang Tendzin, the mind emanation of Péma—who recognized him as the rebirth of the great Rigdzin, invited him (to the monastery) and placed him on the religious throne of Dorjé Drak.

This noble master<sup>4</sup> bestowed upon him all the teachings, empowerments, and reading transmissions—primarily those of the Northern Treasures—in a single, complete, and perfect transmission. Thus, his main tutor in the context of the specific tradition of the Northern Treasures was (definitely) Chuzang Rinpoché Namkha Longyang.

Furthermore, he followed numerous tutors and studied countless profound sūtric and tantric teachings of the *Kama* and *Terma* lineages.

Owing to his personal daily practice, he brought renunciation and realization to their fullest limit.

Through his activities of the three wheels—namely 1. the wheel of reading, listening and reflecting, 2. the wheel of Meditation on renunciation, and 3. the wheel of persistent activities—he became an

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<sup>1</sup> These are two epithets of the Buddha Śākyamuni, of whom Kelzang Péma Wangyel is considered to be an emanation. Śākyamuni is regarded as the fourth among the one thousand and two Buddhas that are said to appear during the present fortunate *kalpa*. In this context, Śākyamuni is described as “the fourth guide” (*rnam 'dren bzhi pa*).

<sup>2</sup> This tradition (*lugs*) is that of the Ancients (*rnying ma pa*), Padmakara being the correct from translating “Padma ‘byung gnas” (instead of Padmasambhava).

<sup>3</sup> Mar pa (1012–1097) was a famed *lotsāwa* and the main master of Mi la ras pa (1052–1135). On Mar pa, see Ducher 2017, *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> I.e., Chu bzang rin po che.

unrivaled holder of the teachings of the Ancient Translations in general, and of those of Dorjé Drak in particular.

He revealed secret Treasures, such as actual Treasure substances (*rdzas gter*), as well as holy statues (*sku tshab*), etc. He also subjugated his mental continuum and engaged in the conduct of a *siddha*. (However,) he held great respect for the Vinaya teachings of the noble Dharma, instituting the practice of renewing and restoring (monastic vows) during the waxing and waning phases of the moon within the monastic community.

In Drakyang Dzong, for the benefit of beings and the general spread of teachings throughout the Tibetan realm, he performed—until the arising of signs—numerous rituals of destructive wrathful activities, such as repelling Mongolian armies at the frontier, thereby becoming widely famous.

The central government of the Ganden Phodrang granted him the title of Hothokthu (*Huthukthu*).<sup>5</sup>

Among his many students, the two (most prominent) were Chuzang Tulku Péma Ngédön Drimé Loden, a lineage holder of the Northern Treasures, and Jigmé Gyelwai Nyugu, a.k.a., Kuzhab Namgyel, the *tulku* of Gyelsé Dzamling Drukdrak, born into the Khyentsé descent line.

Thus, after maintaining these extensive activities, he departed for another realm, in the Iron-Dragon year (1880) of the fifteenth cycle, at the age of thirty-three.<sup>6</sup>




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<sup>5</sup> This is a Mongolian title (*qutuqtu*, Ch. *hutuketu* 呼圖克圖) corresponding to the Tibetan *sprul sku*. See Ulrich Theobald, "Tibetan and Qing Troops in the Gorkha Wars (1788–1792)," p. 117 n. 24. It is one of several loanwords imported from Mongolian language into Tibetan, such as *amchi* (doctor), Dalai (Lama), etc.

<sup>6</sup> That is, thirty-two according to our computation.

## 9. Jigmé Gyelwai Nyugu & Péma Drimé Lodrö

**R**egarding Jigmé Gyelwai Nyugu,<sup>1</sup> otherwise known as Kuzhab Namgyel, born in the Khyentsé family lineage and (recognized as a) *tulku* of Gyelsé Dzamling Drukdrak, the *Prayer to the Lineage Masters of Dorjé Drak* (*rDo brag bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs*) says :

*To Gyelsé Dzamling Drukdrak who has obtained siddhis in this age  
And was magnificently born in the lineage of the Knowledge-Holders,  
Who supremely fulfills the hopes of fortunate disciples,  
To Jigmé Gyelwai Nyugu, I address my prayer!*

This noble master was the direct disciple of the eighth Rigdzin Chenpo, Kelzang Péma Wangyel and the lama of the ninth Rigdzin Chenpo, Thubten Chöwang Nyamnyid Dorjé. In the *Biography* of Rigdzin Chenpo Nyamnyid Dorjé, it is said:

A consultation was held among the former abbots and other (officials) to determine who would be a suitable tutor for this master. In the Sisum Namgyel Protectors' chapel,<sup>2</sup> they performed a divination, invoking the minds of the protective deities, and the lot fell upon the holy spiritual friend<sup>3</sup> Kelzang Tsültrim. The appropriate sequence of concrete offerings—such as presenting him with a ceremonial scarf as a support for his investiture as the tutor of the great Kyabgön (Rinpoché)<sup>4</sup>—were conducted and thereafter, on the fifteenth day of the waxing moon, which was very auspicious owing to the conjunction of stars and planets in the *pūrvāṣāḍhā* constellation,<sup>5</sup> the all-pervading master Kelzang Jigmé Gyelwai Nyugu began reciting the thirty

<sup>1</sup> He should be clearly distinguished from another famed master of the same name, a lineage holder of the *Klong chen snying thig* lineage about whom see Tulku Thondup, *Masters of Meditation and Miracles*, pp. 163-172.

<sup>2</sup> Srid gsum rnam rgyal. This is one of the many temples that existed within rDo rje brag itself. See Kun bzang 'gro 'dul rdo rje, 2004, p. 13 (quoted by Tenpa Tsering Batsang, "Reflection on the Dzungar Persecution," p. 238 n. 139).

<sup>3</sup> Emending *bshes gnyid dam pa* to *bshes gnyen dam pa*. The expression has the same meaning as *dge ba'i bshes gnyen* (skt. *kalyāṇamitra*), i.e., "good friend" but actually conveys much more than this. In fact, it is closer to "tutor", which is generally the rendering used for *yongs 'dzin* (regarded by some as the honorific form of *dge ba'i bshes gnyen*).

<sup>4</sup> I.e., 'Jigs med rGyal ba'i myu gu himself.

<sup>5</sup> *Chu stod zla ba*, roughly corresponding to the July-August period. In traditional Indian astronomy, the *pūrvāṣāḍhā* is the first of the *aṣāḍhā* ("the invincible constellation") and is associated with the water element (and therefore with Apa, the goddess of water). It is the twentieth of the twenty-seven constellations.

consonants (according to) Thönmi <sup>6</sup> and memorizing profound aspiration prayers.

As stated in this abstract, (Kelzang Tsültrim) was invited to assume the charge of the tutorship of Rigdzin Chenpo (Jigmé Gyelwai Nyugu).<sup>7</sup> (Regarding the latter), in the verses of his autobiography, the ninth incarnation of Rigdzin Chenpo<sup>8</sup> says:

During the Fire-Monkey year, when I was eleven,  
My root-master, a lord holding the Vinaya in the Khyentsé family  
line,  
Kelzang Jigmé Gyelwai Nyugu, came from Kham  
And started (my training) with the Dorjé Phurba empowerment  
according to the Northern Treasures (followed by)  
The outer, inner, and secret Practices of the Master,<sup>9</sup> *The Natural  
Arising of the Eight Pronouncements*,<sup>10</sup>  
Both *The Iron Mask* and *The Iron Scorpion*<sup>11</sup> (revealed by) Gya  
Zhangtrom,<sup>12</sup> as well as his *Amṛta Kuṇḍali*,<sup>13</sup>  
*The Gathering of the Clans of the Three Bodies*,<sup>14</sup> *The Secret Gathering of  
the Master*,<sup>15</sup> and *The Excellent Wish-fulfilling Vase*,<sup>16</sup>  
*The Furious One with Nine Heads*,<sup>17</sup> *The Complete Assembly of the  
Knowledge-Holders*,<sup>18</sup> and *The Liberation of Saṃsāra within Primordial  
Space*,<sup>19</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Thu mi in the original, corresponding to Thon mi sambhota, the 7<sup>th</sup> century minister to whom the invention of the Tibetan alphabet is traditionally credited.

<sup>7</sup> Here Khenpo Chöying moves straight to the formation the ninth Rigdzin received from rGyal ba'i myu gu (instead of discussing the latter's education).

<sup>8</sup> I.e., Chos dbang mnyam nyid rdo rje. See his biography in the next section of this chapter.

<sup>9</sup> *Bla sgrub phyi nang gsang gsum*.

<sup>10</sup> *bKa' brgyad rang byung rang shar*. For the contents of this cycle, see volume 9 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs* ([http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW2PD17457\\_0DDB4B](http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW2PD17457_0DDB4B)). See also Neumaier, "bKa'-brgyad rañ-byuñ rañ-śar, ein rJogs c'en Tantra", *passim*.

<sup>11</sup> *lCags 'dra and lCags sdig*. These are two sets of teachings associated with Mañjuśrī. See Arguillère, "Yamāntaka among the Ancients". On the *lCags sdig* cycle of teachings associated with rGya zhang khrom, see rGya zhang khrom, *gShin rje gshed lcags sdig skor*, *passim*.

<sup>12</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>13</sup> Not identified yet.

<sup>14</sup> *sKu gsum rigs 'dus* (discovered by Byang bdag bKra shis stobs rgyal, 1550–1603).

<sup>15</sup> *Bla ma gsang 'dus* (revealed by Gu ru Chos dbang, 1212–1270).

<sup>16</sup> Emending 'dod bun bzang to 'dod bum bzang.

<sup>17</sup> *Drag po dbu dgu*, a revelation made by *gter ston* Legs ldan bDud 'joms rdo rje (1512–1625), centered upon a wrathful form of Padmasambhava.

<sup>18</sup> *Rig 'dzin yongs 'dus*. This is also a cycle revealed by Legs ldan bDud 'joms rdo rje.

<sup>19</sup> *'Khor [ba] dbyings sgrol*. Again, this is a treasure discovered by Legs ldan bDud 'joms rdo rje. The cycle is variously known as the *Profound Path displaying the Liberation of Saṃsāra within Primordial Space* (*Zab lam 'khor ba dbyings sgrol*) or more generally as the *Thugs rje chen po 'khor ba dbyings sgrol*. See Dom po Thub bstan

*The Collection of the Teachings of the Sugatas,*<sup>20</sup> and *The Profound Seal of the Karma Guru.*<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, he carefully granted me empowerments and reading authorizations of the old and new *Kama* and *Terma* cycles, including their practice guidance;

In particular, I fully received (from him) *The Collection of Ancients Tantras,*<sup>22</sup> *The Seven Treasuries,*<sup>23</sup>

*The Trilogy of Resting from Weariness,*<sup>24</sup> together with the complete *Collected Writings* of Jigmé Lingpa, and we had an unexcelled feast among fortunate ones (to celebrate the occasion).

On the 27<sup>th</sup> day of my twelfth year in the Female Earth Pig (1839),

In order to exhort those eternalists clinging to the world to engage in the Dharma,

My master, the supreme incarnation and lord of the lineage,  
Passed beyond suffering without wavering from the dharmakāya posture.

During the cremation of his remains on the fifteenth day of the Month of Miracles,<sup>25</sup>

The colors of Indra radiated sublimely across the pure sky<sup>26</sup>

And numerous remains and relics of beryl hue (were found in his ashes).

Without delay, (a stūpa) resembling a funerary reliquary was built, with a turret

And filled with clusters made of the four kinds of relics of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.<sup>27</sup>

During the offerings presented to these many remains and relics,

An earthquake, thunder-rolls and numerous other virtuous signs occurred.

As shown in this quote, this lord of the lineage was the main tutor from whom the ninth Rigdzin received the profound teachings of the

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rgyal mtshan, “mNga’ ris rig ‘dzin legs ldan bdud ‘joms rdo rje’i gter chos”, in p. 79.

<sup>20</sup> Emending *dge gshegs bka’ ‘dus* to *bde gshegs bka’ ‘dus*. This cycle comes from both pure visions (*dag snang*) and revealed teachings (*gter chos*) by the fifth Rigdzin Chenpo incarnation, Kelzang Péma Wangchuk (1718–1779). It is included in vols. 52–53 of the *Byang gter chos skor phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>21</sup> *Karma guru zab rgya*, a teaching on a specific wrathful form of Padmasambhava.

<sup>22</sup> *rNying ma rgyud ‘bum*.

<sup>23</sup> *mDzod bdun* (by Klong chen pa, 1308–1364).

<sup>24</sup> *Ngal gso skor gsum* (also by Klong chen pa).

<sup>25</sup> *Cho ‘phrul zla ba*, the first month of the year, corresponding to the month in the historical Buddha’s life during which he subjugated heretics through multiple miracles (*cho ‘phrul*).

<sup>26</sup> The expression “colors of Indra” (*dbang po’i tshon*) refers to rainbows (*‘ja’ ‘od*).

<sup>27</sup> The four kinds of relics are: 1. the relics of the Absolute Body (*chos sku*), 2. the actual relics of the body itself (*sku gdung*), 3. the relics coming from the clothes (*sku bal*), and 4. miniature relics (*nyung du*).

Northern Treasures, and it clearly records the manner in which he passed into Nirvāṇa.

In the colophon of the empowerment ritual of the *Transparent Contemplation of the Great Perfection* (*rDzogs chen dgongs pa zang thal*) arranged by Rigdzin Natsok Rangdröl, the first Adzom Drukpa Rinpoché, it is said:

The spiritual son of the second Khyentse (Trakthung Leykyi Pawo)—namely the fifth incarnation of Zur Chöying Rangdröl, the supreme incarnation Kelzang Jigmé Gyelwai Nyugu—(was like) the victory banner of the teachings from Thubten Dorjé Drak, enriched with the glorious and perfect qualities of an erudite reverend. At the time he was offered the empowerment and reading transmission of the short lineage of this Path, he presented many offerings, including goods of great auspiciousness such as gold and special “supreme supports”, etc.<sup>28</sup> He repeatedly gave me the insistent order—not only once but both in direct and indirect manners—to compose a guidance manual on the preliminaries as well as a ritual compilation including the shrine arrangement for the empowerment, in accordance with the practice of the predecessors. Since he was a master from whom I had received numerous instructions on ripening and liberation, I was unable to decline.

If we analyze what has been stated in this quote, it is clear that this master was the fifth incarnation of Zurchen Chöying Rangdröl. Moreover, it can be understood that (this lama) and Adzom Drukpa Rinpoché were mutually master and disciple of each other. In addition, (I must add that) no (further) information on the history of this master and the Chuzang Tulku reached me.<sup>29</sup>

\*

Furthermore, in the *Prayer to the Lineage* (*brGyud 'debs*), it is said:

*I send my supplication to Drimé Lodrö (who is like)  
The sprouts of wondrous activities bending under the weight (of their  
fruits)  
In the fertile field of utterly pure ethics,  
Bestowing a feast of benefit on beings!*

This refers to the one named Chuzang Tulku, Péma Ngédön Drimé Lodrö,<sup>30</sup> who is said to have been a direct disciple of the eighth Rigdzin Chenpo, Kelzang Péma Wangyel.



<sup>28</sup> The expression “supreme supports” renders literally *rten mchog*, i.e., relics which are considered as supreme (*mchog*) supports (*rten*) for devotion, etc.

<sup>29</sup> The locutor is Khenpo Chöying.

<sup>30</sup> Khenpo Chöying does not provide any other information on this master.

## 10. Thubten Chöwang Nyamnyid Dorjé (1885–1932)

Regarding the ninth incarnation of the great vidyādhara, Thubten Chöwang Nyamnyid Dorjé, also known as Ngawang Jangchub Chökyi Lodrö, in *The Supplication to the Lineage Masters of the Northern Treasures* (*Byang gter bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs*), it is said:

*To you who directly behold the unveiled face of the Absolute Body,<sup>1</sup>  
Who guide fortunate ones on the swift path of the Great Secret,<sup>2</sup>  
Protector who has given your primordial throne away (to serve beings),  
O Nyamnyid Dorjé, at your feet I address my prayer!*

And, in *The Practice of the Master* (*Bla ma'i sgrub pa*) that the Lord of Refuge has himself composed, it is said:

*Padmasambhava, the Lord of the (Enlightened) Clans,  
Displays himself in the manner of the root-master...<sup>3</sup>*

Accordingly, the life story of this great Knowledge-Holder—the all-embracing Lord indivisible from the great master of the assembled Clans (of Buddhahood)<sup>4</sup>—is based on the biography redacted by Lathang Tulku Drachen<sup>5</sup> of Minyag, of which I<sup>6</sup> will write a brief summary in four parts:

1. the region where he was born and his enthronement to the

<sup>1</sup> I.e., the primordially pure and empty *Dharmakāya*.

<sup>2</sup> The Tantras or Secret Formulas (*gsang sngags*).

<sup>3</sup> In other words, the root-master (in this case either Thubten Chöwang himself or one of his masters) should be seen as an emanation appearing in the form of Padmasambhava from Oḍḍiyāna.

<sup>4</sup> I.e., Padmasambhava, as shown by the context.

<sup>5</sup> La thang sPrul sku dGra gcan. His name is sometimes spelt sGra gcan. La thang is also rendered as La'u thang elsewhere in the biography. La'u thang monastery is known as gSang chen 'phel rgyas gling, located in the rTa'u rdzong district in Eastern Tibet. It appears on maps under the Chinese name 劳吾通寺. See the BDRC page on this monastery at <https://library.bdrc.io/show/bdr:G4110>. sPrul sku dGra gcan played an interesting role in the ordination of Jetsunma Do Dasal Wangmo. See her biography by TibShelf at : <https://www.tibshelf.org/tibetan-translations/a-brief-biography-of-jetsunma-do-dasal-wangmo#viewer-9977r393>.

<sup>6</sup> The locutor is Khenpo Chöying, author of volume 62 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

- seat of his predecessor;<sup>7</sup>
2. his following spiritual friends and engaging in studies and reflections;
  3. his condensing of the quintessence of the practice and attaining the *siddhis* through his efforts in the yogas of the Two Stages;<sup>8</sup> and
  4. his extensive work for the good of the teachings and migrating beings, including the explanation of his final deeds.

### 1. His Birthplace and Enthronement

The place where this Knowledge-Holder was born is located in Central Tibet, within the religious sanctuary of Lhasa, near Ramoché, to the north of the Trülning Temple. He was born as the son of Sönam Topgyel—his father, who belonged to the Chinese Dragon clan lineage—and of Tséchik Drölma—his mother—, in the Female Wood Bird year, on the fifth day of the twelfth month of the fifteenth Tibetan cycle (1885 CE).

While he was in her womb, his mother had numerous wonderful dreams that are clearly described in his biography. At the time of his birth, it is reported that he was born head-first, in a non-reversed manner.<sup>9</sup> As cited in the narration of his autobiography:

On the evening of the fifth day of the twelfth month, at the end of the Bird year, I was easily born from my mother's womb, with head and rear in proper order.

It is explained that three days after his birth, thick and long white hair resembling vulture feathers appeared on the crown of his head, about three finger-widths in length, while a bright white mole emerged (on his body), upon which garlands of vowels and consonants were visibly seen encircling it.<sup>10</sup>

When he was over two years old, his mother carried the young child on her back to Néchung Drayang Ling<sup>11</sup> on the auspicious date of the third day of the divine month, when the Néchung Dharma protector or the war god Dorjé Drakden<sup>12</sup> was being invoked. The manner in

<sup>7</sup> sKal bzang padma dbang rgyal bdud 'dul rdo rje (1848–1880).

<sup>8</sup> The Development Stage (*bskyed rim*) and the Perfection Stage (*rdzogs rim*).

<sup>9</sup> This is an unnecessarily elaborate way of stating that he was born without complications.

<sup>10</sup> The appearance of vulture feathers on the top of his hair clearly recalls the same phenomenon observed in Rig 'dzin rGod ldem himself. These may be instances of a "white forelock", i.e., poliosis (*poliosis circumscripta*).

<sup>11</sup> On this monastery, see Gra bzhi Mig dmar tshe ring, *gNas chung dgon, passim*.

<sup>12</sup> See a photograph of his statue in *ib.*, image 7.

which the great Dharma protector gave them a direct prophecy (is recorded as follows) in (Thubten Chöwang)'s biography:

When the mother and child were unable to travel together with the important people (that had gathered for the occasion) and were staying under a doorway, through his unobstructed wisdom, the great emanated Dharma King himself looked at them from space and<sup>13</sup> immediately came to the doorway where he took the mother by the hand and brought her inside to sit on the throne. At that time, the great Dralha<sup>14</sup> took the young child, the precious *tulku*, in his arms and elevated him with both hands to the crown of his hat, saying: "This bodhisattva, this son of the Victorious Ones who holds the family lineage, is the one who will spread the activities of the southern monastery called Vajra.<sup>15</sup> Before long, he will come to practice in the remote retreat of Vajraśilā."<sup>16</sup> Having given this adamant prophecy, he placed the *tulku's* feet on the great throne that had been prepared. The mother was also invited to sit on a double carpet, and delicious foods of nine varieties were brought to her. The great emanated Dharma King offered a lotus hat and silk scarves along with three statues from his treasury, after which he gave the prophecy that, for the benefit of the teachings and beings, (the *tulku's*) lotus feet should live for a hundred years. To the mother, he bestowed two precious jewels worth three *srang* each,<sup>17</sup> as well as extremely long, divine silk-scarves, saying that if she possessed pure conduct, she should be able to perform whatever activities were appropriate. During that gathering, all the leaders, officials, and people, both men and women, were amazed (by the event) and considered it truly wondrous.

As stated, Néchung Dorjé Drakden recognized [Thubten Chöwang] as the reincarnation of the great Knowledge Holder.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, (the *tulku*) recalled previous lives and, among other things, recognized the patron benefactor of his preceding incarnation, known as Tsaldé-pa. Additionally, a prophecy of the great Dharma Protector Péhar stated that if the supreme *tulku* did not promptly return to his own seat without turning away, obstacles would arise.<sup>19</sup> Thus, following the prophecy, on the tenth day of the sixth month of the Earth-Male-Mouse year, 1888 CE, he set foot in the second palace

<sup>13</sup> Having entered the gNas chung oracle himself.

<sup>14</sup> rDo rje grags ldan himself.

<sup>15</sup> This is evidently rDo rje brag, the "Vajra Rock."

<sup>16</sup> Vajraśilā is traditionally identified as the site where the historical Buddha sat beneath the pipal tree. Here, Vajraśilā corresponds directly to the meaning of rDo rje brag which literally translates as "Diamond" (*rdo rje, vajra*) "Rock" (*brag, śilā*).

<sup>17</sup> About 120 gr of gold.

<sup>18</sup> I.e., Rig 'dzin rgod ldem himself.

<sup>19</sup> Returning to his seat means traveling from gNas chung to rDo rje brag.

of the glorious Pelri Péma Ö in the land of snowy mountains,<sup>20</sup> at the great seat of Thubten Dorjé Drak in Central Tibet.

At that time, led by the retired abbot Gyelsé Rinpoché and the *tulku* from Lhari Zimphuk,<sup>21</sup> the head teachers and administrators, along with an ocean-like procession of monks from central Tibet, he established his residence throne in the Nyiwö Khyilwa chamber, amid incense smoke billowing like clouds and various banners, parasols, and musical instruments leading the way.

On the fifteenth, an auspicious day when the stars and planets were perfectly aligned, he placed his lotus feet upon the throne seat supported by fearless lions—the golden throne of the previous Knowledge Holder—before the assembled monastic community, and was lavishly presented with auspicious substances and offerings. At that time, officials from the government of the great Ganden Phodrang and representatives specially sent by the precious King of Tibet (Démo Trinlé Rabgyé)<sup>22</sup> presented him with abundant gifts in ninefold sets, including silk scarves, protection cords, statues, etc., and formally enthroned him, fully empowering him with the customary edict of the great Knowledge Holder.<sup>23</sup>

From the 16<sup>th</sup> (of the month), Kyabjé Drubgön Rinpoché, the former abbot of Drépfung Losel Ling,<sup>24</sup> Drak-ra Rinpoché, the former abbot Gyelsé Rinpoché, Chuzang Rinpoché, the oracle of Nechung Tā Lama,<sup>25</sup> the queen mother of Dergué, and other lamas and incarnate teachers from Taklung Sang-ngak Chöling and elsewhere, as well as countless noble people from monasteries and individuals from (various) communities, gathered from all directions. They presented him with extensive personal gifts, including maṇḍala offerings of their own possessions and teachings, supports of the Body, Speech, and Mind (of

<sup>20</sup> The first one is located in the pure realm of Padmasambhava, *Zangs mdog dpal ri*.

<sup>21</sup> The text reads (p. 657) *lha ri gzums phug*, which must be corrected to *lha ri gzims phug*. This is the name of a hermitage where 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang po received a transmission from Yol mo sprul sku. See Akester, *The Life of Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo*, p. 286 n. 192. It is located in gTsang; see Si tu pa Chos kyi rgya mtsho, *Kaḥ thog si tu'i dbus gtsang gnas yig*, p. 223.

<sup>22</sup> He is explicitly styled as *bod kyi rgyal po rin po che* in the text (p. 657), which is evidently a mistake since De mo Phrin las rab rgyas was actually the famed regent (*rgyal tshab*) who was involved in the famous story about the boots given to gTer ston bSod rgyal (1856–1926). See *inter alia* Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, p. 195. His full name was Ngag dbang blo bzang Phrin las rab rgyas (1855–1899), and his tragic fate was such that he eventually died in prison. See Akester, *The Jébumgang Temple*, pp. 17 and 31.

<sup>23</sup> I.e., recognizing him as the incarnation of rGod ldem and of the 8<sup>th</sup> Rig 'dzin (sKal bzang padma dbang rgyal, 1848–1880).

<sup>24</sup> Blo gsal gling is one of the seven colleges of 'Bras spungs monastery.

<sup>25</sup> See image 8 in Gra bzhi Mig dmar tshe ring, *gNas chung dgon*, containing a painting of this oracle made by a “foreigner” (*phyi gling pa*) during “the previous century”.

the Buddha), as well as hundreds of offerings of gold, silver and other precious items. From that time onwards, he (continuously) upheld the former customs of Dorjé Drak (through) his deeds.

## 2. Following Spiritual Friends

Then, as to the manner in which he served his tutors and spiritual friends, initially, in the year 1887—the Fire-Pig year—after he offered his tonsure to the Victorious Thubten Gyamtso (the 13<sup>th</sup> Sovereign and Victorious Lord),<sup>26</sup> he was given the name Thubten Chöwang Nyamnyid Dorjé.

At the age of six, in the Iron-Hare year of 1891, after discussions among the former abbots and other members of the monastery regarding who would serve as this lord's tutor, investigations<sup>27</sup> were conducted through special invocations of the Mind of the protective deities inside the Protectors' chapel of the Sisum Namgyel Temple. According to the results, the successor of Do Khyentsé Yéshé Dorjé (1800–1866)—the emanation of Rigdzin Jigmé Lingpa (1729–1798)—known as Kelzang Jigmé Gyelwai Nyugu and renowned as the manifestation of Zurchen Chöying Rangdröl (1604–1669) was requested to become the tutor of this (lord). On the basis (of this decision), after discussions regarding the proper sequence for presenting material offerings such as silk scarves and so forth, on the fifteenth day of the waxing moon, when the month, day, and astrological conjunctions were extremely auspicious during the summer season, (Thubten Chöwang) began (memorizing) the thirty consonants of the alphabet, (followed by) the consonants with their vowel marks. He perfectly committed (himself to learning) reading and so forth without any difficulty. Through the triple (qualities) of his clear, pure, and melodious (recitations) of *The Practice and Praise of Mañjuḥoṣa* ('Jam dbyangs bstod sgrub), *The Brilliant Clarity of the Daily Preliminaries* (*Chos spyod rab gsal*),<sup>28</sup> *The Final and Median Rituals* (*Cho ga bar tha*), (the practice of) Dödtsi Khyilwa, etc., he successfully passed his assembly oral test, pleasing all (those gathered for the occasion).

As he was still six, in the Iron Female Hare year of 1891, at the great Gandhola<sup>29</sup> of Thubten Dorje Drak Chökhör Namgyel Ling, among the

<sup>26</sup> I.e., the 13th Dalai Lama (1876–1933), on whom see Bell, *Portrait of a Dalai Lama*, *passim*.

<sup>27</sup> In the form of divination.

<sup>28</sup> As noted above, these are the daily preliminaries in use in rDo rje brag that all monks of this institution must in theory learn by heart. It is included in volume 61 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>29</sup> This term (given in transcription in the original, p. 659) generally means “temple” and in some cases corresponds to the name of a mountain.

complete assembly of devoted monks including the supreme Dzogchen Khenpo Könchok Özer Pel Zangpo and the ritual master Khenzur Könchok Drakpa, on the afternoon of the ninth day of the waning moon of the tenth Hor month,<sup>30</sup> during the later part of the sheep hour,<sup>31</sup> he received the vows of a novice monk and (thereafter) maintained his ethical discipline with an utterly pure conduct.

From about the age of eight, he completed his memorization of texts and received in full all sorts of texts such as *The Root Grammar in Thirty Verses* (*Sum rtags*), miscellaneous works on poetry (*kavya*), the root-text on medical science along with supplements (*le lag*), texts on logic, grammar, and so forth.

Furthermore, from Dzogchen Péma Rigdzin,<sup>32</sup> he received the longevity empowerment of *The Embodiment of All Jewels* (*dKon mchog spyi 'dus*),<sup>33</sup> the reading transmission of the *Litany of Mañjuśrī's Names* (*'Jam dpal mtshan brjod*), and other teachings.

From Tertön Rangrig Dorjé (1874-1903), he received minor works,<sup>34</sup> including the longevity empowerment of *The Glorious Bestower of Immortality* (*'Chi med dpal ster*),<sup>35</sup> etc. From Ngakrig Dzinpa Jigmé Trinlé, he received *The Long-life Practice known as the Iron Tree* (*Tshe sgrub lcags sdong ma*).<sup>36</sup> From Chimphu Zurtrül Dorjé Chang, he received empowerments and reading transmissions of *Phurpa's Razor* (*Phur pa spu gri*), *The Peaceful and Wrathful Deities revealed by Karma Lingpa* (*Kar gling zhi [khrol]*), and so forth.

At the age of eleven, he said that from the Clan Lord Kelzang Jigmé Gyelwai Nyugu, also known as Jigmé Sönam Gyelchok, he received empowerments, reading transmissions, and guidance instructions like one vase filling another, starting with the Phurba teachings of the Northern Treasures. He thus stated in his autobiography in verses:

*When I was eleven, in the Fire Monkey year,<sup>37</sup>  
My root-master, the heir to the Khyentsé lineage  
And Lord holder of the vinaya,  
Kelzang Jigmé Gyelwai Nyugu, came from Kham.*

<sup>30</sup> Roughly overlapping October and November.

<sup>31</sup> This more or less corresponds to the period between 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm.

<sup>32</sup> Most certainly Thub bstan Chos kyi rdo rje (1872-1935), the fifth incarnation of rDzogs chen Padma rig 'dzin (1625-1697).

<sup>33</sup> This is an important cycle of *gter ma* revelation discovered by 'Ja' tshon snying po (1585-1656) that spread throughout Tibet as well as Sikkim.

<sup>34</sup> The original reads *phran tshags*, which should be corrected to *phran tshags*.

<sup>35</sup> *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 43, pp. 403-410.

<sup>36</sup> Included in volume 7 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>37</sup> In 1896.

*Starting with the empowerment of the Northern Treasures Vajrakāla,<sup>38</sup>  
 He gave me the outer, inner and secret practices of the master,<sup>39</sup>  
 The Natural Arising of the Eight Pronouncements,<sup>40</sup>  
 Both the Iron-Like (Lord of Life)<sup>41</sup> and the Iron Scorpion,<sup>42</sup> the Amṛta  
 Kuṇḍali,<sup>43</sup>  
 The Gathering of the Clans of the Three Bodies,<sup>44</sup> The Secret Gathering of  
 the Master,<sup>45</sup> The Wish-fulfilling Vase,<sup>46</sup>  
 The Nine-Headed Wrathful One,<sup>47</sup> The Complete Assembly of the  
 Knowledge Holders,<sup>48</sup> The Celestial Liberation of Saṃsāra,<sup>49</sup>  
 The Assembled Teachings of the Blissful Ones,<sup>50</sup> and The Profound Seal of  
 the Karma Guru.<sup>51</sup>  
 Furthermore, he excellently bestowed upon me the new and old Kama and  
 Terma (teachings), together with their empowerments, reading transmissions  
 and guidance instructions;  
 In particular, I received the Collection of Ancient Tantras,<sup>52</sup> the Seven  
 Treasuries,<sup>53</sup>  
 The Trilogy of Resting from Weariness,<sup>54</sup> together with the complete Col-  
 lected Works of Jigmé Lingpa.<sup>55</sup>  
 Having thoroughly obtained instructions in these (works), I greatly bene-  
 fitted from this unsurpassable feast of good fortune!*

As stated in this quote, this very Lord is said to be the principal holder of the transmissions that constitute the profound teachings of the Northern Treasures. Moreover, from his tutor and spiritual friend Chuzang Dorjé Chang Péma Ngédön Tenpai Nyima, Khen Lhari Zimphuk, Umdzé Döndrup, Pangleb Emchi, Gyelsé Bidza, Drak-ra Choktrül, both Chimpu Zurtrül and Thubten Rinpoche, and Lama Jigmé Trinlé, he (received numerous transmissions) and engaged in limitless study and reflection (on the meaning of the teachings). With the great

<sup>38</sup> *Byang gter phur pa*, included in volume 13 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>39</sup> *Bla sgrub phyi nang gsang gsum*, included in volume 54.

<sup>40</sup> *bKa' brgyad rang shar*, included in volumes 9-12.

<sup>41</sup> *lCags 'dra*, included in volume 20.

<sup>42</sup> *lCags sdig*, included in volumes 18-20, and 26-27.

<sup>43</sup> *bDud rtsi 'khyil ba*, included in volume 33.

<sup>44</sup> *sKu gsum rigs 'dus*, included in volumes 35, 50 and 57.

<sup>45</sup> *Bla ma gsang 'dus*, included in volumes 56 and 60.

<sup>46</sup> *'Dod 'jo'i bum bzang*, included in volume 52.

<sup>47</sup> *Drag po dbu dgu*, included in volume 34.

<sup>48</sup> *Rig 'dzin yongs 'dus*, included in volumes 30-32.

<sup>49</sup> *'Khor ba dbyings sgrol*, included in volumes 33 and 48.

<sup>50</sup> *bDe gshegs bka' 'dus*, included in volumes 52-53.

<sup>51</sup> *Karma gu ru zab rgya*, included in volume 35.

<sup>52</sup> I.e., the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*. On this collection, see *inter alia*, Achard, *Jigmé Lingpa's Catalogue of the Ancient Tantras*, *passim*.

<sup>53</sup> *mDzod bdun*, authored by Klong chen pa.

<sup>54</sup> *Ngal gso skor gsum*, also authored by Klong chen pa.

<sup>55</sup> *'Jigs gling gsung 'bum*.

scholar and accomplished master, Tulku Tsültrim Zangpo (1884–c. 1957), he studied and trained in the noble teaching of the *Abhidharma-kośa*, etc., having received—through his extensive studies and reflections—numerous textual traditions associated with Sūtras, Tantras, and the (auxiliary) sciences.

When he reached the age of fifteen in 1899, His Holiness the great Thirteenth Dalai Lama went on pilgrimage to Chökhör Gyel. On his way back, during his journey to the Crystal Rock Cave of Yarlung, [Thubten Chöwang] offered him longevity substances accomplished through *The Long-Life Practice of the Iron Pillar* (*Tshe sgrub lcags sdong ma*), and extensive material offerings in accordance with his means. He likewise delivered eloquent teachings endowed with the five perfections,<sup>56</sup> thereby supremely rejoicing the Heart of the Lord of the Victorious Ones.<sup>57</sup>

That year, as (part of) rituals dedicated to the welfare of the religious and political affairs of the great Tibetan government, he traveled throughout the entire kingdom performing exorcist rites<sup>58</sup> associated with the Eight Pronouncements (*bka' brgyad*), Phurba (*phur pa*), and the Lord of Life (*tshe bdag*). He made aspiration prayers for the well-being of the entire realm of Tibet, so that the signs from the repelling rituals (*zor*) and divinations (*pra*), etc., appeared extremely favorable.

Then, until he reached the age of twenty, he restored the essential points of the tradition and activity practices that had declined in the specific system of (Zangzang) Lhadrak, including the liturgical music with drums and cymbals, the vocal melodies and the religious dances. He also perfected those (branches of the tradition) that had not deteriorated and taught them to others.

At the age of twenty, he received the complete ordination and became a fully ordained monk in the presence of Lord Künzang Péma Drodül at Yardrok Drak-ra. From Rogdung Lama Thubten Tashi, a great yogi and master residing in Samyé Chimphu, he received the complete empowerment and reading transmission of *The Assembly of the Blissful Eight Pronouncements*,<sup>59</sup> *The Secret Perfection of the Eight Pronouncements*,<sup>60</sup> and the cycle of (Péma) Mati's Lion-Faced *Ḍākinī*.<sup>61</sup> From Minling Dordzin—Orgyen Namdröl Gyamtso—, he received *The*

<sup>56</sup> Namely the perfection of the teaching master, the entourage, the time, the place, and the actual teachings.

<sup>57</sup> I.e., the Dalai Lama.

<sup>58</sup> *gTor bzlog*. As their name indicates, these rites consist in *torma* (*gtor ma*) offering and consecutive repelling activities (*bzlog pa*).

<sup>59</sup> *bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa*.

<sup>60</sup> *bKa' brgyad gsang rdzogs*.

<sup>61</sup> *Ma ti'i seng gdong ma'i skor*.

*Assembly of The Great Compassionate One and All Sugatas*.<sup>62</sup> And in the presence of Chuzang Khenchen—Péma Ngédön Tenpai Nyima—, he received *The Sealed Cycle of the Pure Visions*,<sup>63</sup> as well as *The Abridged Empowerment Sūtra* (*'Dus pa mdo dbang*), and others.

In particular, he served for a long time at the lotus feet of Jigmé Pelgyi Sengé, the lord of the incarnation lineage of Vimalamitra, and received complete empowerments, reading transmissions, guidance instructions, as well as secret precepts related to the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*,<sup>64</sup> several profound key points of the *Kadak Gongpa Zangthel*,<sup>65</sup> and the Earlier and Later Heart Essences<sup>66</sup> teachings. Having thoroughly examined the key points of practice, he himself declared:

Since that sole Refuge, this supreme Wishfulfilling Jewel, has severed the binding rope of clinging to things as being real, I do not (and have not) from the start engaged in the fabrications of teachings that pursue the aims of this life.

He stated this explicitly, as written in his biography.

When he was twenty-five, he visited several parts of Tsang and in particular various practice sites associated with Guru Rinpoché. While at these holy places, he made extensive prostrations and offerings, establishing devoted individuals on (the Path of) Ripening and Liberation.<sup>67</sup>

On one occasion, at a place called Mindruk Zhi, he was invited by the Samyé Oracle.<sup>68</sup> Since water was extremely scarce in that area, he went to a spot on the mountain peak where there was a tiny spring. There, he buried a treasure vase of the Eight Nāgas (*klu brgyad kyi bum*

<sup>62</sup> *Thugs chen bde gshegs kun 'dus*.

<sup>63</sup> *Dag snang rgya can skor*.

<sup>64</sup> The root-tantra of the Mahāyoga class.

<sup>65</sup> Obviously the *Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*. By employing the expression *ka dag*, the author may be emphasizing that Thubten Chōwang received both the *dGongs pa zang thal* and the *Ka dag rang byung rang shar*.

<sup>66</sup> *sNying thig gong 'og*. The Earlier Heart Essences are those of Klong chen pa, whereas the Later ones refer to the revelations and composition of 'Jigs med gling pa. In a stricter sense the Earlier Heart Essences are those of the *Bi ma snying thig* and the *mKha' 'gro snying thig*. To this original corpus, Klong chen pa added his own *Bla ma yang tig*, *mKha' 'gro yang tig*, and *Zab mo yang tig* which have been subsequently incorporated by the tradition into the collection making up the "Earlier Heart Essences". The Later one is the revelation of the *Klong chen snying thig* by 'Jigs med gling pa.

<sup>67</sup> See p. 103 n. 5.

<sup>68</sup> This oracle from bSam yas monastery is said to be the "physical support" (*sku rten*) of the deity Tsi'u dmar po. See Bell, "Tsi'u dmar po: How a Northern Treasure God Became Ecumenical".

gter)<sup>69</sup> and cast nāga-medicine pills (*klu sman ril bu*)<sup>70</sup> into the water source. When he dug slightly (into the earth) with his fingers, an uninterrupted stream of water began to flow from that very spot. Before the master and his disciples could even reach the foot of the mountain, a great, fierce torrent of water—more than the irrigation ditches could hold—rushed down. He [thus] established the people of that region in a state of deep faith.

When he was twenty-six, in the presence of P'éyül<sup>71</sup> Lama Rinpoché Jigmé Trlné Namgyel, he received the direct introduction<sup>72</sup> and essential guidance<sup>73</sup> on the practices of the Great Perfection's Primordial Purity<sup>74</sup> in line with the Northern Treasures.

In accordance with an invitation extended by the 'Brahmā of the Earth'<sup>75</sup> of the South—the Governor of Bhutan—he resided there and turned the Wheel of the teachings for the people gathered (on the occasion), completely fulfilling their hopes.

From the end of that year, he rebuilt the assembly hall of Ewaṃ Chogar, which had previously fallen into disrepair. He carried out an unsurpassed restoration of the temple and its sacred contents, applying paint and ornamentations (in ways) even more elaborate than before.

Subsequently, a contagious fever epidemic caused by the class of *Nyen* spirits spread through the region. At a time when the locals were so stricken that they could hardly rise from their beds, he performed—for the general benefit of the teachings and beings—the ritual service

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<sup>69</sup> Such vases filled with sacred substances are used in geomantic rituals during which they are buried in order to protect the region, cause rain during droughts or ensure the regular flow of a spring or a river. The eight nāgas (*klu brgyad*) are often associated with the Northern Protector Vaiśravaṇa, who is a guardian of wealth. See Stein, "Mi-ñag et Si hia", p. 245.

<sup>70</sup> Tiny pills made with ritual substances (essentially medical ingredients such as plants, minerals, and so forth), blessed during a special consecration ritual. They are here thrown into the water source in order to heal the local Nāgas who in turn let the purified water flow freely.

<sup>71</sup> The original reads *spas yul*, which might have to be corrected to *sbas yul*.

<sup>72</sup> The direct introduction (*ngo sprod*) is a special feature of rDzogs chen, during which the master explains the true nature of Awareness (*rig pa*), i.e., the knowledge discerning the abiding mode of the natural state of the Mind, experienced as the nondifferentiation of Emptiness and Clarity (*stong gsal dbyer med*).

<sup>73</sup> *dMar khrid*. These are special teachings given by the master leading his disciple in a step by step manner, explaining the various successive stages of practice, the actual meaning of the lexicon used in the texts, and so forth.

<sup>74</sup> This does not seem to refer to a cycle of teachings (such as the *rDzogs chen dgongs pa zang thal* or the *Ka dag rang byung rang shar*) but rather to the instructions on "Cutting through Rigidity" (*khregs chod*), one of the two main practices of the Great Perfection.

<sup>75</sup> *Sa yi tshangs pa*. This is a title generally referring to a king (be it a local one) or a governor of a region.

of the Northern Treasures' *Conquering the Power of the Disease Lords*,<sup>76</sup> which proved effective.

During this time, this great Knowledge Holder turned his attention toward other pure lands and leaving (this life), saying that from the country of Orgyen there were unceasing welcoming parties (awaiting him), etc.<sup>77</sup>

Both Kyabgön Jigmé Pelgyi Sengé and Minling Dordzin Namdröl Gyatso, together with the chant master, incarnate lamas, the monastic body, and the lay and clerical communities of Dorjé Drak, made earnest entreaties for him to remain firm in this life, and as a result, they obtained his promise to remain for a few more years.

### 3. *The Manner in which He Condensed the Quintessence of the Practice and Attained Siddhis through his Efforts in the Yogas of the Two Stages*

At the age of thirty-one, he attained the accomplishments of the Yamāntaka (teachings) from (the lineage of) Nubchen Sangyé Yéshé, and numerous heart-sons and followers of his were blessed by treading in his footsteps. At the sacred place of Yangdzong Crystal Cave, he newly constructed a retreat center called "Victorious over Māra" (bDud las nam rgyal) on the southwestern mountain peak. (There,) beginning in the Fire-Male Dragon year (1916), he laid the foundation of the Path by engaging in the stages of accumulation and purification of the preliminaries. Then, in conclusion, he brought the practices of approach and accomplishment to their full measure, making no errors in the practices, precepts, sādhanas or the outer and inner mantras exemplified by the "three cycles of practices".<sup>78</sup>

During this interval, he invited the scholar-adept Pelgyi Sengé to the retreat house (where the master) repeatedly bestowed upon him the nectar of the instructions of the profound Path in accordance with the oral transmission of the *Dzogchen Khandro Nyingthik*, in the manner of an elaborated discourse. He also abundantly taught him the cycle of *Tummo* according to the *Longchen Nyingthik*, and so forth.

Having practiced in this manner, (Thubten Chöwang) mastered the key points of the yoga of channels, drops, and winds (*rtsa thig rlung*), thereby perfecting the dynamism of the co-emergent Wisdom.

In particular, he exerted himself in practicing the Great Perfection,

<sup>76</sup> *Nad bdag stobs 'joms*, included in volume 6 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>77</sup> It is through such elliptic statements that masters sometimes allude to their imminent departure from this life.

<sup>78</sup> These three cycles of practice are those of: 1. Phur pa, 2. the bKa' brgyad, and 3. 'Jam dpal tshe bdag. The related rituals have been published in Nub ri ba Chos kyi Nyi ma Rin po che, *Byang gter 'don cha'i skor stod cha sgrub skor rnam gsum yan lag dang bcas pa dngos grub mchog sbyin zhes bya ba*, Kathmandu, 2005.

the summit of vehicles—engaging in the deep practice of Cutting through Rigidity (*khregs chod*) and the magnificent spontaneity of Passing over the Crest (*thod rgal*). Through this, he concretely saw the true face of his self-arisen Awareness, of Suchness free from effort and striving. His Contemplation (*dgongs pa*) thus reached the ultimate viewpoint that does not deviate from Reality. In this way, he engaged in the practice of the yogas of the Development Stage, Perfection Stage, and Great Perfection—maintaining a strict retreat for three years.

Moreover, when he performed the proper approach and accomplishment practices of the *Drubchen Kagyé*,<sup>79</sup> along with the related practice of nectar medicine, even during the extremely cold months, the frozen ice around (his hermitage) would melt and great heat would suddenly descend in waves. Not only in his immediate vicinity, but throughout the entire region of Drak, all the lower valleys were pervaded by the extremely pleasant fragrance of the medicine, which all the villagers witnessed directly. Such are the wondrous exploits that happened (at the time).

When he offered medicine before the thirteenth incarnation of the Victorious One (i.e., the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama), it turned into clouds of offerings, bringing extreme joy to the latter's heart.

Regarding his pure visions, I heard that the lord himself (i.e., Thubten Chöwang) said to some of his own disciples that he had pure visions of Wisdom in which he saw that there were countless dazzling religious treasures (hidden) in great vajra places.

Regarding other matters of that kind, it is said that because the Mind of this Lama was so profound, it was difficult for others to fathom. Moreover, throughout his entire life, he continuously engaged in the yogas of the Two Stages, like the flow of a river. Owing to this, he practiced countless profound teachings, starting with the Northern Treasures, as well as (others) from the *Kama* and *Terma* (traditions, manifesting) all kinds of signs of accomplishment that were commonly perceived by others.

#### 4. His Extensive Work for the Good of the Teachings and Beings

Regarding the conclusion (of his life), as demonstrated through his final deeds, various communities and monasteries led by Miwang Chögyel, the Dharma King of Chakla<sup>80</sup> in the region of Great Tibet, made repeated requests—sending special representatives with

<sup>79</sup> *sGrub chen bka' brgyad*, an extensive ritual based on the Eight Pronouncements.

<sup>80</sup> ICags la, a principality located near present-day Kangding 康定 (Dar rtse mdo), where mDo rdo rje brag (i.e., the "Vajra Rock from [Dar rtse] mDo" is located.

petitions—inviting the supreme Dodrak Kyabgön Chenpo<sup>81</sup> to travel there in order to spread the joy and happiness of the teachings and sentient beings in Dokham.

Furthermore, after this matter was reported to His Holiness the great Thirteenth Dalai Lama, (the master) received an urgent official decree<sup>82</sup> stating that he must generate the resolve (to strive) for the benefit of the teachings and beings in the region of Great Tibet. Immediately upon the decision to proceed accordingly being finalized, the Great Central Government of the Ganden Phodrang granted exceptional support and abundant provisions, including the *lam-son* (Note:<sup>83</sup> this is a travel document allowing the requisition of horses, pack animals, and the like as corvée tax).<sup>84</sup> The administrators and others of Dorjé Drak also made all necessary travel arrangements.

When the great Knowledge Holder himself was thirty-six, in the Iron Female Bird year of 1921, he traveled to the Dokham region of Tibet.<sup>85</sup> After several days, one evening, he directly saw with his own eyes the protector of the sacred site of Dorjé Drak, the great Thubten Chögyel himself, miraculously manifesting as a majestic divine white yak, taller than a tent and appearing as if to stand guard at the entrance of his own tent. From that time forward, he established the practice of performing propitiation rituals (*bskang gsol*) for this great oath-bound protector. Proceeding gradually from there, he was received with deep reverence by his own branch monasteries and all the people of the region, who placed his lotus feet upon the crowns of their heads. He then bestowed all sorts of Dharma teachings appropriate to each of them.

As he approached Chamdo, the minister of the king, Lama Jampa Tendar, came to welcome him with a reception and presented lavish material offerings. He made a request for the removal of obstacles—specifically enemies and evil spirits hostile to the general well-being of the realm of Tibet and the religio-political rule of the Great Ganden Phodrang government. In accordance with this request, (the master) performed the appropriate rituals of protection and reversal, such as the Torma Reversal of Yamāntaka “Lord of Life”<sup>86</sup> and Vajrakīlaya,<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> I.e., Thub bstan chos dbang himself. Here the author (Khenpo Chöying) refers to him by his honorific title.

<sup>82</sup> Lit. a “golden letter” (*gser yig*).

<sup>83</sup> This note is included in the original text as an interlinear insertion.

<sup>84</sup> It implies that the holder of this “road-passport” (*lam yig*) is officially authorized to collect a tax in the form of pack animals, including horses (*rta khal*), and may also demand from the locals some imposed labor (*khral*) along the route.

<sup>85</sup> I.e., Khams in eastern Tibet.

<sup>86</sup> Included in volume 50 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>87</sup> Included in volume 13.

as well as the *Suppression of Hostile Spirits*.<sup>88</sup> He thus displayed signs indicating that the desired results had manifestly come to pass.

He bestowed upon the King, his ministers and lamas the sealed wheel (= practice) that gathers under one's power the activities of the great Lord Maheśvara. It forms part of *The Seven Dharmas of Interdependence*<sup>89</sup> from the Northern Treasures and bears potent signs of blessing. As a result, all the high (spirits of the region) were brought under his control and served as his subjects, as was clearly seen and heard.

Then, proceeding through the valleys toward Dergué and gradually reaching (a place) called Beru,<sup>90</sup> near Horkhog, a proponent of the philosophy of the Bön tradition came to debate with the master, but the latter completely defeated him with flawless (references to) scriptures and reasoning, leaving (the Bönpo) utterly speechless. Although this evil opponent continued uttering various harsh words (after his defeat), before long he was struck by a severe planetary affliction and died.<sup>91</sup>

Then, not far from the great kingdom of Chakla in Dokham, many high-ranking officials, monastic communities, and incarnate lamas under the jurisdiction of Sawang Rinpoché arrived with elaborate and perfect preparations to offer a grand welcome (to the Lord of Refuge), causing the Chinese forces to become alarmed at the arrival of Tibetan troops (in the escort).

After that, when he went to La'uthang Sang-ngak Tengyé Ling, which belonged to Dorjé Drak Monastery, it rained lightly, and he joyfully remarked: "It seems the local deities of Kham have come to welcome me today."

From Garthar Monastery, the appointed abbot of the glorious Drépfung monastic community, accompanied by lamas, monks, and administrators, came (towards his caravan) with music and ceremonial performances to offer a grand welcome.

At Nyi-nyak Pelgyi Lhagang, the great ruler of Chakla himself came to welcome him, and they met on a most propitious day, creating most

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<sup>88</sup> *dGra sri mnan pa*. There are three works of this genre in the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs* (in vol. 8, 24, and 27). Thub bstan chos dbang himself wrote a *gtor bzlog* ritual entitled *Rig 'dzin mnyam nyid rdo rjes mdzad pa'i byang gter bka' brgyad drag po rang byung rang shar gyi khro rol gtor bzlog dus rim chen mo'i zin bris 'dod dgu'i gter mdzod*, included in volume 60 of the collection, pp. 283-344.

<sup>89</sup> *rTen 'brel chos bdun*, included in volumes 15 and 42 of the collection.

<sup>90</sup> This is maybe a mistake for Be ri, which is indeed located among the Hor States, between Gling tshang and Khang gсар (east of dKar mdzes).

<sup>91</sup> Even if the event actually occurred, this is a fairly typical characterization of Bönpos by Buddhist sectarians reflecting a gross ignorance of Bön, particularly given the impressive skill of Bön adepts in debate. The event recorded here may not be entirely fabricated, but it is clearly infused with this triumphalist rhetoric that generally does not correspond to any reality.

excellent auspicious circumstances.

Then, gradually, immeasurable and countless beings from China, Tibet, and other regions gathered, along with (monks from various) monasteries and their branches, while numerous Chinese and Tibetan officials, both of high and low rank, escorted him to the great palace, bringing offering materials that filled the sky like clouds.

During that time, among the countless audiences he granted, he recognized through his unobstructed clairvoyance that the reincarnation of the all-pervading master Jigmé Gyelwai Nyugu had been born. Although no one had previously heard even the slightest mention of this, an elderly woman arrived during one of those audiences, carrying a small boy on her back. The Lord of Refuge, (i.e., Thubten Chöwang), immediately stood and instructed the chamberlain, Thubten Lungrik, to bring a fine ceremonial scarf. He placed the scarf around the boy's neck and recognized him as the reincarnation of the Son of the Victorious Ones, Jigmé Sönam Namgyel (i.e. Gyelwai Nyugu), giving him the name Thubten Chöyang Kelzang Namgyel and taking him under his great kindness and care.

Just as it is said that "when one gathers power over one's own perceptions, one overwhelms the perceptions of others," the Chinese generals who had become enemies of Tibet, and even the border peoples like the Philings,<sup>92</sup> etc., though unwilling, were compelled to submit themselves to this lord.

Thereafter, in response to a request formulated by the Chakla king, he gave the reading transmission of the *Kanjur* of the Victorious One to numerous devoted individuals. From the very first day (of that transmission), all the waters of the spring called Jardong Chumik, in the Lhamo Tsé mountain range, turned the color of milk. On the surface of a piece of rock that had fallen on one side (of the mountain), indeterminate self-arisen designs appeared, and the Chinese said that these were images of their Tārā. When the fiercest of the Chinese officials, named Tramhrö Hrö,<sup>93</sup> requested for the Lord of Refuge to explain (the practice of) Tārā, (the Lord) composed a word-by-word commentary on the twenty-one Tārā invocations and had it translated into Chinese. He thus established all the beings of that region in a pure field of devotion, possessing the power and blessings akin to those of the great northern Knowledge Holder (i.e., Gödem himself).

Moreover, to the ocean-like assembly that, in brief, included the

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<sup>92</sup> These people are said to have come from the West (i.e., western regions of China). See Stoddard, "Stitched Books from the Tibetan World", p. 377. See also, *id.*, "The Great Phi ling dmag zlog of 1888", Proceedings of the IATS Bonn Seminar, 2006 (unseen reference obtained from Akester, *The Jembumgang Temple*, p. 84).

<sup>93</sup> P. 672: *tram hro'i hro'i zer ba*. The phonetic rendering is, to say the least, very awkward.

(monks from) the surrounding monasteries of that region and patrons, he bestowed the gift of the Noble Dharma without reservation. In particular, for the benefit of the teachings and beings, he built and consecrated a new Orgyen Temple beside the Thapchen Palace, with its statues and furnishings, (blazing) like a key geomantic fire.

In the meantime, when a certain Chinese official posed a great threat, seemingly intending to defame the sovereign of Chakla, this lord performed an enemy-subduing ritual in a crucial and effective manner. Thereupon, remarkable and miraculous events occurred: the long door curtain of this important Chinese official fell down, the prison collapsed, and so forth. In the end, the Chinese official himself had to flee to the borderlands. All this is clearly reported in his biography.

Then, for the sake of benefiting sentient beings, he performed the practice of the medicinal nectar. Maintaining (his retreat) for seven days, the Lord himself carried out recitations continuously, day and night, bringing the practice to full perfection. At that time, the Lord himself said that he had obtained excellent accomplishments.

On one occasion, a letter arrived from Central Tibet announcing that the great scholar and accomplished master Jigmé Pelgyi Sengé had passed away into another realm. Immediately thereafter, as a memorial offering, he presented a full one hundred thousand feast and fulfillment rituals, and in conjunction with these, composed verses of supplication with a yearning melody.

In the Wood Mouse year of 1924, Treasurer Thubten Samphel and Manager Thubten Lhundrup arrived specifically from Central Tibet to extend an invitation. Upon their persistent request, and with travel arrangements prepared by the King of Chakla and his ministers as well as various patrons—and with facilities supplied even by the Chinese officials—he traveled with his encampment and arrived at Pel Lhagang.

In accordance with the requests of the local leaders and communities of the region, he undertook the construction of a 'Demon-Taming' Stūpa (*bDud 'dul mchod rten*) at a local site. During the ritual part dedicated to suppressing the oath-breaking spirits,<sup>94</sup> a violent windstorm arose, hail fell fiercely, and black clouds swirled about. However, through the power of his meditative absorption (*samādhi*), he overpowered them. The moment the suppression was sealed, symbolic signs appeared, such as the orb of the sun shining brilliantly, rainbow pillars towering up, etc., leaving all in a state of amazement. Following his

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<sup>94</sup> *Dam sri*, a type of malevolent spirit that is associated with samaya corruptions and refers to entities that cause the violation of commitments. See Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, pp. 300-303. See also Ramble, "Trouble with Vampires", *passim*.

personal instructions, the insertion of *dhāraṇīs* and the manner of building (the *stūpa*) were carried out to perfection, (and the undertaking) was concluded with the auspicious rites of consecration. A statue of this master was also erected on the upper level of the Jokhang (in Lhagang). It is said that from that time onward, auspicious signs appeared in the region, such as the pacification of sickness, famine, and conflict, as well as the falling of timely rain.

Similarly, because there had previously been many inauspicious occurrences of frost and hail damaging the crops in Garthar, the leaders and religious figures of Garthar sought advice from His Eminence (Thubten Chöwang). He instructed that a Namgyel *Stūpa* be built at a key geomantic point. Because they carried out this exactly according to his instructions, all (forms of) sickness and famine completely vanished, and the crops flourished abundantly. Consequently, that *stūpa* became known as “The Great Knowledge Holder’s *Stūpa*” and also as “The Good Harvest *Stūpa*.”

(Then), at La’uthang Monastery, he crafted a support-torma and a soul-stone for the Lord of the Charnel Ground<sup>95</sup> with his own hands. As a result, the community of monks flourished even more than before.

At the request of La’u Thang Tulku Drachen (also known as Thubten Lungtok Gyatso), the Lord of Refuge spontaneously wrote and bestowed an excellent text in both words and meaning, entitled *The Wish-Granting Fulfillment of Hopes: A Method for Performing the Guru Sadhana and its Offerings* (*Bla ma mchod sgrub bya tshul yid bzhin ‘dod ster re skong*).<sup>96</sup>

Then, proceeding gradually, he bestowed many empowerments, instruction-guidances, and secret precepts at numerous monasteries, both large and small, such as Khorlo Dong and Shukjung Gön.

When he was invited to Kham Khorlō Dong (or Khandong) Monastery, he crossed the pass from Hor Browu. While (traveling) on the path, a massive boulder came rolling down from the face of the scree-covered mountain. The Lord drew the *kila* (ritual dagger) from his belt and, merely by brandishing it, the rolling boulder stopped dead in its tracks. This account exists in the oral tradition of the elders and accords with what is stated in the *Invocation of the Continuum of the Knowledge Holders of the Northern Treasure Phurba* (*Byang gter phur pa’i rig ‘dzin rgyud bskul*):

*O Rigdzin Namnyid Dorjé!  
Have you forgotten how you displayed signs of accomplishment  
When the impressive rolling boulder came tumbling down?*

<sup>95</sup> An unnamed local protective deity associated with the neighboring cemetery.

<sup>96</sup> I have been unable to locate this text in the *Byang gter* collections available to me at the time of writing this footnote.

*Please assist us now in our practice of Phurba!*

According to his biography, many people requested empowerment, and although he granted them a copious amount of vase water from a small vase that was only half full, the vase was never exhausted. He thus displayed many forms of miraculous powers, etc. As stated, through his miraculous powers and signs of realization, he established people on the ground of faith.

He then met the Lord of the teachings of the Early Translations, the learned and accomplished Third<sup>97</sup> Dodrupchen, Jigmé Tenpai Nyima (1865–1926). Regarding how they mutually honored one another as “masters”, the biography composed by La’uthang Tulku Drachen clearly states:

He turned his course toward Dodrup Monastery—which is considered the essence of the religious centers of Kham, where many outstanding holders of the Piṭakas expounding scriptures and reasoning reside. (There,) he engaged in Dharma discussions and the like with the Omniscient Lord of Dodrup (monastery), Jigmé Tenpai Nyima, and they mutually partook of the nectar of Dharma from one another.

Then, passing through Bāné Monastery, Gotsa Monastery, and others, he arrived in Chamdo. The Governor General of Chamdo, the great Trimönpa, accepted him as his spiritual master and arranged his travel formalities. After performing several extensive ritual services for the benefit of the teachings, he turned his course toward the Dharma realm of Ü and Tsang.

The first welcome reception organized by his own monastery, Dorje Drak, was carefully arranged at Kongpo Gyamda by the supervisor Lhündrub La. The second welcome reception took place at the foot of Ön Dragkar where the head dharma teacher, guests, etc., gathered. The third welcome reception was held at Glorious Samyé where he proceeded to the ‘Immutable Spontaneously Accomplished’ Temple<sup>98</sup> and offered extensive thousand-fold offerings.

At the Péhar Chok temple,<sup>99</sup> the Great Yakśa [Péhar] descended in person and offered a ceremonial spear-flag. Previously as well, in accordance with the orders of the Great Government, when the supporting thread-cross structure (*rten mdos*) was being fixed (on the altar), the Great Dharma Protector offered a large seal made of black stone; through such acts, (the master) employed the Great Yakśa as a servant

<sup>97</sup> The text (p. 677) erroneously reads “fourth” (*bzhi pa*).

<sup>98</sup> *Mi ‘gyur lhun gyis grub pa’i gtsug lag khang*. This is the traditional name of the main edifice of bSam yas monastery.

<sup>99</sup> It is described as a chapel. See in particular Christopher Bell, *Nechung*, p. 231.

to obey his every command. Then, ushered in by an ocean of extremely elaborate clouds of offerings at Thubten Dorje Drak, he set foot in the great Dharma assembly of Ewaṃ Chogar.

Having requested a private audience with His Holiness the great Thirteenth Dalai Lama, they engaged in a detailed and candid conversation. (His Holiness) bestowed extensive advice, such as the necessity to highly value the purification and restoration of one's own religious tradition, just as it was before.

Then, at his own monastery of Dorje Drak, (Thubten Chöwang) bestowed *The Collection of Ancient Tantras* (*rNying ma rgyud 'bum*), together with various other empowerments and oral transmissions, upon Chuzang Tulku, Péma Ngédön Tenpai Nyima, and others. He also performed elaborate services and offerings for the monastery and the general Sangha.

When he reached the age of forty-one, he began the restoration of the Yarlung Sheldrak Cave. By the time he turned forty-five, both the structure and its contents<sup>100</sup> were successfully completed, surpassing their former condition. He performed the consecration ceremony—scattering the flowers of blessings—in conjunction with a *Mendrup* ritual<sup>101</sup> based on the Northern Treasures' Eight Pronouncements (*bka' brgyad*). In particular, since the *dhāraṇīs*, etc., inside the statue of the “Great One from Orgyen” (Padmasambhava) residing at the center of the Crystal Cave had deteriorated,<sup>102</sup> he performed a perfect and authentic re-insertion of the *dhāraṇīs* and a consecration. On that day, immeasurable auspicious signs occurred, such as the entire sky being filled with spherical rainbows and radial rays, pillars of multicolored rainbows towering up for many days and nights above the palace itself, and so forth.

On the tenth day of the Monkey Month at the Crystal Cave, he bestowed a public empowerment and granted the siddhis of sacred substances liberating upon tasting (*myong grol*) that were connected (to this initiation). Although it was rumored that the gathering of faithful men and women reached one hundred thousand, the attendants who distributed the sacred substances actually stated that there were no fewer than eighty thousand people.

Furthermore, he thought that the teachings of the Victorious Ones should endure for a very long time, and thus laid the foundation for

<sup>100</sup> “Structure and its contents” render the classic *rten dang brten pa*, referring both to the building itself (*rten*, i.e., the material support or structure of the edifice) and to its statues, shrines, maṇḍalas, thangkas, etc., that make up its contents (or what is being “supported” [*brten pa*] inside).

<sup>101</sup> *sMan sgrub*. This is a special ritual during which medical pills are prepared and blessed for ulterior practices.

<sup>102</sup> Such *dhāraṇīs* are written on paper rolls that are inserted into statues.

the Ogmin Lhündrup Phodrang Temple in the Water-Dog year (1922). In the Water Monkey year (1932), he completed the construction, including the main statue known as the precious “Splendid Auspicious Ornament” (bKra shis mdzes rgyan). As for its inner contents, it was filled to the brim with representations of Body, Speech, and Mind, sacred relics (*ringtsel*), and the like—principal among them being the ‘Thongwa Dönden’ (Meaningful to Behold) small holy statue of the Great Orgyen [Padmasambhava], which was a treasure revealed by Guru Chowang (1212–1270). Thus, this reliquary, composed of various precious materials like a wish-fulfilling jewel, was constructed as a glorious source of merit for all beings.

This great Knowledge Holder himself composed *The Precious Garland Explaining Hats* (*Zhwa bshad rin chen phreng ba*) as well as *A General Explanation of Approach and Accomplishment* (*bsnyen sgrub spyi'i rnam bshad*) and provided notes<sup>103</sup> for most of the offering rituals and practices (to perform) during major and minor periodic ceremonies, including (the ritual practices associated with) Amṛta Kuṇḍali, the great ritual of the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month, etc. Through noble deeds in harmony with the Dharma—such as teaching and propagating the approach and accomplishment practices of many important deities of the Old and New Schools, erecting and consecrating sacred edifices,<sup>104</sup> and establishing administrative rules to bring permanent funds for offerings—, he firmly planted the victory banner of the Teachings.

Thus, his activities of the three Wheels<sup>105</sup> flourished to their utmost, and he extensively fostered the welfare of the teachings and beings. Among the many personal disciples of this Lord, the lineage of empowerments and reading transmissions of the Northern Treasures spread through main lineage holders such as Choktrül Tsültrim Zangpo, Bāné Rinpoché Do-ngak Shédруп, and Dergué Gotsa Khenchen Thegchok Tendzin (also known as Jamyang Rigpai Dorjé).<sup>106</sup>

In the Water-Monkey year (1932), he traveled to Yarlung Sheldrak for the ceremonies of the Tenth Day of the Monkey month. From that time onward, he appeared to be slightly ill and said:

Just as the Compassionate Revealer (Śākyamuni) blessed<sup>107</sup> the activities of his life three months before (his passing) by erecting the Vijaya

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<sup>103</sup> *Zin tho*, in the form of explanatory manuals of shorter length.

<sup>104</sup> Lit. “supports” (*rten*).

<sup>105</sup> In this context, this refers to his studies and explanations, his contemplation practice, and the administrative charges he took for the propagation of the Dharma. There are other interpretations of the “three Wheels” (*‘khor lo gsum*), but these appear less applicable to the present context.

<sup>106</sup> See his biography in section 11 of the present chapter.

<sup>107</sup> To be understood in the sense of “concluded” or “completed”.

Stūpa, I, too, will not remain for more than three months now that this great stūpa is completed.

Reaching the age of 48, in the Water-Monkey year of the 16th Tibetan Rabjung cycle (1932 CE), on the third day<sup>108</sup> of the waxing phase of the ninth month,<sup>109</sup> his Mind passed into the Absolute Space at the supremely holy site of Sheldrak.

Regarding the final testament of this great Knowledge-Holder, he said:

For the benefit of the disciples that follow (me), one who will intentionally come as Rigdzin Lekden Jé will (soon) take rebirth.<sup>110</sup>

This moment is clearly recorded in his biography. After the funeral offerings and appropriate rituals had been perfectly carried out, his precious remains were escorted back to his own monastery, Dorjé Drak. In accordance with the Lord of Refuge's own testament, the remains were enshrined within a small stūpa situated below Dorjé Drak Monastery. For those wishing to consult a more detailed biography, please see the work composed by Minyag La'uthang Tulku Drachen, also known as Thubten Lungtok Gyamtso.<sup>111</sup>




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<sup>108</sup> The text uses the astrological term "Second Victorious One" (*rgyal ba gnyis pa*). The "Victorious One" is a code-name corresponding to the number 3. It therefore usually denotes the third day of the lunar month.

<sup>109</sup> *dByug zla*. This is the *danḍa* month, corresponding to the ninth month (*tha skar*) of the year (i.e., approximatively October).

<sup>110</sup> Legs ldan rje was an important lineage holder of the Northern Treasures and lived from 1452 to 1565.

<sup>111</sup> The author of the present biography (i.e., Khenpo Chöying) does not provide the title of this work.

## 11. Gotsa Khenchen Thegchok Tendzin (1878–1949)

**R**egarding the noble master Gotsa Khenchen Thegchok Tendzin, a.k.a. Jamyang Rigpai Dorjé, in the *Prayer to the Lineage Masters of Dorje Drak* (*rDo rje brag gi bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs*), it is said:

*To (the emanation of) Saraha, the Lord of Siddhas in India,  
To the Protector of beings, intentionally assuming the guise of a mundane  
(practitioner),  
To the extraordinary Lord of the Ocean of maṇḍalas,  
To the venerable Thegchok Tendzin, I send my prayers!*

The birthplace of the master praised in this quote was Gotsa Gönpa,<sup>1</sup> to the right of the Dzachukha river in Dergué. He was born among the dignitaries of the divine Washül clan,<sup>2</sup> in the Earth-Tiger year of the fifteenth Tibetan cycle, in 1878, as the son of Gochi Tséchuk, his father, and Aché, his mother. From childhood, he was said to have possessed a virtuous mind and to have paid careful attention to the causes and results of karma.

(One day,) when the Tulku of Kathok Yargön, Péma Guru, paid a visit to the Washül dignitaries, he said: “When I merely gazed at this Lord, I was unable to take off my own hat!”<sup>3</sup> which means that there were numerous signs indicating that (the child) was a special individual.

<sup>1</sup> On this monastery, see mGo tshwa dgon gyi lo rgyus, in *Reb gong pa 'Jigs med bsam grub, Kham's phyogs dkar mdzes khul gyi dgon sde so so'i lo rgyus gsol bar bshad pa nang bstan gsol ba'i me long*, vol. 1, pp. 235 *et seq.* This monastery, founded in 1182 by mGo tshwa Kun dga' byams pa rgyal mtshan (1134–1182, bdr:P8326), is a good example of an ambivalent establishment connected to gSar ma schools (essentially bKa' brgyud and Sa skya, *ib.*, p. 236) as well as to several rNying ma lineages, including those of Nyang ral (*ib.*), rGod ldem, and so forth. It appears that its affiliation became more oriented toward the Northern Treasures with Byang bdag bKra shis stobs rgyal (1550–1693; see *ib.*, p. 236).

<sup>2</sup> This Wa shul (var. dBa' shul) clan corresponds to both a location in Amdo and a family lineage sometimes described as a tribe or even a nation; see Van der Kuijp & Tuttle, “Altan Qayan (1507–1583) of the Tümed Mongols”, p. 474 n. 50.

<sup>3</sup> Most evidently, the meaning of this line is that the Kaḥ thog *sprul sku* was so amazed by the signs the child naturally displayed that he was unable to proceed even with the usual protocolary behavior.

Around his twenties, (Thegchok Tendzin) received three times the empowerments, reading transmissions, and guidance of the complete *Revealed Teachings* from Ge'u Tert(tön) Trakthung Dūdjom Dorjé (1835–1904).<sup>4</sup> In particular, during the Mañjuśrī empowerment, he was instructed to remain in retreat and, accordingly, he stayed at Zangyak Drak,<sup>5</sup> engaged in a Mañjuśrī retreat. At that time, he had a vision of the face of the venerable Mañjughoṣa, and from then onward, an immense treasure mine of unobstructed inspiration in all fields of knowledge was released (into his continuum).

(Afterwards,) he took ordination from the Abbot Rigdzin Shérab Phüntsoḳ and received the name Thubten Zhenphen Chökyi Nyima. With the fourth Zhéchen Gyeltsab, Gyurmé Péma Namgyel (1871–1926),<sup>6</sup> he studied numerous mainstream scriptural traditions, including the (main) sciences, and was given the name Yangchen Gyépai Loden<sup>7</sup>— a moniker indicating his intelligence.

Furthermore, with Zhéchen Rabjampa Péma Thegchok Tenpai Gyeltsen (1864–1909),<sup>8</sup> Khenchen Dharmakīrti, the abbot Rigdzin Shérab, etc., he proficiently studied Sūtras and Tantras, as well as sciences, and served as Khenpo of Gotsa monastery for many years.

From the great Rigdzin of Dorjé Drak, Thubten Chöwang Nyamnyid Dorjé (1885–1932),<sup>9</sup> he received the entire empowerments and reading transmissions of the Northern Treasures. (At that time,) he had repeated visions of Mañjughoṣa, as well as numerous pure visions of the infinite masters and Yidams. For instance, on one occasion, he had a vision of the venerable Mañjughoṣa of orange color, with one face, two hands, holding a sword and a volume, remaining for a long time in the sky before him. (On another occasion,) in Gangri Thökar,<sup>10</sup> he concretely saw the face of the omniscient Longchen Rabjam (1308–1364)<sup>11</sup> and took hold of the citadel of realization.

<sup>4</sup> He is the same person as bDud 'joms gling pa (Bdr: P705). See the translation of his autobiography in Chonyi Drolma, *A Clear Mirror*, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> An ancient and important *gter gnas* for both the rNying ma and the Bon traditions. It is located south of Lhasa in Chu shur rdzong (see bdr:G2444).

<sup>6</sup> On this master see *inter alia* his biography in [https://buddhanature.tsadra.org/index.php/People/Zhechen\\_Gyaltsab\\_4th](https://buddhanature.tsadra.org/index.php/People/Zhechen_Gyaltsab_4th).

<sup>7</sup> "The Intelligent One who Rejoices Sarasvatī".

<sup>8</sup> See his biography in Samten Chhosphel, <https://treasuryoflives.org/bo/biographies/view/The-Fifth-Shechen-Rabjam-Pema-Tekchok-Tenpai-Gyeltsen/P723>.

<sup>9</sup> See his biography in section 10 of this chapter. See also: <https://dorjedrakmonastery.in/the-9th-rigdzin-chenpo-thupten-chowang-nyamnyi-dorje/>.

<sup>10</sup> Gangs ri thod dkar was a favorite hermitage of Klong chen pa where he wrote some of his revered works, including most of the *Bla ma yang tig*, etc.

<sup>11</sup> Note that the original reads *klong chen rab 'byams pa* which is a regular error seen even in Western academic works. As shown decades ago by Samten Karmay, the

Moreover, one day, as he was sitting in session, an old monk wearing a sheep garment and holding a staff in his hand came to him and said:

“Mind is without basis and rootless; it is devoid of conditioned phenomena and is not existent, yet you keep grasping it as existent” and so on,<sup>12</sup> adding:

*Unconditioned Awareness is immutable<sup>13</sup> and in it*

*The Three Bodies<sup>14</sup> are primordially spontaneously accomplished without fluctuations,*

*Transcending eternalism and nihilism, existence and non-existence, imagination and discourse.*

*(Awareness) cannot be evaluated with the intellect and cannot be found through thoughts;<sup>15</sup>*

*It cannot be described through speech, since it transcends the objects of discourse;*

*Awareness, as an object of Meditation, and all individuals engaged in Meditation*

*Eventually purify by themselves, like the sky in which all barriers collapse.*

*All Views, Meditations, Conducts and Fruits must be transcended.*

*At that time, rest (as you are), having discarded everything (in the state of) undifferentiation.*

*This is the authentic View you should be contemplating.<sup>16</sup>*

Having said so, (the old monk) disappeared. He himself stated that

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correct form associated with Klong chen pa's name is *klong chen rab 'byams*, not *klong chen rab 'byams pa*, since *rab 'byams pa* is a title and not part of his personal name.

<sup>12</sup> A basic tautological explanation would elucidate these words as follows: the true abiding mode of the mind is without a basis on which to rely, because it does not depend on anything. It is not produced from anything and does not result from anything. Therefore, it is also defined as rootless, because it is not the fruit of anything. It is not a conditioned phenomenon, because it is not limited or characterized by anything and actually abides beyond forms, colors, and so forth. It cannot be grasped as something existent because it stands beyond extremes.

<sup>13</sup> It is immutable (*gyur med*) because, being the knowledge of the natural state, it discerns (*rig*) this state as the nondifferentiation of Emptiness and Clarity. Since the abiding mode of this state does not change (it is always Emptiness and Clarity), its knowledge is defined as immutable in the sense that it never becomes a knowledge of something else.

<sup>14</sup> That is, the Absolute Body, the Body of Perfect Rapture, and the Emanation Body (*chos sku*, *longs sku*, and *sprul sku*).

<sup>15</sup> Mental analysis cannot lead to the experience of Awareness (*rig pa*) because the latter does not depend on the presence or absence of thoughts.

