Tibetan Buddhist Literature and Praxis

STUDIES IN ITS FORMATIVE PERIOD
900–1400

EDITED BY

RONALD M. DAVIDSON AND
CHRISTIAN K. WEDEMEYER

TIBETAN BUDDHIST LITERATURE AND PRAXIS

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TIBETAN BUDDHIST LITERATURE AND PRAXIS

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INTRODUCTION: ENVISIONING THE TOPOGRAPHY

Ronald M. Davidson and Christian K. Wedemeyer

Over the past several years, the study of Tibetan Buddhism has benefited tremendously from scholars' attention to selected topics, most notably in the areas of biography and doctrine, but also in those related to the investigation of various forms of literature and praxis. Despite this relative wealth of scholarly activity, many topics of Tibetan religion continue to remain opaque or poorly studied. The Xth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, held 6–12 September 2003 at the University of Oxford's St. Hugh's College, provided a vital forum for scholars to delve deeper into some of these more obscure topics of literature and history. This volume presents a synthesis of two separate forums held during the Xth Seminar. The first (comprising the papers by Kapstein, Davidson and Vitali) was a panel entitled "Rising from the Ashes: Phyi dar Before the Mongols", organised by Ronald Davidson. The second (from which the remainder of the current volume is derived) was a session devoted to individual papers on "Tantra and Rnying ma", responsibility for the editing of which was assigned to Christian Wedemeyer. As editorial work commenced, the natural affinity of many of the papers from the two panels became apparent. A decision was thus made to integrate the entire Phyi dar panel[1] with selected papers from the Tantra session, thereby allowing the contributors greater latitude in expanding and enhancing their papers for publication in the proceedings.

The papers—while employing a variety of approaches and methods—share certain thematic and intellectual directions, as they cover one of the least examined (albeit most important) periods in Tibetan religious and intellectual history: the tenth to the early fifteenth century. While parts of the period have been the focus of important studies that emphasise the agency of the West Tibetan kingdom of Gu ge/Pu hrang and its connection with the great Bengali teacher Atiśa, other

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[1] With one exception: regrettably, the paper presented by David Germano at the Phyi dar panel, "The Rise of post-Tantra: the formation of *snying thig* from 1050–1213", could not appear in this volume.

areas of Tibetan Buddhist activity in this period have been less well-studied. This was, after all, the time in which monastic Buddhism once again found a precarious refuge in the small cloisters of the Hexi and Tsong kha areas in Gansu and surrounding districts, including Dunhuang. It is from these regions that, in the late tenth century, the monastic regimen surviving from the royal dynastic era would be reintroduced into Central Tibet by the missionary activity of Klu mes and other monks of the Eastern Vinaya tradition. Simultaneously, Tibetans from aristocratic clans continued to develop indigenous forms of Buddhism, composing esoteric scriptures in Tibetan (perhaps for the first time) and generating unprecedented forms of religiosity that spoke strongly with a Tibetan voice, employing Tibetan images, æsthetics and sensibilities. With the introduction of new Indic scriptures at the beginning of the new translation period (*gsar 'gyur*), the assertion by some that the newer forms were superior to the older varieties led Tibetans to confront anew fundamental questions concerning what constituted the true Dharma and how such valuations could be adjudicated. In the process, they came up with new canons and novel theories of translation, new models of institutional inheritance, and innovative spiritual techniques. The codification and amplification of many of these directions took centuries of effort by dedicated clerics, but the intellectual and spiritual fundamentals of Buddhist praxis got a new life and new impetus during the period of political fragmentation (ca. 842–1246), that accelerated through the time of Mongol domination (1246–1368) and continued with the reëstablishment of Tibetan self-rule, after the Mongols had become a faint memory of the past.

The papers in this volume address a spectrum of issues in Tibetan religion and its literature, ranging in time and space from the far eastern oasis of Dunhuang in the tenth century through 'high classical' developments in Central Tibet in the early fifteenth century. The first three papers are devoted to special topics in the former context, tenth century Dunhuang. In his contribution, Matthew Kapstein has returned our attention to one of the Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts, Pelliot Tibétain 849, which was first edited and translated by Joseph Hackin in 1924, but had not yet been critically evaluated in light of subsequent research. Kapstein shows that *PT 849* is rather more complex than initially thought—less of a lexicon than a variety of lecture notes—and that it includes some of the later directions of Indian Tantrism. In the process, Kapstein's work calls into question the notion that Tibetans

ceased to import material from India until the later translation period and supports the idea of other scholars that some of the 'Indian' texts before us were in fact collaborative compositions between Indian and Tibetan scholars, rather than simple translations. In a similar vein, Carmen Meinert examines titles attributed to the Chinese faction of Chan in imperial Tibet, providing evidence for various alternative sources of Tibetan spirituality *contra* the mainstream traditions' tendency to reify their own inheritance. Working with the early historical writings of Nyang Nyi ma 'od zer, Meinert gives compelling grounds to believe that some of the titles heretofore considered to have been composed by Heshang Mahāyāna are instead the work of earlier Chan masters, such as Wolun. The later reductive attribution of these to the authorship of a single 'Heshang' contributed to the consequent reification of the 'Chinese position' in Tibetan scholasticism. Likewise, Sam van Schaik's work on Avalokiteśvara texts from Dunhuang challenges received opinions about the importance of the cult of the bodhisattva of compassion. Some earlier scholars had suggested that, because of a dearth of citations of the famous six-syllable mantra, *oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ*, Avalokiteśvara was relatively insignificant in Tibet prior to the twelfth century. Van Schaik's examination of more than twenty texts indicates that—in Dunhuang at any rate and likely in Tibet itself—Avalokiteśvara was already a popular figure of devotion in the tenth century. In all these papers, the obscure and elusive relationship between the central provinces, eastern Tibet, and the northwestern areas of Gansu, Xinjiang and elsewhere becomes better articulated.

The pair of essays which make up Part II turn our attention to the activity of those figures composing esoteric texts in Central Tibet. Concomitant with the establishment of a Tibetan Tantric canon in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was the formation of its alter ego, the Old Tantric Canon (*Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum*). Its proponents claimed (and claim) that all its scriptures were authentically translated from non-Tibetan sources, a problematical position. Furthermore, the sheer volume of these Tantras, their strong Tibetan voices, and the complex relationship between texts surviving in the twelfth century, their analogs in the Dunhuang archive, and the texts translated under imperial aegis during the first diffusion of the Teaching (*snga dar*)—all these factors have inhibited our understanding of this tremendous corpus of Tantric material. Cathy Cantwell's paper contributes to the demystification of the Old Tantric Canon, by demonstrating that certain

problems of at least one Tantra, the *Phur bu mya ngan las 'das pa*, stem from its having had folia displaced early in its transmission. Cantwell directly confronts the problem of the vagaries of textual handling and its results—wherein misplacements of folia in loose-leaf Tibetan texts can be interpreted as mystical or narrative, rather than textual, in nature. Rob Mayer's work is somewhat broader in scope, both detailing available strategies for understanding textual stemma and applying them to the available versions of the *Phur pa bcu gnyis*—and in the process revisiting and revising his previous analysis of the same problem. Mayer shows that the transmission of the *Phur pa bcu gnyis*—and, probably, the Old Tantric Canon itself—is limited by its size, so that geographical relationships are mirrored in textual relationships. Together, these two papers help us situate parts of the Old Tantric Canon in their proper geographical and chronological frames and contribute to an understanding of the entire corpus.

The papers comprising Part III reconsider the literature of new translation traditions, both in terms of narratives stimulated by translation and the works actually translated. Both essays address what might be considered 'marginalia' of the process, since their concern is principally with material not included in the orthodox canon. Ronald Davidson considers the origin of the Treasure (*gter ma*) literature, which has been studied mainly through the lens of later Rnying ma writings. Davidson argues that the Treasure phenomenon in the eleventh and twelfth century was understood, first and foremost, as the legacy or inheritance of the emperors of the royal dynasty, so that one class of Treasure texts was considered the manifestation of the emperors' selves. The result was that some of the Treasure literature crossed over the established old translation/new translation categories and became accepted by virtually all Tibetans. Christian Wedemeyer's work also challenges the univocality of the orthodox traditions, through an investigation of surviving quotes from alternative translations of works included in the normative canons. There were many such alternative translations circulating in early Tibet, and most of them have been lost, along with their witnesses for alternative recensions of texts and alternative theories of translation. Wedemeyer's recovery of some of these from quotations in the work of Tsong kha pa shows that alternative translations continued to circulate into the fifteenth century and reveals something of their reception and employment in scholastic circles. In so doing, it opens up new perspectives on the policies and politics of translation and the effect of

later bibliographic technologies on the materials available for writing Tibetan literary history. Both papers reveal that the literary landscape of the early period was much richer and more fluid than the normative perspective established in the seventeenth through twentieth centuries would suggest.

Part IV consists of three contributions on the nature of religious praxis, as seen in both the theoretical structures and in the historical activity of specific Tibetans. Yael Bentor's work, like Wedemeyer's, is concerned with the work of Tsong kha pa, his predecessors and immediate successors. Delving into fifteenth century controversies on the relationship of esoteric practice and the formation of the Buddha bodies, Bentor concludes that two of the preëminent masters of the system, 'Gos Khug pa lhas btsas and Bu ston Rin chen grub, were the unnamed antagonists for the early Dge lugs orthodox masters. Klaus-Dieter Mathes' paper, also focused on the theoretical categories of Tantric Buddhism, demonstrates that the blending of the exoteric and esoteric systems, as found in the Kagyu schools in the twelfth century, had a clear Indian precedent.This syncretism became the object of polemical attack in the thirteenth century with the work of Sa skya Paṇḍita, whose position was treated sympathetically by David Jackson in his *Enlightenment by a Single Means* (Vienna, 1994). Mathes has shown that, contrary to Sa skya Paṇḍita's view, Indian siddhas like Maitrīpa and Sahajavajra already had been advocating (or, at least, adumbrating) this mixing of categories. Finally, Roberto Vitali's historical study of the fasting ceremony attributed to Dge slong ma Dpal mo traces its origin and development from India, through Nepal and into eleventh and twelfth century Tibet. This ceremony became very important for lay Tibetans in the modern period, and Vitali shows that it worked in loose association with other Avalokiteśvara practices, analogous to the ones van Schaik examines from Dunhuang.

The connection between Dunhuang and Central Tibet brings the volume full circle, for the intersection between India, the Kathmandu Valley, Dunhuang and Central Tibet marks the topography of the era, whether in the areas of literature, praxis, historical connection, or ideological formulation. Accordingly, the physical geography of these areas is in some curious measure mirrored in the cultural topography, for the high points of Buddhist activity were generated in the valleys of greatest contact—with their exchanges of cultural information, religious instructions, textual evidence and ritual programs. Collectively,

they have achieved a force of gravity that continues to bind the Tibetan sphere together, and it is the hope of the editors that these papers will assist in the understanding of this most fascinating and fertile period.

PART ONE

EARLY TIBETAN LITERATURE FROM DUNHUANG

NEW LIGHT ON AN OLD FRIEND: *PT 849* RECONSIDERED

MATTHEW T. KAPSTEIN (PARIS AND CHICAGO)

The Dunhuang manuscript now known as *Pelliot tibétain 849* has the distinction of having been both one of the last of the Tibetan documents to have entered Mogao Cave 17 before its closure at some point during the early eleventh century and one of the first to have been examined in the West in fair detail. Joseph Hackin's 1924 study of the text was in many ways a pathbreaking contribution to Tibetology and, given the resources available at the time it was written, a work of outstanding excellence.[1] Indeed, we may still envy Hackin the altogether exceptional living resources he enjoyed in the form of the teachers and colleagues whose aid he acknowledged: Jules Bloch, Louis Finot, Sylvain Lévi, Paul Pelliot and, in Tibetan Studies, Jacques Bacot. Nevertheless, in the light of the development of the field during the eight decades that have followed its first publication, it may be appropriate to return to *PT 849* once again: what secrets does it contain that could not yet be unlocked when Hackin investigated it so long ago?

The manuscript is in the form of a scroll of 201 lines, composed of seven sheets pasted together, and measuring 3.08 metres in length. The text includes both purely Tibetan passages as well as some that are set down in Sanskrit (or in a later variety of Indo-Aryan) transcribed in the Tibetan *dbu med* script, together with Tibetan annotations (*mchan bu*) providing glosses upon them.[2] These interlinear comments are more finely written than the main text. (Hackin, in fact, counted 131 lines instead of 201, numbering the lines of annotation together with the

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[1] Hackin 1924. The entire scroll has since been photomechanically reproduced in Macdonald and Imaeda 1978, vol. I, plates 232-239. In referring to the text herein, I give line numbers following the latter source, adding Hackin's numbering as required in parentheses or notes. I wish to thank my colleague at the EPHE, Mme. Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, for kindly sharing with me her reflections on the history of this remarkable document.

[2] Although the *dbu med* transcriptions of Indic languages in *PT 849* reflect the author's aural comprehension of Indic phonetics, and so are often erroneous when compared either to Sanskrit orthography or to the phonology of Indo-Aryan languages, it may be noted that the *dbu med* script would later be used for the exact transcriptions of Sanskrit texts. For examples, see Yonezawa 2001.

more boldly written lines they gloss.) The bilingual sections of the text, which predominate overall, give the impression that the document is to all intents and purposes a sort of glossary and Hackin treated it as such. The contents and organisation of the scroll, however, suggest that this is at best a very rough description.[3] A somewhat different understanding of the manuscript will emerge in the course of the present discussion.

PT 849 IN ITS PLACE AND TIME

As Hackin well understood, *PT 849* provides the reader with a number of important suggestions regarding the circumstances of its composition. In fact, the scroll concludes with a remarkable historical note, relating the background for the preparation of the work by a certain 'Bro Dkon mchog dpal:

> *rgya gar chos kyi rgyal po'i sras / de ba pu tra chos ni ma bslabs par rang shes / 'phags pa spyan ras gzig kyi dbang phyug kyi dngos sgrub ni brnyes // bod yul du gshes te / bod kyi lha btsan po thams cad la / chos bshad cing dbang bskurs // gangs ti se la bsnyen bsgrub zab mor bgyis // mtsho ma 'phang la 'khrus brgyis nas // chos 'khor bsam yas su gdan gshags / bcom ldan 'das kyi ring lugs dang // dbas rgyal ba ye shes dang / mkhas btsun mang po gis // dge 'dun sde gnyis gis / mchod gnas cher mzdad/ bang chen dang / rim 'gro' bgyis nas // rgya yul du bskyal // rgya rje dang / rgya blon mang pos mchod gnas cher bgyis // ri bo rtse lnga la / 'phags pa 'jam dpal gi zhal mthong // slar rgya gar yul du gshags pa'i shul kar // sug cur gdan gshags / yul dpon dang / dge 'dun sde gnyis dang // rnal 'byor 'phreng thogs gi sde dang // sug cu yon bdag thams cad kyis / mchod gnas cher bgyis // slobs dpon thugs dges nas // theg pa chen po 'i chos bka rtsal // glang gi lo dpyid sla ra ba'i tshes nyi shu gsum gi gdugs la // 'bog rdo rje rgyal po dang // skya phud yang a dgi dang // rnal sbyor slobs dpon sde la // rdo rje rgyal po'i dbang lung rdzogs par stsal / // sngags dang phyag rgya man ngag gtan la phab pa // rdzogs// // 'bro dkon mchog dpal gis bris pa //* [4]

> The son of the Indian king of the doctrine, Devaputra, knew the doctrine by himself, without lessons. He obtained the accomplishment of the sublime Avalokiteśvara. Travelling (*gshes* for *gshegs*) to Tibet, he explained the doctrine to all the divine Btsan po-s of Tibet and he

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[3] Scherrer-Schaub and Bonani (2002: 188) call it "a kind of minimal compendium of Buddhist religion", but as will be seen below, further specification seems possible.

[4] *PT 849*, lines 187–201; Hackin 1924: 117–31.

empowered them. He practised the profound rites of service and attainment at Mt Ti se, and performed ablutions in Lake Ma 'phang. Then he went (*gshags for gshegs*) to the seat of Bsam yas. The Transcendent Lord's Lineage Heir (*bcom ldan 'das kyi ring lugs*),[5] Dbas Rgyal ba ye shes, and many who were learned and dignified, greatly honoured him with the worship of the two sections of the *saṃgha* [of monks and laymen]. After providing him with an escort and hospitality, he was accompanied to China. The Chinese emperor and many Chinese ministers greatly honoured him with worship. On Mt Wutai he beheld the visage of sublime Mañjuśrī. Later, when he was en route to India (*gshags*), he travelled (*gshags*) to the seat at Sug cu [that is, Suzhou, to the east of Anxi in Gansu],[6] where he was greatly honoured with worship from the lord of that land, the two sections of the *saṃgha*, the company of yogins bearing rosaries, and all the patrons of Sug cu. The master was delighted at heart and discoursed on the doctrine of the Greater Vehicle.

In the year of the ox, during the morning[7] of the twenty-third day of the spring month Ra ba, he bestowed the complete empowerment and scriptural transmission of the Vajrarāja upon 'Bog Rdo rje rgyal po, Skya phud yang a dgi and the company of yogins and teaching masters.[8] The mantras, mudrās and esoteric instructions[9] were definitively established.

Following the final statement of completion, the text is then signed by 'Bro Dkon mchog dpal.

As I shall argue below, the events described here likely took place toward the end of the third or the beginning of the last quarter of the

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[5] This phrase, now known to be the standard designation for the head of the Tibetan *saṃgha* in imperial and early post-imperial times, was obscure to Hackin (1924: 40), who, despite his own hesitation, was largely correct in his rendering: "l'école (?) de Bhagavat, son chef (?)". Given the peculiarities in the usage of the conjunction *dang* in the present text, it is possible that Dbas Rgyal ba ye shes is the proper name of the *bcom ldan 'das kyi ring lugs* mentioned.

[6] P. Pelliot clearly recognised this identification and communicated it accordingly to Hackin (1924: 82).

[7] *Gdugs* may mean either 'morning' or 'daytime'. Hackin understood it to mean 'midday'.

[8] In this sentence, I differ from Hackin's interpretations in several respects: *rdo rje rgyal po* is, I believe, 'Bog's proper name and not, pace Hackin, a title designating him to be the *vajrarāja* of 'Bog. I take *skya phud yang a dgi* (or perhaps *dge*) to be a single name and not two persons' names linked by *yang* used as a conjunction. The phrase *rnal 'byor slobs dpon sde* was interpreted by Hackin (following correspondence from S. Lévi; see p. 56) as yogācārya, by analogy to the Chinese rendering of yogācāra as *yuqieshi*. This cannot be altogether ruled out, but I think it rather less plausible in this context than the translation I have adopted, given the clear reference to a community of yogins just above.

[9] Hackin (1924: 40, 56) suggests that this might be the title of a particular text, which he calls *Mantramudropadeśa*, rather than simply an enumeration of some of the key elements of the teaching, as I think is more likely.

tenth century. Assuming, for the moment, that this is indeed the case, a number of points may be noted at once:

● Devaputra clearly travelled in regions in Tibet ruled by a number of local successors to the Tibetan empire, some of whom continued to use the old imperial title of *btsan po*. This, of course, confirms affirmations found within the later Tibetan historical record regarding the status assumed by some of the post-imperial princes.[10]

● Though his travels took him to regions that fell within the kingdom of Gu ge, there is no particular evidence within *PT 849* that pertains to Gu ge as a political realm.[11] Pilgrimage to Kailash and Manosarovar, in any case appear to have already been active concerns (as they may well have been for some centuries).

● A century or more *after* the fall of the Tibetan empire, there was a monk resident at Bsam yas bearing the imperial ecclesiastical title, *bcom ldan 'das kyi ring lugs*. Was this a product of the beginnings of the *bstan pa phyi dar?* or was it, as seems more likely, due to a real continuity (though perhaps one much attenuated) of monastic life in Central Tibet, despite the insistence of the later historical record that this had been brought to an end due to the persecutions lanced by Glang Dar ma?

● As an abundance of evidence from Dunhuang suggests, our text confirms the ongoing presence of a Tibetophone Buddhist religious community in the region of the Gansu corridor, long after this region had been freed from Tibetan imperial administration.[12]

● Pilgrimage routes linking Gansu both with Tibet and with northern China, in particular with Wutaishan, continued to be active.

In brief, in contrast with the perspective that was to dominate later Tibetan religious historiography, depicting post-imperial Tibet as a religious wasteland withdrawn into self-isolation, *PT 849* suggests that on the cusp of the *phyi dar* there was an active legacy, political as well as religious, reaching back to the imperial age, and that circulation was possible on routes linking India, West and Central Tibet, Gansu and China proper.

   All of this, however, presupposes that we are correct in our assumptions regarding the period in which the text was composed.

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[10] For a summary of the question, see Petech 1994.

[11] As will be seen below, the proposal that the Btsan po A tsa ra of our text is to be identified with Lha Bla ma Ye shes 'od cannot be sustained. The absence of any mention of that royal monk or his line suggests either that *PT 849* was redacted prior to his *floruit*, or that 'Bro Dkon mchog dpal, working presumably near Dunhuang, was simply too far distant from events in Gu ge to have given them much thought.

[12] Cf., in particular, the conclusions of Takata 1994.

Accordingly, the rather problematic evidence about this must now be considered.