<sup>16</sup> This is a perfect, genuine definition of the View (*lta ba*) of Dzogchen.

this lama was in fact Śrī Siṃha.<sup>17</sup> In<sup>18</sup> his autobiography, entitled *The Luminous Rays of the Moon, being the Account of the Life of Thegchok Tendzin* (*Theg mchog bstan 'dzin gyi rtogs brjod zla ba'i 'od zer*),<sup>19</sup> he recounted:

*When he appeared, my first thought was that he resembled Peltriül Dorjé Chang (1808–1887). After that, he seemed to me (that he appeared as) a manifestation of the great siddha and Knowledge-Holder Śrī Siṃha, but I actually thought that in essence he was Śrī Siṃha while his outer aspect was that of Peltriül Rinpoché. This is in fact not contradictory since the Contemplations of this Knowledge-Holder and this master are without any differentiation. From then on, I was convinced that there is nothing to meditate on, and no matter how (things) were explained to me, I never felt uneasy again.*

Sometimes, when he was explaining the root-tantra of the *Guhyagarbha* (*rTsa rgyud gsang snying*),<sup>20</sup> appearances of this (ordinary world) would cease, and he would experience the arising of the outer chalices in the form of Citadels and the inner elixirs in the form of deities.<sup>21</sup> As stated in his autobiography, explaining how he followed the Wisdom Illusory Body of<sup>22</sup> Jamgön Mipham Rinpoché (1846–1912), he said:<sup>23</sup>

*In general, after having studied texts, there were a few points whose meaning I did not understand (but as) the Lord of Dharma, the great erudite Mipham was unrivalled, I had the aspiration to (meet such a master), unlike other lamas. Consequently, on account of having seen him (in person), one night, I dreamed of staying with Mipham, asking*

<sup>17</sup> According to the traditional history of the Great Perfection, Śrī Siṃha was the disciple of dGa' rab rdo rje and Mañjuśrīmitra, as well as the master of Vimalamitra, Vairocana, and Padmasambhava. See his biography in Nyoshul Khenpo, *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>18</sup> Here, I skip the section *rje nyid kyi mdzad pa'i* because it is redundant and might mislead the reader if translated as "in the autobiography authored by this master". Readers might think this refers to Śrī Siṃha. I chose to simplify for the sake of clarity.

<sup>19</sup> The text is included in volume 59 of the *sNga 'gyur byang gter chos skor phyogs bsgrigs*, pp. 651-678. The abstract quote here is to be found on p. 669.

<sup>20</sup> This is the root-tantra (*rtsa rgyud*) of the Mahāyoga class and the object of numerous doctrinal polemics. See Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 121 *et seq.*

<sup>21</sup> Outer chalices (*phyi snod*) and inner elixirs (*nang bcud*) are respectively worlds or universes and sentient beings. I believe there are better ways of translating *snod bcud* than "container and its contents". "World and beings" would be an explanation, not a translation, a ridiculous deviation that is endemic in modern English translations.

<sup>22</sup> Emending *ches* to *che'i*.

<sup>23</sup> Pp. 670-671.

*questions and receiving his teachings,<sup>24</sup> and was able to inquire about numerous key points concerning topics I had not understood.*

Now, regarding the manner in which he beheld the face of Ka Dampa Deshek (1122–1192), he said in his autobiography:<sup>25</sup>

*In the temple of the glorious Dam(pa Déshek), Tsang(tön) and Jam(pa Bum)<sup>26</sup>*

*Of Kathok, the monastic seat of the Victorious Lords,*

*On the spiritual mirror of the luminous mind,*

*Radiating from the celestial expanse above*

*Is the Lord, the great siddha Dampa Deshek,*

*Whose Body is radiant and white, looking (upon beings) with a smile;*

*The index finger of his right hand points to the sky, while*

*His left (hand) is in the equipoise mudra, as he rests in a relaxed state.*

*His body sits in (a magnificent) posture, dressed in a shawl and a skirt.*

*With his two eyes looking at me,*

*I remained a long time without saying anything,*

*While my perceptions were left unfixed, suspended in amazement.*

Again, in his autobiography, he explains how he had pure visions as he arrived in Yarlung Sheldrak:<sup>27</sup>

*As I arrived to the hermitage sanctuary of Yarlung Shel(drak),*

*I changed my behavior (and became) a beggar;*

*Once dualistic concepts were abruptly cleared away,*

*The blessings of the sacred place of the master entered me:*

*The unceasing appearances of objects became the Body of the master*

*And vivid appearances arose as (his) illusory emanations.*

*In reality, their nature is not established but, I, the beggar,*

*Saw them as Bodies (endowed with) major and minor marks*

<sup>24</sup> The original wording is interesting: *yar zhu* literally means “to ask upwards”, i.e., to ask questions to the master with respect, implying that he is in a higher position than oneself. *Mar gsungs* refers to his answers or teachings directed downwards, i.e., the disciple sitting before him.

<sup>25</sup> P. 673.

<sup>26</sup> gTsang is gTsang rDo rje rgyal mtshan, and Byams is sPyan snga Byams pa 'bum. On these two masters and Dam pa bde gshegs, see Jann Michael Ronis, *Celibacy, Revelations and Reincarnated Lamas*, p. 127 *et seq.*

<sup>27</sup> This is the famous Crystal Cave of Padmasambhava in the Yar lung valley. See Akester, *Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo's Guide to Central Tibet*, pp. 425-428.

*And immediately experienced a (total) absence of fixations:<sup>28</sup>  
 (At that time,) appearing objects and my mind became absorbed in  
 a single flavor.<sup>29</sup>*

And, as he further adds:<sup>30</sup>

*Viewing the master embodying the generic form  
 Of the Buddhas of the three times as an object  
 Does not satisfy me, since even now he appears in all his splendor.<sup>31</sup>*

Regarding his visions of Orgyen Rinpoché (Padmasambhava), he said  
 in his autobiography:<sup>32</sup>

*All the glorious Buddhas of the three times,  
 All the lords who have come from India and Tibet and attained  
 accomplishments,  
 All the masters that are now alive,  
 And all the masters that will come in the future,  
 All of them are undifferentiated and not established  
 As different from (me,) the Protector Orgyen (Péma, emanation of)  
 the Buddha Vajradhara.  
 In reality, they (all) abide in a single state of equalness (throughout)  
 the three times.  
 (Thus,) when you pray to the unique Lord,<sup>33</sup>  
 You actually pray to the Buddhas of the three times.  
 O Son! Once you have outwardly controlled the diversity of your  
 thoughts,  
 If you pray outwardly, with the devotion of your mind,  
 You will actually reach siddhis outwardly.  
 Son! This will also occur inwardly and secretly.  
 In reality, the unfailing vajra Speech,  
 Which is proclaimed from the mouth of the master himself, exists  
 within your mind:  
 Since beginningless successions of lifetimes,  
 The Lord master and myself, the erring beggar,  
 Have not been separated, even for a single instant.  
 Thus, from now on, and until one obtains the Bodhi,  
 One will not be separated even for a single instant.*

<sup>28</sup> I.e., he did not consider them as existing by themselves.

<sup>29</sup> P. 674. This single flavor (*ro gcig*) is that of Emptiness (*stong pa nyid*).

<sup>30</sup> Pp. 674-675.

<sup>31</sup> And therefore not as a conditioned, material object.

<sup>32</sup> Pp. 677-678.

<sup>33</sup> I.e., the root-master.

*O Son! (Know that) owing to the power of a one-pointed prayer,  
I, the beggar, have become victorious over obstacles  
And that in the future, we shall become undifferentiated when you  
reach Buddhahood.*

Thus, as stated in this quote, Orgyen (Péma), the second Buddha, promised that we will in fact not be separated from him (at the time of reaching Buddhahood).<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, the manner in which infinite pure visions arose in him is clearly described by this very master himself in his autobiography, entitled *The Luminous Rays of the Moon, being the Account of the Life of Thegchok Tendzin (Theg mchog bstan 'dzin gyi rtogs brjod zla ba'i 'od zer)*.

Regarding the manner in which his faithful disciples saw<sup>35</sup> him in the form of the Yidam, and more particularly how he possessed unobstructed clairvoyance, it is said that once, when this master was residing in the house of a donor, there was a child named Thubten Yéshé who wished to obtain for himself a protection cord with a knot but, (owing to shyness,) he did not dare ask the Lord. At that time, the master became aware of this and actually gave him a thread to tie around his neck. On another occasion, he came together with a friend called Odrak and that day was particularly cold. Odrak had a beloved daughter and was wondering whether she was suffering from the cold. While he was thinking about this, the master knew it and declared: "Odrak, today we are both more miserable than your daughter, as she is home drinking tea!" There are numerous stories showing the manner in which he knew the three times without obscurations.

As to the treatises authored by this noble erudite and accomplished master, it is explained that he wrote numerous works on the sciences, including three large volumes on cycles of teachings about the Great Perfection, (a text) on the poetic figures of speech, works on orthography, etc.

Additionally, he primarily maintained the activities of exposition and study of the Northern Treasures teachings in Gotsa monastery, and similarly, at the age of sixty-four, when he was invited in Central Tibet, at Thubten Dorjé Drak Ewam Chogar in the Iron-Snake year of the sixteenth cycle (1941), he extensively turned the Dharma wheel of empowerments, reading transmissions and guidance associated with the Northern Treasures.

Among the numerous direct disciples of this master were the tenth

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<sup>34</sup> Contrary to what may be inferred from this quote, this does not imply that everybody merges into a single, cosmic-like state. Rather, it signifies that one experiences a similar state of realization, i.e., the nondifferentiation of Emptiness and Clarity (*stong gsal dbyer med*).

<sup>35</sup> Lit. "met" (*mjal ba*).

Rigdzin Chenpo of Dorjé Drak, Jétsün Thubten Jigmé Namdröl Gyamtso (1936–2024);<sup>36</sup> the lord of Refuge, Taklung Tsétrül Rinpoché Shédrub Nyinjé Trinlé Zangpo (1926–2015),<sup>37</sup> etc., who profusely spread the religious tradition of the Northern Treasures.

Thus, having perfected the benefit of transmigrating beings, at the age of seventy-two, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of the twelfth month of the Earth-Ox year of the sixteenth Tibetan cycle, in 1949, he departed for the palace of Péma Ö (Lotus Light), located on the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain.




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<sup>36</sup> See his short biography in the next section of this chapter. See also here : <https://dorjedrakmonastery.in/the-10th-rigzin-chenpo-jigmey-thupten-namdrol-gyatso/>.

<sup>37</sup> See section 13 of this chapter.

## 12. Thubten Jigmé Namdröl Gyamtso

**T**he venerable Thubten Jigmé Namdröl Gyamtso (b. 1936), the current<sup>1</sup> tenth incarnation of Rigdzin Chnpo, was born in the Fire-Rat year (1936) of the sixteenth Tibetan cycle in Banak Zhöl in Lhasa. He offered a lock of his hair to the supreme Thubten Jampel Yéshé Tenpai Gyeltsen, the fifth Réting Rinpoché, regent (of the Dalai Lama).<sup>2</sup> (On that occasion,) he received the name Jétsün Thubten Jigmé Namdröl Gyamtso, after which he was installed on the religious throne of his predecessors at the seat of Thubten Dorjé Drak. He soon became learned in the various studies pertaining to his education, including the ordinary sciences, etc.<sup>3</sup>

From Gotsa Khenchen Thekchok Tendzin,<sup>4</sup> also known as Jamyang Rigpai Dorjé, a direct disciple of his previous incarnation coming from Dzachukha in Dergué, he received most of the empowerments and reading transmissions of the Northern Treasures, starting with the *Transparent Contemplation of the Great Perfection* (*rDzogs chen dgongs pa zang thal*).

In addition, he studied under numerous erudite and accomplished tutors such as the supreme Minling Khenchen Rinpoche,<sup>5</sup> the Lord of Refuge Düdjom Rinpoche Jikdrel Yéshé Dorjé,<sup>6</sup> and so forth. From them, he received the ordinary sciences, and likewise authoritative works of the Sūtras and Tantras, as well as extensive teachings on ripening and liberating<sup>7</sup> according to the *Kama* and *Terma* traditions. He (diligently) practiced them and his knowledge (soon) became

<sup>1</sup> Khenpo Chöying wrote his biography no later than 2015 (and probably earlier). Jigmé Namdröl Gyamtso passed away in 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Rwa sgreng sprul sku, Thub bstan 'jam dpal ye shes bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1911–1947). He served as regent from 1934 to 1941. On this important regent, see Dzasag Jampal Gyaltsen, "A Brief Biography of the Fifth Reting Rinpoche", *passim*. See also Surkhang Wangchen Gelek, "Tibet: The Critical Years (Part III)."

<sup>3</sup> The auxiliary sciences are grammar, dialectics, medicine, arts & crafts, and Buddhist philosophy.

<sup>4</sup> See the previous chapter for his biography.

<sup>5</sup> Ngag dbang mkhyen brtse'i nor bu, 1904–1968. For a short biographical account, see G. Manusch, "Minlung Khenchen Ngawang Khyentse Norbu", *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> 1904–1987. See Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal, *Light of Fearless Indestructible Wisdom*, *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> *sMin grol*. As noted several times previously (e.g., p. 103 n. 5), ripening (*smin pa*) refers to the sublimation of the mental continuum through empowerments during which the mind of the disciple is ripened into its true nature. Liberating (*grol ba*) refers to the instructions that enable the practitioner to eventually liberate his continuum once it has been ripened.

unsurpassed.

In the presence of Gotsa Khenchen Thekchok Tendzin, he received detailed and extensive profound guidance based on the practice manual of the *Transparent Contemplation of the Great Perfection* (*rDzogs chen dgongs pa zang thal*) authored by the omniscient Zur(chen), Chöying Rangdröl (1604–1669).<sup>8</sup>

Later, as the seat of Dorjé Drak had deteriorated over time, through his kindness and benevolence, in the Wood-Ox year (1985) of the sixteenth Tibetan cycle, this master (i.e., Thubten Jigmé) had the dwellings rebuilt for the resident monks, as well as the main temple with sixteen columns, a chapel, a Protectors' temple, small bedding houses, a statue of Padmasambhava made of copper and gold, and monks' quarters.

In India, he had an audience with the “supreme golden face” of Tendzin Gyamtso, the fourteenth omniscient ruler (i.e., the Dalai Lama), with whom he established a spiritual connection and from whom he received teachings.

He then went to Dorjé Drak in Simla, in Himachal Pradesh in (north-western) India, where he met the Lord of Refuge Tsétrül Rinpoche.<sup>9</sup>

In Yangléshö, Nepal, he spent several months in the presence of the Lord of Refuge Jadrel Sangyé Dorjé Rinpoché before returning to Tibet.<sup>10</sup>

At the age of sixty-five, in the Iron-Dragon year of the sixteenth cycle, he was invited to Gotsa monastery<sup>11</sup> in the Dzachukha region in Dergué and accordingly went to Kham.

On that occasion, he went to Serta, to the Buddhist Center of the Five Sciences in Larung Gar, where he had a sympathetic audience with the Lord of Dharma and wish-fulfilling jewel Jigmé Phüntsook Jungné Pelzangpo.<sup>12</sup>

In the Fire-Dog year (2006), he was invited to the opening

<sup>8</sup> This is *The Short Path Leading to the Pure Realm of the Absolute Body, the Garden of Liberation being the Experiential Guidance on Primordial Purity and Spontaneity, the Contemplative Elixir of Samantabhadra* (*Kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa'i bcud ka dag lhun grub kyi nyams khrid thar gling chos sku'i zhing khams su bgrod pa'i nye lam*). On this text, see S. Arguillère, “Histoire des manuels de pratique du *dGongs pa zang thal*”, p. 262-265.

<sup>9</sup> sKyabs rje sTag lung rtse sprul rin po che (1926–2015). His biography is given in the next section (#13).

<sup>10</sup> Bya bral rin po che (Sangs rgyas rdo rje, 1913–2015), an important lineage holder of the *Klong chen snying thig* tradition. See a short biographical account in Nyoshul Khenpo, *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems*, pp. 533-534.

<sup>11</sup> mGo tshwa dgon pa (BDRC: G3953), built in 1182.


<sup>12</sup> mKhan po 'Jigs med phun tshogs (1933–2004), the main incarnation of *gter ston* Las rab gling pa (1856–1926). On 'Jigs med phun tshogs, see Nyoshul Khenpo, *op. cit.*, pp. 475-476.

ceremonies of the newly restored (Dorjé Drak) monastery of Dartsedo. Accordingly, he visited Dartsedo in Kham, where he performed the benefit of beings and carried out (numerous dharmic) activities.

He now resides in Central Tibet, in the dharmic field of Lhasa, as a hierarch protecting the teachings of Dorjé Drak.



### 13. Taklung Tsétrül Rinpoché (1927–2015)

aklung Tsétrül Rinpoche (born in 1927) was the head of the Nyingma lineage, of the Ancient Translation School, as well as the main master of the teachings of the Northern Treasures.

[Here Khenpo Chöying, the original author, includes a long note whose meaning is as follows :]

In volume 21 of the *History of the Tibetan Oral Tradition (Bod kyi ngag rgyun lo rgyus)*, on pp. 26-27 of the edition of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, which compiles stories from Yardrok Gön village, it is stated that if we take the example of the monastic college of Sangchö Dratsang, since it was founded at the time of the Zhabdrung Zilnön Wangyel Dorje,<sup>1</sup> the architectural design of the (main) temple was similar to the Tsé Potala palace in Lhasa. When the great Fifth Dalai Lama founded the red section of the Potala Palace,<sup>2</sup> he said that it should be constructed according to the architectural design of my<sup>3</sup> monastery, Zhangzhung Gönpa. Except for the dimensions, which differed from those of the government palace, it was modeled after the architecture of the Sangchö Dratsang college. The description of how the Red Palace was built is very similar in many ways, including the location where it was established, the shape of the mountain (on which it was erected), the architecture of the temple, the Déyang Shar courtyard<sup>4</sup> and the monks' quarters, etc. This period corresponds to the time of Péma Trinlé (1641–1717), the fourth incarnation of the Great Knowledge-Holder of Thubten Dorjé Drak and head of the monastic college. Consequently, the Great Knowledge-Holder Péma Trinlé visited the college of Sangchö Dratsang where the great Fifth Dalai Lama was also invited. (There,) for the first time (in the history of the college,) the latter gave the full ordination vows to more than one hundred novices and monks, as recounted in the basic (historical) sources (of the monastery). As stated, since (Rinpoché)<sup>5</sup> was the *tulku* of the monastery of Taklung Tsé Dratsang in Yardrok, founded

<sup>1</sup> Erroneously named Zil dpon in the text (p. 693.3). He was the fourth incarnation of Yol mo sprul sku (Śākya bzang po, 15<sup>th</sup> c.). See Valentine, *The Lords of the Northern Treasures*, p. 214. Zil gnon dBang rgyal rdo rje lived in the 17<sup>th</sup> c. Dan Martin, *Tibetan Proper Name Index* gives his alternative name as dBang drag rdo rje (p. 1284).

<sup>2</sup> The Potala buildings are basically divided into two "sections": the White Palace (*pho brang dkar po*) which was the seat of the Tibetan Government, and the Red Palace (*pho brang dmar po*) which stands at the center of the entire edifice and contains the main temples, chapels, shrines, etc. For the palace as a whole, see P. Bishop, "Reading the Potala", *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> In this note, the locutor is the author of this *History* (bdr:MW1KG1464), not Khenpo Chöying.

<sup>4</sup> It is described as an "Eastern Courtyard" of the Potala in Kramer, *The Great Tibetan Translator*, p. 75. In *ibid.* (p. 75 n. 29, p. 117 n. 201), it is associated with the White Palace instead of the Red Palace though.

<sup>5</sup> I.e., sTag lung rtse sprul himself.

during the tenure of his Tripön<sup>6</sup> —uncle of the great Fifth Dalai Lama—he was known as Taklung Tsetrül.]

The supreme Taklung Tsétrül Rinpoché Shédруб Nyinjé Trinlé Zangpo, former abbot of Dorjé Drak, main lineage holder of the Northern Treasures teachings, and sixth throne holder of the greatly secret and glorious Nyingma School of the Ancient Translations, was praised in the following manner by the 14<sup>th</sup> omniscient Dalai Lama, Tendzin Gyamtso:

*To he who upholds the teachings of the Victorious Ones through explanations and practices,  
Like the sun in the sky, free from desire and hindrance,  
Who displays the liberation of beings with his excellent activities,  
To the brother of the Victorious One born from a lake,<sup>7</sup> I send my prayers!*

Similarly, Düdjom Jikdrel Yéshé Dorjé (1904–1987) wrote (about him):

*Great Pioneer of the ocean of Sūtras and Tantras from the teachings of Śākyamuni,  
Shédруб Nyinjé Trinley Pelzangpo, (to you, I send my prayers)...*

Numerous accomplished scholars spread complimentary praises about this elder, great upholder of the Vinaya, this regent of Orgyen (Péma), the second Buddha. This great and holy being's first incarnation was that of Samantabhadra from the Absolute Body, and he was recognized by the great abbot of Dorjé Drak, Chuzang Namkha Longyang, as the final rebirth of Ngok Chökü Dorje. The latter had completed his studies and training according to the tradition of the (Dorjé Drak) monastery, in the Sang-ngak Chöling college of Taklung Tsé in Yardrok, and became the *vajrācārya* of that monastery. In the later part of his life, he was one-pointedly absorbed into practice and progressed to the highest levels of accomplishment. He was a holy man who displayed numerous signs of accomplishment, such as binding to his service Düsöl Lhamo, the glorious protector of the extraordinary Ngokpa (lineage). His (immediate) rebirth was named Tulku Thubten Chökyi Nyima, who passed away at the age of twenty-five. His own rebirth was our master, the precious Lord of Refuge, whose birthplace was Nakartsé in Yardrok, in the village called PhüntsoK KyilKhang or Phünkhang (for short). His was an Indian clan

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<sup>6</sup> *Khri dpon* is the title of an official in charge of the administrative and political power in the Ganden Phodrang government. See *inter alia*, Ariane Macdonald, "Histoire et philologie tibétaines", p. 556.

<sup>7</sup> *mTsho skyes rgyal ba*, i.e., Padmasambhava.

of both gods and men. He was born as the son of Namgyel Dorjé, his father, and Dorjé Drölma, his mother, on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the third month of the Fire-Hare year (1927) of the sixteenth cycle. The ninth incarnation of the great Knowledge-Holder, Thubten Chöwang Nyamnyid Dorjé, recognized him as the rebirth of his predecessor.

At the age of five, in the year of the Iron-Sheep (1931) of the sixteenth Tibetan cycle, he was invited to the monastic college of Taklung Tsé in Yardrok. The hair-cutting ceremony was performed in the presence of Chuzang Khenchen Péma Ngédön Tenpai Nyima, after which he was given the name Shedrub Nyinjé Trinley Zangpo. Having been granted the title of *Tulku* and a seat on the monastery's throne, he listened to numerous teachings from Chuzang Khenchen himself. He was carefully trained in reading, writing, and so forth, under the guidance of his tutors Thubten Yéshé and Thubten Wangyel.

At the age of eight, in the Wood-Dog year (1934) of the sixteenth cycle, extensive ceremonies were held at the mother monastery of Thubten Dorjé Drak to mark his entrance into religious life and his enthronement, etc. He was thoroughly trained in the arts of dance, chant, and maṇḍala drawing according to the tradition of the Knowledge-Holders lineage that was gradually transmitted since Chögyel Jangpa<sup>8</sup> and his sons, as well as in the (ritual techniques for) preparing (*tormas*), (mastery of) wind instruments and drumming, etc.

From the age of thirteen, in the Earth-Hare year (1939), he began studying the *Ascertainment of the Three Vows* (*sDom gsum rnam nges*)<sup>9</sup> and other works.

At the age of fourteen, in the Iron-Dragon year (1940), he studied the following works at Dra Nang-gyel Ling, under Lama Pawo Rinpoché:

- the *Thirty (Verses) and Signs (Sum rtags)*,<sup>10</sup>
- the *Karika*,<sup>11</sup>
- the *Gang Blo ma*,<sup>12</sup>
- the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*,<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Chos rgyal byang pa, a.k.a., rNam rgyal grags bzang (1395–1475). On this master, see Cyrus Stearns, *King of the Empty Plain*, p. 546 n. 763.

<sup>9</sup> This is a very famous composition by mNga' ris pañ chen Padma dbang rgyal (1487–1542). See its translation in Ngari Panchen, *Perfect Conduct, passim*.

<sup>10</sup> The foundational Tibetan work on spelling and grammar.

<sup>11</sup> I.e., *Kārikā*, possibly the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra kārikā* (*dBu ma rgyan*) by Śāntarakṣita.

<sup>12</sup> A famed prayer to Mañjuśrī, known as the *Śrījñānagunaphalanāmastuti* (*dPal ye shes yon tan bzang po zhes bya ba'i bstod pa*, [bdr:WIPD95844](https://www.wipd.org/WIPD95844)). See Brunnhölzl, *Straight from the Heart*, p. 534 n. 652.

<sup>13</sup> By Śāntideva.

- the *Prātimokṣasūtra*,<sup>14</sup>
- the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*,<sup>15</sup>
- the *Madhyamakāvātāra*,<sup>16</sup>
- the *Madhyamaka Catuḥśataka*,<sup>17</sup>
- the *Five Treatises of Maitreya*, etc.<sup>18</sup>

He also received empowerments and guidance in the *Longchen Nyingthik*. He said that, at the age of fifteen, in the Iron-Snake year of the sixteenth cycle (1941), he received most of the empowerments and reading transmissions of the Northern Treasures from Thekchok Tendzin,<sup>19</sup> the great Gotsa Abbot from Dzachukha in Dergué, Kham, a direct disciple of the former Rigdzin Chenpo.<sup>20</sup> In his autobiography, he writes:

When I was 19, Gotsa Khenchen Thekchok Tendzin purposely came to Thubten Dorjé Drak and gave the empowerments and reading transmissions of the Northern Treasures to Kyabgön Rigdzin Chenpo, Namdröl Gyamtso.<sup>21</sup> On that same occasion, I myself received:

- *The Long-life Practice known as the Iron Tree (Tshe sgrub lcags sdong ma)*,<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Root canonical work on the vows of individual liberation (*so sor thar pa*), translated by Jinamitra and ICog ro Klu'i rgyal mtshan during the imperial period. Pelliot Tibétain 884 contains a fragment of it (from *ltung byed* #65 down to the beginning of #75). See <https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc91330b>. For a scan of the fragmentary folio see <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8307147r>. Pelliot Tibétain 875 contains also four pages of the original text.

<sup>15</sup> By Nāgārjuna. This very famous work is also known as the *Mādhyamikasūtra*. There are numerous translations of this text. See *inter alia*, Jay L. Garfield, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nāgārjuna Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*.

<sup>16</sup> By Candrakīrti (7<sup>th</sup> c.). See a recent complete translation in Thupten Jinpa, *Illuminating the Intent*, *passim*.

<sup>17</sup> By Aryadeva. See the translation of this text in Karen Lang, *Aryadeva's Catuḥśataka*; see also Ruth Sonam, *Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas*. See also the impressive study by Tom Tillemans, *Material for the Study of Aryadeva, Dharmapāla and Candrakīrti*, vol. 1-2.

<sup>18</sup> These are the *Five Treatises of Maitreya / Asaṅga*. See *inter alia* the very useful work by Karl Brunnhölzl, *An Overview of the Five Texts of Maitreya, The Sun Rays that Open the Lotus of the Mahayana*, Dharmaebooks.org, 2023.

<sup>19</sup> See his biography *supra* in section 11 of the present chapter.

<sup>20</sup> I.e., Thub bstan chos dbang on whom see section 10 of the present chapter.

<sup>21</sup> See his biography *supra* in section 12.

<sup>22</sup> The teachings associated with this cycle are included in volume 7 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs* (and in volumes 19 and 61 of the Tsadra edition of the *Rin chen gter mdzod*). They have been extracted by Rig 'dzin rgod ldem from the Western Copper Repository (*nub zangs mdzod*) in which they were included in the Amitāyus cycle known as the *Bla ma tshes dpag med kyi skor*. On these teachings, see Kanako Shinga, "Section X<sup>2</sup> of the *Phyi nang gsang ba'i tshes sgrub*", *passim*.

- *The Three Kinds of Cycles of Practice* (sGrub skor rnam gsum),<sup>23</sup>
- *Phurpa*,<sup>24</sup>
- *The Eight Pronouncements* (bKa' brgyad),<sup>25</sup>
- *The Lord of Life* (Tshe bdag),<sup>26</sup>
- *Hayagrīva Subjugating Arrogant Ones* (rTa mgrin dregs pa dbang sdud),<sup>27</sup>
- *The Cycle of the Great Deity* (Lha chen skor),<sup>28</sup>
- *The Empowerment for the Conduct of a Bodhisattva* (Byang chub spyod dbang)<sup>29</sup> on the occasion of which he gave me the bodhisattva name Zhenphen Chökyi Lodrö Yéshé Pel Zangpö Dé.

Similarly, he also gave me:

- *The Transparent Contemplation* (dGongs pa zang thal),<sup>30</sup>
- *The Natural Emergence of the Self-Arisen Primordial Purity* (Ka dag [rang byung rang shar]),<sup>31</sup>
- *The Marvelous Mystery* (gSang ba rmad byung),<sup>32</sup>
- *The Profound Seal of Vārāhī* (Phag mo zab rgya),<sup>33</sup>
- *The Long-life Practice known as the Whirling Nectar* (Tshe sgrub bdud rtsi 'khyil ba),<sup>34</sup>
- *The Liberation of Saṃsāra within Primordial Space* ('Khor ba dbyings grol),<sup>35</sup>
- *The Fierce One with Nine Heads* (Drag po dbu dgu),
- *The Gathering of the Clans of the Three Bodies* (sKu gsum rigs 'dus),<sup>36</sup>
- *The Mother Tantra of the Female Goddess* (Displaying) a Blood Wind

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<sup>23</sup> These “Three Kinds of Cycles of Practice” are those of Phur pa, the bKa' brgyad, and 'Jam dpal tshe bdag.

<sup>24</sup> The practice of Phurpa is central throughout the entire Northern Treasures (including the *Byang gter* of the Bon tradition). The core of the Phur pa system revealed by rGod ldem is included in volume 13 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>25</sup> On the bKa' brgyad, see volumes 9 and 44 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>26</sup> According to Jay Valentine's listing of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs* uploaded on BDRC, the texts associated with 'Jam dpal Tshe bdag are included in volumes 19-22, 26, 27, and 50 of this collection.

<sup>27</sup> Some works belonging to this cycle of teachings are included in volumes 15 and 42 of this collection.

<sup>28</sup> Texts of this cycle are included in volumes 15, 42 and 54 of this collection.

<sup>29</sup> See volume 14 of this collection.

<sup>30</sup> Included in volumes 1 & 2 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>31</sup> Included in volume 3 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>32</sup> Also included in volume 3 of this collection.

<sup>33</sup> Also included in the same volume 3 of this collection.

<sup>34</sup> Included in volume 33 of this collection.

<sup>35</sup> In volumes 33 and 48 of this collection.

<sup>36</sup> Texts belonging to this cycle are included in volumes 35, 50 and 57 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

- (*Ma rgyud khrag rlung ma*),<sup>37</sup>
- *The Great Perfection of Mañjuśrī* (*'Jam dpal rdzogs chen*),<sup>38</sup>
  - *The Three Quintessential Principles* (*sNying po don gsum*),<sup>39</sup>
  - *The Karma Guru of the Lord of the North* (*Byang bdag karma gu ru*),<sup>40</sup>
  - *The Complete Gathering of the Knowledge-Holders* (*Rig 'dzin yongs 'dus*),<sup>41</sup>
  - *The Gathering of the Teachings of the Powerful Lotus* [*Padmasambhava*] (*Pad dbang bka' 'dus*),<sup>42</sup>
  - *The Vitality Pillar of the Fierce Lotus* (*Padma drag po'i srog ka*),<sup>43</sup>
  - *The Glorious Bestowing of Immortality* (*'Chi med dpal ster*),<sup>44</sup>
  - the empowerment of Gönpö (Maning),
  - the vitality empowerment of Tsimara,
  - The vitality empowerment of (Nyenchen) Thanglha,
  - the empowerments of *The Long-life Practice known as the Solar Quintessence* (*Tshe sgrub nyi ma'i snying po*),<sup>45</sup> *The Peaceful and Wrathful Deities of Karma Lingpa* (*Kar gling zhi khro*),<sup>46</sup> and *The Blazing Jewel of the Powerful Lord* (*mNga' dbang rin chen 'bar ba*).<sup>47</sup>

I received (all) this together with the guidance on the *Lamp Cherishing the Quintessence* (*Yang tig gces sgron*).<sup>48</sup> I obtained most of the reading transmissions of these volumes of practices, together with most of the reading transmissions of the *Collected Works* of Péma Trinlé.<sup>49</sup>

Furthermore, from this great Abbot, he received the guidance on the

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<sup>37</sup> This is the same as the *Ma rgyud snying po don gsum* included in volumes 35 and 57 of this collection.

<sup>38</sup> This is an early cycle of rediscovered teachings revealed by Sar ban phyogs med. A text of this *gter ston* is included in volume 16 of the Sechen edition of the *Rin chen gter mdzod* (p. 733-786).

<sup>39</sup> In volume 35 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*. Apparently, the biographer did not know that the *Ma rgyud khrag rlung ma* and the *Ma rgyud snying po don gsum* were the same cycle of teachings.

<sup>40</sup> Also included in volume 35. The Lord of the North (Byang bdag) is bKra shis stobs rgyal.

<sup>41</sup> Included in volume 30-32 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>42</sup> Included in volumes 52-53 of this collection.

<sup>43</sup> Included in volume 54 of this collection.

<sup>44</sup> Some works of this cycle are included in volumes 43, 48, and 57 of this collection.

<sup>45</sup> Apparently not included in the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>46</sup> This very famous cycle of teachings exists in various editions, none of which are included in the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*. The largest version of this cycle is [bdr:MW4PD5013](#) in six volumes. However, it includes a lot of liturgical texts from other cycles such as the *Bla ma dgongs 'dus*, the *Dam chos dgongs pa yongs 'dus*, and so forth.

<sup>47</sup> Included in vol. 14 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>48</sup> Included in vol. 43 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, as well as in vol. 12 of the *Rin chen gter mdzod* (Sechen ed.).

<sup>49</sup> An edition of his *Collected Works* is available on BDRC here: [bdr:MW3CN26344](#).

*Transparent Contemplation of the Great Perfection* (*rDzogs chen dgongs pa zang thal*) on the basis of the guidance-treatise (*khrid yig*) of Zurchen (Chöying Rangdröl, 1604–1669).<sup>50</sup> From Orgyen Tendzin, the precious (incarnate of) Bané (monastery), he received the empowerment to the *Three Kinds of Cycles of Practice* (*sGrub skor rnam gsum*),<sup>51</sup> as well as that of the Fierce Lotus (Padma drag po) and *The Marvelous Mystery* (*gSang ba rmad byung*). He (also) requested detailed guidance on (the art of tracing the) basic outline of maṇḍala cycles.

At the age of twenty, in the Fire-Dog year (1946) of the sixteenth cycle, he received the empowerments and reading transmissions of the *Repository of Precious Treasures* (*Rin chen gter mdzod*),<sup>52</sup> as well as the complete empowerments and reading transmissions of the three kinds of *The Eight Pronouncements* (*bKa' brgyad*)<sup>53</sup> from the fifth Zhechen Rabjam, in Ogmin Orgyen Mindröl Ling.<sup>54</sup>

From Shérab Gyamtso, director of the practice college of Mindröl Ling, and from Lhalung Sungtrül Rinpoché, he received the empowerments and reading transmissions of most of the cycles of teachings of Péma Lingpa.

From Golog Chéwo Rinpoché, he received the reading transmissions of the *Seven Treasures of Longchenpa* (*Klong chen mdzod bdun*),<sup>55</sup> the *Trilogy of Resting from Weariness* (*Ngal gso skor gsum*),<sup>56</sup> as well as the latter's *Miscellaneous Writings* (*gSung thor bu*).<sup>57</sup> Between the sessions (of these transmissions), he trained in accumulating (the required number of practices) of the preliminaries of the Northern

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<sup>50</sup> His biography is translated in a previous volume of the present ANR project. The guidance-treatise by Zur chen is the *Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal gyi nyams khrid thar gling chos sku'i zhing khams su bgrod pa'i nye lam chen po* (see [bdr:MW3CN844 O3CN844 FN3MNX](#)). Cf. Arguillère, “History of the *dGongs pa zang thal* practice manuals”, pp. 262-265.

<sup>51</sup> This refers to the three main cycles of practices centered upon Phur pa, the *bKa' brgyad*, and 'Jam dpal tshe bdag. See the *Byang gter sgrub skor rnam gsum gyi las byang* (in the bibliography in *fine* under “Collective”).

<sup>52</sup> The famed collection compiled by Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas. See the complete contents of this collection and its structure on the following website: [https://rtz.tsadra.org/index.php/Main\\_Page](https://rtz.tsadra.org/index.php/Main_Page).

<sup>53</sup> Namely the *bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa* revealed by Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1124–1192), the *bKa' brgyad gsang ba yongs rdzogs* discovered by Gu ru Chos dbang (1212–1270), and the *bKa' brgyad rang byung rang shar* revealed by Rig 'dzin rgod lden.

<sup>54</sup> The fifth Zhe chen rab 'byams was Padma Theg mchog bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1864–1909). For a short biography of this master, see Samten Chospel, “The Fifth Shechen Rabjam, Pema Tekchok Tenpai Gyeltsen”, <https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Fifth-Shechen-Rabjam-Pema-Tekchok-Tenpai-Gyeltsen/9884>.

<sup>55</sup> See [bdr:MW2KG232485](#).

<sup>56</sup> Cf. [bdr:MW3CN21563](#).

<sup>57</sup> Cf. [bdr: MW23504](#).

Treasures and those of the *Heart Drops (sNying thig)*.<sup>58</sup>

From the age of twenty-two, in the Earth-Rat year (1948) of the sixteenth cycle, he was the “Abbot’s regent”<sup>59</sup> of Thubten Dorjé Drak in Central Tibet for two years. Then, at twenty-four, in the Iron-Tiger year (1950), he was appointed abbot in charge and therefore officiated as the abbot of Dorjé Drak for more than three years.

At twenty-five, he took the vows of a fully ordained monk from the great abbot of Mindröl Ling, Gyurmé Khyentsé Norbu (1905–1968) and diligently protected his vows of monastic discipline and individual liberation. At Nyemo monastery, he received the reading transmissions of the *Kanjur*, the *Collection of Ancient Tantras (rNying ma rgyud ‘bum)*,<sup>60</sup> as well as the *Maṇi Kabum (Ma ṇi bka’ ‘bum)*<sup>61</sup> and so forth.

At the age of thirty in the Fire-Monkey year (1956) of the sixteenth Tibetan cycle, according to the astrological procedure of the Sthavira school, he went on pilgrimage to India, accompanied by his parents and close relatives, to commemorate the passing into Nirvāṇa of the Revealer, the King of the Śākya, two thousands and five hundred years ago. After completing the pilgrimage, he set out for Kalimpong where he felt no desire to go back to his homeland and repeatedly wished to remain (in Kalimpong). However, following the advice of his relatives, he eventually went back to Tibet. There, he stayed in Sang-ngak Chöling, the college of Taklung Tsé in Yardrok, among an honorable assembly performing a *drubchen*<sup>62</sup> of *The Natural Arising of the Fierce Eight Pronouncements (bKa’ brgyad drag po rang shar)* as a regenerative practice for the Dharma and beings that should benefit the entire realm of Tibet.

During his twenty-eighth year, he received the complete empowerments and reading transmissions of the upper and lower Treasures of the Jangter<sup>63</sup> from Gotsa Choktrül Rinpoché. He (also) requested instruction and received meditation guidance based upon the *Great Ship of the Absolute Body (leading to) the Island of Liberation*, an

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<sup>58</sup> Since he had already received the *Klong chen snying thig*, this probably refers to the preliminaries of this cycle.

<sup>59</sup> *mkhan tshab*, i.e., a representative of the abbot or a “temporary abbot”, i.e., a high-ranking monk officially holding the temporary role and title of an abbot.

<sup>60</sup> The *rNying ma rgyud ‘bum* is the canon of ancient Tantras accepted by the rNying ma tradition.

<sup>61</sup> A collection of teachings focused upon Avalokiteśvara that started to be revealed by Nyang ral Nyi ma ‘od zer. See *inter alia* [bdr:MW1KG15807](#). On this cycle, see Blondeau, “Le ‘Découvreur’ du Maṇi bka’ ‘bum était-il Bonpo?”.

<sup>62</sup> *sgrub chen*, an intensive ritual practice that is performed in group over a duration of seven days (or more).

<sup>63</sup> Here, this expression refers to the tradition of the two Dorjé Drak monasteries (in Central Tibet and Khams).

experiential guidance of the *Gongpa Zangthel*.<sup>64</sup> (Furthermore,) he received the complete empowerments and reading transmissions of the *Kama Dowang*<sup>65</sup> whose ritual arrangements had been authored by Rigdzin Péma Trinlé.

At the age of twenty-nine, he resigned from (his position as) abbot of Dorjé Drak. When he was thirty-three, on the night of the first days of the third Tibetan month of the Earth-Pig (1959) year of the sixteenth Tibetan cycle, he left his native land with a small entourage, and passing through Lhodrak, traveled to Bumthang in Bhutan. He gradually (made his way to) India, where he sought refuge, staying for one month in (a place) called Pak.<sup>66</sup> After that, he remained in Kalimpong and elsewhere, receiving the complete empowerments and reading transmissions of the *Treasury of Oral Instructions* (*gDams sngags mdzod*) and the *Treasury of the Kagyü Tantric Tradition* (*bKa' brgyud sngags mdzod*) from the Karmapa Rigpai Dorjé (1924–1981).<sup>67</sup>

From the Lord of Refuge, Dūdjom Rinpoche Jikdrel Yéshé Dorjé (1904–1987), on a single occasion, he received the complete *Repository of Precious Treasures* (*Rin chen gter mdzod*) and its empowerments, as well as the complete empowerments and reading transmissions for the *Nyingma Kama* (*rNying ma bka' ma*),<sup>68</sup> and the empowerments and reading transmissions of some cycles of teachings of Dūdjom Lingpa (1835–1904).

From Dilgo Khyentsé Rinpoché Rabsel Dawa (1910–1991), he received numerous empowerments and reading transmissions, including:

- the reading transmission for the entire *Collected Works* of Mipham (1846–1912),<sup>69</sup>
- the empowerments and reading transmissions of the *Four Categories of Heart Drops* (*sNying thig ya bzhi*),<sup>70</sup>
- the *Commentary to the Treasury of Qualities* (*Yon tan mdzod 'grel*),<sup>71</sup>

<sup>64</sup> This is the work by Zur chen Chos dbyings rang grol mentioned above in note 50.

<sup>65</sup> *bKa' ma mdo dbang*, an important work of the Anuyoga class.

<sup>66</sup> sPags.

<sup>67</sup> These two collections were compiled by Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (1813–1899).

<sup>68</sup> Ancient and later canonical works of the rNying ma tradition that were compiled, edited and supplemented by gTer bdag gling pa (1646–1714) and his brother Lo chen Dharma Śrī (1654–1717). Larger versions of this collection have been produced recently, starting with the one compiled by mKhan po Mun sel (1916–1993).

<sup>69</sup> There are several versions of his *Collected Works*, including the *Mi pham gsung 'bum las gzhung 'grel skor* in 33 volumes.

<sup>70</sup> See the bibliography under Klong chen pa (although he is not the author of all the works included in this collection).

<sup>71</sup> The *Yon tan mdzod* is a *lam rim* composed by 'Jigs med gling pa that has given rise to an extensive commentatorial literature. Without further specification from the

- guidance on the *Guhyagarbha* root-tantra,
- the empowerments of the *Repository of Precious Treasures*,
- the empowerments, readings transmissions and guidance of the *Treasury of Oral Instructions* (*gDams ngag mdzod*),
- the *Six Volumes of Jatsön Nyingpo* (*'Ja' tshon pod drug*),<sup>72</sup> etc.

From Polo Khen Rinpoché, he received guidance on the *Ornament of the Middle Way* (*dBu ma rgyan*),<sup>73</sup> as well as minor works on guidance on the nature of the mind (*sems khrid*).

From the Lord of Refuge, Trülzhik Rinpoché (1923–2011), he received several teachings, such as the *Heart Practice* (*Thugs sgrub*), the great empowerment for the *Assembly of the Blissful Ones of the Eight Pronouncements* (*bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa*),<sup>74</sup> the empowerment and reading transmission of Khrodi Kāli<sup>75</sup> according to the Northern Treasures, etc.

Thus, having received an ocean-like set of *Kama* and *Terma* teachings, he dedicated himself exclusively to the threefold series of approach, attainment and activities of an infinite number of Yidams, beginning with those of the Northern Treasures and thereby reached a high level of accomplishment.

He then (concretely) opened the treasury of his altruistic activities and extensively turned the wheel of the Dharma, essentially of the Northern Treasures, in the following manner: at the age of thirty-six, in the Water-Tiger year (1962) of the sixteenth cycle, he gave the empowerments and reading transmissions of the Northern Treasures in Drakthok Gönpa, a branch of Dorje Drak monastery. The master himself gave practice guidance for ritual performance, etc.; he also newly established the ceremonies of the *Gutor*<sup>76</sup> and of the 10<sup>th</sup> day of

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author of the present biography, it remains conjectural to determine which commentary is actually intended.

<sup>72</sup> This collection contains revelations and compositions by 'Ja' tshon snying po (1585–1656). See the bibliography *in fine* for references under 'Ja' tshon snying po. See also a version in 8 volumes edited by Taklung Tsetrul Pema Wangyal (details provided in the bibliography).

<sup>73</sup> This is the *Madhyamālaṅkāra*, a masterwork authored by Śāntarakṣita and a crucial source for his special system known as Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka, i.e., a particular branch of Madhyamaka that uses Cittamātra-style conventional analysis and Svātantrika reasoning methods. Kamalaśīla wrote an important commentary on the difficult points of this text known as the *Madhyamālaṅkāra-panjika*.

<sup>74</sup> Revealed by Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1124–1192).

<sup>75</sup> She is a wrathful form of Tārā, often worshipped in the context of the *Chö* (*gCod*) practice.

<sup>76</sup> *dGu gtor*, an extensive ceremony traditionally performed just before the Tibetan New Year.

the month,<sup>77</sup> and, with his manifold kindness, maintained the (monastic) dances, liturgy, tracing of maṇḍalas, and so forth. He rendered immense service to the Buddha's revelation by giving empowerments and reading transmissions of the *Perfection of Knowledge* ('Bum),<sup>78</sup> the *Collection of Ancient Tantras* (*rNying ma rgyud 'bum*), the *Kama Dowang*, as well as (explaining) the ritual insertion of dhāraṇīs,<sup>79</sup> etc.

At the age of fifty-eight, in the Wood-Rat year (1984) of the sixteenth Tibetan cycle, he visited the Sarasvatī Pleasure Grove in Kusum Tri, within the Tibetan settlement of the Simla district, in Himachal Pradesh. There, he had the monastery of Phakyül<sup>80</sup> Thubten Dorjé Drak Ewam Chokgar newly built, and saw to its complete establishment, including the temple, its (structural) supports and sacred objects, the monks' quarters, the Fasting Temple,<sup>81</sup> and the gigantic statue of Orgyen Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) made of gold and copper, serving as the inner support of the Guru Lhakhang temple. Later, extraordinary murals associated with the Northern Treasures were carefully crafted on the fifth floor of the Guru Lhakhang.

To the community of monks that had come from Tibet, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Ladakh, etc., he expounded teachings primarily based on the Northern Treasures. He restored the immaculate practice of the lineage of the Knowledge-Holders, the tradition of Chögyel Jangpa and his sons, including ritual dances, liturgy and (the art of) tracing maṇḍalas, etc., as these practices had gradually deteriorated. Through his kindness, he thus rekindled the embers of the teachings of the Northern Treasures in the noble land of India.

When he was sixty-six, on the eighth day of the eighth Western month (corresponding to) the third day of the third Tibetan month of the Water-Monkey year (1992) of the seventeenth Tibetan cycle, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tendzin Gyamtso,<sup>82</sup> visited the monastery. He inaugurated and consecrated Thubten Dorjé Drak Ewam Chokgar, the university and temple of the Ancient Translation School, and graciously granted an empowerment of *The Practice of the Heir of the*

<sup>77</sup> *Tshes bcu*, a ritual performed on the 10th day of the month, in honor of Padmasambhava.

<sup>78</sup> 'Bum is a general term referring to the *Prajñāpāramitā* (*Shes rab kyi phar rol tu phyin pa*).

<sup>79</sup> *gZung/gzungs 'bul* is an abbreviated form of *rten la gzungs gzugs 'bul tshul* ("the manner of inserting dhāraṇīs into a support" such as a statue or a stūpa); see Bentor, *Consecration of images*, p. 104 n. 42.

<sup>80</sup> *Phags yul* here designates "India" (or more literally "the country of the Noble Ones") and is used to distinguish this monastery from the original one in Tibet.

<sup>81</sup> sMyung gnas lha khang.

<sup>82</sup> His full title means something like "the Universal Wealth of the World, the Great and Superior Refuge-Protector" (*spyi nor gong sa skyabs mgon chen po*).

*Knowledge Holders (Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub)*.<sup>83</sup> The prime minister of Himachal Pradesh and a group of other officials also attended the ceremony.

Furthermore, he had a branch monastery of Dorjé Drak newly built, complete with its structural supports and sacred objects, in a Tibetan colony in Ladakh.

The manner in which this great master conferred teachings primarily associated with the Northern Treasures is as follows: (on one occasion,) the seventh incarnation of Namkhai Nyingpo Rinpoche, the supreme Tendzin Gyeltsen, returned to Dodrak monastery in Simla and requested extremely extensive empowerments, reading transmissions and instruction guidance on the earlier and later treasures of Jangter. (Then,) in Namtsé in Sikkim, Dragkar Tashi Ding, Dorjé Ling, the Khordong Monastery in Shili Guri, Zhechen monastery in Nepal, Drakthok monastery in Ladakh, and the Dodrak monastery of the Tibetan colony in Ladakh, Ralo monastery in Yanglé Shö in Nepal, as well as Khumbu in the east, etc., he gave numerous empowerments and reading transmissions primarily associated with the Northern Treasures.

In particular, in southern India, at Thekchok Namdröl Shédруб Dargyé Ling, the great seat of the Nyingma School of Ancient Translations, on a single occasion, he conferred to an ocean-like assembly of monks headed by the Lord of Refuge Pénor Rinpoché, the entire empowerments and reading transmissions of the *Repository of Precious Treasures (Rin chen gter mdzod)* and, after that, he bestowed the empowerments and reading transmissions of most of Gödem's Northern Treasures teachings. Following that, on page 26 of the *Commemoration of the Three Secrets of the Venerable Master*,<sup>84</sup> commemorating the Lord of Refuge Pénor Rinpoché, it is recorded that:

...in 1994, he<sup>85</sup> invited the Lord of Refuge, Taklung Tsétrül Rinpoché, to Namdröl Ling monastery in India and received the oral transmission of the *Repository of Precious Treasures* as well as the empowerments of *The Great Compassionate One Liberating all Beings (Thugs rje chen po 'gro ba kun grol)*.<sup>86</sup>

And, on page 28:

During the 2124 Tibetan king year, corresponding to the Female Fire-

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<sup>83</sup> Included in volume 5 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>84</sup> *rJe btsun bla ma'i gsang gsum rjes su dran pa*, Ngagyur Rigzod Editorial Committee, 2010.

<sup>85</sup> I.e., Pad nor rin po che himself.

<sup>86</sup> Included in volume 4 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

Ox year (1997), at the age of sixty-six, he (i.e., Pénor Rinpoché) received the complete empowerments and reading transmissions of the Northern Treasures from Taklung Tsétrül Rinpoche.

As can be seen from these accounts, the sovereign of the teachings of the Ancient Translations, the fourth throne holder and head of the Ancient Translations School, the supreme Lord of Refuge Drubwang Péma Norbu revered him as his main master. Similarly, numerous incarnate masters and holy beings such as Dzogchen Rinpoché, Zhechen Rabjam, Minling Khenchen, the rebirth of Dilgo Khyentsé, and so forth, were among his direct disciples.

At Zhelpa monastery in Nepal, he gave the reading transmission of the *Seventeen Tantras* (*rGyud bcu bdun*)<sup>87</sup> as well as that of the *Seven Treasuries of Longchenpa* (*Klong chen mdzod bdun*).

In 1996, he went to Bumthang in Bhutan (and from there proceeded to) the monastery of Namkhai Nyingpo in Lhodrak Kharchu where he conferred the complete empowerments and reading transmissions of the *Repository of Precious Treasures* (*Rin chen gter mdzod*), as well as the complete empowerments, reading transmissions and guidance at the first meditation center of the Kharchu monastery, near Tang Mébar Tso, (a lake) which was a “treasure sanctuary”<sup>88</sup> of Péma Lingpa (1450–1521). At Orgyen Mindröl Ling—the second Akaniṣṭha—he bestowed extensive ripening (teachings on) empowerments and reading transmissions of the *Kama* lineage of the Ancient Translations School. In Nepal, he gave the empowerments, together with the reading transmissions, of the *Nyingma Kama* at the monastery of Khetsün (Sangpo) Rinpoché.

When this master reached the age of seventy-nine, starting from Wednesday the 29<sup>th</sup> of the first of the two sixth months<sup>89</sup> in the female Wood-Bird year of the seventeenth Tibetan cycle, corresponding to the third of the eighth Western month of 2005, at Nakché Sang-ngak Chöling, in eastern Khumbu, in the hidden land of Padmasambhava near Jomo Lungma (mountain),<sup>90</sup> he gave the complete empowerments of the Northern Treasures, that is, the revealed teachings of Rigdzin Gödem, headed by those of the *Transparent Contemplation of the Great Perfection* (*rDzogs chen dgongs pa zang thal*),

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<sup>87</sup> These constitute the core of the *Man ngag sde* innermost secret Tantras associated with Vimalamitra and later revealed by lDang ma Lhun rgyal in the Zhwa'i lha khang, where Nyang Ting 'dzin bzang po is said to have hidden them.

<sup>88</sup> *gTer gnas*, i.e., a holy place where *gter ma* were hidden and rediscovered.

<sup>89</sup> The text reads *snga phyi gnyis yod pa'i...*, indicating that there were two sixth months during this Wood-Bird year. In Tibetan astrology, every two or three years, a thirteenth month is added to the year in order to compensate for the discrepancy that arises from calculating the year according to lunar rather than solar cycles.

<sup>90</sup> Namely Mount Everest.

along with the associated reading transmissions, except for the *Natural Arising of the Eight Pronouncements* (*bKa' brgyad rang shar*), which, owing to his kindness, I<sup>91</sup> was also able to obtain.

Later, when he was eighty-two, beginning on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the ninth Tibetan month of the seventeenth Tibetan cycle, corresponding to the 8<sup>th</sup> of the eleventh Western month of 2008, at Ogmin Orgyen Mindröl Ling in India, he gave the empowerment of the *Great Repository of Precious Treasures* (*Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo*) to approximately three thousands assembled abbots, incarnates and monks, headed by Minling Khenchen, the rebirth of Dilgo Khyentsé and that of Düdjom Rinpoché. Meanwhile, the senior among all this master's heart sons, the supreme incarnation of the seventh Namkhai Nyingpo—Tendzin Gyeltsen—gave the reading transmissions, both father and son thus maintaining (the lineage of these teachings).

Thereafter, in 2009, during four days on the third western month, the 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup>, at the Néchung Institute of Kyishong, in the mountains of Dharamsala, the central residence of the Tibetan government in exile, at the request of high-ranking committee of doctors of the Tibetan Astro-Medical Institute, he bestowed the extensive ripening empowerments and reading transmission of the *Heart Drops of Yuthok* (*g.Yu thog snying thig*)<sup>92</sup> to an entire (assembly) of medical doctors coming from both the central and border districts of Tibet.

Furthermore, he traveled to Taiwan and numerous Western countries in Europe, explaining and propagating the teachings. The kindness of this master was thus unparalleled for the lineage holders of the teachings of the Northern Treasures.

On Tuesday the 13<sup>th</sup> of the first Tibetan month of the Water-Dragon year of the seventeenth Tibetan cycle—corresponding to the 6<sup>th</sup> of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of 2012—the grand master of the Ancient Translations School, i.e., Zhechen Rabjam Rinpoché, as well as Minling Khenchen, Kathok Gétsé Rinpoché, the great abbot of Namdröl Ling, namely Tséwang Rinpoche, Dzogchen Khenpo Jampel Tendzin, together with the two main representatives of the Nyingmas, jointly requested him to become the sixth head of the Ancient Translations School, a request he favorably accepted. Thus, the third incarnation of the Lord of Refuge, Taklung Tsétrül Rinpoché—the supreme Shédub Nyinjé Trinlé Pel Zangpo, sovereign of the Northern Treasures teachings—was installed as the sixth throne holder of the glorious Ancient Translations School.

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<sup>91</sup> Khenpo Chöying.

<sup>92</sup> See *inter alia* *g.Yu thog Yon tan mgon po, g.Yu thog snying thig skor phyogs sgrig*, 3 volumes.

Afterwards, at the request of the whole assembly of Dodrak monastery in Simla, beginning on the 24<sup>th</sup> of the fifth Western month of the year 2012, he bestowed extremely extensive empowerments and reading transmissions of the entire earlier and later (collections) of the Northern Treasures of the Ancient Translations. On that occasion, more than one hundred abbots and incarnates headed by the precious rebirth of Dilgo Khyentsé and Gyabra Tritshab Rinpoché of Drugung, as well as over five hundred non-sectarian monks and nuns from the Sakya, Kagyü, and Géluk traditions, together with numerous devoted individuals—altogether more than one thousand people—gathered to receive teachings. I too had the good fortune of requesting complete empowerments and reading transmissions.

O Lord of the teachings of the Northern Treasures, you who carry out the (above described) activities, former abbot of Dorjé Drak, Lord of Refuge, Taklung Tsétrül Rinpoche, supreme Shédруб Nyinjé Triné Zangpo, I pray that you remain in indestructible adamant health as the Protector of the general and specific teachings! This being so, I pray that the Victorious Ones and their Sons will grant their blessings so that this may be accordingly accomplished!

From the *Garland of the Extraordinary Discourse on the History of Thubten Dorjé Drak*, such is chapter three containing a systematic presentation of the biographies of the lineage masters of Dorjé Drak in Central Tibet, extracted from the *Biographies of the Lineage Masters of the Northern Treasures*.



## Bané Tulku Yéshé Dūdül (b. 1935)\*

**T**he heart-son of Bané Tulku Thubten Do-ngak Shédруп Gyeltsen (1888–1964) is Bané Tulku Yéshé Dūdül, who is still alive.<sup>1</sup> He was born in Bané, in the female Wood-Pig year (1935) of the fifteenth Tibetan cycle, as the son of Bané Kugyab Dūlo, his father, and Péma Lhamo, his mother. He underwent the hair-cutting ceremony offered to Bané Rinpoché Thubten Do-ngak Shédруп and received the name Yéshé Dūdül. (The Rinpoché) recognized him as a rebirth of Drubnyé Yéshé Tendzin and thus took special care of him.<sup>2</sup>

Around the age of four or five, he learned to read and write from his uncle Bané Lama Chödzin, and (quickly) became proficient (in both). It is said that, from an early age, he manifested uncontrived, natural signs of a noble being, such as faith, renunciation, compassion, and so forth, and that he left his footprints on a rock.

At the age of fourteen, in the year of the Earth-Mouse of the sixteenth Tibetan cycle (1948), he entered the study college of Samten Orgyen Chöling in Bané. There, from Bané Rinpoche, he received *The Seven Points of Mind Training* (*Blo sbyong don bdun ma*),<sup>3</sup> which proved to be of great benefit for (his study) of *The Five Myriads* (*'Bum lnga*).<sup>4</sup>

He received full ordination from that master, who lovingly cared for him, and served as his attendant. He soon became an expert in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (*sPyod 'jug*),<sup>5</sup> *The Three Vows* (*sDom gsum*),<sup>6</sup> *The*

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\* This master is a lineage holder of the 'Khor gdong tradition that will be discussed by Stéphane Arguillère in volume 7 of the present series.

<sup>1</sup> At the time when Khenpo Chöying was compiling this biography.

<sup>2</sup> Grub brnyes Ye shes bstan 'dzin was the main master who introduced Thub bstan mDo sngags bshad grub to the teachings of the Northern Treasures.

<sup>3</sup> Authored by 'Chad ka ba Ye shes rdo rje (1102–1176), an important *dge bshes* of the bKa' gdams pa lineage. See Samten Chhosphel, "Chekhawa Yeshe Dorje", *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> This possibly refers to the *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'bum lnga'i snying po*, on which see [http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW1NLM1826\\_57799A](http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW1NLM1826_57799A).

<sup>5</sup> A sūtric work by Santideva in nine chapters (<http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/WAS8LS27139>). Numerous translations of this text exist in many languages. On this topic, see Luis Gómez, "The Way of the Translators", *passim*. One of the first and most influential translation was Louis Finot's *La Marche à la Lumière*, published in 1920.

<sup>6</sup> *Ascertaining the Three Vows* (*sDom gsum rnam nges*), an important work authored by mNga' ris pañ chen (1487–1542). Its full title is *Auxiliary Teachings on the Path of the Natural Great Perfection, a Treatise entitled the Ascertainment of the Three Vows* (*Rang*

*Precepts known as the Garland of Views (Man ngag lta phreng),<sup>7</sup> The Treasury of Qualities (Yon tan mdzod),<sup>8</sup> The Secret Matrix of the Illusion Web (sGyu 'phrul gsang snying),<sup>9</sup>* and so forth. For many years, he also served as abbot, overseeing the summer retreats.

Thereafter, on numerous occasions, from Bané Rinpoché Thubten Do-ngak Shédруп Gyeltsen Pelzangpo, he received general *Kama* and *Terma* teachings, in particular the complete empowerments, reading transmissions, and guidance for the cycle of teachings of the Northern Treasures. When the master would give empowerments and reading transmissions in Drubgön,<sup>10</sup> etc., he served simply as master of ceremonies.

He was also skilled in the practices of the Knowledge-Holders lineage of the specific tradition of Dorjé Drak, and he became a disciple close to the heart of his master. In addition, the master declared to the Tulku of the victorious son of Dorjé Drak and others: “This Yéshé Dūdül will be the holder of my lineage.”

Moreover, in the presence of the supreme emanation Tsültrim Zangpo (1884–ca. 1957),<sup>11</sup> he received, at different times, all sorts of empowerments and reading transmissions for the Northern Treasures and the cycles of terma teachings of Nyakla [Sögyel] (Lerab Lingpa,

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*bzhin rdzogs pa chen po'i lam gyi cha lag sdom pa gsum rnam par nges pa zhes bya ba'i bstan bcos*). See the root-text and its commentary here: <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/WA1AC334>. The root-text (together with a modern commentary) has been published in Ngari Panchen, *Perfect Conduct, passim*.

<sup>7</sup> An ancient work attributed to Padmasambhava. See *inter alia*, Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, pp. 137–171. See also the fascinating study of this work in Giuseppe Baroetto, *L'Insegnamento Esoterico di Padmasambhava, passim*.

<sup>8</sup> An important gradual path (*lam rim*) text written by 'Jigs med gling pa. Its full title is *The Shower of Delight, the Precious Treasury of Qualities (Yon tan rin po che'i mdzod dga' ba'i char)*. See <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/WA8LS17007>.

<sup>9</sup> The *Guhyagarbhatantra*, the root-work of the Mahāyoga class. See for instance [http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW1KG13607\\_0754](http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW1KG13607_0754). Its full title sometimes varies from one edition to another, but its most widespread form is *The Great Tantra of the Glorious Secret Matrix, known as the Ascertainment of Suchness (dPal gsang ba'i snying po rgyud chen po de kho na nyid rnam par nges pa zhes bya ba)*. The most important work ever done so far on this Tantra and its commentary by Klong chen pa (1308–1364) remains Gyurme Dorje's *The Guhyagarbhatantra and its XIVth century commentary Phyogs-bcu mun-sel* (see bibliography *in fine* for details). On the literature of the Illusion Web (*sgyu 'phrul*), see also Dan Martin, “Illusion Web—Locating the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* in Buddhist Intellectual History,” *passim*.

<sup>10</sup> Grub dgon O rgyan theg mchog gling, a monastery following the Northern Treasures, located in 'Ba' thang. See Ehrhard, “Biography and Historiography”, p. 252.

<sup>11</sup> Some sources give his dates as 1895–1954. See a biographical account of this master by Stéphane Arguillère in volume 7 (forthcoming) of this series. See also Adam Pearcey, [https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Tulku\\_Tsultrim\\_Zangpo](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Tulku_Tsultrim_Zangpo).

1856–1926).<sup>12</sup>

Then, even when overwhelming changes affected all of Tibet and Kham,<sup>13</sup> he did not commit a single non-dharmic activity and repeatedly advised his friends:

“I’d rather die of cold and hunger than engage in non-dharmic actions such as killing or stealing, etc.”

Bané Rinpoché used to say (to him):

“You are very close to my heart so that until we reach enlightenment we will not be separated.”

After (Bané Rinpoché) passed away, the funeral rites including his cremation were carefully performed. At that time, since the country’s laws were extremely strict<sup>14</sup>—it was a period so strict that one could be beaten for merely saying “Let’s recite the *mani*”—, this master (i.e., Yéshé Dödül) went to a (secluded) place where he could not be seen by others and wrote numerous volumes and textbooks, such as instruction manuals, activity practices, etc., whose transmission was difficult to obtain and which were (later) sent to the West.<sup>15</sup>

He thoroughly completed the full and manifold parts of the five *Bum*<sup>16</sup> of the Northern Treasures preliminaries by way of the Five Nails.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, he devoted himself primarily to the sole practices of approach and accomplishment, for which he had more than three hundred small paper leaves containing the liturgical chants of his practices. He performed (these practices) every day without fail, from long ago down to the present day.

He taught children, including his own younger sibling, Tulku Chökyi Nyima, how to read and also gave them exclusive methods for turning their mind toward the Dharma. When someone was about to

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<sup>12</sup> On Las rab gling pa, see the fascinating biography by M. Pistono, *Fearless in Tibet, passim*. For a brief description of his works, see Achard, “Lerab Lingpa,” [http://www.wikidz.artremy.com/wiki/Lerab\\_Lingpa](http://www.wikidz.artremy.com/wiki/Lerab_Lingpa).

<sup>13</sup> This is a subtle reference to the Chinese communist invasion of Tibet in 1959, followed by the havocs of the Cultural Revolution (文革, 1966-1976).

<sup>14</sup> The event mentioned occurred in 1964, decades before the so-called softening of the religious repression that began in the early 1980s.

<sup>15</sup> For preservation purposes. This likely refers to groups of Tibetans in exile in India.

<sup>16</sup> *Bum*. One such *bum* involves reciting some liturgical verses (and performing the related visualization practice) one hundred thousand times.

<sup>17</sup> On these Five Nails, see appendix 6. See also Khenpo Chowang, *The Path of Secret Mantra*, as well as Tulku Tsurlo, *A Commentary on the Northern Treasures*.

kill an animal<sup>18</sup> at the gate of their house,<sup>19</sup> he would reprimand them, (urging) them never to engage in killing again. When he witnessed others killing animals, he would go far away, cover his head with his robe, and weep. These are multiple signs characterizing a bodhisattva whose mental continuum is clearly imbued with great compassion.

Then, after the political situation had somewhat improved, he received the ripening and liberating (instructions) of the tantric tradition of Mañjuśrī<sup>20</sup> from the supreme Tulku Tīṣṭha of Domang monastery. From this time onward, he spoke exclusively of the wish-fulfilling jewel-like qualities of his (spiritual) father—his master and Lord of the Dharma—and repeatedly stated how nice it would be to promptly have the opportunity to receive profound teachings from him.

After that, from the noble Lord of the Dharma, the wish-fulfilling jewel (known as) Jigmé Phüntsook Jung-né,<sup>21</sup> he received the *Root Practice of the Knowledge-Holders* (*Rig 'dzin rtsa sgrub*), belonging to the treasure discoveries of the great Tertön Lerab Lingpa,<sup>22</sup> as well the latter's *Utterly Secret Wrathful Dagger* (*Phur pa yang gsang khros pa*),<sup>23</sup> *The Dispeller of all Negativities and Pollutions due to Samaya breach* (*Dam grib nyes pa kun sel*),<sup>24</sup> and, in particular, the extensive empowerments and instructions of *The Heart Drops of Chetsiin* (*lCe btsun snying thig*).<sup>25</sup>

From then on, he was accepted—with great compassion—as a disciple by the Lord of the Dharma, the wish-fulfilling jewel (Jigmé Phüntsook), and, on all occasions, had the good fortune of receiving numerous profound teachings from him. Later, as the lineage of the empowerments and reading transmissions of the Northern Treasures were nearly interrupted, numerous incarnated masters, such as Khen

<sup>18</sup> The text reads *sems can*, i.e., sentient beings, but the context clearly indicates that this refers to the killing of animals (for food).

<sup>19</sup> In Tibet, animals, essentially yaks or goats, are typically slaughtered outside the house, either in the courtyard or just before the main entrance. In some cases, this can directly occur in the streets.

<sup>20</sup> The *'Jam dpal rgyud lugs* is a subsection of the *Kama* teachings, focusing on both a peaceful (*zhi ba*) and a wrathful (*khro bo*) form of Mañjuśrī

<sup>21</sup> Jigs med phun tshogs 'byung gnas (1933–2004) should not be confused with the second rDo grub chen rin po che (1824–1863/4).

<sup>22</sup> This is the *Rig 'dzin rtsa sgrub skor*, included in the volume 2 of *Las rab gling pa's* collected revelations, pp. 3–117.

<sup>23</sup> Compiled in volumes 10–13 of the *Las rab gling pa gter chos*.

<sup>24</sup> A work by *gter ston* Shes rab 'od zer (1518–1572/84). See the translation of this text by R. Conlon and S. Mang, "Dispeller of All Samaya Corruptions and Pollutions."

<sup>25</sup> The *lCe btsun snying thig* is an arch-treasure (*yang gter*) revealed by 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po (1820–1892). *Las rab gling pa* produced an important transcription of the teachings he received from mkhyen brtse'i dbang po on which see Allan Wallace, *Open Mind*.

Rinpoche Chöyak from Shukjung (monastery),<sup>26</sup> etc., repeatedly requested that this master (i.e., Bané Tulku) impart these empowerments and reading transmissions of the Northern Treasures. He thus specifically sent a message to the Lord of the Dharma, the wish-fulfilling jewel, regarding this matter. The Lord of the Dharma, the supreme wish-fulfilling jewel himself said that (Bané Tulku) was not only worthy of bestowing the empowerments and reading transmissions but also had no choice but to do so. Consequently, the latter received the crown ornament of (Jikmé Phüntsoḳ's) golden diadem.<sup>27</sup>

On account of that, at the age of forty-eight, in the Water-Dog male year (1982) of the sixteenth cycle, starting with the opening of the Vajrapāṇi (maṇḍala) according to the Northern Treasures, he gave numerous instructions on ripening and liberation, essentially drawn from the revealed teachings of the Five Repositories,<sup>28</sup> to a group of ten assembled individuals, headed by Tulku Lungtok,<sup>29</sup> the rebirth of the supreme incarnation Tsültrim Zangpo (1884–ca. 1957), and by Chökyi Nyima.<sup>30</sup>

He then rebuilt the temple of Samten Orgyen Chöling in Bané, along with its structural supports and sacred contents. He also carried out multiple benevolent activities, restoring the practices of the Eight Knowledge-Holders, whose lineages, across the various traditions in which they were (preserved), had gradually declined over time.<sup>31</sup>

At the age of fifty-six, in the Iron-Horse year of the seventeenth cycle, corresponding to 1990, at Zurlha Bumgön monastery in Upper

<sup>26</sup> I.e., mKhan po Thub bstan chos yag (20<sup>th</sup> c.), associated with the Shugs 'byung monastery. Chos belongs to the lineage of mKhan po dKon me (1859–1936) of rDo grub chen monastery. See Tulku Thondup, *Masters of Meditation and Miracles*, p. 342. He was also a patriarch of the Lower Lineage of Vinaya (*sMad 'dul*); see *id.*, "Preface", in Ngari Panchen *Perfect Conduct*, p. xii. Shugs 'byung monastery was the main seat of sPrul sku Tshul lo (1884–1957). See Adam Pearcey, *A Greater Perfection?*, p. 53 n. 187.

<sup>27</sup> This means that he was officially authorized to give the entire corpus of the Byang gter.

<sup>28</sup> *mDzod lnga*. This refers to the treasure that Rig 'dzin rgod ldem revealed in Zang zang lha brag.

<sup>29</sup> He is a disciple of mKhan po 'Jigs phun. See Nyoshul Khenpo, *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems*, p. 476. He was born in 1953 and resides in mDo sngags chos 'byung dgon in rTa'u rdzong. See Hardie & Hobhouse, "Shouldering His Guru's Legacy," p. 29 n. 69.

<sup>30</sup> He appears below as Choktrül Chökyi Nyima (mChog sprul Chos kyi nyi ma).

<sup>31</sup> These Eight Vidyādhara are: 1. Vimalamitra, 2. Hūṃkara, 3. Mañjuśrīmitra, 4. Nāgārjuna, 5. Padmasambhava, 6. Dhanasamkr̥ta, 7. Devacandra, and 8. Śāntigarbha. They are intimately associated with the transmission of the teachings of the Eight Pronouncements (*bKa' brgyad*). See Dūdjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School*, pp. 482–483. For more details on these eight masters and the Eight Pronouncements, see Trautz, *The Legacy of the Eight Teachings*, *passim*.

Nyarong,<sup>32</sup> basing himself on the ritual arrangements made by Péma Trinlé (1641–1717), he gave the empowerment of the *Diipa Do* (*'Dus pa mdo*) to an assembly of incarnate masters and monks headed by Choktrül Dorlo, *a.k.a.*, Trinley Namgyel.<sup>33</sup> There, he received from Choktrül Dorlo the empowerments and reading transmissions of the thirteen maṇḍalas of the *Kama* (*bKa' ma*) collection.

At the age of fifty-seven in the Iron-Sheep year (1991), he conferred the *Dodü* (*mDo 'dus*) empowerment according to the tradition of Péma Trinlé. He also gave extremely detailed instructions on ripening and liberating based on the *Kama* collection, as well as the collection of the Northern Treasures, etc., to approximately five hundred monks. Among those present were Domang Tulku Tiṣṭha, Domang Khenchen Dépa, *a.k.a.*, Khen Rinpoche Jamyang Drubpai Lodrö,<sup>34</sup> Choktrül Lungtok Tenzin Zangpo, and Choktrül Chökyi Nyima, etc.

At that time, he also consecrated the temple (of Bumgön) and presided over the enthronement of Tulku Orgyen Chödrak, the seventh rebirth of Bané Rinpoche. During (the ceremony), the Lord of Dharma, the wish-fulfilling jewel, Jigmé Phüntsook Jung-né Pelzangpo,<sup>35</sup> invited him, and (Yéshé Dödül) kindly accepted the invitation. On that occasion, the Lord of Dharma scattered flowers of praise, saying: “Now, the fact that the supreme Choktrül Yéshé Dödül has bestowed the ripening empowerment and liberating (instructions) of the *Düdo* (*'Dus mdo*) from the *Sūtra*, Illusion Web, and Mind Class (*mDo sgyu sems gsum*) of the *Kama*,<sup>36</sup> the life-pillar of the teachings of the Ancient Translations School, is not only merely an indication of the harmonious union of the vital forces of the precious teachings of the Ancient Translations. It has become a universal ornament (of this School), and this is due to his exceedingly great kindness.”

Furthermore, at Lagdrak Dzong-gön,<sup>37</sup> he gave the ripening and

<sup>32</sup> Zur/gzur Lha 'bum dgon (bdr:G1595) was founded in 1675 by ICags mdud Bla ma rdo rgyal (rDo rgyal sprul sku I, bdr:P2CN11090).

<sup>33</sup> He was born in the 1930s and passed away in 2004. See Gerd Manusch <https://www.facebook.com/280100425371178/photos/tulku-tsophu-dorlo-rinpochewas-born-in-the-1930s-in-kham-minyak-tibet-near-the-s/603378823043335/>.

<sup>34</sup> Born in 1932 (bdr:10631) and a disciple of mKhan po 'Jigs phun.

<sup>35</sup> *A.k.a.*, 'Jigs med phun tshogs (1933–2004), the authentic incarnation of *gter ston* Las rab gling pa (1856–1926). On 'Jigs med phun tshogs, see Nyoshul Khenpo, *op. cit.*, pp. 475–476.

<sup>36</sup> In this context “*Sūtra*” (*mDo*) refers to the main Anuyoga tantra (i.e., the *mDo dgongs 'dus*); “*Illusion Web*” (*sgyu 'phrul [drwa ba]*), to the main Mahāyoga tantra (i.e., the *gSang ba snying po*); and “*Mind Class*” refers (*sems [phyogs]*) to rDzogs chen teachings.

<sup>37</sup> Glag brag rdzong dgon. This establishment is listed among the rNying ma monasteries located in mDo stod, with a number of seventy-five resident monks. See Tarthang Tulku, *Lineage of Diamond Light*, p. 314. It is also a place where the famed

liberating (instructions) of the *Kama*, including the *Düdo*, and so forth. At the age of sixty-nine, in the Water-Sheep year (2003), he went to Dorjé Drak monastery in Dartsedo where he imparted numerous *Kama* teachings, starting with the *Transparent Contemplation (dGongs pa zang thal)*<sup>38</sup> to more than one hundred assembled masters and incarnate (lamas).

At the age of seventy, in the Wood-Monkey year (2004), he conferred the complete empowerments and reading transmissions of the Northern Treasures at Sang-ngak Shukjung Ling,<sup>39</sup> and at the age of seventy-two, in the Fire-Dog year (2006), at the invitation of the lineage holders of the Northern Treasures teachings of the Chamdo region of Tibet, he (once again) gave the empowerments and reading transmissions of the Northern Treasures.

At the age of seventy-six, in the Iron-Tiger year (2010), at Thubten Dorjé Drak in Ü, he bestowed the empowerments and reading transmissions of the Jangter upon a large assembly of monks and incarnate masters, headed by the tenth Dodrak Rigdzin Chenpo, the venerable and supreme Thubten Jigmé Namdröl Gyamtso.<sup>40</sup> In 2011, at Khor-dong monastery,<sup>41</sup> he restored and sustained through many acts of kindness the lineage of the empowerments and reading transmissions of the *Kama* and *Terma* lineages whose continuity had been impaired, (these actions being) exemplified by the fact that he gave extensive empowerment and reading transmissions of the Northern Treasures, and so forth.

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I<sup>42</sup> pray that (this master's) lifespan may endure for as long as the indestructible adamant Essence itself!