The "year of the ox" (*glang gi lo*) mentioned toward the end of the colophon is not, of course, very helpful to us as matters stand. Without being able to assign the work with some assurance to a period of a few decades, there is really nothing that can be inferred on the basis of the animal sign alone. If our general assumptions are correct, 965 or 977 seem the most plausible C.E. equivalents, but little that we have said up to now can be put forward as evidence for this. Only one passage in the text seems to offer information that can help determine the proper periodisation and so resolve the issue, namely, the list of the empowered rulers of the past (*theg pa chen po'i dbang thob pa*), given in lines 116–121 (Hackin 65–71), which we find only in Tibetan. The text reads:

> bod 'phrul gï rgyal po dmyïg gsum pa dang / srong brtsan sgam po /
> dang // btsan po khri srom ldem brtsan dang // btsan po khri gtsug lde
> brtsan // btsan po ral pa can dang / de dag thams cad kyang theg pa chen
> po'i chos spyod pa / btsan po khris kyi ling dang sras che ba pal byin
> mgon dang // bkra shis mgon dang / leg gtsug mgon dang // btsan po
> bkra shis rtsags pa dpal dang // dpal lde dang / 'o lde dang // 'khri lde
> dang // btsan po bkra shis mgon po dang // tsan po a tsa ra dang // 'khri
> lde mgon dang / lha cig cag she dang / de dag thams cad kyang theg pa
> chen po 'i dbang thob pa yin no //

> As for the marvellously sagacious king of Tibet [endowed with] the third
> eye: Srong btsan sgam po, and Btsan po Khri Srong lde btsan, and Btsan
> po Khri Gtsug lde btsan, Btsan po Ral pa can were all practitioners of the
> Mahāyāna. Btsan po Khris kyi ling and his eldest son Dpal byin mgon,
> Bkra shis mgon, Legs gtsug mgon, Btsan po Bkra shis brtsegs pa dpal,
> Dpal lde, 'Od lde, Khri lde, Btsan po Bkra shis mgon po, Btsan po A tsa
> ra, Khri lde mgon, and Lha cig Cag she—all of these, too, obtained the
> empowerment of the Mahāyāna.[13]

The first group of rulers mentioned is apparently unproblematic. As Hackin (p. 68) clearly recognised, Btsan po Khri Gtsug lde btsan and Btsan po Ral pa can are two designations for one and the same individual. Hence, the first three kings listed correspond to those known throughout the later historiography as the *chos rgyal mes dbon rnam gsum*. (Perhaps, in fact, we should interpret the "three eyes" of the first

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[13] For convenience, and to better exhibit the correspondences among differing lists in the discussion that follows, I have employed here the standard classical transcriptions (wherever these are clearly identifiable) in favour of the orthographies found in *PT 849*. I offer my apologies to those who favour perfect philological purity.

line to be a reference to this royal triad.)[14] Neither Khri Lde srong btsan (reigned 804–815), nor U'i dum btsan (i.e., Glang Dar ma) is known to our text. Given the absence of the former, there would seem to be no warrant for assuming that the latter was deliberately excluded in a tacit reference to his supposed persecution of Buddhism.[15] It is probably better to assume that the author of *PT 849* was familiar with a stock list of the three major Tibetan dharma-kings, which he repeated before moving on to list the Central Tibetan post-imperial dynasty with which he apparently had more immediate familiarity:

4. Btsan po Khris kyi ling   [1st generation following Dpal 'khor btsan]
   5. Sras che ba (d)Pal byin mgon   [2nd generation]
   6. Bkra shis mgon
   7. Leg(s) gtsug mgon

8. Btsan po Bkra shis rtsa(e)gs pa dpal   [1st generation]
   9. Dpal lde   [2nd generation]
   10. 'O lde
   11. 'Khri lde

12. Btsan po Bkra shis mgon po   [= 6. Bkra shis mgon]
   13. Tsan po A tsa ra   [3rd generation]
   14. 'Khri lde mgon
   15. Lha cig Cag she

Hackin assumed that the last three mentioned, who were not at all known from other sources available to him, must have been the sons or successors of Btsan po Bkra shis mgon po (no. 12), and that he in turn had to be identified with Bkra shis mgon (no. 6), whom he considered to be the second son of Khris kyi ling (no. 4).[16] If we assume that this is likely to be correct, and that, as Hackin supposed, Khris kyi ling is to be identified with Skyid lde Nyi ma mgon, the son of Dpal 'khor btsan,[17] then we can use the Sa skya master Bsod nams rtse mo's dat-

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[14] The phrase is in fact somewhat puzzling. Does it refer to the Tibetan dharma-kings in general? Or to the trio mentioned? Or does it serve here, as Hackin (1924: 36) thought, as a qualifier of Srong btsan sgam po alone?

[15] It is of course also possible that the enumeration of Btsan po Khri Gtsug lde btsan and Btsan po Ral pa can as if they were distinct figures is due to an error regarding the correct name of Khri Lde srong btsan. Whether or not the exclusion of Glang Dar ma should be taken as suggesting that he was indeed responsible for a persecution of monastic Buddhism depends of course on the overall assessment of the evidence in this regard. For a review of the question, refer to Kapstein 2000, ch. 4.

[16] Hackin's generally sound judgments regarding the interpretation of the list of kings were primarily based on the work of Schlagintweit 1866.

[17] The plausibility of this assumption stems from the identical names of the sons of Khris kyi ling and of Skyid lde Nyi ma mgon. See Hackin 1924: 76.

ing of the latter's consecration of his father 'Od srung's memorial to 905 in order to arrive at an approximate chronology.[18] If we assign twenty-five years to each generation after 905, Btsan po A tsa ra and his siblings must have been active circa 980 or sometime before (905 + 25 + 25 + 25 = 980).

In an important contribution to the religious history of Western Tibet, Samten G. Karmay posited that the Btsan po A tsa ra of our list might be identified with none other than the celebrated Gu ge prince Lha bla ma Ye shes 'od,[19] a proposition that for a time was widely accepted. After all, who else among the rulers of the period with whom we were familiar seemed better to merit the sobriquet of ācārya? However, as Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, following the suggestions of Luciano Petech, has rightly noted, Btsan po A tsa ra is no doubt the same as the A tsa ra now known from several versions of the list of the successors of Glang Dar ma's (possibly fictitious) second son, Yum brtan.[20] Here, of course, we must tread carefully, for as has been apparent now for some time, the variant geneologies of the successors to the old Tibetan empire that have become available contain many contradictions and inconsistencies, frustrating at points even the most cautious interpreters.[21]

The Central Tibetan ruler named A tsa ra[22] is mentioned in the histories of Nyang Nyi ma 'od zer (1124–1192), Lde'u Jo sras, Mkhas pa Lde'u, and Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje.[23] The last of these, the celebrated *Deb ther dmar po* dating to the late fourteenth century, provides an enumeration of eight generations from Yum brtan to A tsa ra, thus:

1. Yum brtan
2. Khri lde Mgon nyin
3. Khri lde Rig pa mgon
4. Rdo rje 'bar
5. Khri Dbang phyug btsan

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[18] Kapstein 2000, ch. 1, n. 51.

[19] Karmay 1980: 150–62.

[20] Scherrer-Schaub and Bonani 2002: 213, n. 18. See further Hazod 2000. For a skeptical view of the Yum brtan tradition, see, especially, Richardson 1971.

[21] Cf. Petech 1994 and van der Kuijp 1992.

[22] Scherrer-Schaub and Bonani 2002, read A tsa rya, but this is surely a hypercorrection.

[23] Nyang Nyi ma 'od zer, *Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud*; Lde'u Jo sras, *Lde'u chos 'byung*; Mkhas pa Lde'u, *Mkhas pa Lde'us mdzad pa'i rgya bod kyi chos 'byung rgyas pa*; Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje, *Deb ther dmar po rnams kyi dang po*

    6. Tsha lan Ye shes rgyal mtshan
    7. Khri pa
    8. A tsa ra.[24]

This was the genealogical list referred to by Scherrer-Schaub, who pro-
posed on this basis that this would push the dating of A tsa ra well into
the mid-eleventh century if not later, a far-reaching conclusion that, if
correct, might even require a reassessment of our suppositions regard-
ing the period in which Dunhuang cave 17 was sealed.[25]

    Nevertheless, I believe that such a radical proposal is not in fact war-
ranted. The *Deb ther dmar po* is the latest of the four histories noted
and the genealogy that it offers for A tsa ra is altogether exceptional; the
three remaining works, all dating to the twelfth–thirteenth centuries,
concur perfectly in their enumeration of this royal line:

    1. Yum brtan
    2. Khri lde Mgon snyan
    3.a. gcen Rig pa mgon   b. gcung Nyi 'od dpal mgon
    4. (from 3.a.) Khri lde
    5. 'Od po
    6.a. Khri lde A tsa ra   b. Khri lde Mgon btsan   c. Khri lde Mgon brtsegs.[26]

The three concur, moreover, in placing the prince Tsha la (s)na Ye shes
rgyal mtshan, considered by the *Deb ther dmar po* as an ancestor of A
tsa ra, in the line of Rig pa mgon's younger brother Nyi 'od dpal

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hu lan deb ther. As van der Kuijp 1992 has argued, there are problems regarding the
attributions of authorship of the two Lde'u *chos 'byung*. Here I retain the conventions
of the publications in question as only a matter of convenience. There are also difficul-
ties regarding their dating, though I think that van der Kuijp is correct in holding that
they were likely redacted (in roughly the form in which we have them) during the sec-
ond half of the thirteenth century.

    [24] *Deb ther dmar po*, pp. 40–41.

    [25] Scherrer-Schaub and Bonani 2002: 188: "The list [of kings in *PT 849*] ends with
three scions of the Yum brtan lineage, who might have been active in the mid-eleventh
century or even later. If we accept that the provenance of Pelliot 849 is Cave 17 at
Dunhuang then the date of the sealing of this cave must be put back". Of course, this
conclusion does not really follow, even if *PT 849* is as late as here proposed. It is well
known that some of the documents discovered in Dunhuang Cave 17 do indeed post-
date the presumed period of its sealing: a number of post-sixteenth century Mongolian
manuscripts, some even on Russian manufactured paper, were among the Cave 17 find-
ings. As András Róna-Tas, however, has plausibly argued, these were most likely detri-
tus from renovations in neighboring caves deposited in Cave 17 by the *daoshi* Wang
prior to Stein's arrival there in 1907.

    [26] *Mkhas pa lde'u*, p. 388; *Lde'u jo sras*, p. 152; *Nyang ral*, p. 449.

mgon.[27] According to these same sources, the son of this Tsha la (s)na Ye shes rgyal mtshan was one Khri pa, whose son was Dge ba ra tsa. It is not impossible to imagine that a careless scribe might have miswritten the last as A tsa ra, yielding the last part of the genealogy of the *Deb ther dmar po*.

Ignoring now the questions surrounding Yum brtan's historicity, let us for the sake of the argument adopt 860 as an estimation for the beginning of Yum brtan's reproductive years.[28] Following the same principle of assigning 25 years to each generation, and adhering to the generational count given in the sources just mentioned, we arrive at 985 as an approximation of the period in which A tsa ra and his brothers flourished, a remarkable coincidence, given the rough date of 980 calculated on the basis of *PT 849* itself. Hackin's conclusion, that "les derniers bcan po mentionnés régnaient encore dans la 2e moitié du Xe siècle de notre ère" may therefore, I think, be allowed to stand. These rough calculations support the general hypothesis that the ox-year empowerment mentioned in the colophon of *PT 849* may have taken place in 977 (or perhaps as early as 965) and that the text was written at some point later in the tenth century. For simplicity, we may consider the last quarter of the tenth century as a plausible time-frame for its composition.

QUESTIONS OF STRUCTURE AND GENRE

Lines 1–14 (Hackin 1–7) of the text are bilingual, giving a list of epithets of Buddha, followed by some broad doctrinal and textual categories, ending with the enumeration of the nine sequences, or vehicles (*na ba kra ma, theg pa rim pa dgu*), and the thirty-six yogatantras (*tsha*

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[27] *Mkhas pa lde'u*, pp. 388–89; *Lde'u jo sras*, p. 153; *Nyang ral*, p. 449.

[28] If, however, Yum brtan was a fictitious personage, then we are presented with just two alternatives: (1) assuming the name Yum brtan to have indeed arisen, as Richardson proposed, as a deformation of Glang Dar ma's proper name, U'i dum brtan, and assuming too that the genealogical information given is otherwise correct, then we might hold Khri lde Mgon snyan to have been a son of none other than Glang Dar ma, in which case A tsa ra would have lived a generation earlier than we are here arguing that he did. (2) If, on the other hand, Yum brtan is a pure fiction, invented to create a tie to the royal clan by some assuming princely prerogative following the dynasty's fall, but not actually descended from the main imperial line, the implications for the royal chronology will have to be resolved solely with reference to the relative chronology of the parallel princely lines during the post-imperial period.

ti sha zo ga tan tra, rgyud chen po sum cu rtsa drug).[29] The passages
that immediately follow offer detailed explanations of these two cate-
gories: lines 15–20 (Hackin 8–13) present the nine yānas and their sub-
divisions, in a mixture of Sanskrit and Tibetan; while lines 21–37
(Hackin 13–23) provide a partially bilingual list of tantras, the Tibetan
being included only through the twenty-first of the thirty-three items
actually listed.

   In Hackin's day, of course, the problematic early history of Tibetan
tantrism was to all intents and purposes unknown. As the list of the
yānas given in our text makes clear, the nine-fold division associated
with the doctrinal categories of the Rnying ma pa and Bon po was
already in play, though the enumeration found here cannot be precisely
identified with any of the known versions of these latter.[30] And as con-
cerns *PT 849*'s inventory of tantras, we find here confirmation not only
that some of the major Mahāyogatantras of the Rnying ma tradition,
including the *Guhyagarbha* and the eight-fascicle *Vajrāmṛtatantra*,
were in circulation at the time the text was composed, but also that
some of the characteristic Anuttarayogatantras associated with the

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[29] Note that even here the translations are not quite exact; the Tibetan adds *theg pa*
in the first case, and substitutes *chen po* for *zo ga* (= *yoga*, cf. Bengali *joga*) in the sec-
ond.

[30] Refer to Kapstein 2000, *Assimilation*, ch. 1, for a brief comparison of the nine
vehicle systems of *PT 849*, the *Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba* attributed to
Padmasambhava, and the Bon-po Central Treasure (*dbus gter*). The discussion in *PT
849* reads as follows:

  *theg pa rim pa dgu gang la bya zhe na // mi 'i theg pa dang // lha'i theg pa dang /
  nyan thos kyi theg pa dang // rang sang rgyas kyi theg pa dang // mdo sde'i theg pa
  dang / byang chub sems pa'i theg pa dang // mdzo ga dang / kyïr yā dang / u pa ya
  dang / de rnams ni theg pa rim pa dgu la bya // 'dzo ga la yang rnam pa bzhi / 'dzo
  ga dang/ ma ha 'dzo ga dang / a nu 'dzo ga dang / a ti 'dzo ga dang / bzhi / kïr ya
  la rnam pa bzhi ste / nyan thos ki kir ya dang // rang sangs rgyas kï kïr ya dang //
  mdo sde 'i kir ya dang // byang chub sems pa'i kiri ya dang / bzhi // u pa ya rnam
  bzhi la / nyan thos kyi 'bras bu thob pa dang / rang sangs rgyas kyi 'bras bu thob
  pa dang // byang chub kyï 'bras bu thob pa dang / mdo sde'i 'bras bu dang bzhi //*

  If one asks, to what does "nine sequential vehicles" refer? The nine vehicles are the
  vehicle of men, the vehicle of gods, the vehicle of pious attendants, the vehicle of
  the self-awakened ones, the vehicle of the sūtra, the vehicle of the bodhisattva, yoga,
  kriyā and upaya. Yoga also has four aspects: the tetrad of yoga, mahāyoga, anuyoga
  and atiyoga. Kriyā also has four aspects: the tetrad of the kriyā of the pious atten-
  dants, the kriyā of the self-awakened ones, the kriyā of the sūtra, and the kriyā of the
  bodhisattvas. The four aspects of upaya are the tetrad of the pious attendants'
  fruition, the self-awakened ones' fruition, the bodhisattvas' fruition and the sūtras'
  fruition.

Note that in the later Rnying ma pa tradition *upaya* in this context is interpreted as
equivalent not to the Skt. term for 'means' (*thabs*), but to Skt. *ubhaya*, "both," referring
to the intermediacy of *caryātantra* between *kriyātantra* and *yogatantra*.

translation activity of Rin chen bzang po and his Gsar ma successors were now known at least by name, such as the *Vajracatuḥpīṭha*.[31] Still other titles are of texts that span the Rnying ma-Gsar ma divide, such as the *Guhyasamāja* (which seems to be listed twice), the *Mañjuśrīmāyājāla*, and the *Amoghapāśa*. One surprising inclusion is the "*Laṅkāvatāratantra*".[32]

The bilingual passage that now follows begins an entirely new sec-

[31] The catalogue of tantras found here is thus quite different from the imperial period lists known from the *Ldan kar ma* and *Phang thang ma dkar chag*-s. Refer to Lalou 1953; and Rta-rdo (ed.) *Dkar chag 'phang thang ma. Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa.* A preliminary perusal of the latter suggests that, though the introduction (pp. 2–3) and conclusion (pp. 66–67) may have been modified by post-imperial copyists, the actual inventory of texts (pp. 3–65) appears to be authentic. Although tantric materials are more amply represented here than in the *Ldan kar ma* (see especially pp. 61–65), it conforms with the latter in that no texts of the *anuttarayoga-tantra* class are mentioned (with the possible exception of the '*Jam dpal gshin rje gshed kyi rtog pa phyi ma'i yang phyi ma*, listed on p. 61).

[32] For convenience I provide here the list of tantras recorded in *PT 849*, lines 21–37 (Hackin 13–23), a list that must certainly count as one of the earliest *rgyud sde dkar chag*. The identifications of the texts mentioned are by no means secure in all cases; and in a few instances categories (e.g. nos. 8, 12, 24, 26), rather than text titles, seem at issue. In many instances, Hackin's interpretations of the underlying Sanskrit were sound, though he erred at points in this as well as in his understanding of just how the text is to be divided. I have translated only the Tibetan glosses, which sometimes do not correspond exactly with the Sanskrit.

Tsha ti sha zo ga tan tra. rgyud chen po sum cu rtsa drug gang la bya. To what does "thirty-six great tantra" refer? [They are enumerated as follows:]

[1] *Tan tra ma ya 'dza la. rgyud sgyu 'phrul dra ba dang.* The Tantra of the Magical Net (*Māyājālatantra*). [Note that on all occurrences of the word *sgyu 'phrul, rdzu 'phrul* was originally written, with the first syllable struck out and corrected to *sgyu* by the same scribal hand.]

[2] *Sri sma dza tan tra. dpal thams cad 'dus pa'ï rgyud.* The Glorious Tantra of the Universal Gathering (**Śrīsamājatantra*).

[3] *Be ro dza na ma ya dzwa la tan tra. rnam par snang mdzad rgyud sgyu 'phrul dra ba dang.* The Magical Net of Vairocana (*Vairocanamāyājālatantra*).

[4] *Man dzu sri ma ya dzwa la tan tra. 'jam dpal ye shes sems pa'i rgyud sgyu 'phrul dra ba dang.* The Magical Net of Mañjuśrī-Jñānasattva (*Mañjuśrīmāyājālatantra*).

[5] *Lo ke shwa ra ma ya dzwa la tan tra. spyan ras gzig dbang phyug gi rgyud sgyu 'phrul dra ba dang.* The Magical Net of Avalokiteśvara (*Avalokiteśvaramāyājālatantra*).

[6] *Ba dzra swad twa ma ya dzwa la tan tra. rdo rje sems pa'i rgyud sgyu 'phrul dra ba dang.* The Magical Net of Vajrasattva (*Vajrasattvamāyājālatantra*).

[7] *De bye ma ya dzwa la tan tra. lha mo rgyud sgyu 'phrul dra ba dang.* The Magical Net of the Goddess (*Devīmāyājālatantra*).

[8] *Ga ya ba ga tsid da tan tra. sku gsum* (sic!) *thugs gï rgyud gsum dang.* The Three Tantra of Body, Speech and Mind (*Kāyavākcittatantra*). [This category pertains to nos. 9–11 as follows:]

[9] *Ga ya tan tra sa rba 'bu ta sa ma dzo ga. sku'ï sbyor ba thams cad sangs rgyas*

tion of the work, as is clearly indicated by both conventions of punctuation and the phrase, "in the language of India" (*rgya gar skad du*), with which this part of the text opens. The first lines here (38–41,

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   kï rnam sbyor gi rgyud. The Tantra of the Bodily Yoga, the Conjunction of All Buddhas (*Kāyatantra-Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*).

[10] *Ba ga tan tra. 'Gu ya ti la ka. gsung gi 'gel* ('*gel* for '*grel*?) *pa zla gsang thïg le rgyud*. The Speech Commentary: the Tantra of the Hidden Point of the Moon (*Vāktantra-Candraguhyatilaka*). [Hackin treated this as two distinct works.]

[11] *Tsid ta tan tra. 'Gu dzya sa ma dza. thugs kyï thigs pa rgyud gsang ba 'dus pa dang*. The Tantra of the Mind-Drop: the Gathering of Secrets (*Cittatantra-Guhyasamāja*).

[11´ or 12] *Mu la tan tra. rtsa ba'i rgyud dang*. The Root Tantra (*Mūlatantra*). [Hackin considered this the closing part of the title of the *Guhyasamāja*, which is certainly possible, though he treated *Cittatantra* as a separate entry.]

[13] *A mo go pa sa tan tra. rgyud thabs kyï zhags pa*. The Tantra of the Lasso of Means (*Amoghapāśatantra*).

[14] *'Gu yya kar rba tan tra. rgyud gsang ba'ï snyïng po*. The Tantra of the Secret Nucleus (*Guhyagarbhatantra*).

[15] *Ba dzre am 'brï ta tan tra. bdud rtsi'i rgyud bam po brgyad pa dang*. The Eight Volumes of the Tantra of Nectar (*Vajrāmṛtatantra*).

[16] *Ba dzre cha tu sprï sti tan tra. rdo rje gdan bzhï 'ï rgyud dang*. The Tantra of the Four Vajra-Seats (*Vajracatuḥpīṭhatantra*). [Hackin read *Vajracaturbṛṣitantra*!]

[17] *He ru ka a pu tha tan tra. he ru ka thams cad 'byung ba'i rgyud dang*. The Tantra of the Emergence of All Herukas (*Herukābhyudayatantra*).

[18] *Ma ri dzi kal pa tan tra. lha mo 'od zer can 'byung ba'ï rgyud dang*. The Tantra of the Emergence of the Goddess *Marīci* (*Marīcikalpatantra*).

[19] *Lag khyi mi sha da na tan tra. yang dag grub pa'i rgyud dang*. The Tantra of Excellent Attainment (*Lakṣmīsādhanatantra*).

[20] *Pan tsa skan da' byi ca ra na tan tra. phung po lnga'i grub pa'ï tan tra dang*. The Tantra of the Attainment of the Five Bundles (*Pañcaskandhavica-raṇatantra*).

[21] *'Bu ta na ma ra tan tra. 'byung po 'byung ba'ï rgyud dang*. The Tantra of the Emergence of Spirits (*Bhūtaḍāmaratantra*).

[22] *A ba da ra tan tra* (*Avatāratantra*).

[23] *Tad twa sang kra tan tra* (*Tattvasaṃgrahatantra*).

[24] *'Zo go 'o tro tan tra* (*Yogottaratantra*).

[25] *Zo go nyi rod tan tra* [Uncertain. Hackin suggested *Yoganirodhatantra*, but perhaps **Yoganiruttaratantra* may be also proposed].

[26] *Zo gi ni tan tra* (*Yoginītantra*).

[27] *O li pad ti tan tra* [Uncertain. Hackin left this uninterpreted. *Oli* (perhaps < Skt. *āvalī*) occurs in the formation of certain technical terms of *haṭhayoga*, e.g., *vajrolimudrā*, referring to the yogic practice of sexual congress. A possible interpretation might therefore be **(Vajr)olipaddhatitantra*].

[28] *Ad dwa shin ti tan tra* (*Advayasiddhitantra*).

[29] *Sha ma ya sid ti tan tra* (*Samayasiddhitantra*).

[30] *Lang ka a ba da ra tan tra* (*Laṅkāvatāratantra*).

[31] *Rad na a ba li tan tra* (*Ratnāvalītantra*).

[32] *Ga ra ni byu tan tra* (*Karaṇḍavyūhatantra*).

[33] *Shu ga ta ti la ka tan tra* (*Sugatatilakatantra*).

Hackin 24–25) enumerate the three sādhana of maṇḍala, divinity, and attainment.[33] The Indic text in this case is notably laconic in comparison to its Tibetan gloss: the syntactically detached word *thar ma ra dza* (l. 39, Hackin 25) that completes these lines, for example, is explained with the clause, "… [these sādhana] were taught by Dharmarāja of India" (*rgya gar chos kyi rgyal pos bstan pa yin no*), a reference, no doubt, to the "Dharmarāja's son Devaputra" whose exploits are described in the scroll's colophon as discussed above. The relatively detailed description of the Mt. Meru world-system and its principal inhabitants (lines 42–88, Hackin 26–50) in the succeeding section seems to offer a précis of abhidharma cosmology and Hackin read it as such.

I would suggest, however, that, following the apparent logic of the text—which moves from tantric textual categories, to types of sādhana, through the present 'abhidharma' passage, to the enumeration of those kings and past dharma-masters who were empowered, and then to the special attainments, mantras, and fruits of tantric empowerment[34]—that it may be equally related to the esoteric teaching of Dharmarāja just mentioned. Thus, the full enumerations we find incorporated here of the "eight great gods", "eight planets", and "eight nāga kings" (ll. 59–70, Hackin 35–41; the last two groups being listed solely in Sanskrit without Tibetan translation), recall the importance of these and other similar eight-fold groups for the tantric maṇḍala-systems that were current in Tibet at the time, for instance, the maṇḍala detailed in another late Dunhuang Tibetan document, the "memorandum on arranging the divinities on the hundred-eight-petalled lotus" (*padma 'kha brgya rtsa brgyad la lha bkod pa'ï brjed byang*), preserved as IO 318 in the collection of the British Library.[35]

Given the identity of Devaputra with the Dharmarāja to whom the

[33] *man dal la no phyi ka / 'de ba no pyi ka / sa da na no pyi ka //* The unusual term *no p(h)yi ka*, which persists in Rnying ma pa *gter ma* literature at least through the fourteenth century, may be explained as derived from the last four syllables of Skt. *sādhanopāyika*.

[34] Detailed discussion of all these matters must await another occasion. Given, however, what has already been said regarding *PT 849*'s apparent connections with aspects of proto-Rnying ma pa traditions—e.g., in its references to the system of nine yānas and to a number of tantras that came to be thought of as characteristically Rnying ma pa—it is of interest to note the occurrence here of the term *rdzogs pa chen po* (line 144, Hackin 1924, p. 87) as an attribute of the highest attainment. The Indic equivalent is given as *pa rï pu ru na*, i.e., Skt. *paripūrṇa*.

[35] An edition and study of this short but highly interesting text has been prepared by

doctrines discussed in this passage are attributed, are we entitled to assume that the work is in its *entirety* to be taken as a sort of record of this person's teaching? On this point we must urge some caution. Though some portions of the text certainly do appear to attempt the transcription of an Indian teacher's words, and to interpret them in Tibetan, this is not always the case. The digressive enumeration of the Tibetan dharma-kings, for instance, as well as the final account of Devaputra himself, are certainly due to the scroll's Tibetan author. The summary of the sequence of the nine yānas, given in a mixture of Tibetan and Sanskrit, seems at least to be open to question. And what of the extremely heterogenous (and incomplete) list of the "thirty-six yogatantras", with its mixture of Rnying ma and Gsar ma titles? Is it imaginable that, in these cases, Indian master and Tibetan disciple were together trying to fill out the categories in question with a combination of fragments from memory and guesswork? Let us recall, too, that the Tibetan glosses on the Indic passages given throughout the text are sometimes inexact, or add material that is not at all present in the Indic version. At the same time, we also find on occasion Indic material that is left uninterpreted in Tibetan.

The generally careful standard of the Tibetan orthography throughout suggests that the author of *PT 849*, 'Bro Dkon mchog dpal, was a relatively well-educated man. However, the Sanskrit we find here is never transcribed on the basis of a literary knowledge of that language. That the principles for exact literary transcription were well established during the eighth and ninth centuries is, of course, quite certain: this is proven, for instance, by the Dunhuang manuscript fragments of the *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*.[36] And the use of the *dbu med* script as a medium for written Sanskrit is now also confirmed by palm leaf manuscripts in this script that have recently become objects of intensive study (see n. 2 above). The orthographical peculiarities of *PT 849*, however, including the absence of distinction between long and short vowels, and frequent confusions of voiced with unvoiced, and aspirated with unaspirated consonants leave little doubt but that what we have here is the transcription of medieval spoken Indic as it sounded to an Indologically untrained Tibetan ear: *buddha*, for instance, is transcribed

the present author as part of an essay entitled "Between Na-rak and a hard place: evil rebirth and the violation of vows in early rNying-ma-pa sources and their Dunhuang antecedents".

[36] For an edition that takes account of the Dunhuang fragments, refer to Ishikawa 1990.

in no less than six different ways (*'bu tha, bu tha,'bu tha'*, *'bu da'*, *'bu da*, *'bu ta*) in the first five lines of Tibetan text alone. At the same time, we must note that some of the orthographic variants are certainly due to Dharmarāja's own way of speaking: the use of *ja* or *za* for *ya*, for example, suggests that he was an easterner, while some pecularities are best explained with reference to NIA rather than Sanskrit vocabulary, for instance, *tsha ti sha*, for Sanskrit *ṣaṭtriṃśat*, "thirty-six", certainly derives from an NIA form of the word (compare, e.g., Bengali *chatriś*). To the extent that *PT 849* offers a Buddhist lexicon, it is one composed without a firm basis in the Tibetan traditions of Indian lexical science that had been introduced to Tibet much earlier.[37]

In sum, it seems plausible to take *PT 849* not as a straightforward record of Devaputra's teaching, but rather as the product of his interaction with his Tibetan disciples. *PT 849* may thus be seen not precisely as a glossary, but rather as something resembling a dharma-student's notebook, containing elements of a lexicon, but also lists of teachings and texts, historical notes, and so on. And, just as we often find in Western dharma-centres today, the student here attempts to transcribe the master's words using the informal tools offered by the spelling conventions of his own language, without reference to phonological science. Nevertheless, as we also find in the case of studious dharma-students today, the disciple, though not an accomplished translator, is nevertheless familiar with many common bilingual equivalencies.

ECHOES OF INDIA

If in the foregoing remarks I have to some degree problematised the status of *PT 849* as an authentic witness to an Indian master's teachings in the late tenth century Tibetan world, I believe nevertheless that we may at points discern Devaputra's own voice. This much is warranted by our conclusions regarding the elements of NIA speech that 'Bro Dkon mchog dpal's inexact phonetic transcription scheme seems surely to

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[37] Hackin (1924: 95 ff) was content to lump all of the Indic peculiarities of *PT 849*'s phonetic representation together as 'prakritisms'. It seems clear, however, that wherever Sanskrit is not the source language, some variety of early NIA is, and that the Prakrits, properly speaking, play no role here at all. A new phonological analysis of the entire text is clearly called for; the few remarks on this topic offered in the present discussion are intended to do no more than to signal the need for such research.

have recorded. There is, however, one key point about which Hackin, significantly, had nothing at all to say, where I believe that we do hear Devaputra speak across the centuries with relative clarity.

One of the more puzzling passages in the text is the strange series of verses given in lines 172–186 (Hackin 109–116), describing the condition of the realised tantric adept. These are transcribed in Indic throughout, with incomplete Tibetan glosses that sometimes offer paraphrases and not exact translations. Following the Tibetan, these twenty-two lines say:

1. Sometimes like a school-child,
2. Sometimes like a brahman,
3. Sometimes like a monk,
4. Sometimes a blabbermouth,
5. Sometimes saying nothing,
6. Sometimes dwelling in one place, going nowhere,
7. Sometimes wandering all about,
8. Sometimes variously smearing the body,
9. Sometimes bathing in perfume,
10. Sometimes eating varied foods,
11. Sometimes eating many delicacies,
12. Sometimes crying,[38]
13. Sometimes singing and playing instruments,
14. Sometimes like the demon lord of death,
15. Sometimes loving all with compassion,
16. Sometimes acting as a blindman,
17. Sometimes with the taintless eye at peace, all three realms clearly manifest,
18. Sometimes as if dumb,
19. Sometimes like the lord of speech,
20. Sometimes one abides as if deaf,
21. Sometimes as if hearing various languages of the gods:
22. The conduct of yoga is entirely uncertain; sometimes one abides pervading all space.

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[38] Hackin read here *res ga ni ru*, which he left untranslated for the very good reason that this phrase means nothing whatsoever. However, his reading of *ru* must be emended to *ngu;* for *ra* and *nga,* particularly with the addition of the *zhabs kyu* ligature, resemble one another closely in the cursive script that is used here. The reading of *ngu*, 'to cry', moreover, is clearly supported by our interpretation of the accompanying Indic text (see below).

Hackin translated these verses, so far as he could, and attempted to reconstitute the Sanskrit, but otherwise left them altogether without comment, which may seem odd, given his remarks on all but a very small number of passages throughout the whole extent of the text. (It is difficult to imagine, however, in the light of the research on esoteric Buddhism available in the early 1920s, just what one could have said about this section of the text at that time.) Only recently it has become clear that these unusual verses can be for the most part identified with some lines from a particular Indian Buddhist tantric text, the *Vyaktabhāvanānugata-tattvasiddhiḥ* (*Tattvasiddhi* hereinafter) attributed to the yoginī Cintā, who is sometimes identified as the consort of the siddha Dārikapāda. The work was edited on the basis of four manuscripts not long ago in *Guhyādi-aṣṭasiddhisaṃgraha*.[39] The Tibetan translation of the text that is preserved in the extant versions of the Tanjur was done by 'Gos Khug pa Lhas btsas in collaboration with the mahāpaṇḍita Śāntibhadra, and thus perhaps dates to the third quarter of the eleventh century, that is, perhaps as much as a century *after* the composition of our Dunhuang manuscript. Roughly contemporaneously with 'Gos, the same text was also transmitted in Tibet by the celebrated Newari mahāmudrā adept Vajrapāṇi (*Blue Annals* 857).

The correspondences between this work and *PT 849* merit consideration in full detail. In the present collation, an asterisk (*) indicates that the line in question is reconstructed here solely on the basis of the transcription given in *PT 849*. Sanskrit verse numbers following the abbreviation 'TS', where provided, refer to the Sarnath edition of the *Tattvasiddhi*. In these cases, the sign '=' indicates a recognisable relationship between the two texts, even where this is less than exact equivalence, whereas the notation *confer* ('cf.') calls attention to less direct semantic or phonetic resemblances, the value of which is open to question.

    1. ka tsid ta tsa ta. *res ga yig phrug dang 'dra*.
    Sometimes like a school-child, (**kvacic chāttraḥ*)

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[39] *Vyaktabhāvānugatatattvasiddhiḥ* attributed to Yoginī Cintā in *Guhyādi-aṣṭasid-dhisaṃgraha*, pp. 165–179. The Tibetan translation, by Paṇḍita Zhi ba bzang po and 'Gos Lhas btsas, is included in the same volume, pp. 252–71. The text has been discussed briefly in a rather different context by Shaw (1994: 182), whose efforts to find here evidence of proto-feminism have been criticised (correctly, I believe) by Davidson (2002: 97).

2. ka tsid ta pha' tra. *res ga bram ze dang 'dra.*
Sometimes like a brahman (Skt. worthy-person), (*kvacit pātram)
(cf. TS 11.c. *kvacid api pavitraḥ śucitānuḥ*)
3. ka tsid ta bra bad 'dzï to na ra. *res ga dge slong dang 'dra.*
Sometimes like a monk (Skt. renunciate), (**kvacit pravrajito naraḥ*)
(cf. TS 16.b. *kvacid bhikṣādakṣaḥ*)
4. ka tsid ba dza me kra ya. *res ga gtam mang du smra.*
Sometimes a blabbermouth, (= TS 9.b. *kvacid api ca maukharyam
asamam*)
5. ka tsid ta me'u na ga da'. *res ga cang myi smra.*
Sometimes saying nothing, (= TS 9.b. *kvacin maunaṃ*)
6. ka tsid ta e ka nyi la ya. *res ga ni sa cig na 'dug. gar yang myi 'gro.*
Sometimes dwelling in one place, going nowhere, (= TS10.b. *kvacid
api virāgaikanilayaḥ*)
7. ka tsid tsan tsa la ka ti. *res ga kun tu 'khyab par 'gro.*
Sometimes wandering all about, (= TS 10.d. *kvacid api taḍiccañ-
calagatiḥ*)
8. ka tsi ta thu'u li ma la na. *res ga sna tshogs lus la sku.*
Sometimes variously smearing the body, (= TS 13.b. *kvacid
dhūlīmlānaḥ*)
9. ka tsid ta sï'u tsi sna na. *res ga ni dri zhim po la khrus byed.*
Sometimes bathing in perfume, (= TS 13.b. *kvacid api sukhasnāna-
subhagaḥ*)
10. ka tsid ta byid tya si. *res ga za ba sna tshogs gsol.*
Sometimes eating varied foods, (cf. TS 11.c. *kvacid viṣṭā-sīnaḥ/-
śīlaḥ*, for, perhaps, *viṣṭāśanaḥ, "eating shit". The Tib. trans. of
Tattvasiddhi reads here *la lar ni mi gtsang bas gnas pa'o*. It is pos-
sible to imagine, too, that the Skt. underlying *PT 849* in this verse
would have been *viśvāśanaḥ, "eating variously".)
11. ka tsid ta myi cha dzï byid ti. *res ga drï zhim rgu za.*
Sometimes eating many delicacies, (= TS 10.a. *kvacit tuṣṭo miṣṭāt*)
12. ka tsid ta kan 'ar na lo na. *res ga ni ngu.*[40]
Sometimes crying, (= TS 12c. *kvacid api mahākrandanaparaḥ* + 9.c.
kvacit tṛṣṇālolaḥ)
13. ka tsid ta 'gi ti ka ba tsa na. *res ga ni dbyangs dang rol mo byed.*
Sometimes singing and playing instruments, (= TS 12.c. *kvacid
gītotkarṣī*)

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[40] On this reading, see n. 38 above.

14. ka tsi ta ra kha sa sa ma. *res ga gshin rje srin po dang 'dra.*
Sometimes like the demon lord of death, (= TS 9.a. *kvacid api mahārākṣasasamaḥ*)
15. ka tsid ta ka ru na ad ma ka. *res ga snying rje kun la byams.*
Sometimes loving all with compassion, (= TS 9.a. *kvacit kāruṇyātmā*)
16. ka tsid ta an ta ba ta. *res ga long ba'i tshul du ston.*
Sometimes acting as a blindman, (**kvacid andhavat*)
17. ka tsid ta 'gya ni e ka tsa bya ma la sha trï sha. *res ga dri myed spyan cig bzhi. khaṃs gsum kun kyang sa ler snang.*
Sometimes with the taintless eye at peace (reading *zhi* for *bzhi*), all three realms clearly manifest, (**kvacid jñānī ekaca(kṣuḥ) vimala sadṛśa*. There seems little point in attempting to reconstruct a grammatically coherent (not to say "correct") Sanskrit phrase on the basis of the badly garbled transcription in this case.)
18. ka tsid ta 'ba he ra bad ta. *res ga gdïg pa dang 'dra.*
Sometimes as if mute, (**kvacid badhiravat*, "…as if deaf")
19. ka tsid ta ba gi sva ra sa 'dri sha. *res ga gsung gi dbang phyug 'dra.*
Sometimes like the lord of speech, (**kvacid vāgīśvarasadṛśaḥ*)
20. ka tsid ta kā la ba ta. *res ga 'on pa'ï tshul du gnas.*
Sometimes one abides as if deaf, (**kvacit kāṇavat*, "…as if one-eyed")
21. ka tsid ta 'dï pi sro tra sha 'di sa. *res ga lha'i sgra skad sna tshogs thos pa 'dra.*
Sometimes as if hearing various languages of the gods: (**kvacid devaśrotrasadṛśaḥ*)
22. ka tsid ta na na ru pa tha ra 'dzo gi pa ri tsa ra na ti, ma hi ta li. *rnal sbyor spyod pa cïr yang ma nges ste. res ga gnam ka kun tu khyab par gnas.*
The conduct of yoga is entirely uncertain;
Sometimes one abides pervading all space.
(**kvacin nānārūpadharayogī paricaranti* (sic!) *mahitale*)
(cf. TS 16.c. *kvacid yogānandaḥ kvacid api pṛthak prāṇisadṛśaḥ*)

It is of course quite evident that the general correspondence of *PT 849* with the *Tattvasiddhi* is very imperfect. Besides the verses with which I am concerned, there is no other discernible connection between the two texts, whether of subject-matter or of actual wording. The transla-

tion of the verses we find in *PT 849*, moreover, is quite distinct from the translation found in 'Gos Lhas btsas's version, so there is no reason to posit a genetic relationship between the former and the latter. Finally, we must note that only some eleven of twenty-two among the lines of verse found in the Dunhuang text can be securely related to those given in the available Sanskrit. Another four exhibit either semantic or phonological similarities that seem to merit comparison. If we grant to these latter the benefit of the doubt, we have fifteen apparent correspondences in all, or about 67%. This is, of course, significant, but by no means a perfect match. How are we to understand the relationship between them?

To begin, on comparing the Sanskrit text with the 'Gos Lhas btsas translation, we find that, in the verses with which we are concerned, the correspondence between the two texts is much poorer than it is in other sections of the *Tattvasiddhi*: six lines found in the Sanskrit are absent in the Tibetan; two given in the Tibetan are missing from the Sanskrit; and a further three are found to occur in different places in the two versions. This is therefore the least stable portion of the *Tattvasiddhi* as a whole. It is possible to imagine that it originated as an altogether separate text, or as a part of some other work that is either lost or that I not yet encountered. If this were the case, then Devaputra might not be quoting the *Tattvasiddhi* at all, but rather the common source-text. However this may be, if we assume that he dictated the passage from memory, and did not have a manuscript at his disposal during his travels in Tibet and China, then it is also possible that what we have here is a partially improvised version of the text, whether derived from the *Tattvasiddhi* or a presumed common source. This might explain why some lines exhibit such a poor correspondence with lines in the extant Sanskrit text with which they otherwise seem plausibly related.

During the last few years some of those working on the history of Tibetan Buddhism during the early phases of the 'later diffusion' have noticed evidence of a class of literature produced at the very margins of Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, 'grey texts' that represent an 'Indo-Tibetan' Buddhism in the most literal sense, and whose exact origins are often obscure.[41] In *PT 849*, I believe, we find conserved a remarkable example of the grass-roots interaction between an Indian master and his Tibetan disciples that became in some respects definitive of

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[41] See, in particular, the contributions of Davidson 2002b and Martin 2002.

very widely ramified developments during the tenth through twelfth centuries and perhaps even for some time beyond. A comparison with the transmission of teachings in contemporary dharma-centres seems, once again, altogether appropriate. With the linguistic tools enabling communication between master and disciple only imperfectly refined, a type of Buddhist instruction may be nevertheless elaborated within the shared space of a common enterprise in which the truth of the Dharma, it is assumed, will sooner or later disclose itself despite the small obstacle of verbal misunderstanding.

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THE LEGEND OF *CIG CAR BA* CRITICISM IN TIBET:
A LIST OF SIX *CIG CAR BA* TITLES IN THE *CHOS 'BYUNG ME TOG SNYING PO*
OF NYANG NYI MA 'OD ZER (12TH CENTURY)

Carmen Meinert (Hamburg, Germany)

I. Object of Research

The twelfth century work *Chos 'byung me tog snying po* by Nyang Nyi ma 'od zer (1124–1192 or 1136–1204) mentions a list of six titles that are said to represent the system of Chinese Meditation Buddhism connected to Heshang Mahāyāna (8th century),[1] the apparent advocate of a subitist approach to awakening in the historically questionable debate of Bsam yas. This particular form of Buddhism spread to Tibet in the eighth century via the Central Asian oasis at Dunhuang and became known in Tibet as *Cig car ba*, in contrast to the gradual teachings of Rim gyis pa advocated by the Indian Kamalaśīla. Nyi ma 'od zer is the first Tibetan scholar to mention such a systematic corpus of titles connected to the development of the Cig car ba school. Soon after, Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251), and Bu ston (1290–1364) again mention this list, yet with some variations. Sapaṇ lists in his thirteenth century work *Skyes bu dam pa rnams la springs ba'i yi ge* only five titles and formulates the whole passage as the direct speech of a certain master,[2] namely Mahāyāna. When Bu ston wrote his famous *Chos 'byung* in 1322, he copied the list of Sapaṇ but clearly attributed the titles to Mahāyāna himself.[3] The different presentations of this list nicely illustrate the creation of a legend, namely how certain titles simply presenting the doctrinal foundation of Mahāyāna's system according to the exposition of Nyi ma 'od zer, turned into Mahāyāna's own compositions by the time

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[1] *Chos 'byung me tog snying po*, f. 425a.4-426a.5 (= Meisezahl 1985: Tafel 287.1-288.1).

[2] *Skyes bu dam pa rnams la springs ba'i yi ge*, f. 3a.6-3b.2. Cf. Karmay 1975: 152-154.

[3] *Bu ston chos'byung*, 188. Bu ston says that Mahāyāna had composed these and other (*la sogs pa*) texts.

of Bu ston. It seems likely that since Bu ston's mention of the list in his influential work, the authorship of these texts was no longer questioned, thus consolidating the legend of the Chinese master Mahāyāna in Tibet. It continued to serve one particular aim, namely to criticise Chinese Meditation Buddhism, *Cig car ba*, and eventually stigmatise it as a heretical path.

   The aim of the present paper is threefold. First, I shall identify some of the texts mentioned in the list of Nyi ma 'od zer. The research is based on the pioneering work of Samten Karmay who first brought to attention the list of five texts later mentioned by Sapaṇ.[4] S. Karmay and R. Kimura already identified one of these five titles as a piece connected to the Chinese Meditation master Wolun.[5] On the basis of these findings I will discuss this recognition of Wolun and further identify another title of the lists attributed to Hongren.