I have written these biographies of Bané Rinpoché<sup>43</sup> and Yéshé Dödül on the basis of the *Biographies of the Lineage Masters of the*

New Bon master dBra ston (sKal bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, 1897–1959) studied with the rNying ma hierarch mKhan po bSod nams chos grub (Ko zhul Grags pa 'byung gnas & rGyal ba blo bzang mkhas grub, *Ming mdzod*, p. 1200).

<sup>38</sup> The *dGongs pa zang thal* is the main treasure revealed by Rig 'dzin rgod ldem and is not included in any version of the *Kama* collection known to me.

<sup>39</sup> A.k.a., mDo sngags thub bstan bshad sgrub gling. It was originally a bKa' gdams pa institution founded in 1210 ([bdr:G1KR159](#)).

<sup>40</sup> Thub bstan 'Jigs med rnam grol rgya mtsho (b. 1936). See his biography in this chapter, section 11.

<sup>41</sup> A.k.a., bDe chen gsang sngags 'khor lo gdong gi dgon pa, abbreviated as 'Khor gdong ([bdr:G3842](#)).

<sup>42</sup> The speaker here is Khenpo Chöying, the original author of the *History of the Northern Treasures*.

<sup>43</sup> I.e., Bāḥ gnas sprul sku Thub bstan mdo sngags bshad grub rgyal mtshan, 1888–1964.

*Northern Treasures (Byang gter bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar)*<sup>44</sup> authored by Bané Rigpai Dorjé.

*From the Garland of the Marvelous Accounts of the Lineage of Knowledge-Holders, of the Religious History of Thubten Dorjé Drak, such is the fourth section, presenting the biographies of several masters of the Northern Treasures lineages from the region of Kham.*




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<sup>44</sup> This should not be confused with the work of the same title by Bya btang Phyang rdor nor bu (16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> c.), whose ornamental title is *bSam 'phel ma ŋi ka'i phreng ba*. See Alexander Schiller, "Das Studienbuch des 5. Yol mo sPrul sku", p. 876.

*Part III*  
*Dorjé Drak &*  
*its Customs*



## *Dorjé Drak and its Customs*

**A**s the actual epicenter of the Northern Treasures, Dorjé Drak monastery is definitely one of the main religious institutions where the teachings of this tradition are commonly taught and practiced. The monastery was moved to its present location in 1632 by the famed master Rigdzin Ngagi Wangpo (1580–1639). Originally, Ngari Pañchen Péma Wangyel (1487–1542) founded a small establishment in Tsang and named it Ewaṃ Chogar. Having become the official headquarters of the Northern Treasures, it was soon expanded by Jangdak Tashi Tobgyel (1550–1602/3) before being eventually relocated to its current site. Dates vary between 1610, 1630 and 1632. The monastery officially opened under the name “Thubten Dorjé Drak Ewaṃ Chogar.”

In 1717, the monastery was razed to the ground by the Dzungar invaders, who also carried out large public executions of Nyingma lineage holders throughout the regions under their control.<sup>1</sup> Prior to its destruction, the authorities at Dorjé Drak had developed important exchanges and relationships with the Ganden Phodrang and the Fifth Dalai-Lama (Lobsang Gyamtso, 1617–1672) who received a vast number of texts and cycles belonging to the Northern Treasures. As we shall see below, at the order of the Great Fifth, some monks from Dorjé Drak were commissioned to perform several annual rituals for the Tibetan government.

To maintain the specific customs and traditions of Dorjé Drak itself, Ngari Pañchen wrote a short charter or constitution (*bca' yig*), which was later commented on and extended by Rigdzin Péma Trinlé (1641–1717) in his own *Regulations of Ewaṃ Chogar* (*E waṃ lcog sgar gyi bca' yig*).<sup>2</sup> These rules are still followed, with minor adaptations, in the Dorjé Drak re-establishment in modern Shimla, India. The latter was founded by Taklung Tsétrül Rinpoché in 1984 and accommodates a retreat center in which monks train in the various stages of Sūtric and Tantric practices, culminating in the revelation of the secret teachings of Dzogchen, essentially based on the corpus of the *Künzang Gongpa Zangthel*.




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<sup>1</sup> At that time, numerous lines of transmissions within the rNying ma tradition were brutally cut off, as in sMin grol gling for instance.

<sup>2</sup> The root-text is translated below in section 6 of the present chapter.

## 1. Dorjé Drak Monastery

### An Explanation of the Layout of the Temples and Shrines at Thubten Dorje Drak in Central Tibet, along with the Traditions of Daily Study and Practice<sup>1</sup>

What follows is the description of Thubten Dorje Drak as it was in the past, as told by Rigdzin Namdröl Gyamtso.<sup>2</sup> I<sup>3</sup> shall thus briefly provide—as the fifth section (of this *History*)—an explanation about the Temple and Shrines of Thubten Dorjé Drak in Central Tibet, regarded as the second Palace of Lotus Light<sup>4</sup> in the Land of Snows, as well as about the daily religious activities (performed in the monastery).

First, regarding the monastery's structure and its sacred objects, since the Dzungar Mongol army previously caused its destruction,<sup>5</sup> the details of its layout prior to that event are not clearly known. However, the following abridged record describing the monastery's later appearance from the time of the Fifth Rigdzin (Kelzang Péma Wangchuk, 1718–1779) onward is drawn from *A Brief Account of the History of Thubten Dorje Drak Ewan Chogar*, composed by the 10th Great Rigdzin, Thubten Jigmé Namdröl Gyamtso (also known as Jamphel Gyamtso). The layout during this intermediate period was as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> This is section five of Khenpo Chöying's *History of Dorje Drak*. The "Temple and Shrines" are, as already explained above, the support and the supported, the Temple being the actual structure that supports (*rten*) what is supported (*brten pa*) within it, namely the shrines, inner sanctuaries, as well as sacred objects, books, and so forth. This section contains only the description of the monastery and its contents. The traditions of daily studies and practices are translated in the sections following the present one.

<sup>2</sup> rje btsun Thub bstan 'Jigs med rnam grol rgya mtsho (1936–2024). See the translation of his biography in chapter 3 (section 12) of the present volume.

<sup>3</sup> Khenpo Chöying.

<sup>4</sup> The "original" Palace of Lotus Light is the sanctuary where Padmasambhava is said to reside, in the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain (Zangs mdog dpal ri).

<sup>5</sup> This happened in 1717 AD.

In the Assembly Hall endowed with twenty pillars,<sup>6</sup> which was beautified by murals depicting many images of the Three Roots<sup>7</sup> and the Victorious Ones with their Sons, there stood at the center a statue of Guru (Rinpoché) spanning one story in height. There were also the divine assembly of (statues of) the Nine Glorious Ones of the Northern Treasure *Kagyé Rangshar*,<sup>8</sup> crafted from medicinal clay, and the Precious *Kanjur* of the Victorious One<sup>9</sup> written in black ink, among other items.

In the principal Chapel with four tall pillars surrounded by beautiful murals of Protector Amitāyus painted in cold gold, was a central medicinal clay statue of the benevolent Teacher (Śākyamuni) reaching two stories in height. Its forehead hair-curl<sup>10</sup> was adorned with a diamond approximatively the size of a pea. To the right and left<sup>11</sup> were statues of Maitreya, the Supreme Pair,<sup>12</sup> the Eight Close Sons,<sup>13</sup> as well as Hayagrīva and Vajrapāṇi, all exquisitely crafted.

In the four-pillared Protectors' Chapel known as the Sisum Namgyel Temple, the principal deity was Dorjé Zhönu according to the Northern Treasures.<sup>14</sup> To the right and left were statues of the Guardians of the Teachings—such as Mamo Ekajāti, Gönpö Maning, Za Rāhula, and Dorjé Lekpa<sup>15</sup>—made of medicinal clay, larger than

<sup>6</sup> The floor area of a room is often evaluated on the basis of the number of pillars (*ka ba*) that support its roof: hence the greater number of pillars, the larger the room.

<sup>7</sup> *Bla ma, yi dam*, and *mkha' 'gro*. We will see more details below.

<sup>8</sup> *bKa' brgyad rang byung rang shar gyi dpal dgu'i lha tshogs*. These nine (8+1) forms are: 1. Che mchog he ru ka, 2. Yang dag he ru ka, 3. Yamāntaka, 4. Hayagrīva, 5. Vajrakīla, 6. Ma mo rbod gtong, 7. 'Jig rten mchod bstod, 8. sMod pa drag sngags, and 9. the Knowledge Holders (*rig 'dzin*) headed by Guru Padmasambhava. See their mantric formulas, which provide the list of the nine manifestations in Dil mgo mkhyen brtse, *bKa' brgyad dpal dgu so so'i sngags byang*.

<sup>9</sup> Buddha Śākyamuni.

<sup>10</sup> *mDzod spu (ūrṇa)*, one of the thirty-two major marks of a Buddha.

<sup>11</sup> Amending *gson* to *g.yon*.

<sup>12</sup> *mChog zung*, namely Śāriputra (sitting on the right side of Buddha Śākyamuni) and Maudgalyāyana (on the left side). They were among the most important disciples of the historical Buddha. See the interesting section of the *Mahāvastu-avadāna* (#73) entitled "The Conversion of Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana" (see the references under \*Anonym in the bibliography *in fine*).

<sup>13</sup> These are the eight great *Bodhisattvas* forming the main retinue of Buddha Śākyamuni, namely: 1. Mañjuśrī, 2. Vajrapāṇi, 3. Avalokiteśvara, 4. Kṣitigarbha, 5. Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin, 6. Ākāśagarbha, 7. Maitreya, and 8. Samantabhadra. See Jamgön Mipham, *A Garland of Jewels – The Eight Great Bodhisattvas*, *passim*.

<sup>14</sup> rDo rje gzhon nu (Vajrakumāra) is a form of rDo rje phur pa (Vajrakīla), one of the main heruka manifestations practiced in the rNying ma tradition.

<sup>15</sup> These are also known as the four main Protectors of rDzogs chen teachings. They often play a key role in the revelation of *gter mas* belonging to the Great Perfection. See for instance the role played by rDo rje legs pa and ("his sister") Ekajāti in Achard, "Zhang ston bKra shis rdo rje (1097–1167) et la continuation des *Essences Perlées (sNying thig)* de la Grande Perfection", *passim*.

human size, and possessing great blessings.

Inside the ten-pillared “Dharmadhātu Palace” (Chos dbyings pho brang) situated above the entrance porch, were one-story-high statues of the Three Long-Life Deities<sup>16</sup> made of royal silver, adorned with various precious gems such as the jewel known as *kekeru*.<sup>17</sup> There were also hundreds of *jhakṣim*<sup>18</sup> and *lima* (bronze/alloy) statues from Eastern and Western India, as well as from Nepal, Tibet, and so forth.

In the various other chapels, starting with the three-story Silver Reliquary Hall, there were two-story-high reliquary stūpas containing the bodily relics of the successive incarnations of the Knowledge Holders.<sup>19</sup> Made of Chinese silver, they were richly adorned with ornaments resembling heaps of jewels, such as diamonds, coral pearls the size of bird eggs, emeralds, sapphires, *zi* beads,<sup>20</sup> and so forth. Surrounding these were a great number of Chinese-style statues made of red gold, bronze, gilded copper, as well as (several) Kadam-style stūpas,<sup>21</sup> etc. As supports of Speech, there were high-quality black-ink manuscripts of the Victorious One’s *Kanjur* and *Tengyur* and *The Collection of Ancient Tantras* (*rNying ma rgyud ‘bum*).<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, printed editions of the *Kanjur* and *Tengyur*, etc., from Dergué and Narthang were present. The ritual objects were also exceptional, exemplified by large and small golden containers for butter lamps.

In the great assembly hall in the center of the three-story Künzang

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<sup>16</sup> *Tshe lha rnam gsum*. These three deities are Amitāyus, white Tārā, and Vijayā.

<sup>17</sup> Dan Martin identifies it as chrysoberyl (skt. *karketana*) in his *Tibetan Vocabulary*, PDF ed., pp. 52-53. It appears to be a rare and expensive white gemstone, described as a type of cat’s eye often incrustated onto statues.

<sup>18</sup> In transcription in the text. The word is variously spelt as: *jakshim* (without diacritics), *dhai kshim* (in Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 804), *dzhakshim*, *dzhaiksim* in O.T., *dzeheshakim*, etc. This is actually a precious alloy known as “red gold” (*gser dmar*) and also as tib. *zi khyim*. Given its purplish luster, it is possible that *zi khyim* is actually a loanword corresponding to the Chinese *Zijin* (紫金), which means “copper” or “purple gold.” It is essentially used for casting statues but also stūpas. As an alloy, it contains copper, gold and other metals, offering a distinct dark, reddish or even purplish sheen. See Chayet (referenced by Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 804), “The Missing Page in the *Sras mkhar dgu thog gnas yig* of the 1985 Dharamsala Edition”, p. 118. For further discussion of metals used in casting statues and so forth, see Lo Bue, “Statuary Metals in Tibet and the Himālayas”, as well as *id.*, “Casting of Devotional Images in the Himālayas.”

<sup>19</sup> *Rig ‘dzin*. These are the successive incarnations of the first rDo rje bra *rig ‘dzin*, i.e., Ngag gi dbang po (1580–1639) down to the 10<sup>th</sup> *rig ‘dzin*, ‘Jigs med nam grol rgya mtsho (1936–2024).

<sup>20</sup> A kind of onyx or agate showing peculiar patterns.

<sup>21</sup> *bKa’ gdams mchod rten*, a kind of round stūpa introduced in Tibet by Atiśa (982–1054) and popularized in the bKa’ gdams pa tradition. See Chris Moore, “Kadam Chorten (Stupa)”, *passim*.

<sup>22</sup> On the *rNying ma rgyud ‘bum* and its structure, see Acharid, *Jigmé Lingpa’s Catalogue of the Collection of Ancient Tantras*, *passim*.

Palace residence, spacious enough to hold over forty pillars, were murals depicting the assembly of the Three Roots deities of the Northern Treasures (depicted) as the central figures.<sup>23</sup>

There was also a two-story *Namgyel* Stūpa made of white silver, inlaid with ornaments consisting primarily of diamonds, *zi* beads, and pearls; it was flanked on the right and left by two smaller reliquaries similarly made of white silver.

Furthermore, there were gilded copper statues of the Eight Manifestations of the Guru, the Lord and Great Being (Rigdzin Gödem), and (a copy of) the Victorious One's *Kanjur*.

Inside the Upper Private Chamber, there were extraordinary (statues) of the seven successive Buddhas<sup>24</sup> made of red gold, and Chinese-style statues of the Sixteen Arhats.<sup>25</sup> Before them were (displayed) gold butter lamps, silver water bowls, eternal butter lamps,<sup>26</sup> etc., as described above.

In addition, there were various other chapels, such as the ten-pillared "Sunlight" Private Chamber, the twenty-pillared "Supreme Vehicle" Palace, and the Lhawang (Temple). In some of these (chapels), there was a three-story statue of Orgyen (Péma) and his Consort,<sup>27</sup> made of Chinese silver, alongside a gilded copper statue of Guru "Conqueror of Demonic Armies" (*Düpfung Zilnön*)<sup>28</sup> of comparable size, as well as statues of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas made of bronze and gilded copper, a very great number of large and small Kadam stūpas of various types, medicinal clay statues of the Sixteen Noble Arhats, the Eight Manifestations of the Guru,<sup>29</sup> the Eight Vidyādhara,<sup>30</sup> and so forth.

<sup>23</sup> The Three Roots (*rtsa gsum*) are the *bla ma*, the *yi dam*, and the *mkha' 'gro*. Depending on the cycle one practices, there are peaceful and wrathful forms of these, such as Padmasambhava or Guru Drag po rtsal (for the first Root), the *bKa' brgyad* or Phur pa (for the second), and Ye shes mtsho rgyal or rDo rje phag mo (for the third).

<sup>24</sup> I.e., the seven successive Buddhas who preceded the coming of Buddha Śākyamuni.

<sup>25</sup> These were a group of "elders" (*gnas brtan*) selected by Buddha Śākyamuni to help him protect the diffusion of the Dharma. They are very famous in China and are often depicted on Chinese paintings.

<sup>26</sup> *rGyun bkang*. These are butter lamps that are constantly (*rgyun*) filled (*bkang*) with butter offered throughout the year. They symbolize the eternal light of Wisdom (*ye shes*).

<sup>27</sup> I.e., *mkha' 'gro* Ye shes mtsho rgyal.

<sup>28</sup> This is a manifestation of Padmasambhava in the form of Vajrakīla.

<sup>29</sup> *Gu ru mtshan brgyad*. These are the eight manifestations displayed by Padmasambhava, i.e.: 1. mTsho skyes rdo rje; 2. Śākya seng ge; 3. Nyi ma 'od zer; 4. Padmakara; 5. Blo ldan mchog sred; 6. Padma rgyal po; 7. Seng ge sgra sgrogs; and 8. rDo rje gro lod.

<sup>30</sup> *Rig 'dzin brgyad*, namely: 1. Vimalamitra; 2. Hūmkara; 3. Mañjuśrīmitra; 4. Nāgārjuna; 5. Prabhastī; 6. Dhanasamskṛita; 7. Devacandra; and 8. Śāntigarbha.

Inside the room (were stored) offering articles and costly substances, along with multiple costumes for religious dances, offering containers, ritual cymbals, treasure daggers,<sup>31</sup> and vajras made of meteoritic iron, as well as tapestries, brocade thangkas, old manuscripts, painted thangkas, and all sorts of ancient materials of great value.

Above and below the library, there was a vast collection of texts of the Old and New Schools, as well as from non-sectarian traditions, consisting primarily of old manuscripts.

To the left of the monastery stood the abbatial residence of Dodrak Chuzang Rinpoche<sup>32</sup> with its thirty pillars, as well as the houses of various incarnate lamas and the multiple monks' quarters glitteringly<sup>33</sup> arranged in terraced rows.

On the eastern side, above and below the assembly hall of the Wangdrak Rölpai turret, within a thirty-pillared room, there were a statue of Rigdzin Kelzang Péma Wangchuk<sup>34</sup> and effigies of the arrogant entities from the cycle of pure visions by Lelung Rigdzin (Zhepai Dorjé, 1697–1740), as well as statues made of medicinal clay of the lineage masters of the *Kama* and *Terma* traditions of the Early Translations.<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, in the immediate vicinity, above and below the Protectors' Temple—the abode of Wangchuk Mahādeva—, there was a chapel containing the reliquary of the ninth Rigdzin incarnation,<sup>36</sup> and so forth.

Among the religious articles of this monastery, there were numerous items exemplified by the supports of the Body (*sku*) such as the representative statue of Guru (Péma) known as the “Mongolian Statue Meaningful to Behold” (*hor sku mthong ba don ldan*), coming from the treasures of Rigdzin Gödem, (other) representative statues coming from the treasures of Nyang-rel (Nyima Özer, 1124–1192), (Guru) Chöwang (1212–1270), Zhikpo Lingpa (1524–1583), Dorjé Lingpa (1346–1405), Jigmé Lingpa (1729–1798), and so forth.

Among the supports of Speech (*gsung*) were the yellow *terma* scrolls from the Lord Gödem, Ngari Pañchen (1487–1542), Lekden Jé (1452–

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<sup>31</sup> *gTer phur*, i.e., phurba daggers discovered during *gter ma* revelations.

<sup>32</sup> Nam mkha' klong yangs (18<sup>th</sup> century). See his biography above in chapter 3, section 5, of the present volume.

<sup>33</sup> *Khra chem mer*. I would suggest here that the author possibly uses this adjectival form in a sense not recorded in dictionaries at my disposal, as I don't see how monks' quarters would be glittering. Ives Waldo's dictionary (see Christian Steinert website) proposed “variegated”, which may correspond to the various sizes of these terraced quarters.

<sup>34</sup> The fifth rDo rje brag rig 'dzin.

<sup>35</sup> The Early Translation (*snga 'gyur*) refers to the Nyingma school.

<sup>36</sup> Thub bstan Chos dbang mNyam nyid rdo rje (1885–1932). See his biography above in chapter 3, section 10, of this volume.

1565), Wangpö Dé (*alias* Jangdak Tashi Tobgyel, 1550?–1603), Minling Terchen (*alias* Terdak Lingpa, 1646–1714), etc.

Among the supports of the Mind (*thugs*) were the practice-phurba (used by) Kharchenza Tsogyel<sup>37</sup> and Nanam Dorjé Dūdjom,<sup>38</sup> coming from the *termas* of Gödem, and the practice-phurba of the Dharma King Trisong Détsen (r. 755–797) from the *termas* of Guru Chöwang.

Furthermore, there were numerous other sacred items, such as a tooth of Sangyé Chöphak,<sup>39</sup> the walking staff of Lord Milarepa (1052–1135), the personal meditation supports of Jangdak (Tashi Tobgyel), together with *thangkas* of local Protectors and Cemetery Lords in union, a *thangka* of Phurba according to the Northern (Treasures), and the "Blood-Dripping" *thangka* of the Supreme Planetary Deity Rāhula which was the meditative support of Jangdak (Tashi Tobgyel). There was also the *thangka* of (Pelden) Lhamo which was the meditative support of the Great Fifth (Dalai Lama's), and the daily brocade gown wore by Jangdak, etc.

*I have written (this description) here in its entirety, as it was reported (by Rigdzin Namdröl Gyamtso).*<sup>40</sup>




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<sup>37</sup> The Lady of mKhar chen (Ye shes mtsho rgyal) was Padmasambhava's consort.

<sup>38</sup> One of the twenty-five main disciples of Padmasambhava. He is mainly associated with the lineage of Phur pa.

<sup>39</sup> A predecessor of the historical Buddha who lived in the pure realm of mNgon par dga' ba.

<sup>40</sup> The locutor is Khenpo Chöying.

## 2. Situ Rinpoché on Dorjé Drak

### Account of Kathok Situ Chökyi Gyamtso of his Pilgrimage to Central Tibet (Ü-Tsang)

**D**oreover,<sup>1</sup> in the travelogue written by Kathok Situ Chökyi Gyamtso (1880–1925) during his pilgrimage to Ü and Tsang, concerning the inner sacred objects of Thubten Dorje Drak monastery, he clearly described what he encountered. If we were to reproduce it fully here, (we should first mention that) on the 10th day of the 7th month of the Earth-Horse year (1918 CE), within the 15th Tibetan Sexagenary Cycle (*Rabjung*), Kathok Situ Rinpoche Chökyi Gyatso departed for the region of Ü (Central Tibet). On the 11th day of the 1st month of the year, he arrived at this seat. In his travelogue, Kathok Situ writes:

"...Then, on the 11th of the 1st month, having disembarked from the boat at Dorje Drak, I visited the following temples: (I went first to) the Assembly Hall, with its twenty pillars and the throne of the Great Rigdzin Péma Trinlé standing at its center. On the right<sup>2</sup> wall are the Victorious One's *Kanjur* and both old and new murals depicting the sixteen Arhats, the eight manifestations of Padmasambhava, and the (deities from the) cycles of Lamas, Yidams and Dharma Protectors of the Northern Treasures.

At the rear, in the principal chapel, there are clay statues of the Revealer (Buddha Śākyamuni), the Supreme Pair,<sup>3</sup> the eight bodhisattvas, and the Gate Keepers—Hayagrīva and Vajrapāṇi—, as well as a blessed statue of the Precious Master (Padmasambhava) crafted by Péma Trinlé.

On the left wall, in the Protectors' Chapel, in the center, there is a medicinal clay statue of Dorjé Zhönu (Vajrakumāra). It possesses great blessings, holding in its final pair of hands a *terma* phurba discovered by Rigdzin Gödem, measuring one cubit in length. To the right and left are the supports and statues of the complete assembly of the

<sup>1</sup> This simply indicates that this section comes after the preceding one.

<sup>2</sup> Correcting *g.yon* to *g.yas*.

<sup>3</sup> As we have seen in the previous section, these are Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana.

Guardians of the Teachings. (Other) offering articles and precious substances are (stored and) carefully arranged.

In the skylight room of the Assembly Hall, there is a painting resembling Garab Dorjé, although it appears to depict (the master) Tendzin Drakpa from Gyarong.

In the Dharmadhātu Palace, there are human-sized statues of the Three of Long-Life Deities (Amitāyus, White Tārā, and Vijayā) made of gilded copper, finely crafted and adorned with inlaid ornaments. There are (also) sixteen Kadam stūpas, and more than two hundred large and small statues made of various alloys of bronze, copper and gold, beautifully arranged in alcoves.

At the center of the eight-pillared Palace of the Supreme Vehicle, stands a human-size statue of the ācārya (Padmasambhava), accompanied by its two Ḍākinīs. There is a statue in the likeness of Guru Khamsum Zilnön, wearing a crown of the five Buddhas with inlaid ornaments, and which is said to have spoken numerous times. Additionally, (the palace houses) more than one hundred bronze statues of various sizes.

To the right of the throne of the successive incarnations—adorned with pearl-ornamented brocades—in the recess at the back, lies the Secret Protectors' Chapel, filled with medicinal clay statues of the complete assembly of Guardians of the teachings, each one foot in height. There are (also) medicinal clay statues of Tobden Drakshül Wangpo, Nyima Zhönu, Sokgi Pudri, and Yugön, each an arrow-length in height and dressed in robes. There are also numerous other articles of great value.

To the left is the secret private room (called) "Sunlight" (Nyi 'od). In the four-pillared Silver Reliquary Hall, there are silver reliquaries of Kelzang Péma Wangchuk, Khamsum Zilnön, and Ngawang Jampel, (built) in the style of the "Stūpa of Enlightenment,"<sup>4</sup> reaching the ceiling and marvelously inlaid with ornaments. (The room also houses:)

- a shrine cabinet carved from ivory, depicting the eight manifestations (of Padmasambhava);
- a shrine cabinet containing two standing arrow-length statues of the Great Compassionate One, Avalokiteśvara, as well as relics;

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<sup>4</sup> *byang chub mchod rten*. Within the traditional set of eight stupas commemorating key episodes in Śākyamuni's life, the Bodhi Stūpa is the one specifically associated with his awakening at Bodhgayā. It symbolizes the defeat of Māra and the full realization of Buddhahood, and it rests on a stepped, square base.

- medicinal clay statues resembling the three Lamas (mentioned above);<sup>5</sup> and
- three sets of the *Kanjur* and one set of the *Tengyur*.

On its left wall stands a support of the protector Sokgi Pudri. On the front wall, there are some pure ritual offering items, such as a golden butter lamp and a silver maṇḍala.

In the new four-pillared Silver Reliquary Hall, there are:

- the reliquary stūpa of Péma Wangyel, reaching the ceiling, and possessing finely inlaid ornaments;
- on the left side, arrow-length medicinal clay statues of Minling Terchen, Péma Trinlé, the 5<sup>th</sup> Lord of the Victorious One (i.e., the Fifth Dalai Lama);
- on the right side,<sup>6</sup> two bronze statues of Ngawang Jampel;
- two sets of the *Kanjur*;
- two sets of *The Collection of Ancient Tantras*, in both printed and manuscript copies;
- an arrow-length statue of Śākyamuni commissioned by Chuzang Rinpoché with a throne and an ornate back;
- (statues of) the Supreme Pair, of Brahmā, Indra, and the eleven-face Avalokiteśvara, (all) made of gilded copper and of refined craftsmanship.

In the Temple of the Knowledge Holders, there are (statues of) the nine and most supreme figures of the *Eight Pronouncements*, each an arrow-length in height and made of medicinal clay.

In the Lama Lhakhang or “Temple of the Master”, there are:

- the “Dragrima” [Rock-Mountain style]<sup>7</sup> Eight Manifestations of Guru (Padmasambhava) whose principal figure’s hand implement is a meteorite-iron vajra, a treasure revealed by Rigdzin Gödem;
- an arrow-sized (statue of) Khandro Sangwa Yéshé; and
- a clay statue of Milarépa.

<sup>5</sup> I.e., bsKal bzang padma dbang phyug, Khams gsum zil gnon, and Ngag dbang ‘jam dpal.

<sup>6</sup> Correcting *g.yon* to *g.yas* (the author seems to have difficulties with left and right orientations).

<sup>7</sup> According to Jackson (*A History of Tibetan Painting*, p. 179 n. 375) “Brag-ri-ma” refers to a style of “figures placed amidst a background of “rocky-mountains” (*brag ri*).”

In the (chapel known as the) “Swirling Light of Excellence” (*Phun tshogs 'od 'khyil*), there are:

- an arrow-length silver reliquary of Khenpo Namgyel;
- a statue in his likeness, medicinal clay statues of Avalokiteśvara, Tārā, and the ācārya (Padmasambhava), placed within a lattice cabinet with glass doors.

In the Chapel of the Complete Assembly of Guardians of the Teachings, there are:

- divine statues of the principal divinity and retinue (forming the assembly of the deities associated with the Great Compassionate One "Liberator of All Beings" (*Gro ba kun grol*); and
- statues of Tārā and the eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara, exceeding an arrow-length in height.

On the (roofs of the) temple buildings, there are six golden victory banners and five golden pinnacles, which appear quite ancient.

Below the Assembly Hall, on the left side, there are:

- a prayer wheel built by the Dzogchen practitioner from Kham, Yönten Zangpo;
- the private room of the Great Rigdzin; and
- (statues of) the Proud Protectors, etc.”

*Since the account given above (in Kathok Situ's travelogue) is written with great clarity, I<sup>8</sup> have presented it here in its entirety.*

*This (description by the Situ) outlines the specific layout of the exterior and interior of this monastic seat as it existed prior to the year 1959. Although it fell into ruin during the subsequent Cultural Revolution, the 10th Incarnation of the Knowledge Holder, Thubten Jigmé Namdröl Gyamtso (also known as Jampel Gyamtso), excellently undertook its reconstruction, thereby restoring its various features.*




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<sup>8</sup> The locutor is Khenpo Chöying.

### 3. A Brief Discussion on the Origins of the Practice Lineage of the Knowledge Holders of Thubten Dorjé Drak Monastery, of the Northern Treasures

Similarly,<sup>1</sup> regarding the religious ceremonies and the modalities of study, reflection, and meditation normally performed at this seat, formerly, during the time of Ngari Pañchen (1487–1542),<sup>2</sup> the manner in which practice was conducted—in terms of the general, non-sectarian teachings and specifically in terms of the *Kama* and *Terma* teachings—is clearly explained at length in the biographies (contained) in the official manuals arranged in (Ewaṃ) Chokgar and composed by (Ngari) Pañchen himself. Accordingly, during the time of Jangdak Tashi Tobgyel (1550?–1603), who was a rebirth of (Ngari) Pañchen's, (the monastery) known as “Ewaṃ Chokgar, (i.e., the sanctuary of) Guru Péma” largely flourished. Later, in the Iron-Dog year (1610) of the tenth calendrical Tibetan cycle, Rigdzin Ngagi Wangpo (1580–1639), the son of the great being (Jangdak), founded the site, which he named Thubten Dorjé Drak Ewaṃ Chokgar. About two thousand monks assembled there.

Regarding the practice of study and reflection as performed at this religious center where the teachings of *Kama* and *Terma* are widely diffused, the holder of the monastic seat of Zabbulung,<sup>3</sup> named Karma Mingyur Wanggi Gyelpo (17<sup>th</sup> c.), who was himself a direct disciple of Ngagi Wangpo, wrote a *History of the Treasures (gTer 'byung)*,<sup>4</sup> in which it is stated in the chapter discussing the biography of Jangdak (Tashi Tobgyel):

The Ewaṃ Chokdra, which appears to have been founded by this master and which has widely spread, is now located in Dorjé

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<sup>1</sup> This follows the previous section dedicated to the material descriptions of Dorjé Drak monastery.

<sup>2</sup> On this personage, see also Achard, “The Heart Drops of Samantabhadra”, pp. 132–137; Sukhanova, “The Life and Identity of mNga’ ris Pañ chen,” *passim*. See also the translation of Khenpo Chöying’s version of his life in volume 4 of the present volume, as rendered by S. Arguillère and Tenpa Tsering.

<sup>3</sup> Zab bu lung is an important Treasure site (*gter gnas*) in the Shangs region where bsTan gnyis gling pa (1480–1535) discovered seven treasures. See Achard, “bsTan gnyis gling pa et la Révélation du *Yang tig ye shes mthong grol*,” p. 60.

<sup>4</sup> See the bibliography under Karma Mi ’gyur dbang rgyal.

Drak in Trengpo,<sup>5</sup> where the external rules of the Discipline are kept pure and where the practice of Secret Mantras has been firmly established. At all times and in all situations, in all (places,) whether at home or away, (the monks) exert themselves in the six-session practice consisting of the prayer to the Guru<sup>6</sup> and the majority of them also strive in the rituals, dances, and liturgy, etc., of the Secret Mantras. The youngest ones train in listening to the treatises of the precious Omniscient One,<sup>7</sup> such as the explanations and commentaries on the *Guhyagarbha* and the *Gongdü*.<sup>8</sup> It is he who extensively established the teachings of Secret Mantra (in this Northern Treasures tradition).

Accordingly, during the time of the patriarch Chögyel Tashi Tobgyel, elaborate and non-elaborate teachings that formerly existed in Ewaṃ Chogar, such as ritual arrangements including the three intermediate cycles of teachings (*bar sgrub skor rnams gsum*), the Eight Pronouncements (*bKa' brgyad*), *The Subjugating Seal of Mañjuśrī, Lord of Life* (*'Jam dpal tshe bdag phyag rgya zil gnon*),<sup>9</sup> etc., as well as (guidance on) musical notations, instrumental music and dance, the triple practice of approach (*bsnyen*), accomplishment (*sgrub*), and activities (*las*),<sup>10</sup> the six-session yoga, and so forth, (all) spread successfully. It is said that by newly establishing what was unprecedented, (Jangdak)<sup>11</sup> made the teachings of the victorious lord Padmasambhava shine like the sun. He was the one who ensured that the practices of the lineage of the Knowledge-Holders remained unimpaired to the present day.

Furthermore, in later times, the main practices of this seat of Thubten Dorjé Drak (following the) Northern Treasures tradition were

<sup>5</sup> The 'Phreng po district is located close to rDo rje brag in dBus.

<sup>6</sup> Padmasambhava (8th c.).

<sup>7</sup> Most certainly Zur Chos dbyings rang grol (1604–1657) who holds the epithet "Omniscient One" (*kun mkhyen*) in the context of the Northern Treasures.

<sup>8</sup> The *Guhyagarbha* and the [*mDo*] *dGongs 'dus* are respectively the root-tantras of the Mahāyoga and the Anuyoga tradition. On the first, see Gyurme Dorje, *The Guhyagarbhatantra, passim*, and on the second see Jacob Dalton, *The Uses of the dGongs pa 'dus pa'i mdo, passim*.

<sup>9</sup> For more details on this cycle of teachings, see Arguillère, "Yamāntaka Among the Ancients: Mañjuśrī Master of Life in Context," *passim*. See also Esler, "Yamāntaka's Wrathful Magic," *passim*.

<sup>10</sup> Approach, accomplishment and activities are the three main steps of the Development Stage (*bskyed rim*). Thus, through mantric recitation, the adept approaches (*bsnyen*) the deity he practices; then, through specific meditations and yogic techniques, he accomplishes (*sgrub*) the state of the deity, and through the activities (*las*) he engages in, he performs the benefit of others.

<sup>11</sup> bKra shis stobs rgyal.

the cycles of teachings of the Five Repositories (*mDzod lnga*)<sup>12</sup> revealed as *terma* by Rigdzin Gödem, as well as cycles mostly coming from Ngari Pañchen, Lekden Jé (1452?–1565), Jangdak Tashi Tobgyel, the teachings on Rāhula revealed by (Pema) Ledrel Tsel (1291-1315?),<sup>13</sup> and the cycle of teaching on Yamantaka, Lord of Life, a *terma* revealed by Tertön Dumgya Zhangtrom.<sup>14</sup>

As to the manner of transmitting the practices of the lineage of the Knowledge-Holders associated with these profound treasures, Tulku Tsültrim Zangpo (1884–ca.1957) has said:

The profound *terma* containing the Five Repositories (*mDzod lnga*) found at Zangzang Lhadrak in the north, the (other) *terma* revelations of Rigdzin Gödem, the set of teachings of the yellow Golden Repositories of the south (*gser mdzod ser po*),<sup>15</sup> the complete maṇḍalas of the eight or six categories of practices (*sgrub pa sde drug*),<sup>16</sup> and the practice with chanting and music of the median activity belonging to the secret practice of Lama Dorjé Drakpo Tsel,<sup>17</sup> all originate from the precious treasure discoverer, the great Knowledge-Holder (Rigdzin Gödem), and were perfectly transmitted to Setön Rinchen Gyeltsen<sup>18</sup> and Nyammé Nubgönpa.<sup>19</sup>

(Furthermore,) there was the tradition of the dharmarāja Tashi Tobgyel, which was transmitted through the emanation of the great siddha Tsephel Zangpo<sup>20</sup> and through his attendant

<sup>12</sup> This refers to the special box (*sgron bu*) that Rig 'dzin rGod ldem found in Zang zang Lha brag, with one repository in the center and the four others dispatched in the four directions. See chapter 1, section 6.

<sup>13</sup> Included in volumes 28 & 29 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>14</sup> These are included in volumes 18-20 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>15</sup> This is the specific repository from which several cycles of tantric teachings were retrieved, including the *Bla ma rig 'dzin thugs sgrub drag po rtsal*, the *bKa' brgyad drag po rang byung rang shar*, the *gTer srung ging chen rdo rje legs pa'i skor* as well as the *Yang tig gces sgron*. See Herweg, *The Hagiography of Rigdzin 'dzin Rgod ldem*, pp. 310, 312 and 316.

<sup>16</sup> Often rendered as the "Six Sādhana Section" on which see Nyang Ral Nyima Öser, *The Lotus-Born*, p. 284.

<sup>17</sup> rDo rje drag po rtsal is a wrathful form of Padmasambhava. His practice is included in vol. 6 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>18</sup> Se ston Rin chen rgyal mtshan. His dates are still unknown but he probably lived toward the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and possibly into the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> c. He was a student of Se ston mGon po bzang po. See Schiller, "Das Studienbuch des 5. Yol mo sPrul sku", pp. 866-888.

<sup>19</sup> mNyam med Nub dgon pa. He is also known as Byams pa Chos kyi rgyal mtshan and, according to BDRC (bdr:P6105), he was born in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and was a master of *Byang bdag bKra shis stobs rgyal* (1550–1603).

<sup>20</sup> According to the Fifth Dalai Lama's *Thob yig* (p. 33), he was a disciple of mNga ris rig 'dzin chen po, (i.e., Padma dbang rgyal, 1487–1542).

Künzang Wangpo.<sup>21</sup> (These teachings) were then gradually transmitted through the son of Chögyel Wangpo Dé,<sup>22</sup> i.e., Rigdzin Ngaggi Wangpo (1580–1639), and through Yölmo Tendzin Norbu (1598–1644),<sup>23</sup> who transmitted them to (Rigdzin) Péma Trinlé (1641–1717).<sup>24</sup>

There were (also) the profound treasures transmitted through Péma (Rigdzin) and Nub (gNubs),<sup>25</sup> that had been discovered by the *tertön* Gya Zhangtrom (11<sup>th</sup> c.), a section of which—namely the chants and music of the activity practice of *The Subjugating Seal of Mañjuśrī*—was gradually transmitted from the *tertön* Dorjé Öbar himself.<sup>26</sup>

(Some teachings) came from Zur Pangtön Jampel Yang Delek Gyeltsen<sup>27</sup> and the celestial yogi Drölmapa.<sup>28</sup> The traditions of the great Setön Rinchen Gyeltsen who is endowed with the eye of knowledge and affection, of the incomparable lord Chökyi Gyeltsen,<sup>29</sup> and of Chögyel Wangpo Dé,<sup>30</sup> father and son, were gradually transmitted, from the time of the attendant Künzang Wangpo down to the all-seeing Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682) and Rigdzin Péma Trinlé.

The great and all-seeing Fifth Dalai Lama declared:

*The root-principles of Padmasambhava's precepts,<sup>31</sup>  
Which are entirely transformed into the sublimely*

<sup>21</sup> See the discussion about him in Arguillère, “Histoire des manuels de pratique du *dGongs pa zang thal*,” pp. 224–226.

<sup>22</sup> Chos rgyal dbang po'i sde is one of the names of Byang bdag bKra shis stobs rgyal. See Valentine, *The Lords of the Northern Treasures*, pp. 274, 296.

<sup>23</sup> On this patriarch, see the amazing book by B. Bogin, *The Illuminated Life of the Great Yolmowa*, *passim*.

<sup>24</sup> Rig 'dzin Padma phrin las received the transmission at the age of four, not six as stated in Samten Chhospel, “The Fourth Dorje Drak Rigdzin, Pema Trinle,” *passim*.

<sup>25</sup> Given the context, gNubs/Nub, is most certainly identical with mNyam med Nub dgon pa who was listed above.

<sup>26</sup> rDo rje 'od 'bar is one of the names of rGya zhang khrom.

<sup>27</sup> He appears under the names sPangs ston chen po and bDe legs rgyal mtshan in lineage prayers such as the *Ka dag skor las sngon 'gro rin po che gnad kyi gzer lnga*, p. 17. He was a student of Rig 'dzin Nam mkha' grags pa, an early lineage holder of the Northern Treasures.

<sup>28</sup> Or sGrol ma ba. This is also the name of a family lineage associated with the rTa nag region (Akester, *The Life of Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo*, p. 285 n. 191). So if sGrol ma ba/pa is a clanic name, then epithet “celestial yogi” would need to be restored as Nam mkha'i rnal 'byor as a proper name (but this sounds very unlikely given the quote from the Fifth Dalai Lama below).

<sup>29</sup> See note 19 *supra*.

<sup>30</sup> See note 22 *supra*.

<sup>31</sup> This refers to the *termas* of the Northern Treasures, which are said to contain the teachings of Padmasambhava himself, hidden in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

*Wrathful dance of the Subjugating Seal*<sup>32</sup> (embracing)  
*Mañjuśrī Vajra*,<sup>33</sup> together with all his retinue,  
*The marvelous practices transmitted by the Knowledge-Holder*  
*(named) Trinlé*,<sup>34</sup>  
*The melodious tone to be chanted and the instrumental music, all conform to the principles of Meditation,*  
*The contemplative principles of Nubchen*<sup>35</sup> *and Gyazhang*<sup>36</sup>  
*Came from both Pangtön*<sup>37</sup> *and Drölma*<sup>38</sup> (and)  
*Were spread by the Great Setön*<sup>39</sup>  
*Endowed with the power of knowledge and affection.*  
*The oral instructions of the venerable and incomparable one*,<sup>40</sup>  
*The practices received by the Lord Jangdak*,<sup>41</sup> (all these are like)  
*The roar transmitted by an awesome and splendid lion*  
*Whose voice—perfectly victorious over partialities—*  
*Resounds as far as the land of Brahmā.*

Accordingly, it is said that the musical rules and liturgy of the *Phurba Razor* (*Phur pa spu gri*),<sup>42</sup> discovered as treasures in Lhadrak,<sup>43</sup> come from a gradual transmission passing through Sakyong Chögyel Drakpa Jung-né (1414–1448)<sup>44</sup> of the great palace of Ne'udong Tsé,<sup>45</sup> and through the glorious monastic proctor Künzang Tséwa.<sup>46</sup> Thus,

<sup>32</sup> This explicitly points to the cycle of the *'Jam dpal tshe bdag phyag rgya zil gnon*, which was discovered by rGya zhang khrom. On this cycle, see Arguillère, "Yamāntaka Among the Ancients", *passim*.

<sup>33</sup> He is the main figure of the preceding cycle.

<sup>34</sup> An allusion and a play on words about Rig 'dzin Padma phrin las.

<sup>35</sup> Probably Nub chen Sangs rgyas ye shes, but this would demand confirmation.

<sup>36</sup> rGya zhang khrom (11<sup>th</sup> c.).

<sup>37</sup> I.e., Zur spang ston 'Jam dpal dbyangs bde legs rgyal mtshan.

<sup>38</sup> I.e., sGrol ma pa, author *inter alia* of the *bCom ldan 'das phyag rgya zil gnon gyi phrin las kyi rim pa gsal bar byed pa'i sgron me*. See Arguillère, "Mañjuśrī Master of Life – A Table of the texts of the 'Jam dpal tshe bdag cycle included in the Byang gter phyogs sgrigs," <https://www.arguillere.org/2021/03/manjusri-master-of-life-a-table-of-the-texts-of-the-jam-dpal-tshe-bdag-cycle-included-in-the-byang-gter-phyogs-sgrigs.html>.

<sup>39</sup> Se ston Rin chen rgyal mtshan (14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> c., maybe later).

<sup>40</sup> mNyam med Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (late 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> c.).

<sup>41</sup> Byang bdag bKra shis stobs rgyal (1550–1603).

<sup>42</sup> This is one of the three traditions of *Phur pa* (*phur pa lugs gsum*) discovered by Rig 'dzin rgod ldem from the northern black repository made of iron (*byang lcags mdzod nag po*). These teachings are gathered in volume 13 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>43</sup> I.e., Zang zang lha brag.

<sup>44</sup> He was a Phag mo gru pa regent, in charge of the sNe'u gdong rtse palace from 1432 to 1444. His father was Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan (1389–1457). See Czaja, *Medieval Rule in Tibet*, pp. 19-20, p. 213 n. 19, p. 217 *et seq.*

<sup>45</sup> Bdr:G1513. See <https://sakyaresearch.org/places/244>.

<sup>46</sup> Possibly a contemporary of Kun dga' dpal 'byor (1428–1476). See D. Martin, *Tibetan Proper Name Index*, p. 88.

regarding the fact that the transmission of the Phurpa liturgy had befallen Künzang Tséwa, the all-seeing Fifth Dalai Lama declared:

*He is from an unmistakable tradition of authentic Knowledge-Holders  
And has perfectly received the authorizations from the divine Yidams;  
Far superior to other tantrikas, in this region he is known  
As Künzang Tséwa, the outstanding scholar.*

As it is stated, “when the authentic music and liturgy of the practice lineage of the Knowledge-Holders is not disturbed, (the lineage remains alive)...”.

Furthermore, the manner in which the transmission of the practice lineage of the Knowledge-Holders was passed from the Treasure Revealer, the great Knowledge-Holder Gödemchen, down to Jangdak Tashi Tobgyel, is described as follows in *The Treasury of Scriptures explaining the General Structure of the Northern Treasures Rituals* (Byang gter cho ga'i spyi chings lung gi gter mdzod):<sup>47</sup>

*He took the practical contents of the Five Treasuries of his (i.e. Gödemchen) own Treasure and, having applied (the practices from the) Repositories, attained accomplishment. Then, with regard to Wön Dorjé Pelwa,<sup>48</sup> Tsenden Jampa Shényen,<sup>49</sup> Chöjé Sangyé Pelzang,<sup>50</sup> Thuksé Namkha Gyeltsen,<sup>51</sup> and Lekden Düdjom Dorjé,<sup>52</sup> (these masters) formerly acted exclusively as assistant preceptors and later as shrine masters to one another.*

Regarding the manner in which the transmission proceeded from the Treasure Revealer, the Great Knowledge-Holder Gödemchen, down to Lekden Jé, and the manner in which Jangpa Dakpo<sup>53</sup> relied on numerous masters, starting with Lekden Jé, and how he received the latter's teachings, *The General Structure of the Northern Treasures Rituals* (Byang gter cho ga'i spyi chings) says:

<sup>47</sup> This apparently important work is unknown to me.

<sup>48</sup> dBon rDo rje dpal ba (d.u.). He was a direct disciple of rGod ldem as well as of the latter's son rNam rgyal mgon po. See Schiller, *op. cit.*, pp. 868, 869, and 883. He is also known as *sngags 'chang chen po* rDo rje dpal ba; see Valentine, *ib.*, p. 136. See also Arguillère, “Histoire des manuels de pratique du *dGongs pa zang thal*,” p. 228 n. 115.

<sup>49</sup> He was a disciple of rNam rgyal mgon po (Valentine, *ib.*, p. 135) but also of rDo rje mgon po (Schiller, *loc. cit.*, p. 883).

<sup>50</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> c.

<sup>51</sup> Ca. 1454–1541.

<sup>52</sup> 1452?–1565.

<sup>53</sup> I.e., Byang bdag bKra shis stobs rgyal.

From Thuksé Lodrö Gyeltsen, he received the liturgy and musical (rules) of the Three Cycles of Practices of Jangpa,<sup>54</sup> as well as (the rituals) from each of these lineages, including the fabrication of *tor-mas*, the ornamentations (of maṇḍalas, etc.), liturgy, musical rules, and dances, which existed before him, together with their corrections. From Jampa Chökyi Gyeltsen, he received the liturgy, musical rules and dances of the Yamāntaka Lord of Life cycle as transmitted through Setön Rinchen Gyeltsen. From both (masters Thuksé and Setön), he received the monastic traditions of Tönub Gön.<sup>55</sup> It is (also) explained that he received the liturgical chants and dances of *The Natural Arising of the Eight Pronouncements (bKa' brgyad rang shar)*<sup>56</sup> from these lords and masters. He received the *Guhyasamāja (gSang 'dus)*, etc., from Lekden Jé and Künga Drölchok,<sup>57</sup> and its ritual dances, etc., as well as a few practices from the descendants of (Guru) Chöwang,<sup>58</sup> and so forth. Especially, when he newly established the monastery of Thekchok Ling in Jang,<sup>59</sup> he undertook a tour of inspection, consulting Lekden Jé about restoring practices that existed in the past but had been impaired, and implanting new ones that had never before been established. From this lord, (the lineage passed through) the two sons of his family, Rigdzin Ngaggi Wangpo, Yölmo Tulku Tenzin Norbu, great erudite in the five sciences, Zur Chöying Rangdröl, Döndrub Tashi,<sup>60</sup> head of the family lineage of Drugu Yangwang,<sup>61</sup> Kundün Künzang

<sup>54</sup> In this context, *byang pa* does not refer to Byang bdag bKra shis stobs rgyal but is a generic term pointing to adepts of the Northern Treasures in general. The rituals of the *Three Cycles of Practice (sGrub skor gsum)* have been reprinted in Nub ri ba Chos kyi Nyi ma Rin po che, *Byang gter 'don cha'i skor stod cha sgrub skor rnam gsum yan lag dang bcas pa dngos grub mchog sbyin zhes bya ba*, Kathmandu, 2005.

<sup>55</sup> According to Gu ru bKra shis' Chos 'byung (p. 665), this is a monastery located in gTsang and was the main seat of Byams pa Chos kyi rgyal mtshan. The author states that the original founder of the monastery is uncertain (*ma nges*) though. See also 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po, *Bod yul gsang sngags gser rnying gi gdan rabs*, pp. 323-324.

<sup>56</sup> This cycle is known in full as the *bKa' brgyad drag po rang byung rang shar*, included in volume 44 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>57</sup> 1507–1566. He was an important gsar ma hierarch originally coming from Mustang. See his biography in Cyrus Stearns, "Kunga Drolchok."

<sup>58</sup> 1212–1270. See *inter alia*, Düdjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 760-771.

<sup>59</sup> This refers to Zang zang lha brag 'od gsal theg mchog gling (bdr: G00AG01624) located in modern Ngam ring rdzong.

<sup>60</sup> A disciple of Rig 'dzin Ngag gi dbang po.

<sup>61</sup> Gru gu yang dbang (12<sup>th</sup> c.). He was a *gter ston* and a disciple of Nye mo zhu yas. See a short biographical account of him in Kong sprul, *gTer ston brgya rtsa'i rnam thar*, p. 126.

Wangpo, and Omjak Chakdor Tashi,<sup>62</sup> etc., from whom Rigdzin Pema Trinlé received (the transmissions).


Thus, as stated, the manner in which the transmission proceeded from the Treasure Revealer, the great Knowledge-Holder, down to Rigzin Péma Trinlé—together with the practice of the liturgy and the musical rules that were gradually transmitted—is very clearly explained. (The lineage) has remained unimpaired from Rigdzin Péma Trinlé down to the present, and most of the manner in which the transmissions were given can be known from the biographies of the lineage masters mentioned above.




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<sup>62</sup> Or Am ljags Phyag rdor bkra shis. He was a disciple of Byang bdag bKra shis stobs rgyal and Rig 'dzin Ngaggi Wangpo. See Valentine, *ib.*, pp. 204-206, 274.

## 4. Dorjé Drak's Customs

 few specific traditions of Dorjé Drak are explained in the autobiography of the *tulku* of Chuzang (Rinpoché). Thus, in the *Autobiography of the Ninth Incarnation of Chuzang Tulku*, on p. 8, it is said:

At Dorjé Drak, every morning when the sun rises, a monk blows a white conch to announce the morning tea, and the others must immediately gather for the daily assembly<sup>1</sup> and the daily amendment ritual.<sup>2</sup> In the Sisum Namgyel Protectors' temple, in the morning, the monks should perform four daily amendments, starting with Refuge and prayers. They should then continue with the root-text of the *Heart Activity of Vajrakīlaya*<sup>3</sup> and its extensive fulfillment rituals (*skong gso*) without fail. After the daily assembly, the monks must recite every day *The Sublimely Radiant Daily Practices (Chos spyod rab gsal)*,<sup>4</sup> beginning with the visualization of the support (for the ritual) and ending with *The Auspicious Aspiration Prayer for the Spread of the Revelation (bKra shis bstan rgyas smon lam)*. In the late afternoon, the evening tea is taken when the conch is blown. The disciplinarian must supervise the gatherings for the daily feast-offering,<sup>5</sup> the daily mending ritual,<sup>6</sup> and so forth.

In terms of monastic rules, etc., the vajra master, together with the chant leader and the monastic disciplinarian, have the charge of maintaining the unbroken performance of rituals and practices on the basis of the manual for (monastic) regulations.

Regarding the ceremonies that are performed each year, during the first Tibetan month, a great accomplishment ceremony<sup>7</sup> is held for one

<sup>1</sup> *rGyun 'tshogs* (or *tshogs*), a meeting of the monks in the early morning session of the day.

<sup>2</sup> *rGyun skong*, a confession ritual.

<sup>3</sup> *Phur pa thugs phrin las gzhung*, most certainly the *Phur pa'i phrin las chen mo*, about which see its place in the collection of the *Phur pa che mchog lha khra'i bskor* in Schiller, "Das Studienbuch des 5. Yol mo sPrul sku," p. 855 n. 78.

<sup>4</sup> This text, entitled *Thub bstan e wam lcog sgar ba'i 'dus sde rnams kyi chos spyod rab gsal*, is included in vol. 61 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, pp. 1-276. As we have seen elsewhere in this volume, it is essentially a compendium of prayers and other daily recitative sections. All monks associated with the rDo rje brag monastery are expected to have memorized it entirely (Boord, *The Cult of the Deity Vajrakīlaya*, p. 31).

<sup>5</sup> *rGyun tshogs*.

<sup>6</sup> *rGyun skangs*. This is the same as *rgyun skong*, a mending or confession ritual.

<sup>7</sup> *sGrub chen*.

week, using *The Long-Life Practice of the Gathering of the Clans of the Three Bodies* (*Tshe sgrub sku gsum rigs 'dus*), which is a *terma* revelation made by Jang Wangpö Dé.<sup>8</sup>

During the second month, for a whole week, (the monks) perform the offering practice<sup>9</sup> for the “seven-time brahman”<sup>10</sup> ritual according to the (cycle of) *The Great Compassionate One Liberating all Migratory Beings* (*Thugs chen 'gro ba kun sgröl*) of the Northern Treasures.<sup>11</sup>

In the course of the fourth month, for a whole week, they perform the offering practice of Amṛtakunḍali according to the long-life practice (*tshe sgrub*) from the profound Treasures of Rigdzin Lekden Jé (1452–1565).

Starting from the ninth day of the fifth month, (the monks) perform feast offerings such as that of *The Secret Gathering of the Master* (*Bla ma gsang 'dus*) of the great treasure revealer Guru Chöwang (1212–1270), and so forth, for six days (followed by) two days of ritual dances.

During the sixth month, (the monks spend) a week (performing) the long sādhana offering ritual of the *Heart Practice of Vajrasattva* (*rDor sems thugs kyi sgrub pa*), a profound treasure of Garwang Dorjé (1640–1685).

During the seventh month, (they spend) a week (performing) the long sādhana offering ritual of the *Great Compassionate One Liberating Saṃsāra into Primordial Space* (*Thugs chen 'khor ba dbyings sgröl*) of Rigdzin Lekden Jé. Furthermore, during the same month, (they spend) five days (performing) the long sādhana offering ritual of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities according to the *Transparent Contemplation* (*dGongs pa zang thal*) of the Northern Treasures.

During the eighth month, (they dedicate) five days to the great sādhana of the *Combined Practice of Phurba* (*Phur pa dril sgrub*) from the Northern Treasures, together with the casting of the *Torma* and the fire puja (performed) on the maṇḍala of colored powders.

In the course of the tenth month, (they devote) five days to the *Torma* offering practice in the great Protector’s Temple (mGon khang

<sup>8</sup> Byang dbang po'i sde, i.e., Byang bdag bkra shis stobs rgyal (1550–1603).

<sup>9</sup> *sGrub mchod*. This expression is sometimes regarded as a synonym of *sgrub chen*, “great accomplishment”. However, it is generally shorter than a *sgrub chen*. During such rituals, special pills are being prepared and blessed.

<sup>10</sup> This refers to the preparation of the pills mentioned in the previous note, which rely on the flesh of an individual who took rebirth seven successive times as a brahman.

<sup>11</sup> The rituals performed during the third month are not specified in this chapter. According to Boord (*op. cit.*, p. 32), this month is dedicated to the rituals of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities based on the Karma gling pa revelation (i.e., the *Kar gling zhi khro*, a.k.a. *Zab chos zhi khro dgongs pa rang grol*) and *The Mirror of the Heart of Vajrasattva* (*rDo rje sems dpa' thugs kyi me long*) discovered by Gar dbang rdo rje (1640–1685).

chen mo).

During the final part of the eleventh month, the wrathful dances (*khro rol*) of *The Natural Arising of the Eight Pronouncements of the Northern Treasures* (*Byang gter bka' brgyad rang shar*),<sup>12</sup> as well as *The Lord of Life* (*Tshe bdag*) ritual that was discovered by Gya Zhangtrom, are performed each year alternatively<sup>13</sup> and, based on a maṇḍala of colored powders, one week (is dedicated to) the great sādhana, the casting of *Torma*, and so forth, (according to these cycles).

In addition to these uninterrupted, continuous (rituals) and to gatherings (for the performance of) extra ritual services for the State and individuals, (the monks) must maintain the uncorrupted flow of all the practices of the Vidyādhara's lineage, including the ritual ceremonies of the sādhana offerings with their dances, (specific maṇḍala) outlines, ritual chanting, and so forth, without sullyng them with their own fabrications and impurities.

Furthermore, during the later summer retreat, together with the undertaking of commitments, the monks engage in the teaching, study, and practice of the *Kanjur*, the morning and evening preliminaries, (the reading of the) *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, *The Three Vows* (*sdom gsum*),<sup>14</sup> and so forth. They must also continually convene to perform daily collective offerings, regular fulfillment rituals, as well as monthly rites including divine juniper offerings to the gods on the third day (of the month), the practice of the Medicine Buddha on the 8<sup>th</sup>, homages and offerings to the Elders (*sthavira*) on the 15<sup>th</sup>, the feast offering presented on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the waxing and waning moon, the ceremony for restoring the vows, as well as the planetary offering ritual performed on the 8<sup>th</sup> day corresponding to the movement of Rāhula (in the sky).

As it is clearly stated in the regulation manuals composed by Lord Péma Trinlé regarding the rules of Dorjé Drak, the procedure for entering the (monks') assembly in the monastery is as follows: first, upon entering the gate of the Dharma, (applicants) enter the ranks of the monks after offering a silk scarf, a flower, and some curds to the disciplinarian. Then, for six months, they are allowed to take tea and soup from the kitchen, but they may not join the ritual assemblies (with the rest of the monks). After that, those who have not yet reached the age requirement should be examined; if they have indeed not reached it yet, they must sit among the rows of those following the regulations for children. According to the specific rules existing (in the monastery), every month, the children must gather before the

<sup>12</sup> This is the *Byang gter bka' brgyad rang byung rang shar* discovered by rGod ldem and included in volumes 9 and 44 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>13</sup> I.e., "alternating the one with the other on successive years" (Boord, *op. cit.*, p. 33).

<sup>14</sup> On the system of the three vows, see Jan-Ulrich Sobisch, *Three-Vow Theories in Tibetan Buddhism*, especially pp. 392-447.

disciplinarian for inspection.

Monks who have reached the appropriate age requirement are called “*ban shar pa*” (“grown up monks”). They are expected to take care of the monks’ quarters and to provide cushions during gatherings, and so forth.

The successive texts that monks should memorized are the following ones, no matter whether they are elder monks or younger ones:

1. first, they must memorize the complete *Sublime Clarity of the Daily Practices (Chos spyod rab gsal)*;<sup>15</sup>
2. second, the three cycles of practice (*sgrub skor rnam gsum*),<sup>16</sup> as well as *The Mind Activities of Phurpa (Phur pa thugs ‘phrin)*;<sup>17</sup>
3. the Eight Pronouncements (*bKa’ brgyad*),<sup>18</sup> the Lord of Life (*Tshe bdag*),<sup>19</sup> and *The Secret Gathering of the Masters (Bla ma gsang ‘dus)*;<sup>20</sup>
4. the long-life practice (*tshe sgrub*) of Amṛtakunḍali,<sup>21</sup> together with *The Gathering of the Clans of the Three Bodies (sKu gsum rigs ‘dus)*.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See note 4 *supra*. One of the latest edition of this compilation that is widely in use is the *rDo rje brag e wam lcog sgar ‘dus sde rnam ki chos spyod rab gsal*, Delhi, 2003.

<sup>16</sup> These cycles are those of Phur pa, the bKa’ brgyad, and ‘Jam dpal tshe bdag. See the *Byang gter sgrub skor rnam gsum gyi las byang* (in the bibliography *in fine* under “Collective”). See also the bibliography under Chos kyi nyi ma (ed.) for a reference to the *Byang gter ‘don cha’i skor stod cha sgrub skor rnam gsum*.

<sup>17</sup> This abridged title corresponds to *The Mind Activities of the Glorious Vajrakīla (dPal rdo rje phur pa’i thugs kyi ‘phrin las)*. See the translation of this text in Rig ‘dzin rdo rje, *A Roll of Thunder From The Void*, pp. 101-119.

<sup>18</sup> See note 12 *supra*.

<sup>19</sup> See volume 21 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>20</sup> Texts of the *Bla ma gsang ‘dus* cycle are included in volume 56 and 60 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*. Originally the *Bla ma gsang ‘dus* was a *terma* discovered by Gu ru Chos dbang (1212–1270). On this cycle, see Cathy Cantwell, “The Formative Impact of Guru Chöwang’s (gu ru chos kyi dbang phyug, 1212-1270) Secret Embodiment of the Lama”, *passim*.

<sup>21</sup> The Amṛtakunḍali’s long life practices are spread into several volumes of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*. According to Jay Valentine’s listing of contents included on the BDRc website (see under W2PD17457), there are: 1. *bDud rtsi ‘khyil ba ‘chi med tshe’i sgrub chen gyi cha rkyen las bzhi’i sbyin bsreg me hom dang bcas pa las bzhi lhun grub*, vol. 33, pp. 711-725; 2. *Tshe sgrub bdud rtsi ‘khyil ba’i bsnyen sgrub kyi yi ge ‘chi med bdud rtsi’i gter mdzod*, vol. 50, pp. 329-346; 3. *Tshe sgrub bdud rtsi ‘khyil ba’i sgrub thabs kyi rnam bshad byin rlabs sprin phung dngos grub rol mtsho*, vol. 56, pp. 59-239. The actual cycle gathering the Amṛtakunḍali’s texts on long life practices has been discovered by Rig ‘dzin legs ldan rje (bDud ‘joms rdo rje, 1512–1625?).

<sup>22</sup> This cycle is also known as *The Profound Teachings of the Gathering of the Clans of the Immortal Three Bodies (Zab chos ‘chi med sku gsum rig ‘dus)*. Some of its contents are spread through volumes 35, 50 and 57 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs* although covering only five texts of the original cycle. It should not be confused with the *sKu*

Once the examinations are completed, regardless whether one is old or young, one is allowed to sit in the front rows of the monks. All Lamas and incarnates (Tulkus) must also definitely take the examinations on the liturgical texts.<sup>23</sup>

As for the support of the monk's livelihood, each monk receives from the monastery one bushel (*khal*) of grain, a bushel being about 28 pounds. In addition, every year, they would receive sixteen bushels of grains distributed by the four treasurers and managers (of the monastery) every three months. Daily tea and daily noodles, as well as the necessary implements for the "Great Ritual Practices" (*sgrub chen*) are also provided by the four treasurers and managers, without anything lacking.

It is also customary to dispatch (monks) to the six estates (of the monastery) to perform daily offerings. Thus, as to the monks who have to leave Dorje Drak to (perform rituals in) other places, a group of eight monks would be sent to Drak Yangdzong; nine monks, including one nun, to the Ku-nga shrine in the Barkhang Temple in Lhasa; a group of four monks to the Chokzhi Riksum temple (in Lhasa); a group of four monks to the army headquarters (in Lhasa); a preceptor and a treasurer to Sheldrak; one monk to the Döpal Lhamo temple (at the feet of the Potala); one monk to the Keru Lhakhang temple in Ön; one representative to each of the Sheldrong and Le'uchung temples; and one treasurer to Dzogchen (monastery), in the Dölphur (valley) of Chezhöl, and so forth. These were the respective locations in which monks had to be dispatched."

It is also said that "for those coming from Amdo<sup>24</sup> to become new monastic residents, there are three residential divisions (in the monastery), known as "monks' cells" for new residents. They are allowed to stay (there) so that they do not have to look elsewhere for accommodation."




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*gsum rig 'dus zab tig* which is a "pure vision" (*dag snang*) revelation by 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang po. The *sKu gsum rigs 'dus* that is referred to here is a revelation by Byang bdag bKra shis stobs rgyal.

<sup>23</sup> In other words, regardless of one's social status within the hierarchy of the monastery, all monks and *sprul skus* must undergo the examination process.

<sup>24</sup> I.e., mDo smad.

## 5. The Lineage Practices according to the Teachings of Taklung Tsétrül Rinpoché<sup>1</sup>

**T**he daily ritual practices as well as the regular religious ceremonies performed in Dorjé Drak can be summarized as follows according to Taklung Tsétrül Rinpoché. First come the daily ritual practices that are accomplished by all the monks of this tradition.

### *Daily Ritual Practices*

There are three prayer sessions per day, and the main commitment is to recite the *Prayer in Seven Chapters* twice during each session without fail. Then, monks should recite the *Chöchö Rabsel* liturgy in its entirety within a five-day period. Inside the Protectors' Chapel known as "Sisum Namgyel" ("The Complete Victory over the Three Existences")<sup>2</sup>, the monks should engage in the self-visualization (*bdag bskyed*) of Phurba and perform the related activity ritual before offering the complete extensive propitiation ritual to the Dharma Protectors.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> and the 25<sup>th</sup> days of the lunar month, as well as on special occasions such as memorial services or when presenting the *Gutor* offering,<sup>3</sup> monks should perform the mending-purification practices, consisting in a ceremony for restoring broken vows. These practices should be carried out every month.

Regarding the practice and offering rituals, beginning on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> Tibetan month, (there is):

- a one-week practice and offering ritual of the long-life *sādhana* of *The Gathering of the Clans of the Three Bodies* (*sKu*

<sup>1</sup> See a very similar presentation of these schedules and lists in Boord, *The Cult of the Deity Vajrakīla*, pp. 31 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> In this context, the *srid gsum* refers to the three realms (*khams gsum*), namely the Realms of Desire, Form and the Formless Realm. The main deity associated with this chapel is Vajrakīla.

<sup>3</sup> *dGu gtor*, a *gtor ma* offering performed during the yearly ritual accomplished on the 29<sup>th</sup> of the 12<sup>th</sup> Tibetan month in order to expel the evil spirits, bad luck, etc., that assigned the previous months of the year.

- gsum rigs 'dus*), as rediscovered from the treasures of Jangdak (Tashi Tobgyel),<sup>4</sup> together with
- three days of *Kanjur* recitations.

On the first day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tibetan month, following a single day earth ritual, there is:

- one week dedicated to the main practice of the pill *sādhana*<sup>5</sup> of *The Great Compassionate One Liberating all Beings* (*Thugs rje chen po 'gro ba kun grol*),<sup>6</sup> based on a maṇḍala of colored powders;
- customarily followed by a one-day supplementary fire offering, together with the (Avalokiteśvara) empowerment.

From the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tibetan month, there is a five-day practice and offering ceremony for *The Profound Teachings on the Self-Liberated Contemplation of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities* (*Zab chos zhi khro dgongs pa rang grol*) by Tertön Karma Lingpa.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tibetan month, the earth ritual and preparatory practices are performed beforehand, followed by a sand maṇḍala ritual.<sup>7</sup> Based on this, beginning in the first days of the 4<sup>th</sup> Tibetan month, the practice and offering ceremony for Lekden Jé's profound terma (entitled) *The Long-life Practice known as the Whirling Nectar* (*Tshe sgrub bdud rtsi 'khyil ba*),<sup>8</sup> and *The Gathering of the Clans of the Three Bodies* (*sKu gsum rigs 'dus*) are conducted for an entire week. On this occasion, one must also offer longevity substances to establish connections with the Wish-fulfilling Jewel, i.e., the Dalai Lama.<sup>9</sup>

From the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 4<sup>th</sup> Tibetan month, there are five days dedicated to the practice and offering of the Northern Treasures' *Spontaneously Accomplished Peaceful and Wrathful Deities of the Transparent Contemplation* (*dGongs pa zang thal gyi zhi khro lhun grub*).

On the 14<sup>th</sup>, there is one day of offering preparations in connection with the 15<sup>th</sup>, the celebration day of the Earth Month, during which an

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<sup>4</sup> This cycle is included in volumes 35, 50 and 57 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>5</sup> *ril sgrub*, a ritual practice consisting in producing medicinal pills, using special substances that are prepared, blessed, etc., through visualizations and intense mantric recitations. They are then essentially used (depending on their ingredients) for *bcud len* practice or other medical purposes (principally those related to longevity).

<sup>6</sup> Included in volume 4 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>7</sup> Of Vajrasattva according to the *rDor sems thugs kyi me long* revealed by Gar dbang rdo rje (Boord, *op. cit.*, p. 32).

<sup>8</sup> Included in volume 33 of this collection.

<sup>9</sup> *Gong sa skyabs mgon*, lit. the highest (*gong sa*) Refuge (*skyabs*) and Protector (*mgon*), the classical epithet associated with the Dalai Lama.

extensive thousand-offering ceremony<sup>10</sup> is performed for one day through the means of *The (Great Compassionate One) Liberating all Beings* ('*Gro ba kun grol*).

Following the offering preparation, on the 27<sup>th</sup>, there are three days of *torma* ritual and reversal at the Wrathful Deities' Assembly Hall, using *The Gathered Teachings known as the Ocean of Dharma* (*bKa' 'dus chos kyi rgya mtsho*).<sup>11</sup>

From the 5<sup>th</sup> day of this month until the 10<sup>th</sup>, there are three days of training for the great Tenth Day dance, as well as three days of chanting practice.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> Tibetan month, the Great Knowledge Holder and his entourage visit the residence of Lhachen Maheśvara, where the great deity's enthronement ceremony is performed. Returning to the Wrathful Deities' Assembly Hall, the local protector Dzong Tsenpa of Sheldrak is invited to descend into the body (of the oracle): in relation to this, there is the dance of the Commanders,<sup>12</sup> followed by the enthronement ceremony of the proud Sokgi Pudri. Once this is completed, the monks return to the monastery to perform the *cham*-dance of the Ten Wrathful Ones.<sup>13</sup>

On the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> Tibetan month, in the morning, after taking seats in order, they perform the feast offering of *The Practice of the Heir of the Knowledge Holders* (*Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub*),<sup>14</sup> establish the boundaries with the dance of the Ten Wrathful Ones, and in the evening engage in the dance of the tenth day.

On the tenth day, following the grand ceremonial dance associated (with the ritual) of the tenth day (of the month) connected with the feast offering of the eight chapters of *The Secret Gathering of the Master* (*Bla ma gsang 'dus*) revealed by Guru Chöwang, a long-life empowerment of *The Glorious Bestowing of Immortality* ('*Chi med dpal ster*)<sup>15</sup> is bestowed as the concluding ritual.<sup>16</sup>

On the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, (the monks practice) *The Secret Gathering of the Master*. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, they engage in the secret practice of Drakpo Tsel according to the Northern Treasures. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, they perform a feast offering according to *The Treasury of the Guru's Qualities* (*Gu ru yon tan gter mdzod*).<sup>17</sup>

On the fourth day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Tibetan month, a grand thousand-

<sup>10</sup> Of butter-lamps.

<sup>11</sup> A treasure revealed by O rgyan gling pa (1323–c. 1360).

<sup>12</sup> *Ru 'dren*, i.e., vanguards or commanders of the "army" of the local deity.

<sup>13</sup> *Daśakrodha*, a retinue of ten wrathful deities in the entourage of Vajrakīla.

<sup>14</sup> Included in volume 5 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>15</sup> Some works of this cycle are included in volumes 43, 48, and 57 of this collection.

<sup>16</sup> I.e., it constitutes the final ceremony for the special festival of the 10<sup>th</sup> of that month.

<sup>17</sup> See volume 30 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

offering ceremony<sup>18</sup> is held for one day. On the 15th, there is a mending-purification ceremony.<sup>19</sup> On the 16th, in the morning, in connection with the vows (taken during) the summer retreat, (the monks) diligently apply themselves to reading and abstaining from (non-virtuous activities) throughout the summer retreat. In particular, there is a tradition of reciting the entire *Kanjur* once during this period.

On the twenty-first day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Tibetan month, following the preliminary earth ritual, a one-day main practice of the pill *sādhana* is conducted, based on the maṇḍala of colored powders and in conjunction with the profound *terma* (known as) *The Liberation of Saṃsāra within Space* (*'Khor ba dbyings sgrol*), revealed by Lekden Jé.<sup>20</sup> This is followed by a single day dedicated to the supplementary peaceful fire offering and empowerment.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of the seventh Tibetan month, those who have been engaged in preparing the offerings then gather at the shrine residence in a great assembly (*tshoms chen*) and:

- on the 9<sup>th</sup>, they engage in *The Practice of the Heir of the Knowledge Holders* (*Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub*);
- on the 10<sup>th</sup>, they practice *The Secret Assembly of the Master* (*Bla ma gsang 'dus*) revealed by Guru Chöwang;
- on the 11<sup>th</sup>, they practice *The Wrathful Master* (*Gu drag*) from Nyang-rel (Nyima Özer);
- on the 12<sup>th</sup>, they practice *The Wrathful Master* (*Gu drag*) according to the Northern Treasures;
- on the 13<sup>th</sup>, there is a feast offering based on *The Treasury of the Guru's Qualities* (*Gu ru yon tan gter mdzod*), and in connection with it, on the tenth day of the seventh (month, this feast is performed for) five days;
- on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the 7<sup>th</sup> month, in the morning, there is an earth-consecration ritual, while in the evening, after preparations, relying on a maṇḍala of colored powders, the monks engage in the main part of the great practice of Phurba according to the Northern Treasures, which lasts a whole week;
- on the 29<sup>th</sup>, there is a “throwing-*torma*” (*gtor rgyag*) ritual; and
- on the 30<sup>th</sup>, there are supplementary rituals, including the fire puja's four activities—appeasing, increasing, subjugating, and destroying—along with the ritual consisting of the reception of *siddhis*.

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<sup>18</sup> See *supra* note 10.

<sup>19</sup> *gSo sbyong*, i.e., an extensive ritual consisting of confessions aimed at restoring (*gso*) and purifying (*sbyong*) broken vows and commitments.

<sup>20</sup> In volumes 33 and 48 of this collection.

Besides these, there is a tradition of observing the *Gag-yé* ritual<sup>21</sup> throughout the entire night of the 29<sup>th</sup> and the morning of the 30<sup>th</sup>.

From the first day of the eighth Tibetan month, there is a three-day excursion,<sup>22</sup> followed by a holiday of some sort. During the eighth and ninth months, there are no major ritual festivals at the monastery during the regular assembly period. The abbot and about ten monks travel to Lhasa, and at the treasury house of the Ladrang, for four days, they have to perform rituals such as *The Supreme and Victorious Jewel of Divinatory Activities* (*Phywa 'phrin nor bu mchog rgyal*),<sup>23</sup> *The Mahādeva (Practice)* of the Northern Treasures,<sup>24</sup> the ritual of the gathering of luck associated with (the cycle) of Durdak,<sup>25</sup> as well as the ritual display of mules and horses.

From the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> of the ninth Tibetan month, twenty-two monks from Dodrak Monastery visit Gongkar County. With the material support (*yon sbyar*) provided by the county,<sup>26</sup> the monks have to perform an extensive ritual of the *Gönpo Yüldö*.<sup>27</sup>

By the tenth Tibetan month, the monks produce new yearly tormas offerings for the Sisum Namgyel Protectors' Chapel, and in connection with this, from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup>, during four days, there is a tradition of performing rituals based on the four activities (with) *Torma* offerings, as well as making extensive sets up of support for the Guardians.

From the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> of the tenth Tibetan month, twenty-two monks from Dodrak Monastery travel to Samyé where, with the material support provided by the county, they have to perform a great *Dö* ceremony of Shinjé Charka (Nakpo) as a ritual for the solstice, executed in the Hayagrīva Garden temple near the southern door (of the monastery).<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *dGag dbye*, a specific ceremony performed for lifting the rules and restrictions of the summer retreat.

<sup>22</sup> *Ijongs rgyu*. Sometimes translated as picnic, it is actually a kind of casual wandering consisting of roaming (*rgyu*) aimlessly in the countryside (*Ijongs*).

<sup>23</sup> Included in volume 7 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>24</sup> Included in volume 15 of this collection.

<sup>25</sup> *Dur bdag*, short for *Dur khrod bdag po*, the Lord of Cemeteries whose teachings are included in vol. 35 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>26</sup> This means that the local administration provides all that is necessary for the performance of the rituals.

<sup>27</sup> *mGon po g.yul mdos*, a *mdos* ritual aimed at propitiating Protectors (*mgon po*, starting with Mahākāla, etc.) to defeat conditioned existence (*srid pa*) in battle (*g.yul*), revealed by Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer and included in the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, vol. 37, pp. 189-380.