   Second, the present paper aims to trace back the teachings attributed to these two sixth and seventh century Meditation masters to their Chinese sources in order to elucidate a number of doctrinal issues underpinning the very complex situation of Chinese Meditation Buddhist teachings and their spread in Dunhuang and Tibet in the eighth and ninth centuries. Wolun and Hongren are known from a number of Chinese Dunhuang manuscripts representing the state of Meditation Buddhism before the split of this movement into the Northern branch of Shenxiu (605?–706), advocating gradualism, and the Southern branch of Huineng (636–713), promoting subitism. A brief analysis of the content of some of these Dunhuang manuscripts will expose this situation and shed new light on the message of the *Cig car ba* school in Tibet.

   Third, the position of the *Bsam gtan mig sgron* (9th/10th centuries) by Gnubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes, the very first Tibetan commentary on this subject, will be re-evaluated within the range of Tibetan criticism on the Chinese *Cig car ba* tradition. Although Gnubs is the only early Tibetan scholar to have analysed the *Cig car ba* tradition on a wide textual basis and to have qualified it as an authentic Buddhist path, nonetheless, as S. Karmay briefly suggested,[6] he denies the possibility of gaining complete insight into the absolute via this tradition.[7] Thus,

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[4] Karmay 1975: 152–54.
[5] *Loc. cit.*: 153 and Kimura 1981: 185.
[6] Karmay 1988: 105–106.
[7] *SM*: 490.3–5. Cf. also translations in Meinert 2003: 192 and Karmay 1988: 105.

the present research will demonstrate that Gnubs seems thereby to fail to acknowledge that some metaphors of Chinese Meditation Buddhism in Dunhuang and Tibet actually point to a kind of luminous emptiness which he connects only to the Rdzogs chen teachings. In short, the present paper will point out different layers of the legend of *Cig car ba* criticism in Tibet.

II. Six Titles of the Cig car ba Tradition

II.1. *Identification of the Titles*

According to Nyi ma 'od zer's exposition in the *Chos 'byung me tog snying po*, six titles are said to present the doctrinal foundation of the *Cig car ba* tradition as taught by Mahāyāna. Let us first turn to the actual passage in the *Chos 'byung me tog snying po* before attending to each title individually. Nyi ma 'od zer writes:

> The meditation practitioners who followed the Chinese master Mahāyāna had increased. [The system of Mahāyāna teaches that] if one does not oneself recognise one's own nature, it is the cause of being reborn in saṃsāra. [Yet] if one recognises one's own nature, one will awaken. Therefore, it is necessary to recognise the nature of one's mind. If one recognises it, it is the white panacea. In order to establish the doctrinal position of this, the so-called (?) [(N1)] *Sems lon* is composed as a treatise.[8] Since it is sufficient to recline (*nyal ba*) when one has recognised the nature of mind, the [(N2)] *Bsam gtan nyal 'dug gi 'khor lo* [is composed]. Its crucial point is composed in the [(N3)] *Bsam gtan gyi 'khor lo*, the removing of its obstacles in the [(N4)] *Bsam gtan gyi yang lon*, the logical explanation of its instructions in the [(N5)] *Man ngag lta ba'i rgyab sha* and the explanation by means of authoritative scriptures in the [(N6)] *Mdo sde brgyad bcu khongs*.[9]

Sapan's list deviates as follows from Nyi ma 'od zer's:

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[8] The text seems to be corrupt here. The meaning of *bsu bya ba'i bstan bcos* is not clear to me. It might be a spelling mistake for *zhes bya ba*, 'so-called'.

[9] *Chos 'byung me tog snying po*, f. 425a.4–426a.5 (= Meisezahl 1985: Tafel 287.1–288.1).

Nyi ma 'od zer (N)	Sapaṇ (S)
(N1) *Sems lon*	
(N2) *Bsam gtan nyal 'dug gi 'khor lo*	(S1) *Bsam gtan nyal ba'i 'khor lo*
(N3) *Bsam gtan gyi 'khor lo*	(S2) *Bsam gtan gyi lon*
(N4) *Bsam gtan gyi yang lon*	(S3) *Yang lon*
(N5) *Man ngag lta ba'i rgyab sha*	(S4) *Lta ba'i rgyab sha*
(N6) *Mdo sde brgyad bcu khongs*	(S5) *Mdo sde brgyad cu khungs*

Nyi ma 'od zer's text appears to be partly corrupt, a view reinforced by Sapaṇ's attempt to correct some of the mistakes—though not necessarily successfully, as will be shown below. Sapaṇ's list deviates in the following points: he omits (N1), shortens (N2), (N4) and (N5), changes the title (N3) and slightly varies the spelling of title (N6). More important than the actual deviations is probably Sapaṇ's different order of the titles. Whereas Nyi ma 'od zer establishes the (N1) *Sems lon* as the central text—which puts forward the doctrinal foundation of Mahāyāna's system, namely to recognise the nature of one's own mind—Sapaṇ immediately starts with the titles devoted to the actual meditation practice. However, according to Nyi ma 'od zer's list, the titles (N2) to (N6) on meditation are all dependent on the meaning of (N1) *Sems lon*.

We do not know why Sapaṇ excluded the (N1) *Sems lon* from his list. This text was still known to Gnubs on composing his *Bsam gtan mig sgron* in the ninth/tenth centuries. He quotes the *Sems lon* seven times and even starts his exposition of the *Cig car ba* school with a quotation of this text.[10] Even though, to the best of our present knowledge, the *Sems lon* is no longer extant, it is clear from a quotation in the *Bsam gtan mig sgron* that it describes a meditation in accordance with non-conceptuality (*mi rtog pa*)[11]—a central topic in the whole *Bsam gtan mig sgron* as well.[12] The title *Sems lon* already suggests that it is based on a Chinese copy since a Tibetan title is generally not composed like this. The literal Chinese reconstruction of *Sems lon* is *Xinlun*,[13] a title

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[10] *SM*: 119.3–4, 121.6–122.2, 122.2–3, 132.1–2, 172.4–5, 172.5–6 and 173.2–3. None of the quotations mentions the author of the *Sems lon*.

[11] *SM:* 173.2–3.

[12] *Loc. cit.*: 60.6–61.1.

[13] S. Karmay (1975: 153) assumes that the Tibetan *lon* is equivalent to the Chinese *lun* 'treatise'. Therefore, this and other such titles with the element *lon* may be regarded as a mixed translation. For the title *Sems lon* it means *sems* is etymologically *xin*, whereas *lon* is a phonetic rendering of Chinese *lun*.

that has not been identified either among the Dunhuang manuscripts or in the Chinese canon.

Sapaṇ shortens Nyi ma 'od zer's title (N2) *Bsam gtan nyal 'dug gi 'khor lo* "Wheel of reclining and sitting of meditation", in Chinese *Chan wo zuo lun*, to *Bsam gtan nyal ba'i 'khor lo* "Wheel of reclining of meditation", Chinese *Chan wolun*. Though this emendation does not completely make sense yet—as the reconstructed Chinese titles shows—at least Sapaṇ emends the term *nyal 'khor* 'wheel of reclining'. This term appears at the very beginning of the most important Dunhuang scroll on Chinese Meditation Buddhism, P. tib. 116, here as *Mkhan po nyal 'khor ba'i bsam gtan gyi mdo*.[14] If the two titles (N2) and (S1) refer to the same text, with regard to the mentioned expression in P. tib. 116 a conjectured title may be *Bsam gtan gyi mkhan po nyal ba'i 'khor lo*,[15] or in Chinese *Wolun chanshi* "Meditation master Wolun". Compared to the obviously corrupt (N2) *Chan wo zuo lun* and (S1) *Chan wolun*, this is a meaningful reconstruction. Based on this assumption at least (N2) and (S1) are connected to a historical Chinese figure, namely master Wolun. In the present context, we may further assume that the title (N3) *Bsam gtan gyi 'khor lo* is another corrupt version of *Bsam gtan gyi mkhan po nyal ba'i 'khor lo* and is thus likewise connected to Wolun. However, the expression *Bsam gtan gyi mkhan po nyal ba'i 'khor lo* is not as such a complete title of a text. S. Karmay proposed that (S1) may refer to P. tib. 811.[16] The full title of this manuscript is *Bsam gtan gyi mkhan po nyal ba'i 'khor lo sems bde bar bzhag pa'i* [*chos*], reconstructed in Chinese as *Wolun chanshi anxin* [*fa*].[17] On the other hand, another possibility would be the identification with a quotation of Wolun in P. tib. 116,[18] which is a Tibetan translation of the beginning of the Chinese title *Wolun chanshi kanxin fa*—now still

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[14] Cf. the modern edition of P. tib. 116 in *Krung go'i bod sa gnas kyi lo rgyus yig tshad phyogs btus* 1983: 60.

[15] The term *bsam gtan gyi mkhan po* "Meditation master" is also common in the *SM* (e.g. 122.4–5). Sometimes the Chinese term *chanshi* is phonetically rendered in Tibetan as s*han shis*—a variation used likewise in the *SM* and P. tib. 116.

[16] Karmay 1975: 153–154.

[17] Neither S. Karmay (*loc.cit.*) nor Wu Qiyu (1980, 1981) recognised that the title of P. tib. 811 is *Bsam gtan gyi mkhan po nyal ba'i 'khor lo sems bde bar bzhag pa'i [chos]* and not *Bsam gtan gyi mkhan po nyal ba'i 'khor lo sems bde bar bzhag pa'i rab tu byung ba'i yon tan bcu*. A comparable title occurs in P. tib. 635: *Bsam gtan kyi mkhan po bdud 'dul kyi snying po'i sems bde bar gzhag pa'i chos,* connected to the below mentioned Xiangmo Zang (= Bdud 'dul kyi snying po)

[18] P. tib. 116: VIb, f. 167.2–3.

extant in two Chinese Dunhuang manuscripts.[19] A translation of this title in Tibetan could be *Bsam gtan gyi mkhan po nyal ba'i 'khor lo sems la lta ba'i chos*. In other words, neither (N2), (N3), nor (S1) can be definitely identified with one particular text. Nonetheless, those titles are obviously connected to a certain Wolun. The Chinese anthology of hagiographies, the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, actually mentions the nickname Wolun for a certain Meditation master Tanlun (ca. 545–626). His meditation was renowned as *wochan* 'meditation of reclining',[20] an expression that may even be echoed in Sapan's title (S1) *Bsam gtan nyal ba'i 'khor lo*, in Chinese *chan wolun*.

S. Karmay already identified (S2) *Bsam gtan gyi lon* as one of the texts in P. tib. 117.[21] Nyi ma 'od zer's title (N4) *Bsam gtan gyi yang lon* has not as yet been identified in a Tibetan Dunhuang manuscript. However, a possible reconstructed Chinese title, *Xiuxin yaolun*,[22] exists in nine Chinese Dunhuang manuscripts and likewise in the Chinese canon.[23] The *Xiuxin yaolun* is attributed to Hongren (600–674) who was posthumously raised to the rank of the fifth patriarch of Meditation Buddhism in China. The sheer number of copies in Dunhuang of this text evidences its importance. Overlaps in content and terminology with the above mentioned *Wolun chanshi kanxin fa* further support the placing of this text (N4) subsequent to (N3) and (N2) in Nyi ma 'od zer's list.

The title (N5) or (S4) *Man ngag lta ba'i rgyab sha* has not been identified yet. S. Karmay found title (S5) (and (N6)) *Mdo sde brgyad cu khungs* mentioned in P. tib. 996.[24] In this manuscript it is simply stated

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[19] TY and S. chin. 1494.

[20] *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 20, in T. 2060, vol. 50, 598b.12–13.

[21] Karmay 1975: 153–54 and Kimura 1981: 183–92.

[22] *Bsam gtan gyi yang lon* is also a mixed translation of *Xiuxin yaolun* (cf. footnote 13 above): *yang lon* is a phonetic rendering of Chinese *yaolun*, *bsam gtan* here translates the meaning of *xiuxin*.

[23] P. chin. 3434, P. chin. 3559, P. chin. 3777, S. chin. 2669, S. chin. 3558, S. chin. 4064, S. chin. 6159, Beijing *yu* 04 und *shang* 75 (the manuscripts are partly in *Dunhuang chanzong wenxian jicheng* 1998: vol. 1, 454–536). Cf. also McRae 1986: 1–16 and his translation of the text in loc. cit.: 121–32. W. Pachow provides another translation which I was not able to consult (see Pachow 1963 and 1980). P. chin. 3559 is the only manuscript to mention the author, the monk Ren (*Ren heshang*), identified as Hongren. John McRae (1986: 311, footnote. 36) dates P. chin. 3559 the middle of the eighth century since the back of the manuscript was copied in 751. The Taishō edition (T. 2011, vol. 48, 377a–379b) provides the main title *Zuishang cheng lun*.

[24] Karmay 1975: 153–54. According to S. Karmay the title *Mdo sde brgyad cu khungs* is mentioned again in P. tib. 818 which seems to be a part of P. tib. 996. Unfortunately, I was not able to look at P. tib. 818 myself.

that a certain Spug Ye shes dbyangs explained 108 chapters of questions on the *Mdo sde brgyad cu khungs*. Moreover, R. Kimura assumes that the *Mdo sde brgyad cu khungs* is the Tibetan title for the Chinese anthology *Zhujing yaochao*—a compilation of quotations from various texts which exists as a Dunhuang manuscript.[25]

In the light of the present research, three points may be summarised on the basis of Nyi ma 'od zer's list: (1) (N1) formulates a doctrinal basis and (N2) to (N6) describe the meditation based on (N1); (2) Among these last titles (N2) and (N3) can be identified as connected to Wolun and (N4) as a title attributed to Hongren; and (3) to our present knowledge none of the titles seemed to be connected to Mahāyāna—rather these texts support the supposition that various sources of Chinese Meditation Buddhism seemed to have fed the *Cig car ba* trend prevailing in Dunhuang and Tibet in the eighth century.

II.2. *The Two Chinese Masters Wolun and Hongren*

According to Nyi ma 'od zer's list, the Chinese Meditation master Wolun played a crucial role in the development of eighth century Meditation Buddhism in Dunhuang and Tibet. As noted above Wolun is the nickname of master Tanlun. Little is known about this seemingly unimportant figure active in the Chinese capital Chang'an at the turn of the sixth and seventh centuries.[26] Surprisingly enough, his fame spread 150 years after his death in the Central Asian oasis Dunhuang.

The only hagiography of Tanlun in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* provides more anecdotes than actual historical data—although it was composed by Tanlun's contemporary Daoxuan in 645, less than twenty years after Tanlun's decease.[27] Daoxuan depicts Tanlun as a meditation master who enjoyed a rather secluded life practising the meditation of transcending thoughts (*linian*).[28] Unfortunately we do not learn anything

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[25] Kimura 1981: 186–187. R. Kimura's argument is based on the following assumption. A quotation from P. tib. 818 (f. 9a.1) is found in *Zhujing yaochao* (T. 2819, vol. 85, 1194a–b). Since P. tib. 818 is a fragment of P. tib. 996 and since the author consulted the *Mdo sde brgyad cu khungs* as a source for quotations from the canon, R. Kimura believes that the *Mdo sde brgyad cu khungs* actually is a Tibetan translation of the *Zhujing yaochao*.

[26] Wu Qiyu (1980/1981) first put together different materials on Wolun/Tanlun. Yet, he did not contextualise the figure Wolun in the broader scope of Dunhuang Meditation Buddhism.

[27] *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 20, in T. 2060, vol. 50, 598a.20–c.4.

[28] *Loc. cit.*, 598b.3.

else about this practice from Daoxuan. Although Tanlun appears as a solitary figure on the margins of the bustling life in Buddhist circles in the Chinese capital, he did enjoy the esteem of followers of different groups: meditators, Vinaya masters, exegetes and lay practitioners. In a rather non-sectarian approach he appears to have instructed even well known masters of others schools in actual meditation practice. Moreover, according to Daoxuan, at one point in his life Tanlun even enjoyed the protection of the Chinese court and was invited to live at one of the most important temples in Chang'an, the Chanding temple (*Chanding si*), built in memory of the deceased Chinese emperor's wife, Wenxian, in 602.[29]

The story of Tanlun's fame is rather peculiar. Judging from his hagiography in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* he did not leave a wide circle of dharma heirs: only one lay practitioner is mentioned to have carried on his tradition.[30] Neither is there any veneration of him in his time as an outstanding master, nor any mention of texts composed by him. However, some 150 years after his death he was ranked among other eighth century masters who were well-received in Dunhuang—from which point onward he was renowned by the name of Wolun and not Tanlun. The manuscript P. tib.116 lists eight masters to prove that the *Cig car ba* teachings are "in complete harmony with the instructions of sagacious masters".[31] Here are listed: (1) Nāgārjuna, (2) Bodhidharma, (3) Wuzhu, (4) Xiangmo Zang, (5) Ardasīr (A rdan hwar), (6) Wolun ('Gwa lun), (7) Mahāyāna and (8) Āryadeva.[32] Not all of these figures actually played a role in the context of Dunhuang Meditation Buddhism. (1) Nāgārjuna and (8) his most important disciple Āryadeva are clearly mentioned in order to link the local current to the Indian tradition and (2) Bodhidharma, the posthumously appointed first patriarch of Meditation Buddhism in China, is mentioned in order to connect it to the Central China mainstream. In effect, important for Dunhuang were only (3) Wuzhu, (4) Xiangmo Zang, (5) Ardasīr (A rdan hwar), (6) Wolun ('Gva lun), and (7) Mahāyāna. (3) Wuzhu (714–774) was the head of a local Sichuanese tradition, the Baotang

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[29] *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 20, in T. 2060, vol. 50, 598b.9–21.

[30] *Loc. cit.*, 598c.1–4.

[31] P. tib. 116: VIb, f. 163.4; the translation is quoted from Faber 1985: 71.

[32] P. tib. 116: VIb, f. 164.1–168.2.

[33] *Lidai fabaoji*, in T. 2075, vol. 51,186a.15–195c.15.

[34] *Dunwu dacheng zhengli jue*, f. 157a and Demiéville 1952: 161.

school (*baotang zong*).[33] According to the Chinese account of the great debate of Bsam yas, the *Dunwu dacheng zhengli jue,* (4) Xiangmo Zang was one of Mahāyāna's teachers.[34] Though Chinese historiography does not mention this teacher-student relationship, nonetheless two major anthologies of hagiographies list Xiangmo Zang as one of the main disciples of the famous Northern School master Shenxiu.[35] (5) Ardasīr is mentioned in the manuscript P. tib. 996 where he is renowned as a Central Asian Meditation master active in the first half of the eighth century in Kuchā.[36] And, of course, (7) Mahāyāna is renowned as one of the main protagonists of the legendary eighth century Sino-Indian controversy. We do not have any evidence that any of the masters except Mahāyāna ever actually stayed in Dunhuang.[37] Moreover, with regard to the important masters (3) through (7), Wolun is the only figure who did not live in the eighth century. The question is, therefore, why would he be placed within a line of those eighth century masters and eventually even become one of the central figures of the *Cig car ba* tradition according to Nyi ma 'od zer?

The Dunhuang manuscripts attributed to Wolun may shed new light on these questions. Of primary importance is the above mentioned *Wolun chanshi kanxin fa* (henceforth *Kanxin fa*), since this is not only the longest text attributed to Wolun but also the only one at least partly extant in both Tibetan and Chinese.[38] As I have shown elsewhere,[39] a detailed analysis of the textual history of the two *Kanxin fa* manuscripts—including parallels in other texts—prove that the different manuscript versions seemed to be a patchwork of different bits and pieces and can hardly be attributed as a single complete work to Wolun. Only the very beginning of the text—extant in a Tibetan version in P.

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[35] *Jingde chuandeng lu* 4, in T. 2076, vol. 51, 232b.18–19 and S*ong gaoseng zhuan* 8, in T. 2061, vol. 50, 760a.9–27.

[36] Lalou 1939: 506.

[37] Wang Xi, a high official from Dunhuang, mentions in his Chinese account on the great debate of Bsam yas that Mahāyāna was invited to travel to Tibet and that he asked Wang Xi to write down the dialogue. This is the only description to support the assumption of Mahāyāna ever staying in Dunhuang (cf. *Dunwu dacheng zhengli jue*, f. 127a, 129a and Demiéville 1952: 24, 42.

[38] There are two other Dunhuang texts attributed to Wolun: the *Wolun fashi jie* in two manuscripts (S. chin. 6631 and S. chin. 5657) and one copy of the *Bsam gtan gyi mkhan po Nyal ba'i 'khor lo sems bde bar bzhag pa'i* [*chos*] (P. tib. 811). For a discussion of both texts cf. also my Ph.D. thesis *Chinesischer Rdzogs chen?*, ch. 3.1.4 and 3.1.6.

[39] Cf. my Ph.D. thesis *Chinesischer Rdzogs chen?*, ch. 3.1.5.1.

tib. 116 and in two Chinese manuscripts (TY and S. chin. 1494)—is clearly a dictum of Wolun known in the eighth century. Some other parts do have parallels, e.g. in the tenth century Chinese work *Zongjing lu*.[40] Since none of the parallels in other texts bear the title *Kanxin fa*, but always something similar to "master Wolun said", we may further assume that the title *Kanxin fa* is also a much later addition. Therefore, in the case of Wolun we encounter an early seventh century Chinese master active in Central China to whom texts where attributed 150 years after his death in the Central Asian oasis Dunhuang. Before we turn to the contents of these texts, we must add one more word about Hongren, the other seventh century meditation master to whom the *Xiuxin yaolun* is attributed, that is (N4) *Bsam gtan gyi yang lon* from Nyi ma 'od zer's list.

Hongren was born around 600 in Huangmei, Central China (modern Jiangsu province), where his predecessor and teacher Daoxin (580–651) had established a meditation community in 624. On his teacher's death in 651, Hongren took over the leadership of the Huangmei community and moved it to the nearby East Mountain (Dongshan), so that later sources usually refer to the East Mountain teachings (*dongshan famen*) in reference to both Daoxin and Hongren.[41] East Mountain became a thriving Buddhist community owing to the personal brilliance of Hongren. Hongren laid the corner-stone of Northern School Meditation Buddhism, one of whose major figures turned out to be Hongren's own disciple Shenxiu. Despite his single-minded concentration on meditation, Hongren attracted Buddhist disciples from various backgrounds and other Buddhist tradi-tions—an interesting parallel to Wolun. Students usually stayed with him for a limited amount of time and were exclusively trained in med-itation.[42] According to the research of Ui Hakuju, the East Mountain community practised a meditation purely concentrated on the recogni-tion of the nature of mind (*xinxing*). Scriptures were not understood lit-erally but sometimes even arbitrarily interpreted to enhance the spiritu-al experience of their deeper meaning. Consequently, the meditation practice was also not limited to any group of people, but was designat-ed for anybody seeking to realise the nature of mind.[43]

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[40] *Zongjing lu* 98, in T. 2016, vol. 48, 942c.16–19.
[41] McRae 1986: 36.
[43] Ui Hakuju quoted in McRae 1986: 42.