<sup>28</sup> To my knowledge, there is only one *mdos chen* in the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, in vol. 29, pp. 323-342, but it is associated with Rāhula, not Yamāntaka (*gShin rje char ka nag po*). However, the connection is certainly tighter in this case since, during the *mdos* offering section included in this text, the yogi has to visualize himself as Yamāntaka (p. 325), albeit in a yellow form.

From the 19<sup>th</sup> of the eleventh Tibetan month, those who have gathered in a great assembly at the shrine residence (of the Knowledge Holder) build the maṇḍala of colored powders, after the preparations and earth-rituals carried out alternately<sup>29</sup> between the *Kagyé Troröl Langgangma*<sup>30</sup> and *The Repelling Torma of the Lord of Life*.<sup>31</sup>

From the 22<sup>nd</sup> onwards, the monks start with the *torma* practice (*gtor sgrub*), then on the 28<sup>th</sup>, (they open) the path (for scattering) the *tormas* offerings,<sup>32</sup> and on the 29<sup>th</sup>, the *zor* of the main practice is hurled. On the 30<sup>th</sup>, they conclude with the extensive *torma* offering and the ritual involving the reception of the *siddhis*.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of the twelfth Tibetan month, regarding the main practice of the *Zorphen Tséchu* ritual,<sup>33</sup> the monks start training in the dance renowned as the great ritual offering of the *Gutor*.

On the 15<sup>th</sup>, the ritual dances are performed. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, the earth ritual and the laying out of the lines<sup>34</sup> of the maṇḍala take place. From that day, the construction of the offering maṇḍala itself begins.

On the 18<sup>th</sup>, after performing the preparatory rituals, the monks draw the colored sand maṇḍala. From the 22<sup>nd</sup>, the *Gutor* offering is made, alternating each year between the extensive *Kagyé Troröl* of the Northern Treasures<sup>35</sup> and the repelling *torma* of the Lord of Life (revealed by Gya) Zhangtrom.<sup>36</sup>

On the 27<sup>th</sup>, they perform the concise “liberation dance”<sup>37</sup> of the Ten Wrathful Ones. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, they engage in an elaborate “liberation dance”, with *torma* offering. On the 29<sup>th</sup>, they perform a highly elaborate “liberation dance” and a “missile dance”,<sup>38</sup> as well as an extensive hurling of *torma* in connection with (these dances).

On the 30<sup>th</sup>, (the monks perform) a residual dance<sup>39</sup> and an

<sup>29</sup> From one year to the other.

<sup>30</sup> *bKa' brgyad khro rol rlang gang ma*. I have been unable to identify any text bearing the nickname *rlang(s) gang ma* (“full of vapor” or the “steaming one”) in its title.

<sup>31</sup> *Tshe bdag gi gtor bzlog*, a treasure traditionally attributed to the early *gter ston* rGya zhang khrom. On this treasure revealer, see Esler, “Yamāntaka’s Wrathful Magic”; see also Arguillère, “Yamāntaka Among the Ancients: *Mañjuśrī Master of Life in Context*”.

<sup>32</sup> *gTor lam*. On this term, see Sehnalova, “Dancing for Protection and Prosperity”, p. 550.

<sup>33</sup> *Zor phan tshe bcu*, “the hurling of the *gtor ma* on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month”.

<sup>34</sup> Correcting *thugs 'debs* to *thigs 'debs*.

<sup>35</sup> *bKa' brgyad khro rol*, in volumes 13 and 46 in the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

<sup>36</sup> In volume 27 of the collection.

<sup>37</sup> *sGrol 'cham*. On this term—which implies the liberation (lit. “murder”, *sgrol*) of obstacle creators (*bgegs*)—, see Schlieter, “Die ‚Befreiung des Bösen‘ in ritueller Wiederholung”, p. 181

<sup>38</sup> *Zor 'cham*, a ritual dance during which a *zor* (missile) is hurled.

<sup>39</sup> *Lhag 'cham*, another ritual dance during which the remains of the offerings are presented to worldly local entities, non-humans, and so forth.

extremely elaborate *torma* offering. The ceremony concludes with the ritual of receiving accomplishments (*siddhis*), the dissolution of the maṇḍala, the request for the deities to depart,<sup>40</sup> and dedication and aspiration prayers adorned with auspicious verses. That night—since it corresponds to the exhaustion of the year and the exhaustion of the month<sup>41</sup>—the repelling ritual (*zlog pa*) of the Lord of Death is performed.<sup>42</sup> These offering practices are carried out every year without fail, in accordance with the ritual arrangements of Rigdzin Péma Trinlé.

### *Drak Yangdzong*

Similarly, at Drag Yangdzong, through the performance of *The Long-Life Practice known as the Iron Tree* (*Tshe sgrub lcags sdong ma*), *The Extraction of the Pure Elixir* (*Dwangs ma bcud 'dren*), and *The Gathering of the Clans of the Three Bodies* (*sKu gsum rigs 'dus*), a permanent staff of eight monks and a shrine keeper (*sku gnyer*) engage in the long-life practice for the Wish-fulfilling Jewel (i.e., the Dalai Lama). Eight monks performing the invocations to the Protector (Mahākāla) are assigned to the printing house of the Lhasa temple; four monks performing the invocations to the Protector are assigned to the Zhöl military headquarters;<sup>43</sup> and one shrine keeper is assigned to the Döpel Lhamokhang.<sup>44</sup>

(Moreover,) at the few temples dedicated to the (Lords of the) Three Clans<sup>45</sup> in Lhasa, the Dorjé Drak and Mindröl Ling monasteries take turns in providing four monks each to perform the *Gongpo Arté* suppression ritual.

Besides, any additional ritual services required for the State and religion of the Sublime Government must be performed. A sufficient number of abbots, treasurers, shrine-keepers, and so forth must be dispatched to the branch monasteries in remote regions.

From the first to the third day of the first Tibetan month, the New Year ceremonies are observed, and in connection with these, on the third day, the Great Knowledge Holder and his retinue travel to the

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<sup>40</sup> During the rituals, the Buddhas and deities are asked to take residence in the maṇḍala and are then asked to depart at the end of the ritual, to return to their pure realms, etc.

<sup>41</sup> I.e., the last day of the last month of the year.

<sup>42</sup> It is a wrathful ritual performed to ward off obstacles, sudden accidents, premature death, and ill-influences likely to arise during the coming year.

<sup>43</sup> The Zhöl was this labyrinthic section of Lhasa below the Potala Palace itself. The military quarters were installed in this section.

<sup>44</sup> A temple dedicated to dPal ldan lha mo.

<sup>45</sup> Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, and Vajrapāṇi.

support-site of the Great Deity (Maheśvara) to perform the Profound Supplication in connection (with the deity).

Then, proceeding to the Wangdrak Chok turret, the ritual of the “Third Day Invitation of Dzong Tsenpa”<sup>46</sup> and the sacred dance of the commanders are performed in accordance with the pure vision (*dag snang*) of Kelzang Péma Wangchuk (1720–1771).

Following this, once the enthronement<sup>47</sup> of the Guardians is completed, the Great Knowledge Holder and his retinue return to their quarters. Then, until the 7<sup>th</sup>, after completing the New Year holiday, the monks once again engage solely in practices such as offering rituals, studying, reflecting, and meditating, continuously carrying out activities to uphold, protect, and spread the teachings of the Buddha.”

This is as it was stated (by Taklung Rinpoché).

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In this way, this lineage of Thubten Dorjé Drag from the Northern Treasure spread throughout Tibet (including the three provinces of Do, Ü, and Kham, as well as Bhutan, Sikkim, central Nepal, the snowy range of Yölmo, Khumbu in the east, and Ladakh.

New monasteries were established in various Tibetan exile settlements and in many foreign countries. A rough nominative list of the monasteries where this lineage has flourished and continues to flourish is provided below.<sup>48</sup> In these (monasteries), the great tradition of ritual practices that passed down from the Dharma King Jangpa (Tashi Tobgyel), father and sons, to the Knowledge Holder Péma Trinlé (still) combines Tantras and *sādhanas*, *sādhanas* and ritual arrangements, ritual arrangements and practical guidance, and practical guidance and the lineage of Knowledge Holders. (Thus,) the rituals imbued with this fourfold connection possess powerful blessings and efficacy in their activities that particularly surpass other (traditions). They have continued down to the present day through the benevolent root-master.<sup>49</sup>

In the sky, the rows of the lineage of the Knowledge Holders have been unbroken. On the earth, the radiance of the maṇḍala practice has not disappeared. In between, the ambrosiac lake of medicinal and fermented substances has not dried up. It has not been corrupted or adulterated by *samaya*-breakers. The fragrant breath of the Mothers<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> He is a Guardian of the Teachings (*bstan srung*).

<sup>47</sup> *mNga' gsol*. During this ceremony, the commitments of the protector deities are renewed.

<sup>48</sup> See the section 8 in this chapter.

<sup>49</sup> The locutor is Khenpo Chöying, whose root-master is sTag klung rtse sprul rin po che.

<sup>50</sup> *Mātrikās*.

and Dākinīs has not dissipated. The continuity of the lineage of ultimate blessings remains uninterrupted.

Additionally, the activities of teaching, debating, and composing, based on the general *Kama* and *Terma* teachings, as well as on the profound writings of the Omniscient Rongzom Chözang, Longchen Rabjam, and Jamgön Mipham Rinpoché, have likewise been extensively nurtured.

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Such is the fifth chapter from *The Garland of Wondrous Tales: An Account of the Knowledge Holders' Lineage of Thubten Dorjé Drak of the Northern Treasures* that describes the sacred objects and structures of Thubten Dorjé Drak in Central Tibet, as well as the ongoing practices of study, reflection, and formal practice.

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## 6. The Regulations of the Ewaṃ Chogar entitled "The Splendor of the Blazing Vajra"

by Ngari Paṅchen

Namaḥ mahāsantiya.<sup>1</sup>

*Before Samantabhadra, the Primordial Conqueror, the utterly pure  
Absolute Space entirely free from concepts,*

*Before the deities of the maṇḍala of the Hundred Clans of the noble  
Peaceful and Wrathful Ones subjugating thought, endowed with an  
unceasing dynamism that is immutable and unobstructed,*

*Before [the state] that possesses the non-duality of all maṇḍalas of the  
uncompounded quintessence free from being either singular or plural,<sup>2</sup>*

*Before the supreme master, with the devotion of my body, speech, and  
mind, I join my palms and bow the crown of my head in respectful homage!*

*Namo Gura we!*<sup>3</sup>

*I prostrate and take refuge in the noble Gurus, the Venerable Ones, and the  
supreme Deities together with their retinues, as vast as the atoms of the ocean.*

*With your great kindness, please protect me and all sentient beings—  
together with my descendants and disciples—at all times and in every way.*

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<sup>1</sup> "Homage to (the state of) Mahāsandhi!" Mahāsandhi or Mahāsanti is the reconstructed sanskrit corresponding to the tib. *rDzogs chen* (the "Great Perfection"). In the titles of rdzogs chen Tantras from the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* one sometimes finds the form *Sandhi/Santi Mahā* (or Śāntimahā and other variants) with the adjective following the noun in the title of the texts. According to the late Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, this is a characteristic of the texts supposedly coming from Oḍḍiyāna. At the time of writing this footnote (February 2026), to my knowledge not a single original rdzogs chen text written in any Indic language has been discovered so far.

<sup>2</sup> This quintessence is not singular in the sense that it does not refer to a single cosmic consciousness to which all beings would be connected. It is not plural in the sense that it is not to be defined in multiple ways, but should rather be understood and experienced as being exclusively expressed in the nondifferentiation of Emptiness and Clarity (*stong gsal dbyer med*). This quintessence is the natural state (*gnas lugs*) itself.

<sup>3</sup> "Homage to the guru!"

Now, I shall address my own monks who have entered this encampment:<sup>4</sup>

I have treated everyone—whether influential or humble, of high or low status, old or young—with honor, placing them above myself in both spiritual and worldly matters. I did this in hope that, ultimately, there might be a few among them capable of upholding the Buddha’s Teachings. Yet, despite the fact that I nurtured them with a mind free of impurity or guile, some have become stubborn in character.

Some have developed wrong conceptions; some have acted tyrannically among the monks; some have disregarded their *samaya*; and some fail to understand [that I am attempting to] rectify the Doctrine.<sup>5</sup>

In response to repeated (cases concerning) certain individuals who have been regarded as having slandered others out of bias, these regulations were progressively established.<sup>6</sup> In particular, to settle the issue, one must act in accordance with the (following specific) stipulations:

- If one wishes to request a teaching, the request should not be received (favorably) unless it has been examined on three separate occasions.<sup>7</sup>
- When teachings are to be explained, this must be done by general consensus; however, disciples whose motivations have not been examined shall not be admitted to the empowerment row.
- Except for local governors occupying the honorary seats and pure Bhikṣus<sup>8</sup> seated in the head places, no distinction shall be made between old and young monks. Seating in the rows shall be determined by the order of arrival rather than by fixed

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<sup>4</sup> *sGar* (as in E waṃ lcog **sgar**), a euphemism in reference to the rDo rje brag monastery.

<sup>5</sup> *Dag ther byed pa* means to reorganize, clean up, improve, rectify. What the great paṇḍit implies here is not that he intends to modify the teaching (*bstan pa*), but rather that he seeks to rectify the situation in the monastery and its rules. mNga’ ris paṅ chen is thus clearly expressing his frustration about the situation. The leniency and respect with which he treated his monks did not result in them (or at least some of them) becoming, in his educated opinion, great Dharma holders. His aim is therefore to restore the original purity of the monastic rules.

<sup>6</sup> This clearly indicates that the rules of monastery were not written all at once in an arbitrary manner. On the contrary, they were established gradually, often as a reaction to specific incidents.

<sup>7</sup> This is a traditional method described in the Vinaya, consisting in verifying the genuine interest of the disciple in the teaching he requests. Moreover, the request must be made in a timely manner, that is, at the right time. Hence, the examination of all the conditions required for transmission is carried out three times.

<sup>8</sup> Fully ordained monks.

places.<sup>9</sup>

- If outsiders come to request teachings, they shall be seated separately. While they may be provided with Dharma and material provisions as they wish, they are not to be included in the ranks of the Encampment.
- Regardless of high or low status, the (monks of the) encampment shall not keep any robes that serve as ostentatious adornment. Beyond a single stool, a small mat, a rain cover, and (ordinary) Dharma robes (no additional items shall be kept).
- Whatever resources exist shall be offered to the common fund, and everyone shall partake together of flour soup (*phye thug*). In particular, meat and alcohol shall not be distributed within the assembly.
- If one fails to assemble when the *gandi* (bell) or the gong signals the Dharma session, one must perform one hundred prostrations in accordance with the general rule (observed by) the Saṅgha (on such occasions).
- In general, one must exert oneself in hearing, reflecting, and meditating,<sup>10</sup> in matters concerning teaching and practicing authentic Sūtras, Tantras, and Pith Instructions.<sup>11</sup> In particular, one should listen to the kind of teachings that are described in the (*Prayer of*) *the Great Bliss Free from Proliferations* (*sPros bral bde chen*).<sup>12</sup>
- As to the implementation of teaching and practice—regardless of status, whether high or low, of great or small rank, old or young—those who are requested (to teach), and who possess good character and a pure discipline, should take the responsibility of accomplishing (this task) harmoniously in the capacity of a master.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> In other words, the order is determined by whoever arrives first and takes a seat in the line.

<sup>10</sup> *Thos bsam sgom gsum*, i.e., the three knowledges leading to realization.

<sup>11</sup> In this context, it is obvious that *man ngag* refers to rDzogs chen.

<sup>12</sup> *sPros bral bde chen ma*, a famous section from the *gSol 'debs le'u bdun ma*. See for instance, sPrul sku bZang po grags pa, *O rgyan gu ru padma 'byung gnas kyi gsol 'debs le'u bdun ma bsam pa lhun grub rten bskyed dang bcas pa*, pp. 133-139.

<sup>13</sup> The rule is stricter than it appears: 1. one must be asked (*thebs pa*) to teach and therefore must possess some knowledge of some sort and be known for it; 2. one must have a personality that is in harmony with others; and 3. one must maintain a pure discipline by keeping one's vows and commitments immaculate. It thus does not imply that *anybody*, no matter his status and age, can be regarded as a spiritual master.

Furthermore, among the monks, if instances of theft or bullying occur, [the offender] must offer a fine of one *zho*<sup>14</sup> and provide a tea service offering for the entire Sangha assembly.<sup>15</sup>

If anyone acts with arrogance or aggression, and this is proven, the conch shall be blown and the person shall be expelled from the assembly. Regarding that, whoever provides support or backing (to such a person) shall be subjected to the general penal labor prescribed by the internal regulations of the community.

During the winter and spring, the alternating teaching and practice of the Eight Pronouncements (*bKa' brgyad*) shall be conducted within the retreat boundaries. During the summer and autumn, with regard to the rotation of the encampment monks and the responsibility of fostering whatever Dharma is desired in accordance with their capacities—all lamas, ācāryas, and monks should act as friends to one another, bear witness for one another, and uphold one another.

If anyone fails to do this, they will be regarded as samaya breakers, and their Dharma lineage will therefore be of no benefit. It is crucial to know this.

Do not admit unfamiliar monks into the monastery without first examining them (carefully).

Do not harbor great desires (for this world). Instead, primarily engage in listening, explaining, and reciting (prayers), while maintaining the boundaries (consisting in keeping the purity of your) *samaya* and vows.

Do not explain the Tantras without having received Empowerment. Do not expound the Secret Mantra without having received the Bodhicitta and Prātimokṣa vows.

Meanwhile, do not allow the (daily) Torma for Dharma Protectors (to be neglected),<sup>16</sup> and on the 12<sup>th</sup>, offer the *Gutor*;<sup>17</sup> do not let the *Gutor* (offering) be missed.

In particular, receive the “Empowerment of the Time of the Path”<sup>18</sup> for *The Secret Gathering of the Master* (*Bla ma gsang 'dus*) and *The Eight Pronouncements* (*bKa' brgyad*) without fail.

Ensure that the teaching and practice of the Six-Syllable Mantra (of Avalokiteśvara) remain unceasing.

Regarding daily practices (*chos spyod*), in the general assembly, recite authentic texts from India and Tibet—such as the *Great Bliss Free*

<sup>14</sup> A *zho* is a monetary unit corresponding to a half tola of gold (around 10 euros).

<sup>15</sup> This is called a *mang ja*, lit. a “multitude” (*mang*) offering of tea (*ja*).

<sup>16</sup> *Chos gtor*, apparently short for *chos skyong gi gtor ma*.

<sup>17</sup> The *dgu gtor* is generally offered on the 29<sup>th</sup> of the 12<sup>th</sup> month but here it seems to refer to a monthly offering.

<sup>18</sup> *Lam dus kyi dbang*. On such an initiation that allows one to engage into higher states of contemplation, see Kongtrül, *System of Buddhist Tantra*, p. 476 n. 71.

from *Proliferations (sPros bral bde chen)*<sup>19</sup>—along with praises to your own root master, and daily dharma practice at the Sūtra level. Perform your daily tantric practices during empowerment and in the assembly rows.

Don't break the continuity of (your practice) of the Winds and Magic Wheels (*Yantras*), and since you have taken all three vows,<sup>20</sup> do not break them!

Except for those who have received empowerments and maintain pure vows, do not admit (anyone else) in the assembly rows.

Regarding your meditation practice, whether in your own quarters or away, it is very important never to interrupt (the regularity of) your four sessions.<sup>21</sup> Those who are capable should actually perform six sessions!<sup>22</sup>

If important texts need to be copied, those with the (requisite) level of knowledge should gather and take part in the copy.<sup>23</sup>

Teach new monks how to read and write, and ensure that they become proficient (in these skills). If you act contrary to this:

- either, I stay aside (uninvolved in the matter) and you should not expect anything from me (in this regard),<sup>24</sup>
- or you should put effort to purify<sup>25</sup> the transgression and refrain from destroying the monastic community.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>19</sup> See note 12 above.

<sup>20</sup> *sDom pa gsum*, namely the vows of self-liberation, the vows of bodhisattva, and tantric samayas.

<sup>21</sup> At dawn, in the morning, in the afternoon, and in the evening.

<sup>22</sup> Adding noon and midnight to the four above.

<sup>23</sup> Copying texts in traditional Tibet was often a communal effort and a labor-intensive task involving, in situations as the one referred to here, one or several copyists, a scholar (at least) to check the copy, and a final editor. In worst cases, young monks were asked to make copies based on a master dictating the text (hence the often catastrophic orthographic results).

<sup>24</sup> *Yang na nga gcig pur sdod pas khyed la nga la ma re!* I would like to thank Tenpa Tsering Batsang for his kind clarification of this section (email of the 12/17/25). mNga' ri pañ chen here leaves the potential culprit entirely responsible for his actions: if, while attempting to address the transgression, the culprit does not seek the help of a qualified master but instead leaves matters as they are, then he should not expect anything else in return from the master (lenience, indulgence, etc., basically a fair decision based on the vinaya rules). This may indeed imply a severing of the relationship between master and disciple.

<sup>25</sup> *Dag thon gzher*. Thanks also to Tenpa Tsering Batsang (*ib.*) for his clarification on this rare expression. *Chad las dag thon gzher* should be understood as “solving the issue”.

<sup>26</sup> The punishment should follow the monastery's regulations based on the vinaya and, in order to preserve the cohesion of the monastic community, should be in full accordance with the established rules for all. In other words, the authorities responsible for imposing punishment should ensure that the monastic community is not damaged in the process (for instance in case of an unfair situation).

Apart from following me, do not cling to specific philosophical tenets.<sup>27</sup> Why? Because I fear that, due to ignorance, you might fall into sectarian bias.

Cultivating pure perception toward all (beings) is the root of the Dharma.<sup>28</sup>

Regarding the ultimate depth of this religious system, I myself have examined it three times by day and three times by night. The traditions of *Kama* and *Terma* that I uphold represent the pure continuation of the teachings spanning from Ngari (in the West) to Kham and Kongpo (in the East). Since (these teachings) have been repeatedly analyzed by, repeatedly requested of, and repeatedly verified with blessed Lamas, liberated Yogis,<sup>29</sup> and learned paṇḍitas skilled in discrimination, they are trustworthy. Therefore, do not rely on other (teachings)."

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Furthermore,<sup>30</sup> regarding the glorious Sakya tradition, since the Ngor and Dzong (lineages)<sup>31</sup> maintain pure monastic discipline, I consider them to be authoritative sources.

Regarding the lineage coming from Lord Marpa,<sup>32</sup> place your trust in the six maṇḍalas (*dkyil 'khor drug*), *The Four Great Teachings (bKa' chen bzhi)*,<sup>33</sup> *The Guhyasamāja (gSang 'dus)*, *The Oral Transmission of Chakrasaṃvara (bDe mchog snyan brgyud)*, the *Dohas*, and the *Dar-tsha* (branch).<sup>34</sup>

<sup>27</sup> This is an exhortation not to study *siddhantas* by oneself, but only under the guidance of a qualified master.

<sup>28</sup> Cultivating such pure perception consists in imagining or visualizing all beings as emanations of one's *yiḍam*, all sounds as the mantra of the *yiḍam*, all thoughts as the expression of the spontaneous Wisdom of the *yiḍam*, and the entire environment as the pure realm of the *yiḍam*.

<sup>29</sup> *Grol ba can gyi zhig po*. A *zhig po* is a master who has destroyed (*zhig*) the illusions that affects ordinary beings in this world and who has also pulverized (*zhig*) his own ignorance. From this perspective, he is a destroyer (*zhig*) of delusion (*'khrul*).

<sup>30</sup> In this final section, mNga' ris Paṇ chen lists the specific non-rNying ma lineages that he considers authentic, that is, "pure" and safe for his disciples to practice, thus displaying an early Rimé approach.

<sup>31</sup> Ngor and rDzong are two lineages within the larger Sa skya tradition, with their own transmissions of *Lam 'bras*, *Hevajra*, etc. On *Ngor lugs*, see Dhongthog Rinpoche, *The Sakya School of Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 125 et seq. On *rDzong lugs*, see Sobisch, *Life, Transmission, and Works of A-mes-zhabs*, p. 52, n. 234.

<sup>32</sup> 1012–1097, the founder of the bKa' brgyud school.

<sup>33</sup> See Creek, *The Life and Times of 'Gos Lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal*, p. 57, n. 217. See the detailed discussion of this expression in Roloff, *Red mda' ba*, pp. 398-391, n. 550.

<sup>34</sup> rDar certainly corresponds to Slob dpon rDar sgom (12<sup>th</sup> c.), a direct disciple of dGe bshes Khyung tshang ras pa (1115–1176). He is also known as *Bla ma lTar sgom* or *sTar sgom*. See his short biography in rTa tshag Tshe dbang rgyal, *Lho rong chos 'byung*, pp. 123-127. See also Khetsun Sangpo, *rGya bod mkhas gru rim byon gyi rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 7, pp. 98-100.

Also reliable are Rechungpa's Thirteen Deities of Chakrasaṃvara in union, the *Mixing and Transference* (*bsre 'pho*) yogas, the Indian texts on *Long-Life Practice*, and (the Songs of) Milarépa.

*The General Empowerment of the Five Tantra Sections* (*rGyud sde lnga'i spyi dbang*) of the Shangpa Kagyüs and their specific empowerments and instruction-guidance are (also) authentic.

All traditions of the Kālachakra are authentic.

The teachings of Phadampa (Sangyé) from India and the teachings of Ama (Machig) Labdrön are ultimately in harmony and authentic.

Since all the teachings of Lord Atiśa<sup>35</sup> are authentic, listen to them, request them, and practice them.

Besides these, as for the older and newer Kagyü lineages fabricated and composed by many lamas who are merely fame-seeking, arrogant, ignorant, jealous, and sectarian, just leave them aside!

If anyone acts contrary to this, may the Guardians who protect the Dharma, the seventy categories of Glorious Protectors such as Brahmā, Indra, and so forth, together with their armies—inflict punishment upon them!

Whatever they expect for this life, deliver upon them exactly what they do not desire!

O Mahākāla, Brother and Sister,<sup>36</sup> bear witnesses and stand sentry to this command! Samaya!

For those who practice correctly according to the rules, extend their lives,<sup>37</sup> increase their wealth, gather retinues,<sup>38</sup> dispel obstacles, and intensify their experience and realization! Samaya! Samaya!

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*On the auspicious conjunction of the 28<sup>th</sup> day of the third month of the Dragon Year,<sup>39</sup> at the Golden Temple of U-tshel,<sup>40</sup> I called the Three Jewels and the Dharma Protectors as witnesses and set down this as my testament for those under my command.<sup>41</sup> May virtue and excellence increase! Maṅgalaṃ!*



<sup>35</sup> Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna (982–1054), founder of the bKa' gdams pa lineage.

<sup>36</sup> In the context of the rNying ma tradition, these are mGon po ma ning and Ekajāti.

<sup>37</sup> The exhortation is directed at the Dharma Protector Mahākāla and his sister.

<sup>38</sup> 'Khor in this context more specifically refers to disciples (*slob ma*) making up the entourage of a master.

<sup>39</sup> Most certainly 1544, a Wood-Dragon (*shing 'brug*) which corresponds to the year he passed away at 57. Actually, since this *bca' yig* is presented here as his "testament" (*kha chems*), this appears to be the most logical date for the redaction of this text.

<sup>40</sup> dBu tshal gser khang. It is located on the northern wall of bSam yas monastery and "is a two-storey temple erected by Queen Phogyangza (Pho-gyang-bza)" (Martin, "Samye Guide", <https://sites.google.com/site/tiblical/samye-guide>).

<sup>41</sup> I.e., the monks of rDo rje brag.

## 7. Abridged History and Presentation of Do Dorjé Drak<sup>1</sup>

**T**he reason this monastery is called Dorjé Drak is that it is one of the major branch monasteries<sup>2</sup> of the great original seat of Thubten Dorjé Drak in Central Tibet. To differentiate the two, Do Dorjé Drak was given the prefix Do, which is short for Dartsédo (modern Kanding 康定).<sup>3</sup> The monastery is also known as Ewaṃ Chogar<sup>4</sup> as well as Ger Dratsang.<sup>5</sup> Just like its monastic source in Central Tibet, Do Dorjé Drak follows the tradition of the Northern Treasures and is therefore associated with the Nyingma School and its Early Translations (*snga 'gyur*).

When the monastery was under the responsibility of Do Khyentsé Yéshé Dorjé (1800–1866) and the Chakla Prince Péma Thegchok, the king's main minister and a few wealthy patrons commissioned the construction of a two-story height statue of Padmasambhava and his two principal consorts,<sup>6</sup> as well as paintings of the Eight Manifestations of the Great Guru. They also commissioned more than three hundred larger and smaller statues, including some life-sized carved statues made of red sandalwood, etc. They also enriched the library with a *Kanjur* written in gold and a *Tengyur* printed in vermilion ink, together with the complete collection of texts from the Northern Treasures and the commentary on the *Graded Path known as the Quintessence of Wisdom* (*Lam rim ye shes snying po*) composed by Kathok Gétsé Rinpoché (1761–

<sup>1</sup> This short appendix is based on a brief presentation of mDo rDo rje brag by Reb gong pa 'Jigs med bsam grub (ed.) in his *dKar mdzes khul gyi dgon sde so so'i lo rgyus gsal bar bshad pa*. I have access only to the E-text portion of the chapter kindly provided by BDRC. This version presents certain difficulties in interpretation due to OCR errors, which hinder comprehension, limiting me to providing here a mere summary. All potential inconsistencies in this abridged rendering result from my inability to fully make sense of the OCRized E-text.

<sup>2</sup> *Bu dgon*, lit. “son monasteries”. Thub bstan rDo rje brag has numerous branches (see the next section 8), mDo rDo rje Brag perhaps being its most famous one.

<sup>3</sup> According to 'Jigs med bsam grub (*rDo rje brag gi lo rgyus*, p. 16), the monastery was founded in the Wood-Mouse year of the 9<sup>th</sup> Tibetan cycle, corresponding to 1564 CE. He attributes this foundation to Byang bdag bKra shis stobs rgyal (1550?–1603) whom he styles as an emanation of Gu ru Chos dbang (1212–1270) and a Speech incarnation of Khri srong lde btsan (r. 755–797). Given the probable date of birth of bKra shis stobs rgyal running about 1550, it would have been impossible for Byang bdag to have founded the monastery at the age of fourteen.

<sup>4</sup> E waṃ lcoḡ sgar, like the original site in Central Tibet.

<sup>5</sup> sGer grwa tshang.

<sup>6</sup> Princess Mandāravā and dākinī Ye shes mtsho rgyal.

1829).<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, numerous *cham*-dance costumes were offered, complete with their brocade and ivory ornaments.

Within the monastery itself, there was a sevenfold hierarchy of monks with official ranks and duties, including: 1. one monastery head (*dgon bdag*), 2. one throne holder (*khri ba*), 3. one chant master (*dbu mdzad*), 4. one disciplinarian (*dge skos*), 5. one shrine master in charge of offerings (*in chod dpon*), one treasurer (*phyag mdzod*), and one supervisor (*gnyer pa*).

In terms of its structure, the monastery displayed: 1. one main assembly hall (*'du khang*), 2. one golden hall (*gser khang*),<sup>8</sup> 3. a storehouse (*gnyer khang*), 4. a library (*dpe mdzod khang*), 5. a kitchen (*ja khang*), 6. the main Lama's palace (*bla brang*), 7. the Protectors' Chapel (*mgon khang*), 8. a guesthouse (*mgron khang*), and 9. a prayer wheel house (*dung 'khor khang*). The remainder of the building consisted of the eighty monks' quarters (*grwa shag*).<sup>9</sup>

Regarding the representations of Body, Speech, and Mind,<sup>10</sup> it is difficult to determine their precise number, as well as to reconstruct the arrangement of the temples and sacred objects commissioned over the centuries. From the time of the monastery's foundation, patrons—led by successive generations of the Chakla royal lineage, together with the continuous succession of lineage holders—sponsored numerous constructions and sacred supports. While a comprehensive inventory remains impossible, an approximate list of the representations that were still present around the year 1950 may nonetheless be established as follows:

In accordance with a prophecy concerning the Sino-Tibetan border, and for the benefit of the teachings and sentient beings, gilded copper statues of the Great Master Padmasambhava and his retinue were erected in the center of the monastery's main temple.

The main statue was two stories high. A diamond roughly the size of a walnut was incrustated at the point between its eyebrows, and a right-coiling white conch was embedded at his heart. Adorned with various precious substances such as gold, silver, dzi beads, turquoise, and coral,

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<sup>7</sup> To my knowledge, there is no commentary of the *Lam rim ye shes nying po* by dGe rtse rin po che. The author seems to have mistaken it for the *gSang sngags nang gi lam rim* by Padmasambhava, for which dGe rtse rin po che wrote a two-volume commentary that remains very famous. The original text of the *Lam rim ye shes snying po* is a *gter ma* revealed by mChog gyur gling pa (1829–1870). While both texts indeed belong to the *lam rim* genre, they are totally different works.

<sup>8</sup> Housing precious golden stūpas containing the relics of the lineage masters, former abbots, and so forth.

<sup>9</sup> A part of these quarters had apparently been recently burnt when I visited the site in 1994.

<sup>10</sup> As we have already explained, in general, supports of the Body (*sku*) refer to statues; support of Speech, to texts; and supports of the Mind to stūpas or other precious rediscovered items, such as treasure-phurbas (*gter phur*), and so forth.

the body of the statue possessed all the perfect major and minor marks and was definitely awe-inspiring. From whichever direction one viewed the face—whether straight on or from the sides—it seemed as though the eyes were looking directly at the viewer.

It was considered extremely sacred, as it is said that a lock of hair from the actual body of Orgyen (Padmasambhava) himself, along with many priceless objects of blessing, had been deposited within its inner relic cavity.

The statues of Padmasambhava's two consorts—the princess Mandāravā and the Ḍākinī Yéshé Tsogyel—displayed a beauty characterized by peace, tranquility and ease, thus perfectly illustrating the exceptional artistic skill of Tibetan statue makers. The ritual consecration of the three statues was performed by Do Khyentsé Yéshé Dorjé, the direct emanation of Jigmé Lingpa (1729–1798).

Inside the temple, on the left side, stood the silver reliquary stūpa of Prince Péma Thegchok, inlaid with many precious gems; it is said to have been built by one of his disciples from Nepal. On the right side stood the silver reliquary stūpa of Lama Sang-ngak Tenpai Gyeltsen, also adorned with many precious gems.

Inside the “Prosperity Casket”,<sup>11</sup> were numerous precious objects, including the religious robes of the supreme Fifth Dalai Lama, a seal bestowed by the Pañchen Lama, a Garuḍa egg,<sup>12</sup> a Yeti's armpit-stone,<sup>13</sup> a jade vase, and a piece of trunk of the āmalakī tree.

On the surrounding walls were murals depicting Buddhist figures characterized by radiant colors and exceptional artistic skill.

In the chapel at the back of the main temple, there were more than three hundred large and small statues of deities made of bronze and gilded copper.

Among them, the most valuable gilded copper statues of Guru Rinpoché and his two consorts, as well as more than one hundred bronze statues, were said to have been presented to Dardo Dorjé Drak Monastery by the Chakla King. These constituted the sacred representations of Body, Speech, and Mind that had survived from the ruins of the great Lamo Tsé Monastery—belonging to the Kagyü tradition and founded around the 12th century on the Denthok (gDan thog) mountain in Dartsedo. Many sacred objects were retrieved from its ruins after it was destroyed by fire.

<sup>11</sup> *g. Yang sgam*, a kind of precious chest where one keeps rare and valuable items.

<sup>12</sup> This is to be understood as a rare stone or fossil resembling the egg of a Garuḍa.

<sup>13</sup> These are a variety of soul-stone or *bla rdo*. For Yetis (*mi rgod*), the *bla rdo* is not located in the heart but under the armpits. For pictures of these stones, see Gerd Manusch, “Jigs med rgyal bu myu gu'i mi rgod kyis phul bas mchan rdo bla rda lam bla rdo”: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1320065740165111&set=pcb.1320065810165104>.

In the Protectors' Chapel to the left of the main temple, there were statues of the general Dharma Protectors of the Nyingma School, such as Mamo Ekajāti, Rāhula, and Damchen Dorjé Lekpa, as well as the treasure guardians of the Northern Treasures. There were also hides of ferocious beasts such as tigers, leopards, and bears, and many blessed objects showing signs of realization, such as swords tied into knots by past siddhas and tokens of the subjugation of demons and oath-breakers.

Inside the second floor of the Protector Chapel, there were three complete sets of new and old cham dance costumes made of fine embroidered Chinese silk and adorned with ivory ornaments. There were also many ritual objects, such as fine cymbals and other musical instruments of the best quality, originating from the lands of Khotan, China, etc.

To the left of the rear of the main temple were the Thanggyel Temple<sup>14</sup> and the Dharma Library. In the latter, there were the complete woodblocks for the Northern Treasures (*Byang gter*) cycles, as well as many woodblocks for texts such as the *Commentary on the Lamrim* by the great Getse Rinpoche.<sup>15</sup> There were also a *Kanjur* written in gold, the *Tengyur* printed in vermilion ink, and many books belonging to the *Kama* and *Terma* genres.

The woodblocks for the complete Northern Treasures collection contained in the Library were produced under the direction of a daughter of the Chakla family, who, having been given as a consort to the son of Tenpa Tséring, the Dharma King of Dergué, had the entire work carried out in accordance with her uncle's command.

The Chakla king, Lord Gyeltsen Dorjé, and his consort Tashi Tso acted as devoted patrons of religious art, inviting skilled artisans to produce works of exceptional quality. The queen herself—referred to as the "Great Mother"—together with a retinue of court ladies, carried out the needlework required for an exceptionally large, embroidered thangka. The latter was modeled on a monumental painting, depicting the Eight Manifestations of Padmasambhava, celebrated for its artistic refinement.

During the monastery's annual three-day religious ceremony held at the winter solstice, this large, embroidered Thangka is unfurled from the third floor of the main temple, and a viewing is granted to those participating in the worship assembly.

Also, during the Padmasambhava festival on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month of the Tibetan calendar, a large painted Thangka is displayed, a great assembly is held, and ceremonies such as sacred mask dances are performed.

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<sup>14</sup> I.e., the Thang stong rgyal po Temple.

<sup>15</sup> See note 7 above.

Furthermore, on three sides surrounding the courtyard in front of the main temple are the monks' quarters. At the foot of the monastery, near the main gate, there are several meditation retreat cells and large prayer wheels (*dung 'khor*).

In the forest to the right, there is a potent Nāga spring, which serves as the site for performing rituals to prevent weather catastrophes and to summon rain. On the meadow to the left, there are several stūpas, while on the mountain slope behind the monastery there is a sacred site for worshipping the local deities and lords of the soil.

On the southern slope of the mountain below the monastery, stands the summer palace of the Chakla King and the Vajrakīla Temple. Inside the temple are statues of the assembly of Vajrakīla deities carved from red sandalwood, each the height of a human body, as well as many sacred supports of Body, Speech, and Mind.

As for the sources of income, they consist of collecting rent from the monastery's farmlands in places such as Dartsédo and other localities in Minyak, collecting butter and other pastoral products from the nomad families associated with the monastery, and receiving offerings for performing rituals (for birth, death, etc.) in nearby villages.

Subsequently, between the years 1966 and 1976, due to the political upheavals of the Cultural Revolution, the priceless receptacles of Body, Speech, and Mind—including the complete printing blocks of the entire texts of the Northern Treasures, various line-drawings of ritual diagram wheels, as well as everything inside and outside the monastery—were completely destroyed.

In its current condition, the monastery has been rebuilt and now includes two assembly halls (one large and one small), one Protectors' temple, one library, a monastic college building, one kitchen, fifty monks' quarters, and two prayer wheel houses. The collection of sacred receptacles (statues, books, and stūpas), ritual implements, musical instruments, and utensils is now mostly complete.

As for the religious assemblies to be convened, every month of the year, *The Practices of the Heir of the Knowledge Holders* (*Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub*) is held on the 10<sup>th</sup> day; fumigations and prayer rituals are performed on the 15<sup>th</sup> day; and *The Heart Practice* (*Thugs sgrub*) is held on the 25<sup>th</sup> day.

Nowadays, the source of income relies on a little over two hundred patron households. In later times, numerous high-ranking individuals such as the main master of the King Bhutan and so forth have visited the monastery.

\*

In this abridged presentation, one can easily note that two important elements are missing: 1. the date of the foundation of Do Dorjé Drak,

and 2. the name of its founder.

As a branch monastery, it seems logical to assume that Do Dorjé Drak was founded *after* Thubten Dorjé Drak in Central Tibet. It appears reasonable to suggest that one of the Chakla kings played an important role in its construction. Tentative conclusions would certainly place its foundation in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century or the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Part of the solution had in fact already been found by Gene Smith (*Among Tibetan Texts*, p. 19), who explains that Rigdzin Khamsum Zilnön (1775–1810), the son of the Chalka King of the time, founded Mé Dorjé Drak (i.e., Do Dorjé Drak). As noted, the monastery is also known as Ger Dratsang, sometimes spelt Gar Dratsang, and appears locally in Chinese as Jigangsi 金刚寺.<sup>16</sup>

Some questionable sources claim that the original monastery dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, even suggesting the year 1272 AD for its actual foundation.<sup>17</sup> Others have proposed the year 1126 AD, corresponding to the *me rta lo* of the second cycle (*rab byung*).<sup>18</sup> In all likelihood, one cannot *a priori* dismiss these earlier dates without access to the sources on which they are based. It is possible that Rigdzin Khamsum Zilnön restored an already existing establishment and converted it<sup>19</sup> to the Northern Treasures tradition. As a son of one of the Chakla kings, he most certainly benefited from the support of the royal family and could have significantly expanded the monastery under his patronage.

Be it as it may, the monastery was entirely destroyed in 1959<sup>20</sup> and partially restored around the mid-1980s,<sup>21</sup> featuring a main temple with a large Guru Rinpoché statue.



<sup>16</sup> It is also known as Duoji zhasi (多吉扎寺), 寺 meaning monastery and 多吉扎 being the Chinese phonetic rendering of *rdo rje brag*.

<sup>17</sup> <https://tibetantrekking.com/kham-destinations-guide/kangding/>. The date 1272 corresponds to the 8<sup>th</sup> year of the Xianchun (咸淳) era of the Song dynasty. See *inter alia* <https://www.tibetcul.com/xy/sy/nm/30834.html>. This is an interesting webpage that informs us that during the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the ancestors of the Mingzheng (明正) local rulers have moved the small monastic temple to the foot of the mountain located west of actual Kangding. In the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, after the temple was destroyed by fire, it was moved to the foot of the mountain southwest of Kangding City (the current site of the temple).

<sup>18</sup> Lha lung 'Chi med rdo rje & Zla g.yung, *Khams sde dge rgyal po'i srid don lo rgyus*, p. 129. This date is already rejected on BDRC: <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/G3493>.

<sup>19</sup> Or accentuated its conversion to the *Byang gter* since, apparently, the teachings of Byang bdag bKra shis stobs rgyal were already well established in the monastery.

<sup>20</sup> Or in 1966, at the start of the havocs of the Cultural Revolution in the region. This needs to be investigated.

<sup>21</sup> The monastery was re-opened on July 13, 1984. For more details, see <https://www.tibetcul.com/xy/sy/nm/30834.html>.

## 8. The List of Monasteries Upholding the Northern Treasures Lineage

[Note: This list is appended to Khenpo Chöying's fifth chapter (pp. 883-897) and provides an inventory of the monasteries, nunneries, hermitages, and tantrikas temples<sup>1</sup> belonging to the tradition of the Northern Treasures tradition. The Wylie transcription has been preferred to phonetics since such a listing will certainly be of use essentially to Tibetologists.]

### 1. Monasteries in Tibet

#	Name	District/town
1	Thub bstan rDo rje bra Ewaṃ lcog sgar chos 'khor nam rgyal gling	dBus
2	rDo brag dgon pa	Khams – sDe dge
3	mDo rDo rje brag	Dar rtse mdo (sMad)
4	Chu bzang ri khrod	From among the 13 monastic establishments associated with rDo rje brag in Central Tibet (dBus)
5	'Ol kha rje drung	
6	Zur chen	
7	sTag lung gSang chos grwa tshang	
8	lCags zam	
9	Lha rigs gsum phug	gTsang
10	bDud 'joms gling	Lho brag mkhar chu
11	Brag ra dgon	Yar 'brog
12	sMan lung bla brang	
13	Phung po ri bo che	gTsang
14	Seng ge ri	

<sup>1</sup> Khenpo Chöying uses the term *sngags dgon* in reference to an establishment for tantric practitioners. Since it contains the same word *dgong* (with the original meaning of hermitage, solitary retreat place, etc.) for monasteries (which house monks, i.e., celibate, ordained practitioners), I have chosen the rendering "monastery for tantrikas" to translate *sngags dgon*, even though these institutions are not monasteries *stricto sensu*.

15	Yol mo	Yol mo
16	Long po lha steng	
17	Chu bzang bde chen ri khrod	sNye mo rdzong
18	Bee ro dgon btsun dgon	At the birthplace of Vairocana in sNye mo rdzong
19	Thar dgon (with 12 nuns)	Rin spungs rdzong
20	Brag gzhong dgon (nunnery)	Rin spungs rdzong
21	Bye thang 'od gsal gling (nunnery)	Rin spungs rdzong
22	sMon dga' dgon (nunnery)	Rin spung rdzong
23	Unnamed nunnery at the ruins of Rongzom Chözang's residence	Rin spung rdzong
24	dPal chen ha'o dgon	gZhis ka rtse
25	lCang lo bde chen gling dgon (nunnery)	gZhis ka rtse
26	Phung po ri bo che bdud 'dul zil snon gling	gZhis ka rtse
27	'Ug pa gling (monastery for tantrikas)	gZhis ka rtse
28	g.Yang chos dgon (nunnery)	gZhi ka rtse
29	Ma sgrub phug dgon (nunnery)	rNam gling
30	rDza ra dgon (nunnery)	rNam gling
31	Thob rgyal zab lung dgon (nunnery)	rNam gling
32	Padma chos gling (nunnery)	rNam gling
33	rTses gdong (nunnery)	rNam gling
34	dPal ri dgon	Pa snam
35	Chu bzang dgon	Pa snam
36	bSe rags sgrub sde	Pa snam
37	Ma ri se dgon (nunnery)	Pa snam
38	'Dre brag dgon (nunnery)	Pa snam
39	Myang tsho dgon, birthplace of Myang Ting 'dzin bzang po	rGyal rtse
40	'Dod shar dgon (nunnery)	rGyal rtse
41	Nyi sbug dgon (nunnery)	rGyal rtse
42	sPo tog dgon (nunnery)	rGyal rtse
43	Theg mchog gling	rGyal rtse
44	Ras sog klu ri dgon (nunnery)	rGyal rtse

45	sPyan ras gzigs dgon	rGyal rtse
46	Gu ru lha khang (monastery for tantrikas)	rGyal rtse
47	Lha ris 'gro 'dren gling (monastery for tantrikas)	rGyal rtse
48	Kha dbang dgon (monastery for tantrikas)	rGyal rtse
49	sNying ri dgon, residence of mDa' 'phyar grub thob	Lha rtse
50	rGyang lon po lung lha khang, sanctuary where the <i>Le'u bdun ma</i> treasure was found	Lha rtse
51	Brag mkhar chen dgon	Lha rtse
52	rTa zed dgon	Ngam ring
53	Phug po che dgon	Ngam ring
54	Unnamed dgon pa where Thang stong rgyal po was born	Ngam ring
55	Lha lding dgon	Ngam ring
56	Ri bo che dgon (monastery of village tantrikas)	Ngam ring
57	gCung stod bzo lung dgon (monastery of tantrikas)	Ngam ring
58	mTsho stod brgya mkhar lha khang	Ngam ring
59	bKra bzang dgon (nunnery)	Ngam ring
60	Lha brag dgon	Ngam ring
61	Hri gsum dgon	Ngam ring
62	Bya dkar dgon (nunnery)	Ngam ring
63	Nyi sbug dgon (monastery for tantrikas)	Ngam ring
64	'O ma sbug dgon	Ngam ring
65	Nub dgon gSang sngags chos gling	Sa ga
66	dGon chung dGon (monastery for village tantrikas)	Sa ga
67	dPal lung dgon (monastery for tantrikas)	Ding ri
68	rDza phug dgon located in dPal gsum (8 village tantrikas)	Ding ri
69	Chu phug dgon located in Chos rdzong village (monastery for village tantrikas)	Ding ri
70	Brag bstod dgon founded by the previous Brag sprul rin po che in Kha lung grong tsho	Ding ri

71	Rab zhi dgon, located in Ri spel grong tsho (monastery of tantrikas)	Ding ri
72	Ku ye dgon (with both monks and tantrikas)	Ding ri
73	bSam song dgon (monastery for tantrikas)	Ding ri
74	Gu ru lha khang (monastery for tantrikas)	Ding ri
75	dGon zla lha lung (monastery for tantrikas)	Ding ri
76	Lu mar skyu ru dgon	Ding ri
77	dGon zla phug (monastery for tantrikas)	Ding ri
78	Chos lung dgon (monastery for tantrikas)	Ding ri
79	dGon zla gsar pa (monastery for tantrikas)	Ding ri
80	gNas chung dgon (founded by a master named Pha rdo rje)	Ding ri
81	dGon zla lha mthong dgon	Ding ri
82	bKa' sgyur gr(w)a tshang located below Ma gcig temple	Ding ri
83	Shar lung dgon pa byang, a monastery for tantrikas founded by Bla ma rTsa ri ral pa	Ding ri
84	bCa' cho mo dgon (monastery for village tantrikas)	Ding ri
85	gTing skyed dgon byang	gTing kheng
86	mChod rten nyi ma dgon (nunnery)	Gam pa
87	Brag dmar dgon	Khang dmar
88	Unnamed nunnery	gNya' lam
89	bDe phug rin po che'i dgon	gTsang
90	gNam skas gSang sngags chos gling	
91	O rgyal gling (in gNyal), seat of Sha gzugs pa	
92	mGo 'dom ri khrod	
93	rGyal yum Te pa rgyal po chos sde	
94	gNas chung dgon	Lha sa
95	dGa' gdong dgon	Lha sa
96	'On smon thang ri khrod	Lho kha
97	Unnamed nunnery in 'On smon thang	Lho kha
98	'Od gsal gling	Bar thang
99	rNam grol gling, near rDo brag	Lho kha

100	Mu tig shel gyi nags khrod, seat of the Yol mo lineage	Yol mo
101	rDo rgya dgon	Byang gnam mtsho
102	Hor za ma	Nag chu
103	Baḥ gnas o rgyan bsam gtan chos gling	Brag mgo
104	'Jig med chos grags gling (nunnery)	
105	Ka ra ri khrod	
106	sKu 'dzoms sbas ri khrod (nunnery)	
107	'Bri rgyud dgon	
108	Ri shul dgon	Phyag phreng
109	Ri shul dgon rmying	
110	Dza bal khang tshan <sup>2</sup>	sDe rong
111	rGyal steng ri khrod	
112	bShad sgrub kun bzang gling	
113	dGe ra steng (nunnery)	
114	Brag dkar ri khrod	
115	dGe zhi gling (nunnery)	
116	Phyug ri ri khrod	
117	rDo bcang dgon	
118	Yon tan dgon in gTor ma rong	rGyal thang
119	dPal lhang sgang gsung baḥ gnas bsam gtan gling	Dar (rtse) mdo
120	gSang sngags chos 'khor gling	dPal ri
121	g.Yu thang dgon	
122	Baḥ gnas bsam gtan gling in Gru stod	Nyag chu
123	'Gra smin grol dgon	
124	Zangs mdog dpal ri	Rong brag
125	O rgyan gling	Khung yul
126	Zab glegs bstan rgyas gling	sPro snang
127	Thub bstan phan bde gling	sTong 'gu
128	Ge smad bstan srung khang tshan	Li thang
129	Missing/Error in Khenpo Chöying's listing	

<sup>2</sup> *Khang tshan* designates a small monastic unit, a monastic house of small dimension with only a few monks.

130	dGon khang dgon pa	'Jo mda'
131	'Bri mang dgon	Ri bo che
132	Brag ra dgon	
133	rTsal sgrub sde	E rong
134	Lha brag seng ri	
135	'khor gdong dgon	
136	Shugs 'byung dgon	'Dzam thang
137	'Ba' grub pa dgon	
138	'Ba' gangs ra dgon	
139	mGo tshwa dgon	Ser shul
140	Mi nyag la'u thang dgon pa	rTa'u rdzong
141	Mi nyag ba langs dgon	
142	Rag shul dgon	
143	Ka dam dgon	sPo bo
144	Lha mdun dgon	
145	gSang sngags dgon	Go 'jo
146	Sa ngan gser nyin dgon	dPal yul
147	Go bo dgon (O rgyan bdud 'dul gling)	sDe rong
148	Go 'jo ri khrod	
147	Ri shul dgon	Phyag phreng
150	Thugs rje chen po'i dgon	Khro skyabs

## 2. Monasteries in India

	Name	Location
151	Thub bstan rDo rje brag E waṃ lcog sgar chos 'khor rnam rgyal gling	Sim la
152	Thub bstan mdo sngags bshad sgrub chos 'khor gling	La dwags lcog lam sa
153	Brag thog dgon	La dwags
154	Sa rān bKra shis chos gling	
155	'Khor gdong dgon	Shi li gu ri
156	rDo rje gling dgon	
157	gNas chung sgra dbyangs gling	rDa (ram) sa (la)

158	dGa' gdong dgon	rDa sa
159	rDo rje gling a lu ba ri'i dgon (Alu Bari)	Darjeeling
160	Unnamed monastery of Ghoom	Darjeeling
161	O rgyan bde chen chos phug dgon	
162	Brag dkar bkra shis ldings dgon	Sikkim
163	gNam rtsi mnga' bdag	Sikkim
164	sGang thog dgon	Sikkim
165	sGang thog gu ru lha khang	Sikkim
166	La chung dgon	Sikkim
167	Sha ri bā ri Rig 'dzin dga' tshal gling	Sikkim
168	Thub bstan dar rgyas gling in Ra bang la	Sikkim
169	rJe gong dgon	
170	sTag lung gsang chos grwa tshang	South India

### 3. Monastery in Bhutan

	Name	Location
171	Lho brag mkhar chu grwa tshang	Bum thang

### 4. Monasteries in Nepal

	Name	Location
172	Ra lo'i dgon	Yang le shod
173	sTeng/sTon po che'i dgon	Khum bu
174	dGe dkar dgon	Glo bo
175	Tsu ri'i dgon, residence of Yol mo sngags 'chang Śā kya bzang po.	Yol mo (Helambu)
176	'Od dpag med kyi lha khang, residence of Zil gnon dBang rgyal rdo rje	Yol mo rmi lim chim
177	Padma chos gling dgon, residence of gter ston Surya seng ge	Yol mo gla ra
178	Na ko te dgon	Yol mo
179	Dreng ga grub dgon	Yol mo
180	Nor bu sgang dgon	Yol mo
181	rGyang dgon	Yol mo

182	Phung po che dgon	Yol mo
183	sNang skyid don	Yol mo
184	Ma ñi mkhar kha dgon	Yol mo
185	Thang dpal dgon	Yol mo
186	Rli mkhar kha dgon	Yol mo
187	Nam langs dgon	Yol mo
188	dPog ra ni dgon	Yol mo
189	Lis ti dpa' bo dgon	Yol mo
190	Bho ñi dgon	Yol mo
191	dKyil gung dgon	Yol mo
192	bShom mkhar ka dgon	Yol mo
193	'Bras mang dgon	Yol mo
194	gNas bsnyen pa dgon	Yol mo
195	Sems smrang dgon	Yol mo
196	bKa' bzhes gsang sngags chos gling	Yol mo
197	dPal gtso dgon	Yol mo
198	g.Yu gzhong dgon	Yol mo
199	dPa' bo dgon	Yol mo
200	bSam pa gling dgon	Yol mo
201	Mañdal sgang dgon	Yol mo
202	rNam snang dgon	Yol mo
203	bSam gtan gling dgon	Yol mo
204	Ja thang sa shu dgon	Yol mo
205	Unnamed monastery of the Northern Treasures in Yo ga che stod	Yol mo
206	Unnamed monastery of the Northern Treasures in Yo ga che smad	Yol mo
207	Mang gu dgon	Yol mo
208	'Bo long se dgon	Yol mo
209	Nyi ma mgron po dgon	Yol mo
210	Padma tshal dgon	Yol mo
211	dGon pa thang dgon	Yol mo
212	bsTan pa thang dgon	Yol mo
213	Chin ji thang dgon	Yol mo

214	rTa lu dgon	Yol mo
215	Sa lhag rdo lhag, monastery of Śā bzang po in Kathmandu	Bal yul (Kathmandu)
216	A ma g.yang ri dgon, close to Bya rung kha shor	Bal yul (though the historical lineage is from Yol mo)
217	Gu ru lha khang dgon in Bya rung kha shor, residence of Yol mo sprul sku (bsTan 'dzin nor bu)	Bal yul (Yol mo)
218	Ye shes chos gling	rTa mang
219	O rgyan mdo sngags chos gling	rTa mang
220	Padma dgon	rTa mang
221	gSang sngags chos gling	rTa mang
222	gSang sngags chos gling in Sindhuli	rTa mang
223	Byang gter dbang sa dgon in Sindhuli	rTa mang
224	Byang gter sde tshan dgon in Sindhuli	rTa mang
225	Ma tha'u li byang gter dgon in Sindhuli	rTa mang
226	Ghum ne byang gter dgon in Sindhuli	rTa mang
227	Zangs mdog dpal ri chos gling in Kab ri	rTa mang
228	Om buddha chos gling in Kab ri	rTa mang
229	bKra shis chos gling in Kab ri	rTa mang
230	Mo Buddha ku dung bkra shis gling in Kab ri	rTa mang
231	bDe chen chos gling in Kab ri	rTa mang
232	sNga 'gyur bkra shis chos 'phel gling in Kab ri	rTa mang
233	Padma chos 'phel gling in Lalitpur	rTa mang
234	Zang mdog dpal ri in Lalitpur	rTa mang
235	bKra shis rgyal dbang dgon in Lalitpur	rTa mang
236	bKra shis chos gling in Salang	rTa mang
237	gTe ma la byang gter dgon <sup>3</sup>	rTa mang
238	He ṭa hu ḍa byang gter dgon	rTa mang
239	Sangs rgyas chos gling	rTa mang
240	mKhar shong byang gter dgon	rTa mang

<sup>3</sup> This possibly refers to a monastery following the Northern Treasures in gTe ma la. This remark applies to other names above, especially when it is difficult to distinguish between a descriptive term and a proper name (in particular when a monastery is known primarily by its location).

241	Ja ye Mangala byang gter dgon	rTa mang
242	Tsa ye tsu te byang gter dgon	rTa mang
243	Bā run byang gter dgon	rTa mang
244	sKya gshong byang gter dgon	rTa mang
245	Ram pur byang gter dgon	rTa mang
246	Padma tshal dgon	rTa mang
247	Oṃ A wa lo ke shwa ra ma ṇi dgon	
248	sNgags brgyud byang gter dgon	
249	Le ru byang gter dgon	
250	rDzong byang gter dgon	
251	Chos khang byang gter dgon	
252	Tsom phyed byang gter dgon	
253	Yar phyogs byang gter dgon	
254	rTsom gling byang gter dgon	
255	Log pa byang gter dgon	
256	rDo thang byang gter dgon	
257	Pang zhing byang gter dgon	
258	Ra ṇa byang gter dgon, in the direction of Nub ri	Nub ri
259	Pi byang gter dgon	
260	rGya ru byang gter dgon	
261	Tshags byang gter dgon	
262	gNam grub byang gter dgon	
263	Glod byang gter dgon <sup>4</sup>	
264	Rus byang gter dgon	
265	Sa mdo byang gter dgon	
266	Kli (Ka li?) byang gter dgon	
267	Hi nang byang gter dgon	
268	Klog pa byang gter dgon	
269	Thang me dgon	Shar Khum bu <sup>5</sup>
270	sKya rog dgon	Shar Khum bu

<sup>4</sup> It would seem that #263-268 are located in the Nubri and Tsum valleys (Manaslu region).

<sup>5</sup> I.e., the Solu-khumbu region, famed for the Sherpa ethnic group.

271	O rgyan chos gling	
272	rDo rje brag ye, in Sethang	Suwa rdzong, Nepal <sup>6</sup>
273	Sa phur sgang dgon pa, in Sethang Kheḍi	Suwa rdzong
274	mDo sngags gtsug lag khang dgon pa, in Bhiḍem	Suwa rdzong
275	Chos gling dgon pa, in 'Bor le	Suwa rdzong
276	mTsho steng dgon, in 'Bor le	Suwa rdzong
277	gSer gshongs dgon pa, in 'Bor le gser gshongs	Suwa rdzong
278	bKra shis dgon pa, in 'Bor le gser gshongs	Suwa rdzong
279	dPal ldan chos gling dgon pa, in 'Bor le gser gshongs	Suwa rdzong
280	Tshe sgrub dgon pa, 'Bor le gser gshongs	Suwa rdzong
281	bSam gling dgon pa, in Lha ri dpa' bo	Suwa rdzong
282	bKra shis dgon pa, in Lha ri dpa' bo	Suwa rdzong
283	Shes rab dgon pa in Saramthali	Suma rdzong
284	Padma dgon in Saramthali	Suwa rdzong

The list of monastery names enumerated here was compiled primarily from information provided by Khenpo Rinpoché Tséring Döndrup of Tsang Hao Monastery (#24 of the list above) regarding most of the monasteries in the Ü-Tsang region of Tibet, and from the writings of Khenpo Rinpoché Péma Chokdrub of Dartsédo Dorjé Drak Monastery in the Kham region.

(The list of) monasteries in Nepal was made possible through the extensive assistance of Yölmo Khen Rinpoché Nyima Döndrup and others, resulting in a list of 284 monastic institutions (in total). However, if one were to collect [the names of] all monasteries upholding the religious tradition of the Northern Treasures across places such as Ü-Tsang, Nepal, and beyond, their number would certainly exceed 5,000 monasteries.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, please gradually add any newly discovered (names to this list) in the future.<sup>8</sup>



<sup>6</sup> Su wa rdzong actually corresponds to the Rasuwa district in the Bagmati province.

<sup>7</sup> This opinion engages only Khenpo Chöying. Given the widespread destruction that affected Tibet from 1959 onwards, it is very difficult to draw an accurate picture of the situation regarding Byang gter monastic institutions in particular.

<sup>8</sup> This statement reflects the request of the original author (Khenpo Chöying).



*Part IV:*  
*Literature*



## Chapter V

### 1. *The Basic Structure of the Northern Treasures Corpus by the End of the 15th century*

**I**n the course of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Sétön Péma Wangchen wrote a fascinating work entitled *The General Outline of the Northern Treasures* (*Byang gter spyi chings*),<sup>1</sup> in which he provides an exhaustive list of the texts belonging to the Jangter that were available at the time. The works he mentions are presented here through a very basic overview, followed by a detailed description of the collection's contents.

#### 1. *Basic Overview*

His discussion begins with a basic description of the Five Repositories (*mdzod lnga*),<sup>2</sup> followed by a brief overview of the topics and contents of the individual cycles of teachings. The general structure he adopts is based on a division of the texts into three main categories:

1. the Three Scrolls (*shog dril gsum*),<sup>3</sup>
2. the Thirty-Six Oral Transmissions (*snyan brgyud sum cu rtsa drug*), divided into two series of eighteen groups of instructions and texts, and
3. further complementary cycles, essentially of tantric nature.

#### 2. *The Detailed Structure of the Collection's Contents*

The *Byang gter* collection, as it was available by Sétön's time (15<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See the bibliography *in fine* for the references, under Se ston Padma dbang chen. P. Schwieger, M. Boord, S. Arguillère and A. Schiller (see bibliography) have carried out impressive pioneer works on the literature of the *Byang gter* tradition. Schiller, in particular, has provided volume and page references for the vast majority of the texts listed in this chapter. My presentation relies entirely on Se ston's *sPyi bcings*. I have also prepared a synthesis similar to the present chapter based on mNga' ris pañ chen's *sPyi bcings*, which will appear in the near future.

<sup>2</sup> On this corpus, see *supra* chapter 1, section 6.

<sup>3</sup> As we shall see below, despite the traditionally cited number of these scrolls, only four titles are actually enumerated.

century) is essentially centered upon the Five Repositories (*mdzod lnga*), which he briefly describes at the beginning of his discussion, drawing on historical sources contained in these Repositories. He then describes each of the individual cycles that make up the bulk of the collection. His exposé follows the following structure:

## I. The Contents of the Five Repositories

## II. The Individual Cycles of Teachings

### 1. The Three Scrolls

#### 2. The Thirty-Six Oral Transmissions

##### 2-1. The Eighteen Ordinary Branches

###### 2-1-1. The Six Precepts

###### 2-1-2. The Six Sādhanas

###### 2-1-3. The Six Lamps

###### 2-1-3-1. The Two Lamps of the Body

###### 2-1-3-2. The Two Lamps of Speech

###### 2-1-3-3. The Two Lamps of the Mind

##### 2-2. The Eighteen Root-series of Teachings

###### 2-2-1. The Six Profound Seals of Vajravārāhī

###### 2-2-2. The Six Oral Transmissions<sup>4</sup>

###### 2-2-2-1. The Two Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava

###### 2-2-2-1-1. The Cycle of the Natural Emergence of the Self-Arisen Great Perfection

###### 2-2-2-1-2. The Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra

###### 2-2-2-1-2-1. The Root Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava

###### 2-2-2-1-2-2. The Two Oral Transmissions of Ācārya Vimalamitra

###### 2-2-2-1-2-3. The Two Oral Transmissions of Ācārya Vairocana

###### 2-2-3. The Six Expanses of Vajrasattva's Heart

### 3. The Cycle of Amitāyus in his Saṃbhogakāya Form

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<sup>4</sup> The first Oral Transmission of Padmasambhava is found in the *Ka dag rang byung shar* (no. 2-2-2-1-1), and the second is in the *dGongs pa zang thal* (no. 2-2-2-1-2), which also contains the Two Oral Transmissions of Vimalamitra and those of Vairocana.

4. The Cycle of the Peaceful Guru
5. The Cycle of the Great Practices of the Eight Pronouncements
6. The Cycle of the Heart Practice of the Guru
  
7. The Cycle of Vajra Kīla
  - 7-1. The Many-Colored Deities
  - 7-2. The Black Phurpa
  - 7-3. The Divine Assembly of Vajra Kīla
  
8. The Cycle of the Profound Dependent Originations
9. The Cycle of the Great Compassionate One Liberating All Migratory Beings
10. The Cycle of the Empowerment to the Bodhisattva Conduct
  
11. The Cycles of the Powerful Lords of the Teachings
  - 11-1. The Cycle of Maheśvara and Jambhala
  - 11-2. The Protectors of Dharma
  - 11-3. The Cycle of Gönpö Takzhön
  - 11-4. The Cycle of the Guardians of the Teachings
  - 11-5. The Cycle of the Treasure Lords
  - 11-6. The Cycle of Dorje Lekpa
  - 11-7. The Cycle of Nyenchen Thanglha
  - 11-8. The Cycle of the Tongpön Commander
  - 11-9. The Cycle of Prophecies
  - 11-10. The Cycle on the Four Activities<sup>5</sup>




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<sup>5</sup> On this general structure, see also Schiller, “Das Studienbuch des 5. Yol mo sPrul sku”, and Arguillère, “An Overview of Rigdzin Gödem’s Works”, *passim*.

## 2. *The Actual Contents of the Northern Treasures as Synthesized by Sétön Péma Wangchen*

**T**he description of the literary contents of the Northern Treasures make up the eighth main section of Sétön Péma Wangchen's *General Outline of the Northern Treasures*,<sup>6</sup> the full title of which is *The Precious Garland, the General Outline of the Cycles of Teachings of the Northern Treasures (Byang gter gyi chos skor rnam kyi spyi chings rin chen phreng ba)*.<sup>7</sup> This description consists of two parts: 1. a general presentation of the contents of the five Repositories (*mdzod lnga*), and 2. the individual contents of the specific cycles.<sup>8</sup>

### I. The Contents of the Five Repositories

As we have seen in Chapter I (section 6), these contents are described in a summarized manner in *The Root-Sādhana of the Knowledge-Holders (Rig 'dzin rtsa ba'i sgrub thabs)* and can be summarized as follows:

- [1]. In the White Conch Repository in the east is a statue of Vajrasattva and instructions dealing with the activity of pacification.
- [2]. In the Golden Yellow Repository in the south is a statue of Heruka and instructions for increasing activities.
- [3]. In the Red Copper Repository in the west is a statue of Amitāyus and instructions for subjugating activities.
- [4]. In the Black Iron Repository in the north is a statue of Heruka and instructions for wrathful activities.
- [5]. In the Brown Heart Repository in the center is a statue of Padmasambhava and instructions on various secret methods.

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<sup>6</sup> The heading of the relevant chapter is: "Explanation of the enumeration of the (cycles) that have been taught in this manner (i.e., as described in the previous chapters) and identification of the individual sections of teachings" (*de ltar ston pa'i rnam grangs bshad cing chos tshan ngos bzung ba*).

<sup>7</sup> It is included in volume 14 of the *Byang gter snga 'gyur chos skor phyogs bsgrigs*, pp. 363–454.

<sup>8</sup> Throughout this chapter, there are often several ways of translating the titles of the texts, owing to their abridged or extended forms. I have chosen to be as literal as is reasonably possible and have provided the original title in Wylie transliteration immediately after the translation.

In order to provide further details, Sétön draws on another source entitled *The Seven Testaments* (*Zhal chems bdun pa*), from which he quotes the following abstract:<sup>9</sup>

*In the east, in the white Conch-shell Repository is the teaching on the Fruit  
Which contains methods for entrusting (Buddhahood) directly in your hands in this lifetime.  
It comprises one root-tantra and ten categories of precepts,  
(Each of which) contains ten minor precepts;  
When counted individually, (the corpus) amounts to one hundred and one precepts.*<sup>10</sup>

*In the south, in the yellow Golden Repository is the teaching about approach and accomplishment,<sup>11</sup>  
Which includes sādhanas for dispelling obstacles on the Path.  
It has ten root-sādhanas of the Yidam deity,  
Each of which contains ten precepts.  
When counted individually, (the corpus) amounts to one hundred and one precepts.*<sup>12</sup>

*In the west, in the red Copper Repository is the teaching on interdependencies,  
Which contains quintessential key points (for obtaining) the siddhis of the Methods of the Profound Path.  
Its single root-(Tantra) has one hundred and one precepts.*<sup>13</sup>

*In the north, in the black Iron Repository are twenty-one sādhanas  
Slashing by means of black magic spells.  
Each mother and sons texts is divided into five, amounting to one hundred and one (precepts).*<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The text of *The Seven Testaments* seems to have been lost (Schiller, “Das Studienbuch des 5. Yol mo sPrul sku”, p. 827 n. 14).

<sup>10</sup> *shar na dung mdzod dkar po 'bras bu'i chos/ /tshé 'dir lag bcang gtad thabs yod/ /rtsa ba rgyud gcig man ngag rnam pa bcu/ /de la phran bu'i man ngag bcu bcu yod/ /so sor phye bas man ngag brgya rtsa gcig/.*

<sup>11</sup> We have repeatedly described approach and accomplishment (*bsnyen sgrub*) as the core of the Development Stage (*bskyed rim*) of the Mahāyoga. For more details, see *inter alia*, Jigme Lingpa, “Ladder to Akaniṣṭha”, pp. 56-67.

<sup>12</sup> *lho na gser mdzod ser po bsnyen sgrub chos/ /lam gyi bar chad sel ba'i sgrub thabs yod/ /yi dam lha yi sgrub thabs rtsa ba bcu/ /de rnams re re la yang man ngag bcu/ /so sor phye bas man ngag brgya rtsa gcig/.*

<sup>13</sup> *nub na zangs mdzod dmar po rten 'brel chos/ /zab lam thabs kyi dngos grub gnad tig yod/ /rtsa ba gcig la man ngag brgya rtsa gcig/.*

<sup>14</sup> *byang na lcags mdzod nag por ngan sngags kyis/ /reg chod sgrub thabs nyi shu rtsa gcig yod/ /ma bu lnga lngar phye bas brgya rtsa gcig/.*

*In the center are one hundred and three scrolls (containing)  
 Key points on examining worthy vessels, banning those who have no sa-  
 mayas,<sup>15</sup>  
 And converting the red-face (Tibetans) of the southern border of Tibet;  
 These constitute the six teachings that are necessary for you, noble being.  
 After cutting open the belly of the poisonous snake,<sup>16</sup> you shall find  
 Two profound ordinary sādhanas and one Testament.  
 In the middle, there is a complete teaching necessary for  
 A hidden individual whom (nobody) pays attention to  
 And which deals with an extremely essential and profound gathering of  
 key points.<sup>17</sup>*

Then, Sétön quotes from *The Testament known as the Quintessence of the Heart* (*Zhal chems thugs kyi yang tig*),<sup>18</sup> in which Padmasambhava addresses the 8<sup>th</sup>-century king Trisong Detsen (r. 755–797), explaining to him the contents of the Five Repositories as follows:

- the Red Copper Repository is aimed at increasing the king’s power;<sup>19</sup>
- the Black Iron Repository contains instructions on black magic, aimed at protecting the king (and the kingdom) against obstructing enemies and all kinds of obstacles;<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Dam med*. This of course refers to those who have broken their samayas, but may also include anyone who, having received no empowerment, has therefore no samaya to protect.

<sup>16</sup> This is a reference to one of the artifacts that rGod ldem found in Zang zang lha brag, namely a snake statue which the *gter ston* himself describes as follows: “(...) [there] was a snake (statue) of light blue color with a yellow belly and of a diameter of approximatively an upper arm, coiling in the form of an eight-faceted gem. Its head was turned toward the southeast and in its heart were three jewel protrusions. Inside these were a scroll and a mere semblance of jewels. The whole interior of the snake appeared covered with gold color, and jewels—the mere size of thumbs—were dangling, attached to its spine.”

<sup>17</sup> *dbus na shog ril brgya rtsa gsum yod pas/ /las can snod brtag dam med spangs ba dang/ /gdong dmar lho bod mtshams kyi gdul bya’i gnad/ /skyes bu khyod la dgos pa’i chos drug yod/ /dug sbrul lto ba gshags pas thun mongs kyi/ /sgrub thabs zab mo gnyis dang zhal chems gcig/ /dbus na rtsis rgyar ma bzhas gab pa yi/ /gang zag gcig la dgos pa’i chos tshang ba/ /zab la gnad ’dus shin tu gces pa yod/.*

<sup>18</sup> On this *Testament*, see Valentine, “Missing Texts of Historical Value to the Northern Treasure Tradition”. Se ston also quotes this text under the title of *Zhal chems thugs kyi thigs pa* (*Byang gter spyi chings*, p. 383).

<sup>19</sup> Even though he addresses Khri srong lde btsan who will evidently not access the contents of these Treasures (precisely because they are going to be hidden as *gter ma*), Padmasambhava actually aims this treasury at the king’s descendants (and more specifically, given the context of their discovery, at the Gung thang kings).

<sup>20</sup> Since the Gung thang kings failed to support rGod ldem’s revelations, it is unsurprising that many of the scrolls that were not transcribed by rGod ldem originate from this Repository.

- the Yellow Golden Repository contains tantric instructions on approach and accomplishment (*bsnyen sgrab*) that enable practitioners to attain siddhis;
- the White Conch Repository contains utterly secret instructions that lead to Buddhahood in a single lifetime and a single body.<sup>21</sup>

## II. The Individual Cycles of Teachings

As we have seen above, Rigdzin Gödem revealed hundreds of sections of teachings in the form of yellow scrolls (*shog ser*). Many of these have not been transcribed from the Ḍākinīs' script (*mkha' 'gro brda yig*) and have remained in their original form on these scrolls.<sup>22</sup> For instance, as noted above, most of the texts belonging to the Black Iron Repository were not translated and were left in their undeciphered scripts. Another set of works, known as *The Cycle of Practice of Vajravārāhī* (*Phag mo'i sgrub skor*), was re-concealed as a treasure in order to be rediscovered at a later time. The cycle was thus hidden at Riwo Pelbar in Mangyül and prayers were recited so that an authentic emanation would reveal it again in the future.<sup>23</sup>

The rest of the texts retrieved from the Five Repositories form a well-known corpus of works presented as having been directly translated from the yellow scrolls. According to Sétön, these are crucial texts that must be examined in detail since some of them—few actually, *dixit* Sétön—are difficult to penetrate, while others are considered so secret he fears the blame of the Guardians of the Teachings (*bka' srungs*) if he were to provide elaborate explanations.

Be it as it may, Sétön intends to discuss all these teachings briefly for the sake of interested individuals, starting with explaining the "Supreme Peak" (*yang rtse*) of all Vehicles, namely the cycles of the Atiyoga teachings, dealing with the definitive meaning (*nges don*). He initiates his discourse with a quotation from *The Listing of the Six Oral Transmissions* (*sNyan brgyud drug gi tho byang*),<sup>24</sup> in which it is said:

<sup>21</sup> Note that the central Brown Heart Repository is not described in the quote provided by Se ston. See *supra* in Chapter I, section 6.

<sup>22</sup> On the Ḍākinī script used in the Northern Treasures, see bsTan gnyis gling pa, *dMus long mig 'byed lde mig zang zang lha brag gi gter yig mkha' 'gro'i brda yig byed tshul*. It is interesting to note that some parts written in Ḍākinīs' script are surprisingly understandable, as they are actually written in Tibetan language but transcribed in these runes.

<sup>23</sup> This emanation was bsTan gnyis gling pa (1480–1535).

<sup>24</sup> See the bibliography *in fine* under rGod ldem.

*The three kinds of scrolls from the Central (Repository),  
And the thirty-six profound teachings  
Should not be shown to anyone other than oneself.<sup>25</sup>*

*Intentionally contemplating the benefit of other beings,  
He<sup>26</sup> shall reveal the root-teachings of the Oral Transmissions,  
Whose thirty-six (sections) are as follows:  
The Six Profound Seals of Vajravārāhī,  
The Six Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava, and  
The Six Great Expanses of Vajrasattva,  
Making up the eighteen sections of root-teachings.  
As for the eighteen ordinary branches (of instructions),  
There comprise the Six Lamps of excellent conduct,  
The Six Precepts that purify defilements, and  
The Six Sādhanas required for (specific) times.<sup>27</sup>*

Then, Sétön describes the times and conditions that justify the necessity for the teachings to emerge. For this, he refers to *The Structure of the Six Oral Transmissions* (sNyan brgyud drug gi khog dbub), in which it is stated:

*He<sup>28</sup> reflected on the benefit of migratory beings in these degenerated times,  
When six defilements will strike the symbolic, emanated individual:<sup>29</sup>  
Because of this, the defects linked to the six impure conducts will arise.  
To purify them, the six precepts that cleanse degenerations will be needed.<sup>30</sup>*

*Owing to the defects inherent to the end of times, six outer and inner obstacles will arise*

<sup>25</sup> sNyan brgyud drug gi tho byang, p. 195: dbus kyi shog ril nram gsum dang: zab mo sum cu rtsa drug chos: rang min gzhan la bstan mi bya:.

<sup>26</sup> The agent is supposed to be rGod ldem himself.

<sup>27</sup> sNyan brgyud drug gi tho byang, p. 197: 'gro ba gzhan don dgongs pa'i ched: snyan rgyud rtsa ba'i chos rnams bstan: sum cu rtsa drug 'di lta ste: rdo rje phag mo'i zab rgya drug: padma 'byung gnas snyan rgyud drug: rdo rje sems pa'i klong chen drug: rtsa ba'i chos sde bco brgyad yin: yan lag thun mongs bco brgyad ni: spyod pa legs pa'i sgron ma drug: snyigs ma dangs pa'i man ngag drug: dus la dgos pa'i sgrub thabs drug po:. The whole enumeration here is actually a list of the Thirty-Six Oral Transmissions (snyan brgyud sum cu rtsa drug).

<sup>28</sup> Padmasambhava.

<sup>29</sup> This most evidently refers to rGod ldem.

<sup>30</sup> Byang gter spyi chings, p. 414: snyigs ma'i dus su 'gro ba'i don la dgongs pa : sprul pa brda'i skyes bu de la grib drug phog pas : spyod pa ma dag pa drug gi skyon 'byung : de sbyong ba la snyigs ma dang ba'i man ngag drug dgos so :. This corresponds to the sNyan brgyud drug gi them byang dang khog dbub, p. 74.

*And six sādhanas for reverting them will be necessary.*

*Since they will be of need for the common (good) of oneself and others,  
The six lamps of excellent conduct will be necessary.  
These three things will thus be required in this common age.<sup>31</sup>*

*During these three special periods,<sup>32</sup>  
The inner channels, winds, and elements will be integrated into the Path  
Owing to the six profound seals of Vajravārāhī.  
To eliminate the defects of intellectual doubts,  
The six Oral Transmissions of the (three) vajrācāryas (will come).<sup>33</sup>*

*To directly introduce the profound realization of the View as being (al-  
ready) liberated (from defects) in its natural emergence,  
The Six Expanses of the Vajrasattva's Heart will be revealed.<sup>34</sup>*

*(Furthermore), there are the eighteen ordinary, treasured precepts,  
The eighteen secret precepts of the Heart,  
And the five mansions in meteoritic iron for fierce annihilation.  
(In total,) there are the forty-one precepts<sup>35</sup> of the Oral Transmission  
That have been placed for the benefit of worthy individuals: such is the  
root-listing.<sup>36</sup>*

### 1. The Three Scrolls

These Three Scrolls (*shog ril rnam gsum*) were retrieved from the Central Repository. Sétön, however, unfortunately provides a list that actually enumerates the four following texts:

<sup>31</sup> *Ib.: dus tha ma'i skyon gyis phyi nang gi bar chad drug 'byung : de bzlog pa'i sgrub thabs drug dgos so : bdag gzhan thun mongs la dgos pa'i phyir : spyod pa legs pa'i sgron ma drug dgos so : de gsum thun mongs kyi dus na dgos pa'o :*

<sup>32</sup> These three periods are: 1. that of the six defilements, 2. that of the six impure conducts, and 3. that of the six outer and inner obstacles.

<sup>33</sup> These three masters are Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, and Vairocana. Their specific Oral Transmissions will be described below (under § 2-2-2).

<sup>34</sup> *Ib.: khyad par gyi dus gsum la : nang rtsa rlung khams lam du zud pa : rdo rje phag mo'i zab rgya drug : blo the tshom gyi skyon bsal ba la : rdo rje slob dpon gyi snyan rgyud le'u drug : lta ba zab mo rtogs pa grol bar rang shar du ngo sprad pa la : rdo rje sems pa'i thugs kyi klong drug bstan te:.* The details about these Six Expanses will be given below (under § 2-2-3).

<sup>35</sup> 18 + 18 + 6 = 41.

<sup>36</sup> *Ib.: thun mongs gces pa'i man ngag bco brgyad : gsang ba thugs kyi man ngag bco brgyad : tshar gcod drag po gnam lcags kyi khang bu lnga yod de : snyan rgyud man ngag bzhi bcu rtsa gcig : gang zag las can gyi don du bzhag pa rtsa ba'i them so:.*

- *The Great Tantra of the Transparent Contemplation* (*dGongs pa zang thal gyi rgyud chen*);
- the shorter version of the previous text (*rgyud de chung*);
- the root-text (*rtsa ba*), i.e., the root-tantra; and
- *The Lamp of the Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* (*Kun tu bzang po dgongs pa zang thal gyi sgron ma*).

According to Sétön, these works are of a special nature and should therefore not be taught to anyone other than “oneself” (*rang min gzhan la bstan mi bya*). In this context, “oneself” evidently refers to Rigdzin Gödem. This implies that he should not teach these texts to others but, on the contrary, keep them secretly for himself. At least for a time. He may then reveal them to fortunate ones capable of integrating the thirteen joys (*dga’ ba bcu gsum*).<sup>37</sup> The main reason for keeping these works secret is the lack of good fortune of sentient beings at the time of the discovery, coupled with the absence of support from a king (here, one of the kings of Gungthang) to help diffuse the treasures during this dark age (*dus ngan*).

## 2. The Thirty-Six Oral Transmissions

These Oral Transmissions are divided into six sets of six corpuses according to six great occasions (*dus chen drug*), during which various kinds of tragic events occur. These corpuses are therefore presented as “necessary” (*dgos pa*) for these specific periods, to counter the effects of such episodes. In fact, there are thirty-six minor occasions (*dus phra mo’i skabs*), grouped under the six great occasions. This corresponds to the spread of the six contaminations (*grib drug*), against which one ought to seek protection during these degenerate times. These six occasions are as follows:

1. in order to maintain health, one should avoid heavy food and drink ambrosial water free from defects;
2. to protect the adamantine body (*rdo rje’i lus*), one should take medicinal food that restores one’s health;
3. to guard against faults arising from degeneration in practice and corruption of samayas, one should wear the vajra armor;
4. to avoid contaminated places, one should keep the three sealed ornaments (*phyag rgya’i rgyan gsum*), namely avoiding contact

<sup>37</sup> These joys are not listed anywhere in the sources at my disposal. According to the *sNyan rgyud rin po che’i lung byang*, p. 171, this might need to be corrected to “thirteen austerities” (*dka’ ba bcu gsum*) even though I have not found any list of these austerities in the *Byang gter* texts so far (nor outside this corpus).

with impurities, remembering impermanence, and coping with suffering;<sup>38</sup>

5. to avoid contamination through clothes, one should maintain the two signs of protection (*bsrung ba'i rtags gnyis*);<sup>39</sup> and
6. to avoid bad companions who have broken their samayas, one should exclusively associate with friends who have a clear understanding and resolve regarding contamination in general, and breaking samayas in particular.

The thirty-six Oral Transmissions are divided into two groups of eighteen works, namely: 1. the eighteen ordinary branches (*yan lag thun mongs bco brgyad*); and 2. the eighteen root-series of teachings (*rtsa ba chos sde bco brgyad*).

### 2-1. The Eighteen Ordinary Branches

These branches are further subdivided as follows: 1. the six Precepts (*man ngag drug*), 2. the six sādhanas (*sgrub thabs drug*); and 3. the six Lamps (*sgron ma drug*).

#### 2-1-1. The Six Precepts

The purpose of these six Precepts is to concretely purify the six defects (*skyon drug*) that cause the deviation of one's continuum into a state of total ordinariness (*tha mal*). In *The Listing of the Oral Transmissions* (*sNyan brgyud them byang*), these precepts are said to be necessary when the defects associated with the six impure Conducts (*spyod pa ma dag pa drug*) manifest.<sup>40</sup>

According to *The Preliminaries of the Six Oral Transmissions* (*sNyan brgyud drug gi sngon 'gro*), these six precepts are closely linked to the

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<sup>38</sup> In the context of a contaminated place, preventing any contact with impurities implies avoiding impure locations at all cost. Remembering impermanence implies recalling that the place might change—being first pure and then becoming impure (or vice versa) for various outer and inner reasons. Coping with suffering means never forgetting that mundane expectations (regarding a particular place which should fit our desires, etc.) are sources of dissatisfaction. Note that some versions of Se ston's text read *phyag rgya'i dran gsum*, which, if it does not refer to the same elements, eludes me.

<sup>39</sup> In general, there are rules for yogis to prevent catching illnesses from contaminated clothes. This implies avoiding wearing the clothes of somebody affected by a lethal contagious illness, and wearing the clothes of a deceased person, as well as preventing one's clothes from becoming contaminated by others.

<sup>40</sup> If we refer to the six times listed above, these six impure Conducts consist in not paying attention to: 1. one's food (eating too heavy or too light); 2. one's health; 3. one's preservation of samayas; 4. the place one lives in; 5. the cleanliness of one's clothes; and 6. the friends one associates with.

six great occasions previously listed. Thus, there is:

1. a precept on extracting the elixirs (*bcud len*) of food and water to maintain health;<sup>41</sup>
2. a precept on long-life (*tshe sgrub*) and the mastery of the air element to protect the adamantine body;<sup>42</sup>
3. a precept on the vajra armor (*rdo rje go khrab*) to prevent degeneration in practice;<sup>43</sup>
4. a precept based on mantric recitation (*sngags*) to prevent contamination from impure places;<sup>44</sup>
5. a precept based on protection against contamination from clothes;<sup>45</sup> and
6. a precept based on avoiding “bad friends” (*grogs ngan*) to prevent contaminations from individuals who have broken their samayas.<sup>46</sup>

### 2-1-2. The Six Sādhanas

These are specific methods employed by practitioners when obstacles arise during the practice of the Path. Such obstacles include:

1. the fragmentation of a kingdom and the advent of bandits;

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<sup>41</sup> To engage in its practice, one should avoid impure food and rely on ambrosial water. This helps in emptying the inner cavity of the channels and increase physical force. Three kinds of waters may be used: water from a glacier (*gangs chu*), water that flows among rocks (*rdza chu*), and water flowing from a slate mountain (*g.ya' chu*). See *sNyan brgyud drug gi sngon 'gro*, pp. 843-846.

<sup>42</sup> This precept uses various kinds of gazes (*lta stangs*) in order to control the inner winds. Its practice should increase lifespan, generate super-knowledges, enable the practitioner to perform miracles, and eventually attain the state of Immortal Knowledge-Holder. See *ib.*, pp. 846-847.

<sup>43</sup> This precept consists in visualizing oneself in a wrathful form (*khro bo*) with three heads, six arms, and four legs, and reciting a fierce mantra, to prevent contamination resulting from encountering obstacles, impure people with broken samayas, and so forth. See *ib.*, pp. 847-848.

<sup>44</sup> This precept is based on the recitation of the mantra purifying the five elements and restoring their balance. See *ib.*, pp. 848-849.

<sup>45</sup> This precept explains that if the yogi's clothes are touched by someone who has broken his vows and samaya, a lowly person, a butcher, a barren woman, or someone demonstrating a bad behavior, the yogi's mind will be clouded and remain in a state of delusion. If, for any reason, contaminated clothes must be used, they should be purified beforehand with the mantric seeds of the fire, air, and wind elements, and anointed with perfumed medicine (*ib.*, pp. 849-850).

<sup>46</sup> This precept explains that bad friends corrupt one's mind and create unfavorable conditions and obstacles. In general, “bad friends” are acquaintances that indulge in passions (*nyon mong*s) and encourage one to share their behavior. Such individuals must be avoided at all costs. Others to be avoided are heretics, butchers, etc. *ib.*, pp. 850-851.

2. the advent of demons that ruin the sources of virtues;
3. the arising of sickness and epidemics that cause disturbances in the elements;
4. the exhaustion of merits and the loss of one's possessions;
5. outer and inner circumstances that threaten one's lifespan; and
6. the arising of inner enemies and *Gongpo* spirits.<sup>47</sup>

For each of these obstacles, there is a corresponding method of practice that enables the yogi to remove difficulties.<sup>48</sup> These methods must be performed as soon as the obstacles arise, in order to prevent long-term adverse effects. For instance, the degeneration of royal power and the advent of bandits could hinder one's abilities to remain in retreat or reside in a monastery, etc. In such cases, it is crucial to engage in the methods known as *The Binding of the Nepalese Bandits (Bal mo'i jag chings)*, which was retrieved by Gödem from the Iron Repository.<sup>49</sup>

### 2-1-3. The Six Lamps

This system of Six Lamps is divided into two series of Lamps for each of the three doors of the individual. There are therefore two Lamps for the body, two for speech, and two for the mind. Sétön provides a very clear rationale for the existence of these Six Lamps about which he says:

*In these degenerate times, it is extremely difficult to please sentient beings because of their terribly gross thoughts. If one allows one's three doors to slip into ordinariness while (keeping in mind) the necessity to strive for the welfare of migratory beings, obstacles will (inevitably) arise for oneself and others. Consequently, as a method to remedy this (situation), the Six Lamps of excellent Conduct are taught.*<sup>50</sup>

#### 2-1-3-1. The Two Lamps of the Body

Sétön then explains that the two Lamps of the body are: 1. the seven ornaments of external beauty (*phyi mdzes pa'i rgyan bdun*), and 2. the

<sup>47</sup> On the '*Gong po* entities, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, pp. 283-285.

<sup>48</sup> See volume 7 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs* for more details about these *sādhanas*.

<sup>49</sup> *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 7, pp. 99-111. The fact that the bandits are styled as Nepalese says a lot about the situation around the Tibeto-Nepalese border at the time, with bandits either coming from Nepal or with Tibetan brigands crossing the frontier after committing their crimes.

<sup>50</sup> Sétön, *op. cit.*, p. 416: *snyigs ma'i dus na sems can rtog pa hrag la shin* (p. 417) *tu mgu dka' stel 'gro don byed dgos pa la sgo gsum tha mal du shor na/ rang gzhan la bar chad 'byung bas/ de bcos pa'i thabs spyod pa legs pa'i sgron ma drug ston te/*.

four ornaments of internal beauty (*nang mdzes pa'i rgyan bzhi*). A practice organized according to these two Lamps is intended to prevent defects (*skyon*) and obstacles (*bar chad*) from arising and affecting the body.

The first seven ornaments relate to clothing used to hide the flesh of the body in order to avoid the arising of physical obstacles (potentially caused by demonic entities).<sup>51</sup> These are: 1. a conch-colored dress, 2. a white and red belt, 3. a dark blue upper garment, 4. the eight beautiful saffron marks, 5. a large maroon cloak, 6. a lotus-petaled hat, and 7. a three-pointed khaṭvāṅga.<sup>52</sup>

The four ornaments of internal beauty do not refer to material objects but rather to one's Conducts throughout day and night. These Conducts are defined as "seals" (*rgya*).<sup>53</sup> Thus: 1. during the day, one should remain in the sevenfold posture of Vairocana, known as the vajra seal; 2. in the morning and evening, one should adopt the crouching ṛṣi posture, called the *dharmakāya* seal in the morning, and the *dākinī* seal in the evening; 3. when walking and sitting, one should maintain the hero (*vīra*) seal; and 4. at night, one should sleep in the lion's posture.<sup>54</sup>

### 2-1-3-2. The Two Lamps of Speech

These two Lamps correspond to: 1. the "five outer words of auspiciousness" (*phyi legs pa'i tshig lnga*), and 2. the "single inner sound of transformation" (*nang bsgyur ba'i sgra gcig*). Engaging in a practice in which these two Lamps play a central role will definitely dispel all defects and obstacles associated with speech.

The first Lamp is applied when interacting with ordinary people, whose minds are impure and under the power of passions. In such encounters, one may end up engage in accusations, irrational talk, disparaging discussions, praise, or heartfelt dialogues. Since these five modalities are difficult to evaluate and analyze with certainty, one should avoid 1. anger, 2. meaningless exchanges that simply amount to accumulating faults, 3. ignorant discourses based on proliferating concepts, and instead rely on speech that 4. utters words that are certain and auspicious, and 5. is based on careful examination of one's intended meaning.

<sup>51</sup> See the *sNyan brgyud drug gi sngon 'gro*, p. 113, which says: "...do not stay naked: if you hide the flesh of the body, obstacles will not arise" (...*gcer bu mi bya bar: sha lus sbas na bar chad med*:).

<sup>52</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 113.

<sup>53</sup> *Ib.*, p. 114.

<sup>54</sup> For more details, see *sGron ma rnam gsum, Byang gter phyogs bsgribs*, vol. 1, pp. 225-262.

The second Lamp consists in remembering that everything may be the source of attachment and aversion. Therefore, when replying to someone, one should utter faultless words, imagining that the sound is instantaneously transformed into one's Yidam's heart essence (*snying po*). In this way, one should ultimately obtain the *siddhi* of Vajra Speech (*rdo rje gsung*).<sup>55</sup>

### 2-1-3-3. The Two Lamps of the Mind

According to Sétön, the two Lamps of the mind are briefly discussed in *The Preliminaries of the Oral Transmission* (*sNyan brgyud kyi sngon 'gro*)<sup>56</sup> and treated in detail in *The Tantra of the Deluded Mind* (*'Khrul pa'i sems kyi rgyud*).<sup>57</sup> The names of these Lamps are not clearly defined in Sétön's presentation but, in all likelihood, they correspond to identifying the deluded mind (*sems*) and distinguishing it from Awareness (*rig pa*). In order to experience their differences concretely, one should relinquish the eight worldly concerns<sup>58</sup> and remember that words and thoughts are like the wind, with the mind following them as it constantly rides the wind of karma and passions. In other words, it simply follows after the conditioned habits of delusion.

In actual practice, this entails separating from conceptual proliferations, merging wind and Awareness, and remaining in a state of total equality. In this condition, one should eradicate hopes and fears, meditating in a state free from dualistic grasping. Eventually, one will obtain the diamond-like Mind (*rdo rje lta bu'i thugs*).

In conclusion, it should be noted that, although included in the list of the literary contents of the thirty-six Oral Transmissions, these Six Lamps do not correspond to titles of works; rather they indicate specific practices that adepts must engage in throughout their spiritual curriculum.

## 2-2. The Eighteen Root-Series of Teachings

These eighteen sets of instructions are divided into three groups of six, namely: 1. *The Six Profound Seals of Vajravārāhī* (*rDo rje phag mo'i zab*

<sup>55</sup> According to Sétön, the details are given in the text entitled *Zhal gdams bdun pa*, which, to my knowledge, is no longer available.

<sup>56</sup> *sNyan brgyud drug gi sngon 'gro*, *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 1, pp. 101-118.

<sup>57</sup> This is *The Tantra that Uproots Delusion, the Source of all Tantras*, extracted from the *Utterly Secret and Unsurpassable Transparent Contemplation of the Great Perfection* (*Yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po dgongs pa zang thal las rgyud thams cad kyi thog ma 'khrul pa rtsad gcod kyi rgyud*), *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 2, pp. 553-577.

<sup>58</sup> [1-2]. Attachment to gain and displeasure at loss; [3-4]. attachment to fame and displeasure at blame; [5-6]. attachment to praise and displeasure at slander; and [7-8]. attachment to happiness and displeasure at sadness.

rgya), 2. *The Six Oral Transmissions* (*sNyan brgyud drug*), and 3. *The Six Expanses of Vajrasattva* (*rDo rje sems dpā'i klong drug*).

### 2-2-1. The Six Profound Seals of Vajravārāhī

(*rDo rje phag mo'i zab rgya*)

The first cycle in this series is that of *The Six Profound Seals of Vajravārāhī*. It is intended for practitioners of intermediate capacities and good fortune. According to *The Tantra of the Delightful Activities* (*dGyes pa 'phrin las kyi rgyud*), these six seals (*rgya drug*) are:

1. the seal of the body (*lus*), similar to a vajra;<sup>59</sup>
2. the seal of the wind (*rlung*), similar to an ocean;<sup>60</sup>
3. the seal of the View (*lta ba*), similar to the sky;<sup>61</sup>
4. the seal of Meditation (*sgom pa*), similar to the sun and moon;<sup>62</sup>
5. the seal of Conduct (*spyod pa*), similar to meteoritic iron;<sup>63</sup> and
6. the seal of Precepts (*man ngag*), similar to jewels.<sup>64</sup>

When fully explained according to their own texts, these six seals are divided into twenty series of teachings that are condensed into six root-texts.

At the time Sétön wrote his description of the cycle, only eleven sections of teachings were available,<sup>65</sup> while the texts on empowerments and some of the instructions on channels and winds were described as being “not very clear” (*kha gsal mi 'dug pa*), i.e., not easy to understand. Rigdzin Gödem hid back the entire collection at Riwo Pelbar in Mangyül. It was later rediscovered by Tennyi Lingpa (1480–1535), who widely disseminated it in Southern Tibet and various other places. In particular, he transmitted it to Thuksé Namkha Gyeltsen<sup>66</sup> and many

<sup>59</sup> I.e., it is immutable (*mi 'gyur ba*).

<sup>60</sup> I.e., it is deep (*zab*) and profound (*gting*).

<sup>61</sup> I.e., it is limitless or beyond extreme (*mtha' yas*).

<sup>62</sup> I.e., it is steadily increasing (*rgyas pa*).

<sup>63</sup> I.e., it is stable (*brtan pa*).

<sup>64</sup> I.e., it is precious (*rin chen*). For the list of specific works associated with these seals, see Sétön, *op. cit.*, pp. 422-423.

<sup>65</sup> These texts are included in the first volume of the *dGongs pa zang thal*, in the *Byang gter phyogs bsrigs*, pp. 625 *et seq.*

<sup>66</sup> On Thugs sras Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, see the fascinating paper by J. Valentine, “The Great Perfection in the Early Biographies of the Northern Treasure Tradition: An Introduction to and Translation of The Life of Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan,” *pas-sim*.

other disciples, thereby reuniting the mother and son teachings.

According to Sétön, some criticism has been formulated against this “twice-concealed” treasure (*yang gter*). He states:

*Regarding this (cycle), some who practice incorrectly assert that they have never seen any history about the Great Knowledge-Holder<sup>67</sup> hiding it as a twice-concealed treasure. In the (latter’s) biography and so forth, there is no mention of it being (re-)hidden; therefore, they claim that it is a false treasure.<sup>68</sup>*

However, for Sétön, there is in fact a passage in *The Index of Teachings*, known as the *Key to the Heart of Wisdom* (*Lung byang ye shes thugs kyi lde mig*) which confirms the authenticity of the twice-concealed treasure. The text says:

*It should be given to a worthy vessel<sup>69</sup> of  
The Supreme Vehicle, who will come from the east:  
He should practice it without dispersing himself in talking.  
Once he has found a son for the seal of entrustment, he should give him  
(the scrolls).  
But if he does not find a worthy (vessel), he should re-conceal (the texts)  
as treasures.<sup>70</sup>*

Therefore, one should take into account that the texts of these *Six Profound Seals* were concealed twice and discovered twice. In Sétön’s own words, there are thus a newer and an older (*gsar rnying*) tradition associated with this treasure.

As for its actual approaches to practice, the cycle provides three methods, which respectively pertain to Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga levels. This is confirmed by *The Gradual Path of the Yogas* (*rNal ’byor lam rim*),<sup>71</sup> which Sétön quotes as follows:<sup>72</sup>

<sup>67</sup> That is, Rig ’dzin rgod ldem himself.

<sup>68</sup> Sétön, *op. cit.*, p. 421: ‘*di la log sgrub mkhan ’ga’ zhid rig ’dzin chen po’i yang gter du sbas pa’i lo rgyus yong ma mthong pa la/ rnam thar sogs na sbas pa’i ’phros med pas/ rdzun gter yin no zhes gleng stel.*

<sup>69</sup> Again, this refers to rGod ldem.

<sup>70</sup> Sétön, *ib.*: *theg pa mchog gi snod ldan gcig: shar gyi phyogs nas ’byung gi gtad: kha la ma ’byams nyams len gyis: gtad rgya’i bu rnyed de la gtad: las can ma rnyed gter du sbos.* The original text (p. 208) gives an nearly identical reading : *theg pa mchog gi snod ldan gcig: shar nas ’byung gi de la gtad: kha la ma ’byams nyams len gyis: gtad rgya’i bu rnyed de la gtad: las can ma rnyed gter du sbos.*

<sup>71</sup> Not identified yet.

<sup>72</sup> P. 421: *nyams len ni lha sgrub na dmigs pa dang : snying po la brtson par bya : rtsa rlung sbyong na lus sbyongs dang rlung bum pa can bya : mi rtog pa’i ye shes nyams su len na : lus gnad lta stangs la brtson par bya’o.*

*Regarding practice, when one aims at accomplishing the deity,  
One should exert oneself in visualization and mantric essence.<sup>73</sup>*

*When one trains in channels and winds, one should train the body and  
perform kumbhaka.<sup>74</sup>*

*When one practices non-discursive Wisdom, one should exert oneself  
with the key points of the body and the gazes.<sup>75</sup>*

Still referring to the same work, Sétön notes that certain elements remain unclear regarding the differences between the original “old” treasure (*gter ma*) revealed by Gödem and the “newer” twice-rediscovered version (*yang gter*).<sup>76</sup> After a brief analysis, he eventually concludes that the twenty-six sections of teachings that make up the second treasure are in perfect harmony with those of the first treasure, ensuring that contradictions are avoided.<sup>77</sup>

To synthesize his presentation of these *Six Seals*, Sétön proposes (pp. 422-423) a series of equivalences between the seals and their related text(s), which can be rendered as follows:

Seal	Text
seal of the body	<i>rNal 'byor lam rim</i>
seal of wind	<i>rTsa gnas lus kyi 'khor lo, rTsa rlung gnad kyi sgron ma, Zab rgya'i dmigs rim, bDe chen gsang sgrub</i>

<sup>73</sup> This line refers to the Mahāyoga approach.

<sup>74</sup> *rlung bum pa can*, holding the vase breathing. This is a yogic technique in four steps which is central to Yantra Yoga (*'khrul 'khor*) and similar practices. This line refers to the Anuyoga approach.

<sup>75</sup> This line refers to the Atiyoga approach. The key point of the body concerns the postures of the Three Bodies (*sku gsum*, i.e., the postures of the Lion, the Elephant, and the Sage) while the gazes are the manners of looking (at the sky, the rays of the sun, etc.) specifically associated with these postures.

<sup>76</sup> According to Sétön (pp. 421-422), this is particularly the case with the “outer astrological cycle” (*phyi rtsis kyi skor*) and the “inner cycle on channels” (*nang rtsa gnas kyi skor*). The issue at stake is somewhat unclear. For the version of the entire cycle as revealed by bsTan gnyis gling pa, see *rDo rje phag mo'i zab khrid kyi skor*, Delhi, 1985. I have been unable to locate an astrological cycle in this version but the text that Sétön elliptically refers to must be the *mKha' 'gro ma'i dus kyi rtsis rgya drug gi man ngag, Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 1, pp. 679-697. This text is not so much about astrology as about calculations (in an embryological perspective, and about the inner movements of winds within the channels, etc.). The cycle on channels corresponds in the version revealed by bsTan gnyis gling pa to *The Secret Practice of Great Bliss (bDe chen gsang sgrub*, pp. 41-52.). See bsTan gnyis gling pa, *The Clarification of the Errorless Index-Listing (Them byang 'chug med gsal byed)*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>77</sup> These twenty-six sections correspond to the entire set of texts included in bsTan gnyis gling pa's *rDo rje phag mo'i zab khrid kyi skor*.

seal of the View	<i>lTa ba ye shes klong grol</i> <sup>78</sup>
seal of Meditation	<i>mKha' gro'i 'phrin las, mKha' 'gro las rim dus kyi rtsis rgya drug</i>
seal of Conduct	the whole <i>rDo rje phag mo'i sgrub skor</i> , and the specific <i>gcod</i> collection known as <i>The Cycle of the Extraordinary Secret</i> ( <i>gSang ba rmad byung gi skor</i> )
seal of precepts	<i>Thig le'i gegs sel, Man ngag thor bu gsum pa, Zab rgya bsam pa'i zhal gdams nor bu'i phreng ba</i>

### 2-2-2. The Six Oral Transmissions

(*sNyan brgyud drug*)

These teachings are intended for the highest disciples among those of superior capacities and constitute the instructions transmitted by the three main vajrācāryas: Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, and Vairocana. However, according to *The Index of the Six Oral Transmissions* (*sNyan brgyud drug gi tho byang*), they are attributed solely to Padmasambhava. This most evidently represents a limited perspective, since these Six Oral Transmissions form the core of *The Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* (*Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*), which indeed incorporates the teachings from all three vajrācāryas.

In *The Index of Teachings known as the Key to the Heart of Primordial Wisdom* (*Lung byang ye shes kyi lde mig*), these transmissions are listed as follows:

1. the Oral Transmission with quintessential precepts in three chapters (*snyan brgyud gnad du dril ba'i man ngag le'u gsum pa*);
2. the intermediate Oral Transmission (*snyan brgyud bar pa*);
3. the Oral Transmission that concretely reveals Primordial Wisdom (*ye shes mngon sum ston pa'i snyan brgyud*);
4. the Oral Transmission of the authentic principle that should not be written down (*yang dag don gyi snyan brgyud yi ge med pa*);
5. the Contemplation of the Heart that should not be written down (*thugs kyi dgongs pa yi ge med pa*); and
6. the Seal of Entrustment of the Oral Transmission.

<sup>78</sup> This text is presented in bsTan gnyis gling pa, *Them byang 'chug med gsal byed* (p. 4) as the main doctrinal (“dzogchen”) text of the collection, dealing with *khregs chod*.

It should also be noted that alternative listings of these transmissions exist. For instance, in the opening section of *The Great Exegetical Commentary* ('*Grel tig chen mo*'),<sup>79</sup> they are presented as follows:

- the Oral Transmission of the Authentic Principle (*yang dag don gyi snyan brgyud*), and the Oral Transmission of the Direct Introduction to Reality (*chos nyid ngo sprod pa'i snyan brgyud*) associated with Padmasambhava;
- the Oral Transmission causing understanding by means of explanatory methods (*bshad thabs kyi sgo nas go bar bya ba'i snyan brgyud*), and the Oral Transmission causing liberation by means of practice (*nyams len gyi sgo nas grol bar bya ba'i snyan brgyud*); and
- the Oral Transmission that differentiates between mind and Primordial Wisdom (*sems dang ye shes dbye ba'i snyan brgyud*), and the Oral Transmission of the practice of the five methods of access (*bzhag thabs rnam pa lnga'i nyams len gyi snyan brgyud*).<sup>80</sup>

Basically, these six Oral Transmission are distributed across the two main Dzogchen cycles of the Northern Treasures: *The Natural Emergence of the Self-Arisen Great Perfection* (*rDzogs pa chen po rang byung rang shar*), and *The Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* (*Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*).

### 2-2-2-1. The Two Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava

These two transmissions are those of the entire *Natural Emergence of the Self-Arisen Great Perfection* (*rDzogs chen rang byung rang shar*) and a substantial portion of *The Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* (*Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*).<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> See the translation of this text in Smith 2016.

<sup>80</sup> See also Smith, p. 35.

<sup>81</sup> As will be seen below, the *dGongs pa zang thal* also includes the two transmissions from Vimalamitra, the two transmissions coming from Vairocana, and the corpus known as the Six Expanses of Vajrasattva (*rDo rje sems dpa'i klong drug*). The doctrinal contents of the *dGongs pa zang thal* are discussed below in chapter VI.

### 2-2-2-1-1. The Cycle of the Natural Emergence of the Self-Arisen Great Perfection

(*rDzogs pa chen po rang byung rang shar gyi skor*)

This cycle corresponds to what is designated as the “Oral Transmission that Cuts Through Elaborated Limitations” (*spros pa'i mtha' spyod [=gcod] pa'i snyan brgyud*), which belongs to the Oral Transmission of Ācārya Padmasambhava (*slob dpon padma snyan brgyud*). To provide a clear listing of this cycle's contents, Sétön cites *The Treatise of the Quintessential Dialogue* (*Zhus lan gnad kyi yi ge*), in which the works comprising this collection are organized into a series of eight precepts (*man ngag brgyad*) and a set of two tantras (*rgyud gnyis*), for a total of ten works. The eight precepts are:

1. *The Treatise of the Quintessential Dialogue* (*Zhus lan gnad kyi yi ge*);
2. *The Testament known as the Precious Nail* (*Zhal chems rin chen gzer bu*);
3. *The Lamp Dispelling the Darkness of Ignorance* (*Ma rig mun sel sgron ma*);
4. *The Condensed Quintessence, the Empowerment to Awareness* (*sNying po bsdus pa rig pa'i dbang*);
5. *The Quintessential Drop: The List of the Profound Oral Instructions* (*gNad tig zhal gdams zab mo'i them*);
6. *The Direct Introduction to the Natural Clarity of One's Awareness* (*Ngo sprod rang rig rang gsal*);
7. *The Treasure-House of the Precious Jewels Dispelling Obstacles* (*Gegs sel nor bu ratna'i bang mdzod*); and
8. *The Lamp Clarifying Precepts* (*Man ngag gsal ba'i sgron ma*).

The two tantras are:

9. *The Tantra of Vajrasattva's Universal Freedom* (*Kun grol rdo rje sems dpa'i rgyud*), and
10. *The Root-Tantra of the Self-Arisen Natural Emergence* (*Rang byung rang shar rtsa ba'i rgyud*).

An eleventh work is listed as *The Stages for the Offering Activities to the Treasure Lords* (*gTer bdag mchod pa'i las rim*). All of these are said to have been transmitted by Padmasambhava to his consort, Yéshé Tsogyel, the Lady from Kharchen. Furthermore, in addition to these texts, the following complementary treatises are also included:

1. *The Five Quintessential Nails of the Preliminaries* (*sNgon 'gro gnad*

2. *The Stages of the Instructions on the Key Points of the Path, the Condensed Elixir of the Quintessence* (sNying po bcud bsdus lam gyi gnad khrid kyi rim pa); and
3. *The Direct Introduction to the Five Intermediate States* (Bar do lnga'i ngo sprod).

To conclude this description, Sétön explains that these works belong to the oral transmission (*snyan brgyud*) that primarily teaches the “absorption into the Access-to-Equality” (*mnyam gzhaq ting nge 'dzin*).<sup>82</sup>

### 2-2-2-1-2. The Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra (dGongs pa zang thal)

#### 2-2-2-1-2-1. The Root Oral Transmission of Padmasambhava

According to Sétön, this cycle constitutes what is defined as the “Oral Transmission of the Direct Introductions to Reality” (*chos nyid ngo sprod kyi snyan brgyud*) and is also known as comprising the “Oral Transmission of Manifest Thögel” (*mngon sum thod rgal gyi snyan brgyud*). The texts included in this Oral Transmission are:

1. *The List of the Six Oral Transmissions* (sNyan brgyud drug gi them byang);
2. *The Preliminaries* (sNgon 'gro);
3. *The Structure [of the Oral Transmission]* (Khog dbub);
4. *The Index of the Profound Teachings that Reveal the Effortless Vehicle* (rTsol med kyi theg pa ston pa zab mo chos kyi lung byang);
5. *The Religious History of the Three Kinds of Revelations of the Secret Formulas* (gSang sngags kyi bstan pa rnam gsum gyi chos 'byung);
6. *The Unborn, Uncontrived and Self-Arisen Tantra* (sKye med ma bcos rang byung gi rgyud);
7. *The Instruction Manual of the Transparent Contemplation* (dGongs pa zang thal gyi khrid yig);
8. *The Treatise on Key Points* (gNad kyi yi ge);
9. *The Treatise on Signs* (rTags kyi yi ge);

<sup>82</sup> The expression “Access-to-Equality” (*mnyam g/bzhag*) is borrowed from the talented scholar Jacques May. It literally translates the act of accessing (*g/bzhag*, hence the result of a meditative equipoise) the equality (*mnyam*) of one’s natural state (*gnas lugs*). This natural state abides in the equality or nondifferentiation of Emptiness and Clarity (*stong gsal*). The term Absorption (*ting nge 'dzin*) is itself a result of Concentration (*bsam gtan*), which leads, when familiarization is optimal, to the state of Contemplation (*dgongs pa*).

10. *The Treatise on the Full Measure [of the Signs] (Tshad kyi yi ge);*
11. *The First Official Letter of Padmasambhava (Padma'i bka' yig dang po);*
12. *The Activities of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities (Zhi khro'i 'phrin las);*
13. *The Ritual to Guide the Dead (gNas lung);*
14. *The Offerings Presented to the Five Clans (Rigs lnga'i mchod 'bul);*
15. *The Classification of Empowerments Given through Efforts (rTsol byas dbang gi dbye ba);*
16. *The Elaborated Empowerment (sPros bcas);*
17. *The Non-Elaborated and Extremely Non-Elaborated Empowerments (sPros med shin tu spros med);*
18. *The Totally Non-Elaborated Empowerment (Rab tu spros med);*
19. *The Twenty-One Direct Introductions (Ngo sprod nyer gcig pa);*
20. *The Oral Transmission of the Authentic Principle (Yang dag don gyi snyan brgyud);*
21. *The Unwritten Oral Transmission on the Contemplation of the Heart (Thugs kyi dgongs pa yi ge med pa'i snyan brgyud);*
22. *The Complete Unwritten Armor (Yi ge med pa go cha tshang ma);*
23. *The Garland of the Precious Oral Transmission (sNyan brgyud rin po che'i phreng ba);*
24. *The Empowerment to the Dynamism of Awareness (Rig pa'i rtsal dbang);*
25. *The Commentary on the Empowerment to the Dynamism of Awareness (rTsal dbang gi 'grel pa);*
26. *The Precepts in Three Chapters Combining the Key Points of the Oral Transmission (sNyan brgyud gnad du dril ba'i man ngag le'u gsum ma);*
27. *The Oral Transmission Concretely Revealing Primordial Wisdom (Ye shes sngon [= mngon] du bstan pa'i snyan brgyud);*
28. *The Index of the Teachings known as the Key to the Heart of Primordial Wisdom (Lung byang ye shes thugs kyi lde mig);*
29. *The Index of the Teachings known as the Precious Garland (Lung byang rin po che'i phreng ba);*
30. *The Mode of Liberation of the Adepts of Superior, Median, [and Lower Capacities] (Gang zag rab 'bring gsum gyi grol tshul);*
31. *The Empowerment of the General Anointment of the Royal Method (rGyal thabs spyi blug gi dbang);*
32. *The Precious Lamp of the Three Roots (rTsa gsum rin chen sgron ma); and*
33. *The Entrustment of the Seal of the Oral Transmission (sNyan brgyud kyi gtad rgya).*

### 2-2-2-1-2-2. The Two Oral Transmissions of Ācārya Vimalamitra

The first Oral Transmission associated with Vimalamitra is defined as relying upon “methods of explanations” (*bshad thabs*), aimed at generating understanding (*go ba*) in the mind of the adepts. It corresponds to *The Great Exegetical Commentary* (*‘Grel tig chen mo*).

The second Oral Transmission relies on actual practice (*nyams len*), aimed at liberating practitioners. It comprises the four following works:

1. *The Original Empowerment* (*dBang thog ma*);
2. *The Quintessential Empowerment of the Heart* (*sNying po thugs kyi dbang*);
3. *The Lamp Summarizing Mind Itself* (*Sems nyid bsdus pa’i sgron ma*);  
and
4. *The Nail of the Instruction Manual* (*Khrid yig gzer bu*).

### 2-2-2-1-2-3. The Two Oral Transmissions of Ācārya Vairocana

The first of these transmissions is the “Oral Transmission that Distinguishes Mind and Awareness” (*sems dang rig pa dbye ba’i snyan brgyud*). It comprises:

1. *The First Oral Transmission* (*sNyan brgyud dang po*);
2. *The Intermediate Oral Transmission* (*Bar pa*); and
3. *The Last Oral Transmission* (*Phyi ma*).

The second transmission is known as the “Oral Transmission of the Practices of the Five Methods of Access” (*bzhag thabs rnam pa lnga’i nyams len gyi snyan brgyud*). It comprises only one work, entitled *The Transmission of the Heart* (*Thugs brgyud*).

These two Oral Transmissions are also respectfully known as:

- the Oral Transmission Defining the Reality of the Base (*gzhi chos nyid dang gtan la ‘bebs pa’i snyan brgyud*), and
- the Oral Transmission of Thögel, of the Path (*lam thod rgal gyi snyan brgyud*).

### 2-2-2-1-3. The Six Expanses of Vajrasattva's Heart

(*rDo rje sems dpa' thugs kyi klong drug*)

This section of the *Gongpa Zangthel* cycle is a set of instructions for fortunate adepts endowed with superior capacities. It contains:

1. *The Tantra of the Differences Between Mind and Awareness (Sems dang rig pa dbye ba'i rgyud);*
2. *The Tantra of the Natural Clarity of Awareness (Rig pa rang gsal gyi rgyud);*
3. *The Tantra of the Primordial Wisdom Abiding Within Oneself (Ye shes rang la gnas kyi rgyud);*
4. *The Tantra that Reveals the Great Primordial Wisdom (Ye shes chen po bstan pa'i rgyud);*
5. *The Tantra of the Natural Emergence of Contemplation (dGongs pa rang shar gyi rgyud); and*
6. *The Tantra of the Natural Manifestations of the Bardo (Bar do rang snang gi rgyud).*

Belonging to the same category is a set of additional Tantras and related texts comprising:

7. *The Tantra of the Deluded Mind ('Khrul pa sems kyi rgyud);*
8. *The Tantra that Distinguishes between the deluded mind and Awareness ('Khrul pa'i sems dang rig pa dbye ba'i rgyud);*
9. *The Tantra of the Precious Garland (Rin po che phreng ba'i rgyud);*
10. *The Tantra of the Natural Emergence of Primordial Wisdom (Ye shes rang shar gyi rgyud);*
11. *The Tantra of the Direct Introduction to Buddhahood (Sangs rgyas ngo sprod kyi rgyud);*
12. *The Origin of the Tantra that Liberates Through Wearing (bTags grol gyi rgyud byung tshul);*
13. *The Takdröl Empowerment known as the Wishfulfilling Jewel (dBang btags grol yid bzhin nor bu);*
14. *The Tantra of the Single Son of the Buddhas (Sangs rgyas sras gcig gi rgyud);*
15. *The First Testament Enunciated in Tuṣita (dGa' ldan gsungs pa'i 'das rjes dang po)*
16. *The Second Testament (gNyi pa);*
17. *The Third Testament (gSum pa);*
18. *The Small and Great (Drawings) that Liberate Upon Seeing (mThong grol che chung).*

As can be seen from the list above, connected to the same corpus of the Six Expanses, one finds the cycle of texts that liberate-through-wearing, or *Takdröls*.<sup>83</sup> These are essentially aimed at devoted practitioners who have entered the Path but who have not been able to reach the ultimate stage of the Four Visions (*snang bzhi*).<sup>84</sup> Such individuals must therefore take another rebirth (*nying mtshams sbyar ba*). In fact, the *Takdröls* are given to yogis engaged in the practice of the Path, but they can also be taught to ordinary sentient beings at the time of death. Within this collection, there are also two texts that liberate-upon-seeing (*mthong grol*) which Sétön considers to be very important.<sup>85</sup>

There are also other manners of expounding *The Six Expanses*, which involve three Buddhas who have taught Tantras and other works, and three Bodhisattvas to whom Tantras, etc., have been taught. Thus, there are:

1. the Expanse **enunciated by** Samantabhadra (*kun tu bzang pos gsungs pa'i klong*);
2. the Expanse **enunciated by** Vajradhara (*rdo rje 'chang gis gsungs pa'i klong*);
3. the Expanse **enunciated by** Vajrasattva (*rdo rje sems dpas gsungs pa'i klong*);
4. the Expanse **taught to** Mañjuḥṣa (*'jam pa'i dbyangs la gsungs pa'i klong*);
5. the Expanse **taught to** Avalokiteśvara (*spyen ras gzigs la gsungs pa'i klong*); and
6. the Expanse **taught to** Vajrapāṇi (*phyag na dor je la gsungs pa'i klong*).

Due to the presence of two additional Buddhas and three Bodhisattvas, it seems somewhat illogical to designate this corpus as *The Six Expanses of Vajrasattva's Heart* (*rDo rje sems dpa'i thugs kyi klong drug*).

<sup>83</sup> Basically, in this limited corpus of the *Six Expanses*, several texts are explicitly defined as *Takdröls*, such as the *dPal kun tu bzang po'i man ngag btags grol byon tshul* (*Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 2, pp. 695-700), the *Sangs rgyas thams cad kyi sras gcig pa'i rgyud* (*ib.*, pp. 701-710) the *bTags grol rgyud drug dus gnas zhal chems* (*ib.*, pp. 711-728), the *bsTan pa bu gcig pa'i rgyud* (*ib.*, pp. 729-754), and the *bTags grol rgyab yig* (*ib.*, pp. 769-777). The *Sangs rgyas kyi 'das rjes gsum* (*ib.*, pp. 755-768) is also considered by some to constitute a set of three *Takdröls* (although in other collections, such as the *mKha' 'gro snying thig*, they are not regarded as such).

<sup>84</sup> This ultimate stage is actually the fourth vision itself, namely the Vision of the Exhaustion of Reality (*chos nyid zad pa'i snang ba*) during which the adept obtains the Bodies and Wisdoms (*sku dang ye shes*) that define the authentic abiding mode of the natural state.

<sup>85</sup> These are the *rDzogs pa chen po'i mthong grol rin po che* (*Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 2, pp. 779-782), and the *Gong ma mthong grol dpe ris dang man ngag bcas* (*ib.*, pp. 783-786).

Nevertheless, this has not prevented some from attributing a list of texts to each of these *Six Expanses*. Sétön briefly enumerates these works as follows:

1. the Expanse enunciated by Samantabhadra, comprising four texts: 1. *The Tantra of the Precious Garland* (*Rin po che phreng ba'i rgyud*); 2. *The Tantra of the Natural Emergence of Vajrasattva's Contemplation* (*rDo rje sems dpa'i dgongs pa rang shar gyi rgyud*); 3. *The Tantra of the Direct Introduction to Buddhahood* (*Sangs rgyas ngo sprod kyi rgyud*); and 4. the texts that liberate-through-wearing (*btags grol*) and that liberate-upon-seeing (*mthong grol*);<sup>86</sup>
2. the Expanse enunciated by Vajradhara, with three works: 1. *The Tantra of the Primordial Wisdom Abiding Within Oneself* (*Ye shes rang la gnas pa'i rgyud*); 2. *The Tantra of the Emergence of Primordial Wisdom within Oneself* (*Ye shes rang la shar ba'i rgyud*); and 3. *The Tantra of the Natural Manifestations of the Bardo* (*bar do rang snang gi rgyud*);
3. the Expanse enunciated by Vajrasattva, regrouping two texts: 1. *The Tantra of the Natural Clarity of Awareness* (*Rig pa rang gsal gyi rgyud*); and 2. *The Expanse taught to Vajrapāṇi* (*Phyag na rdo rje la gsung pa'i klong*);
4. the Expanse taught to Mañjuḥṣa, comprising only one text, namely *The Tantra that Distinguishes between the Deluded mind and Awareness* (*'Khrul pa'i sems dang rig pa dbyer ba'i rgyud*);
5. the Expanse taught to Avalokiteśvara, with one text too, i.e., *The Tantra that Stabilizes the Great Primordial Wisdom* (*Ye shes chen po brtan pa'i rgyud*); and
6. the Expanse taught to Vajrapāṇi, with two works: 1. *The Tantra of the Deluded Mind* (*'Khrul pa sems kyi rgyud*); 2. the *Tantra that Distinguishes mind from Awareness* (*Sems dang rig pa dbye ba'i rgyud*).

In addition to these Expanses, one should include the corpus described above as that of “the five mansions in meteoritic iron for fierce annihilation” (*tshar gcod drag po gnam lcags kyi khang bu lnga*). This corresponds to the collection of *The Cycle of the Extraordinary Secret* (*gSang ba rmad byung gi skor*), i.e., the teachings dealing with *Chö*.<sup>87</sup> From

<sup>86</sup> As we have just seen, the last category does not concern a single, isolated text, but rather a coherent corpus of works.

<sup>87</sup> *gCod* means “to cut” and implies in this instance “to cut the grasping at a self” (*bdag 'dzin gcod pa*). It is a teaching that goes back to Pha Dam pa sangs rgyas (d. 1117) who actually received it from the bon po master Khro tshang 'Brug lha (b. 956). Its “creation” was attributed to Ma gcig Lab sgron, whereas it in fact derives from Khro tshang's earlier teachings. See Achard, *Enlightened Rainbows*, pp. 44-45, n. 172.

within the ten sections of teachings that are now included in this cycle,<sup>88</sup> Sétön enumerates the five following works:

1. *The History of the Teachings* (Chos 'byung), corresponding to the *Introductory History of the Teachings of the Extraordinary Secret* (gSang ba rmad byung gi chos 'byung gleng gzhi);
2. *The Key to Empowerment* (dBang lde mig), corresponding to *The Key to the Extraordinary Secret* (gSang ba rmad byung gi lde mig) and *The Ultimate Empowerment Ritual Without Proliferations, the Profound Empowerment of the Extraordinary Secret* (gSang ba rmad du byung ba'i dbang zab mo spros med don gyi dbang chog);
3. *The Crushing of Setbacks in Five Chapters* (Log gnon le'u lnga pa), corresponding to *The Crushing of Setbacks in the Extraordinary Secret* (gSang ba rmad du byung ba'i log gnon);
4. *The Seven Profound Instructions of the Noble Ones* ('Phags pa zab mo'i lung bdun) which I have been unable to identifying so far; and
5. *The Guru-Yoga Together with the Prayer to the Lineage* (Bla ma'i rnal 'byor brgyud 'debs dang bcas pa) corresponding to *The Guru-Yoga of the Extraordinary Secret and the Supplication Prayer to the Lineage* (gSang ba rmad byung gi bla ma'i rnal 'bor brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs).

Thus, according to *The Structure of the Six Oral Transmissions* (sNyan brgyud drug gi khog dbub) quoted above, there are forty-one main sections of teachings in this central corpus of the Northern Treasures, i.e.:

- the eighteen ordinary teachings,
- the eighteen extraordinary teachings, and
- the five mansions.

To this overall series of forty-one works, Sétön eventually adds four texts, namely:

1. *The Precepts on the Five Rounds* (Khug pa lnga'i man ngag);<sup>89</sup>
2. *The Spontaneous Accomplishment of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities* (Zhi khro lhun grub ma), corresponding to *The Spontaneous Activities of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities* (Zhi khro lhun grub kyi 'phrin las);<sup>90</sup>

<sup>88</sup> See *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 3, pp. 375-498.

<sup>89</sup> On this text, see Turpeinen, "Divine Visions at the Last Breath," *passim*.

<sup>90</sup> Sétön describes (p. 428) these two texts as "sections of teachings from the Heart Drops of the Clear-Light of Dzogchen" (rdzogs chen 'od gsal snying tig gi chos tshan). It seems that for him these are general works from other Dzogchen Heart Drops

3. *The Direct Introduction at the Time of Death* ('Chi kha'i ngo sprod); and
4. *The Development Stage of the Great Perfection* (rDzogs chen bskyed rim).<sup>91</sup>

### 3. The Cycle of Amitāyus in his Saṃbhogakāya Form

(*Tshe dpag med long sku ma'i chos skor*)

The purpose of this cycle is to restore health and extend the lifespan through the practice of Amitāyus (Tshe dpag med).<sup>92</sup> To synthesize this purpose, Sétön quotes from *The History of the Athlete Reverting Wheel* (bZlog byed gyad kyi 'khor lo'i lo rgyus),<sup>93</sup> in which it is said:

*Yama, the outer Lord of Death,  
Is reversed by the precepts of the Athlete.<sup>94</sup>  
The inner sense organs and the vital support,<sup>95</sup>  
Are nourished by the substances (obtained from) extracting elixirs, and  
by medicines.  
The secret sap of life is sustained by  
The empowerment to the Development Stage and by the winds.  
When this is the case, karmic traces are purified.<sup>96</sup>*

Regarding the origin of this cycle and its subdivisions, Sétön quotes the *Precious Oral Transmission for Reaching Immortality* ('Chi med tshe'i snyan brgyud rin po che), which says:<sup>97</sup>

*Padmasambhava of Oḍḍiyāna,  
Unraveled the Contemplation of the Mind of all Buddhas,*

---

cycles, but he does not identify these collections. A rapid search in the *Bima Nyingthik* and the *Khandro Nyingthik* has not shown obvious overlaps so far.

<sup>91</sup> Here Sétön briefly criticizes unnamed individuals who regard these last two texts as belonging to the Treasures retrieved from Zang zang lha brag, while for him these are simply compositions or explications made by Rig 'dzin rgod ldem himself.

<sup>92</sup> We shall see below that there are also practices centered on his *nirmāṇakāya* form.

<sup>93</sup> Not identified yet.

<sup>94</sup> In this case, this "athlete" or "strong man" is none other than Amitāyus himself.

<sup>95</sup> Depending on the context, this support could simply be the winds (*rlung*) or the heart.

<sup>96</sup> Quoted by Sétön (*op.cit.*, p. 428): *phyi yi 'chi bdag gshin rje de : gyad kyi man ngag 'di yis bzlog : nang gi dbang po srog gi rten : bcud len rdzas dang sman gyis gso : gsang ba tshe'i dangs ma de : bskyed rim dbang dang rlung gis gso : de tshe bag chags 'dag par 'gyur .*

<sup>97</sup> This text corresponds to the *Tshe'i snyan brgyud bzhugs pa'i dbu phyogs*, which is included in the vol. 8 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, pp. 179-180.

And striving for the benefit of migratory beings with his Emanation  
 Body,  
 Hid at the center of the brown casket, halfway up the Zangzang  
 Lhadrak,  
 A practice of long life based on health-restoring substances,  
 A practice of the very Essence of Amitāyus based on his divine  
 saṃbhogakāya form,  
 A practice aimed at restoring the elements and the vital wind,  
 A reverting ritual based on an armor and substances against the de-  
 monic assistants of the Lord of Death,  
 A practice for achieving the deathlessness of the immutable life-force,  
 Complements for filling what is incomplete,  
 Together with seven minor precepts.<sup>98</sup>

To clarify this quote, Sétön explains that within the *nirmāṇakāya* corpus of teachings, there are:

1. *The Long-Life Practice (tshe sgrub)* that relies on substances restoring health;
2. *The Outer Practice known as the Extracting of Ambrosial Elixirs (Phyi sgrub bdud rtsi'i bcud len);*
3. *The Conferral of Empowerment (dBang bskur);* and
4. *The Method for Combining Ambrosial Medicines (bDud rtsi sbyar thabs).*

Then, there is a sub-cycle based on the *saṃbhogakāya* form of Amitāyus, aimed at realizing his Essence Body (*ngo bo nyid sku*). The texts included in this section are:

1. *The Root Long-Life Practice (Tshe sgrub kyi rtsa ba);*
2. *The Method for Conferring the Long-Life Empowerment (Tshe dbang bskur thabs);*
3. *The Garland of Lotuses, the Commentary on the Practice of the Saṃbhogakāya (Longs spyod rdzogs skur sgrub pa'i 'grel pa padma'i phreng ba);*
4. *The Saṃbhogakāya Activities of Amitāyus (Tshe dpag med longs sku'i 'phrin las);* and

<sup>98</sup> *Tshe'i snyan brgyud*, p. 179: o rgyan padma 'byung gnas kyis/ sangs rgyas thams cad kyi thugs kyi dgongs pa dkrol te/ sprul sku 'gro don mdzad pa'i [429] tshe/ gso byed rdzas la rten te tshe sgrub pa dang/ longs spyod rdzogs sku lha la rten te tshe dpag med ngo bo nyid sgrub pa dang/ 'byung ba srog gi rlung gsos te sgrub pa dang/ 'chi (p. 180) bdag las kyi bdud rdzas dang cho gas bzlog pa dang/ mi 'gyur srog gi tshe 'chi ba med par sgrub pa dang/ ma tshang ba kha skong ba/ phran bu'i man ngag bdun dang bcas pa/ zang zang lha brag gi skyed bse sgrom smug po'i dbus su sbas pa'ol.

5. *The Long-Life Activities (Tshe phrin)*, including the root-text composed by Rigdzin Gödem.

Furthermore, in order to restore the vital wind and balance the elements, there is *The Profound Long-Life (Tshe zab mo)*, consisting of a *chülen*<sup>99</sup> practice during which “one eats the sky as food” (*nam mkha' zas su za ba*).<sup>100</sup>

This cycle centered upon Amitāyus also contains a series of special teachings known as the “Precious Oral Transmission for reaching Immortality” (*'chi med tshe'i snyan brgyud rin po che*), which regroups the following works:

1. *The History of the Athlete Reverting Wheel (bZlog byed gyad kyi 'khor lo'i lo rgyus)* for reverting the demonic assistants of the Lord of Death, based on special substances and the visualization of an armor;

2. *The Ritual for Reverting the Lord of Death, known as the Mighty Athlete ('Chi bdag bzlog pa'i cho ga stobs chen gyad kyi 'khor lo)*;

3. *The Drawing Manual of Wheels ('Khor lo'i bri yig)*;

4. *The Allegoric Lamp (describing) the Precepts for Reverting Death ('Chi ba bzlog pa'i man ngag dpe'i sgron ma)*; and

5. *The Practice for Achieving Deathlessness of the Immutable Life-Force (Mi 'gyur srog gi tshe 'chi ba med par sgrub pa)*.

Furthermore, there is a short section of seven minor precepts (*phran bu'i man ngag bdun*) that serve to complete the cycle. These texts are:

1. *The Examination of Death ('Chi ba brtag pa)*;

2. *The Reversal of Death ('Chi ba bzlog pa)*;

3. *The Transformation of Death ('Chi ba bsgyur ba)*;

4. *The Practice of the Long-Life Dhāraṇī (Tshe'i gzungs sgrub)*;

5. *The Dhāraṇī on Boundless Longevity and Wisdom (Tshe dang ye shes dpag tu med pa'i gzungs)*;

6. *The Method for Visualizing the Wisdom Being (Ye shes sems dpa'i bsgom thabs)*; and

7. *The Method for Drawing the Wheel of Long-Life (Tshe'i 'khor lo bris thabs)*.

<sup>99</sup> *bcud len*, extracting the elixir (from an element, flowers, stones, etc.).

<sup>100</sup> In general, this corresponds to the practice defined as the “*Chiülen of the dharma-kāya*” (*chos sku'i bcud len*), which is performed after training in the *saṃbhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya* levels of *bcud len* practice.

#### 4. The Cycle of the Peaceful Guru

(*Gu ru zhi ba'i skor*)

To briefly introduce this cycle, Sétön quotes from *The Root-Listing of the Knowledge-Holders* (*Rig 'dzin rtsa ba'i them*s),<sup>101</sup> saying:

*In the central direction, within the Brown Heart Repository,  
There is a (statue of) the master (in the form) of the Emanation Body  
of the Knowledge-Holder<sup>102</sup>  
And the practice of secret methods.<sup>103</sup>*

The texts included in this cycle are:

1. *The History of the Three Sādhanas* (*sGrub thabs gsum gyi lo rgyus*);
2. *The Listing of the Necessary<sup>104</sup> Root-Practices of the Knowledge-Holders* (*Rig 'dzin rtsa ba sgrub pa'i dgos<sup>105</sup> pa'i them*s byang);
3. *The Precious Blazing Tantra of the Heart Practice* (*Thugs sgrub rin po che 'bar ba'i rgyud*);
4. *The Empowerment of the All-Encompassing Teachings, the Empowerment Ritual of All the Vidyādhara*s (*Rig 'dzin yongs rdzogs kyi dbang chog rab 'byams bka'i dbang*);
5. *The Torma Empowerment of the Body, Speech, and Mind* (*sKu gsung thugs kyi gtor dbang*);
6. *The Great Root-Sādhana of the Vidyādhara*s (*Rig 'dzin rtsa ba'i sgrub thabs che ba*);
7. *The Short Sādhana* (*sGrub thabs chung ba*);
8. *The Contemplative Mindset for Mantric Recitation, the Specific Sādhanas of the Eight Names* (*mTshan bryad bye brag gi sgrub thabs 'dzab dgongs*);
9. *The Lamps Clarifying Experiences and Signs* (*Nyams rtags gsal ba'i*

<sup>101</sup> The quote actually comes from the *Rig 'dzin rtsa ba'i sgrub thabs* (p. 409). In this cycle, the term *rig 'dzin* should be understood as referring to Padmasambhava alone, or as pointing to the entire group (*rig 'dzin yongs rdzogs*) of Vidyādharas, including those of the five Clans (*rigs lnga'i rig 'dzin*), as well as dGa' rab rdo rje, Śrī Siṃha, etc. Therefore, the plural form is sometimes needed when translating the title of this collection.

<sup>102</sup> That is, Padmasambhava in a peaceful form.

<sup>103</sup> *Rig 'dzin rtsa ba'i sgrub thabs*, p. 409: *dbus kyi snying mdzod smug po na: bla ma rig 'dzin sprul pa'i sku: gsang ba thugs kyi sgrub thabs yod*..

<sup>104</sup> I have reluctantly followed the spelling *dgos pa* ("necessary") which may indeed be correct, but I cannot stop thinking that it should rather be corrected to *sgos pa* (individual, distinct) or *dgongs pa* (see next note).

<sup>105</sup> To possibly correct to *dgongs pa* (see text no. 1 in vol. 5: *Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub kyi sgrub pa'i dgongs pa them*s byang).

*sgron ma*);

10. *The Activities* ('Phrin las);
11. *The Tantra* (rGyud);
12. *The Mantric Recitation* ('Dzab);
13. *The Signs and Praises* (rTags bstod);
14. *The Torma Praise* (gTor ma'i bstod pa);<sup>106</sup>
15. *The Ritual for Guiding the Dead* (gNas lung);
16. *The Consecration Ritual known as the Wish-fulfilling Gem* (Rab tu gnas pa'i cho ga bsam 'phel nor bu);
17. *Precepts on Consecration, with Dialogue* (Rab gnas kyi man ngag zhus lan ma);
18. *The Confession and Aspiration Prayer* (bShags pa smon lam);
19. *The Verses of Auspiciousness* (bKra shis);
20. *The Perfection Stage* (rDzogs rim);
21. *The Method for Following a Master, known as the Conduct of a Yogi* (Bla ma bsten thabs rnal 'byor spyod pa zhes bya ba), and
22. *The Activities Collection known as the Garland of Gems* (Las tshogs nor bu'i phreng ba).

### 5. The Cycle of the Great Practices of the Eight Pronouncements

(sGrub pa chen po bka' brgyad kyi chos skor)

This very complex cycle of teachings is introduced by Sétön, using a quote from *The Oral Instructions and Listing of the Eight Pronouncements* (bKa' brgyad kyi them byang zhal gdams), saying:

*The Eight Pronouncements of the Great Practices of Secret Mantras  
Are headed by the two great Tantras, which contain  
One hundred and eight series of teachings on the Development  
Stage,  
And eleven series of teachings on the Perfection Stage.  
Hold them dearly and keep them pure!*<sup>107</sup>

This *Listing* states that there are one hundred and eight texts connected to the Development Stage (bskyed rim), while according to Sétön, there

<sup>106</sup> A praise chanted with a *torma* offering.

<sup>107</sup> *bKa' brgyad kyi them byang zhal gdams*, p. 304: *gsang sngags sgrub chen bka' brgyad la: rgyud chen gnyis kyis* (Sétön's quote [p. 431] reads *kyi thog drangs nas: bskyed rim chos tshan brgya rtsa brgyad: rdzogs rim chos tshan bcu gcig yod: shin tu gces shing dam par bcang* (the original text [p. 304] reads *bcings*):. Here *Dam par* implies to keep these teachings pure (or "noble", "excellent", "higher", etc.), free from proliferations and additions.

are “about one hundred” (*brgya rtsa*). If one follows his own list, this section indeed contains one hundred texts, which he enumerates as follows:

1. *The Oral Instructions and Listing (Them[s] byang zhal gdams)*, i.e., the text just quoted above;
2. *The Tantra of the Great Natural Emergence of the Self-Arisen Wrathful Ones (Drag po rang byung rang shar chen po'i rgyud)*;
3. *The Root-Tantra of the Natural Emergence of the Self-Arisen Regent (rGyal tshab rang byung rang shar rtsa ba'i rgyud)*;
4. *The Precious Tantra on Mantras (sNgags rgyud rin po che)*;
5. *The Preliminaries to (the Great) Activities ('Phrin las kyi sngon 'gro)*;
6. *The Great Activities ('Phrin las chen mo)*;
7. *The Median Activities ('Phrin las 'bring po)*;
8. *The Appendix to the Activities ('Phrin las kyi zur 'debs)*;
9. *The Great Meditational Frameworks (sGom khog chen mo)*;
10. *Extracts from the Praising Records (bsTod byang bkol ba)*;
11. *Extracts on Fulfilling and Restoring (bsKang gso bkol ba)*;
12. *Extracts on Fierce Activities (Drag las bkol ba)*;
13. *Extracts on Strict Conduct (Dam du bkol ba)*;
14. *Extracts from the Daily Confession (rGyun bshags bkol ba)*;
15. *Extracts from the Cursing Records (dMod byang bkol ba)*;
16. *Extracts from the Offering Records (mChod byang bkol ba)*;
17. *The Extensive Ultimate Fulfillment (Don skongs rgyas pa)*;
18. *The Abridged Offerings and Fulfillment (mChod skongs bsdus pa)*;
19. *The Teachings on Longevity and the Teachings on Purification (Tshe lung khrus lung)*;
20. *The General Exhortation to the Blissful Ones (bDe gshegs spyi bskul)*;
21. *The Specific Exhortation to the Messenger (Pho nya dgos (=sgos) bskul)*;
22. *Praises, Exhortations and the Spontaneous Accomplishment of the Four Activities (bsTod bskul las bzhi lhun grub)*;
23. *The Exhortation to Draw the Sword and Strike Negative Spirits (Ral gri phyung rdeg gi bskul)*;
24. *The Condensed Sādhana Similar to a Stem (Dril ba sdong po lta bu'i sgrub thabs)*;
25. *The Extensive Sādhana Similar to a Twig (rGyas pa yal ga lta bu'i sgrub thabs)*;
26. *The Sādhana Similar to a Beautiful Flower (mDzes pa me tog lta bu'i sgrub thabs)*;
27. *The Sādhana Similar to a Ripe Fruit (sMin pa 'bras bu lta bu'i sgrub thabs)*;
28. *The Great Transmission of the Empowerment Flow (dBang gi chu bo babs so chen mo)*;

29. *The Great Root-Practice* (sGrub gzhung chen mo);
30. *The Appendix to the Root-Practice Text* (sGrub gzhung gi zur 'debs);
31. *The Short Manual for Examining the Consort* (Yum brtag pa'i yig chung);
32. *The Short Manual for Enthronement* (mNga' gsol yig chung);
33. *The Arising of Signs and the Method for Taking Siddhis* (rTags byung dngos grub blangs thabs);
34. *The Examination and Reversal of Obstacles and Negative Forces* (Bar chad nyul le brtag cing bzlog pa);
35. *The Complete Songs and Dances for Subjugating Obstacles* (Bar chod 'dul phyir glu bro yongs rdzogs);
36. *The Outer Practice of the Full Immortal Elixirs* (Phyi sgrub 'chi med bdud rtsi yongs rdzogs su sgrub pa)
37. *The Inner Practice of the Complete Long-Life Deities* (Nang tshe lha yongs rdzogs su sgrub pa);
38. *The Secret Practice Similar to a Celestial Vajra* (gSang ba nam mkha' rdo rje lta bur sgrub pa);
39. *The Long-Life Activities* (Tshe'i 'phrin las);
40. *The Praise* (bsTod pa);
41. *The Method for Fully Conferring the Empowerment of Long-Life* (Tshe dbang yongs rdzogs su bskur thabs);
42. *The Complete Practice of the Yakṣa Norlha* (gNod sbyin nor lha yongs rdzogs su sgrub pa);
43. *the latter's Activities* (Phrin las);
44. *The Empowerment* (dBang bskur);
45. *The Fast-Walking Assistant* (Las mkhan myur mgyogs);
46. *The Triple Combination of the Fierce Assistants* (Las mkhan drag po gsum sgril);
47. *The Fire Puja of the Four Activities* (La bzhi'i sbyin sreg);
48. *The Complete Consecration* (Rab gnas yongs rdzogs);
49. *The Instructions on the Transference of Consciousness* ('Pho ba'i gdams pa);
50. *The Cremation of the Corpse* (Ro sreg);
51. *The Complete Activity Stages for (Making) Tsatsas* (Tshwa tshwa las rim yongs rdzogs);
52. *The Complete Purification and Cremation of the Bones of the Deceased* (Tshe 'das rus pa sbyong bsreg yongs rdzogs);
53. *The Weekly Ritual for the Dead* (bDun tshigs gnas lung);
54. *The Dedication of Food* (Zas gtad);
55. *The Minor Teachings on Destroying the Entrance into the Womb* (Lung phran ssubs zhugs bshigs pa);
56. *The Explanation of the Teachings on the Intermediate States* (bar do chos bshad);
57. *The Presentation of Offerings* (mChod 'bul);

58. *The Stirring of the Depths of Hells (Na rag dong sprugs);*
59. *The Water-Torma Offering (Chab gtor);*
60. *The Outer Torma and the Inner Torma (Phyi gtor nang gtor),<sup>108</sup>*
61. *The Secret Torma (gSang gtor);*
62. *The Explanation of the Eight Roots and the One Thousand Branches (rTsa ba brgyad dang yan lag stong gi bshad pa);*
63. *The Complete Exhortation to Obtain Siddhis (dNgos grub yongs rdzogs su bskul ba);*
64. *The Complete Instructions on the Deity (Lha khrid yongs rdzogs);*
65. *The Extraction of Elixirs known as the Ambrosial Garland (bCud len bdud rtsi'i phreng ba);*
66. *The Ordinary Activities Stages, the Great Practice (Thun mong las rim sgrub chen);*
67. *The Tantra of the Garuḍa (Khyung gi rgyud);*
68. *The Empowerment of the Garuḍa (Khyung gi dbang bskur);*
69. *The Sādhana of the Garuḍa (Khyung gi sgrub thabs);*
70. *The Collected Activities of the Garuḍa (Khyung gi las tshogs);*
71. *The Ritual for Bringing Rain (Char 'bebs);*
72. *The Fierce Activities of Za Rāhula (Drag po gza'i phrin las);*
73. *The Complete Descent of Hail and Sleet (sKyin thang dbab pa yongs rdzogs);*
74. *The Complete Protection against Hailstones (Ser srungs yongs rdzogs);*
75. *The Method for Performing Yearly Rituals (Lo chog bya thabs);*
76. *The Protection and Reversal known as the Blazing Meteoritic Iron (Srung zlog gnam lcags me 'bar);*
77. *The All-Gathering Courage in Six Collections of Activities (Thub chod kun gril las tshogs drug pa);*
78. *The Protection and Reversal known as the Ten Collections of Activities of the Red Siṃhamukha (bSrung bzlog seng gdong dmar mo las tshogs bcu pa);*
79. *The Complete Blood and Poisons (Dug khrag yongs rdzogs);*
80. *The Practice Substances, the Examination of the Kapāla (sGrub rdzas ka pā la brtag pa);*
81. *The Examination of the Kapāla and the Taking of the Accomplishments (Ka pā mchod cing dngos grub blangs ba);*
82. *The Source of Entrustment and Reversal (gTod bzlog gi rtsa ba);*
83. *The Great Torma Reversal being the Display of the Wrathful Ones (Khro bo rol pa'i gtor bzlog chen mo);*
84. *Opening the Door for the Torma Offering (gTor sgo dbye ba);*
85. *The Practice of the Mediator (gZu dpang);*

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<sup>108</sup> These are actually two different texts in the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 10, respectively pp. 181-191, and pp. 193-197.

86. *The Nine Eliminations* ('Ded kha dgu pa);<sup>109</sup>
87. *The Ten Minor Activity Rites* (Las phran bcu);<sup>110</sup>
88. *The Fierce Mantras of the Assembly of the Eight Pronouncements* (bKa' brgyad 'dus pa'i drag sngags);
89. *The Practice of Cursing and Fierce Formulas, the Sealing of Formulas* (dMod pa drag sngags kyi sgrub pa sngags kyi rgyas 'debs);
90. *The Extensive and Condensed Prayers to the Lineage* (brGyud 'debs rgyas bsdus);
91. *The Request for Forgiveness and the Aspiration Prayer* (bZod gsol smon lam);
92. *The Small Treatise on Dedication and Auspicious Prayers* (bsNgo ba bkra shis kyi yig chung);
93. *The Root-Text of the Thirty Proud Commanders Protecting the Teachings* (bKa' bsrung dregs pa'i sde dpon sum cu'i sgrub gzhung);
94. *The Activity Manual of the Commanders* (sDe dpon las byang);
95. *Praises and Exhortations* (bsTod bskul);
96. *The Outer Practice consisting in the Preparation of the Dö Ritual* (Phyi sgrub mdos kyi bca' thabs);
97. *The Great Manual of the Dö Ritual* (mDos byang chen mo);
98. *The Inner Practice of the Commanders* (sDe dpon nang sgrub);
99. *The Secret Practice of the Commanders* (sDe dpon gsang sgrub);
100. *The Protective Wheel Against the Eight Classes* (sDe brgyad bsrung ba'i 'khor lo).

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<sup>109</sup> The title appears in several forms, such as 'Dogs kha dgu pa, 'De kha dgu pa, 'Debs pa dgu pa. The translation given here is tentative. The corresponding text in the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs* is the *sGrub pa chen po bka' brgyad kyi 'debs kha dgu dang las phran bcu*, vol. 10, pp. 171-179. It contains wrathful mantric formulas that one should recite in order to get rid of various kinds of obstacle creators. Here Sétön lists the nine works that make up these *Nine Eliminations* as individual texts (which they are not in fact) and enumerates them as: 1. *The Reversal Based on the Astrological Chart of Yama* (gShin rje'i khram kha bzlog pa); 2. *The Reverting Whip of the Matrikās* (Ma mo'i thun kha bzlog pa); 3. *The Reversal of the Gyelpo's Commands* (rGyal po'i bka' nan bzlog pa); 4. *The Reversal of the Malevolence from Nāgas* (Klu'i gdug pa bzlog pa); 5. *Reverting the Harm from the Thedrang* (The brang gnod pa bzlog pa, the brang being a variant of the'u rang); 6. *Reverting the Deceptions of the Tsen* (bTsan gyi shod kha bzlog pa); 7. *Reverting the Insanity Caused by Planet Demons* (gZa'i smyo 'bog bzlog pa); 8. *Reverting the Negativities of the Demons* (bDud kyi gnod pa bzlog pa); and 9. *Reverting the Negativities of the Rākṣasa Demons* (Srin po'i gnod pa bzlog pa).

<sup>110</sup> Following Sétön's list (p. 433), these ten sections refer to: 1. *The Ritual Mending of Infants* (Sri'u gso ba); 2. *The Reversal of Cholera* (Sho kha bzlog pa); 3. *Eradicating the Proximity of Death* (Shi kha gcod pa); 4. *The Taming of Hungry Ghosts leading to Poverty* (bSe rags kha chings); 5. *The Subjugation of Mad People* (sMyo ba 'dul ba); 6. *The Protection Against Hail* (Ser ba bsrung ba); 7. *The Eradication of Diseases* (Nad kha gcod pa); 8. *The Minor Practice of Long-Life* (Tshe sgrub phran bu); 9. *The Protection against Omens Foretelling Sickness* (Nad pa'i sngas srungs); and 10. *The Protection Rite for Curds and Beer* (Zho chang srungs pa).

Now, as to the sections of teachings associated with the Perfection Stage (*rdzogs rim*), Sétön enumerates the eleven following works:

1. *The Heart Drops of Yama* (*gShin rje'i snying tig*), centered on liberation (*sgrol ba*);
2. *The Heart Drops of Padma* (*Padma snying tig*), centered upon Supreme Speech (*gsung mchog*);
3. *The Heart Drops of the Vajra* (*rDo rje'i snying tig*), centered on Supreme Mind (*thugs mchog*);
4. *The Heart Drops of Qualities* (*Yon tan snying tig*), centered on Amṛta [Kuṇḍali] (*bdud rtsi*);
5. *The Heart Drops of Phurpa* (*Phur pa'i snying tig*), centered on activities (*'phrin las*);
6. *The Heart Drops of the Mātrikās* (*Ma mo'i snying tig*), centered upon the path of attachment (*chags lam*);
7. *The Heart Drops of the Master* (*Bla ma'i snying tig*), centered on Knowledge-Holders (*rig 'dzin*);
8. *The Heart Drops of the Arrogant Ones* (*Dregs pa'i snying tig*), centered upon mundane spirits;
9. *The Heart Drops of the Fierce Mantras* (*Drag sngags snying tig*), centered upon cursing (*dmod*);
10. *The Heart Drops of the Quintessence* (*sNying po'i snying tig*), centered on generalities (*spyi dril*); and
11. *The Instruction Manual known as the Transparent Wisdom* (*Khrid gzhung ye shes zang thal*).

In his conclusion to this section on the Eight Pronouncements, Sétön explains that Chögyel Sönam, a tantrika from the Dong clan,<sup>111</sup> wrote a *listing* (*them yig*) of this cycle, noting that the latter was actually unable to clearly identify all the sections of teachings, with their specific subdivisions, etc. Sétön further states that he disagrees with the organization proposed by Chögyel Sönam dividing the texts into a series of nine works,<sup>112</sup> followed by ten shorter works on secondary activities,<sup>113</sup> and a large set of gradual activity manuals associated with specific Tantras. In Sétön's mind, this approach is incorrect.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>111</sup> On this figure, see Valentine, "On the Life of Chos rgyal bsod nams (1442-1509): Unlocking the Mysteries of a Byang gter Master from Mustang," *passim*.

<sup>112</sup> This evidently corresponds to text no. 86, which indeed contains nine sections of teachings.

<sup>113</sup> Corresponding to text no. 87 with its ten inner sections.

<sup>114</sup> Of the slightly fewer than 180 works included in vols. 9-12, about 50 of them are actually listed in Sétön's presentation.