The major work attributed to Hongren is the *Xiuxin yaolun* which appears in Nyi ma 'od zer's list under the title (N4) *Bsam gtan gyi yang lon*. Although the *Xiuxin yaolun* was clearly not authored by Hongren himself, the ascription to him is no surprise either. As J. McRae puts it:

> Hung-jen was in many ways the most important figure of early Ch'an, in that he was the immediate spiritual forebear to many of the men who disseminated the teachings in Ch'ang-an and Lo-yang in the late seventh and early eighth centuries. Therefore, it is not surprising that a text like the *Hsiu-hsin yao lun* would have been composed to represent the fundamentals of his teachings. The attribution of this text to Hung-jen thus has a retrospective validity: its contents are not an exact record of his teachings, but they are at least representative of the most fundamental doctrines of early Ch'an, a 'lowest common denominator' of Ch'an theory around the year 700.[44]

Thus, the *Xiuxin yaolun* and the *Kanxin fa* attributed to Wolun likewise embody some of the most basic teachings of early Meditation Buddhism. The attribution to certain masters may be considered the conventional tactic of constructing a chronological development of that tradition and in a way to legitimise its earliest products—at least in the case of the *Xiuxin yaolun.* In regard to the *Kanxin fa* the situation seems to be even more complex since the scope of the different manuscripts varies greatly and may be regarded as a result of a regional current in Dunhuang, where anthologies of sayings of the masters were compiled or, more precisely in the case of the *Kanxin fa*, notes on the topic *kanxin,* 'gazing at mind'.

II.3. *Analysis of the Dunhuang Manuscripts* Wolun chanshi kanxin fa *and* Xiuxin yaolun

Both texts, the *Kanxin fa* and the *Xiuxin yaolun*, represent some of the basic teachings of Meditation Buddhism before the split of the movement into the gradualist Northern School and the subitist Southern School. J. McRae has demonstrated in his excellent work, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism*, that the early texts attributed to Bodhidharma, the East Mountain teachings and the teachings of Shenxiu are similar in structure, namely in expressing a dynam-

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[44] McRae 1986: 120.
[45] McRae 1986: particularly 101–255.

ic model of the dichotomy of gradual and subitist elements, which complement one another without contradiction.[45] Only much later, the Southern School emphasised a subitist aspect in the teachings and thereby created a contrast to a gradual path. However, the so called Northern School provided the primary and essential impetus for the whole Meditation Buddhist movement. Therefore, a parallel structure in the *Kanxin fa* and the *Xiuxin yaolun* may be considered as another practical response to the dilemma implied by a conceptual matrix first laid out in the *Erru sixing lun* attributed to Bodhidharma: the paradigm of the immanent Buddha Nature and the adventitious defilements caused by illusions.[46] Thus, we shall see that our texts describe doctrines characteristic of the Northern School as a whole. They discuss firstly, the pure and the defiled aspect of mind, secondly, the insubstantiality of the defiled mind and its illusions, thirdly, the continuity of the practice of contemplation, and fourthly, the instantaneous realisation of awakening.[47] Since it is extremely difficult to assign a date to any of these doctrinal developments of early Meditation Buddhism, we may turn to a thematic approach in the analysis of the texts. However, due to the limited scope of the present paper, I will simply note a few central ideas of each text.[48]

II.3.a. Wolun chanshi kanxin fa

In the *Kanxin fa* the dichotomous structure of sudden/gradual is immediately connected with the discussion of the pure and defiled aspect of mind, which is itself expressed in the opposition of the nature of mind (*xinxing*) and mind (*xin*). The inner, the nature of mind, is described as clear like empty space and without arising and ceasing, whereas mind is discursive on the outside. Whenever thoughts arise in the mind, the practitioner is asked to immediately turn to the inside of mind. Here, the important instruction is to trace the light back toward the mind-source (*fanzhao xinyuan*), that is a concentration on the pure rather than the defiled aspect of mind.[49] The instruction to trace the light back

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[46] Cf. also McRae 1986: 146–47, the copy of the *Erru sixing lun*, in *Lengjia shizi ji,* in T. 2837, vol. 85, 1285a.11–14 and my notes in Meinert 2002: 294–95, footnote 21–22.

[47] McRae 1986: 208–209.

[48] For a more comprehensive study cf. my Ph.D. thesis.

[49] The references to the lines in *Kanxin fa* are according to my edition of the different texts in my Ph.D. thesis in ch. 3.1.5.1. Cf. here lines (1–2), (15–16) and (23–31).

toward the mind-source functions as a path through which the discrim-
inating mind can rediscover its original non-dual source. In this regard,
it functions as a bridge between the pure nature of mind and the dual-
istically-perceiving mind. In the treatment of the sudden/gradual
dichotomy, it is this tracing of the light back to the mind-source that
constitutes the element of sudden awakening. It opens the practitioner
to a vision of his own awakened nature and is an immediate re-cogni-
tion of the nature of mind.

   Subsequent to recognising the non-discriminating nature of mind,
the practitioner has to continue to discipline his mind through a grad-
ual cultivation. This gradualist aspect in the meditation practice
described in the *Kanxin fa* focuses on the defiled aspect of mind, or on
mental dichotomisation. Again, the practitioner is asked to turn toward
the inside of the mind, but now he internally and externally ripens gaz-
ing (*shu kan*) until there is not the slightest sign of either movement or
the absence of movement. Here, ignorance is viewed attentively until
illusions exhaust themselves in non-existence, or as the text puts it, to
exhaust themselves in neither movement nor its absence. A similar con-
cept also appears in the *Xiuxin yaolun*. The very moment discursive-
ness exhausts itself, one can contact the nature of mind through attain-
ing the great stillness *samādhi* (*da jiding*).[50]

   The dual structure in the *Kanxin fa* may be summarised again in the
following table:

approach	sudden	gradual
focus	nature of mind	mind
quality	like empty space	mental dichotomisation
instruction	trace the light back toward mind-source	ripen gazing

Interestingly enough, in different parts of the *Kanxin fa* both mind and
the nature of mind are eventually described as still and pure, without
arising and without ceasing, without signs and without activity.[51]
Therefore, the question arises, what is the relationship between mind
and the nature of mind? In the *Kanxin fa*, the nature of mind is clearly

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[50] Cf. my edition of the *Kanxin fa* in my Ph.D. thesis in ch. 3.1.5.1, lines (54–62).
[51] *Loc. cit.*: lines (29), (48) and also (71).

synonymous with the absolute, suchness or Buddha nature. It is
revealed and becomes active in mind. Mind is described as the source
for thoughts and a subject-object dichotomy to arise. It is the very start-
ing point for ignorance to begin to operate within one's Buddha nature
and thus the moment when Buddha nature switches from being the pure
nature of mind to a mind of illusion. On the one hand, the nature of
mind is the pure source and mind is responsible for discursiveness.
However, on the other hand, both are described as pure and without
essence. Thus the *Kanxin fa* postulates the idea of an absolute wherein
both the pure and the defiled aspect are inherently conjoint.

This concept resonates strongly with the locus classicus for the term
'mind-source' (*xinyuan*), the important Mahāyāna scripture *Dacheng
qixin lun*, first reputedly translated in 550 by the Indian Paramārtha and
again 150 years later by the Central Asian monk Śikṣānanda.[52] The text
espouses mind-only theory (*weixin*), which assumes the simultaneous
existence of innate wisdom and ignorance. Whereas innate wisdom is
referred to as suchness or Buddha nature, ignorance is understood as
the tendency to mental dichotomisation, namely the distinction
between subject and object. Any moment of thought, as long as it
involves preconceived dualities, is a moment of ignorance. Mind-only
theory rests on the logically prior existence of ignorance, for it is on this
basis that one's entire realm of existence is manifested. Because wis-
dom and ignorance co-exist inherently, the *Dacheng qixin lun* has to
posit two different kinds of awakening, namely inherent awakening
(*benjue*), the equivalent to the wisdom within, and temporal awakening
(*shijue*), the actual realisation by means of a spiritual path. On achiev-
ing Buddhahood, both types of awakening become identical.[53] The fol-
lowing passage from the *Dacheng qixin lun* on inherent awakening
explains the meaning of mind-source (*xinyuan*) as it is also described
in the *Kanxin fa* attributed to Wolun.

> The meaning of awakening is that the essence of the mind transcends
> thoughts (*linian*). The characteristic of the transcendence of thoughts is
> equivalent to the realm of empty space, which pervades everywhere. The
> single characteristic of the *dharmadhātu* is the universally same *dhar-
> makāya* of the *Tathāgata*. Inherent awakening (*benjue*) is preached in
> relation to this *dharmakāya*. Why is this? The meaning of inherent awak-
> ening is explained in juxtaposition to that of temporal awakening, so that

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[52] Cf. J. Hakeda 1967 and *Dacheng qixin lun*, in T. 1666 and 1667, vol. 32.
[53] Hakeda 1967: 11–19 and McRae 1986: 219–21.

> temporal awakening is identical to inherent awakening. Because tempo-
> ral awakening is based on inherent awakening and because non-awaken-
> ing exists, temporal awakening is explained on the basis of that non-
> awakening.
>
> Further, to be awakened to the mind-source (*xinyuan*) is called ulti-
> mate awakening (*jiujing jue*). When one is not awakened to the mind-
> source, one has not [achieved] ultimate awakening.[54]

In regard to this interpretation of the problem of ignorance, liberation
is achieved when the practitioner recognises the initial activation of
mind. Then he is said to transcend thought (*linian*), and he enters into
the realm of the transcendence of thoughts. This refers to both the
moment in which the transcending of thoughts occurs and to awaken-
ing itself, the awakening to the mind-source. The transcending of
thoughts and the importance of the mind-source in the *Dacheng qixin
lun* are identical to the above depicted basic assumptions of the *Kanxin
fa*. The text may even be regarded as a starting point for similar discus-
sions in other early Meditation Buddhist texts.[55] Moreover, this analy-
sis of the term to trace the light back toward the mind-source (*fanzhao
xinyuan*) also shows the connection to the meditation of transcending
thoughts (*linian*). Since, according to the hagiography in the *Xu
gaoseng zhuan*, Wolun/Tanlun was renowned for this very meditation
practice, here we actually do have a link in contents between the histor-
ical Wolun and the Wolun appearing in the Dunhuang manuscripts.

II.3.b. Xiuxin yaolun

Although the main topic of the *Xiuxin yaolun* centres on the term 'to
guard the mind' (*shouxin*), nonetheless its dual structure in regard to
sudden/gradual is very similar to the one just described for the *Kanxin
fa*. 'To guard the mind' is not to be understood in the sense that the
mind has to be protected against outside influences. Rather, to guard
the mind means continuously to maintain possession of the nature of
mind, that is, the awareness of its continuous presence. Eventually,

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[54] The translation is based on McRae 1986: 221–22. I adopted some minor changes
in terminology. For the Chinese text cf. Hakeda 1967: 13, l. 3–8.

[55] The same passage is actually quoted in Shenxiu's *Wu fangbian* (cf. McRae 1986:
219–23). For a discussion on the influence of the *Dacheng qixin lun* on the concept of
one-practice *samādhi* (*yixing sanmei*) in the Northern School of Meditation Buddhism,
cf. Faure 1986: 101–108.

when one's illusions disappear, one will experience Buddha nature
directly. The *Xiuxin yaolun* even uses the light metaphor of the sun to
illustrate the affirmative attitude toward achieving awakening:

> The sun's light is not destroyed, but merely deflected by the clouds and
> mists. The pure mind possessed by all sentient beings is also like this, in
> simply being covered by the layered clouds of discriminative thinking,
> false thoughts, and ascriptive views. If one can just distinctly maintain
> [awareness of] the mind (*shou-hsin*) and not produce false thoughts, then
> the Dharma sun of nirvāṇa[56] will be naturally manifested. Therefore, it is
> known that one's own mind is inherently pure.[57]

The abstract concept of guarding the mind and the metaphor of the sun
is applied in a practical meditation instruction for a beginning practi-
tioner. This practice eventually focuses on the mind-source, which is to
shine forth.

> Sit properly with the body erect, closing the eyes and mouth. Look
> straight ahead with the mind, visualizing a sun at an appropriate distance
> away. Maintain this image continuously without stopping. […]
>   If you sit [in meditation] at night, you may experience all kinds of
> good and bad psychological states; enter into any of the blue, yellow, red
> and white *samādhis*; witness your own body producing light; observe the
> physical characteristics of the *Tathāgata*; or experience various [other]
> transformations. When you perceive [such things], concentrate the mind
> and do not become attached to them. They are all nonsubstantial mani-
> festations of false thinking. […]
>   […] Calm yourself with care, moderate any sensory activity, and
> attentively view the mind that is the source of all dharmas. Make it shine
> distinctly and purely all the time, without ever becoming blank.[58]

Like the *Kanxin fa*, the *Xiuxin yaolun* seems not to posit such a sharp
distinction between the pure and defiled aspects of mind. In the *Kanxin
fa* both the nature of mind and mind are described as pure, and corre-
spondingly the *Xiuxin yaolun* emphasises that Buddha nature and
emptiness of the discriminating mind are simply two sides of the same
coin. This is the case since the *Xiuxin yaolun* seems at times to mix up

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[56] The Taishō edition (T. 2011, vol. 48, 377b.2) is missing the character *ri* ('sun')
which is however in the Dunhuang versions. Cf. e.g. S. chin. 4064 in *Dunhuang chan-
zong wenxian ji* 1998: vol. 1, 458, line 17.
[57] The translation is from McRae 1986: 122; cf. the Chinese in T. 2011, vol. 48,
377a.28–b.3.
[58] The translation is from McRae 1986: 127–28; cf. the Chinese in T. 2011, vol. 48,
378a.29–b.1, 378b.3–6, 378b.21–23.

the meaning of mind-source. The term is used with both meanings: first, the function of the deluded consciousness responsible for the appearance of dharmas, and second, the pure mind, which is Buddha nature.[59] Nonetheless, more important for the present context is the use of the light metaphor itself. In contrast to the *Kanxin fa*, the *Xiuxin yaolun* explicitly describes the absolute, Buddha nature, in positive terms, not only as pure but also in its luminous aspect. This is unmistakably shown in the following two passages:

> The essence of what is called nirvāṇa is serene extinction. It is unconditioned and pleasant. When one's mind is true, false thoughts cease. When false thoughts cease, [the result is] correct mindfulness. Having correct mindfulness leads to the generation of the wisdom of serene illumination [(jizhao)] (i.e., the perfect knowledge or illumination of all things without mental discrimination), which in turn means that one achieves total comprehension of the Dharma Nature. By comprehending Dharma Nature one achieves nirvāṇa.[60]

Or:

> Understand clearly that the Buddha Nature embodied within sentient beings is inherently pure, like a sun obscured by clouds. By just distinctly maintaining awareness of the True Mind, the clouds of false thoughts will go away and the sun of wisdom will appear. Why make any further study of knowledge based on the senses, which [only] leads to the suffering of saṃsāra?
>
> All concepts, as well as the affairs of the three periods of time, [should be understood according to] the metaphor of polishing a mirror: when the dust is gone, the Nature naturally becomes manifest.[61]

In the two metaphors of the sun/clouds and the mirror/dust, the emphasis is placed on the sun/mirror rather than the clouds/dust. The illuminative/reflective quality of the sun/mirror is the basic characteristic, which is in no way affected by adventitious appearances of clouds/dust. In this way, the *Xiuxin yaolun* does not focus on the annihilation of the obstacles of the dualistically perceiving mind but rather points to the

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[59] Other Northern School texts like Shenxiu's *Guanxin lun* seems to draw a much clearer line between the pure and defiled aspect of mind. Cf. McRae 1986: 322, footnote 123.

[60] The translation is from McRae 1986: 124–25; cf. the Chinese in T. 2011, vol. 48, 377c.14–18.

[61] The translation is based on McRae 1986: 125, I adopted some minor changes in vocabulary; cf. the Chinese in T. 2011, vol. 48, 378a.3–6.

luminous quality of the sun, to the empty nature of mind. This is the meaning of the practice to continuously maintain awareness of the mind (*shouxin*).

III. *Cig car ba* Critique in the *Bsam gtan mig sgron*

The first and more elaborate discussion on the *Cig car ba* view in Tibetan literature is found in Gnubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes' *Bsam gtan mig sgron*. Gnubs reveals in great detail the topics of view, meditation, conduct and fruition according to the *Cig car ba* school, on the basis of recorded sayings of mainly Chinese Meditation masters and on the basis of authoritative scriptures.[62] Long passages of quotations are obviously taken from anthologies now available within the corpus of Dunhuang manuscripts, such as P. tib. 116.[63] We can thus say that Gnubs' knowledge of the *Cig car ba* tradition seems to stand partly on such patch-work materials translated into Tibetan following the Tibetan dominion over Dunhuang in the late eighth century. Compared to the Tibetan criticism of the *Cig car ba* tradition throughout the centuries, Gnubs' critique appears as rather moderate. Moreover, since he is one of the only Tibetan scholars who did *not* condemn *Cig car ba* as a heretical path, yet integrated it in an unusual doxographical system of the four traditions in question—namely, Rim gyis pa, *Cig car ba*, Mahāyoga and Rdzogs chen[64]—Gnubs may even be regarded as *pro Cig car ba*. Nevertheless, a closer look at his criticism—particularly in regard to the concept of the luminosity of mind, just described as a central theme in the *Xiuxin yaolun*—necessitates a re-evaluation of his position as well.

In a general definition of suchness and non-conceptuality according to the four schools, Gnubs depicts Rdzogs chen as the supreme of all views and particularly emphasises the aspect of luminosity. He writes:

> The spontaneously perfected suchness of the supreme yoga, of Atigoya, means that the entire world of phenomenal appearances are immaculately and primordially self-luminous (*sel me par ye nas rang gsal ba*) in the

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[62] Chapter five of the *SM* is dedicated solely to the exposition of the *Cig car ba* tradition (cf. SM: 118.4–186.4).

[63] E.g. *SM:* 57.5–58.6 corresponds almost entirely to the above mentioned list of eight masters in P. tib. 116: VIb, f. 164.1–168.2.

[64] Cf. my article Meinert 2003.

utterly pure expanse of self-originated primordial wisdom. The sponta-
neously perfected [state], where no cause and effect whatsoever is sought
after, means that the one who [embodies] the supreme identity is with-
out the slightest movement and without a name. Therefore, what else is
to be meditated upon other than the clear and brilliant primordial lumi-
nosity (*lhan ne lhang nge ye gsal ba*), [other than] intrinsic awareness
that is unfabricated, imperturbable, uncorrupted, and impenetrable?
There is nothing whatsoever that exists as an object of recollection; there
is simply this very meaning of nothingness. Whoever accepts this, [for
him is this] the primordial great non-conceptuality and also the unob-
structed manifesting. There is no conceptual thought in it, and even non-
conceptuality itself is a [mere] designation.[65]

In contrast to his assessment of Rdzogs chen, Gnubs argues that—
though the *Cig car ba* tradition immediately focuses on the unborn
absolute (*don dam pa ma skyes pa nyid*)—it simply corrupts mind,
since there is still involved a concept of the unborn absolute.[66]
Moreover, he qualifies its concept of the unborn and empty ground as
the perfected reality (*yongs su grub pa*) of the Yogacāra school.[67]
However, in his exposition on the understanding of non-conceptuality
in the *Cig car ba* school, Gnubs does not to my knowledge mention
anywhere the aspect of luminosity, but only the emptiness aspect. In the
present research, it is not the point to argue whether the light metaphor
applied in the *Cig car ba* text *Xiuxin yaolun* is comparable to the expe-
rience of luminosity as it is described above according to the Rdzogs
chen tradition. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that Gnubs' seemingly
positive exposition of the *Cig car ba* school is actually rather one-sided
and does not take into account the full implications of Chinese
Mediation Buddhism—as it was exemplified by a brief analysis of the
Kanxin fa and the *Xiuxin yaolun*. In this light, Gnubs might even be
seen as the first critic in the *Cig car ba*/Rdzogs chen debate, although
in the view of later critics he might have appeared as rather pro *Cig car
ba*.

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[65] *SM*: 60.2–6.
[66] *Loc. cit.*: 57.2, 61.3–4, 490.3–4.
[67] *Loc. cit.*: 490.3–4 and Meinert 2003: 192.

IV. Conclusion

To conclude, three points may be stressed in light of the present research. First, three of the six *Cig car ba* titles in the list of Nyi ma 'od zer are identified as connected with the sixth and seventh century masters Wolun and Hongren. These titles are said to summarise the doctrinal foundations of the *Cig car ba* school taught by Mahāyāna in the eighth century in Dunhuang and Tibet. The attribution of some of the titles to a certain master was seemingly never questioned, but instead further distorted and eventually came to be known as the works of Mahāyāna himself. The Chinese reconstructions of the Tibetan titles connected to Wolun also illustrate the beginning of a corrupt transmission.

Second, the two texts attributed to Wolun and Hongren, the *Kanxin fa* and the *Xiuxin yaolun*, exemplify a balance of gradual and sudden aspects in early Meditation Buddhism and thus reflect the situation in Central China before the split of the movement into a gradualist and a subitist approach. Moreover, the *Xiuxin yaolun* clearly illustrates the use of light metaphors in Meditation Buddhism which points to the luminous aspect of mind.

Third, the digestion of eighth century *Cig car ba* thought in the *Bsam gtan mig sgron* neither focuses on the balance of subitist and gradualist elements in Meditation Buddhist texts nor takes into account any of the light metaphors. Therefore, the *Bsam gtan mig sgron* seems to be the actual starting point of the legend of Tibetan *Cig car ba* criticism, a legend which was then built up of other different layers. After all, in Tibet this earliest trend of Chinese Meditation Buddhism became stigmatised as *Cig car ba*, a subitist approach to awakening, whereas on the contrary during the subitist/gradualist split in China it flowed into the stream of the gradualist teachings of the Northern School. As a result, the former may serve as an example of a *Cig car ba* legend, the latter as one of a Rim gyis pa legend.

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Abbreviations

Beijing   Chinese Dunhuang manuscripts (e.g. Beijing yu 04) preserved in the Chinese National Library in Beijing

DHBZ   *Dunhuang baozang*

JA   *Journal Asiatique*

P. chin.   Chinese Dunhuang manuscripts from the Pelliot collection preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris

P. tib.   Tibetan Dunhuang manuscripts from the Pelliot collection preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris

SM.   *Bsam gtan mig sgron; cf. Gnubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes*

S. chin   Chinese Dunhuang manuscripts from the Stein collection preserved in the British Library in London

S. tib.   Tibetan Dunhuang manuscripts from the Stein collection preserved in the British Library in London

T.   *Taishō shinshō daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 [*Tripiṭaka Compiled in the Taishō Era*], Taibei reprint

TY   Dunhuang manuscript of the *Wolun chanshi kanxin fa* from the former private collection of Tokushi Yūshō (TY); the manuscript is now found in the Dunhuang collection of Ryūkoku University in Kyoto

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LIST OF CHINESE TERMS

anxin 安心
baotang zong 保唐宗
benjue 本覺
chan wo zuo lun 禪臥坐輪
chan wolun 禪臥輪
Chanding si 禪定寺
da jiding 大寂定
Daoxin 道信
Dongshan 東山
Dongshan famen 東山法門
fanzhao xinyuan 返照心源
Guanxin lun 觀心論
Hongren 弘忍
Huineng 慧能
jizhao 寂照
jiujing jue 究竟覺
linian 離念
Mahāyāna (Moheyan) 摩訶衍

Ren heshang 忍和尚
Shenxiu 神秀
shijue 始覺
shouxin 守心
shukan 熟看
weixin 唯心
Wenxian 文獻
Wolun 臥輪
Wolun chanshi 臥輪禪師
Wolun chanshi anxin [fa] 臥輪禪師安心[法]
Wolun chanshi kanxin fa 臥輪禪師看心法
Wuzhu 無住
Xiangmo Zang 降魔藏
xin 心
Xinlun 心論
xinxing 心性
xinyuan 心源
Xiuxin yaolun 修心要論

THE TIBETAN AVALOKITEŚVARA CULT IN THE TENTH CENTURY: EVIDENCE FROM THE DUNHUANG MANUSCRIPTS

Sam van Schaik (London, England)

I. Introduction

As most readers will know, all the manuscripts from the library cave at Dunhuang date from before the eleventh century of the common era. Most of the Tibetan manuscripts were carried away by Paul Pelliot and Aurel Stein on behalf of France and Britain, and now reside in the national libraries of these two countries. Neither the French nor the English collection was ever fully catalogued. This has led to a situation where work on individual texts has not generally been complemented by an overall view of the manuscript collections in which those texts are situated, a situation which has only recently begun to change in studies of the secular documents, especially in the work of Tsuguhito Takeuchi.[1] The Buddhist manuscripts have so far not been the subject of a comprehensive overview of this kind. Due to the extent and diversity of the Buddhist manuscripts, such an undertaking would indeed be considerably more difficult than for the secular material.

As well as becoming more comprehensive, work on the Dunhuang texts has just begun to be more integrated with the a study of all physical features of a manuscript, including the script and handwriting (palæography), and the form of the manuscript (codicology).[2] There has also been an increasing recognition that textual work should not be carried out in isolation from work on the pictorial representations found in the Dunhuang library cave material and in wall paintings.[3]

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[1] See especially Takeuchi 1995 and 1997-1998.

[2] A significant first step in the description and analysis of Old Tibetan bibliography is Scherrer-Schaub and Bonami 2002.

[3] Recently, Amy Heller and Matthew Kapstein have both presented conference papers on work combining the study of Dunhuang manuscripts and Dunhuang paintings.

This paper results from an attempt to apply this more comprehensive
approach to a self-contained research project on a thematically-linked
group of manuscripts: the Tibetan Dunhuang texts of the deity
Avalokiteśvara (Tib. *Spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug*).[4] I will try to
demonstrate here that a comprehensive approach to the Dunhuang man-
uscript collections can lead to conclusions rather different from those
derived from work on only a few specific manuscripts.

In the 1970s some important Tibetan Dunhuang texts on after-death
states featuring Avalokiteśvara were discussed by Rolf Stein and Ariane
Macdonald.[5] The first of these texts, *Showing the path to the land of the
gods* (*Lha yul du lam bstan pa*) describes the various paths which the
deceased might take, and exhorted the deceased to remember the name
of Avalokiteśvara and to call upon him in order to avoid the hells.[6] The
second text was identified by Stein as a funeral rite of the pre-Buddhist
Tibetan religion transformed into a Buddhist practice featuring
Avalokiteśvara.[7]

A compendium of short texts also concerned with death and the
after-death state was examined by Yoshiro Imaeda. One of these, called
Overcoming the three poisons (*Gdug gsum 'dul ba*), contained
Avalokiteśvara's six-syllable mantra.[8] Like the text studied by Stein,
this one seemed to be addressed to an audience familiar with pre-
Buddhist rituals. Imaeda pointed out that this was the only example of
the six-syllable mantra found in the Pelliot collection, and suggested
that the role of Avalokiteśvara in ancient Tibet might be much less sig-
nificant than the later tradition tells us. His work, along with
Macdonald's examination of ancient material related to King Srong
btsan sgam po, challenges the traditional accounts of the significance

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[4] In the later Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the deity's name is generally shortened to
Spyan ras gzigs (Skt. Avalokita). In the Dunhuang manuscripts, the full, Sanskritic
form is nearly always used.

[5] The manuscript is PT239. A partial copy of the same text is in ITJ504. The Pelliot
manuscript had previously been the subject of a short paper by Marcelle Lalou 1939.
Here Lalou refers to the manuscript as PT241, while PT239 is its number in her cata-
logue, published a year after the paper.

[6] Macdonald 1971.

[7] Stein 1970. The deity appears here as the horse Bālāha, a form which he takes in
the *Kāraṇḍavyūha sūtra*. The story involving Bālāha is found in chapter one of the
second part of the sūtra. See Studholme 2002: 134-36.

[8] Imaeda 1979. The manuscripts are ITJ420 and ITJ421. The two forms of the
mantra, which add extra syllables to the usual six, are *Oṃ ma ṇi pad me hūṃ myi tra
svā ha* and *Oṃ maṇi pad me // hum mye //*.

of Avalokiteśvara in the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet. Based on these studies, Matthew Kapstein has argued in his recent book *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism* that the Tibetan cult of Avalokiteśvara is primarily a product of the period of the later spread of the teachings, that is, from the eleventh century onwards.[9]

II. THE DUNHUANG AVALOKITEŚVARA TEXTS

In the course of my work on the Dunhuang collection at the British Library, I began to realise that these texts on the post-death state represented only a fraction of the Avalokiteśvara material. Most of the familiar forms of Avalokiteśvara are represented in the Dunhuang manuscripts. The simplest aspect of the deity has one face and two arms. We also find the form with eleven heads called *Ekādaśa-mukha* (Tib. *Zhal bcu gcig pa*). There is the form with a thousand arms and a thousand eyes, *Sahasrabhuja-sahasranetra* (Tib. *Phyag stong spyan stong dang ldan pa*). We have Avalokiteśvara holding a wish-fulfilling jewel and a wheel, known as *Cintāmaṇicakra* (Tib. *Yid bzhin 'khor lo*). Finally, there is Avalokiteśvara in the form known as "the unfailing noose," *Amoghapāśa* (Tib. *Don yod zhags pa*), a very popular form in Dunhuang. All of these aspects of Avalokiteśvara are usually white in colour, but he is also represented with a red, a blue and a golden body.

The texts I will look at here are those in which the role of Avalokiteśvara is absolutely central, leaving aside those in which he appears along with other bodhisattvas like Mañjuśrī. The texts so devoted to Avalokiteśvara are overwhelmingly tantric in nature.[10] Leaving aside the funerary texts, which have been discussed in detail in the sources mentioned above, there are four basic categories of Avalokiteśvara text from Dunhuang:

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[9] Kapstein 2000: 144-55.

[10] The problematics of the terms 'tantra' and 'tantric' have been discussed by several scholars. It is clear that they should be understood as modern terms relating to a modern categorisation of Buddhist literature, which identifies a 'tantric' literature categorised by certain features, including visualisation, mantra recitation, the use of gesture (*mūdra*), and empowerment ceremonies. Yet there are problems in this kind of categorisation, especially when certain texts contain some 'tantric' elements, yet are clearly different from fully-developed tantras. Thus it is difficult to decide whether the dhāraṇī literature should be termed 'tantric' or not. Here I have cast the net wide, and included dhāraṇī literature.

1. *Sūtra*
2. *Dhāraṇī*
3. *Stotra* (hymns of praise)
4. *Sādhana* (the visualisation and recitation practice of the deity)

In the first category, sūtras, there is only one text, found in two manuscripts. This is the Avalokiteśvara chapter of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra* (*The Lotus Sutra*), which describes the forms taken by the bodhisattva in order to save sentient beings. This chapter, known as The Universal Gateway (*kun nas sgo*, Ch. *pumen*), was particularly popular in China, where it took on the form of an independent text from the seventh century onwards.[11] There are dozens of Chinese manuscript copies of The Universal Gateway in the Dunhuang collections. This Tibetan version seems to have been extracted from the eighth-century translation by Sna nam Ye shes sde, which is also the canonical version. We know that the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* was translated into Tibetan in the eighth century, as it appears in the ninth-century catalogue of Tibetan translations, the *Ldan dkar ma*.[12]

The other major sūtric source for the cult of Avalokiteśvara found in the *Ldan dkar ma* is the *Kāraṇḍavyūha sūtra*. This late sūtra displays several features found in tantric literature, including a mantra (the six-syllable mantra itself) and a maṇḍala. In the sūtra, Avalokiteśvara has the role of a universal saviour. There is no Tibetan translation of the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* in the Dunhuang collections, but the sūtra does seem to have influenced the two previously-mentioned texts on the after-death state, *Gdug gsum 'dul ba* (with the inclusion of the six-syllable mantra) and the funerary rites that appear in PT239 (wherein Avalokiteśvara appears in the form of the white horse Bālāha).

In short, the extent of the sūtric material devoted to Avalokiteśvara is quite limited. When we move on to the *dhāraṇī*-s, there is a great deal more material. A *dhāraṇī* (Tib. *gzungs*) is a sequence of Sanskrit sylla-

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[11] This is chapter 24 of the Tibetan translation (P.781) of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*, as well as the extant Sanskrit versions. However, it is chapter 25 of the popular Chinese translation by Kumārajīva (T.262), and is thus has become generally known as the 25th chapter of the sūtra.

[12] See Appendix III for a list of relevant texts catalogued in the *Ldan dkar ma*.

[13] Though there is little to distinguish a *dhāraṇī* from a mantra, it will tend to be longer. However, the terms *dhāraṇī* and mantra are not always firmly distinguished, and these strings of syllables may also be referred to as *hṛdaya* (Tib. *snying po*) and vidyā (Tib. *rig sngags*).

bles used to attain a variety of worldly and transcendent goals.[13] The
texts which expound a *dhāraṇī* are usually (and somewhat confusingly)
also termed *dhāraṇī* or *dhāraṇī-sūtra*. A *dhāraṇī* text, as well as
explaining the uses of the deity's *dhāraṇī*, may also contain instructions
for creating the altar and physical representations of the deity.[14]

I have identified twenty manuscripts containing at least seven differ-
ent *dhāraṇī* texts dedicated to Avalokiteśvara. Different texts are dedi-
cated to the eleven-headed form, the thousand-armed form, and the
Amoghapāśa form. Several of these texts appear in the *Bka' 'gyur*,
mostly in versions very similar to the Dunhuang texts. The *dhāraṇī*-s
are mostly variations on a single theme, beginning, *Oṃ Āryāvalokiteś-
varāya Bodhisattvāya Mahāsattvāya Mahākarunikāya*. The *dhāraṇī* of
the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara also addresses the deity as a sid-
dha-vidyādhara, an accomplished esoteric adept.

The next category of texts is the hymns of praise, or *stotra* (Tib.
bstod pa). There are two such texts addressed to Avalokiteśvara, which
appear in twenty-one manuscripts. The first text is a hymn to the deity
in the six-armed form of Cintāmaṇicakra. Avalokiteśvara is addressed
in the terms of a tantric deity, and his maṇḍala is taken as an embodi-
ment of the mind's true nature:

> If you meditate on this maṇḍala of mind itself,
> The equality of all maṇḍalas,
> Conceptual signs will not develop.
> Conceptualisation is itself enlightenment.
> With this non-abiding wisdom
> All accomplishments will be perfected.[15]

I have identified five manuscript copies of this text, which was appar-
ently quite popular. It does not, however, appear in the *Bka' 'gyur* or
Bstan 'gyur.

The other hymn is an enumeration of the 108 epithets of
Avalokiteśvara. This text does appear, in a nearly identical form, in the
Bka' 'gyur.[16] In this text Avalokiteśvara has four arms, holding a lotus,
a vase, a staff and a rosary. At the end of the text it is written that the

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[14] For example, the *Sarvatathāgata-uṣaṇīṣa-vijaya-dhāraṇī* (P.197) includes
instructions on setting up an altar for worship. A Chinese diagram of this altar arrange-
ment appears in a Dunhuang manuscript in the British Museum: OA 1919,0101,0.74.

[15] ITJ76, f.46v.5-8: */ sems nyid ldan pa'i dkyil 'khor te // dkyil 'khor mnyam pa de
bsgoms na // rtog pa'i mtshan ma myi skye'o // rtog pa nyid ni byang chub te // myi gnas
pa'i ye shes pas // dngos grub thams cad rdzogs par 'gyur /*

[16] P.381

benefits of praising Avalokiteśvara with these epithets include the entry
into all maṇḍalas and the accomplishment of all mantras. The 108 epi-
thets of Avalokiteśvara is the single most common Tibetan
Avalokiteśvara text in the Dunhuang collections, appearing in at least
fifteen manuscript copies.

The last category of Avalokiteśvara text is the sādhanas. There are
only a few manuscripts containing sādhanas, but we are fortunate in
that they represent a wide range of sādhana forms. At one end of the
spectrum, we have ritual manuals for the attainment of worldly aims
through practices like fire rituals (*homa*)—the kind of text usually clas-
sified as *kriyā* or *caryā* tantra.[17] One 28-folio booklet (ITJ401) contains
several such ritual texts, which invoke Avalokiteśvara in his thousand-
armed form, or in the form of Amoghapāśa. Figures from the maṇḍala
of Amoghapāśa, such as Hāyagrīva and the goddess Bhṛkutī, also
appear. There are a great variety of small sub-rituals included within
the larger *homa* context. These address a great variety of worldly needs,
a sample of which is provided by the following opening lines:

　　(i) "If you want to avoid being bitten by a dog"
　　(ii) "If you have cataracts"
　　(iii) "If you are afraid of the dark"
　　(iv) "If you want to make water flow uphill"
　　(v) "If you need to make it flow downhill again"[18]

Also included in this collection are some longer rituals, one for mirror
divination, and one for making rain. In one ritual, the six-syllable
mantra makes another cryptic appearance in the form: *Oṃ vajra yakṣa
maṇi padme hūṃ.*[19]

I have also identified a sādhana of Avalokiteśvara in the Dunhuang
manuscripts which would fall into the Yogatantra category. It appears
in three versions, none of them quite complete. In two manuscripts, the
sādhana opens with the identification of the practitioner of the sādhana
as "one who desires the *siddhi* of Noble Avalokiteśvara in this very

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[17] I have employed the basic divisions of the Tibetan traditional classifications of
tantric literature, with the provision that they are not to be understood as a reading of
later Tibetan doxographical categories onto this early literature. Nevertheless, the cate-
gories are very useful in identifying thematic links and differences between texts, and
all of the terms used here were in use by the tenth century.
[18] ITJ401, 9v.3, 17r.10, 16v.10, 8v.5, 9r.1.
[19] ITJ401, 4r.1.
[20] ITJ583/2, Rf1v.2: *de la 'phags pa spyan ras gzigs gyi dbang phyug / tshe 'di nyid
la dngos su grub par 'dod pas /* (see also PT331, l.1).

life".[20] In the sādhana, Avalokiteśvara is white in colour and has two
arms, one in the gesture of giving refuge, and one holding a red lotus.
He sits cross-legged on a lotus. To the left of him is the consort
*Dharmasattvī (chos kyi sems ma). The meditator is to develop the
vajra pride in himself as *Bhagavān Śrī Dharmasattva (bcom ldan 'das
dpal chos kyi sems pa) which seems to be another name for this form
of Avalokiteśvara. In the Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha tantra,
Avalokiteśvara belongs to the dharma family (which is identical with
the padma family). The other deities of the maṇḍala are the standard
eight offering goddess and four gate guardians of Yogatantra literature.
There is a visualisation and recitation of "the root mantra of the heart[-
mantra] of approach".[21] The mantra is Oṃ vajra dharma hrī.[22] This
mantra is based on the seed syllables of Avalokiteśvara according to the
Vajradhātu maṇḍala of the Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha.[23]

ITJ384 is a hastily written manuscript containing notes on various
maṇḍalas, includes an Amoghapāśa maṇḍala. This maṇḍala may also
be tentatively classified as Yogatantra, as the other maṇḍalas discussed
in the same manuscript are all in some way related to the
Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra. According to this text, the maṇḍala is
laid out on the ground, with a vase at the centre representing
Amoghapāśa. There seems to be some relationship with the maṇḍala
diagram in the Dunhuang manuscript kept at the National Museum of
New Delhi (Ch.00379), in which a vase is drawn in the centre of the
maṇḍala for a healing ritual. There are a number of scriptural texts
which may be sources for these Amoghapāśa practices, and there cer-
tainly does seem to have been an Amoghapāśa tantra in use by the eight
century.[24]

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[21] ITJ583/2, Rf4v.1-3: nye ba'i snying po rtsa ba'i sngags.

[22] ITJ583/2, Rf4v.4: ōṃ bā dzra dar mā rhri.

[23] P.112: 223-3-5.

[24] See Davidson 2002: 152. An Amoghapāśa tantra is listed in PT849, l.17–18:
Thabs kyi zhags pa rgyud / A mo ga pa sha tan tra; here the Sanskrit title may be a mis-
take, however, as the Thabs kyi zhags pa pad mo'i phreng ba'i rgyud (P.458) is not con-
cerned with Amoghapāśa. Two Amoghapāśa texts are listed in the Ldan dkar ma. The
first is Don yod zhags pa'i rtogs pa chen po, which can probably be identified with a
long text of rituals connected with Amoghapāśa which appears in the Bka' 'gyur with-
out a colophon, the Amoghapāśa-kalparāja (P.365). The second is Don yod zhags pa'i
snying po, which probably represents the same text as the Dunhuang manuscripts
which bear the same title (see Appendix I). These texts have been discussed briefly in
Meisezahl 1962.

We have a single example of another type of sādhana which might be classified as Mahāyoga. The deity here is a red Avalokiteśvara, with one face and two arms, one holding the lotus and one giving refuge. Avalokiteśvara is visualised in union with the white-robed goddess Pāṇḍaravāsinī, surrounded by the deities Yamāntaka, Mahābala, Hayagrīva and Amṛtakuṇḍalī. These deities are generated out of "the *bodhicitta* arising from the great bliss of the father's and mother's non-dual union".[25] This sādhana indicates that the popularity of Avalokiteśvara continued in the Mahāyoga practices which were prevalent in tenth-century Dunhuang. The form of Avalokiteśvara in this sādhana is similar to the form known as 'Jig rten mgon po or 'Jig rten dbang phyug (Skt. *Lokeśvāra*) in the later Tibetan tradition. I have not yet identified any sources for this Mahāyoga Avalokiteśvara practice, though it is possible that Tibetans were familiar in the tenth century with a Lokeśvaramāyājāla tantra.[26]

III. OTHER APPROACHES TO THE MATERIAL

Manuscript forms

Having very briefly reviewed the range of the Tibetan Avalokiteśvara texts from Dunhuang, let us now look, equally briefly, at the physical form of the manuscripts in which these texts appear. There are four basic types:

> 1) The *pothī*: the loose-leaf form that became ubiquitous in Tibet;
> 2) The scroll;
> 3) The concertina; and
> 4) The booklet.

One interesting aspect of looking at the physical form of the manuscripts is that we can draw conclusions about the use to which the manuscript was put. The *pothī* is the most common form for Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang, followed by the scroll, then the concertina, and finally the booklet. Yet a large proportion of Avalokiteśvara texts are written on concertinas and booklets.

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[25] ITJ754, vol.72, f.79, ll.33–43: *yab yum gnyis su myed pa'i bde ba chen po'i byang cub [sic] sems.*

[26] Pelliot tibétain 849, l.15: *Spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug gi rgyud sgyu 'phrul dra ba / Lo ke sva ra ma ya jva la tan tra).*

A feature of the concertinas and booklets is that they are often col-
lections of several short prayers and sādhanas—an example is PT37, the
collection of texts on the after-death state studied by Lalou and Imaeda.
The concertina and booklet forms lend themselves to such collections
because of the ease with which one can leaf through the pages to find
a particular text. They are usually of a relatively small size, and thus
easily carried on the person.

These collections of prayers and sādhanas may have been used by
wandering monks or lay yogins either for personal use or when provid-
ing religious services for others. In post-imperial Tibet, such figures,
who would have been literate in Buddhism but without monastic spon-
sorship, would probably have been common. It is easy to imagine most
of the Avalokiteśvara texts in the Dunhuang collections being used in
this way—texts to be read to the dying or deceased, rituals for healing
the sick, helping crops, and sorting out personal problems, as well as
general-purpose, all-accomplishing prayers like the 108-epithet prayer
in praise of Avalokiteśvara.

The forms of the manuscripts can also be used to date them approx-
imately. The concertina format was popular in China from the late Tang
dynasty, that is the ninth century. The booklet, on the other hand, was
not widely known in China until much later, and the Dunhuang book-
lets seem to date from the earliest experimentation with this form. The
majority are dated to the tenth century.

We can also look at the handwriting of the manuscripts, although
this approach to the study of the Dunhuang manuscripts is very much
in its infancy. The palæographic features of our Avalokiteśvara manu-
scripts indicate that they did not originate from the scribal centre that
operated in Dunhuang in the dynastic period. They are often charac-
terised by rather ornamental flourishes, features which are predomi-
nantly found in the Tibetan script of the post-dynastic period, especial-
ly the tenth century. In this case the handwriting of the manuscripts
would date them, rather roughly, to the period between the mid-ninth
and early eleventh century, with the bulk of them being from the tenth
century.

Other features of some manuscripts can help us to date them more
accurately. For example, one of the hymns of praise to Avalokiteśvara
is written on the verso of a scroll, the recto of which is a Chinese

almanac written for the local ruler of Dunhuang, Cao Yuanzhong, con-
cerning the year 956.[27] We can see that the Tibetan side was written
after the Chinese side,[28] so the text must date from the half-century
between 956 and the closing of the library cave in the early eleventh
century. Two others of our Avalokiteśvara manuscripts may be linked
with this scribe, and hence also placed in the second half of the tenth
century.[29] So many Tibetan texts from Dunhuang have now been found
by this method of dating to derive from the late tenth century that the
burden of proof would seem to rest on those who believe a Tibetan
Dunhuang manuscript to date from before the tenth century.[30]

Finally, one indispensable source for establishing the presence of a
text in early Tibet is the *Ldan dkar ma*, the catalogue of texts kept at the
Ldan dkar palace written in the early ninth century (AD 814). The *Ldan
dkar ma* contains the titles of some of our Dunhuang texts: the
Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra, the *dhāraṇī-s* of *Amoghapāśa* and the
eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara, and the 108-epithet praise of
Avalokiteśvara. The *Kāraṇḍavyūha sūtra*, which is not found in
Dunhuang, but is the probable source of the six-syllable mantra, is also
listed in the *Ldan dkar ma*.