## 6. The Cycle of the Heart Practice of the Guru

(*Gu ru thugs sgrub kyi chos skor*)

The teachings contained in this cycle are included in volumes 6-8 of the *Northern Treasures Compilation*. To introduce his description, Sétön quotes<sup>115</sup> *The Index known as the Blazing Lamp* (*Thems byang gsal ba'i sgron ma*), which provides the original context in which Padmasambhava is said to have hidden the texts that make up this cycle. *The Index* states:<sup>116</sup>

*I, Padmasambhava,  
In continuation of my previous aspiration prayers,  
Have come to the country of Tibet for the benefit of sentient beings,  
And have filled (the land) with teachings, both above the ground and  
underground,  
Hiding one hundred and one Great Treasures,  
As well as ten million minor Treasures.  
Halfway up the rocky mountain resembling a heap of poisonous snakes,  
In a treasure-casket of brown rhinoceros-skin,  
I have hidden one hundred and twenty-one sādhanas (through which)  
One shall obtain the supreme accomplishment.  
There are (also) thirteen essential pith precepts  
And thirteen divine sādhanas, through which  
One shall obtain both the supreme and the ordinary accomplishments.  
(Furthermore,) there are three hundred minor precepts  
For efficiently transforming ordinary circumstances.  
In order to convert the sentient beings of Tibet,  
There are twenty testaments and prophecies.  
The root-teachings of all these  
Is the Heart-practice of Orgyen Pema  
Which has twenty-five sections of teachings.  
In order to clarify all this by means of a narrative*

<sup>115</sup> With slight variations. The translation follows the original *Lamp*, not Sétön's quote of it.

<sup>116</sup> *gTer gyi them byang gsal ba'i sgron me*, p. 30: *padma 'byung gnas bdag gis kyang : sngon gyi simon lam 'phro 'thud nas : bod yul sems can don la 'ongs : sa 'og sa steng chos kyiis bkang : gter chen brgya dang rtsa gcig sbas : gter phran bye ba sa ya sbas : brag ri dug sbrul spungs 'dra'i sked : bse sgrom smug po'i gter sgrom du : sgrub thabs brgya dang nyer gcig sbas : mchog gi dangos grub thob pa'i chos : man ngag gnad tig bcu gsum yod : mchog dang thun mong gnyis thob pa'i : lha yi sgrub thabs bcu gsum yod : thun mong rten 'brel mtha' bsgyur ba'i : phran bu'i man ngag sum brgya yod : bod kyi sems can gdul bya'i phyir : zhal chems lung bstan nyi shu yod : de la chos tshan nyer lnga yod : dang po sngon byung gleng gzhi yis : gsal bar bya phyir lo (p. 31) rgyus yod .:*

*Describing the events of the past, there is the History (of the lineage).*<sup>117</sup>

Sétön's long list contains the following works:<sup>118</sup>

Histories (*Lo rgyus*) clarifying the cycle

1. *The History of the Three Sādhanas* (*sGrub thabs gsum gyi lo rgyus*);<sup>119</sup> and
2. *The Embodiment of the Key Points of the Body, Speech, and Mind in Metaphoric Harmony with the Chest of the Body* (*Byang khog lus dang dpe mthun pa'i sku gsung thugs kyi gnad 'dus*).

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*The Gathering of Secret Jewels in Metaphoric Harmony with the Heart*  
(*Tsitta snying dang dpe mthun pa'i gsang ba rin chen 'dus pa*)

The texts included in this category are:

1. *The Gathering of Secret Jewels* (*gSang ba rin chen 'dus pa*);
2. *The General Maṇḍala for the Sādhana* (*sGrub thabs dkyil 'khor spyi gril [=dril]*);<sup>120</sup>
3. *The Twenty-One Manners of Guiding the Hūṃ* (*Hūṃ gi 'dren thabs nyer gcig*);
4. *The Secret Practice of Dorjé Drakpo Tsel* (*rDo rje drag po rtsal gyi gsang sgrub*);
5. *The Crucial Key Points for Applying Activities in the Secret Practice* (*gSang sgrub las sbyor gnad kyi man ngag*);
6. *The Successive Signs of the Secret Practice* (*gSang sgrub rtags rim*);
7. *The Ritual Practices of the Four Activities* (*Las bzhi'i las tshogs*);
8. *The Method for Visualizing the Protective Circle according to the Heart Practice* (*Thugs sgrub srung 'khor sgom thabs*);
9. *The Mirror Clarifying the Method for Liberating Speech* (*Ngag 'grol gsal ba'i me long*); and
10. *The Method for Generating the Power of Mantric Recitation* (*bZlas*

<sup>117</sup> This final text is *The History of the Adamantine Heart-Practice* (*rDo rje thugs sgrub pa'i lo rgyus*, *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 6, pp. 59-63). Of the nearly 180 works included in vols. 6-8, around 50 are actually listed in Sétön's presentation.

<sup>118</sup> Apparently, the author had in mind a precise organization of the texts, grouping them into several sets. These groups are separated here by a blank line (marked by the siglum —~\*~—).

<sup>119</sup> Sétön states that this text is also known as the *Karma ma le 'phrin las kyi rgyud*, a title that does not appear in the text itself. Rather, it is found in the *Thugs sgrub rtsa ba brgyud pa'i lo rgyus*, p. 53.

<sup>120</sup> Not identified yet under this title.

*brjod nus pa bskyed thabs*);<sup>121</sup>

—~\*~—

*The Eight Lists Enumerating the Key Points*  
(*gNad them man ngag rnam grangs brgyad*)

These texts are intended for entering the Path of Recitations (*bsnyen pa*). This category comprises only the two following works:

1. *The Ten Profound Lists of Key Points* (*Zab mo gnad kyi them bcu*); and
2. *The Method for Taking Siddhis and Seeing Signs at the Time of Mixing Together the Three Doors, the Deity and the Samaya* (*sGo gsum lha dang dam 'dres dus/rtags mthong dngos grub blangs thabs*).

—~\*~—

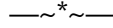
*The Precepts of the Secret Empowerment*  
(*gSang ba'i dbang bskur man ngag*)

The purpose of these precepts is to reveal the Path of Ripening and Liberation to worthy disciples. This category contains the following works:

1. *The Earth Ritual of the Maṇḍala* (*Dal gyi sa chog*);
2. *Drawing the Lines (for the Maṇḍala of) the Heart Practice* (*Thugs sgrub kyi thig rtsa*);
3. *The Sādhana for the Extensive Maṇḍala* (*Dal rgyas pa'i bsgrub thabs*);
4. *The Practice of the Vase Empowerment* (*dBang gi bum sgrub*);
5. *The Great Empowerment Ritual* (*dBang chog chen mo*);
6. *The Water Empowerment of Drakpo Tsel* (*Drag po rtsal gyi dbang chu*);
7. *The Five Empowerments of Compassion through Blessings* (*Byin rlabs thugs rje'i dbang lnga*);
8. *The Serene Ritual for Obtaining the Torma Empowerment* (*gTor dbang thob chog blo bde*); and
9. *The Empowerment Ritual of the Anointment to the Royal Method* (*rGyal thabs spyi blugs kyi dbang chog*).

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<sup>121</sup> This work and the preceding one should certainly be combined into a single text, since the corresponding *gter ma* in the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs* (vol. 6) bears the following title: *gSang mtshan thugs kyi sgrub pa las ngag 'grol nus pa bskyed thabs*. The title *Ngag 'grol gsal ba'i me long* does not appear in the collection, but the expression *ngag 'grol gsang ba'i man ngag* can indeed be found in the text mentioned above (p. 124).



*The Activities of the Fierce Hūṃ (Drag po Hūṃ gi phrin las)*

Texts in this category supplement the offerings presented during approach and accomplishment (*bsnyen sgrub*) and include the following works:

1. *The Great Activities* ('Phrin las chen mo);
2. *The Beacon Clarifying the Meditation Manual* (sGom byang gsal ba'i sgron me);
3. *The Median Activities* ('Phrin las 'bring po);
4. *The Activity Manual for Intensifying the Mantric Syllables* (sNgags tshig spel ma'i las byang) composed by the great Knowledge-Holder;
5. *The Practice Manual Combining Peaceful and Violent Activities* (Zhi drag sbrags ma'i las byang);
6. *The Outline of Activities* ('Phrin las kyi sa bcad);
7. *The Median Listing of Rituals* (Cho ga'i bar them),<sup>122</sup>
8. *Chanting the Praise of the Hūṃ Mantra* (Hūṃ gi 'dzab bstod);
9. *The Praise of Signs* (rTags bstod), composed by the great Knowledge-Holder;
10. *The General Exhortation to the Three Jewels* (dKon mchog spyi bskul);
11. *The General Exhortation to the Blissful Ones* (bDe gshegs spyi bskul);
12. *The Appendix to Activities* ('Phrin las kyi zur 'debs);
13. *The Fire Ritual for the Increasing Activity* (rGyas pa'i sbyin sreg);
14. *The Fire Ritual for the Subjugating Activity* (dBang gi sbyin sreg);
15. *The Preparation of the Implements for the Fierce Homa Rite* (Drag po'i hom chas 'jug);
16. *The Homa Rite known as the Natural Flamboyance of Wisdom* (bSreg chog ye shes rang 'bar);
17. *The Beacon Clarifying the Divination of the Flames* (Me bkra [=pra] gsal ba'i sgron me);
18. *The Activity Stages of the Mantra and the Praise to its Meaning, (performed) in order to Maintain the Continuity of the Morning and Evening Offerings* (Nang nub mchod pa'i rgyun bzung phyir/ Don bstod sngags kyi las rim);
19. *The Precious Tree of Activity Practices, (performed) in order to Establish Happiness in the Realm of Tibet* (Boḍ khams bde la 'god pa'i phyir/ Las tshogs rin chen sdong po); and

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<sup>122</sup> This work and the preceding one are grouped under a single title in the *Byang gter phyogs bsgribs* (vol. 6). The *Cho ga'i bar them* is clearly a short appendix to the preceding *Sa bcad* text (pp. 349-350).

20. *The Precepts for Bringing down the Blessings of Holy Sanctuaries, (performed) in order to Cause the Power of these Places to Arise (gNas kyi nus pa byung ba'i phyir/ gNas chen byin 'bebs man ngag).*

—~\*~—

*The Trainees of Body, Speech, and Mind,  
(performed) in order to Increase (the number) of Trainees  
(Tamed with) Compassion to its Limit  
(Thugs rje'i gdul bya mtha' rgyas phyir/ sKu gsung thugs kyi gdul bya)*

Texts in this category include:

1. *The Profound Precepts of the Heart Practice (Thugs sgrub kyi man ngag zab mo);*
2. *The Fivefold Wisdom that Permanently Suppresses the Five Poisons (Dug lnga gtan 'joms ye shes lnga ldan);*
3. *The Sādhana of Dorjé Namjom Composed by Śrī Siṃha (rDo rje rnam 'joms kyi sgrub thabs śrī siṃhas mdzad pa);*
4. *The Root-Sādhana [of Dorjé Namjom] (rTsa ba'i sgrub thabs);*
5. *The Powerful Purification of Karmic Traces, the Sādhana of Dorjé Namjom (rDo rje rnam 'joms kyi sgrub thabs bag chags stobs sbyong);*
6. *The Activities ('Phrin las);<sup>123</sup> and*
7. *The Crushing of the Gongpo Demons (performed) to Protect Tibet from Internal Warfare (Bod kyi nang rme bsrung ba'i phyir/ 'Gong po ar la gtad pa).*

—~\*~—

*The Precepts for the Powerful Subjugation of the Lord of Diseases,  
(performed) in order to Subdue Earth Imbalances and Plague  
(Sa nad gnyan nad 'joms pa'i phyir/ Nad bdag stobs 'joms man ngag);*

The texts to include in this category are:

1. *The History of the Powerful Subjugation of the Lord of Diseases (Nad bdag stobs 'joms kyi lo rgyus);*
2. *The Dö Ritual of the Powerful Subjugation of the Lord of Diseases, together with Chants and Genealogical Invocations (Nad bdag stobs joms/mdos chog/gyer glu rabs dang bcas pa);*
3. *The Illustrated Wheel of the Black Garuḍa (Khyung nag 'khor dpe);*
4. *The Medical Preparation of the Garuḍa (Khyung gi sman sbyor);*

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<sup>123</sup> I.e., *The Activity Practice of Dorjé Namjom (rDo rje rnam 'joms sgrub pa'i phrin las).*

5. *The Mantra List* (sNgags byang);
6. *The Sādhana and Torma Offering* (sGrub thabs gtor 'bul);
7. *The Protection of the Extensive Vajra Armor* (rDo rje khrab rings kyi bsrung ba);
8. *The Oral Instructions for the Practice of the Medicine Goddess* (sMan gyi lha mo sgrub pa'i zhal gdams);
9. *The Oral Instructions for the Practice of the Medicine Goddess and Curative Treatments* (gSo spyad [=dpyad] sman gyi lha mo sgrub pa'i zhal gdams);
10. *The Medical Source of Curative Treatments* (gSo spyad [=dpyad] sman gyi rtsa ba);
11. *The Precepts for Curing Cancer and Heat Disease* (gNyan tshad bcos pa'i man ngag);
12. *The White Scroll* (Shog ril dkar po);
13. *The Yellow Scroll* (Shog ril ser po)
14. *The Scroll of the Shining Beacon* (sNang gsal sgron me'i shog ril);
15. *The Blue Scroll* (Shog ril sngon po);
16. *The Protection of the Guardians of the Three Clans* (bSrung ba rigs gsum mgon po);<sup>124</sup>
17. *The Method for Protection Against Eye Diseases* (Mig nad bsrung thabs);
18. *The Precepts of the Compassionate Maitreya* (Thugs rje byams pa'i man ngag), which appease inner conflicts;
19. *The Precepts Gathering the Iron Chains* (lCags sgrog 'dus pa'i man ngag), which is practiced for protection against treacherous paths and dangers; and
20. *The Sādhana for Swift-Foot Running* (rKang mgyogs sgrub thabs).

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*The Precepts of the Jewel Mansion*  
(Rin chen khang bu'i man ngag)

The texts belonging to this category aim to cure the weakened elixir of the elements. They are:

1. *The Precepts of the Jewel Mansion* (Rin chen khang bu'i man ngag);
2. *The Method for Protecting Against the Enemy Years of the Elements* ('Byung ba'i lo dgra bsrung thabs);
3. *The Sādhana of the Ṛṣī Amoli* (Drang srong a mo li'i sgrub thabs);
4. *The Precepts [for Handling] the Invisibility Wand* (sGrib shing man

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<sup>124</sup> In the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 7, pp. 35-40, this text and the following one are counted as a single work.

- ngag);
5. *The Protection Against Frost called The Roaring Nāga* (*Sad bsrung nā ga 'brug sgrogs*);
  6. *The Protection Against Frost, the Cloud Ritual* (*Sad bsrung sprin gyi cho ga*);
  7. *The Protection Against Hail known as the Pavilion in Meteoritic Iron* (*Ser bsrung gnam lcags gur khang*);
  8. *The Suppression of Rain, known as the Fire Razor* (*Char gcod me'i spu gri*); and
  9. *The Rain maker, known as Striking the Nāga Key Points* (*Char 'bebs nā ga gnad 'bebs*).

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*The Precepts of the Eight Armors aimed at Protecting  
against Armies and Weapons*  
(*dMag dpung mtshon cha bsrung ba'i phyir/ Go cha brgyad kyi man ngag*)

There are two texts in this section:

1. *The Precept of the Eight Armors* (*Go cha brgyad kyi man ngag*);<sup>125</sup>  
and
2. *The Protection against Weapons, extracted from the Precepts of the Eight Armors* (*Go cha brgyad kyi man ngag las mtshon srung*).<sup>126</sup>

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*The Precious Rain Shower of Collective Activities*  
(*Las tshogs rin chen char 'bebs*)

This section regroups the following works, the practice of which should provide desired qualities:

1. *The History of the Precious Rain Shower of Collective Activities* (*Las tshogs rin chen char 'bebs kyi lo rgyus*);
2. *The Sādhana of the Yakṣa Dzambhala* (*Yagsha'i dzam bha la'i sgrub thabs*);
3. *The Precepts for the Water Offering* (*Chu sbyin man ngag*);
4. *The Torma Offering* (*gTor 'bul*);<sup>127</sup>
5. *The Praise* (*bsTod pa*); and

<sup>125</sup> Corresponding to the *dMag dpung mtshon cha bsrung ba'i phyir go cha brgyad kyi man ngag* them can bcu bdun, *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 7, pp. 231-237.

<sup>126</sup> *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 7, pp. 249-250.

<sup>127</sup> Wrongly spelt *gtod 'bul* in Se ston, p. 438.

6. *The Collective Activities (Las tshogs).*

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*The Outer, Inner, and Secret Long-Life Practices  
(Phyi nang gsang ba'i tshe sgrub)*

These practices are intended to extend the lifespan of the yogi and contain the following texts:

1. *The Outer Practice known as the Precious Vase (Phyi sgrub rin chen bum pa);*
2. *The Inner Practice known as the Iron Tree (Nang sgrub lcags kyi sdong po);*
3. *The Secret Practice known as the Celestial Vajra (gSang sgrub nam mkha'i rdo rje);*
4. *The Innermost Secret Practice known as the Sādhana of the Single Hrīḥ (Yang gsang hrīḥ gcig sgrub thabs); and*
5. *The Key of the Symbolic Script (brDa yig lde mig).*

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*The Secret Practice of the Dākinīs  
(mKha' 'gro gsang sgrub)*

The corpus dealing with the Secret Practice of the Dākinīs aims to bestow all *siddhis* upon the practitioner, as though they were falling like rain. It contains the following texts:

1. *The Secret Practice of the Dākinīs (mKha' 'gro gsang sgrub);*
2. *The Profound Oral Transmission of Vajravārāhī (rDo rje phag mo'i snyan brgyud zab mo);*
3. *The Clarification of the Practice of Vārāhī (Phag mo sgrub pa'i gsal byed);*
4. *The Sādhana of the Four Clans of Vārāhī (Phag mo rigs bzhi'i sgrub thabs);*
5. *The Torma Offering (gTor 'bul);*
6. *The Collection of Activities including Fire Puja (Las tshogs me'i sbyin sreg);*
7. *The Heart Practice of the Female Black One (Nag mo thugs kyi sgrub pa);*
8. *The Method for Drawing a Life-Force Wheel (Srog 'khor bri thabs);*
9. *The Delivery of Dākinīs Provisions (mKha' 'gro rgyags skyel);*
10. *The Method for Accomplishing Foreknowledge (mngon shes sgrub*

- thabs*);
11. *The Minor Points Concerning the Activities of Tröma Nakmo* (*Khros nag gi las kha tshar*);
  12. *The Thirteen Collections of Activities* (*Las tshogs bcu gsum pa*); and
  13. *The Method for Examining the Desires of Disciples* (*Slob bu'i 'dod pa brtag thabs*).<sup>128</sup>

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*The Precious Beacon of the Quintessence*  
(*Yang tig gces pa'i sgron me*)<sup>129</sup>

This category comprises the following works:

1. *The Instruction Manual known as the Precious Lamp*<sup>130</sup> of the Quintessence (*Khrid yig yang tig gces pa'i sgron ma*);
2. *The Guru-Yoga* (*Bla ma'i rnal 'byor*);
3. *The Tantra Establishing the Three Bodies* (*sKu gsum gtan la dbab pa'i rgyud*);
4. *The Profound Transfer of (Guru) Drakpo Tsel* (*Drag po rtsal gyi 'pho ba zab mo*);
5. *The Gradation of the Outer and Inner Signs* (*Phyi nang rtags kyi rim pa*); and
6. *The Root-Tantra of the Fierce Self-Arising Natural Emergence* (*Drag po rang byung rang shar rtsa rgyud*) in 26 chapters.<sup>131</sup>

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*The Prosperity Practice known as the Precious Heap*  
(*Nor sgrub rin chen spungs pa*)

This category contains the following texts:

1. *The Outer Practice known as the Sādhana Relying on Dzambhala's Reliquary* (*Phyi sgrub dzam bha la ga'u la rten pa'i sgrub thabs*);
2. *The Sādhana of the Yakṣa Aparatsita* (*A pa ra tsi ta'i sgrub thabs*), together with:

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<sup>128</sup> Its purpose is to identify worthy and fortunate individuals suitable for authentic transmissions.

<sup>129</sup> Its purpose is to receive the quintessence (*snying po*) of the Heart Practice (*thugs sgrub*).

<sup>130</sup> Se ston blithely alternates various spellings of specific terms, such as *sgron ma* (*Lamp*) and *sgron me* (*Beacon*).

<sup>131</sup> This text is presented by Se ston as the root-Tantra of all these works (*kun gyi rtsa ba'i rgyud*).

3. *The Inner Practice (Nang sgrub)*,
4. *The Sādhana for Promptly Accomplishing the Secret Practice (gSang sgrub myur mgyogs su sgrub thabs)*; and
5. *The Sādhana of the White [Dzambhala] (dKar po'i sgrub thabs)*.

In conclusion of this extensive enumeration of titles, Sétön explains that *The Prosperity Practice known as the Precious Heap* contains six important works made up of two outer practices (*phyi sgrub*), two inner practices (*nang sgrub*), and two secret practices (*gsang sgrub*). To these, one should add *The Innermost Secret Practice of the Heart (Yang gsang tsitta'i sgrub pa)*, as mentioned in *The Index Listing of the Precious Heap (Rin chen spungs pa'i tho byang)*.

*The History of the Powerful Subjugation of the Lord of Diseases (Nad bdag stobs 'joms lo rgyus)* explains that methods for obtaining protection (*bsrung ba*) against illnesses, for reversing them (*bzlog pa*), and for curing (*gso ba*) them are to be found in the *Precepts on the Subjugating Iron Chains (lCags sgrog 'dul ba'i man ngag)*.<sup>132</sup> The author also advises consulting the various works dealing with “mantric weapons” (*sngags kyi mtshon cha*) in order to cure or eradicate severe illnesses such as plague or cancer (*gnyan*), as well as imbalances of the soil (*sa nad*), and so forth. For more general disorders, the yogi should engage in the practice of the Powerful Athlete (*stobs chen gyad*).<sup>133</sup> In the event that frontier armies overflow like water, one should consult the precepts on reverting powerful armies (*stobs chen dpung bzlog gi man ngag*). One may also consult the precepts describing the wheel-amulet against obstructors (*sgrib byed*).

## 7. The Cycle of Vajra Kīla<sup>134</sup>

(*rDo rje phur pa'i chos skor*)

In the system of the Northern Treasures, the instructions on Vajra Kīla (Dorje Phurpa) are divided into three main corpuses, namely:

- the many-colored deities (*lha khra*),
- the black deity (*lha nag*), and
- the divine assembly (*lha 'dus*)

<sup>132</sup> The author refers to an otherwise unknown *lCags sgrog dug sgril*, which must probably correspond to the text referred to here.

<sup>133</sup> This actually refers to a kind of amulet presented in the form of a wheel, with a powerful athlete drawn in the center and surrounded by mantric formulas. This is used to counteract the activities of the Lord of Death (*'chi bdag*).

<sup>134</sup> On the general Phurpa literature, see Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning From the Blue*, pp. 109 *et seq.*

7-1. *The Many-Colored Deities*

The teachings dealing with this first corpus come from the Southern Golden Repository (*lho gser mdzod*) and concern a special form of Phurba Chemchok (*phur pa che mchog*). The deities that are referred to are described as multicolored because the central form and its retinue display various specific colors, hence the designation “many-colored deities.”

To describe this first corpus of Dorje Phurba texts, Sétön initially quotes a source that he calls *The Transmission Line of the Empowerment* (*dBang gi [b]rgyud rim*), which is known in the *Northern Treasures Compilation* as *The Stages of Empowerment, the Stages for Taking the Secret and Precious Siddhis* (*dBang gi rim pa gsang ba rin po che'i dngos grub blang pa'i rim pa*). This work is the first to open the collection of Phurba texts in this *Compilation*. According to Sétön, the Phurba instructions are divided into Tantras (*rgyud*), activity practices (*phrin las*), and empowerment rituals (*dbang*). Quoting the same source, Sétön explains that this section on the Many-Colored Phurba Deities contains fifteen teachings, but he himself lists a noticeably larger number of texts. The first part of his list encompasses the following works:

1. *The Secret Tantra of the Body, which is the Heart [of Dorjé Phurba] ([rDo rje phur pa'i] thugs gsang ba'i sku'i rgyud);*
2. *The Setting of the Perimeter for performing Activity Rituals ('Phrin las kyi mtshams gcod bkol ba);*
3. *The Activities ('Phrin las);*
4. *The Mantric Recitations and Exhortation ('Dzab bskul);*
5. *The Mantric Recitations and Praise ('Dzab bstod);*
6. *The Invocation of the Subtle Methods of the Ten Wrathful Ones (Khro bcu phra thabs kyi bskul); and*
7. *The Treasury of the Precious Empowerment (Rin po che dbang gi mdzod).*

Sétön then adds a second set of works primarily concerned with the practices of approach and accomplishment (*bsnyen sgrub*), which form the core of the Development Stage (*bskyed rim*). He lists:

8. *The Lamp of the Path of the Bodhi (Byang chub lam gyi sgron ma);*
9. *the latter's List of Mantras (sNgags byang);*
10. *The Iron Staff for Severe Retributions (bKa' gnyan lcags kyi ber ka);*
11. *the latter's List of Mantras (sNgags byang);*
12. *The Crucial Index of the Oath-Bound Ones (Dam can gnad them);*
13. *The Wheel that Strikes the Crucial Point (gNad la dbab pa'i 'khor lo);*

14. *The Wheel of the Black Poison* (*Nag po dug gi 'khor lo*);
15. *The Supremely Secret Wheel* (*Rab tu gsang ba'i 'khor lo*); and
16. the latter's *List of Mantras* (*sNgags byang*).

The next series of works addresses wrathful activities generally regarded as black magic. The works listed by Sétön are:

17. *The Horn-Zor* (*Rwa zor*);
18. *The Stone-Zor* (*rDo zor*);
19. *The Fierce Homa* (*Drag po'i sbyin sreg*);
20. *The Methods and Activities of Suppression* (*mNan pa bya thabs*); and
21. *The Ritual Dance* (*Bro rdung*).

Then, Sétön briefly enumerates a series of shorter yogic practices (without providing their titles though) that are intended to benefit the yogi, namely:

22. a long-life practice (*tshe sgrub*);
23. a prosperity practice (*nor sgrub*); and
24. a feast-gathering of food (*za tshogs*).

The penultimate section of works regroups the following texts, which constitute the actual supplements (*kha skongs*) for practice:

25. *The Method for Casting Tsatsas* (*Tsha tsha gdab thabs*); and
26. *The Tantra of Dorjé Phurba's Empowerment* (*rDo rje phur pa dbang gi rgyud*).

Finally, there is a series of additional works (*zur 'debs*) whose titles Sétön lists in extremely abbreviated forms, as follows:

27. *The Visualization of the Body* (*sKu bskyed pa*);
28. *The Invitation* (*sPyan 'dren*);
29. *The Request to Take Seat* (*bZhugs gsol*);
30. *The Prostration Offering* (*Phyag mchod*);
31. *The Praises* (*bsTod pa*);
32. *The Exhortation to the Vidyādhara*s (*Rig 'dzin gyi bskul*);
33. *The Exhortation to the Divine Assembly of the Maṇḍala* (*dKyil 'khor lha tshogs kyi bskul*);
34. *The Exhortation to the Oath-Bound Guardians* (*Dam can srungs ma'i bskul*);
35. *The Exhortation to the Guests for the Leftovers* (*Lhag ma'i mgron bskul ba*);
36. *The Exhortation to the Twenty-Eight Powerful Guardians of the*

- Teachings (*bKa' srungs ma dbang phyug nyi shu rtsa brgyad kyi bskul*); and
37. *The Exhortation to the Twelve Guardians (bSrung ma bcu gnyis kyi bskul)*.

### 7-2. *The Black Phurba*

This cycle concerns the black divine form of Phurba (*phur pa lha nag*). It is designated as such because the central deity and the emanations of his retinue all have a body of black complexion. It basically depends on *The Supreme Awareness of Vajra Kīla (rDo rje phur pa rig pa mchog)*, *The Arch-Quintessence of the Vidyotamala Hundred Thousand Verses (Bhi to ta ma la 'bum sde yang snying)*, and *The Edited Compilation of the Secret Fierce Formulas (gSang ba drag sngags su sdebs pa)*. In the Northern Treasures, the Phurba cycle comes from the Iron Repository (*lcags mdzod*) and is known as the cycle of teachings of the Fierce Formulas of Phurba (*phur pa drag sngags zhes pa'i chos skor*). Their complete list does not appear clearly in the *Indexing Lists (Them byang)*, but it is nevertheless possible to establish the sections of teachings that were directly transcribed from the yellow scrolls (*shog ser*) themselves. Thus, we find:

1. *The History of Phurba's Fierce Formulas (Phur pa drag sngags kyi lo rgyus)*;
2. *The Utterly Secret Tantra of the Black Razor (sPu gri nag po rab tu gsang ba'i rgyud)*;
3. *The Empowerment Ritual of the Black Razor (sPu gri nag po'i dbang chog)*;
4. *The Quintessence of the Heart, the Secret Solitary Form of Phurba (Thugs kyi snying po gsang ba phur gcig ma)*;
5. *The Assembled Source of all Phurbas (Phur pa thams cad kyi rtsa ba 'dus pa)*;
6. *The Source of the Fierce Formulas (Drag po sngags kyi rtsa ba)*;
7. *The Source of the Precious Gathering of Phurba (Phur pa rin chen bsdus pa'i rtsa ba)*;
8. *The Rhinoceros Chest, the Commentary on the Fierce Formulas (Drag sngags kyi ti ka bse sgrom ma)*;
9. *The Vital Razor of Phurba (Phur pa srog gi spu gri)*;
10. *The Activities based on the Fierce Formulas (Drag sngags kyi phrin las)*;
11. *The Use of the Feast-Offering and the Leftovers (Tshogs dang lhaq ma bkol ba)*;
12. *The Praise Blazing like the Fire of the End of a Kalpa (bsTod pa bskal pa me ltar ma)*;
13. *The Condensed Secret Exhortation to the Oath-Bound Guardians*

- (*Dam can bsrung ma'i gsang bskul bsdus pa*);
14. *The Extensive Exhortation (rGyas par bskul ba)* of the latter;
  15. *The Razor Exhortation (sPu gri'i bskul)*;
  16. *The Reversing Torma Rite of the Wrathful Vajra (rDo rje khros pa'i gtor bzlog)*;
  17. *The Analysis of the Path of the Zor offering composed by the Great Vidyādhara*<sup>135</sup> (*Rig 'dzin chen pos mdzad pa'i zor lam dbye ba*);
  18. *The Mediator (gZu dpang)*;
  19. *The Dance (Bro rdung)*;
  20. *The Daily Torma Offering to Dorje Phurba (rDo rje phur pa'i rgyun gtor)*;
  21. *The Daily Activities (rGyun gyi spyod lam)*;
  22. *The Method for Reciting the Approach Mantra (bsNyen pa'i bzlas thabs)*;
  23. *The Seven-Day Ritual Method Performed by way of Phurba (Phur pa'i sgo na bdun tshigs bya thabs)*;
  24. *The Explanation of Phurba (Phur pa'i bshad pa)*;
  25. *The Explanation of the Four Ranges of Phurba (Phur pa ru bzhi'i bshad pa)*;
  26. *The Reverting and Protecting Practices of Dorje Phurba against the Eight Classes (rDo rje phur pa'i sde brgyad bsrung bzlog)*;
  27. *The Anticipating Reversing of Hail (Ser ba'i gdong bzlog)*;
  28. *The Suppressing of the Thirteen Minor Si-Demons with the Phurba Activities (Phur pa las kyi(=kyis) sri chung bcu gsum mnan pa)*;
  29. *The Methods for Subduing Demonic Obstacles (bDud kyī bar chad 'dul thabs)*; and
  30. *The Short Precepts for Subduing Demonic Obstacles (bDud kyī bar chad 'dul ba'i man ngag chung ba)*, and so forth.<sup>136</sup>

### 7-3. *The Divine Assembly of Vajra Kīla*

This divine assembly (*lha 'dus*) groups together all the divine forms associated with Phurba into a single series of practices known as *The Combined Practices of Phurba (Phur pa dril sgrub)*. It actually contains the following works:

- *The Root Combined Practice of Dorje Phurba (rDo rje phur pa'i rtsa ba'i dril sgrub)*;
- *The Tantra of Phurba (Phur pa'i rgyud)*, together with its complementary sections;

<sup>135</sup> Ngag gi dbang po (1580–1639), the Third rDo rje brag rig 'dzin.

<sup>136</sup> This “and so forth” indicates that Sétön has not listed all the texts but contented himself with providing a general list that gives an idea of the contents of this cycle.

- *The Great Activities of the Combined Practice* (*Dril sgrub kyi phrin las chen mo*); and
- *The Small Activities* (*Phrin las chung ba*).

The last two categories of Phurba teachings (i.e., those of the black form of Phurba and the divine assembly of Phurba forms) are extracted from the Central Repository (*dbus mdzod*).



## 8. The Cycle of the Profound Dependent Originations

(*Zab mo rten 'brel gyi chos skor*)

This cycle is also known as the *Seven Teachings on the Profound Dependent Originations* (*Zab mo rten 'brel gyi chos bdun*) and is said to have been found in the Copper Treasury (*zangs mdzod*). It is included in volume 15 of the *Northern Treasures Compilation* (*Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*).

According to the *Index of the Entire Great Empowerment* (*dBang chen yongs rdzogs thams byang*), this cycle contains five main *sādhana*s. This *Index* says:

[1]. *The essence of all subjugations consists in subjugating one's Awareness, for which there is the Sādhana of the Protector Amitābha.*

[2]. *For subjugating the beings of the six migrations, which constitute the field of those to be converted, there is the Sādhana of the Noble Avalokiteśvara.*

[3]. *For subjugating the eight categories of gods and demons, there is the Sādhana of the wrathful Hayagrīva.*

[4]. *For subjugating the Mātrikās and Dākinīs, there is the Sādhana of Vajravārāhī.*

[5]. *For subjugating the Lords of the Desire Realm, there is the Sādhana of Rigdzin Pema.*<sup>137</sup>

These five subdivisions form the main sections of the cycle, each of them comprising a series of individual texts. In the same *Index of the Entire Great Empowerment*, these are listed as follows:

<sup>137</sup> *dBang chen yongs rdzogs kyi thams byang*, p. 8: *dbang sdud thams cad kyi ngo bo rang gi rig pa dbang du sdud pa la/ mgon po 'od dpag med kyi sgrub thabs/ gdul bya'i zhing 'gro drug dbang du sdud pa la/ 'phags pa spyan ras gzigs kyi sgrub thabs/ lha srin sde brgyad dbang du bsdud pa la/ khro bo rta mgrin gyi sgrub thabs/ ma mo mkha' 'gro dbang du sdud pa la/ rdo rje phag mo 'i sgrub thabs/ 'dod khams kyi bdag po dbang du sdud pa la/ rig 'dzin padma'i sgrub thabs dang lnga'o/.*

In the teachings associated with the Protector Amitābha, there are three texts, namely: 1. *The Root Practice that Dispels the Darkness of Ignorance* (*Ma rig mun sel rtsa ba'i sgrub pa*); 2. *The Activity Practice of the Natural Visions of Wisdom* (*Ye shes rang snang 'phrin las kyi sgrub pa*); and 3. *The Collective Activities for Empowerment* (*dBang gi las tshogs*).

For the teachings associated with Avalokiteśvara, there are four texts, namely: 4. *The Sādhana that Liberates Upon Seeing and Subjugates Migratory Beings* (*'Gro ba 'dul ba mthong grol gyi sgrub thabs*); 5. *The Sādhana of the Lord of the World that brings Benefit to Migratory Beings* (*'Jig rten dbang phyug 'gro don gyi sgrub thabs*); 6. *The Liberation Through Wearing* (*bTags grol*); and 7. *The Immaculate Crystal Garland* (*Dri med shel phreng*).

For the teachings associated with Hayagrīva, there are: 8. *The Subjugation of the Arrogant Ones, together with its Collective Activities* (*Dregs pa dbang bsdud las tshogs dang bcas pa*); 9. *The Subjugation of Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa, together with its Collective Activities* (*'Khor 'das dbang sdud las tshogs dang bcas pa*); 10. *The Hrī<sup>138</sup> Activities of the Mighty One* (*dBang chen hrī'i phrin las*); and 11. *The Contemplation of the Supreme Speech, of Hayagrīva* (*gSung mchog rta mgrin gyi dgongs pa*).

For the teachings associated with Vajravārāhi, there are: 12. *The Sādhana of the Red Subjugating One* (*dMar mo dbang sdud kyi sgrub thabs*); 13. *The Sādhana of the Heart of the Black One* (*Nag mo thugs kyi sgrub thabs*); 14. *their collective activities* (*las tshogs*); and 15. *the fire offering* (*me mchod*).

For the teachings associated with Rigdzin Péma, there are: 16. *The Outer Practice according to the Cakravartin* (*Phyi ltar 'khor los bsgyur ba'i rgyal po ltar sgrub pa*); 17. *The Inner Practice according to the Wish-fulfilling Jewel* (*Nang yid bzhin nor bu ltar sgrub pa*); 18. *The Secret Practice of the Heart* (*gSang ba thugs kyi sgrub pa*); and 19. *The Powerful Practice of the Antidote (or The Practice of the Powerful Antidote, gNyen po stobs kyi sgrub pa)*.

(The whole set) thus counts nineteen root-teaching sections.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>138</sup> The correct spelling here should be hrīh.

<sup>139</sup> The quote by Sétön is slightly different from that of *The Index* itself (p. 8 et seq.). Sétön's reading is as follows: *de la mgon po 'od dpag med la/ ma rig mun sel rtsa ba'i sgrub pa ye shes rang snang 'phrin las kyi sgrub pa/ dbang gi las tshogs dang gsum mol spyen ras gzigs la/ 'gro ba 'dul ba mthong grol gyi sgrub thabs/ 'jig rten dbang phyug 'gro don gyi sgrub thabs/ btags grol dang/ dri med shel phreng dang bzhi/ rta mgrin la dregs pa dbang bsdud las tshogs dang bcas pa/ 'khor 'das dbang sdud las tshogs dang bcas pa/ dbang chen hrī'i phrin las/ gsung mchog rta mgrin gyi dgongs pa dang bzhi/ rdo rje phag mo la/ dmar mo dbang sdud kyi sgrub thabs/ nag mo thugs kyi sgrub thabs/ las tshogs/ me mchod dang bzhi/ rig 'dzin padma la/ phyi ltar 'khor los bsgyur ba'i rgyal po ltar sgrub pa/ nang yid bzhin nor bu ltar sgrub pa/ gsang ba thugs kyi sgrub pa/ gnyen po stobs kyi sgrub pa dang bzhi ste rtsa ba'i chos tshan bcu dgu'ol.*

In addition to this series of root-teachings (*rtsa ba*) centered upon the five main deities of this cycle, there is a sub-cycle of instructions connected with the messengers (*pho nya*) assisting (*las mkhan*) these deities. This sub-cycle contains a total of eighty-nine works divided into four parts:

- fifty-six texts centered upon the assistant of Amitābha,
- five works associated with the assistants of both Avalokiteśvara and Hayagrīva,
- seven texts dealing with the assistant of Vajravārāhī, and
- twenty-one works associated with the assistants of Rigdzin Péma.

All in all, the seven teachings (*chos bdun*) that characterize this cycle and give it its name are: 1. the teachings centered upon Amitābha; 2. those dealing with Avalokiteśvara; 3. those associated with Guru Padmasambhava; 4. those centered upon Hayagrīva; 5. those dealing with Lhachen Mahādeva; 6. those associated with Yum Uma Dhewa (U ma dhe ba); 7. and those centered upon Jambhala.

Concluding his description of this cycle, Sétön adds a slightly sarcastic remark, noting that the structure of the cycle can be clearly identified from the listing he has provided, and that confusion will result when consulting other sources.



### 9. The Cycle of the Great Compassionate One Liberating All Migratory Beings

(*Thugs rje'i chen po 'gro ba kun grol gyi chos skor*)

This cycle comprises twenty-three main works that Sétön enumerates as follows:

1. *The History (Lo rgyus)*;
2. *The Tantra That Liberates All Migratory Beings ('Gro ba kun grol gyi rgyud)*;
3. *The Tantra of the Quintessence Increasing Qualities (Yon tan rgyas pa snying po'i rgyud)*;
4. *The Tantra That Naturally Liberates from Passions (Nyon mongs rang grol gyi rgyud)*;
5. its *Sādhana (sgrub thabs)*;
6. *The Tantra of the Natural Clarity of Reality (Chos nyid rang gsal gyi rgyud)*;

7. its *Sādhana* (*sgrub thabs*);
8. *The Great General Structure of the Main Practice Text* (*sGrub gzhung spyi khog chen mo*);
9. *The Outer Practice known as the Activities Liberating All Migratory Beings* (*Phyi sgrub 'gro ba kun grol gyi phrin las*);
10. *The Oral Transmission of the Authentic Principle* (*Yang dag don gyi snang brgyud*);
11. *The Lamp Clarifying the Treatise Guidance* (*Khrid gzhung gsal ba'i sgron ma*);
12. and its *Lineage Prayer* (*brgyud 'debs*);
13. *The Manifest Realization, known as the Wishfulfilling Jewel* (*mNgon rtogs yid bzhin nor bu*);<sup>140</sup>
14. *The Liberation-Upon-Seeing that Subjugates Migratory Beings* (*'Gro ba 'dul ba'i mthong grol*);
15. *The Liberation-Upon-Wearing* (*bTags grol*);
16. *The Immaculate Crystal Garland* (*Dri med shel phreng*);
17. *The Long-Life Practice* (*Tshe sgrub*);
18. *The Homa ritual* (*sByin sreg*);
19. *The Transfer and The Ritual for Guiding the Dead* (*'Pho ba gnas lung*);
20. *The Dedication of Food* (*Zas gtad*);<sup>141</sup>
21. *The Ritual Cremation of the Corpse* (*Ro sreg*);
22. *The Confection of Tsatsas* (*Tsha tsha*);
23. *The Five Applications of Activities* (*Las sbyor lnga pa*); and
24. *The Compassionate Activities Practices for the Beloved Spouse* (*Las sbyor thugs rje brtse ba ma*).

Sétön briefly adds that there are four other short works of the *Liberation-Upon-Seeing* (*mthong grol*) type, which should be appended to the specific texts above dealing with liberation (*grol*).



## 10. The Cycle of the Empowerment to the Bodhisattva Conduct

(*Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod dbang gi chos skor*)

This cycle combines sūtric and tantric representations in a single collection of texts. It is described as having been taught by Śākyamuni to

<sup>140</sup> Texts of the *mngon rtogs* category provide extensive descriptions of a deity—its various forms, emblems, consort, retinue and sanctuary—thus leading the practitioner to a manifest (*mngon*) realization (*rtogs*) of this deity.

<sup>141</sup> For the dead. It is a kind of *sur mchod* practice offering. The difference is that *sur mchod* is performed on a daily basis and not only for the dead.

Ānanda and comprises thirteen works, which Sétön enumerates as follows:

1. *The Precious Empowerment Ritual to the Bodhisattva Conduct* (Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod dbang rin po che'i dbang chog);
2. *The Tantra of the Goddess Mahāmudrā Vipāśyin* (Lha mo phyag rgya chen mo rnam par gzigs ma'i rgyud);
3. *The Sādhana of the Tantra of Vairocana* (rNam par snang mdzad rgyud kyi sgrub thabs);
4. *The Liberation-Upon-Seeing that Reveals the Inherent Contemplation of Vairocana's Body* (rNam par snang mdzad sku'i rang chas dgongs par bstan pa'i mthong grol);
5. *The Dhāraṇī of Precious Qualities* (Yon tan rin po che'i gzungs);
6. *The Ritual of Offerings to the Blissful Ones* (bDe gshegs mchod pa'i cho ga);
7. *The Aspiration Prayer with Intense Yearning* (gDung shugs drag po'i smon lam);
8. *The Distinctions of the causes and results of karma known as the Lamp that Dispels Darkness* (Las rgyu 'bras kyi dbye ba mun sel sgron ma);
9. *The Restoring and Purification of Vows during the Nine Occasions* (Dus dgu'i gso sbyong);
10. *The Benefits of the Daily Rules* (Dus khrims kyi phan yon);
11. *The Ritual for Taking the Vows of the Daily Rules* (Dus khrims blangs pa'i cho ga);
12. *The Antidotal Method for Protecting the Definitive Lifelong Rules* (gTan khrims bsrung bya gnyen po'i thabs); and
13. *The Torma Ritual of the Seventy-Two Glorious Protectors* (dPal mgon bdun cu rtsa gnyis kyi gtor chog).

## 11. The Cycles on the Powerful Lords of the Teachings

### 11-1. The Cycle on Maheśvara and Jambhala

This cycle contains eleven works, namely:

1. *The History* (Lo rgyus);
2. *The Blazing Empowerment of the Precious Power* (mNga' thang rin chen 'bar ba'i dbang);
3. *The Treasury of Jewels Endowed with Six Qualities* (Yon tan drug ldan nor bu'i mdzod);
4. *The Testament known as the Drops of the Heart* (Zhal chems thugs kyi thigs pa);
5. *The Testament of the Master* (Gu ru'i zhal chems);

6. *The Testament of the Dharma King Trisong Détsen* (Chos rgyal khri srong lde btsan gyi zhal chems);
7. *The Testament of the Dakini Yéshé Tsogyel* (mKha' 'gro ye shes mtsho rgyal gyi zhal chems);
8. *The Testament of the Prince Mutri Tsenpo* (Lha sras mu khri btsan po'i zhal chems);
9. *The Lamp Revealing the Religious Law* (Chos khrims bstan pa'i sgron ma);
10. *The Method for Dispelling Obstacles to the Revelation, the Lamp Indexing the Teachings* (Lung byang sgron ma bstan pa'i bar chad bsal thabs); and
11. *The Lamp that Dispels Obstacles on the Path* (Lam gyi gegs sel sgron ma).

### 11-2. The Protectors of Dharma

This cycle regroups five works, namely:

1. *The Tantra on the Entire Dharmapalas and Guardians of the Revelation, in Eight Chapters* (Chos skyong bstan srungs yongs rdzogs kyi rgyud le'u brgyad pa);
2. *The Empowerment Ritual and its Activities* (dBang chog phrin las);
3. *The Fulfillment and Confession* (bsKang bshags);
4. *The Successive Exhortations* (bsKul gyi rim pa); and
5. *The Condensed Secret Exhortation* (gSang bskul bsdus pa).

### 11-3. The Cycle of Gönpö Takzhön

The cycle of this protector contains eleven works:

1. *The History* (Lo rgyus);
2. *The Secret Tantra in Ten Chapters* (gSang rgyud le'u bcu pa);
3. *The Secret Practice of the Excellent Black Razor* (Legs ldan spu gri nag po'i gsang sgrub);
4. *The Wheel of the Practice Session of the Wrathful One* (Drag po thun gyi 'khor lo);
5. *The Index Listing of the Sādhana* (sGrub thabs kyi them byang);
6. *The Quintessence* (Yang snying);
7. *The Activity Sādhana of Takzhön* (sTag zhon gyi sgrub thabs phrin las);
8. *The Fulfillment and Confession* (bsKang bshags);
9. *The Application of the Activities* (Las sbyor);
10. *The Sādhana of the Three Assistants being the Black Mön Brothers* (Las byed mon nag mched gsum gyi sgrub thabs); and
11. *The Exhortation to Takzhön* (sTag zhon gyi bskul ba).

### 11-4. The Cycle of the Guardians of the Teachings

This cycle contains the following works:

1. *The Tantra of Ekadzāti in Nine Chapters* (*E ka dza ti'i rgyud le'u dgu pa*);
2. *her sādhana* (*sgrub thabs*);
3. *The Exhortation to Perform Activities* (*Phrin las bskul ba*);
4. *The Fulfillment and Confession* (*bsKang bshags*);
5. *The Garland of Offerings* (*mChog phreng*);
6. *The Dö rite and its Collection of Activities* (*mDos las tshogs dang bcas pa*);
7. *The Garland of Offerings to the Three Charnel Ground Mātrikās* (*Dur khrod ma mo gsum gyi mchod phreng*);
8. *The Sādhana of Remati* (*Re ma ti'i sgrub thabs*);
9. *The Garland of Offerings* (*mChog phreng*);
10. *The Sādhana of the Seven Powerful Mātrikās* (*dBang gi ma mo bdun gyi sgrub thabs*); and
11. *The Garland of Offering* (*mChod phreng*).

### 11-5. The Cycle of the Treasure Lords

In this cycle, one finds:

1. *The History of the Twelve Tenma* (*brTan ma bcu gnyis la lo rgyus*);
2. *The Sādhana of Kyiingthing, the White Snow Faery* (*Kyiing mthing gangs sman dkar mo'i sgrub thabs*);
3. *The Offering Garland of the Dö Ritual* (*mDos chog mchod phreng*); and
4. *The Minor Points connected to Activities* (*Las kyi kha tshar*).

### 11-6. The Cycle of Dorje Lekpa

This cycle is composed of twelve works:

1. *The Tantra of the Kinkara Treasure Lord* (*gTer bdag gyiing gi rgyud*) in six chapters;
2. *The Sādhana of the Five Kings and Ministers* (*rGyal blon lnga'i sgrub thabs*);
3. *The Sādhana of the Forceful Method* (*bTsan thabs su sgrub thabs*);
4. *The Vital Razor of the Great Kinkara* (*Gyiing chen sgrog gi spu gri*);
5. *The Ten Preparatory Steps* (*Them sbyor bdun pa*);
6. *The Precepts of the Soul-Stone* (*Bla rdo'i man ngag*);
7. *The Method for Obtaining Siddhis from Seeds* (*'Bru'i dngos grub blangs*).

*thabs*);

8. *The Utterly Profound Prosperity Practice* (Nor *sgrub yang zab*);
9. *The Sādhana* (for generating) *Foreknowledge* (mNgon *shes sgrub thabs*);
10. *The Sādhana of the Kinkara* (for developing) *Foreknowledge* (mNgon *shes gyi ng gi sgrub thabs*);
11. *The Garland of Offerings* (mChod *phreng*) including fulfillment (*bskang*) and *Dö* (*mdos*) rituals;
12. praises and exhortations (*bstod bskul*).

### 11-7. The Cycle of Nyenchen Thanglha

This cycle contains the seven following works:

1. *The Sādhana and History Associated with the king Nyenchen Thanglha* (gNyan chen thang lha rgyal po dang 'brel ba'i lo rgyus *sgrub thabs*);
2. *The History of the Secret Practice* (gSang *sgrub kyi lo rgyus*);
3. *The Preparation of the Practice Substances* (sGrub *rdzas bsham pa*);
4. *The Sādhana of the Authorization* (rJes gnang *sgrub thabs*);
5. praises and exhortations (*bstod bskul*);
6. *The Subjugation of Demons Causing Madness* (sMyo 'dre 'dul ba); and
7. *The Garland of Offerings* (mChod *phreng*).

### 11-8. The Cycle of the Tongpön Commander

This cycle comprises four works:

1. *The History* (Lo rgyus);
2. *The Sādhana* (sGrub *thabs*);
3. *The Drawing Manual of Wheels* ('Khor lo'i bri yig); and
4. *The Garland of Offerings* (mChod *phreng*).

### 11-9. The Cycle of Prophecies

Prophetic works are found in four of the Five Repositories, namely: 1. the central Brown Repository, 2. the Conch Repository, 3. the Golden Repository, and 4. the Copper Repository. Note that there are no prophetic text associated with the Iron Repository.

Thus, in the Brown Repository, there is *The All-Illuminating Lamp* (*Kun gsal sgron ma*).<sup>142</sup>

The Conch Repository has the largest number of prophetic texts,

<sup>142</sup> The text is actually entitled *The All-Illuminating Beacon* (*Kun gsal sgron me*) and is included in the *yang gter* version of *The Profound Seals of Vajravārāhī* (*rDo rje phag mo'i zab rgya*), rediscovered by bsTan gnyis gling pa. This version is included in vol. 17 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

including travel guides or guidebooks (*lam yig*), as well as various kinds of listings (*them(s) byang*). Sétön enumerates the following works:

1. *The Great Exhortation* (*bsKul byang chen mo*);
2. *The Seven Listings* (*Them byang bdun pa*);
3. *The General Listing of the Hidden Lands* (*sBas yul spyi'i them yig*);
4. *The Traveling Guide to Drémo Shong* (*'Bras mo gshongs kyi lam yig*);
5. *The Prophecies of the Three Treasuries* (*mDzod gsum gyi lung bstan*);
6. *The Listing of the Seven Hidden Lands* (*sBas yul bdun gyi them byang*);
7. *The Index of the Kyimo Lung Hidden Land* (*sBas yul skyid mo lung gi kha byang*);
8. *The Traveling Index* (*Lam byang*);
9. *The Quintessential Index* (*sNying byang*);
10. *The Lamp Clarifying the Key* (*lDe mig gsal ba'i sgron ma*);
11. *The Essential Dissipation of Obstacles* (*gNad kyi gegs sel*);
12. *The Key Opening the Door to the Sanctuary of Kyimo Lung* (*sKyid mo lung gi gnas sgo 'byed pa'i lde mig*);
13. *The Key Opening the Secret Door* (*gSang sgo 'byed pa'i lde mig*);
14. *The Traveling Guide to Khenpa Lung* (*'Khan pa lung gi lam yig*);
15. *The Index of the Path to Khenpa Lung* (*'Khan pa lung gi lam byang*);
16. *The Compassionate Armor of Loving Kindness (containing) the Precepts for Protection Against Obstacles on the Path* (*Lam gyi bar chad bsrungs ba'i man ngag thugs rje brtse ba'i go cha*);<sup>143</sup>
17. *The Prophecies of Bulé Gang* (*Bu le gangs kyi lung bstan*);
18. *The Great Teaching (regarding) the Prophecies of Riwo Trazang* (*bKra bzang gi lung bstan mdo lung chen mo*); and
19. *The Ten Index Listings* (*Them byang bcu pa*).

The Golden Repository has apparently several works of this nature but Sétön only includes *The Index Listing of the Collective Activities Necessary for Tibet* (*Bod la dgos pa'i las tshogs kyi them byang*).

Eventually, the Copper Repository has four texts on this topic:

1. *The Prophecies about the Mountain Küntuzik* (*Ri kun tu gzigz kyi lung bstan*);<sup>144</sup>
2. *The Explanation about Important Places* (*Sa'i gnad bstan pa*);
3. *The Essential Pearls about All-Seeing* (*Kun tu gzigz kyi gnad tig*); and
4. *The Traveling Guide to the Three Sanctuaries* (*gNas gsum gyi lam yig*).

<sup>143</sup> The Path (*lam*) here refers to the route one takes when traveling.

<sup>144</sup> According to Jay Valentine (email of May 19th, 2026), this might refer to the name of a mountain located near the lake in Ngamring.

### 11-10. The Cycle on the Four Activities<sup>145</sup>

The teachings pertaining to this category are said to be beyond number and to come essentially from the Iron Repository. As we have seen, except for the Dorje Phurpa corpus, most of the texts belonging to this Repository are of an occult nature, and many of them (if not most) were never transcribed, having remained in their original form as untranscribed yellow scrolls (*shog ser*).  
\*

In his conclusion, Sétön explains that some of these sections of teachings (*chos tshan*) can be clearly identified (by consulting the relevant volumes) and are concretely available, while others are still in the form of yellow scrolls (*shog ser*), which means that they have not been transcribed.<sup>146</sup> Still others have been re-hidden as treasures (*yang gter*). He acknowledges that it is therefore difficult to identify some of these texts correctly and to determine their concrete status.<sup>147</sup>




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<sup>145</sup> These activities are those of pacifying, increasing, subjugating, and destroying.

<sup>146</sup> This clearly shows that the process of transcribing these scrolls was spread out over several decades, and that by Se ston's time some still had not been transcribed.

<sup>147</sup> This certainly implies that he himself did not have access to the entire corpus available in his time.

### 3. Recapitulative Tables of Contents of the Northern Treasures Collection

The correspondences listed in the table below are often difficult to establish clearly and are sometimes unsatisfactory attempts since variants in some titles are in specific cases difficult to reconcile. This is not to mention that a number of texts are not listed in the *sNga 'gyur byang gter* 2015 collection, either because they are included under a more generic title page or because they appear as additional short works without an individual title page of their own.

<b>1. The Three Scrolls</b>	
<b>Sétön's List (15<sup>th</sup> c.)</b>	<b>Khenpo Chöying's Contents (2015)<sup>148</sup></b>
1. <i>dGongs pa zang thal gyi rgyud chen</i> 2. <i>rGyud de chung</i> 3. <i>rGyud rtsa ba</i> 4. <i>Kun tu bzang po dgongs pa zang thal gyi sgron ma</i>	Vol. 2 : 1. <i>rDzogs pa chen po dgongs pa zang thal du bstan pa'i bshad rgyud chen po</i> 2. $\emptyset$ 3. <i>Kun tu bzang po dgongs pa zang thal du bstan pa'i rtsa rgyud</i> 4. <i>Kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa zang thal gyi ye shes sgron ma'i bshad rgyud</i>

### 2. The Thirty-Six Oral Transmissions

These are composed of the eighteen ordinary branches (*yang lag thun mongs bco brgyad*) and the eighteen root-series of teachings (*rtsa ba chos sde bco brgyad*).

#### 2-1. The Eighteen Ordinary Branches

These are composed of the Six Precepts (*man ngag drug*), the Six Sādhanas (*sgrub thabs drug*), and the Six Lamps (*sgron ma drug*).

<sup>148</sup> The list of contents of the *sNga 'gyur byang gter chos skor phyogs bsgrigs* has been established by Jay Valentine. See BDRC: <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW2PD17457>.

### 2-1-1. The Six Precepts

These comprise teachings on: 1. *bcud len*, 2. *tshe sgrub*, 3. *rdo rje go khrab*, 4. *sngags*, 5. *grib gos*, and 6. *grogs ngan*.

### 2-1-2. The Six Sādhanas

These *sādhanas* are performed to counter the six kinds of obstacles (*bar chad drug*) that may affect the practice of the Path. These are: 1. the fragmentation of the kingdom and the advent of bandits; 2. the arising of demons destroying the sources of virtues; 3. sickness and epidemics; 4. the exhaustion of merits; 5. circumstances threatening one's life duration; and 6. the coming of 'Gong po demons.

### 2-1-3. The Six Lamps

These are made up of: 1-2. the two Lamps of the body (*lus*), 3-4. the two Lamps of speech (*ngag*), and 5-6. the two Lamps of the mind (*sems*).

## 2-2. The Eighteen Root-series of Teachings

These comprise: 1-6. the Six Profound Seals of Vajravārāhī (*rDo rje phag mo'i zab rgya drug*); 7-12. the Six Oral Transmissions (*snyan brgyud drug*); and 13-18. the Six Expanses of Vajrasattva (*rDo rje sems dpa'i klong drug*).

### 2-2-1. The Six Profound Seals of Vajravārāhī

1. *rNal 'byor lam rim*,  
2. *rTsa gnas lus kyi 'khor lo, rTsa rlung gnad kyi sgron ma, Zab rgya'i dmigs rin, bDe chen gsang sgrub*,  
3. *lTa ba ye shes klong grol*,  
4. *mKha' 'gro'i 'phrin las, mKha' 'gro las rim dus kyi rtsis rgya drug*,  
5. *rDo rje phag mo'i sgrub skor, gSang ba rmad byung gi skor*,  
6. *Thig le'i gegs sel, Man ngag thor bu gsum pa, Zab rgya bsam pa'i zhal gdams nor bu'i phreng ba*

Vol. 3 and 17 :

1. *rNal 'byor sgrub pa'i las kyi rim pa*  
2. *rTsa gnas lus kyi 'khor lo, rTsa rlung gnad kyi sgron ma, dGongs pa zang thal las zab rgya drug gi dmigs rim, bDe chen gsang sgrub*,  
3. *lTa ba ye shes klong grol*,  
4. *mKha' 'gro lde lnga'i phrin las mchod pa'i rim pa, mKha' 'gro ma'i dus kyi rtsis rgya drug gi man ngag*,  
5. *rDo rje phag mo'i zab rgya, gSang ba rmad byung gi chos 'byung gleng gzhi & al.*,  
6. *rDo rje phag mo'i las tshogs las gegs sel, O rgyan gyi zhal gdams nor bu'i phreng ba*

### 2-2-2. The Six Oral Transmissions

These comprise: 1-2. the two Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava, 3-4. the two Oral Transmissions of Vimalamitra, and 5-6. the two Oral Transmission of Vairocana.

#### 2-2-2-1. The Two Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava

These transmissions are those of: 1. the *Cycle of the Natural Emergence of the Self-Arisen Great Perfection* (*Ka dag rang byung rang shar gyi chos skor*), and 2. a section of the *Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* (*Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*).

### 2-2-2-1-1. The Cycle of the Natural Emergence of the Self-Arisen Great Perfection

<p>The eight precepts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Zhus lan gnad kyi yi ge,</i></li> <li>2. <i>Zhal chems rin chen gzer bu,</i></li> <li>3. <i>Ma rig mun sel sgron ma,</i></li> <li>4. <i>sNying po bsdus pa rig pa'i dbang,</i></li> <li>5. <i>gNad tig zhal gdams zab mo'i them,</i></li> <li>6. <i>Ngo sprod rang rig rang gsal,</i></li> <li>7. <i>Gegs sel nor bu ratna'i bang mdzod,</i></li> <li>8. <i>Man ngag gsal ba'i sgron ma.</i></li> </ol>	<p>Vol. 3:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Zhus lan gnad kyi yi ge shar dung mdzod nas byon pa</i></li> <li>2. <i>Zhal chems rin chen gzer bu zhes bya ba</i></li> <li>3. <i>Ma rig mun sel sgron me</i></li> <li>4. <i>sNying po bcud bsdus rig pa'i dbang</i></li> <li>5. <i>Zab mo gnad kyi them bcu (missing pp. 146-148)</i></li> <li>6. <i>Ngo sprod rang rig rang gsal</i></li> <li>7. <i>Gegs sel nor bu'i bang mdzod</i></li> <li>8. <i>rDzogs pa chen po rang byung rang shar gyi rgyud las byung ba'i man ngag gsal ba'i sgron ma</i></li> </ol>
<p>The two tantras</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Kun grol rdo rje sems dpa'i rgyud,</i></li> <li>2. <i>Rang byung rang shar rtsa ba'i rgyud</i></li> </ol>	<p>Vol. 3:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Kun grol rdo rje sems dpa'i rgyud</i></li> <li>2. <i>rDzogs pa chen po rang byung rang shar gyi rgyud</i></li> </ol>

### 2-2-2-1-2. The Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra 2-2-2-1-2-1. The Root Oral Transmission of Padmasambhava

All the works listed by Sétön are available in the Chöying 2015 edition, although some have slightly different titles. Chöying 2015 also has extra works that are not listed by Sétön.

1. *sNyan brgyud drug gi them byang*; 2. *sNgon 'gro*; 3. *Khog dbub*; 4. *rTsol med kyi theg pa ston pa zab mo chos kyi lung byang*; 5. *gSang sngags kyi bstan pa rnam gsum gyi chos 'byung*; 6. *sKye med ma bcos rang byung gi rgyud*; 7. *dGongs pa zang thal gyi khrid yig*; 8. *gNad kyi yi ge*; 9. *rTags kyi yi ge*; 10. *Tshad kyi yi ge*; 11. *Padma'i bka' yig dang po*; 12. *Zhi khro'i 'phrin las*; 13. *gNas lung*; 14. *Rigs lnga'i mchod 'bul*; 15. *rTsol byas dbang gi dbye ba*; 16. *sPros bcas*; 17. *sPros med shin tu spros med*; 18. *Rab tu spros med*; 19. *Ngo sprod nyer gcig pa*; 20. *Yang dag don gyi snyan brgyud*; 21. *Thugs kyi dgongs pa yi ge med pa'i snyan brgyud*; 22. *Yi ge med pa go cha tshang ma*; 23. *sNyan brgyud rin po che'i phreng ba*; 24. *Rig pa'i rtsal dbang*; 25. *rTsal dbang gi 'grel pa*; 26. *sNyan brgyud gnad du dril ba'i man ngag le'u gsum ma*; 27. *Ye shes sngon [= mngon] du bstan pa'i snyan brgyud*; 28. *Lung byang ye shes thugs kyi lde mig*; 29. *Lung byang rin po che'i phreng ba*; 30. *Gang zag rab 'bring gsum gyi grol tshul*; 31. *rGyal thabs spyi blug gi dbang*; 32. *rTsa gsum rin chen sgron ma*; and 33. *sNyan brgyud kyi gtad rgya*.

### 2-2-2-1-2-2. The Two Oral Transmissions of Vimalamitra

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>'Grel tig chen mo</i>;</li> <li>2. Second Oral Transmission comprising: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2-1. <i>dBang thog ma</i>;</li> <li>2-2. <i>The Quintessential Empowerment of the Heart (sNying po thugs kyi dbang)</i>;</li> <li>2-3. <i>The Lamp Summarizing Mind Itself (Sems nyid bsdus pa'i sgron ma)</i>; and</li> <li>2-4. <i>The Nail of the Instruction Manual (Khrid yig gzer bu)</i>.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>'Grel tig chen mo</i>;</li> <li>2-1. Possibly the <i>rig pa'i rtsal dbang</i> as suggested by vol. 1, p. 394.2.</li> <li>2-2. <i>sNying po thugs kyi dbang</i></li> <li>2-4. This corresponds to the three <i>khrid yig</i> of Vimalamitra included in vol. 2 under separate titles (<i>Khrid yig dang po</i>, <i>Khrid yig gnyis pa</i>,</li> </ol>
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	etc.).
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### 2-2-2-1-2-3. The Two Oral Transmissions of Vairocana

<p>The first transmission is divided into three parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>sNyan brgyud dang po</i>;</li> <li>2. <i>Bar pa</i>;</li> <li>3. <i>Phyi ma</i>.</li> </ol> <p>The second transmission contains two works which have <i>Thugs rgyud</i> in their titles. See in the right column.</p>	<p>These two transmissions are included in the 2015 edition, in-between vol. 1 and 2.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>sNyan brgyud dang po</i>, in vol. 1.</li> <li>2. <i>sNyan brgyud bar pa</i>, in vol. 2</li> <li>3. <i>sNyan brgyud phyi ma</i>, in vol. 2.</li> </ol> <p>- <i>Bee ro tsa na'i thugs rgyud gnyis pa</i>, in vol. 2.  - <i>rDzogs pa chen po'i man ngag bee ro'i thugs rgyud zab mo</i>, in vol. 2.</p>
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### 2-2-3. The Six Expanses of Vajrasattva's Heart

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Sems dang rig pa dbye ba'i rgyud</i>;</li> <li>2. <i>Rig pa rang gsal gyi rgyud</i>;</li> <li>3. <i>Ye shes rang la gnas kyi rgyud</i>;</li> <li>4. <i>Ye shes chen po bstan pa'i rgyud</i>;</li> <li>5. <i>dGongs pa rang shar gyi rgyud</i>;</li> <li>6. <i>Bar do rang snang gi rgyud</i>.</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;">Additional Tantras</p> <p><i>'Khrul pa sems kyi rgyud</i>;  <i>'Khrul pa'i sems dang rig pa dbye ba'i rgyud</i>;  <i>Rin po che phreng ba'i rgyud</i>;  <i>Ye shes rang shar gyi rgyud</i>;  <i>Sangs rgyas ngo sprod kyi rgyud</i>;  <i>bTags grol gyi rgyud byung tshul</i>;  <i>dBang btags grol yid bzhin nor bu</i>;</p> <p><i>Sangs rgyas sras gcig gi rgyud</i>;  <i>dGa' ldan gsungs pa'i 'das rjes dang po</i>;  <i>gNyis pa</i>;  <i>gSum pa</i>;  <i>mThong grol che chung</i>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Appended cycle of the gSang ba rmad byung</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Chos 'byung</i> or <i>gSang ba rmad byung gi chos 'byung gleng gzhi</i>;</li> <li>2. <i>dBang lde mig</i> or <i>gSang ba rmad byung gi lde mig</i>;</li> <li>3. <i>gSang ba rmad du byung ba'i dbang zab mo spros med don gyi dbang chog</i>;</li> <li>4. <i>Log gnon le'u lnga pa</i> or <i>gSang ba rmad du byung ba'i log gnon</i>;</li> <li>5. <i>'Phags pa zab mo'i lung bdun</i>;</li> <li>6. <i>Bla ma'i rnal 'byor brgyud 'debs dang bcas pa</i> or <i>gSang ba rmad byung gi bla ma'i rnal 'bor brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs</i>.</li> </ol>	<p>Vol. 2: 1. <i>Sems dang rig pa dbye ba'i bshad rgyud</i>;  2. <i>Rig pa rang gsal gyi rgyud</i>; 3. <i>Ye shes rang la gnas pa'i rtsa ba'i rgyud</i>; 4. <i>Ye shes chen po bstan pa'i phyi ma rgyud</i>.  Vol. 16: 5. <i>Klong chen dgongs pa rang shar gyi rgyud</i> (this tantra actually belongs to a completely different cycle, namely the <i>rDor sems thugs kyi me long</i> and it is not part of the <i>dGongs pa zang thal</i>).  Vol. 2: 6. <i>Bar do rang snang gi rgyud</i>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Additional Tantras</p> <p>Vol. 2: <i>Rin chen phreng ba'i rgyud</i>.  Vol. 2: <i>dPal kun tu bzang po'i man ngag btags grol byung tshul</i>.  Vol. 1: <i>bTags grol gyi dbang</i>.  Vol. 2: <i>Sangs rgyas thams cad kyi sras gcig pa'i rgyud</i>.  Vol. 2: <i>Yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po sangs rgyas kyi 'das rjes gsum pa</i>.  Vol. 2: <i>rDzogs pa chen po'i mthong grol rin po che</i> and <i>Gong ma mthong grol dpe ris dang man ngag bcas</i>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cycle of the gSang ba rmad byung (vol. 3)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>gSang ba rmad byung gi chos 'byung gleng gzhi</i>;</li> <li>2. <i>gSang ba rmad byung gi lde mig</i>;</li> <li>3. <i>gSang ba rmad du byung ba'i dbang zab mo spros med kyi dbang chog</i>;</li> <li>4. <i>gSang ba rmad du byung ba'i log gnon</i>;</li> <li>6. <i>brGyud 'debs utpala'i chu rgyun</i> and <i>gSang ba</i></li> </ol>
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<p style="text-align: center;">Additional <i>man ngag</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Khug pa lnga'i man ngag</i>;</li> <li>2. <i>Zhi khro lhun grub ma</i> or <i>Zhi khro lhun grub kyi 'phrin las</i>;</li> <li>3. <i>'Chi kha'i ngo sprod</i>; and</li> <li>4. <i>rDzogs chen bskyed rim</i>.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;">Additional <i>man ngag</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Khug pa lnga'i gdams pa</i> (vol. 3);</li> <li>2. <i>Zhi khro lhun grub kyi 'phrin las</i> (vol. 1).</li> </ol> <p>Works nos. 3 and 4 do not seem to appear in the 2015 edition.</p>
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### 3. The Cycle of Amitāyus in his Saṃbhogakāya Form

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Tshe sgrub</i>; 2. <i>Phyi sgrub bdud rtsi'i bcud len</i>;</li> <li>3. <i>dBang bskur</i>; 4. <i>bDud rtsi sbyar thabs</i>.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>'Od dpag med ye shes rang gsal gyi sgrub thabs</i> (vol. 15).</li> <li>- <i>bDud rtsi 'khyil ba 'chi med tshe'i rgyud don 'chi bdag bzlog pa'i cho ga rten 'brel gnad kyi 'khor lo</i> (vol. 33).</li> <li>- <i>Tshe'i snyan brgyud</i> (vol. 8)</li> <li>- <i>Tshe'i 'khor lo bri thabs</i> (vol. 7).</li> </ul>
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### 4. The Cycle of the Peaceful Guru

<p>The texts listed in this category make up the <i>Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub</i>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>sGrub thabs gsum gyi lo rgyus</i>;</li> <li>2. <i>Rig 'dzin rtsa ba sgrub pa'i dgos pa'i them byang</i>;</li> <li>3. <i>Thugs sgrub rin po che 'bar ba'i rgyud</i>;</li> <li>4. <i>Rig 'dzin yongs rdzogs kyi dbang chog rab 'byams bka'i dbang</i>;</li> <li>5. <i>sKu gsung thugs kyi gtor dbang</i>;</li> <li>6. <i>Rig 'dzin rtsa ba'i sgrub thabs che ba</i>;</li> <li>7. <i>sGrub thabs chung ba</i>;</li> <li>8. <i>mTshan brgyad bye brag gi sgrub thabs 'dzab dgongs</i>;</li> <li>9. <i>Nyams rtags gsal ba'i sgron ma</i>;</li> <li>10. <i>'Phrin las</i>;</li> <li>11. <i>rGyud</i>;</li> <li>12. <i>'Dzab</i>;</li> <li>13. <i>rTags bstod</i>;</li> <li>14. <i>gTor ma'i bstod pa</i>;</li> <li>15. <i>gNas lung</i>;</li> <li>16. <i>Rab tu gnas pa'i cho ga bsam 'phel nor bu</i>;</li> <li>17. <i>Rab gnas kyi man ngag zhus lan ma</i>;</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Possibly <i>sGrub thabs gsum gyi lo rgyus</i> (vol. 6) although it is from the <i>Thugs sgrub</i>.</li> <li>2. <i>Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub kyi sgrub pa'i dgongs pa them byang</i> (vol. 5)</li> <li>4. <i>Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub rig 'dzin yongs rdzogs kyi dbang chog rab 'byams bka' dbang</i> (vol. 5)</li> <li>5. <i>Rig 'dzin bla ma'i gdung sgrub las sku gsung thugs kyi gtor dbang</i> (vol. 5)</li> <li>6. <i>Rig 'dzin rtsa ba'i sgrub thabs</i> (vol. 5)</li> <li>7. <i>Zhi ba'i rtsa ba'i sgrub thabs</i> (vol. 5)</li> <li>8. <i>Bla ma rig 'dzin gdung sgrub kyi bye brag mtshan brgyad du sgrub thabs</i> (vol. 5)</li> <li>9. <i>Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub kyi nyams rtags gsal ba'i sgron me</i> (vol. 5)</li> <li>10. <i>Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub kyi 'phrin las</i> (vol. 5)</li> <li>11. <i>Rig 'dzin 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud</i> (vol. 5)</li> <li>12. <i>Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub kyi 'dzab dgongs</i> (vol. 5)</li> <li>13. <i>Slob dpon padma rtags bstod</i> (vol. 5)</li> <li>14. <i>Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub gtor ma'i bstod pa</i> (vol. 5)</li> <li>15. <i>Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub kyi gnas lung</i> (vol. 5)</li> <li>16. <i>Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub rab tu gnas pa'i cho ga bse sgrom smug po nas byon pa</i> (vol. 5)</li> </ol>
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<p>18. <i>bShags pa smon lam</i>;</p> <p>19. <i>bKra shis</i>;</p> <p>20. <i>rDzogs rim</i>;</p> <p>21. <i>Bla ma bsten thabs rnal 'byor spyod pa zhes bya ba</i>;</p> <p>22. <i>Las tshogs nor bu'i phreng ba</i>.</p>	<p>18. <i>Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub kyi bshags pa smon lam bkra shis rnam</i> (vol. 5)</p> <p>19. See above in #18.</p> <p>22. <i>Bla ma rig 'dzin yongs rdzogs nor bu'i phreng ba</i> (vol. 5)</p>
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## 5. The Cycle of the Great Practices of the Eight Pronouncements

<p>The two root-tantras of this cycle are:</p> <p>1. <i>Drag po rang byung rang shar chen po'i rgyud kyi rgyal po</i> and</p> <p>2. <i>rGyal tshab rang byung rang shar rtsa ba'i rgyud</i>.</p> <p>I do not reproduce here the list of the 100 works dealing with the Development Stage (<i>bskyed rim</i>); see next column.</p> <p>The 11 texts explaining the Perfection Stage (<i>rdzogs rim</i>) are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>gShin rje'i snying tig</i>;</li> <li>2. <i>Padma snying tig</i>;</li> <li>3. <i>rDo rje'i snying tig</i>;</li> <li>4. <i>Yon tan snying tig</i>;</li> <li>5. <i>Phur pa'i snying tig</i>;</li> <li>6. <i>Ma mo'i snying tig</i>;</li> <li>7. <i>Bla ma'i snying tig</i>;</li> <li>8. <i>Dregs pa'i snying tig</i>;</li> <li>9. <i>Drag sngags snying tig</i>;</li> <li>10. <i>sNying po'i snying tig</i>; and</li> <li>11. <i>Khrid gzhung ye shes zang thal</i>.</li> </ol>	<p>1. <i>Drag po rang byung rang shar chen po'i rgyud kyi rgyal po</i> (vol. 9)</p> <p>2. <i>sGrub chen bka' brgyad rtsa ba'i rgyud rgyal tshab rang byung rang shar bsam 'phel nor bu</i> (vol. 9).</p> <p>The texts on the Development Stage are contained for the most part in volumes 9-10. The entire <i>bKa' brgyad rang byung rang shar</i> covers volumes 9-12.</p> <p>Only two works belonging to the <i>rdzogs rim</i> category can be easily identified with those of the list on the left column:</p> <p>2. <i>Padma snying tig</i>, and</p> <p>11. <i>sGrub chen bka' brgyad kyi rdzogs rim khrid gzung ye shes zang thal chen po</i>, vol. 10.</p>
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## 6. The Cycle of the Heart Practice of the Guru

<p>As stated above, the teachings that constitute this cycle are included in volumes 6-8 of the <i>Northern Treasures Compilation</i>. These instructions are divided into 14 main subdivisions, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Lo rgyus</i> (vol. 6)</li> <li>2. <i>Rin chen 'dus pa</i> (vol. 6)</li> <li>3. <i>gNas them rnam grangs brgyad</i> (vol. 6)</li> <li>4. <i>gSang ba'i dbang bskur</i> (vol. 6)</li> <li>5. <i>Drag po Hūṃ gi phrin las</i> (vol. 6)</li> <li>6. <i>sKu gsung thugs kyi gdul bya</i> (vol. 6)</li> <li>7. <i>Nad bdag stobs 'joms</i> (vol. 6)</li> <li>8. <i>Rin chen khang bu'i man ngag</i> (vol. 7)</li> <li>9. <i>Go cha brgyad</i> (vol. 7)</li> <li>10. <i>Las tshogs rin chen char 'bebs</i> (vol. 7)</li> <li>11. <i>Phyi nang gsang ba'i tshes sgrub</i> (vol. 7)</li> <li>12. <i>mKha' 'gro gsang sgrub</i> (vol. 7)</li> <li>13. <i>Yang tig gces pa'i sgron me</i> (vol. 7)</li> </ol>
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14. *Nor sgrub rin chen spungs pa* (vol. 8).