IV. Pictorial Representations of Avalokiteśvara

Now I want to look briefly at the pictorial representations of
Avalokiteśvara in the wall-paintings and painted silk hangings from
Dunhuang. In 1992 Henrik Sørensen published a study of representa-
tions of esoteric deities at Dunhuang. He concluded that Avalokiteśvara
was by far the most represented esoteric deity in the wall-paintings.
According to his statistics Avalokiteśvara is the central deity in 143 of
the 198 esoteric wall-paintings at Dunhuang. The eleven-headed form
is the most often represented, followed by the thousand-armed form

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[27] Or.8210/S.95.

[28] The later date of the Tibetan writing can be determined when the two sides are
compared: (i) the Chinese text is the exact length of the scroll, while the Tibetan ends
with blank space; (ii) the Chinese shows that the scroll was written in two pieces, which
were then attached to each other—the Tibetan is written over this join; (iii) there is
Tibetan writing (in the same hand as the verso) on the recto, between the Chinese lines.

[29] These are ITJ384 and ITJ754.

[30] Tsuguhito Takeuchi has recently reviewed the extent of this material in as-yet-
unpublished conference papers.

and Cintāmaṇicakra form, with Amoghapāśa being the least popular. The majority of these paintings date from the mid-eighth century to the early eleventh: exactly the same period covered by the Tibetan Dunhuang manuscripts.[31] The greatest concentration of the Avalokiteśvara paintings is in the tenth century, which is also the date of the majority of our Avalokiteśvara manuscripts.

No complete overview of the painted hangings from the library cave at Dunhuang has yet been published. In a brief survey of the British Museum holdings, I counted over seventy images of Avalokiteśvara, about a third of which related to tantric forms. These forms—such as Amoghapāśa and Cintāmaṇicakra, are the same set that is found in our Tibetan manuscripts. These images of Avalokiteśvara far outnumber those of any other single deity.

Most of the hangings have been dated to the mid-ninth to tenth centuries. Notable among them are a number of maṇḍalas painted in an Indic (rather than Chinese) style, which may have been the work of Tibetans, although we must also consider the possibility of their being by Khotanese painters, or Chinese painters trained in an Indic style for the depiction of tantric deities. These include a maṇḍala of the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara (kept in the New Delhi National Museum); three Amoghapāśa maṇḍalas in which Avalokiteśvara is surrounded by four deities: Hayagrīva, Bhṛkuṭī, Ekajātī, and another form of Avalokiteśvara (all in the Musée Guimet);[32] an Amoghapāśa protective circle inscribed with a *dhāraṇī* (in the British Museum); and a sketch of an Amoghapāśa maṇḍala being used by a monk in a healing ritual (in the New Delhi National Museum). The last image seems to be related to the Amoghapāśa healing rituals found in the booklet ITJ401 and the concertina ITJ384.

Since the hangings were taken from the library cave, they derive from the same source as the manuscripts, probably a single monastery.[33] Thus the presence of several Indic-style depictions of Avalokiteśvara and his maṇḍala in these hangings are particularly significant, and may well have been owned and used by the same Tibetan-speaking people who wrote and used the manuscripts which we have been considering here.

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[31] Sørensen 1991: 335–39. Sørensen draws his statistics from Matsumoto 1937.

[32] Cf. Roerich 1976: 1024 on Bari lo tsā ba's five-deity initiation of Amoghapāśa.

[33] See Rong Xinjiang 2000 for the argument that the Dunhuang collection is the library of a single monastery.

V. Conclusions

The material that we have been reviewing should certainly lead us to revise the notion that we have no evidence for a cult of Avalokiteśvara in Tibet before the eleventh century. In these Dunhuang manuscripts, most of which are from the tenth century, there is ample evidence for a growing popularity of Avalokiteśvara, in which the deity has become a saviour for all kinds of ills, and the accomplisher of both worldly and transcendental aims.

But we must be careful here: I can see two reasons to doubt this conclusion. One is the geographical location of Dunhuang, marginal to the Tibetan cultural area, and more strongly under the influence of other cultures, especially Chinese. This is certainly something to keep in mind, yet the influences on the Dunhuang texts may not be so different from those affecting more central areas of Tibet. If we look at the Dunhuang Avalokiteśvara texts which are also found in the *Bka' 'gyur,* only two—both *dhāraṇī-s* of the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara—are translated from the Chinese. Many more are translations from Indian texts. Also, we should remember that Tibetan histories generally relate the introduction of Buddhism back into central Tibet at the end of the so-called Dark Age of the tenth century from marginal areas to the east and west. In particular, Tibetan monks are held to have taken refuge in the countries of the Hor and Mi nyag, and to have settled in the region of Amdo (Mdo smad) in Northeastern Tibet—all areas close to the Silk Routes and the Dunhuang nexus.[34] Thus, in this period, geographical marginality cannot be equated with cultural marginality.

The other factor that might make us wary of drawing the conclusion of Avalokiteśvara's general popularity is the scarcity of the six-syllable mantra in this material. In the later tradition, the deity Avalokiteśvara is so closely associated with the six-syllable mantra that the two are almost interchangeable. The Tibetan historical sources that associate the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet from the very beginning with

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[34] See for example, Roerich 1976: 63–67. Stein (1959: 228–35) discusses this region apropos the location of the legendary kingdom of Gling. The identification of Hor and Mi nyag in this period is problematic, but they both certainly refer to the Amdo region, or beyond this, the Silk Road sites associated with the Uighurs and Tanguts.

[35] While King Srong btsan sgam po's advocacy of Avalokiteśvara has no basis in non-legendary material, it is not unlikely that Avalokiteśvara was first introduced to

the six-syllable mantra have been challenged by the recent studies mentioned earlier.[35] In fact, the first firm Tibetan textual evidence for the centrality of the six-syllable mantra are the *Bka' 'chems ka khol ma* and *Maṇi bka' 'bum* collections, both of which date from the twelfth century.

Despite this lack of pre-eleventh century textual sources for the mantra, there is reason to believe that it was being popularised before the time of the *Maṇi bka' 'bum* in an oral tradition. Matthew Kapstein has cited two textual sources that attest to the popularity of the six-syllable mantra by the eleventh century. First, Ma cig lab sgron (1055-1145/1153) is supposed to have said that Avalokiteśvara and Tārā are the ancestors of Tibetans, and that Tibetan infants learn to recite the six-syllable mantra at the same time as they are just beginning to speak.[36] Second, La bstod dmar po, who lived at the same time as Dmar pa lo tsā ba, went to India to find a teaching to purify the negative actions he committed as a child. The teacher he found agreed to entrust a very secret teaching, with which he would remove the obstacles of this life and gain enlightenment in the next. The teacher, speaking down a bamboo tube inserted into the ear of the student, so that no one could overhear, said *Oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ*. La bstod dmar po then had some doubts, thinking, "This mantra is repeated throughout Tibet by old men, women, and even children...". He had to perform some unpleasant penance for his doubts, but the story ends well.[37]

These examples suggest that the six-syllable mantra may have gained its status in Tibet as the salvific mantra *par excellence* outside of the textual tradition. This may have been accomplished by wander-

Tibetans during the seventh century, when the Tibetan empire expanded to Buddhist states of Central Asia such as Khotan. Perhaps, as some Tibetan historians have claimed, Khotanese missionaries propounding the *Kāraṇḍavyūha sūtra* reached Central Tibet even before the advent of the Tibetan empire. So we see in the *dBa' bzhed* the story of the descent from heaven of the six-syllable mantra onto the palace roof during the reign of Lha tho tho ri. Other texts relate that it was the *Kāraṇḍavyūha sūtra* which fell from heaven—the sūtra is, of course, the main source of the six-syllable mantra. In the *Blue Annals*, 'Gos lo tsā ba argues that what really happened was that these texts were brought to the king by two figures including a Khotanese translator; but the king, being illiterate, was uninterested and sent them away (Roerich 1976: 38). This kind of missionary activity, in which Avalokiteśvara is employed as an ambassador for Buddhism, is suggested by the texts on the after-death state studies by Stein and Imaeda. These incorporated Buddhist elements, including the practice of relying on Avalokiteśvara, into an indigenous funeral rite.

[36] Kapstein 2000: 48.
[37] Roerich 1976: 1026-27.

ing religious preachers, the forbears of those who later came to be
known as Maṇipas, because they spread a simple form of dharma in
which the six-syllable mantra was pre-eminent.[38] If the six-syllable
mantra was being popularised through an oral tradition in the ninth and
tenth centuries, then we would not necessarily expect to find a wide-
spread textual representation of the mantra during this period in our
Dunhuang manuscripts.[39]

We must also be careful not to be misled by the continuing Tibetan
oral and folk tradition in which the six-syllable mantra tends to over-
shadow all of Avalokiteśvara's many other mantras. In fact, the six-syl-
lable mantra is by no means a ubiquitous feature of the tantric literature
on Avalokiteśvara, even in the post-eleventh-century literature. The
sādhanas of Avalokiteśvara employ a number of different *dhāraṇī*-s and
mantras, of which the six-syllable mantra is only one among many.[40]
Most of the forms of Avalokiteśvara found in the Dunhuang texts, such
as Cintāmaṇicakra and Amoghapāśa, are associated with other
mantras, found in the *dhāraṇī*-s and tantras dedicated to those forms.
Before the six-syllable mantra became so very popular, it would have
been seen primarily as the Avalokiteśvara mantra of the *Kāraṇḍavyūha
sūtra*. Traditions of Avalokiteśvara derived from any other scriptures
would use the mantra specific to that scripture. Thus in the sādhanas
based on the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha tantra* use a mantra based
on the seed syllables of Avalokiteśvara in that tantra: *Oṃ vajra dharma
hrī* (interestingly, this is itself a six-syllable mantra). Thus we may be
asking too much of the texts when we expect to see more of the six-syl-
lable mantra, and we are certainly not justified in equating the scarcity
of that mantra with a lack of interest in Avalokiteśvara.

In any case, based on the Dunhuang manuscripts I would argue that

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[38] These *maṇi pa*, one species of Tibet's wandering preachers, have been discussed
in passing in Stein 1959: 324, 336, 330, 334. They are also briefly discussed in Tucci
1980: 207–208.

[39] There is an interesting additional piece of evidence for the argument that the six-
syllable mantra was predominant in the oral tradition. The only place that the mantra
has so far been found in the Dunhuang manuscripts (apart from the altered form found
in ITJ401) is in the *Gdug gsum 'dul ba*, and the manuscripts in which this text appears
show signs of separate transcriptions written down from an oral teaching. I will discuss
this topic in a forthcoming paper.

[40] If we look at an extensive collection of Avalokiteśvara sādhanas derived from the
post-eleventh century literature (as listed in a recently-published Tibetan compilation),
only one-tenth employ the pure six-syllable mantra without any additional syllables,
and three-quarters of the mantras are entirely unrelated to the six syllables.

that the composition of Avalokiteśvara material in the eleventh and twelfth century occurred in a culture in which Avalokiteśvara was already a very significant presence at the popular level of Buddhist practice and devotion. The advocates of Avalokiteśvara in the later diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet may have altered the appearance of the Avalokiteśvara cult, but it was already well-established before they began their work.

There is still much work to be done on the Avalokiteśvara texts. An important further step will be to establish what connections, if any, exist between the pre-eleventh century material and the later tradition, including the *Maṇi bka' 'bum* and the *Bka' 'chems ka khol ma*, and the material brought from India by Atiśa and others. But this admittedly brief study shows, I hope, the benefits to be reaped from a comprehensive approach to the study of the Dunhuang manuscripts. These manuscripts can then be properly used to afford momentary illuminations of the dark period of the tenth century, before the great explosion of translation and textual creation in second diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet.

APPENDIX I: TIBETAN AVALOKITEŚVARA TEXTS IN DUNHUANG COLLECTIONS

Sūtra

Chapter 24 of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra (on the manifestations of Avalokiteśvara) [P.781] ITJ191 (concertina), ITJ351 + PT572 (booklet)

Stotra

Byang chub sems dpa' spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug yid bzhin khor lo la bstod pa Or.8210/S.95 (scroll), ITJ76/3 (booklet), ITJ311/3 (pothī), ITJ369/3 (pothī; incomplete), PT7/4 (concertina)
'Phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug la bstod pa ITJ314 (pothī):
Spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug gi mtshan brgya rtsa brgyad pa [P.381] ITJ315 (concertina), ITJ316/1 (concertina), ITJ351/2 (booklet), ITJ379/2 (concertina), ITJ385/3 (concertina), PT7/5 (concertina), PT11 (concertina), PT23 (concertina), PT24 (concertina), PT32 (concertina), PT107 (concertina), PT109 (concertina), PT110 (poth?), PT111 (concertina), PT753 (fragment)

Dhāraṇī

Byang chub sems dpa' spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug gi rigs sngags ITJ453 (concertina), ITJ513 (concertina), PT356 (fragment)

*'Phags pa byang chub sems dpa' spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug phyag stong spyan stong
    dang ldan pa thogs pa myi mnga' ba'i thugs rje chen po'i sems rgya cher yongs
    su rdzogs pa zhes bya ba'i gzungs [P.369]* (tr. from Chinese) ITJ214 (pothī),
    PT420 (booklet), PT421 (booklet)
*'Phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug phyag stong spyan stong du sprul pa rgya chen
    po yongs su rdzogs pa thogs pa med par thugs rje chen po dang ldan pa'i gzungs
    [P.368]* (tr. from Chinese) PT365 (pothī)
Spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug zhal bcu gcig pa'i gzungs [P.373] PT45 (concertina)
'Phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug gi snying po [P.372] ITJ337/4 (concertina),
    PT75 (scroll)
Don yod zhags pa'i snying po / gzungs [P.366] ITJ311/1 (pothī), ITJ312/2 (pothī),
    ITJ372/2 (scroll), PT7/7 (concertina), PT49/4 (scroll), PT56 (pothī), PT105
    (scroll), PT264 (frag)

Others

ITJ323/2 (12:74-92; pothī), PT1/5 (scroll)

Sādhana

Various rituals including *homa* (Kriyā/Caryā)
ITJ401 (booklet), PT327 (scroll)
White, one-faced, two-armed Avalokiteśvara (Yogatantra)
PT331 (single sheet), ITJ583/2 (concertina), ITJ509 & PT320 (concertina)
Amoghapāśa maṇḍala (Yogatantra)
ITJ384/2 (concertina)
Red, one-faced, two-armed Avalokiteśvara (Mahāyoga)
ITJ754/6 (scroll)

TEXTS ON THE AFTER-DEATH STATE

Gdug gsum 'dul ba
ITJ420 (booklet), ITJ421/1 (booklet), ITJ720 (fragment), PT37/1 (booklet)
Lha yul du lam bstan pa
PT37/2 (booklet), PT239 recto (concertina), PT733 (fragment)
Funeral rites
ITJ504 (fragment), PT239 verso (concertina)

APPENDIX II: SELECTED PAINTED HANGINGS

Avalokiteśvara maṇḍala: Stein painting 66
Avalokiteśvara, Indic style: Stein Painting 55
Cintāmaṇicakra with eight bodhisattvas and four kings: Stein Painting 61
Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara with entourage: Stein Painting 35, MG.17775
Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, Indic style: Delhi Museum Ch.xxviii.006

Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara: EO.3587

Amoghapāśa: MG.2306

Amoghapāśa protective diagram according to the *Amoghapāśa dhāraṇī sūtra* Stein Painting 18

Amoghapāśa (blue) maṇḍala w/ Hayagrīva, Bhṛkuṭī, Ekajaṭī and another form of Avalokiteśvara, Indic style: EO.1131

Amoghapāśa maṇḍala, similar to above, Indic style: MG.26466

Amoghapāśa maṇḍala, with five buddhas and many other deities, Indic style style: EO.3579

Amoghapāśa maṇḍala sketch for healing ritual (deity represented by a vase): Delhi Museum Ch.00379

APPENDIX III: AVALOKITEŚVARA TEXTS IN THE *LDAN DKAR MA*

78 & 101. *snying rje [chen po] padma dkar po* (P.799)

79. *dam pa'i chos pad ma dkar po*

114. *za ma tog bkod pa* (P.784)

157. *spyan ras gzigs zhes bya*

170. *seng ge'i sgra bsgrags pa* (P.385/387?)

316. *don yod zhags pa'i rtogs pa chen po* (P.365?)

343. *spyan ras gzigs yid bzhin 'khor lo sgyur ba'i gzungs* (P.370?)

347. *don yod zhags pa'i snying po* (P.366)

352. *spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug yid bzhin gyi nor bu 'khor lo sgyur ba'i gzungs*

366. *spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug zhal bcu gcig pa'i gzungs*

368. *snying rje mchog*

388. *spyan ras gzigs kyi yum* (P.399)

440. *spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug gi mtshan brgya rtsa brgyad pa* (P.381)

459. *spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug la phyag na rdo rje 'dzin rnams kyi bstod pa*

460. *spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug la snying rje'i bstod pa*

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PART TWO

THE RNYING MA TANTRIC CANON

THE CASE OF THE SHUFFLED FOLIOS: FIRST STEPS IN CRITICALLY EDITING THE *PHUR BU MYA NGAN LAS 'DAS PA'I RGYUD CHEN PO* IN THE *RNYING MA'I RGYUD 'BUM*

CATHY CANTWELL (OXFORD, UK)[1]

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE *MYANG 'DAS*

The *Phur bu mya ngan las 'das pa'i rgyud chen po*, found in the Mahāyoga Phur pa 'phrin las skor of the *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum*, is widely quoted in the commentarial literature of the Phur pa traditions. It has been referred to as especially significant for its teachings on the Completion Stage Lord (*rdzogs rim gtso bo*).[2] Yet despite the obvious importance of the text for the Rnying ma and Sa skya Phur pa traditions,[3] an examination of the extant editions of it soon reveal that there are such major variations that it is unclear whether we might have two or more recensions of the text. In this paper, I intend to present the provisional results of my investigation into the ordering of the contents of the text, since we witness large portions of text shifting position from one edition to the next (see Appendix). These discrepancies have implications for the coherency or otherwise of our individual editions: in Chapter 4, there are two quite different versions of the narrative

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[2] Kong sprul's *Rgyud 'grel* (66.2-3) says: *bskyed rim gtso bor ston pa phur pa gsang rgyud/ rdzogs rim gtso bor ston pa phur pa myang 'das kyi rgyud /* Similarly, in the *'Bum nag* (37.1 [270.2] Gonpo Tseten edition with Bdud 'joms bka' ma variants in square brackets) we find: *bskyed pa'i rim pa phur pa gsang rgyud nas bton / [ston /] rdzogs rim thaṃd [thams cad] phur pa myang 'das las [nas] ston /*

[3] The commentary of A myes zhabs, which is extensively relied upon in the Sa skya tradition, notes (20.6) that there are thirty-seven tantras which established their tradition (*rang gzhung*) of Rdo rje phur pa, and he goes on to list these. The first of the five "*la bzla ba'i rgyud*" is given (21.7) as "*phur bu bla ma chen po mya ngan las 'das pa'i rgyud*", which is presumably to be identified with our *Myang 'das*. A little later, in emphasising the centrality of the *Phur pa rtsa ba'i dum bu* as a root tantra in the early transmissions, he gives (24.4) the *Myang 'das* as the first of a list of explanatory tantras (*bshad rgyud*).

sequence of the taming of Rudra account, while later in the text, the
contents of Chapters 17-19 and 23 vary markedly, and two further chap-
ters after Chapter 23 in some editions are altogether omitted in others,
resulting in a different number of chapters and a rather different sense
of the development of the text as a whole.

II. The Ordering of Text in the Different Editions of the *Myang ʼdas*: A Summary of the Case

In accounting for the discrepancies between the ordering of material in
the different versions of the *Myang ʼdas* (see Appendix), we are faced
with two possible scenarios. First, we might be faced with genuinely
alternative versions. Such alternative versions may have stemmed from
different editions in the distant past, perhaps even before the early ver-
sions of the *Rnying maʼi rgyud ʼbum* were compiled. Or, one version
may reflect deliberate editorial intervention, and where we find added
material, this might even represent an expanded version of an earlier,
shorter text.[4]

On the other hand, a second scenario is that, rather than the differ-
ing arrangements pointing to genuinely independent recensions of the
text, the ordering varies because at some stage in the past,[5] folios have

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[4] Of course, we witness instances of the expansion of canonical texts in Indian
Mahāyāna sūtras, and given that the Rnying ma tradition tended towards a dynamic
understanding of scriptural revelation (see Mayer 1996: 51-55), such a scenario might
not be altogether unexpected in this genre of scripture.

[5] If folios *have* been misplaced as I believe, this must have happened *before* the
extant editions were made, because our page and chapter numbering follow in all edi-
tions in correct sequence, and the ʻjumpsʼ in the text do not correspond to where the
text moves from one folio to another. If I am correct in the suggestion that the Southern
Central group (see note 8) have lost two chapter endings, it is likely that the process was
in at least two stages: the first, in which, say, a folio of text was omitted and other folios
misplaced, and the second in which an editor or scribe noticed the omission of chapter
titles for Chapters 23 and 24 and the reverse ordering of chapter titles for Chapters 17
and 18, and thus renumbered Chapters 17 and 18, numbered Chapter 25 as 23, and the
subsequent chapters accordingly. An alternative, perhaps less likely, possibility is that
earlier versions of the text might have only given chapter titles and no numbers (this is
not uncommon in *Rnying maʼi rgyud ʼbum* texts, eg. the *Byang chub kyi sems bsgom
pa yi ge med paʼi rgyud* [http://ngb.csac.anthro-pology.ac.uk/csac/NGB/kha/2] or the
Rdo rje gsang ba chen poʼi sku rin po che dbyig gi sgron ma shes rab chen poʼi mdo
[http://ngb.csac.anthro-pology.ac.uk/csac/NGB/ca/5]), so that an ancestor of the
Southern Central group might have inserted chapter numbering throughout, *after* the
folio misplacements had taken place.

been displaced and in one case or the other, the textual arrangement has been muddled. My suggestion in this paper is that, on the basis of the evidence found in our extant editions, it is this second scenario which is the more likely one: we have a case of shuffled folios. Furthermore, I suggest that the 'extra' text found in Sde dge and the two Bhutanese editions, Mtshams brag and Sgang steng,[6] is not added or alternative text, but text which was once shared, and has been mistakenly omitted from an ancestor of our Gting skyes, Rig 'dzin and Nubri editions.