## 7. The Cycle of Vajra Kīla

As seen in the general presentation above, the teachings of Dorjé Phurpa are divided into three categories contained in volume 13 of the *Northern Treasures Compilation*. The three categories are:

### 7-1. The Many-Colored Deities

1. *Phur pa lha khra* (vol. 13)

### 7-2. The Black Phurpa

2. *Phur pa lha nag* (vol. 13)

### 7-3. The Divine Assembly of Vajra Kīla

3. *Phur pa lha 'dus* (vol. 13)

## 8. The Cycle of the Profound Dependent Originations

In this cycle, there are five main subdivisions made of root-texts (*rtsa ba*) as well as a series of 89 complementary works associated with them.

### I. Amitābha

1. *Ma rig mun sel rtsa ba'i sgrub pa;*
2. *Ye shes rang snang 'phrin las kyi sgrub pa;*
3. *dBang gi las tshogs.*

### II. Avalokiteśvara

4. *'Gro ba 'dul ba mthong grol gyi sgrub thabs;*
5. *'Jig rten dbang phyug 'gro don gyi sgrub thabs;*
6. *bTāgs grol;*
7. *Dri med shel phreng.*

### III. Hayagrīva

8. *Dregs pa dbang bsduḍ las tshogs dang bcas pa;*
9. *'Khor 'das dbang sduḍ las tshogs dang bcas pa;*
10. *dBang chen hri'i phrin las;*
11. *gSung mchog rta mgrin gyi dgongs pa.*

### IV. Vajravārāhī

12. *dMar mo dbang sduḍ kyi sgrub thabs;*
13. *Nag mo thugs kyi sgrub thabs;*
14. *Las tshogs;*
15. *Me mchod.*

The majority of the works belonging to this cycle are not available in the 2015 edition for comparison.

8. *Dregs pa dbang bsduḍ* (vol. 15)
9. *rTa mgrin 'khor 'das dbang sduḍ kyi sgrub thabs las tshogs dang bcas pa* (vol. 15)

12. *dMar mo dbang bsduḍ kyi sgrub thabs* (vol. 7)
13. *rDo rje khros ma nag mo gsang ba'i thugs kyi sgrub thabs* (vol. 7)
14. *Las tshogs me'i sbyin sreg* (vol. 7)

<p>V. Rigdzin Pema  16. <i>Phyi ltar 'khor los bsgyur ba'i rgyal po ltar sgrub pa;</i>  17. <i>Nang yid bzhin nor bu ltar sgrub pa;</i>  18. <i>gSang ba thugs kyi sgrub pa;</i>  19. <i>gNyen po stobs kyi sgrub pa.</i></p>	<p>18. <i>Gu ru gsang thugs kyi sgrub pa'i las mtha'</i> (vol. 8)  19. <i>O rgyan padma'i sgrub pa ngyen po stobs kyi sgrub pa.</i></p>
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## 9. The Cycle of the Great Compassionate One Liberating All Migratory Beings

<p>Most works are to be found in volume 4</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Lo rgyus;</i></li> <li>2. <i>'Gro ba kun grol gyi rgyud;</i></li> <li>3. <i>Yon tan rgyas pa snying po'i rgyud;</i></li> <li>4. <i>Nyon mongs rang grol gyi rgyud;</i></li> <li>5. <i>its Sādhana (sgrub thabs);</i></li> <li>6. <i>Chos nyid rang gsal gyi rgyud;</i></li> <li>7. <i>its Sādhana (sgrub thabs);</i></li> <li>8. <i>sGrub gzhung spyi khog chen mo;</i></li> <li>9. <i>Phyi sgrub 'gro ba kun grol gyi phrin las;</i></li> <li>10. <i>Yang dag don gyi snang brgyud;</i></li> <li>11. <i>Khrid gzhung gsal ba'i sgron ma;</i></li> <li>12. <i>brGyud 'debs;</i></li> <li>13. <i>mNgon rtogs yid bzhin nor bu;</i></li> <li>14. <i>'Gro ba 'dul ba'i mthong grol;</i></li> <li>15. <i>bTags grol;</i></li> <li>16. <i>Dri med shel phreng;</i></li> <li>17. <i>Tshe sgrub;</i></li> <li>18. <i>sByin sreg;</i></li> <li>19. <i>'Pho ba gnas lung;</i></li> <li>20. <i>Zas gtad;</i></li> <li>21. <i>Ro sreg;</i></li> <li>22. <i>Tsha tsha;</i></li> <li>23. <i>Las sbyor lnga pa;</i></li> <li>24. <i>Las sbyor thugs rje brtse ba ma.</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Byang gter 'gro ba kun grol gyi lo rgyus</i> (vol. 56)</li> <li>2. <i>Thugs rje chen po yid bzhin nor bu 'gro ba kun grol gyi rgyud</i> (vol. 4)</li> <li>3. <i>Thugs rje chen po yid bzhin nor bu 'gro ba kun grol gyi yon tan rgyas pa snying po thugs kyi rgyud</i> (vol. 4)</li> <li>4. <i>'Gro ba kun grol gyi nyon mongs rang grol gyi rgyud</i> (vol. 4)</li> <li>5. <i>Nyon mongs rang grol gyi rgyud kyi sgrub thabs</i> (vol. 4)</li> <li>6. <i>'Gro ba kun grol chos nyid rang gsal gyi rgyud</i> (vol. 4)</li> <li>7. <i>Chos nyid rang gsal gyi sgrub thabs</i> (vol. 4)</li> <li>8. <i>sGrub chen spyi khog chen mo</i> (vol. 4)</li> <li>9. <i>Phyi sgrub thugs rje chen po bsnyen thabs</i> (vol. 4)</li> <li>11. <i>Khrid gzhung gsal ba'i sgron me</i> (vol. 4)</li> <li>12. <i>'Gro ba kun grol gyi brgyud 'debs</i> (vol. 4)</li> <li>13. <i>mNgon rtogs yid bzhin nor bu</i> (vol. 4)</li> <li>17. <i>Thugs rje chen po'i tshe sgrub</i> (vol. 4)</li> <li>18. <i>'Gro ba kun grol gyi sbyin sreg</i> (vol. 4)</li> <li>19. <i>gNas lung gi cho ga</i> (vol. 4)</li> <li>20. <i>Zas gtad</i> (vol. 4)</li> <li>21. <i>Ro sreg</i> (vol. 4)</li> <li>22. <i>Tsha tsha las rim</i> (vol. 4)</li> <li>23. <i>'Gro don las sbyor lnga pa</i> (vol. 4)</li> <li>24. <i>Las sbyor thugs rje rtse gcig ma</i> (vol. 4)</li> </ol>

## 10. The Cycle of the Empowerment to the Bodhisattva Conduct

<p>This cycle is made of thirteen texts listed as follows by Sétön:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod dbang rin po che'i dbang chog;</i></li> <li>2. <i>Lha mo phyag rgya chen mo rnam par gzigs ma'i rgyud;</i></li> <li>3. <i>rNam par snang mdzad rgyud kyi sgrub thabs;</i></li> <li>4. <i>rNam par snang mdzad sku'i rang chas dgongs</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod dbang rin po che'i dbang chog</i> (vol. 14)</li> <li>2. <i>Lha mo phyag rgya chen mo rnam par gzigs ma'i rgyud</i> (vol. 14)</li> <li>3. <i>rNam par snang mdzad rgyud kyi sgrub thabs</i> (vol. 14)</li> <li>4. <i>rNam par snang mdzad sku'i rang chas dgongs</i></li> </ol>
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<p><i>par bstan pa'i mthong grol;</i>  5. <i>Yon tan rin po che'i gzungs;</i>  6. <i>bDe gshegs mchod pa'i cho ga;</i>  7. <i>gDung shugs drag po'i smon lam;</i>  8. <i>Las rgyu 'bras kyi dbye ba mun sel sgron ma;</i>  9. <i>Dus dgu'i gso sbyong;</i>  10. <i>Dus khrims kyi phan yon;</i>  11. <i>Dus khrims blangs pa'i cho ga;</i>  12. <i>gTan khrims bsrung bya gnyen po'i thabs;</i>  13. <i>dPal mgon bdun cu rtsa gnyis kyi gtor chog.</i></p>	<p><i>par bstan pa'i mthong grol</i> (vol. 14)  5. <i>Yon tan rin po che'i gzungs</i> (vol. 14)  6. <i>bDe gshegs mchod pa'i cho ga</i> (vol. 14)  7. <i>sMon lam yid bzhin nor bu</i> (vol. 14)  9. <i>Dus chen dgu'i gso sbyang</i> (vol. 14)  10. <i>Dus khrims kyi phan yon</i> (vol. 14)  11. <i>Dus khrims kyi lag len bya thabs</i> (vol. 14)  12. <i>gTan khrims bsrung bya gnyen po'i thabs</i> (vol. 14)  13. <i>dPal mgon bdun cu rtsa lnga'i bsngo</i> (vol. 14)</p>
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## 11. The Cycles of the Powerful Lords of the Teachings

These cycles are those of: 1. Maheśvara and Jambhala, 2. the Protectors of Dharma, and 3. Gönpö Takzhön.

### 11-1. The Cycle on Maheśvara and Jambhala

The eleven works that make up this cycle are:

1. *Lo rgyus;*
2. *mNga' thang rin chen 'bar ba'i dbang;*
3. *Yon tan drug ldan nor bu'i mdzod;*
4. *Zhal chems thugs kyi thigs pa;*
5. *Gu ru'i zhal chems;*
6. *Chos rgyal khri srong lde btsan gyi zhal chems;*
7. *mKha' 'gro ye shes mtsho rgyal gyi zhal chems;*
8. *Lha sras mu khri btsan po'i zhal chems;*
9. *Chos khrims bstan pa'i sgron ma;*
10. *Lung byang sgron ma bstan pa'i bar chad bsal thabs;*
11. *Lam gyi gegs sel sgron ma.*

2. *mNga' thang rin chen 'bar ba'i dbang* (vol. 14)
3. *Gu ru'i zhal gdams nor bu'i mdzod yon tan drug ldan* (vol. 8)

9. *Chos khrims bstan pa'i sgron me* (vol. 53)

### 11-2. The Protectors of Dharma

This cycle counts the five following works: 1. *Chos skyong bstan srungs yongs rdzogs kyi rgyud le'u brgyad pa;*  
2. *dBang chog phrin las;*  
3. *bsKang bshags;*

4. *bsKul gyi rim pa;*
5. *gSang bskul bsdu pa.*

1. Possibly *Chos skyong bstan srung yongs rdzogs kyi bla rdo srog 'khor gnad yig zab mo* (vol. 9)

3. *Chos skyong bstan srung yongs rdzogs kyi bskang bshags* (vol. 12)
4. *Chos skyong bstan srung yongs rdzogs kyi bskul gyi rim pa* (vol. 12)

### 11-3. The Cycle of Gönpö Takzhön

The cycle of this protector contains eleven works:

1. *Lo rgyus;*
2. *gSang rgyud le'u bcu pa;*
3. *Legs*

Apparently, there are no texts from this cycle in the 2015 edition.

<p><i>Idan spu gri nag po'i gsang sgrub; 4. Drag po thun gyi 'khor lo; 5. sGrub thabs kyi them byang; 6. Yang snying; 7. sTag zhon gyi sgrub thabs phrin las; 8. bsKang bshags; 9. Las sbyor; 10. Las byed mon nag mched gsum gyi sgrub thabs; 11. sTag zhon gyi bskul ba.</i></p>	
<b>11-4. The Cycle of the Guardians of the Teachings</b>	
<p>1. <i>E ka dza ti'i rgyud le'u dgu pa; 2. sgrub thabs; 3. Phrin las bskul ba; 4. bsKang bshags; 5. mChog phreng; 6. mDos las tshogs dang bcas pa; 7. Dur khrod ma mo gsum gyi mchod phreng; 8. Re ma ti'i sgrub thabs; 9. mChog phreng; 10. dBang gi ma mo bdun gyi sgrub thabs; and 11. mChod phreng.</i></p>	<p>1. <i>Rang byung rang shar gyi bka' srung e ka dza ti'i rgyud (vol. 11); 2. sgrub thabs (vol. 11).</i></p>
<b>11-5. The Cycle of the Treasure Lords</b>	
<p>1. <i>brTan ma bcu gnyis la lo rgyus; 2. Kyiing mthing gangs sman dkar mo'i sgrub thabs; 3. mDos chog mchod phreng; and 4. Las kyi kha tshar.</i></p>	<p>No explicit correspondences with these titles, although two <i>mdos chog</i> are to be found (in vol. 6 and 52).</p>
<b>11-6. The Cycle of Dorje Lekpa</b>	
<p>1. <i>gTer bdag gyiing gi rgyud; 2. rGyal blon lnga'i sgrub thabs; 3. bTsan thabs su sgrub thabs; 4. Gying chen sgrog gi spu gri; 5. Them sbyor bdun pa; 6. Bla rdo'i man ngag; 7. 'Bru'i dngos grub blangs thabs; 8. Nor sgrub yang zab; 9. mNgon shes sgrub thabs; 10. mNgon shes gyiing gi sgrub thabs; 11. mChod phreng, bskang, mdos; 12. bstod bskul.</i></p>	<p>— Probable correspondence of text no. 9 (<i>mNgon shes sgrub thabs</i>) with the <i>Phag mo nag mo'i mngon shes sgrub thabs</i>. — Unlikely correspondence of text no. 10 with the <i>gNyan chen thang lha'i mchod phreng</i> since this text actually appears in section 11-7.</p>
<b>11-7. The Cycle of Nyenchen Thanglha</b>	
<p>1. <i>gNyan chen thang lha rgyal po dang 'brel ba'i lo rgyus sgrub thabs; 2. gSang sgrub kyi lo rgyus; 3. sGrub rdzas bsham pa; 4. rjes gnang sgrub thabs; 5. bsTod bskul; 6. sMyo 'dre 'dul ba; 7. mChod phreng.</i></p>	<p>Vol. 15: 1. <i>gNyan chen thang lha'i phyi nang gsang gsum gyi sgrub pa las lo rgyus; 2. Lha chen thang lha'i gsang sgrub; 5. gNyan chen thang lha'i bstod bskul; 6. Thang lha'i bka' gta'd smyo 'dre rgod kyi 'grim shul; 7. gNyan chen thang lha'i mchod phreng las bzhi llun grub ces bya ba.</i></p>
<b>11-8. The Cycle of the Tongpön Commander</b>	
<p>1. <i>Lo rgyus; 2. sGrub thabs; 3. 'Khor lo'i bri yig; 4. mChod phreng.</i></p>	<p>No text clearly available under these abridged titles.</p>
<b>11-9. The Cycle of Prophecies</b>	
<p>1. <i>Kun gsal sgron me</i> included in the <i>rDo rje</i></p>	<p>1. <i>Kun gsal sgron ma</i> (vol. 17).</p>

<p><i>phag mo'i zab rgya</i> rediscovered by bsTan gnyis gling pa. The other prophetic works are :</p> <p>1. <i>bsKul byang chen mo</i>; 2. <i>Them byang bdun pa</i>; 3. <i>sBas yul spyi'i them yig</i>; 4. <i>'Bras mo gshongs kyi lam yig</i>; 5. <i>mDzod gsum gyi lung bstan</i>; 6. <i>sBas yul bdun gyi them byang</i>; 7. <i>sBas yul skyid mo lung gi kha byang</i>; 8. <i>Lam byang</i>; 9. <i>sNying byang</i>; 10. <i>lDe mig gsal ba'i sgron ma</i>; 11. <i>gNad kyi gegs sel</i>; 12. <i>sKyid mo lung gi gnas sgo 'byed pa'i lde mig</i>; 13. <i>gSang sgo 'byed pa'i lde mig</i>; 14. <i>'Khan pa lung gi lam yig</i>; 15. <i>'Khan pa lung gi lam byang</i>; 16. <i>Lam gyi bar chad bsrungs ba'i man ngag thugs rje brtse ba'i go cha</i>; 17. <i>Bu le gangs kyi lung bstan</i>; 18. <i>bKra bzang gi lung bstan mdo lung chen mo</i>; 19. <i>Them byang bcu pa</i>.</p> <p><i>Bod la dgos pa'i las tshogs kyi them byang.</i></p> <p>1. <i>Ri kun tu gzigs kyi lung bstan</i>; 2. <i>Sa'i gnad bstan pa</i>; 3. <i>Kun tu gzigs kyi gnad tig</i>; and 4. <i>gNas gsum gyi lam yig</i>.</p>	<p>9. <i>sNying byang rgyas pa gnad kyi them bu</i> (vol. 33).</p> <p>11. possible correspondence with the <i>gNad dbab gegs sel</i> (vol. 15).</p> <p><i>Bod khams bde la 'god pa'i phyir: las tshogs rin chen sdong po</i> (vol. 6).</p>
<b>11-10. The Cycle on the Four Activities</b>	
No actual listing.	No actual listing.



## Chapter VI

### The *Gongpa Zangthel* and the Basic Representations of Dzogchen Thought

**I**n volume 2 of the present ANR research project, I have already discussed the inner structure and general contents of *The Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* (*Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*).<sup>1</sup> Since it clearly emerges that Dzogchen is evidently the central doctrinal tenet, not only of the *Gongpa Zangthel* but also of the literary corpus of the Northern Treasures, in this final chapter of the present volume, I would like to take the opportunity to highlight some of the most interesting characteristics of its philosophical topics by briefly analyzing crucial representations that stand at the core of the entire collection.

When discussing the themes of Dzogchen, a number of subjects come to mind, such as the Base of the natural state (*gnas lugs kyi gzhi*), its epiphany (*gzhi snang*), its special visionary Path (*lam*), as well as its ultimate sign of realization, i.e., the Rainbow Body (*'ja' lus*),<sup>2</sup> and so forth. Foremost among these are the notions of Base, Path, and Fruit,<sup>3</sup> as well as that of Awareness (*rig pa*) which is often misunderstood in the West.

#### 1. The Base of the Natural State

The Base of the natural state refers to the primordial abiding mode of the nature of one's mind. It is not a collective Base, as if there were a single cosmic-like Base to which all individual consciousnesses would be connected. Such an idea does not exist in Buddhism in general, nor in Dzogchen in particular. Thus, each sentient being possesses his own individual Base, and all these Bases have the same qualities of Emptiness and Clarity.

<sup>1</sup> The entire collection was the object of an extensive catalogue (including notes and comments) by P. Schwieger in his now legendary *Die Werksammlungen Kun-tu bzang-po'i dgoñs-pa zañ-thal, Ka-dag rañ-byuñ rañ-sar und mKha'-'gro gsañ-ba ye-ses-kyi rgyud* completed more than four decades ago.

<sup>2</sup> On the Rainbow Body, see Achard, *The Rainbow Bodies as described by Düdjom Rinpoche, passim*.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed presentation of these three subject matters, see Achard, "Les principes de Base (*gzhi*), de Voie (*lam*), et de Fruit (*'bras bu*) dans les enseignements de la Grande Perfection", in *Cahiers de l'Unité, Revue d'études des doctrines et des méthodes traditionnelles*, no. 37, Avril 2025, pp. 9-29.

Despite being styled as immutable,<sup>4</sup> the Base is not a static condition that would be eternally fixed in a given state. On the contrary, it is naturally endowed with a spontaneous dynamism (*rtsal*) that manifests as the display of sounds, lights, and rays. Thus, at a “time” prior to time and space, the Base was abiding as the Youthful Vase Body (*gzhon nu bum sku*), an esoteric representation that should be understood as:

- a state or Body (*sku*), that corresponds to its primordial mode beyond all forms of dualities; this is a dimension for which the term Body is used, not in the sense of a physical support, but as a collective grouping the three Wisdoms of Essence (*ngo bo*), Nature (*rang bzhin*), and Compassion (*thugs rje*);
- this Body is symbolically compared to a sealed Vase (*bum pa*), in which the natural Clarity of the three Wisdoms radiates unceasingly; it is presented as sealed because the primordial luminosity of this state does not arise externally;
- this Vase Body is associated with the notion of Youthfulness (*gzhon nu*) because, at the level of its Essence, one’s mind eternally remains free from the “old age of passions”, the arising of these passions coinciding with the advent of time.

Thus, owing to its natural dynamism, this Base has let a primordial wind (*ye rlung*) arise within itself, breaking the seal that covered it, causing the spontaneous epiphany of sounds, lights, and rays (*sgra ‘od zer gsum*), the three basic manifestations of the natural state itself.

These three manifestations are the outer expressions of one’s Essence, Nature, and Compassion, and their arising constitutes what is technically designated in Dzogchen texts as the Epiphany of the Base (*gzhi snang*). Thus, when the seal of the Youthful Vase Body is broken, the three manifestations arise spontaneously and are apprehended by the individual contemplating the Epiphany of his own Base. This moment is crucial because it is the actual frontier between liberation (*grol ba*) and delusion (*‘khrul pa*). As a matter of fact, if the individual recognizes that these appearances are his own manifestations (*rang snang*), he directly pierces the true abiding mode of his real nature and clearly discerns (*rig pa*) the Emptiness and Clarity that characterize that nature. This coincides with the moment of liberation and the obtainment of Buddhahood. Conversely, if he does not recognize the nature of these appearances, he apprehends them as manifestations

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<sup>4</sup> In the sense that the Base of the mind is never other than empty and luminous. This means that its definition does not change and always abides, reflecting this nondifferentiation of Emptiness and Clarity (*stong gsal dbyer med*).

having a source other than himself (*gzhan snang*), and enters dualistic grasping. This coincides with the time of delusion and the entry into the cycle of countless rebirths that will characterize his errancy due to ignorance (*ma rig pa*).

The display of the Epiphany of the Base is actually a very complex process of manifestation that covers specific representations ranging from the original abiding mode of one's Essence to the display of the six destinies of deluded sentient beings.<sup>5</sup> There is thus a sixfold hierarchic mode of manifestations that can be enumerated as follows:

1. The state of the Base or the primordially pure Essence of the Mind, which is nothing other than the inner Clarity (*nang gsal*) of the Mind.
2. The Precious Sphere of Spontaneity (*lhun grub rin po che'i sbubs*), which is also referred to as the Spontaneity of the Base (*gzhi'i lhun grub*), the Indeterminacy of the Base (*gzhi ma nges pa*), and the Base Emerging in the Manifold (*gzhi sna tshogs su 'char ba*). This Sphere is characterized by six modes of emergence (*'char lugs drug*) and two gates (*sgo gnyis*), the whole forming what is known as the Eight Gates of Spontaneity (*lhun grub sgo brgyad*).<sup>6</sup> The expression Spontaneity of the Base is used because the unfolding of the manifestations that are being described corresponds to that of the Nature of the primordial state and, therefore, to its Spontaneity. Its designation as the Indeterminacy of the Base means that all manifestations emerging from the dynamism of the Base are indeterminate (*ma nges pa*)—that is, they are not conditioned by particular representations—and appear in multiple modes. Finally, its description as the Base Emerging in the Manifold is due to the variety of the Epiphany of the Base, and specifically to its eight modes of emergence (*'char lugs brgyad*), which make up the Eight Gates (*sgo brgyad*) mentioned above.
3. The great manifestations of the Base (*gzhi snang chen po*), appearing as multiple five-colored displays.

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<sup>5</sup> I have discussed this at length in Achard, *Le mode d'émergence du Réel*, Tibetica Hermetica, vol. III, *passim*. The following presentation is a synthesis of this work, pp. 16-17. The six destinies (*rigs drug*) are those of the denizens of hell, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, demi-gods, and gods.

<sup>6</sup> These are modes in which the Epiphany of the Base manifests, namely: 1. Compassion (*thugs rje*), 2. lights (*'od*), 3. non-duality (*gnyis med*), 4. Bodies (*sku*), 5. Wisdoms (*ye shes*), 6. freedom from extremes (*mtsha' grol*), 7. the door of impure Saṃsāra (*ma dag pa 'khor ba'i sgo*), and 8. the door of pure Wisdom (*dag pa ye shes kyi sgo*). See the details in Achard, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-36.

4. The manifestations of the Enjoyment Body (*longs sku'i snang ba*) with their perfectly oriented multi-colored splendors.
5. The pure realm of the Natural Emanation Body (*rang bzhin sprul pa sku'i zhing khams*).
6. The impure realms of the six destinies of transmigration (*'gro ba rigs drug gi zhing*).

Sentient beings who have been unable to recognize the nature of their own Epiphany must engage in the practice of the Path if they aspire to free themselves from conditioned existence. For all those who seek to escape the cycle of rebirths, practice is therefore not optional.<sup>7</sup> We will now turn to a brief description of the practice of the Great Perfection.

### 2. The Visionary Path of Dzogchen

In the Precepts Section (*Man ngag sde*) to which the *Gongpa Zanthe* is intimately associated, the practice of the Path relies on a series of successive meditative exercises that constitute the various steps necessary to eventually attain Buddhahood whether in this lifetime, at the time of death, or during the Bardo.<sup>8</sup> The successive steps of the Path can be divided into three categories: 1. the preliminaries (*sngon 'gro*), 2. the main practice (*dnegos gzhi*), and 3. the conclusion (*rjes*).

The preliminaries are of three kinds:

- ordinary preliminaries (*thun mong sngon 'gro*) dealing with the four thoughts that turn the mind away from Saṃsāra,<sup>9</sup>
- extraordinary preliminaries (*thun min sngon 'gro*) that are centered on Refuge, *bodhicitta*, maṇḍala offering, purification with Vajrasattva's hundred syllable mantra, and Guru-Yoga; and
- special preliminaries (*khyad par sngon 'gro*) that are divided into the yoga of the four elements (*'byung bzhi'i rnal 'byor*), the outer and inner separations of Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa (*phyi nang 'khor 'das ru shan dbye ba*), and the training of the three doors (*sgo gsum sbyang ba*).

<sup>7</sup> From the perspective of Dzogchen, the options for practice depend on one's capacities (*dbang po*) and personal tendencies. Basically, the options are those of the sūtric approach, the tantric approach, and the Great Perfection approach.

<sup>8</sup> See below the section "3-2. The three modes of liberation."

<sup>9</sup> I.e., 1. the difficulty of obtaining a human body; 2. death and impermanence; 3. karmic retributions; and 4. the flaws of Saṃsāra.

The Northern Treasures are particularly renowned for their detailed explanation of the extraordinary preliminaries that are described in instructions known as “the Five Nails” (*gzer lnga*). This practice combines Refuge and *bodhicitta* together and incorporates the topic of impermanence (*mi rtag pa*) from the ordinary preliminaries. These Nails thus cover: 1. Refuge and *bodhicitta*, 2. offering of the maṇḍala, 3. Vajrasattva’s purification mantra, 4. reflection on impermanence, and 5. Guru-Yoga.<sup>10</sup>

The main practice of the *Gongpa Zangthel* follows the framework of the Precept Series, although it barely uses the terms Trekchö (*khregs chod*) and Thögel (*thod rgal*).<sup>11</sup> Even though later instruction manuals (*khrid yig*) provide separate explanations of these two practices, one of the interesting features of this cycle is that it presents these practices in a combined manner. Thus, in chapter VI of *The Root Tantra Revealing the Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* (*Kun tu bzang po’i dgongs pa zang thal du bstan pa’i rtsa rgyud*),<sup>12</sup> the main practice is described as follows by the primordial Buddha himself:

*By letting Awareness spring forth in all its nakedness,  
Free of concepts related to the grasping of sentient beings,  
One liberates from saṃsāric traps.*<sup>13</sup>

This corresponds to the part of the practice dealing with Trekchö. Letting Awareness arise in all its nakedness means that one remains absorbed in the experiential knowledge of Awareness, free from the conceptual dualistic grasping of ordinary sentient beings. When one abides in this state, one is (temporarily) liberated from all the snares of conditioned existence since one is actually fully absorbed in the state of Contemplation (*dgongs pa*) itself.

Then, Samantabhadra explains the basics of Thögel practice in a highly distilled form, without elaborating on its actual key-points

<sup>10</sup> The inclusion of the meditation on impermanence in these preliminaries is not a unique feature of the *Byang gter* since it is also encountered elsewhere, for instance in the preliminaries of the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* tradition.

<sup>11</sup> The terms appear for instance in vol. 1, p. 448; in vol. 2, in a quote from the *Mu tig phreng ba* tantra (p. 118), p. 200 (in interlinear glosses), and p. 1009. I do not take into account the various occurrences of *thod rgal* with a different meaning (such as the name of a wind, a kind of Dākinī practice, and so forth).

<sup>12</sup> This text is essentially a dialogue between the primordial Buddha Samantabhadra and Vajrapāṇi, the Lord of Mysteries. The French translation of this Tantra was privately published in 1995 under the title: *Le Tantra-Racine qui révèle la Transparente Contemplation de Samantabhadra*, Khyung-mkhar.

<sup>13</sup> P. 442: *sems can gzung ‘dzin rtoḡ pa dang bral: rig pa gcer bur phyung bas ‘khor ba’i rgya las grol:.*

(*gnad*), except for the fixation of the gaze:<sup>14</sup>

*(Thus), by fixing one's gaze on the sky,  
The manifestations of objects emerge as (visions of) Wisdom  
And since this Body of Wisdom has no form (dependent) on  
characteristics,  
It is already liberated from the full maturation of virtues and vices.*<sup>15</sup>

When one applies the key-points of Thögel, such as postures, gazes, and so forth, one begins to see the arising of mono-colored and then multi-colored visions that make up the display of Wisdom (*ye shes*). The Body of Wisdom that is referred to in the third line of the above quote corresponds to the full display of these visions. Since such visions are entirely devoid of graspable characteristics, they are inherently free from the ripening of virtues and vices and thus do not depend on their associated activities. Indeed, these visions arise only when one is sufficiently stable in the natural state to contemplate their increasing developments:<sup>16</sup> they do not arise as a result of performing virtues or refraining from vices. Immature minds generally understand this to mean that engaging in virtues is unnecessary and that indulging in vices is permissible. This simply demonstrates that they do not understand the difference between the pure state of Dzogchen and their own human condition (which, in accordance with karmic law, is generally impure).

Samantabhadra then adds:<sup>17</sup>

*All that is required is to recognize that the Essence of Awareness,  
which radiates unceasingly in a clear and vivid manner, is  
Buddhahood.*

*When the quintessence of the true meaning is freed from the  
karmic traces associated with the delusion of sentient beings,  
The defects of Saṃsāra are purified (and thus),  
By fixing one's gaze on the sky,  
One will concretely see the Absolute Body.*

<sup>14</sup> Sky gazing is also a device used in *khregs chod*, but in that context it is not combined with other key points (*gnad*).

<sup>15</sup> P. 442: *lta stangs nam mkha' la gtad pas: yul snang ye shes su 'char: ye shes kyi sku la mtshan ma'i gzugs med pas: dge sdi gi rnam par smin pa las grol.*

<sup>16</sup> Actually, anybody can see things after spending some time gazing at the sky but these “visionary” appearances will not develop beyond a very basic threshold unless one abides in the state of Awareness and combines this state with the practice of the key-points of *thod rgal*.

<sup>17</sup> P. 442: *rig pa'i ngo bo ma 'gags par wal le khyung ge gsal bar sangs rgyas su ngo shes dgos: nges pa don gyi snying po sems can 'khrul pa'i bag chags dang bral bas: 'khor ba'i skyon dag: lta stangs nam mkha' la gtad pas: chos sku mngon du mthong.*

Here again, the Buddha describes both Trekchö and Thögel together: the first three lines concern Trekchö, summarizing it with the exhortation to recognize the Essence of Awareness as it is. The quintessence of the true meaning (*nges pa don gyi snying po*) points to the same state, which is entirely free from karmic traces and therefore *already* liberated from all the defects of Saṃsāra. The last two lines address the key-point of Thögel Contemplation, using the method of sky-gazing (*nam mkha' ar gtad*), owing to which one will definitely see the marvels of the Absolute Body, i.e., of Awareness itself.

In the same section of the text, Samantabhadra concludes his explanation in two parts. First, he states:<sup>18</sup>

*Since Awareness radiates clearly within Emptiness,  
The fact that Emptiness and Clarity are nondifferentiated  
corresponds to the unique (state of) Perfect and Authentic Buddhahood.  
As soon as the mind relaxes, Awareness emerges clearly in a self-  
arisen mode.  
This is the Concentration of the Great Symbol.*

In this short quatrain, Samantabhadra essentializes the teachings related to Trekchö. The first line is actually a definition of the natural state, Awareness being a strict synonym of Clarity (*gsal ba*). The second explains what this state is, namely that of total Buddhahood. The next one deals with practice itself, emphasizing that the basis of this practice is the complete relaxation of the mind: at that time, Awareness blazes naturally, emerging in a self-arisen manner that characterizes the total absence of artifices required to cultivate the state of Trekchö. The latter is associated with the notion of the Great Symbol, that is, *Mahāmudrā*, an equivalence which is a *locus classicus* in Dzogchen texts. The following five lines are dedicated to the second part, namely, the synthesis of Thögel:<sup>19</sup>

*By fixing the eyes on the sky,  
The Absolute Body of Buddhahood that dwells in the center of our  
heart manifests itself concretely:<sup>20</sup>*

<sup>18</sup> P. 442 : *rig pa stong pa nyid la gdangs gsal bas: stong gsal dbyer med du 'dug pa 'di ka yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas nyag gcig yin no: sems lhod kyiis klod pa dang rig pa rang byung du gsal bar 'char: de phyag rgya chen po'i bsam [p. 443] gtan yin no:.*

<sup>19</sup> P. 443: *mig dang nam mkhar gtad pas: rang gi snying gi dkyil na sangs rgyas chos kyi sku bzhugs pa de mngon sum du 'char: de la rang bzhin lhun grub gyi (sic! = kyi) sangs rgyas zer ro: rang gi mig gi dkyil na mthong ba ma 'gags par zang thal le ba 'di ga gnyis snang gi rtoq pas ma bsgrigs par 'dzin med du sal le bzhag pas: kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa zang thal yin no:.*

<sup>20</sup> This is a reference to the five-colored radiance of Awareness that blazes in the center of the Brown Cornelian Tent (*mchong gur smug po*), i.e., the heart.

*This is what is called "the Buddhahood of one's Spontaneous Nature."*

*Allowing the Transparency that is perceived unobstructedly at the very center of our eyes in a non-grasping manner that is not obscured by the concepts of dualistic manifestations,*

*This is the Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra.*

In the *Gongpa Zangthel*, there are of course other manuals in which the practices of Trekchö and Thögel are described in detail. I have already published an annotated translation of perhaps the most secret text of the original cycle itself, entitled *The Source of the Unwritten Oral Transmission Revealing the Contemplation of the Heart of the precepts of the Authentic Principles (Yang dag don gyi man ngag thugs kyi dgongs pa yi ge med pa'i snyan brgyud kyi rtsa ba)*.<sup>21</sup> This is one of those texts that were meant to remain untranscribed or unwritten, except in cases where the recipient of the transmission fears forgetting it. In such a case, he is authorized to write it down and keep it until his death. At that time, the text must either be eaten by the recipient or burnt with him during cremation.<sup>22</sup>

Longer works, much influenced by the *Heart Drops* associated with Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava are to be found as complementary satellites of the original cycle.<sup>23</sup> They are generally used as manuals and guides for personal retreat. Their practice revolves around the threefold scheme (preliminaries, main practice, and conclusion) mentioned above. Depending on how these manuals are structured, the conclusion itself is dedicated either to a presentation of the Bardo states or to the Fruit of the Path itself. It is the latter that we shall now briefly consider.

### 3. The Fruit of Buddhahood

This section is explained in two parts: 1. the actual Fruit of Buddhahood and the manner in which it manifests, and 2. the manner in which the three categories of practitioners reach liberation.

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<sup>21</sup> See Achard, *The Oral Transmission of Padmasambhava*, pp. 19-34, together with a detailed explanation pp. 35 *et seq.* The original text is also known as *The Oral Transmission of Padmasambhava, the Precious Unwritten Oral Transmission Revealing the Contemplation of the Heart of the Precepts of the Secret Principle (gSang ba don gyi man ngag thugs kyi dgongs pa yi ge med pa'i snyan brgyud rin po che'o: padma'i snyan brgyud)*.

<sup>22</sup> With the passing of time, these texts have eventually been kept in written form.

<sup>23</sup> These have been discussed at length in Arguillère, "A History of the *dGongs pa zang thal* practice manuals", *passim*.

### 3-1. *The Actual Fruit*

No matter which Path one has practiced, the Fruit is always the same: Buddhahood itself. Thus, if one perfects the Path of Sūtras, one will manifest the same level of Buddhahood as practitioners of the Tantras and Dzogchen. The manner in which the signs indicating the attainment of Buddhahood appear may differ according to the Path that has been completed. Thus, regardless of the meditations one has accomplished, the state of Buddhahood is an utterly pure condition of omniscience in which one naturally displays Bodies, Wisdoms, and liberating Activities.

In this context, the Bodies are not divine manifestations but expressions of one's enlightenment manifesting primarily as the Three Bodies, namely the Absolute Body (*chos sku*), the Enjoyment Body (*longs sku*), and the Emanation Body (*sprul sku*). Each of these has its own set of associated Wisdoms, related to them in the following manner:

- the Absolute Body is endowed with the Three Wisdoms, namely Essence, Nature, and Compassion;
- the Enjoyment Body manifests its Five Wisdoms, i.e., the Wisdom of the Absolute Space, the Mirror-like Wisdom, the Discriminating Wisdom, the Equality Wisdom, and the Wisdom of all accomplishments; and
- the Emanation Body arises with its Two Wisdoms, namely the Wisdom that knows things as they ultimately are and the Wisdom that knows them as they appear in their diversity.

The liberating activities that one is able to perform for the sake of sentient beings once Buddhahood has been attained are those of pacification, increase, power, and violence. These are connected to the ordinary *siddhis* that one is capable of manifesting at that stage for the benefit of others, while the realization of the supreme *siddhi* of Buddhahood is obtained for one's own benefit.

### 3-2. *The Three Modes of Liberation*

The moment one is able to display these Bodies, Wisdoms, and Activities depends on one's capacities (*dbang po*). Thus, practitioners are divided into three major groups<sup>24</sup> known as those of superior capacities (*dbang po rab*), of intermediate or median capacities (*dbang po*

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<sup>24</sup> With further subdivisions amounting to twenty-seven categories of practitioners (nine for each of the three main groups).

'bring), and of inferior capacities (*dbang po tha ma*). The category to which one belongs depends on the speed with which one attains Buddhahood. Thus, as a rule, those belonging to the first categories reach enlightenment during their lifetime, at the moment when they have entirely completed the Path. They are then able to manifest the Rainbow Body (*'ja' lus*) as a sign indicating that they have fully perfected the Path of Thögel (*thod rgal*) and thus reached the Fourth Vision of this practice, i.e., the Vision of the Exhaustion of Reality (*chos nyid zad pa'i snang ba*). During their lifetime, they experience physical and visionary signs that indicate whether or not they will display the five-colored splendors of the Rainbow Body.

Those of intermediate capacities generally obtain Buddhahood at the time of death, after the separation between the mind and the body. At that precise moment, they are said to be able to let their Awareness dissolve into Space and thereby reach the superior Transparency (*yar gyi zang thal*) of their own natural state.<sup>25</sup> In general, these practitioners have performed the same Path as the previous ones but have been unable to complete it before death. When transferring their Awareness into Space, they are said to attain Buddhahood without undergoing further rebirths.

Those of inferior capacities are confronted with the terrors of the *post mortem* intermediate states or Bardos. If they are able to recognize the marvels that manifest to their consciousness during the Bardo of the Clear-Light of Reality (*chos nyid 'od gsal gyi bar do*), they may recall the teachings of their master and perform a transference of consciousness into the pure realms of the Natural Emanations of the five Victorious Ones. These pure realms constitute an intermediate cosmological level situated between the Enjoyment Body (above) and the Emanation Body (below). The practitioner of inferior capacities then takes five further rebirths—one in each of these pure realm—each lasting five hundred years, after which they are guaranteed to obtain definitive Buddhahood.

Belonging to one or another of these categories depends entirely on the faculties that enable one to discern the state of pure Sapience that is Awareness. However, the latter is so often misunderstood in the West that I deemed it important to dedicate the last section of this chapter to a detailed explanation of it.

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<sup>25</sup> The expression *yar gyi zang thal* refers to the state of Buddhahood, indicating a total absence of regression into conditioned existence. It is opposed to the notion of "downward delusion" (*mar 'khrul*), which indicates a return into one of the six destinies, according to one's karma.

4. *The Notion of Awareness*

In Dzogchen literature, there are numerous ways of introducing the nature of Awareness (*rig pa*) that do not necessarily depend on the capacities (or lack thereof) of the disciple receiving the direct introduction, but rather on the intent embedded in the very wording of a text providing such an introduction. Consequently, there are very diverse manners of revealing this nature, stressing either its sapiential aspect (*shes cha*), its visionary aspect (*snang cha*), or both together. In general, in Dzogchen tantras, such a direct introduction unfolds within the framework of the five perfections (*phun sum tshogs pa lnga*), which are required for this revelation, namely:

- a sanctuary (*gnas*), or perfect place, where the Buddha—whether Samantabhadra, Vajradhara, or Vajrasattva—teaches the principles of Dzogchen to his audience;
- a Revealer (*ston pa*), who discloses the secret instructions of the Great Perfection;
- an entourage (*khor*), composed primarily of emanations of the Revealer or central Buddha;
- a revelation (*bstan pa*), consisting of the teachings and secret instructions of Dzogchen; and
- a temporality (*dus*), corresponding to the moment when the Buddha imparts these instructions.

Within the framework of these five perfections a dialogue unfolds between the central Buddha and his entourage, structured around a series of requests that organize the tantra and highlight its specific topics. For instance, in *The Tantra of the Natural Clarity of Awareness (Rig pa rang gsal gyi rgyud)*, this scheme appears as follows:<sup>26</sup>

*In the great Citadel of the unceasing visions of Wisdom,<sup>27</sup>*  
*The glorious Vajrasattva<sup>28</sup>*  
*Remained in the company of a large entourage made of myriads of*  
*deities from the Vajra Clan,<sup>29</sup>*  
*Abiding in the state of his own unceasing Awareness.*

<sup>26</sup> P. 618: *ye shes kyi snang ba ma 'gags pa'i gzhäl yas khang chen po na: dpal rdo rje sems dpa' la: rdo rje rigs kyi sde pa bye ba khrag khrig mang po 'khor gyis bskor nas: rang gi rig pa ma 'gags pa'i ngang la bzugs so: de'i tshes gsang ba'i bdag po phyag na rdo rjes 'di skad ces zhus o: kye ston pa rdo rje sems dpa': rig pa rang byung gi don gsung du gsol: zhes zhus so.*

<sup>27</sup> This is the sanctuary of the Revelation.

<sup>28</sup> This is the Revealer.

<sup>29</sup> This is his Entourage.

*At that time,<sup>30</sup> Vajrapāṇi, the Lord of Mysteries, formulated this request:*

*“Kye! O Revealer Vajrasattva!*

*I pray you to reveal the meaning of the self-arisen Awareness!”<sup>31</sup>*

Thus, this series of conditions or perfections introduces the first topic of the tantra, namely the self-arisen Awareness (*rig pa rang byung*).<sup>32</sup> According to the oral instructions, this expression should be understood as follows:

- self-arisen (*rang byung*) indicates that the state referred to is not produced by outer or inner causes but simply arises from itself, owing to its own spontaneous (*lhun grub*) dynamism (*rtsal*); and
- Awareness (*rig pa*) refers to the knowledge (*rig*) of the natural state, abiding as the nondifferentiation of Emptiness and Clarity (*stong gsal dbyer med*).

In his answer to the Lord of Mysteries, Vajrasattva explains the nature of Awareness by employing the classical rhetoric of absence that characterizes the literature of the Mahāyāna. The use of this analytical expedient allows him to define Awareness in terms of what it is not, systematically excluding elements that do not logically pertain to the field of Awareness. This method relies entirely on an actual understanding of Awareness as it is in reality, namely the knowledge that discerns (*rig*) the nondifferentiation of Emptiness and Clarity. Using this rhetorical approach, Vajrasattva explains:<sup>33</sup>

*One’s own Awareness is not established in any way whatsoever, whether in terms of materiality, essence,<sup>34</sup>*

*Color, and so forth, but abides as a luminous Emptiness, which is*

<sup>30</sup> This corresponds to the temporality or moment of revelation.

<sup>31</sup> This corresponds to the topic or revelation that the Buddha is about to make in this tantra.

<sup>32</sup> This expression is strictly the same as that of *rang byung rig pa* in the text quoted above. Here, the adjectival form *rang byung* is also associated with the notion of “meaning” or “principle” (*don*), that actually defines Awareness as the knowledge of Emptiness and Clarity.

<sup>33</sup> P. 618: *rang gi rig pa dngos po dang ngo bo dang : kha dog la sogs pa cir yang ma grub pa stong sang nge ’dug pa ’di sangs rgyas kyi sa bon yin no.*

<sup>34</sup> In this context, the concept of “essence” (*ngo bo*) refers to an essence that is characterized by limited qualities, and that can be described in terms of conditioned characteristics. Even though the term is the same in Tibetan, it does not refer to the primordially pure (*ka dag*) and empty (*stong pa*) Essence of the natural state.

*the seed of Buddhahood.*

In other words, Awareness cannot be defined as a material object because it is not produced from the elements and does not exist as anything concretely graspable. Yet it is not mere nothingness, since it abides in a luminous mode that is empty of conditioned characteristics, such as colors, etc. This empty and luminous state constitutes the seed or potential of Buddhahood, residing within the heart of all sentient beings. Vajrasattva then adds:<sup>35</sup>

*It is not a state of torpor or mental opacity,  
That drifts and becomes dispersed.  
It does not follow after outer objects  
Nor is it inwardly driven by defects such as the five passions.<sup>36</sup>*

Awareness is not a mental condition amounting to some sort of torpor or mental opacity, or a lethargy characterized by dullness and intellectual obscurity. It does not fluctuate, in the sense that it *always* abides as the knowledge of Emptiness-cum-Clarity (*stong gsal*) and does not become anything else. Consequently, it does not disperse, since it is not conditioned by potential obstacles that could affect it in any way. Dispersion would imply that, once attained, this knowledge of the natural state could be lost. Yet this is entirely impossible, as direct experience confirms: one either knows and understands that the natural state abides as Emptiness and Clarity, or one does not. In the former case, once clearly understood, this knowledge cannot be lost.

As a conclusion expressed in this *negative* rhetoric mode, Vajrasattva states:<sup>37</sup>

*It is not affected by karmic winds<sup>38</sup>*

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<sup>35</sup> P. 618: *bying zhing* [p. 619] *rmugs pa ni ma yin no: g.yo zhing 'phro ba yang ma yin no: phyi'i yul gyi rjes su ma 'brenng : nang nyon mongs pa lnga'i skyon gyis ma ded.*

<sup>36</sup> Hatred, desire, nescience, jealousy, and pride.

<sup>37</sup> P. 619: *las kyi rlung gis ma bskyod pa: snyems byed kyi the tshom ma zhugs pa.*

<sup>38</sup> Karmic winds (*las kyi rlung*) are winds that circulate throughout the body, moving within the channels (*rtsa*) and Wheels (*'khor lo*). They are associated with the four elements (earth, water, fire, and air) and consist of air that is alternately inhaled and exhaled. Their internal movements give rise to inner experiences shaped by karmic traces and passions. Because the movements of these winds are closely linked to the movements of the body, immobilizing the body in a particular posture temporarily calms the movements of these winds, thereby reducing the dualistic concepts and the proliferations they normally generate. One of the main techniques of tantric yoga consists in bringing these winds—otherwise scattered throughout the body—back into the lower part of the central channel, forcing them to enter it, and holding them there until they dissolve. This dissolution gives rise to the emergence of empty forms (*stong gzugs*). As we have just said, when

*And doubts (arising from) confusion do not enter it.*

Awareness rides on the wind of Wisdom (*ye shes kyi rlung*) that ordinarily abides in the center of the heart. When one engages in the visionary practice of Thögel, this wind is “activated” in such a way that Wisdom rides it, and its natural radiance moves within the Crystal Tube channel (*rtsa shel sbug can*) connecting the heart to the eyes. Conversely, the ordinary mind (*sems*) abides in a small channel connecting the heart to the lungs, where it rides the karmic winds moving with the breath. Thus, Awareness is never affected by the karmic winds and is not modified by potential doubts or confusion. Indeed, as stated above, one either knows and understands Awareness—through the direct introduction given by a qualified master—or one does not. If one does, there is no room in this state for the arising of doubts and confusion.

Now moving to a *positive* approach of Awareness, Vajrasattva defines it as follows:<sup>39</sup>

*This clear, vivid, resplendent, vibrant and luminous state  
Is what is defined as the self-arisen, co-emergent Awareness.  
When one abides in one’s own condition and reaches the ultimate  
(Fruit),  
One becomes a son of Samantabhadra.*

In the previous paragraphs, Awareness was defined in terms of what it is not; in other words, it was described according to its “empty aspect” (*stong cha*). In the above quote, it is defined according to its “luminous aspect” (*gsal cha*), thereby completing the *real* definition of Awareness as simultaneously empty and luminous—its natural Emptiness being fundamentally luminous, and its Clarity naturally empty. Here, Awareness is also styled as self-arisen (*rang byung*) which, as we have seen above, implies that it is not caused by anything. It is furthermore

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Awareness does not radiate outwardly, its radiance (*gdangs*) travels from the Brown Cornelian Tent (*mchong gur smug po*) to the lungs through a channel similar to a straw, connecting the heart to the lungs. It is in this channel that the radiance of Awareness rides on a karmic wind, therefore becoming what is simply referred to as the ordinary mind (*sems*). The fact that the mind rides on these winds produces concepts. On the other hand, when one adopts the key points of *thod rgal* practice, the radiance of Awareness does not enter the channel connecting the heart to the lungs but rides the wind of Wisdom (*ye shes kyi rlung*) and enters the channel of light that connects the heart to the eyes (Achard, [http://www.wikidz.artremy.com/wiki/Souffles\\_karmiques](http://www.wikidz.artremy.com/wiki/Souffles_karmiques)).

<sup>39</sup> P. 619: *sa le: sing nge: wal le: khyug ge gsal ba 'di: rang byung lhan cig skyes pa'i rig pa bya ba yin no: 'di rang sar gnas shing mthar phyin pa'i dus na: kun tu bzang po'i sras su 'gyur ro:*

described here as co-emergent (*lhan cig skyes pa*), in the sense that it arises together with the natural state itself. In other words, since this state exists beyond the appearance of time and space, its own discerning faculty has always constituted its specific mode of knowledge. Thus, if one is able to remain in the state of one's own Transparent Contemplation (*dgongs pa zang thal*) without ever regressing from it, one becomes a son of Samantabhadra. This means that, upon completing the Path, one eventually attains Buddhahood and can display the marvels of one's Bodies (*sku*) and Wisdoms (*ye shes*).

In the following sections of the Tantra, Vajrasattva provides a series of definitions concerning: 1. Samantabhadra, 2. the state of the Absolute Body (*chos sku*) experienced in the Contemplation of the Buddhas (*sangs rgyas kyi dgongs pa*), 3. Samantabhadra's manifestation as the Buddha "Immutable Light" ("Od mi 'gyur ba), 4. the Enjoyment Body (*longs sku*), and 5. the Emanation Body (*sprul sku*).

Thus, beginning with the definition of Samantabhadra, Vajrasattva declares:<sup>40</sup>

*When Emptiness displays itself  
And avoids deviating into a nihilistic void,  
The unceasing Awareness that clearly radiates (within it)  
Is Samantabhadra himself.*

Emptiness is not a state of nothingness: rather, it refers both to space and existence. In the sense of space (*dbyings*), Emptiness is the infinite display that is undifferentiated from the Clarity that arises within it in an unceasing manner. As we have seen, both Emptiness and Clarity are qualities that define the natural state.<sup>41</sup> Samantabhadra represents the Clarity aspect of this state,<sup>42</sup> as well as its Awareness aspect (*rig cha*). In iconography, this primordial Buddha is depicted as a naked blue Buddha radiating within the original space of the natural state.

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<sup>40</sup> P. 619: 'di stong bdo tsa na: stong pa phyang chad du ma song bar: rig pa 'gags pa med pa sal ler gsal ba 'di: kun tu bzang po yin no:.

<sup>41</sup> In the sense of existence, saying that something is empty means that it is devoid of inherent existence: in this perspective, this "something" lacks any independent, intrinsic essence or self-nature (*svabhāva*). Rather, it arises through dependent origination relying on primary causes and secondary conditions, and ultimately amounts to a mere conceptual designation. Therefore, the notion of Emptiness has never implied any nihilistic non-existence since what "it does" is to simply negate the reified substance that deluded sentient beings mistakenly apprehend as something permanent. In this sense, it definitely allows conventional reality to function on a relative level, while avoiding both extremes of eternalism or nihilism.

<sup>42</sup> He of course embodies both aspects, since in Dzogchen, Emptiness cannot be separated from its Clarity aspect and *vice versa*.

He was the first to discern (*rig*) the original Epiphany of the Base (*gzhi snang*) as it truly is, namely the spontaneous manifestations of his own nature. Endowed with a natural Compassion, he is also the source of all Dzogchen teachings, which he revealed in the corpus of the 6,400,000 verses of the Great Perfection.

Next, Vajrasattva discusses the Absolute Body and its Contemplation:

*The nondifferentiation of Emptiness and Clarity  
Is the Contemplation of the Absolute Body of the Buddhas.*<sup>43</sup>

As the illustration of the nondifferentiation of Emptiness and Clarity, Samantabhadra abides in the primordial state of the Absolute Body, experiencing the unceasing flow of his own Contemplation (*dgongs pa*)<sup>44</sup> and never deviating from it. The Absolute Body itself defined as primordially pure and empty (*ka dag stong pa*), arising as a manifestation of the Path (*lam gyi snang ba*), a conception that has gigantic repercussions for the correct understanding of the Buddha-Bodies within sentient beings. Many people think that they possess the Three Bodies (*sku gsum*), while others believe these Bodies are acquired through practice. Both ideas are actually incorrect. These Bodies are defined as potential at the level of the Base,<sup>45</sup> gradually rendered manifest during the practice of the Path, and fully perfected in all their liberating splendors at the level of the Fruit. This simply entails that beings who are not engaged in the Path have no possibility of manifesting these Bodies, since for them they “exist” (*yod*) only as a

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<sup>43</sup> P. 619: *stong pa dang gsal ba gnyis dbyer med pa ni: sangs rgyas chos kyi sku'i dgongs pa yin no.*

<sup>44</sup> The term Contemplation (*dgongs pa*) is often misunderstood and translated as “intention”. While the latter is evidently a function of the ordinary mind (*sems*), the former points to an unconditioned state of knowledge that results from the familiarization with one’s own nature. According to Lopön Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche (private meeting, Kathmandu, 1998), when practicing meditation (*sgom pa*), one first engages in Concentration (*bsam gtan*). Then, after a period of familiarization that depends upon individual capacities, the experience of Concentration both deepens and intensifies (in terms of its Clarity) and leads to an experience of Absorption (*ting nge 'dzin*) during which the principles of the natural state (Emptiness and Clarity) are discerned and maintained without effort. After a while, when one no longer regresses from this experience and one is able to cultivate it without artifices, one enters the state of Contemplation. This state is characterized by the unceasing experience of Emptiness and Clarity (with the respective manifestations of Bodies and Wisdoms) from which one never regresses anymore. Thus, this is not a state that can be defined as an “intention”.

<sup>45</sup> Thus before engaging in the practice of the Path.

“non-existing” (*med*) potential<sup>46</sup> that has not yet been ripened by the practice of the Path.

Resuming his exposition of the five crucial concepts mentioned above, Vajrasattva now turns to an explanation of one of Samantabhadra's names, applied to him because of his luminous manifestation. He states:<sup>47</sup>

*One's Awareness—undifferentiated Emptiness-Clarity—abiding  
in immense orbs of light and knowing neither birth nor death,  
Is the Buddha “Immutable Light.”*

Abiding as both empty and luminous, one's Awareness manifests in a specific visionary mode made of orbs of lights (*'od kyi phung po*). These lights are associated with the multiple aspects of Wisdom (*ye shes*) that arise in specific patterns during the practice of Clear-Light. As familiarization with these visions intensify, they tend to organize according to the four directions and the center, displaying themselves in increasingly complex maṇḍalic configurations. In the present context, Awareness is described as being beyond birth and death because it is not caused by anything and cannot be destroyed by anything. It is totally unconditioned and manifests as the Buddha “Immutable Light” (*'Od mi 'gyur ba*), a form of Samantabhadra that symbolizes both aspects of the natural state itself.<sup>48</sup>

Next is Vajrasattva's definition of the Perfect Enjoyment Body that he mentions in the following two lines:<sup>49</sup>

*When one recognizes the unceasing Clarity of one's own Awareness  
as (the state of) the Buddha,  
One enjoys it within oneself, and this constitutes the Perfect  
Enjoyment Body.*

Using the two preceding lines as his base of reasoning, Vajrasattva concretely equates the luminous Awareness with the state of Buddhahood, a leitmotiv repeated throughout this root-tantra, as well as in other similar works within the *Gongpa Zangthel* cycle. The thematic content of these two lines reiterates earlier statements, now

<sup>46</sup> In the sense of not existing since these Bodies have not yet been rendered manifest (*mngon sum*).

<sup>47</sup> P. 619: *rang gi rig pa stong gsal dbyer med 'od kyi phung po chen por bzhugs pa 'di la skye shi med pas: sangs rgyas 'od mi 'gyur ba yin no.*

<sup>48</sup> See Appendix 5 note 6. See also P. Schwieger, *Die Werksammlungen Kun-tu bzän-po'i dgoñs-pa zang-thal*, p. xix.

<sup>49</sup> P. 619: *rang gi rig pa ma [p. 620] 'gags par gsal ba 'di sangs rgyas su ngo shes na: rang gis rang la longspyod pas longspyod rdzogs pa'i sku yin no.*

contextualized within the framework discussing the existence of Buddhahood within oneself—a topic addressed in several Tantras of the collection.<sup>50</sup>

As for the Emanation Body, Vajrasattva explains the following:<sup>51</sup>

*Since, when examining this vivid Awareness,  
(It appears) as the self-arisen (state of) Buddhahood,  
(This very) Buddhahood need not be sought elsewhere.  
When revealed to others, they become awakened  
(Through its) Compassion, which is the Emanation body.  
To recognize this is sufficient.*

During formal practice and intervals between sessions, when one examines one's vivid Awareness, one promptly realizes that it does not abide as anything other than the self-arisen state of Buddhahood, uncaused and unaffected by anything.<sup>52</sup> Here, Vajrasattva emphasizes the direct recognition of one's true nature, which he defines as the self-arisen Buddhahood that already exists as potential in all beings. The difference with other sentient beings is that Awareness appears as the knowledge that is undifferentiated from the state only if one engages in formal practice and cultivates Awareness without artifices. If one does not practice meditation, this knowledge remains at the potential level and does not ripen into the total discerning Sapience that it actually is. The experiential fact that it is identical to the state of Buddhahood, when one does regress from its experience, totally negates the necessity of any external searching. Thus, in its direct approach, Vajrasattva's discourse definitely bridges the gap between internal realization and external activity. For this purpose, he defines the Emanation Body" (*sprul sku*) in terms of its being associated with the Compassion aspect (*thugs rje cha*), displaying its innate Awareness to benefit all sentient beings. This display is manifested through the compassionate revelation of the teachings of the Great Perfection. Under optimal conditions,<sup>53</sup> the mere explanation of their principles to others can enable them to reach Buddhahood instantaneously, precisely because of their superior capacities and the power of

<sup>50</sup> Such as *inter alia* the *Ye shes rang la gnas pa'i rtsa ba'i rgyud*, vol. 2, pp. 631-643.

<sup>51</sup> P. 620: *rig pa sal le ba 'di la brtags na: rang byung gi sangs rgyas yin pas: sangs rgyas gzhan du btsal mi dgos so: gzhan la bstan pas gzhan sangs rgyas te: thugs rje sprul pa'i sku yin no: 'di ngo shes pas chog go: zhes gsungs so.*

<sup>52</sup> One may wonder why, but this is actually both simple and logical. Since one's Awareness is empty and luminous, and since it abides as the knowledge of the natural state, if one does not regress from this recognition, one eventually experiences the self-arisen Absolute Body which is itself both empty and luminous.

<sup>53</sup> I.e., if "others" (in the quote) refer to practitioners of superior capacities, not the everyday individual.

## Compassion demonstrated by the Emanation Body.

\*

It is clear from the above discussion that the notion of Awareness in Dzogchen is both simple and complex. As the knowledge that discerns the Emptiness and Clarity of the natural state, Awareness is to be understood as the unique Sapience through which one penetrates the core of one's Essence. While it is indeed more complex than generally understood, it is also particularly well delineated, and its true meaning—as outlined above—is in no way a form of presence (for which there is no Tibetan equivalent) or mindfulness, precisely because Awareness is beyond sensations (such as “presence”). Therefore, it cannot be reduced to any function of the ordinary mind (whether “full” or otherwise) since the ordinary mind is defined by the exact opposite of Awareness (*rig pa*), namely “ignorance” (*ma rig pa*).

In *The Tantra Explaining the Differences Between Mind and Awareness* (*Sems dang rig pa dbye ba'i bshad rgyud*),<sup>54</sup> Vajrasattva describes Awareness as being threefold :

- Awareness of the Base (*gzhi'i rig pa*),
- Awareness of the Path (*lam gyi rig pa*), and
- Awareness of the Fruit (*'bras bu'i rig pa*).

The first aspect is associated with the notion of “understanding” (*go ba*), that is, penetrating the true meaning of the Mind (*sems nyid*), of the natural state. This understanding is the goal of the direct introduction (*ngo sprod*) given by the master. There are several ways of introducing the nature of Awareness in Dzogchen, but in general, the master employs both words and allegorical illustrations to explain how Emptiness and Clarity define one's primordial condition. Thus, the disciple who receives this direct introduction must achieve a clear understanding, which he then seeks to stabilize during a short retreat devoted to deepening this insight. This understanding involves a direct comprehension of Awareness that dawns in a state entirely free from conceptual proliferation. Hence, Awareness is not a “mindfulness”, precisely because it transcends the functions of the ordinary mind and is fundamentally empty.

The second aspect is associated with the notion of experience (*myong ba*, or *nyams myong*), which results from the intensification of this understanding during formal practice. As the practitioner becomes familiar with the various experiences—generally

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<sup>54</sup> *dGongs pa zang thal*, vol. 2, pp. 608.

characterized by Bliss, Clarity, and Non-discursiveness—that arise during and between sessions, he must remain in isolated retreat, engaging in the practice of Trekchö (essentially through sky-gazing). The duration of this retreat varies according to the individual, but can last up to eighteen consecutive months. This phase of “experience” is divided into three main steps:

1. deepening the calm (*gnas*) of the mind at the beginning of the retreat;
2. stabilizing (*brtan*) the experience of Awareness throughout the retreat, using various methods to integrate it into the diverse situations and activities one engages in (both during meditation sessions and post-meditation periods); and
3. liberating (*grol*) the continuum from any potentially remaining passions, without effort, that is, by directly experiencing the natural liberation of these passions.

The third aspect is associated with the notion of realization (*rtogs pa*), which is actually twofold: 1. a regressive realization, which occurs when one eventually reverts to the ordinary state of the mind, indicating that this realization has not yet reached its optimal level; and 2. a non-regressive realization, which characterizes the full-measure (*tshad*) of Awareness itself. This third aspect is therefore connected to the obtainment of the Fruit of Buddhahood. It is the state in which one’s Contemplation (*dgongs pa*) abides during the unceasing display of one’s own enlightenment (*sangs rgyas pa*).





## Conclusion

The research material compiled and organized in the present volume represents the fruit of a selection of my own contributions to the ANR FCHINT project (2021-2026) co-directed by Stéphane Arguillère, Jay Valentine, and myself. Like the other volumes of proceedings and research work that have been published so far and are forthcoming within the very same project, our investigations were made possible by the existence of a 63-volume collection that compiles the most important cycles of teachings from the Northern Treasures tradition. This corpus is the work of a modern former abbot, Khenpo Chöying, who spent many years organizing the collection, overseeing its digitization and editing its contents. Most of the texts contained in this collection were difficult—and for some impossible—to access until the recent past, when their gathering into a single anthology in 2015, now freely available online (BDRC:W2PD17457), fundamentally transformed the conditions of research in this field.

Owing to this material, research in the field of the Northern Treasures has made tremendous progress, to such an extent that a survey of its history, lineages, doctrinal contents, ritual liturgies, and so forth has revealed distinctive features that, beyond the mere fact of its continued survival from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, clearly point to a unique tradition that has succeeded in bringing its early medieval origins into modern times.

Numerous other treasures-oriented traditions within the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism have not demonstrated the same resilience. A significant number declined rapidly after the demise of their founders, and even when some transmissions are still being given (through for instance teachings drawn from large collections like the *Rinchen Terdzö*), many of them are moribund and largely eclipsed by more recent revelations. This is clearly not the case with the Northern Treasures, in Tibet and abroad. Thus, despite the vast changes that have shaped Tibet and modern China in the past decades, the lineage of the *Jangter* revelations has remained committed to preserving its century-old tradition by keeping its transmission alive.

These inquiries into the *Jangter* system will be continued in the next volume of this ANR project, devoted entirely to the tradition stemming from Khordong monastery. This will essentially be the work of Stéphane Arguillère, the initiator of this ANR project and most

certainly the leading worldwide specialist of this Eastern Tibetan lineage of the Northern Treasures. His study will focus on the remaining biographies of the patriarchs of this special line of transmission compiled by Khenpo Chöying.

Khordong Monastery is located in Kham, historically within the wide nomadic regions of Golog and Drakyül. The establishment was founded in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century by the first Khordong Terchen (“Great Treasure Revealer of Khordong”), Nüden Dorjé (1802–1864), and soon emerged as a second beacon of the Northern Treasures, alongside Dorjé Drak itself.

Besides Nüden Dorjé, the most influential figures in the monastery’s history include (among many others):

- Khamtrül Shérab Mébar (1752–1815) whose immediate family was in charge of the monastery;
- Gönpö Wangyel (1845–1915);
- Tulku Tsurlo (or Tsullo, i.e., Tsültrim Zangpo, 1895–1954) who was one of the greatest masters of his time and a personal teacher of Dilgo Khyentsé Rinpoché (1910–1991); and
- Chimé Rigdzin Rinpoché (1922–2002), who was the first to introduce the Khordong tradition to India and to the West, particularly Germany.

During the ten-year upheavals of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), the monastery was razed to the ground, and all its contents (texts, statues, ritual objects, etc.) were entirely destroyed. It was rebuilt during the late 1980s and has since regained most of his former glory, notably through its famed *Cham* ritual dances, and so forth.



## Chronological Table

This chronological table primarily presents dates and corresponding events that are covered in the present volume. Earlier dates are included when they relate to earlier lineage holders or to events that are directly or indirectly connected with the Northern Treasures.

DATE	EVENT
1040	Birth of Bari Lotsāwa.
1092	Birth of Sachen Künga Nyingpo.
1111	Death of Bari Lotsāwa.
1122	Birth of Ka Dampa Deshek.
1124	Birth of Nyang-rel Nyima Özer.
1134	Birth of Gotsa Künga Jampa Gyeltsen.
1158	Death of Sachen Künga Nyingpo.
1182	— Foundation of Gots Gönpa. — Death of Gotsa Künga Jampa Gyeltsen.
1192	— Death of Nyang-rel Nyima Özer. — Death of Ka Dampa Deshek.
1212	Birth of Guru Chöwang.
1270	Death of Guru Chöwang.
1291	Birth of Péma Lédrél Tsel.
1308	Birth of Longchenpa.
1315?	Death of Péma Lédrél Tsel.
1323	Birth of Orgyen Lingpa.
1337	Birth of Rigdzin Gödem.
1338	Birth of Phüntsoḱ Dé.
1346	Birth of Dorjé Lingpa.
1360	Probable death year of Orgyen Lingpa.
1364	Death of Longchenpa.
1366	Discovery of the <i>Künzang Gongpa Zangthel</i> by Rigdzin Gödem in Zangzang Lhadrak.
1370	Death of king Phüntsoḱ Dé.
15 <sup>th</sup> c.	Setön Péma Wangchen.
1405	Death of Dorjé Lingpa.

1408	Death of Rigdzin Gödem.
1452	Birth of Lekden Düdjom Dorjé.
1487	Birth of Ngari Pañchen Péma Wangyel.
1512	Birth of Lekden Düdjom Dorjé according to a faulty source.
1524	Birth of Zhikpo Lingpa.
1542	Death of Ngari Pañchen Péma Wangyel.
1550	Probable date of birth of Jangdak Tashi Togyel.
1564	Foundation of Do Dorjé Drak in Dartsédo.
1565	Death of Lekden Düdjom Dorjé.
1580	Birth of Rigdzin Ngagi Wangpo.
1583	Death of Zhikpo Lingpa.
1585	Birth of Jatsön Nyingpo.
1598	Birth of Yölmo Tulku Tendzin Norbu.
1603	Death of Jangdak Tashi Tobgyel.
1604	Birth of Zurchen Chöying Rangdröl.
1615	Birth of Rigdzin Düdül Dorjé.
1617	Birth of the 5 <sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (Lobsang Gyamtso).
1625	— Birth of Rigdzin Longsel Nyingpo. — Death of Lekden Düdjom Dorjé according to a faulty source.
1632	Foundation of Dorjé Drak by Rigdzin Ngagi Wangpo.
1639	Death of Rigdzin Ngagi Wangpo.
1640	Birth of Rigdzin Garwang Dorjé.
1641	Birth of Rigdzin Péma Trinlé.
1644	Death of Yölmo Tulku Tendzin Norbu.
1646	— Birth of Rigdzin Terdak Lingpa. — Birth of Künzang Longyang.
1654	Birth of Lochen Dharma Śrī.
1655	Birth of Taksham Nüden Dorjé (Samten Lingpa).
1656	Death of Jatsön Nyingpo.
1669	— Death of Zurchen Chöying Rangdröl. — Discovery of the <i>Zab tig chos dbyings rang gsal</i> by Garwang Dorjé in Mangyül.
1670	Possible date of birth of Zurchen Choktrül Ngawang Sönam.
1672	Death of Rigdzin Düdül Dorjé.

1679	Birth of Chöwang Dodzin Tsel.
1682	Death of the 5 <sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (Lobsang Gyamtso).
1685	Death of Rigdzin Garwang Dorjé.
1692	Death of Rigdzin Longsel Nyingpo.
1696	Birth of Künzang Garwang Trinlé Namgyel.
1697	Birth of Lelung Rigdzin (Zhepai Dorjé).
1699	Zurchen Choktrül Ngawang Sönam receives novice vows then full monk vows from Rigdzin Péma Trinlé.
1714	— Death of Rigdzin Terdak Lingpa. — Death of Künzang Longyang.
1717	— Dzungar invasion. — Death of Rigdzin Péma Trinlé. — Possible date of death of Zurchen Choktrül Ngawang Sönam. — Death of Lochen Dharma Śrī.
1718	Birth of Kelzang Péma Wangchuk, the 5 <sup>th</sup> Rigdzin Chenpo.
1720	Birth of Kelzang Péma Wangchuk.
1729	Birth of Jigmé Lingpa.
1740	Death of Lelung Rigdzin (Zhepai Dorjé).
1748	Death of Künzang Garwang Trinlé Namgyel.
1761	Birth of Kathok Gétsé Rinpoché.
1771	Death of Kelzang Péma Wangchuk.
1775	Birth of Rigdzin Khamsum Zilnön (Künzang Gyurmé Lhündrup Dorjé).
1779	Death of Kelzang Péma Wangchuk, the 5 <sup>th</sup> Rigdzin Chenpo.
1798	Death of Jigmé Lingpa.
1800	Birth of Do Khyentsé Yéshé Dorjé.
1802	Birth of Khordong Nüden Dorjé.
1808	Birth of Peltrül Dorjé Chang
1810	Death of Rigdzin Khamsum Zilnön. Birth of Ngawang Jampel Mingyur
1813	Birth of Kongtrül Lodrö Thayé.
1829	Death of Kathok Gétsé Rinpoché.
1835	Birth of Trakthung Düdjom Dorjé.
1846	Birth of Ju Mipham.
1848	Birth of Kelzang Péma Wangyel, the eighth Rigdzin Chenpo.
1855	Birth of Démo Trinlé Rabgyé.

1856	Birth of Lerab Lingpa (Nyakla Sögyel).
1864	— Death of Khordong Nüden Dorjé. — Birth of Zhéchen Rabjampa Péma Thegchok Tenpai Gyeltsen.
1865	Birth of Tenpai Nyima (3 <sup>rd</sup> Dodrubchen).
1866	Death of Do Khyentsé Yéshé Dorjé.
1867	Birth of Ngawang Tendzin Norbu.
1871	Birth of Zhéchen Gyeltsab (Gyurmé Péma Namgyel).
1874	Birth of Tertön Rangrig Dorjé.
1876	Birth of Thubten Gyamtso (13 <sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama).
1878	Birth of Gotsa Khenchen Thegchok Tendzin.
1880	— Death of Kelzang Péma Wangyel. — Birth of Kathok Situ Chökyi Gyamtso
1884	Birth of Tulku Tsültrim Zangpo.
1885	Birth of Thubten Chöwang. Other sources propose 1886 for his date of birth.
1887	— Thubten Chöwang is ordained by the 13 <sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. — Death of Peltrül Dorjé Chang.
1888	— Thubten Chöwang travels to Dorjé Drak. — Birth of Bané Tulku Thubten Do-ngak Shédруп Gyeltsen.
1891	Kelzang Jigmé Gyelwai Nyugu becomes the tutor of Thubten Chöwang.
1896	Kelzang Jigmé Gyelwai Nyugu travels from Kham to Dorjé Drak.
1899	— Death of Kongtrül Lodrö Thayé. — Death of Démo Trinlé Rabgyé. — The 13 <sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama makes a pilgrimage to Chökhör Gyel.
1903	Death of Tertön Rangrig Dorjé.
1904	— Death of Trakthung Düdjom Dorjé. — Birth of Ngawang Khyentsé Norbu.
1909	Death of Zhéchen Rabjampa Péma Thegchok Tenpai Gyeltsen.
1910	Birth of Dilgo Khyentsé Rinpoché.
1911	Birth of Reting Tulku (Thubten Jampel Yéshé)
1912	Death of Ju Mipham.
1913	Birth of Jadrel Sangyé Dorjé.
1916	Thubten Chöwang lays the foundation of the bDud las mam rgyal Temple.
1918	Kathok Situ Chökyi Gyamtso visits Dorjé Drak.
1921	Thubten Chöwang travels to Dokham.

1922	Thubten Chöwang lays the foundation of the Ogmin Lhündrup Phodrang Temple.
1924	— Birth of Khenpo Lodrö Zangpo. — Thubten Chöwang is invited to Central Tibet.
1925	Death of Kathok Situ Chökyi Gyamtso.
1926	— Birth of Taklung Tsétrül Rinpoché. — Death of Tenpai Nyima (3 <sup>rd</sup> Dodrubchen). — Death of Lerab Lingpa (Nyakla Sögyel). — Death of Zhéchen Gyeltsab (Gyurmé Péma Namgyel)
1927	Birth of Thubten Trinlé Pelzangpo (4 <sup>th</sup> Dodrubchen).
1932	— Thubten Chöwang completes the building of the Ogmin Lhündrup Phodrang (started ten years prior). — Death of Thubten Chöwang.
1933	— Death of Thubten Gyamtso (13 <sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama). — Birth of Khenpo Jigmé Phüntso.
1934	— Birth of Chuzang Kelzang Namdak Dorjé. — Reting Tulku starts to be regent of Tibet.
1935	Birth of Bané Tulku Yéshé Dödül.
1936	Birth of Jétsün Thubten Jigmé Namdröl Gyamtso.
1938	Chuzang Kelzang Namdak Dorjé is installed on the throne of Dorjé Drak. At that time he received ordination vows.
1940	Death of Ngawang Tendzin Norbu.
1943	Birth of Kyabjé Zenkar Rinpoché (Thubten Nyima).
1947	Death of Reting Tulku.
1948	Bané Tulku Yéshé Dödül enter Samten Orgyen Chöling.
1949	Death of Gotsa Khenchen Thegchok Tendzin
1957	Possible date of Tulku Tsültrim Zangpo's death.
1964	Death of Bané Tulku Thubten Do-ngak Shédруп Gyeltsen.
1967	Birth of Zhechen Rabjam Rinpoché.
1968	Death of Ngawang Khyentsé Norbu.
1982	Bané Tulku Yéshé Dödül give the transmission of the texts of the Five Repositories to a group of ten disciples.
1984	— Foundation of Dorjé Drak in Shimla by Taklung Tsétrül Rinpoché. — Re-opening of Do Dorjé Drak in Dartsédo.
1985	Thubten Jigmé Namdröl Gyamtso restores Dorjé Drak.
1986	Death of Khenpo Lodrö Zangpo.

1990	Bané Tulku Yéshé Dödül gives the empowerment of the <i>Düpa Do</i> in Zurlha Bumgön.
1991	— Death of Dilgo Khyentsé Rinpoché. — Bané Tulku Yéshé Dödül gives again the empowerment of the <i>Düpa Do</i> and other collections of texts (including the Northern Treasures) to five hundred monks.
2000	Chuzang Kelzang Namdak Dorjé takes permanent residence in Taiwan.
2003	Bané Tulku Yéshé Dödül gives the transmission of the <i>Kama</i> and the <i>Gongpa Zangthel</i> in Do Dorjé Drak.
2004	— Death of Khenpo Jigmé Phüntso. — Bané Tulku Yéshé Dödül gives the transmission of the Northern Treasures in Sang-ngak Shukjung Ling.
2006	— Thubten Jigmé Namdröl Gyamtso is invited at Do Dorjé Drak. — Bané Tulku Yéshé Dödül gives the transmission of the Northern Treasures in Chamdo.
2010	Bané Tulku Yéshé Dödül gives the transmission of the Northern Treasures in Dorjé Drak in Central Tibet.
2011	Bané Tulku Yéshé Dödül teaches <i>Kama</i> and <i>Terma</i> in Khordong monastery.
2015	— Death of Taklung Tsétrül Rinpoché. — Death of Jadrel Sangyé Dorjé.
2022	Death of Thubten Trinlé Pelzangpo (4 <sup>th</sup> Dodrubchen).
2024	Death of Jetsün Thubten Jigmé Namdröl Gyamtso.




# *Appendices*



## — Appendix 1 —

## Table of Contents of the *Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*<sup>1</sup>

able of Contents of the *Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal* edition of the *sNga 'gyur byang gter chos skor phyogs bsgrigs*, volumes 1-3, *Byang gter dpe sgrig tshogs chung*, 2015. The preface to this edition, presumably redacted by Khenpo Chöying, reads as follows:

“The great treasure revealer Rigdzin Gökyi Demtruchen, also known as Rigdzin Ngödrup Gyeltsen, was born in 1337, on the tenth day of the Month of Miracles of the Fire Ox year of the sixth sexagenary cycle. His birth was accompanied by auspicious omens that manifested before Mount Rigyel Trazang, at the foot of Zangzang Lhadrak in the Jang (Byang) region of Upper Yéru.

When his spiritual potential awakened and the time had come to reveal profound treasures, he extracted cycles of teachings from the rocky mountain known as 'The Mount Resembling a Heap of Poisonous Snakes' or Zangzang Lhadrak. These teachings were aimed at bringing happiness to Tibet and repelling border armies. They included over five hundred extraordinary sections, such as the profound instructions represented by the *Dzogchen Künzang Gongpa Zangthel* from the fivefold brown leather repository. They were transcribed from the yellow scrolls (*shog ser*) in order to bring fortunate ones and karmically connected disciples to ripening and liberation.

Furthermore, he opened the gateways to many of Guru Padmasambhava's hidden lands, such as Sikkim (Bras ljongs), and so forth. His lineage was maintained by his seven heart-sons,<sup>2</sup> including his supreme son Namgyel Gönpö, his great consort who was a qualified emanated woman, Künpang Dönyö Gyeltsen, etc., and by a vast assembly of disciples, foremost among them were three thousand karmically gifted individuals.

He eventually passed into *nirvāṇa* at the end (of his life), in 1408, during the Earth Rat year of the seventh sexagenary cycle.”

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<sup>1</sup> See also the list of contents prepared by Jay Valentine for the BDRC website, here: <https://library.bdrc.io/show/bdr:MW2PD17457?s=%2Fosearch%2Fsearch%3Fq%253DW2PD17457&unaligned=true>.

<sup>2</sup> I.e., close disciples.

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## Appendix 2

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114. Thugs sgrub rin chen khar bu'i las tshogs las ser srung gnam lcags gur khang: 471-486
115. Las tshogs rin chen char 'bebs: 487-498
116. brDa' yig lde mig (byang gter gyi lde mig): 499-504


\*

Source: *Byañ gter rdzogs chen dgoñs pa zañ thal and Thugs sgrub skor* — Collections of texts from two cycles of rediscovered teachings of the Byañ-gter or Rdo-rje-brag tradition of the Rñyiñ-ma-pa school, Revealed from their place of concealment by Rig-'dzin Rgod-kyi-ldem-'phru-can. Reproduced from ancient manuscripts from the monastery of Gsañ-sñags-chos-gliñ in Spiti. Published by Orgyan Dorji, Suma, Kinnaur Distt. 3 volumes, 1978.

\*

## Appendix 3

### Northern Treasures Works by Ngari Pañchen Péma Wangyel (1487–1542) kept in the Potala

 single manuscript volume of works attributed to Ngari Pañchen Péma Wangyel—collated under the reference “Potala number 01272”—is preserved in the Potala Library. This volume contains only eleven individual texts and thus offers an incomplete picture of the numerous works authored and revealed by Péma Wangyel. These eleven texts are as follows:

1. *Rig ‘dzin yongs ‘dus las/ ‘Chi med ye shes ‘od mchog gi dbang chog grub dgon gyi phyogs bsgrigs* (19 folios)
2. *Rig ‘dzin yong ‘dus las/ sPros bral bde chen ma’i dbang gi sgrub thabs grub dgon kun bzang gi phyogs sgrigs* (29 folios)
3. *Rig ‘dzin yong ‘dus las/ bsTan pa rmad byung ma’i dbang sgrub grub dgon kun bzang gi phyogs sgrigs* (35 folios)
4. *Rig ‘dzin yong ‘dus las/ Sin rdu rgya mtsho chung ba’i dbang sgrub thabs grub dgon kun bzang gi phyogs sgrigs* (21 folios)
5. *Rig ‘dzin yongs ‘dus las/ Sin rdu rgya mtsho che ba’i dbang sgrub thabs grub dgon kun bzang gi phyogs sgrigs* (15 folios)
6. *Zab chos rig ‘dzin yongs ‘dus kyi gter srung ma gza’ rdor gsum mchod thabs grub dgon gyi phyogs sgrigs* (3 folios)
7. *Thug rje chen po ‘gro ba ‘dul ba’i dmar khrid kyi rim pa las rnam bshad rin chen gter* (55 folios)
8. *Byang gter chos skor rnam kyī spyi chings gsal byed nor bu’i gter* (15 folios)
9. *Rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po’i lam gyi cha lag sdom pa gsum rnam par nges pa’i bstan bcos* (18 folios)
10. *Yongs rdzogs bstan pa’i mnga’ bdag pan chen mnga’ ris pad ma dbang rgyal rdo rje grags pa rgyal mtshan gyi rtogs brjod rin chen phreng ba* (48 folios)
11. *gNod sbyin tsi’u dmar po’i gsol kha rgyas pa* (13 folios).

The first six works belong to *The Complete Assembly of Knowledge-Holders* (*Rig ‘dzin yongs ‘dus*), also known as *bKa’ brgyad rig ‘dzin yongs ‘dus*, an important treasure centered upon the collective deities known as the Eight Pronouncements (*bKa’ brgyad*). The first five works focus on liturgical practices associated with empowerment rituals, while the sixth deals with the offerings that are presented to the three main

Protectors of Dzogchen teachings, Ma (Ma mo Ekajāti), Za (gZa' bdud Rāhula), and Dor (rDo rje legs pa).

Text no. 7 is an extensive explanation (the largest work in the volume) of the various stages of practice of the *Great Compassionate One Subjugating Migrating Beings* (*Thugs rje chen po 'gro ba 'dul ba*), originally a treasure discovered by Nyang-rel Nyima Özer (1124–1192).

Text no. 8 is a very interesting text about the “general outline” (*spyi chings*) of the cycles of teachings within the Northern Treasures.

Text no. 9 is the famed root-text on the three vows (*sdom gsum*) that is generally associated with Ngari Pañchen's name.

Text no. 10 is a biographical account of the life of Ngari Pañchen.

Text no. 11 is an extensive libation offering to the *yakṣa* Tsi'u Marpo.

To my knowledge, the *Collected Works* by Ngari Pañchen chen have not yet been published, although a number of his revelations and commentatorial compositions have found their way in the recent massive *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs* collection. The eleven works listed here thus constitute only a meager sample of what this master discovered and authored.

Source: Dom po Thub bstan rgyal mtshan, *Po ta lar bzhugs pa'i rnying ma'i gsung 'bum dkar chag* (*rNying ma'i gsung 'bum dkar chag*), Lha sa, 1992. BDRC bdr:MW19822.



## Appendix 4

### The Lineage of the *Gongpa Zangthel* according to the *Prayer to the Lineage of the* *Transparent Contemplation of the Great* *Perfection (rDzogs pa chen po* *dgongs pa zang thal brgyud 'debs)*

**P**rayers to the lineage (*brgyud 'debs*) are specific supplications aiming at receiving the blessings (*byin rlabs*) of the lineage holders of a particular cycle of teachings. They are invaluable sources for identifying the main masters invoked, as well as for understanding the multiple lines of transmission that may exist within a single collection of texts. In the present context, the line of transmission is that of the *Künzang Gongpa Zangthel* (*Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*), with the following successive masters:

1. Samantabhadra
2. Vajradhara
3. Vajrasattva
4. Garab Dorjé
5. Mañjuśrīmitra
6. Śrī Shingha (Śrī Siṃha)
7. Padmasambhava
8. Vimalamitra
9. Vairocana
10. Trisong Détsen
11. Yéshé Tsogyel<sup>1</sup>
12. Tertön Rigdzin Muknag<sup>2</sup>
13. Namgyel Gönpö (1399–1423)
14. Dorjé Gyeltsen
15. Sangyé Tenpa

<sup>1</sup> According to the traditional history of the cycle, Ye shes mtsho rgyal received the *dGongs pa zang thal* directly from Padmasambhava and took part in the cache of the Treasure in *Zang zang lha brag*. After her, the lineage continues through the Treasure revelation.

<sup>2</sup> This is another name of Rig 'dzin rGod ldem (1337–1408) who excavated the Treasure in 1366.

16. Shākya Zangpo (15th-16th c.)<sup>3</sup>
17. Khyenden Wangpo
18. Sangyé Lodrö
19. Namkha Rinchen
20. 'Chi med tshe ring
21. Zilnön Dorjé<sup>4</sup>
22. Künzang Longyang (1646–1714)
23. Chöwang Dordzin Tsel (= Künkhyen Dorjé Zibji, Chökyi Wangchuk, b. 1679)<sup>5</sup>
24. Künzang Garwang Trinlé Namgyel (1696–1748).

The actual prayer is divided into three parts (not numerated). The first one enumerates the masters listed above, providing very few details, such as their potential mudrā or the implements that they hold. The second part follows the exact same list but offers more detailed information about the places where the lineage masters lived, taught or originated.

After # 23, the prayer is dedicated to the root-master, who is almost certainly Künzang Garwang Trinlé Namgyel (# 24), in which case the author of the prayer in its present form would likely have been his main disciple. The third part of the prayer is concerned with the supplication to the Protectors of the teachings, and an aspiration prayer for realizing the principles of the Great Perfection either in this life or in the Bardo.

The last master mentioned in the list, Künzang Garwang Trinlé Namgyel, has authored an interesting Guidance Manual (*khrid yig*) associated with *The Mirror of the Heart of Vajrasattva* (*rDor sems thugs kyi me long*) cycle, which had been previously discovered by Ngari Pañchen (1487–1542).<sup>6</sup> According to his biography, he was born in 1696 (*me byi lo*)<sup>7</sup> and studied numerous cycles of instructions, including *The Mirror of the Heart of Vajrasattva* until all signs of success manifested.

<sup>3</sup> Dates recovered from Valentine, *The Lords of the Northern Treasures*, p. xiv.

<sup>4</sup> On this master see Franz-Karl Ehrhard, *A Rosary of Rubies*, p. 104 n.4.

<sup>5</sup> His mother was actually the daughter of Zil gnon rdo rje (# 21); see Solmsdorf, *Treasure-Traditions of Western Tibet*, p. 60 n. 94. See his biography in Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu, *gCod yul nyon mongs zhi byed kyi bka' gter bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar byin rlabs gter mtsho*, pp. 181-262.

<sup>6</sup> The text is simply entitled *rDor sems thugs kyi me long las/ gar dbang 'phrin las rnam rgyal gyi* (=gyis) *mdzad pa'i 'khrid* (= *khrid*) *yig*, 37 folios. It also appears in the *gCod* lineage of the Northern Treasures; see Sanders & Pansa, "The Appearance of *gcod* in the rNying ma School", p. 328 n. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu, *gCod yul nyon mongs zhi byed kyi bka' gter bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar byin rlabs gter mtsho*, pp. 263.

Later, he took a secret spouse (*gsang yum*) named Karma Chödrön Démo who bore him a son named Péma Jikdrel. The latter would become his heir in the *Chö* (*gCod*) lineage.<sup>8</sup> From his second wife, Nyida Wangmo, he also had a daughter named Déchen Wangmo. Trinlé Namgyel passed away at the age of fifty-two (in 1748, *'brug lo*).<sup>9</sup>





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<sup>8</sup> This can be deduced from the fact that Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu bases his account on 'Phrin las nam rgyal's biography, which itself relies on the biography of the latter's master (Kun mkhyen Chos kyi dbang phyug) and on that of the latter's son Padma 'jigs bral (*id., op. cit.*, p. 262). On Padma 'jigs bral's biography, see *op. cit.*, pp. 277-305.

<sup>9</sup> The biography says fifty-three but since Tibetans count the gestation year, this should be understood as fifty-two according to modern computation.

## Appendix 5

### A Line of Transmission of the *dGongs pa zang thal* according to the *History of the Lineage known as the Garland of Gems*

he *History of the Lineage Known as the Garland of Gems* (*brGyud pa'i lo rgyus nor bu'i phreng ba*) is a late work that has been included in some of the later editions of the *Gongpa Zangthel*.<sup>1</sup> It was authored by one Jamyang Sönam Gyeltsen Pelzangpo who is supposed to have been the 25<sup>th</sup> Sakya Trichen, also known as Drakpa Lodrö (1563–1617).<sup>2</sup> I have so far been unable to identify any reference to the transmission of the *Gongpa Zangthel* in his biography, nor have I found any indication in the same source of this master's interest in Dzogchen teachings. However, in the present narrative, he recounts the lineage from which he has received transmission, including direct teachings from Chökyi Gyeltsen Pelzangpo, Rigdzin Namkha Drakpa and Namgyel Gönpö, among others. This close connection raises questions about his dates.<sup>3</sup> He states (p. 68) that the transmission he obtained from Namkha Drakpa occurred seventy-four years after the *terma* revelation by Gödem. This would correspond to 1439 (*sa mo lug*).<sup>4</sup> He also explains that the transmission lasted down to 1441 (*lcags mo bya*), covering a period during which he received the various empowerments of the *Gongpa Zangthel*.<sup>5</sup> The teachings he received are connected to the following line of transmission:

#### 1. Ö Mingyurwa / Samantabhadra (pp. 45-46)<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The text is not, for instance, included in the 1978 three volume edition of the *Byang gter rdzogs chen dgongs pa zang thal and Thugs sgrub skor*, nor is it contained in the A 'dzom chos sgar edition. See its detailed summary above in chapter II.

<sup>2</sup> About his life, see 'Jam mgon A mes zhabs, *sNgags 'chang grags pa blo gros kyi rnam thar*, pp. 39-91. His name is given on p. 43 as *sNgags 'chang Grags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po*, and as 'Jam dbyangs bSod nams rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po on p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> The fact that he belong to the Sa skya lineage and may therefore really have been the 25<sup>th</sup> Sa skya khri 'dzin, is hinted at in the *Nor bu'i phreng ba* itself, in which he introduces himself at one point as being of Sa skya lineage (p. 69: *bdag sa skya 'jam dbyangs bsod nams rgyal mtshan dpal bzang posl...*).

<sup>4</sup> There is a discrepancy of about one century and a half when comparing these dates with those that are traditionally associated with the 25<sup>th</sup> Sa skya khri 'dzin.

<sup>5</sup> The list he gives enumerates: *spros bcas dbang*, *spros med dbang*, *shin tu spros med dbang*, *rab tu spros med dbang*, as well as *thugs dbang*, and *rtsal dbang*.

<sup>6</sup> 'Od mi 'gyur ba ("Immutable Light") is the name of the primordial Buddha as it appears in several Tantras of the *dGongs pa zang thal* (and elsewhere). This name

2. Buddhas of the Five Clans (*rigs lnga*, p. 46)
3. Mahā Vajradhara/Vajrasattva (p. 46)
4. Vajrapāṇi (pp. 46-48)<sup>7</sup>
5. Garab Dorjé (pp. 48-49)
6. Mañjuśrīmitra (pp. 49-52)
7. Shrī seng ha (Śrī Siṃha) (p. 52)
8. Padmasambhava (p. 52)
9. Vairocana (p. 52)
10. Vimalamitra (p. 52)<sup>8</sup>
11. Trisong Détsen (p. 53)
12. Yéshé Tsogyel (p. 53)<sup>9</sup>
13. Tertön Rigdzin Muknak (p. 56)<sup>10</sup>
14. Sönam Zangpo (p. 66)
15. Rigdzin Chenpo Namkha Drakpa (p. 66)<sup>11</sup>
16. Namgyel Gönpö (p. 68)<sup>12</sup>
17. Sakya Jamyang Sönam Gyeltsen Pelzangpo (p. 69)

The issue about the author of this text is thorny because his dates on the Sakya side seem to be well established, yet they do not align with the chronology he himself provides for the transmission he received. One possible solution would be to posit the existence of two Sakya Jamyang Sönam Gyeltsen Pelzangpo, which I think is highly unlikely.




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can be interpreted as symbolically referring to the natural state (*gnas lugs*), which is defined as the nondifferentiation of Emptiness and Clarity (*stong gsal dbyer med*). The Emptiness aspect (*stong cha*) of this state is to be associated with the “Immutable” (*mi ’gyur ba*) Essence (*ngo bo*) of the Buddha, while the “Light” or Clarity aspect (*gsal cha*) is connected to his Nature (*rang bzhin*). See *supra* p. 62 n. 6; see also P. Schwieger, *Die Werksammlungen Kun-tu bzañ-po’i dgoñs-pa zang-thal*, p. xix.

<sup>7</sup> Starting with the next in the line of transmission, i.e., dGa’ rab rdo rje, all masters belong to the human realm, whereas nos. 1-4 were associated with divine abodes.

<sup>8</sup> Padmasambhava, Vairocana, and Vimalamitra are traditionally presented as having all been disciples of Śrī Siṃha, although not at the same time.

<sup>9</sup> She was a disciple of Padmasambhava (no. 8), not of Vairocana or Vimalamitra. And even though she had been married to king Khri srong lde btsan, she was in no way his disciple.


<sup>10</sup> As we have seen in Appendix 4, this is Rig ’dzin rGod ldem. In the lineage of the *Ka dag rang byung rang shar* (*Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 3 p. 11), he is described as a great Knowledge-Holder (*rig ’dzin chen po*) having a dark red or brown complexion (*sku mdog dmar smug*); see also appendix 6.

<sup>11</sup> bSod nams bzang po and Nam mkha’ grags pa were both direct disciples of Rig ’dzin rGod ldem.

<sup>12</sup> He was Rig ’dzin rGod ldem’s son.

## Appendix 6

### The Lineage of the *Kadak Rangjung Rangshar* according the Preliminaries known as *The Five Nails* (*gZer lnga*)

he *Natural Emergence of the Self-Arisen Primordial Purity* (*Ka dag rang byung rang shar*) revealed by Rigdzin Gödem in 1366 at Zangzang Lhadrak is sometimes regarded as a secondary or complementary Dzogchen cycle associated with the famed *Transparent Contemplation of Samantabhadra* (*Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*).<sup>1</sup> Here, I shall briefly introduce the structure of its preliminary practices (*sngon 'gro*) and present its two main lines of transmissions.<sup>2</sup> The main source for this short note is *The Five Nails making up the Key Points of the Precious Preliminaries* (*sNgon 'gro rin po che gnad kyi gzer lnga*), which is the second text in the collection.<sup>3</sup>

#### 1. *The Five Nails*

Its structure is organized around five nails (*gzer lnga*) corresponding to the five following practices:

1. taking Refuge and generating *bodhicitta* (*skyabs 'gro sems bskyed*);
2. releasing the grasping at a self (*bdag 'dzin bkrol ba*);
3. the purification of obscurations and the confession (*sgrib sbyangs bshags pa*);
4. the reflection on impermanence urging [renunciation] (*bskul 'debs mi rtag pa*); and
5. the Guru-Yoga (*bla ma'i rnal 'byor*).

It should be noted that this manner of introducing the preliminaries (*sngon 'gro*) actually combines two traditional systems which are

<sup>1</sup> For a complete analytical description of the *Ka dag rang byung rang shar* cycle, see Peter Schwieger, *Die Werksammlungen Kun-tu bzan-po'i dgoñs-pa zang-thal, Ka-dag ran-byun ran-sar und mKha'-'gro gsañ-ba ye-śes-kyi rgyud*, pp. 114-132.

<sup>2</sup> These lines of transmission are detailed in Schwieger, *op. cit.*, p. 115. Another line of transmission according to the main *Supplication* (*gSol 'debs*) text of this cycle is fully described in Schwieger, *ib.*, p. 116.

<sup>3</sup> On this system of five preliminary practices described according to the *dGongs pa zang thal*, see Tulku Thondup, *Boundless Vision*, pp. 65-79; *id.*, *The Five Nails*, *passim*. See also S. Arguillère, *Manuel de la transpiration immédiate*, p. 117 *et seq.*

generally referred to as the ordinary preliminaries (*thun mong gi sngon 'gro*) and the extraordinary preliminaries (*thun min gi sngon 'gro*). The first preliminaries revolve around four reflections:

1. reflecting on the difficulty of obtaining a human body,
2. reflecting on impermanence,
3. reflecting on the unsatisfactory nature of Saṃsāra, and
4. reflecting on the inevitability of karmic results.

The fourth preliminary listed among the Five Nails corresponds to no. 2 in the list. The extraordinary preliminaries may vary in content and structure from one school to another, or even from one cycle to another within a single school. In general, they follow the following scheme:

1. Refuge,
2. *bodhicitta*,
3. offering of the maṇḍala,
4. purification of Vajrasattva, and
5. Guru-Yoga.

Nos. 1-2 correspond to no. 1 of the *Five Nails*. The offering of the maṇḍala perfectly relates to the second preliminary, which involves releasing grasping at a self. The purification of Vajrasattva is identical to the purification of obscurations and the recitation of the confession. Evidently, the Guru-Yoga is the same in both presentations and is central to both the preliminaries (*sngon 'gro*) and the main practice (*dnagos gzhi*).<sup>4</sup>

The following section of the text contains a dialogue between Padmasambhava and Yéshé Tsogyel about Guru-Yoga, including a lengthy prayer by Tsogyel requesting the blessing of her master.

## 2. The Lineage of the Cycle

The Guru-Yoga itself relies on a complex visualization in which the following lineage holders appear:

1. Samantabhadra,
2. Vajrasattva,
3. Garab Dorjé,
4. Śrī Siṃha,

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<sup>4</sup> Within the context of this cycle, the main practice primarily revolves around the experience of the natural state (*gnas lugs*), the various methods for integrating it, as well as secret precepts for dispelling potential obstacles (*gegs sel*) to this integration, and so forth.

5. Padmasambhava,
6. Yéshé Tsogyel,
7. Rigdzin Gödem (referred to as Rigdzin Chenpo, described as having a dark red or brown complexion [*sku mdog dmar smug*]),<sup>5</sup>
8. his son, Namgyel Gönpö,
- 9-10. the two qualified masters (*mtshan ldan bla ma rnam gnyis*),<sup>6</sup>
11. Śākya Zangpo,<sup>7</sup>
12. Dūdjom Dorjé,<sup>8</sup>
13. Pelden Lodrö,<sup>9</sup>
14. the *Dharmarāja* bearing *Maṅga* (*bKra shis*) in his name,<sup>10</sup> and
15. the author's root-master (*rtsa ba'i bla ma*, unnamed).

The next section of the text contains a lineage prayer presenting an alternative line of masters following Namgyel Gönpö (no. 8 above). Thus, after Gödem's son, the lineage continues as:

9. Dorjé Gönpö,
10. Ngawang Drakpa,
11. Sangyé Pelzang,<sup>11</sup>
12. the two tantrikas (*sngags 'chang rnam gnyis*),<sup>12</sup>
13. Namkha Gyeltsen,
14. Śākya Zangpo,

<sup>5</sup> Hence, his name sometimes appears in lineage prayers as *gter ston Rig 'dzin smug nag*. See here in Appendixes 4 and 5 and *inter alia*, 'Jam dbyangs bSod nams rgyal mtshan, *brGyud pa'i lo rgyus nor bu'i phreng ba*, in *sNga 'gyur byang gter chos skor phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 1, p. 46.

<sup>6</sup> These should be bSod nams bzang po and Nam mkha' grags pa. However, they may also be rDo rje dpal and Byams pa bshes gnyen who also appear below (see note 10). This requires clarification. According to J. Valentine (email of the 08/05/2026, these two masters should be Byams pa bshes gnyen and Ngag dbang grags pa. The first was indeed a direct disciple of rNam rgyal mgon (see bdr:P10116). He was the first *Yol mo sprul sku*.

<sup>7</sup> He was the first *Yol mo sprul sku*.

<sup>8</sup> Primarily known as Legs ldan rdo rje. He was the second *rDo rje brag sprul sku*.

<sup>9</sup> He was also a disciple of Padma gling pa (1450–1521). See Valentine, "The Great Perfection in the Early Biographies of the Northern Treasure Tradition", p. 127.

<sup>10</sup> Lower in the text (p. 24), he is identified as the "great tantrika" (*sngags 'chang chen po*) Chos rgyal maṅga'i mtshan, i.e., Chos rgyal bkra shis. An interlinear note further names him Rig 'dzin maṅga'i mtshan can (p. 25.4). He was in fact Chos rgyal bkra shis stobs rgyal (1550–1602). The same note indicates that he received these teachings from rJe btsun Mnga' ri pa chen po, dPal ldan blo gros, as well as from Byams pa Chos kyi rgyal mtshan.

<sup>11</sup> He was an important Dzogchen master, styled in the prayer as having perfected the Four Lamps (*sgron bzhi*) and having attained the full measure of the Four Visions (*snang bzhi*).

<sup>12</sup> According to J. Valentine (email of the 08/05/2026), these should be Chos rgyal bsod nams and Chos skyong bsod nams bkra shis, the first being the father of the second.

15. Dūdjom Dorjé, and
16. Pelden Lodrö.

A further line of transmission branching from rNam rgyal mgon po provides the following names:

9. Śrī Dhwa dza (Pelden Tsültrim),
10. Gyeltsen Shényen,
11. Sönam Zangpo,
12. Namkha Drakpa,
13. Délek Gyeltsen,
14. Sétön Rinchen Gyeltsen,
15. Gönpö Dawa,
16. Chökyi Gyeltsen,
17. Chögyel (*chos rgyal mnga' ba'i mtshan: "dharmaṛāja ruler name"*),<sup>13</sup>
18. the author's root-master.<sup>14</sup>

In the Guru-Yoga practice, the purpose of invoking all these lineage masters is to receive their blessings (*byin rlabs*) and merge one's mind with theirs. In this manner, the practitioner gradually becomes familiar with the experience of the natural state of his Mind (*sems nyid kyi gnas lugs*).




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<sup>13</sup> See note 10 *supra*.

<sup>14</sup> There are no explicit authors for these lines of transmission, as names are regularly added through the passing of generations. The last in the lineage typically adds his master's name (often simply the mention *rtsa ba'i bla ma*) to the on-going list (as evidenced by the change from *gter ma* punctuation (།) to the use of *shad* (།) before returning to *gter ma* punctuation).

## Appendix 7

### The Lineage of Rigdzin Gödem's Incarnations

**W**hen reading the biographies of the lineage holders of the Northern Treasures, one may become confused by the various names attributed to a single master, as well as by his twofold status within the chronological hierarchy as an Incarnate or Tulku (*sprul sku*) and a Throne Holder (*khri 'dzin*). As a general rule—supported by historical evidence—starting with the foundation of Dorjé Drak Monastery and its relocation to its present site in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Throne Holders have consistently been recognized as Tulkus of Gödem. The lineage may therefore be envisioned as follows:

#### *I. The Original Source of the Transmission and the First Incarnation*

1. Rigdzin Gödem (1337–1408).
2. Lekden Düdjom Dorjé (1452–1565<sup>1</sup> or 1512–1625).

#### *II. The Throne Holders of Dorjé Drak*

3. Rigdzin Ngagi Wangpo (1580–1639),<sup>2</sup> the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tulku and 1<sup>st</sup> Throne Holder.
4. Rigdzin Péma Trinlé (1641–1717),<sup>3</sup> the 4<sup>th</sup> Tulku and 2<sup>nd</sup> Throne Holder.
5. Kelzang Péma Wangchuk (1720–1771),<sup>4</sup> the 5<sup>th</sup> Tulku and 3<sup>rd</sup> Throne Holder.

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<sup>1</sup> The dates cited here are those provided in BDRC (bdr:P1701) and appear to derive from Samten Chhosphel, “The Second Dorje Drak Rigdzin, Lekden Dorje”, <https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Second-Dorje-Drak-Rigdzin-Lekden-Dorje/3010>. His biography, as rendered by Khenpo Chöying, is included in the forthcoming volume 4 of the present series (by S. Arguillère and C. Ducher).

<sup>2</sup> In light of these dates, the chronology of Legs ldan rdo rje must be revised to 1452–1565; otherwise, his lifetime would partially overlap with that of his subsequent incarnation.

<sup>3</sup> He is among the numerous lineage holders of the rNying ma tradition who died as the hands of the Dzungar invaders.

<sup>4</sup> He was the main master of Grub dbang Padma bshes gnyen (see section no. 3 in chapter III of the present volume).

6. Künzang Gyurmé (Lhündrup Dorjé, 1775–1810),<sup>5</sup> the 6<sup>th</sup> Tulku and 4<sup>th</sup> Throne Holder.
7. Ngawang Jampel Mingyur (1810–1844), the 7<sup>th</sup> Tulku and 5<sup>th</sup> Throne Holder.<sup>6</sup>
8. Kelzang Péma Wangyel (Düdül Dorjé, 1848–1880), the 8<sup>th</sup> Tulku and 6<sup>th</sup> Throne Holder.<sup>7</sup>
9. Thubten Chöwang (Nyamnyid Dorjé, 1886–1933), the 9<sup>th</sup> Tulku and 7<sup>th</sup> Throne Holder.<sup>8</sup>
10. Thubten Jigmé (Namdröl Gyamtso, 1936–2024), the 10<sup>th</sup> Tulku and 8<sup>th</sup> Throne Holder.<sup>9</sup>



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<sup>5</sup> He appears in this volume under the name of Rig ‘dzin Khams gsum zil gnon (see no. 4 in chapter III).

<sup>6</sup> See his biography *supra* in chapter III (no. 7).

<sup>7</sup> See his biography *supra* in chapter III (no. 8).

<sup>8</sup> See his biography *supra* in chapter III (no. 10).

<sup>9</sup> See his biography *supra* in chapter III (no. 12).

## Table of Equivalences

This table shows the correspondences between the phonetic renderings used in the main body of the present volume and their equivalents in Wylie transliteration.

Phonetics	Wylie
Aché	A che
Adzom Drukpa Rinpoché	A 'dzom 'brug pa rin po che
Ama Machig Labdrön	A ma ma chig Lab sgron
Amdo	A mdo
Ati	A ti
Ba Drubpa	'Ba' grub pa
Banak Zhöl	sBra nag zhol
Bané	Baḥ gnas
Bāné	Bāḥ gnas <sup>1</sup>
Bané Rigpai Dorjé	Bāḥ gnas Rig pa'i rdo rje
Bāné Rinpoché Do-ngak Shédrup	Bāḥ gnas rin po che mDo sngags bshad sgrub
Bané Tulku Gyelo	Bah gnas sprul sku rGyal lo
Bané Tulku Yéshé Dūdül	Bāḥ gnas sprul sku Ye shes bdud 'dul
Bardo	Bar do
Barkhang	Bar khang
Béru	Be ru
Bön	Bon
Bönpo	Bon po
Bulé Gang	Bu le gangs
Bulé Norbu Zangpo	Bu le Nor bu bzang po
Bum	'Bum

<sup>1</sup> Baḥ gnas and Bāḥ gnas evidently point to the same place. The two forms are simply variants found in the texts.

Bumthang	Bum thang
Chakla	lCags la
Chakla Gyelpo	lCags la rgyal po
Cham	'Cham
Chamdo	Chab mdo
Chang	'chang
Chezhöl	lCe zhol
Chimé Tséring	'Chi med tshe ring
Chimphu	mChims phu
Chimphu Zurtrül	mChims phu zur sprul
Chiti	sPyi ti
Chö	gCod
Chöchö Nénang	Chos spyod gnas nang
Chöchö Rabsel	Chos spyod rab gsal
Chödrön	Chos sgron
Chögyel Jangpa	Chos rgyal byang pa
Chögyel Sönam	Chos rgyal bsod nams
Chögyel Tashi Tobgyel	Chos rgyal bKra shis stobs rgyal
Chögyel Wangpo Dé	Chos rgyal dbang po sde
Chogyur Lingpa	mChog gyur gling pa
Chöjé Durtrö Relpa	Chos rje Dur khrod ral pa
Chöjé Sangyé Pelzang	Chos rje Sangs rgyal dpal bzang
Chok	Cog
Chokdrub Tenpai Gyeltsen	mChog grub bsTan pa'i rgyal mtshan
Chökhör Namgyel Ling	Chos 'khor rnam rgyal gling
Choktrül Chökyl Nyima	mChog sprul Chos kyi nyi ma
Choktrül Dorlo	mChog sprul rDor lo
Choktrül Gyurmé Dorjé	mChog sprul 'Gyur med rdo rje
Choktrül Lungtok Tendzin Zangpo	mChog sprul Lung rtogs bstan 'dzin

	bzang po
Choktrül Tsültrim Zangpo	mChog sprul Tshul khrim s bzang po
Chökyi Gyeltsen	Chos kyi rgyal mtshan
Chökyi Gyeltsen Pelzangpo	Chos kyi rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po
Chökyi Wangchuk	Chos kyi dbang phyug
Chokzhi Riksum	Phyogs bzhi'i rigs gsum
Chongkhang	'Phyong khang
Chongyé	'Phyongs rgyas
Chöwang Dordzin Tsel	Chos dbang rdo 'dzin rtsal
Chöwang Dorjé Dzinpa	Chos dbang rDo rje 'dzin pa
Chöying Rangdröl	Chos dbyings rang grol
Chülen	bCud len
Chuzang	Chu bzang
Chuzang Déchen Jampa Ling	Chu bzang bDe chen byams pa gling
Chuzang Dorjé Chang	Chu bzang rDo rje 'chang
Chuzang Drimé Loden	Chu bzang Dri med blo ldan
Chuzang Khenchen	Chu bzang mkhan chen
Chuzang Künga Zangpo	Chu bzang Kun dga' bzang po
Chuzang Ladrang	Chu bzang bla brang
Chuzang Namkha Longyang	Chu bzang Nam mkha' klong yangs
Chuzang Péma Ngawang Tendzin	Chu bzang Padma ngag dbang bstan 'dzin
Chuzang Rinpoché	Chu bzang rin po che
Chuzang Rinpoché Namkha Longyang	Chu bzang rin po che Nam mkha' klong yangs
Chuzang Tulku	Chu bzang sprul sku
Chuzang Tulku Péma Ngédön Drimé Loden	Chu bzang sprul sku Padma nges don dri med blo ldan
Dakpo Kagyü	Dwags po bka' brgyud
Damchen Dorjé Lekpa	Dam can rDo rje legs pa
Dampa Déshek	Dam pa bde gshegs

Dar-tsha	rDar tsha
Dardo Dorjé Drak	Dar mdo rDo rje brag
Dartsédo	Dar rtse mdo
Dartsédo Dorjé Drak	Dar rtse mdo rDo rje brag
Darzung	Dar bzang
Déchen Chöding	bDe chen chos sdings
Déchen Wangmo	bDe chen dbang mo
Délek Gyeltsen	bDe legs rgyal mtshan
Démo Trinlé Rabgyé	De mo phrin las rab rgyas
Denthok	gDan thog
Dergué	sDe dge
Dergué Gotsa Khenchen	sDe dge mGo tsha mkhan chen
Déyang Shar	bDe yangs shar
Dilgo Khyentsé	Dil mgo mKhyen brtse
Dilgo Khyentsé Rinpoché	Dil mgo mkhyen brtse rin po che
Dö	mDos
Do Dorjé Drak	mDo rDo rje brag
Do Khyentsé Yéshé Dorjé	mDo mkhyen brtse Ye shes rdo rje
Do Shukjung Tulku	rDo Shugs 'byung sprul sku
Dodrak	rDo brag
Dodrak Chuzang Rinpoché	rDo brag Chu bzang rin po che
Dodrak Chuzang Tulku	rDo brag Chu bzang sprul sku
Dodrak Kyabgön Chenpo	rDo brag sKyabs mgon chen po
Dodrak Kyabgön Rigdzin Chenmo	rDo brag skyabs mgon Rig 'dzin chen mo
Dodrak Rigdzin Chenmo	rDo brag Rig 'dzin chen mo
Dodrak Rigdzin Chenpo	rDo brag Rig 'dzin chen po
Dodrub Rinpoché	rDo grub rin po che
Dodrubchen	rDo grub chen
Dodrup	rDo grub

Dodrupchen	rDo grub chen
Dokham	mDo khams
Dokham Dorjé Drak	mDo khams rDo rje brag
Dölphur	Dol phur
Domang	mDo mang
Domang Khenchen Dépa	mDo mang mKhan chen sde pa
Domang Tulku Tiṣṭha	mDo mang sprul sku Tiṣṭha
Domé	mDo smad
Dong	lDong
Döndrub Tashi	Don grub bkra shis
Döpal Lhamo	'Dod dpal lha mo
Döpel Lhamokhang	'Dod dpal lha mo khang
Dorjé Drak	rDo rje brag
Dorjé Drakden	rDo rje grags ldan
Dorjé Draktsel	rDo rje drag rtsal
Dorjé Drölma	rDo rje sgrol ma
Dorjé Düdjom	rDo rje bdud 'joms
Dorjé Gönpö	rDo rje mgon po
Dorjé Gyeltsen	rDo rje rgyal mtshan
Dorjé Lekpa	rDo rje legs pa
Dorjé Ling	rDo rje gling
Dorjé Lingpa	rDo rje gling pa
Dorjé Namjom	rDo rje rnam 'joms
Dorjé Öbar	rDo rje 'od 'bar
Dorjé Phalam	rDo rje pha lam
Dorjé Phurba	rDo rje phur ba
Dorjé Yudrönma	rDo rje g.yu sgron ma
Dorjé Zhönu	rDo rje gzhon nu
Dra Nang-gyel Ling	Gra Nang rgyal gling

Dragkar Tashi Ding	Brag dkar bkra shis sdings
Dragrma	Brag ri ma
Drak	sGrag
Drak Yangdzong	sBrag yang rdzong
Drak Yangdzong	Brag yang rdzong
Drak-ra Choktrül	Brag ra mchog sprul
Drak-ra Rinpoché	Brag ra rin po che
Drakpa Lodrö	Grag pa blo gros
Drakpo Tsel	Drag po rtsal
Drakra Ladrang	Brag ra bla brang
Drakthok	Brag thog
Drakthok Gönpa	Brag thog dgon pa
Drakyang Dzong	bsGrag yang rdzong
Dralha	dGra lha
Dré	'Dre
Drépung	'Bras spungs
Drépung Losel Ling	'Bras spung blo gsal gling
Drémo Shong	'Bras mo shong
Drimé Lhünpo	Dri med lhun po
Drimé Lodrö	Dri med blo gros
Drölma	sGrol ma
Drölmapa	sGrol ma pa
Drompa Gyang	Grom pa rgyang
Drong-ngur Chöjor Gyamtso	'Brong ngur Chos 'byor rgya mtsho
Drong-ngur Mapham Rinpoché	'Brong ngur Ma pham rin po che
Drubchen	sGrub chen
Drubchen Kagyé	sGrub chen bka' brgyad
Drubgön	Grub dgon
Drubnyé Yéshé Tenzin	Grub brnyes Ye shes bstan 'dzin

Drubwang Péma Norbu	Grub dbang Padma nor bu
Drubwang Péma Shényen	Grub dbang Padma bshes gnyen
Drugu Yangwang	Gru gu yang dbang
Drugung	'Bru gung
Düdjom Dorjé	bDud 'joms rdo rje
Düdjom Jikdrel Yéshé Dorjé	bDud 'joms 'Jigs bral ye shes rdo rje
Düdjom Lingpa	bDud 'joms gling pa
Düdjom Rinpoché	bDud 'joms rin po che
Düdtsi Khyilwa	bDud rtsi 'khyil ba
Düdül Dorjé	bDud 'dul rdo rje
Dumgya Zhangtrom	Dum rgya zhang khrom
Düpfung Zilnön	bDud dpung zil gnon
Durdak	Dur bdag
Düsöl Lhamo	Dud sol lha mo
Dzachukha	rDza chu kha
Dzatrül	rDza sprul
Dzogchen	rDzogs chen
Dzogchen Khandro Nyingthik	rDzogs chen mKha' 'gro snying thig
Dzogchen Khenpo	rDzogs chen mkhan po
Dzogchen Khenpo Jampel Tendzin	rDzogs chen mkhan po 'Jam dpal bstan 'dzin
Dzogchen Künzang Gongpa Zangthel	rDzogs chen Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal
Dzogchen Péma Rigdzin	rDzogs chen Padma rig 'dzin
Dzogchen Rinpoché	rDzogs chen rin po che
Dzong	rDzong
Dzongtsenpa	rDzong btsan pa
Ewaṃ Chogar	E waṃ lcog sgar
Gag-yé	dGag dbye
Ganden	dGa' ldan

Ganden Phobrang	dGa' ldan pho brang
Gangri Thökar	Gangs ri thod dkar
Gar Dratsang	sGar grwa tshang
Garab Dorjé	dGa' rab rdo rje
Garthar	mGar thar
Garwang Dawa Gyeltsen	Gar dbang Zla ba rgyal mtshan
Garwang Dorjé	Gar dbang rdo rje
Gautama Chöchok Yongphel	Goo ta ma chos mchog yongs 'phel
Gé'u Tertön	rGe'u gter ston
Gégen Rabyé	dGe rgan rab rgyas
Géluk	dGe lugs
Ger Dratsang	sGer grwa tshang
Géshé	dGe bshes
Gétsé Rinpoché	dGe rtse rin po che
Gö	rGod
Gochi Tséchuk	sGo spyis tshe phyugs
Gödem	rGod ldem
Gödemchen	rGod ldem can
Gökyi Demtruchen	rGod kyi ldem 'phru can
Golog Chéwo Rinpoché	mGo log Che bo rin po che
Gongdü	dGongs 'dus
Gongkar	Gong dkar
Gongpo	'Gong po
Gongpo Arté	'Gong po ar gtad
Gongsa Kyabgön Chenpo	Gong sa skyabs mgon chen po
Gönjang Rinpoché	dGon byang rin po che
Gönpo Dawa	mGon po zla ba
Gönpo Lekden	mGon po ldegs ldan
Gönpo Maning	mGon po Ma ning
Gönpo Takzhön	mGon po sTag zhon

Gönpo Yüldö	mGon po g.yul mdos
Gotsa	mGo tsha / tshwa mGo tshwa / 'Go tsha
Gotsa Choktrül	mGo tshwa mchog sprul
Gotsa Choktrül Rinpoché	'Go tsha mChog sprul rin po che
Gotsa Gönpa	mGo tshwa dgon pa
Gotsa Khenchen	mGo tshwa mkhan chen
Gotsa Khenchen Thegchok Tendzin	mGo tshwa mkhan chen Theg mchog bstan 'dzin
Gotsa Khengen	mGo tshwa mkhan rgan
Gotsa Péma Gyurmé Gyamtso	mGo tshwa Padma 'gyur med rgya mtsho
Gungtang	Gung thang
Guru Chöwang	Gu ru chos dbang
Guru Lhakhang	Gu ru lha khang
Guru Péma	Gu ru Padma
Guru Rinpoché	Gu ru rin po che
Guru Tashi	Gu ru bkra shis
Gutor	dGu gtor
Gya Zhangtrom	rGya Zhang khrom
Gyabra Tritshab Rinpoché	rGyab ra Khri tshab rin po che
Gyang	rGyang
Gyarong	rGya rong
Gyazhang	rGya zhang
Gyello	rGyal lo
Gyelsé Bidza	rGyal sras bi dza
Gyelsé Dzamling Drukdrak	rGyal sras 'Dzam gling 'brug grags
Gyelsé Rinpoché	rGyal sras rin po che
Gyelsé Tulku	rGyal sras sprul sku
Gyelthang	rGyal thang
Gyeltsab Réting Rinpoché	rGyal tshab Ra sgrenng rin po che

Gyeltsen Shényen	rGyal mtshan bshes gnyen
Gyelwang Rinpoché	rGyal dbang rin po che
Gyurmé Khyentsé Norbu	'Gyur med mKhyen rtse nor bu
Gyurmé Péma Namgyel	'Gyur med Padma rnam rgyal
Hépori	Has po ri
Hor	Hor
Hor Browu	Hor bro'u
Horkhog	Hor khog
Jadrel Rinpoché	Bya bral rin po che
Jadrel Sangyé Dorjé	Bya bral Sangs rgyas rdo rje
Jadrel Sangyé Dorjé Rinpoché	Bya bral Sangs rgyas rdo rje rin po che
Jamgön Mipham Rinpoché	'Jam mgon Mi pham rin po che
Jampa	Byams pa
Jampa Chökyi Gyeltsen	Byams pa Chos kyi rgyal mtshan
Jampa Chözang	Byams pa chos bzang
Jampel Gyamtso	'Jam dpal rgya mtsho
Jampel Ku	'Jam dpal sku
Jamtrin	Byams sprin
Jamyang Khyenrab Gyamtso	'Jam dbyangs mKhyen rab rgya mtsho
Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo	'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po
Jamyang Rigpai Dorjé	'Jam dbyangs Rig pa'i rdo rje
Jamyang Sönam Gyeltsen	'Jam dbyangs bSod nams rgyal mtshan
Jamyang Sönam Gyeltsen Pelzangpo	'Jam dbyangs bSod nams rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po
Jang	Byang
Jang Wangpö Dé	Byang dbang po'i sde
Jangdak	Byang bdag
Jangdak Tashi Tobgyel	Byang bdag bKra shis stobs rgyal
Jangpa Dakpo	Byang pa bdag po

Jangter	Byang gter
Jangter Dodrak Chötsok	Byang gter rdo brag chos tshogs
Jardong Chumik	sByar dong chu mig
Jatsön Nyingpo	'Ja' tshon snying po
Jetsün Thubten Jigmé Namdröl Gyamtso	rje btsun Thub bstan 'jigs med rnam grol rgya mtsho
Jigmé Gyelwai Nyugu	'Jigs med rGyal ba'i myu gu
Jigmé Lingpa	'Jigs med gling pa
Jigmé Pawo	'Jigs med dpa' bo
Jigmé Pelgyi Sengé	'Jigs med dpal gyi seng ge
Jigmé Phüntsook Jungné	'Jigs med phun tshogs 'byung gnas
Jigmé Phüntsook Jungné Pelzangpo	'Jigs med phun tshogs 'byung gnas dpal bzang po
Jigmé Sönam Gyelchok	'Jigs med bsod nams rgyal mchog
Jigmé Sönam Namgyel	'Jigs med bsod nams rnam rgyal
Jigmé Tenpai Nyima	'Jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma
Jigmé Trinlé Namgyel	'Jigs med phrin las rnam rgyal
Jikdrel Yéshé Dorjé	'Jigs bral Ye shes rdo rje
Jokhang	Jo khang
Jomo Lungma	Jo mo lung ma
Jowo Bulé	Jo bo Bu le
Jungpo Nyingkün	'Byung po snying rkun
Ka	sKa
Ka Dampa Déshek	Ka Dam pa bde gshegs
Kadak Gongpa Zangthel	Ka dag dgongs pa zang thal
Kadam	bKa' gdams
Kagyé	bKa' brgyad
Kagyé Rangshar	bKa' brgyad rang shar
Kagyé Troröl	bKa' brgyad khro rol
Kagyé Troröl Langgangma	bKa' brgyad khro rol rlang gang ma

Kagyü	bKa' brgyud
Kama	bKa' ma
Kama Dowang	bKa' ma mdo dbang
Kanjur	bKa' 'gyur
Karma Chödrön Démo	Karma Chos sgron bde mo
Karma Lingpa	Kar ma gling pa
Karma Mingyur Wanggi Gyelpo	Karma Mi 'gyur dbang gi rgyal po
Karmapa Rigpai Dorjé	Karma pa Rig pa'i rdo rje
Kathok	Kaḥ thog
Kathok Gésé Rinpoché	Kaḥ thog dGe rtse rin po che
Kathok Rigdzin	Kaḥ thog rig 'dzin
Kathok Yargön	Kaḥ thog yar dgon
Kelzang Gyamtso	sKal bzang rgya mtsho
Kelzang Jigmé Gyelwai Nyugu	sKal bzang 'Jigs med rgyal ba'i myu gu
Kelzang Namdak Dorjé	sKal bzang rNam dag rdo rje
Kelzang Péma Wangchuk	sKal bzang Padma dbang phyug
Kelzang Péma Wangyel	sKal bzang Padma dbang rgyal
Kelzang Tendzin Namdak Dorjé	sKal bzang bstan 'dzin rNam dag rdo rje
Kelzang Tsültrim	sKal bzang tshul khriims
Keru Lhakhang	Ke ru lha khang
Kham	Khams
Kham Khorlö Dong	Khams 'khor lo'i gdong
Khamsum Zilnön	Khams gsum zil gnon
Khandro Sangwa Yéshé	Khandro gSang ba ye shes
Khangdong	Khang gdong
Khangdong Lama Gönwang	Khang gdong bla ma mgon dbang
Khangsar Rinpoché	Khang gsar rin po che
Kharchenza	mKhar chen bza'
Kharchenza Tsogyel	mKhar chen bza' mtsho rgyal

Kharchu	mKhar chu
Khen Lhari Zimphuk	mKhan Lha ri gzim phug
Khen Rigdzin	mKhan rig 'dzin
Khen Rinpoche Chöyak	mKhan rin po che Chos yag
Khen Rinpoche Jamyang Drubpai Lodrö	mKhan rin po che Jamyang grub pa'i blo gros
Khenchen Dharmakīrti	mKhan chen Dharmakīrti
Khenpa Lung	'Khan pa lung
Khenpo Chöying	mKhan po Chos dbyings
Khenpo Lodrö Zangpo	mKhan po Blo gros bzang po
Khenpo Namgyel	mKhan po rnam rgyal
Khenpo Rinpoché Péma Chokdrub	mKhan po rin po che Padma mchog grub
Khenpo Rinpoché Tséring Döndrup	mKhan po rin po che tshe ring don grub
Khenzur Könchok Drakpa	mKhan zur dKon mchog grags pa
Khetsün Sangpo Rinpoché	mKhas btsun bzang po rin po che
Khordong	'Khor gdong
Khordong Péma Künzang Yéshé	'Khor gdong Padma kun bzang ye shes
Khordong Terchen Nüden Dorjé	'Khor gdong g'Ter chen Nus ldan rdo rje
Khordong Tertön	'Khor gdong gter ston
Khorlo Dong	'Khor lo gdong
Khorlö Dong	'Khor lo'i gdong
Khumbu	Khums bu
Khyenden Wangpo	mKhyen ldan dbang po
Khyentsé	mKhyen brtse
Khyunglung Ngülkhar	Khyung lung dngul mkhar
Kikang	Ki kang
Könchok Özer Pel Zangpo	dKon mchog 'Od zer dpal bzang po

Kongpo	Kong po
Kongpo Gyamda	Kong po rgya mda'
Kongtrül	Kong sprul
Kongtrül Lodrö Thayé	Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas
Ku-nga	sKu lnga
Kugyab Dülo	sKu rgyab bdud lo
Kundün Künzang Wangpo	sKu mdun Kun bzang dbang po
Künga Drölchok	Kun dga' grol mchog
Künga Jigmé Zilnön	Kun dga' 'jigs med zil gnon
Künga Rinchen	Kun dga' rin chen
Künkhyen Dorjé Zibji	Kun mkhyen rDo rje gzi brjid
Künkyong Lingpa	Kun skyong gling pa
Künpang	Kun spangs
Künpang Dönyö Gyeltsen	Kun spangs Don yod rgyal mtshan
Künzang	Kun bzang
Künzang Garwang Trinlé Namgyel	Kun bzang gar dbang 'Phrin las rnam rgyal
Künzang Gyurmé Lhündrup Dorjé	Kun bzang 'gyur med Lhun grub rdo rje
Künzang Longyang	Kun bzang klong yangs
Künzang Péma Drodül	Kun bzang padma 'gro 'dul
Künzang Tendzin	Kun bzang bstan 'dzin
Künzang Tséwa	Kun bzang rtse ba
Künzang Wangpo	Kun bzang dbang po
Kusum Tri	Ku sum kri
Kuzhab Namgyel	sKu zhabs rNam rgyal
Kyabgön Jigmé Pelgyi Sengé	sKyabs mgon 'Jigs med dpal gyi seng ge
Kyabgön Rigdzin Chenmo	sKyabs mgon Rig 'dzin chen mo
Kyabgön Rinpoché	sKyab mgon rin po che
Kyabjé Drubgön Rinpoché	sKyabs rje grub dgon rin po che

Kyabjé Zenkar Rinpoché Thubten Nyima	sKyabs rje gZan dkar rin po che Thub bstan nyi ma
Kyimo Lung	sKyid mo lung
Kyirong	sKyid rong
Kyishong	sKyid gshongs
La'uthang	La'u thang
La'uthang Sang-ngak Tengyé Ling	La'u thang gsang sngags bstan rgya gling
La'uthang Tulku Drachen	La'u thang sPrul sku dgra can
Ladrang	Bla brang
Lagdrak Dzong-gön	Glag brag rdzong dgon
Lama	Bla ma
Lama Chökyi Gyeltsen	Bla ma Chos kyi rgyal mtshan
Lama Chödzin	Bla ma Chos 'dzin
Lama Dampa Chökyi Gyeltsen Pelzangpo	Bla ma dam pa Chos kyi rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po
Lama Dorjé Drakpo Tsel	Bla ma rDo rje drag po rtsal
Lama Dorjé Pel	Bla ma rDo rje dpal
Lama Jampa Tendar	Bla ma Byams pa bstan dar
Lama Jigmé Trinlé	Bla ma 'Jigs med phrin las
Lama Lhakang	Bla ma lha khang
Lama Nyizang	Bla ma nyi bzang
Lama Sang-ngak Tenpai Gyeltsen	Bla ma gSang sngags bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan
Lamas	Bla ma
Lamo Tsé	La mo rtse
Langkhor	Glang 'khor @@
Larung Gar	Bla run sgar
Lathang Tulku Drachen	La thang sPrul sku dGra gcan
Latö Jang	La stod byang
Le'uchung	Sle'u chung

Lekden Dorjé	Legs ldan rdo rje
Lekden Düdjom Dorjé	Legs ldan bDud 'joms rdo rje
Lekden Jé	Legs ldan rje
Lelung Rigdzin Zhepai Dorjé	Sle lung rig 'dzin bzhad pa'i rdo rje
Lélung Zhépai Dorjé	Sle lun bZhad pa'i rdo rje
Lérab Lingpa	Las rab gling pa
Lhachen Maheśvara	Lha chen Maheśvara
Lhadrak	Lha brag
Lhalung Sungtrül Rinpoché	Lha lung gSung sprul rin po che
Lhamo Dré'u Zhönma	Lha mo Dre'u zhon ma
Lhamo Tsé	Lha mo rtse
Lhari Zimphuk	Lha ri gzims phug
Lhasa	Lha sa
Lhawang	Lha dbang
Lhodrak	Lho brag
Lhodrak Kharchu	Lho brag mkhar chu
Lhodrak Marpa Rinpoché	Lho brag Mar pa rin po che
Lhündrub La	Lhun grub lags
Lobsang Gyamtso	Slob bzang rgya mtsho
Lobzang Pema Trinley	Slob bzang Padma 'phrin las
Lochen Dharma Śrī	Lo chen Dharma Śrī
Longchen Nyingthik	Klong chen snying thig
Longchen Rabjam	Klong chen rab 'byams
Longchenpa	Klong chen pa
Longthang Drönmé	Klong thang sgron me
Lopön Chöbarwa	Slob dpon Chos 'bar ba
Lu-nyen	Klu gnyan
Mamo Ekajāti	Ma mo E ka dzā ti
Mangyül	Mang yul
Marpa	Mar pa

Me Dorjé Drak	sMad rDo rje brag
Mendrup	sMan sgrub
Menlungwa	sMan lung ba
Milarépa	Mi la ras pa
Mindröl Ling	sMin grol gling
Mindruk Zhi	rMin drug gzhi
Minling Dordzin	sMin gling rdo 'dzin
Minling Dordzin Namdröl Gyamtso	sMin gling rdor 'dzin rNam grol rgya mtsho
Minling Dorsem	sMin gling rdor sems
Minling Khenchen	sMin gling mkhan chen
Minling Khenchen Rinpoché	sMin gling mkhan chen rin po che
Minling Terchen	sMin gling gter chen
Minyag	Mi nyag
Minyag La'uthang Tulku Drachen	Mi nyag La'u thang sprul dGra can
Mipham	Mi pham
Miwang Chögyel	Mi dbang chos rgyal
Mön	Mon
Mönkhar	Mon mkhar
Mönlam Sengé	sMon lam seng ge
Musé	Mu se
Mutri Tsenpo	Mu khri btsan po
Nakartsé	sNa dkar rtse
Nakché Sang-ngak Chöling	Nags che gSang sngags chos gling
Namdröl Gyamtso	rNam grol rgya mtsho
Namdröl Ling	rNam grol gling
Namgyel	rNam rgyal
Namgyel Dorjé	rNam rgyal rdo rje
Namgyel Gönpö	rNam rgyal mgon po
Namkha Drakpa	Nam mkha' grags pa

Namkha Gyeltsen	Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan
Namkha Longyang	Nam mkha' klong yangs
Namkha Rinchen	Nam mkha' rin chen
Namkhai Nyingpo	Nam mkha'i snying po
Namkhai Nyingpo Rinpoché	Nam mkha'i snying po rin po che
Namolung	gNa' / sNa mo lung
Namsé Ling	rNam sras gling
Namtsé	gNam rtse
Nanam Dorjé Düdjom	sNa nam rDo rje bdud 'joms
Narthang	sNar thang
Ne'udong Tsé	sNe'u gdong rtse
Néchung	gNas chung
Néchung Dorjé Drakden	gNas chung rDo rje grags ldan
Néchung Drayang Ling	gNas chung sgra dbyangs gling
Nechung Tā Lama	gNas chung Tā bla ma
Nénang Orgyen Tendzin	gNas nang O rgyan bstan 'dzin
Nénang Yéshé Dūdül	gNas nang Ye shes bdud 'dul
Ngagi Wangchuk	Ngag gi dbang phyug
Ngagi Wangpo	Ngag gi dbang po
Ngakrig Dzinpa Jigmé Trinlé	sNgags rig 'dzin pa 'Jigs med phrin las
Ngari	mNga' ris
Ngari Pañchen	mNga' ris pañ chen
Ngawa Tsegyam	rNga ba Tshe rgyam
Ngawang Drakpa	Ngag dbang grags pa
Ngawang Jampel	Ngag dbang 'jam dpal
Ngawang Jangchub Chökyi Lodrö	Ngag dbang byang chub chos kyi blo gros
Ngawang Khyentsé Norbu	Ngag dbang mkhyen brtse'i nor bu
Ngawang Künga Sönam	Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams
Ngawang Mingyur Lhündrub Dorjé	Ngag dbang Mi 'gyur lhun grub rdo

	rje
Ngayab Ling	rNga yab gling
Ngödrub Ding	dNogs grub lding
Ngödrup Gyeltsen	dNgos grub rgyal mtshan
Ngok Chökü Dorjé	rNgogs Chos sku'i rdo rje
Ngokpa	rNgog pa
Ngor	Ngor
Norlha	Nor lha
Nub	gNubs
Nub Sangyé Yéshé	gNub(s) Sangs rgyas ye shes
Nubchen	Nub chen, gNubs chen
Nubchen Sangyé Yéshé	gNubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes
Nubri	Nub ri
Nyagrong	Nyag rong
Nyak Lotsāwa	gNyags Lo tsā ba
Nyakla	Nyag bla
Nyakla Sögyel	Nyag bla bSod rgyal
Nyammé Chökü Gyeltsen	mNyam med Chos kyi rgyal mtshan
Nyammé Nubgönpa	mNyam med Nub dgon pa
Nyang-rel Nyima Özer	Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer
Nyémo	sNye mo
Nyemo Zhuyé	sNye mo zhu yas
Nyen	gNyan
Nyenchen Thanglha	gNyan chen thang lha
Nyi-nyak Pelgi Lhagang	Nyi nyag dpal gyi lha sgang
Nyida Longsel	Nyi zla klong gsal
Nyida Wangmo	Nyi zla dbang mo
Nyima Özer	Nyi ma 'od zer
Nyima Zangpo	Nyi ma bzang po

Nyima Zhönu	Nyi ma gzhon nu
Nyingma	rNying ma
Nyingma Kama	rNying ma bka' ma
Nyiwö Khyilwa	Nyi 'od 'khyil ba
Nymanyid Dorjé	mNyam nyid rdo rje
Odrak	O grags
Ogmin Lhündrup Phobrang	'Og min Lhun grub pho brang
Ogmin Orgyen Mindröl Ling	'Og min O rgyan smin grol gling
Ö Mingyurwa	'Od mi 'gyur ba
Omjak Chakdor Tashi	Om ljags Phyag rdor bkra shis
Ön	'On
Ön Dragkar	'On brag dkar
Orgyen	O rgyan
Orgyen Lingpa	O rgyan gling pa
Orgyen Mindröl Ling	O rgyan sMin grol gling
Orgyen Namdröl Gyamtso	O rgyan nam grol rgya mtsho
Orgyen Péma	O rgyan padma
Orgyen Rinpoché	O rgyan rin po che
Orgyen Tendzin	O rgyan bstan 'dzin
Pangleb Emchi	sPang leb em chi
Pangtön	sPangs ston
Pawo Rinpoché	dPa' bo rin po che
Péhar	Pe har
Péhar Chok	Pe dkar lcog
Pel Lhagang	dPal lha sgang
Pelden Lhamo	dPal ldan lha mo
Pelden Lodrö	dPal ldan blo gros
Pelden Tsültrim	dPal ldan tshul khrim
Pelgyi Sengé	dPal gyi seng ge
Pelri Péma Ö	dPal ri padma 'od

Peltrül Dorjé Chang	dPal sprul rdo rje 'chang
Peltrül Rinpoché	dPal sprul rin po che
Pelyül	dPal yul
Péma	Padma
Péma Drimé Lodrö	Padma Dri med blo gros
Pema Garwang Tsel	Padma gar dbang rtsal
Péma Guru	Padma gu ru
Péma Jikdrel	Padma 'jigs bral
Pema Ledrel Tsel	Padma Las 'brel rtsal
Péma Lhamo	Padma lha mo
Péma Lingpa	Padma gling pa
Péma Mati	Padma ma ti
Péma Ngedön Drimé Lodrö	Padma nges don Dri med blo gros
Péma Ngédön Tenpai Nyima	Padma nges don bstan pa'i nyi ma
Péma Ö	Padma 'od
Péma Shényen	Padma bshes gnyen
Péma Shényen Jikdrel Choklé Nampar Gyelwai Dé	Padma bshes bsnyen 'jigs bral phyogs las rnam par rgyal ba'i sde
Péma Sung	Padma gsung
Péma Thegchok	Padma theg mchog
Péma Thegchok Tenpai Gyeltsen	Padma Theg mchog bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan
Pema Thegchok Tenzin	Padma Theg mchog bstan 'dzin
Péma Thötreng Tsel	Padma thod phreng rtsal
Péma Trinlé	Padma 'phrin las
Péma Wangyel	Padma dbang rgyal
Pénor Rinpoché	Pad nor rin po che
Péwar Rinpoché	dPe war rin po che
Péyül	sPas yul/sBas yul
Phadampa Sangyé	Pha dam pa sangs rgyas

Phakyül	'Phags yul
Philings	Phi ling
Phünkhang	Phun khang
Phüntsok Dé	Phun tshogs lde
Phüntsok Kyilkhang	Phun tshogs dkyil khang
Phurba	Phur ba
Phurba Chemchok	Phur pa che mchog
Phurba Trinlé	Phur ba phrin las
Phurba	Phur bu
Polo Khen Rinpoché	sPo lo mkhan rin po che
Rabjung	Rab 'byung
Rabsel Dawa	Rab gsal zla ba
Ralo	Ra lo
Ramoché	Ra mo che
Réchungpa	Ras chung pa
Réting Rinpoché	Rwa sgreng rin po che
Réting Tulku	Ra sgreng sprul sku
Rigdzin	Rig 'dzin
Rigdzin Chenpo	Rig 'dzin chen po
Rigdzin Chenpo Namkha Drakpa	Rig 'dzin chen po Nam mkha' grags pa
Rigdzin Chenpo Nyamnyid Dorjé	Rig 'dzin chen po mNyam nyid rdo rje
Rigdzin Drubdé	Rig 'dzin grub sde
Rigdzin Dödül Dorjé	Rig 'dzin bDud 'dul rdo rje
Rigdzin Garwang Dorjé	Rig 'dzin Gar dbang rdo rje
Rigdzin Gödem	Rig 'dzin rgod ldem
Rigdzin Gödem Chen	Rig 'dzin rGod ldem can
Rigdzin Gökyi Demtruchen	Rig 'dzin rGod kyi ldem 'phru can
Rigdzin Gönpo	Rig 'dzin mgon po
Rigdzin Jigmé Lingpa	Rig 'dzin 'Jigs med gling pa

Rigdzin Kelzang Péma Wangchuk	Rig 'dzin bsKal bzang padma dbang phyug
Rigdzin Khamsum Zilnön	Rig 'dzin khams gsum zil gnon
Rigdzin Lekden Jé	Rig 'dzin Legs ldan rje
Rigdzin Namdröl Gyamtso	Rig 'din rNam grol rgya mtsho
Rigdzin Namkha Drakpa	Rig 'dzin Nam mkha' grags pa
Rigdzin Natsok Rangdröl	Rig 'dzin sNa tshogs rang grol
Rigdzin Ngagi Wangpo	Rig 'dzin Ngag gi dbang po
Rigdzin Ngödrup Gyeltsen	Rig 'dzin dNgos grub rgyal mtshan
Rigdzin Péma	Rig 'dzin padma
Rigdzin Péma Trinlé	Rig 'dzin Padma 'phrin las
Rigdzin Pétrin	Rig 'dzin Pad 'phrin
Rigdzin Shérab	Rig 'dzin shes rab
Rigdzin Shérab Phüntso	Rig 'dzin shes rab phun tshogs
Rigdzin Terdak Lingpa	Rig 'dzin gTer bdag gling pa
Rigdzin Tulku	Rig 'dzin sprul sku
Rigyel Trazang	Ri rgyal bkra bzang
Rinchen Ling	Rin chen gling
Rinchen Terdzö	Rin chen gter mdzod
Ringsel	Ring bsrel
Rinpoché	Rin po che
Riwo Pelbar	Ri bo dpal 'bar
Riwo Trazang	Ri bo bkra bzang
Rogdung Lama Thubten Tashi	Rog dung bla ma Thub bstan bkra shis
Rongzom Chözang	Rong zom Chos bzang
Rulak	Ru lag
Sadak	Sa bdag
Sakya	Sa skya
Sakya Jamyang Sönam Gyeltsen Pelzangpo	Sa skya 'Jam dbyangs bsod nams rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po

Sakyapa	Sa skya pa
Śākya Sönām	Śākya bsod nams
Sakya Trichen	Sa skya khri chen
Śākya Zangpo	Śākya bzang po
Sakyong Chögyel Drakpa Jung-né	Sa skyong chos rgyal Grags pa 'byung gnas
Samten Orgyen Chöling	bSam gtan o rgyan chos gling
Samyé	bSam yas
Samyé Chimphu	bSam yas mchims phu
Sang-ngak Chöling	gSang sngags chos gling
Sang-ngak Shukjung Ling	gSang sngags shugs 'byung gling
Sangchö Dratsang	gSang chos grwa tshang
Sangchö Pema Lhunding	gSang chos padma lhun sdings
Sangdzin Gönpö Wangyel	gSang 'dzin mGon po dbang rgyal
Sangyé Chöphak	Sangs rgyas chos 'phags
Sangyé Lodrö	Sangs rgyas blo gros
Sangyé Pelzang	Sangs rgyas dpal bzang
Sangyé Tenpa	Sangs rgyas bstan pa
Sawang Rinpoché	Sa dbang rin po che
Serta	gSer rta
Sertok	gSer tog
Setön	Se ston
Sétön Péma Wangchen	Se ston padma dbang chen
Setön Rinchen Gyeltsen	Se ston Rin chen rgyal mtshan
Shangpa Kagyü	Shangs pa bka' brgyud
Shédруб Gyeltsen	bShad sgrub rgyal mtshan
Shédруб Nyinjé Trinlé Zangpo	bShad sgrub nyin byed 'phrin las bzang po
Sheldrak	Shel brag
Sheldrong	Shel grong

Shérab Gyamtso	Shes rab rgya mtsho
Shérab Mébar	Shes rab me 'bar
Shili Guri	Shi li gu ri
Shinjé Charka Nakpo	gShin rje 'char ka nag po
Shinjé Tsédak	gShin rje tshe bdag
Shukjung	Shugs 'byung
Shukjung Gön	Shugs 'byung dgon
Shukjung Tulku Tsültrim Zangpo	Shugs 'byung sprul sku Tshul khrim bzang po
Sisum Namgyel	Srid gsum rnam rgyal
Situ Chökyi Gyamtso	Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho
So	So
Sokgi Pudri	Srog gi spu gri
Sönam Gyeltsen	bSod nams rgyal mtshan
Sönam Tobgyel	bSod nams stobs rgyal
Sönam Wangchuk	bSod nams dbang phyug
Sönam Zangpo	bSod nams bzang po
Srin	Srin
Takdröls	bTags grol
Taklung Sang-ngak Chöling	sTag lung gSang sngags chos gling
Taklung Tsé	sTag lung rtse
Taklung Tsé Dratsang	sTag lung rtse grwa tshang
Taklung Tsétrül Rinpoché	sTag lung rtse sprul rin po che
Taklung Tsétrül Rinpoché Shédруб Nyinjé Trinlé Zangpo	sTag lung rtse sprul rin po che bShad sgrub Nyin byed 'phrin las bzang po
Taksham	sTag sham
Tang Mébar Tso	sTang Me 'bar mtsho
Tashi Dé	bKra shis lde
Tashi Tobgyel	bKra shis stobs rgyal
Tendzin Drakpa	bsTan 'dzin grags pa

Tendzin Gyamtso	bsTan 'dzin rgya mtsho
Tendzin Gyeltsen	bsTan 'dzin rgyal mtshan
Tengyur	bsTan 'gyur
Tenma	brTan ma
Tennyi Lingpa	bsTan gnyis gling pa
Tenpai Nyima	bsTan pa'i nyi ma
Terdak Lingpa	gTer bdag gling pa
Terma	gTer ma
Tertön	gTer ston
Tertön Rangrig Dorjé	gTer ston Rang rig rdo rje
Tertön Rigdzin Muknak	gTer ston Rig 'dzin smug nag
Thabchen	Thabs chen
Thangtong Gyelpo	Thang stong rgyal po
Thegchok Tendzin	Theg mchog bstan 'dzin
Thegchok Ling	Theg mchog gling
Thegchok Namdröl Shédru Dargyé Ling	Theg mchog rnam grol bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling
Thögel	Thod rgal
Thongwa Dönden	mThong ba don ldan
Thönmi	Thon mi
Thoyor Nakpo	Tho yor nag po
Thubten Chögyel	Thub bstan chos rgyal
Thubten Chökyi Nyima	Thub bstan Chos kyi nyi ma
Thubten Chöwang	Thub bstan chos dbang
Thubten Chöwang Nyamnyid Dorjé	Thub bstan chos dbang mnyam nyid rdo rje
Thubten Chöyang Kelzang Namgyel	Thubten Chös dbyangs skal bzang rnam rgyal
Thubten Do-ngak Shédru Gyeltsen	Thub bstan mDo sngags bshad grub rgyal mtshan
Thubten Do-ngak Shédru Gyeltsen	Thub bstan mDo sngags bshad grub

Pelzangpo	rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po
Thubten Dorjé Drak	Thub bstan rDo rje brag
Thubten Dorjé Drak Ewaṃ Chogar	Thub bstan rDo rje brag E waṃ lcog sgar
Thubten Gyamtso	Thub bstan rgya mtsho
Thubten Jampel Yéshé Tenpai Gyeltsen	Thub bstan 'jam dpal Ye shes bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan
Thubten Jigmé Namdröl Gyamtso	Thub bstan 'jigs med rnam grol rgya mtsho
Thubten Lhündrup	Thub bstan lhun grub
Thubten Lungrik	Thub bstan lung rigs
Thubten Lungtok Gyamtso	Thub bstan Lung rtogs rgya mtsho
Thubten Rinpoché	Thub bstan rin po che
Thubten Samphel	Thub bstan bsam 'phel
Thubten Wangyel	Thub bstan dbang rgyal
Thubten Yéshé	Thub bstan ye shes
Thubten Zhenphen Chökyi Nyima	Thub bstan gZhan phan chos kyi nyi ma
Thuksé	Thugs sras
Thuksé Lodrö Gyeltsen	Thugs sras Blo gros rgyal mtshan
Thuksé Namkha Gyeltsen	Thugs sras Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan
Tö	sTod
Tobden Drakshül Wangpo	sTobs ldan drag shul dbang po
Tokden Chönyi Shérab	rTogs ldan Chos nyid shes rab
Tongpön	sTong dpon
Tönub Gön	sTod nub dgon
Torma	gTor ma
Tormas	gTor ma
Trakthung Düdjom Dorjé	Khrag 'thung bDud 'joms rdo rje
Trakthung Lékyi Pawo	Khrag 'thung Las kyi dpa' bo
Tramdruk	Khra 'brug

Tramhrö hrö	Tram hro'i hro'i
Trekchö	Khregs chod
Trengpo	'Phreng po
Trimönpa	Khri smon pa
Trinlé	Phrin las
Trinlé Namgyel	Phrin las rnam rgyal
Tripön	Khri dpon
Trisong Détsen	Khri srong lde btsan
Tröma Nakmo	Khros ma nag mo
Trül nang	'Phrul snang
Trülzhik Rinpoché	'Khrul zhig rin po che
Tsang	g'Tsang
Tsang Panam	g'Tsang Pa snam
Tsangpo	g'Tsang po
Tsangtön	g'Tsang ston
Tsang Hao	g'Tsang Ha'o
Tsatsas	Tshwa tshwa
Tsé Potala palace	rTse pho brang po ta la
Tséchik Drölma	Tshe gcig sgrol ma
Tseldé-pa	Tshal sde pa
Tsen	bTsan
Tsenden Jampa Shényen	mTshan ldan Byams pa bshes gnyen
Tsephel Zangpo	Tshe 'phel bzang po
Tséring Ma	Tshe ring ma
Tseten Gyeltsen	Tshe brtan rgyal mtshan
Tsétrül Rinpoché	rTse sprul rin po che
Tséwang Namgyel	Tshe dbang rnam rgyal
Tséwang Rinpoché	Tshe dbang rin po che
Tshethar	tshe thar
Tsi'u Marpo	Tsi'u dmar po

Tsimara	Tsi dmar ra
Tsullo	Tshul lo
Tsültrim Zangpo	Tshul khrims bzang po
Tulku	sPrul sku
Tulku Chökyi Nyima	sPrul sku Chos kyi nyi ma
Tulku Lungtok	sPrul sku Lung rtogs
Tulku Orgyen Chödrak	sPrul sku O rgyan chos grags
Tulku Tiṣṭha	sPrul sku Tiṣṭha
Tulku Tsüllo	sPrul sku Tshul lo
Tulku Tsültrim Zangpo	sPrul sku Tshul khrims bzang po
Tulkus	sprul sku
Tummo	gTum mo
Ü	dBus
Ü-Tsang	dBus gtsang
U-tshel	dBu tshal
Uma Dhewa	U ma dhe ba
Umdzé Döndrup	dBu mdzad don grub
Vati	Va ti
Wangchuk Mahādeva	dBang phyug Mahā de wa
Wangdrak chok	dBang drag lcog
Wangdrak Rolpa	dBang grags rol pa
Wangpö Dé	dBang po'i sde
Washül	Wa shul
Wön Dorjé Pelwa	dBon rDo rje dpal ba
Yaktö	Yag stod
Yam	Yam, g.Yam
Yamdruk Taklung	Yar 'brog stag lung
Yangchen Gyépai Loden	dByangs can dGyes pa'i blo ldan
Yangchenma	dByangs can ma

Yangdak Thuk	Yang dag thugs
Yangdzong	Yang rdzong
Yangléshö	Yang le shod
Yangti	Yang ti
Yardok Drak-ra	Yar 'brog brag ra
Yardrok	Yar 'brog
Yardrok Göñ	Yar 'brog dgon
Yardrok Taklung	Yar 'brog stag lung
Yari Gong	g.Ya' ri gong
Yarlung Sheldrak	Yar klung shel brag
Yatshé	Ya tshe
Yenhren	Yan hran
Yéru	g.Yas ru
Yéshé Dödül	Ye shes bdud 'dul
Yéshé Tsogyel	Ye shes mtsho rgyal
Yidam	Yi dam
Yidams	Yi dam
Yidzhin Norbu	Yid bzhin nor bu
Yölmo	Yol mo
Yölmo Khen Rinpoché Nyima Döndrup	Yol mo mkhan rin po che Nyi ma don grub
Yölmo Tendzin Norbu	Yol mo bsTan 'dzin nor bu
Yölmo Tulku Tenzin Norbu	Yol mo sprul sku bsTan 'dzin nor bu
Yölmowa	Yol mo ba
Yönten Zangpo	Yon tan bzang po
Yoru	g.Yo ru
Yugön	g.Yu mgon
Yum Uma Dhewa	Yum U ma dhe ba
Za Rāhula	g.Za' Rā hu la
Zabbulung	Zab bu lung

Zangdok Pelri	Zangs mdog dpal ri
Zangpo Drakpa	bZang po grags pa
Zangyak Drak	Zangs yag brag
Zangzang	Zang zang
Zangzang Lhadrak	Zang zang lha brag
Zenkar Rinpoché	gZan dkar rin po che
Zhabdrung Zilnön Wangyel Dorjé	Zhabs drung Zil gnon dbang rgyal rdo rje
Zhang	Zhang
Zhangzhung Gönpa	Zhang zhung dgon pa
Zhechen	Zhe chen
Zhéchen Gyeltsab	Zhe chen rgyal tshabs
Zhechen Rabjam	Zhe chen rab 'byams
Zhechen Rabjam Rinpoché	Zhe che rab 'byams rin po che
Zhéchen Rabjampa	Zhe chen rab 'byams pa
Zhelpa	gZhal pa
Zhenphen Chökyi Lodrö Yéshé Pel Zangpö Dé	gZhan phan Chos kyi blo gros Ye shes dpal bzang po sde
Zhigpo Lingpa	Zhig po gling pa
Zhöl	Zhol
Zilnön Dorjé	Zil gnon rdo rje
Zilnön Sengge	Zil (g)non seng ge
Zorphen Tséchu	Zor 'phan tshes bcu
Zur Chöying Rangdröl	Zur Chos dbyings rang grol
Zur Pangtön Jampel Yang Delek Gyeltsen	Zur sPang(/spangs) ston 'Jam dpal dbyangs bde legs rgyal mtshan
Zurchen	Zur chen
Zurchen Choktrül	Zur chen mchog sprul
Zurchen Choktrül Ngawang Sönam	Zur chen mchog sprul Ngag dbang bsod nams
Zurchen Chöying Rangdröl	Zur chen Chos dbyings rang grol

Zurlha Bumgön	Zur lha 'bum mgon
Zurtrül	Zur sprul
Zurtrül Dorjé Chang	Zur sprul rDo rje 'chang



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