But first, before I comment further on the correctness or incorrectness of the different arrangements and what we might learn from them, it is worth discussing why I have reached the conclusion that we do indeed have accidental movements of text rather than new composition or editorial work. One feature of the kind of religious texts we find in the *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum* is that they contain much ritual and symbolic material which is not always presented in an immutably logical or sequential order, and there may be alternative ways of ordering the material which would be equally valid. However, in the cases we have in the *Myang 'das*, there is nothing to suggest that any re-ordering or re-shuffling was a deliberate editorial act. If it had been, it seems unlikely that the breaks would come—as they do in some instances—in the middle of lines of verse or prose.[7] Moreover, if such editorial intervention had taken place, we might expect to find at least some other evidence in terms of added or amended material at key points, clarifying the new context for the placement of text. But this is not the case apart from the additional text found in one place in Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng and Sde dge, and this text does not seem self-consciously to comment on or to make sense of the arrangement of the other material

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[6] Where I refer in this article to the Bhutanese editions, I merely denote these two manuscript editions. While we might well find that the further Bhutanese editions which have not yet been made available will be genetically closely related to our Mtshams brag and Sgang steng editions, we cannot as yet know this, so my comments in this case should not be taken to imply that *all* Bhutanese editions will necessarily follow these two witnesses. However, the extant versions of our text which are currently available do fit into three groupings which correspond to the geographical regions from which they derive.

[7] For example, we have breaks in the middle of *yig rkang* in M120v.1/G107v.1, which 'jump' from the place corresponding to D49r.7 to the section found from D50r.3. Similarly, where this moved passage ends in Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng (M121v.4; D50v.6) and Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng 'jump' back to the text found from D49r.7, and again, when Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng (M122v.5) 'jump' forward to the passage found from D50v.6, we do not find neat breaks at the end of sentences/ verses, or even indeed, at the end of *yig rkang*!

which is ordered differently from the corresponding sections in the Southern Central group[8] of manuscripts. Thus, the shuffling of folios is the most likely explanation for the different ordering of the material, and this is borne out by a close examination of the text, which does indeed seem to indicate that we have misplacements.

To sum up the results of my investigations, I have concluded that we do not have a single incident of shuffling text. Instead, we have at least two independent movements, one in which an ancestor of Mtshams brag and Sgang steng misplaced a single folio in Chapter 4 [=Block B], and one (or possibly more) case(s) where an ancestor of the Southern Central group inserted perhaps two folios originally from Chapters 18 and 19 between folios in Chapter 17 [=Block F], and (on the same or a separate occasion) misplaced two or three folios of text from Chapter 19 into Chapter 23 [=Block H], at the same time losing a folio of text which had originally been placed at this point and which gave the titles for Chapters 23 and 24 [=Block J].[9] Thus, while we seem to have some problems with the ordering of both the Southern Central group and the Bhutanese editions, Sde dge alone, which resembles the Southern Central group in its ordering of Chapter 4, and the Bhutanese manuscripts elsewhere, appears to retain the 'correct' ordering throughout. I will comment on the implications of this later.

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[8] Robert Mayer (see Mayer's article in this volume) and I are using this designation in a very loose and provisional descriptive fashion to describe manuscripts which we believe all derive from areas in the south of Tibet proper or in the ethnically Tibetan border areas of Nepal. Gting skyes and Nubri are self explanatory. For comments on the Rig 'dzin edition, see Cantwell, Mayer and Fischer 2002-2003, Distinctive Features of the Edition (http://ngb.csac.anthropology.ac.uk:8080/csac/NGB/Dist). The volume in the Kathmandu edition in which the *Myang 'das* almost certainly occurs is missing, so in this instance, we have three rather than four witnesses of this group, and my comments are intended only to apply to these three.

[9] It is conceivable that rather than witnessing instances of folio shufflings in two separate areas of the *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum* tradition, that is, amongst ancestors of the Southern Central group on one hand and of the Bhutanese editions on the other, the misplacements might have occurred at a very early stage through separate copyings of one old and renowned exemplar, which might perhaps have lost some of the edges of its pages giving folio numbering.

III. A Detailed Examination of the Evidence: The First Discrepancy in the Text Order

To consider each case in turn, we begin with Chapter 4. At first sight it might seem straightforward to make an assessment of which version is 'correctly' ordered: Chapter 4 relates the myth of the subjugation of Rudra, and one might expect it to follow an obvious sequence. However, matters are not quite so simple; what we witness is a series of incidents in which Rudra and his retinue show resistance that is over-come, and the movement of text rearranges these. The opening of the chapter outlines the problem which Rudra poses and the need to subdue him, while the end of the chapter relates the completion of the subjuga-tion, how all Rudra's attributes and realm are purified and integrated into the Kīlaya maṇḍala, and it gives the prediction of Rudra's Buddhahood. It is during the main account of the subjugation process that one folio of text [Block B] given in Sde dge, 49r.7-50r.3,[10] is moved down in Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng, and inserted between the *yig rkang* which we find in Sde dge's 50v line 6.

It is also not entirely clear from the language where we shift places that one version is more incoherent than the other. In the case of the Sde dge version, the Tibetan seems coherent at the place where Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng part company from Sde dge,[11] but where the section which is moved further down in Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng comes to an end, the language does not seem to run *entirely* smoothly into the passage following.[12] However, where Sde dge and Mtshams brag/

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[10] Here, I am using Sde dge to illustrate the ordering found also in this case in Gting skyes, Rig 'dzin and Nubri.

[11] We have (underlining marking where the jump is made in Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng) D49r.6-7: *srin mo kro dhī shwa rī nyid ni / 'khor ba smin pa'i dung phor du / nyon mongs pa smin pa'i chang gis bkang ste / longs spyod cing gnas pa las / 'jigs byed kyi rgyal po dpal kī la yas // srin po'i gzugs su sprul nas /* e ma ho // bdag gi gtso bo ni phyin to zhes te / *bam chen gyis khri las bab ste / rje la dung phor gyi mtsho zhal du bstabs pas / kī la yas rol to /*

[12] D50r.3-4: *yab lha'i sprul pa de la / yum gyi sprul pa bstan pa'i tshul du / srin mo kro dhī bshwa rīr gyur bas/ mtshan yang rdo rje srin mo* zhes bya bar gsol to *// de nas srin pos kyang rang gi sems bltas nas // nga rgyal gyi dka' thub skyes nas / srin po bskul ba byas te /*

Sgang steng join up and run parallel again to the end of the chapter, the Sde dge version appears to make good sense.[13]

In terms of the language, there does not appear to be any particular problems where Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng first depart from Sde dge,[14] and the same applies to the places where Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng begin the passage which is higher up in Sde dge,[15] and where the passage ends and Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng join Sde dge for the end of the chapter.[16]

Nonetheless, a closer examination of the chapter as a whole does seem to indicate that the Sde dge/ Gting skyes/ Rig 'dzin/ Nubri version in this case fits together more naturally, and that the Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng version has problems of coherency. In the first part of the account, the King of Vajra Horses emanates to Rudra's realm and begins the transformation process, generating pig- and tiger-headed sons. Then Kīlaya emanates in Rudra's form to meet Rudra's consort, Krodheśvarī. At this point the versions diverge. In Sde dge, it seems that Krodheśvarī[17] makes offerings to and unites with Kīlaya, believing him to be her lord, and she is impregnated by Kīlaya. When Rudra returns, he finds a changed environment, with pig- and tiger-headed ones in the retinue. Then Kīlayzm Krodheśvarī, appearing as Rudra, in a form with 9 heads and 18 arms. Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng, having omitted the section above, re-join Sde dge and the other editions at this juncture. The furious Rudra invokes the sound 'ru lu ru lu' and takes a

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[13] D50v.6-7: *de nas cung zad cig nas bcom ldan 'das kyis snam du bton pa las / shin tu mi dga' ba'i gdung ba skyes nas dus te <u>zhus pa</u> / e ma ho dpa' bo thugs rje chung // shin tu bde ba'i gnas shig nas // snam du bton pa thugs rje chung /*

[14] M120v.1-2: *'jigs byed dpal kī lā yas / srin po'i gzugs su sprul nas <u>byon / bya bar gsol to</u> // de nas srin pos kyang rang gi sems ltas nas // nga rgyal gyi dka' thub skyes nas/ srin pos bskul ba byas te /*

[15] M121v.3-4: *bcom ldan 'das kyi snams su ru dra bsdan pa las / shin tu mi dga' ba'i <u>sa la / e ma ho bdag gi gtso bo ni byon to</u> zhes te / bam chen po'i khri las babs te / rje la dung phor gyi mtsho zhal bstabs pas / ki la yas rol to /*

[16] M122v.4-5: */ yab lha'i sprul pa sten pa'i tshul du / ma mo kro ti sho rir gyur pas / mtshan yang rdo rje srin mo zhes gdung ba skyes nas bsdus te zhus pa / e ma ho dpa' bo thugs rje chung /*

[17] It is not entirely clear that the subject is Krodheśvarī, although this might seem implied by the context. It is also suggested by a similar account in the *'Bum nag* (Boord 2002: 132; Gonpo Tseten edn. 29-30; Bdud 'joms bka' ma edn. 255-56). Since the *'Bum nag* account is prefaced by an explicit quotation from our *Myang 'das*, which cites the section opening our Chapter 4 (Boord 2002: 131; Gonpo Tseten edn. 28; Bdud 'joms bka' ma edn. 253), we can be fairly confident that the two stories are likely at least to be related, even though they also seem to have marked differences.

3 headed, 6 armed form. From Kīlaya with 9 heads and 18 arms, 3 headed, 6 armed wrathful ones come forth, wrapping the ru lu ru lu with oṃ and hūṃ, and weakening Rudra's speech. Rudra responds by taking a 9 headed and 18 armed form, and again further emanations follow, each time with Kīlaya appropriating Rudra's forms and speech, until finally Rudra attempts to escape, but Kīlaya forces him to recognise his former *samaya*. This is the point where Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng insert the omitted section above, after which the two versions conclude together with the description of the place of Rudra and his retinue in the maṇḍala.

Now, while the Sde dge/ Southern Central group version as presented above seems to have a fairly clear story line, the Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng version is more problematic: it gives the emanation of Kīlaya with 9 heads and 18 arms *after* the arising of 3 headed, 6 armed wrathful ones from the 9 headed, 18 armed form. In Sde dge, Kīlaya's invocation of Rudra's former samaya is followed very naturally by a description of Rudra's integration into the maṇḍala. On the other hand, in Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng, the apparent victory is followed at first by offerings to Kīlaya (in this version, it would seem that these are made by Rudra), and then by further episodes in which Kīlaya unites with and impregnates the consort, Rudra discovers the pig and tiger headed ones and questions the consort, and Kīlaya is born. Since this is religious mythology with symbolic connotations, repetition of themes is not necessarily unexpected, and some sense can be made of the Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng account. Yet it would certainly seem that the Sde dge/ Southern Central group version is rather more coherent and straightforward, and my present hypothesis is that it was an exemplar or ancestor of the Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng editions which misplaced a folio at this place.

IV. THE SECOND DISCREPANCY IN THE TEXT ORDER

In examining the ordering in Chapters 17 to 19 to assess the second displacement of text outlined in the Appendix, we find that certainty is even more elusive. Both the versions in the Southern Central group on one hand and the Sde dge and Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng editions on the other can make reasonable sense; neither *entirely* fail to be coherent when we jump passages. In terms of content, Chapters 17 to 19

range backwards and forwards between the two themes of the ultimate
nature of the enlightened mind revealed by the teaching, and wrathful
activities for subduing negativities and transforming them into the
enlightened vision. Thus, in this case, there is no sequential story-line
which can be used to judge the coherency of the alternative versions,
and ascertaining which version is incorrect is not in the least straight-
forward.

In the Sde dge/ Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng editions, in the first two
places marking the change in content (D66v.3 and D68r.5),[18] the text
appears to flow without any apparent problem although there is not a
strikingly obvious flow of ideas in the few lines concerned.[19] The final
passage (D70r.1),[20] however, runs very smoothly with a clear connec-
tion in the content. In the Gting skyes edition, the text marking the first
place where the ordering changes from that in Sde dge [moving from
Block D to F] (T171v.2)[21] does not appear problematic, although in the
second instance [where it moves from Block F to E] (T173v.6),[22] nei-
ther the text nor the ideas it expresses appear to flow smoothly, but
nonetheless, they do not represent total incoherencies. The third pas-
sage affected [the end of Block E and the beginning of G] (T176r.2)[23]
seems to make fairly good sense in its *immediate* context—the lan-

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[18] I use Sde dge to illustrate the ordering it shares in these cases with the Bhutanese
editions, and Gting skyes as representative of the Southern Central group as a whole.

[19] D66v.3-4 (underlining marks where the transition occurs): */ drag po gtum po
bsgrub pa ni // gnod gdug rnam gnyis bsgral ba'i phyir // gzhung dang mthun pa'i gnas
dag tu // phun sum tshogs pa'i slob dpon gyis // byams dang snying rje sngon btang nas
// srid pa'i phur bu bsgrub par bya'o /* D68r.5-6: */ nyes byed gsum gyi khams bsreg nas
// ye shes 'bar ba'i phrin las bskul // khams gsum dus gcig dbang bskur bas // rang
byung sku ru rnam dag cing /*

[20] D69v.7-70r.1: */ hūṃ chen sgra 'byin phag dang smig bur bcas // rnam rgyal
snyems ma stag dang bya rgod mgo // dbyug sngon sber mo g.yag dang bya rog bcas
// gshin rje dur khrod sha ba 'ug par bcas // mi g.yo gtun khung gzig dang khwa ta'i
mgo /* [...and so on through the list of the *khro bo bcu*.]

[21] T171v.2: */ drag po gtum po bsgrub pa ni // gnod gdug rnam gnyis bsgral bas
phyir // ye shes 'bar ba'i 'phrin las bsgul //*

[22] T173v.6-7: */ hūṃ chen sgra 'byin phag dang dmigs par bcas // gzhung dang 'thun
pa'i gnas dag tu // phun sum tshogs pa'i slob dpon gyis // byams dang snying rje sngon
btang nas // srid pa'i phur bu bsgrub par bya'o /*

[23] T176r.1-4: */ nyes byed gsum gyi khams bsregs nas // rnam rgyal bsnyems ma stag
dang bya dgod bcas // g.yug sngon sder mo g.yag dang bya rog bcas // gshin rje dur
khrod sha ba 'ub par bcas // mi g.yo tun khung gzig dang khwa ru bcas // rta mgrin
gtum mo byi la pu shud bcas // gzhan gyis mi thub 'da' snyems spyang khu khra mgo
bcas // bdud rtsi rlung 'byin seng ge phang bang bcas // khams gsum gsod byed dred
dang sre mo bcas // ma hā pa la skyod ma dom dang byi ba bcas // nyes byed ma lus
mkha' la 'don /*

guage follows smoothly and there is some repetition of the theme of overcoming wicked deeds (*nyes byed*).

Nonetheless, while the ordering in both versions can make sense, the Sde dge/ Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng ordering does seem clearer. In particular, the final place where Sde dge (D70r.1) moves from Gting skyes's 173v.6 to its 176r.2 [from Block F to G], the ordering seems much more natural in Sde dge, because we have the list of the *khro bo bcu*, their consorts and emanations. In the Southern Central group, the list is broken after the first of the *khro bo bcu* given (T173v), and resumed with the second and subsequent deities on T176r. It seems most unlikely that this would have been intended. Secondly, although the three chapters cannot be definitely distinguished from each other in terms of subject matter, the opening phrases introducing the content of Ch. 18[24] and Ch. 19[25] in Sde dge/ Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng seem to fit neatly with their chapter titles, which concern 'Phur bu bodhicitta' and the activities of messengers respectively.[26] This is not the case in the Southern Central group editions, where the opening of ch.19[27] would seem to fit more naturally with their title for ch.17,[28] and the opening of ch.18[29] seems close to their title for ch.19.[30] This is most striking in the case of Ch.19, where although (as noted above) the lines where we have the 'jump' in content (T176r.2) seem to flow on without problem, the wider context of the chapter as a whole does not cohere very well, beginning with the nature and features of the bodhicitta phur bu and concluding with the theme of the messengers and their activities.

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[24] D67v.3-4: *// de nas yang kī la yas / lta ba byang chub sems kyi chos nyid // byang chub sems kyi phur bu mya ngan las 'das shing / rang bzhin byang chub sems su bsgrub par bya ba'i phyir / 'di skad brjod do /*

[25] D69v.5: *// de nas badzra kī la yas bsgrub pa'i don yod par bya ba'i phyir // mngags pa las kyi pho nya 'di dag gsungs so /*

[26] D69v.4-5: */ phur bu byang chub sems su bsgrub pa'i le'u ste bco brgyad pa'o //*
D72v.1: */ pho nyas rnam shes ye shes su sbyongs shing / mngags par bya ba'i thabs bstan pa'i le'u ste bcu dgu pa'o //*

[27] T175r.4-5: *// de nas yang kī lā yas / lta ba byang chub sems kyi chos nyid / byang chub sems kyi phur bu mya ngan las 'das shing / rang bzhin byang chub sems su bsgrub par bya ba'i phyir / 'di skad brjod do /*

[28] T173v.2: */ phur bu byang chub sems su sgrub pa'i le'u ste bcu bdun pa'o //*

[29] T173v.2-3: *// de nas yang badzra ki la yas / grub pa'i don yod par bya ba'i phyir // mngag pa las kyi pho nya 'di dag gsungs so /*

[30] T177r.4-5: */ pho nyas rnam shes ye shes su sbyangs zhing mngag par bya ba'i thabs bstan pa'i le'u ste bcu dgu pa'o //*

V. THE THIRD AND FOURTH DISCREPANCIES IN THE TEXT ORDER

A similar picture emerges when we examine the more complex shifting of passages found in Chapters 19, 23 and in the case of Sde dge and the Bhutanese editions, Chapters 24 and 25. In Chapter 19, not only do we have the different openings mentioned above, but a long passage further down in the Sde dge/ Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng editions of this chapter is omitted in Gting skyes[31] and inserted below in its Ch. 23. Where this passage begins in Sde dge's Chapter 19 [with Block H],[32] the Tibetan does not seem to follow in a strikingly obvious way, but there is some continuity of content across the opening of the chapter and the passage omitted in Gting skyes, since we find similar description of ritual activities in both. A more convincing piece of evidence suggesting that the ordering is correct is that where the passage ends [at the end of Block H and beginning of I], it fits well with the final section of the chapter.[33] Furthermore, as noted above in discussing the earlier movement of text, the subject matter of the chapter coheres as a whole. On the other hand, where Gting skyes jumps in omitting the passage [moving from Block G to I], the Tibetan does not seem very coherent at all, and we seem also to have 'jumped' in topic.[34]

Gting skyes's[35] inclusion of the passage in Ch.23 seems to provide further evidence that it does indeed belong to Ch.19. Again, matters are not altogether clear where the insertion begins [at the end of Block I and beginning of H], since we have a mantra which seems to fit, begin-

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[31] Again, I take Gting skyes as representative of the Southern Central group witnesses, and Sde dge as illustrative of the ordering which it shares with our Bhutanese manuscript editions, Mtshams brag and Sgang steng.

[32] D70v.4-5: / hūṃ // lcags kyi gze ma mgo dgu pa // mgo dgu rkang gsum stong gsum gang // shin tu mi bzad 'jigs su rung // 'khrugs byed 'bar ba'i nga ro sgrogs // zhal mdog gcig tu ma nges te // khro rgyal 'jigs byed hūṃ sgra can // phyag mtshan 'jigs pa'i char phab nas // ha la phaṭ kyi sgra 'byin cing /

[33] D72r.6-72v.1: / phyogs ris sa mtshams dbyings su dag pho nya mang pos stong gsum bkang // ma spros sems su ye nas dag / 'gugs byed mang po gcig tu dril // 'gyur med dbyings kyi ngang du 'dres // zhes brjod pas // pho nya'i tshogs de dag mya ngan las 'das pa'i ngang du // ye nas gnas pa'i don de bzhin du mya ngan las 'das so /

[34] T177r.2-4: / hūṃ lcags kyi bze ma mgo dgu po // mgo dgu rkang gsum stong gsum gang // shin du mi bzang 'jigs su rung // 'khrugs byed 'bar ba'i nga ro sgrogs // zhal 'dog cig du ma des te // 'gyur med dbyings kyi ngang du dril // ces brjod pas / pho nya'i tshogs de dag mya ngan las 'das pa'i ngang du ye nas yin pa'i don de bzhin du mya ngan las 'daso /

[35] As above, the comments here on Gting skyes apply to the Rig 'dzin and Nubri editions also.

ning and ending each side of the changeover.[36] However, it is not at all clear that the following section with its ritual description makes good sense in the context of this chapter, and at the end of the passage [moving from Block H to K], the lines immediately after it do not appear to follow, nor do they make any clear sense.[37]

In place of this passage [Block H] which appears likely to have been erroneously moved from Chapter 19 to 23 in Gting skyes, Sde dge[38] inserts text altogether missing in Gting skyes [Block J]. This amounts only to about a single folio in length, but it includes two chapter titles and this accounts for the discrepancy between the Southern Central group's twenty-six chapters and Sde dge/Mtshams brag/Sgang steng's twenty-eight. The title given for Chapter 23 in Gting skyes[39] corresponds to Sde dge's Chapter 25 title, occuring after the extra text. Now, in Gting skyes, the subject matter of the opening and the close of this Chapter 23 together with its title do not seem to coincide closely.[40] On the other hand, the title fits exactly with the opening lines of Sde dge's Ch. 25.[41] On examining the place where the extra text begins in Chapter 23, the language seems to flow smoothly: it is a section of mantras which follows seemingly quite logically from the beginning of the chapter.[42] While it is not totally obvious that Chapter 23 coheres well as a whole—for instance, we do not on this occasion have an exact match of topic mentioned at the outset and in the title—it is certainly the case

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[36] *T187r.5-6: / sngon chad ji 'zhin dam bcas bzhin // mngon spyod 'phrin las myur du mdzod // ghri na ghri na <u>hūṃ phaṭ / ban dha ban dha hūṃ phaṭ</u> / khro rgyal 'jigs byed hūṃ sgra can // phyag mtshan 'jigs pa'i char phab nas // ha la phaṭ kyis sgra 'byin cing // khams su gdug pa ma lus sreg /*

[37] *T189v.2-4: / phyogs ris sa 'tshams dbyings su dag / pho nya mang pos stong gsum bkang // ma spros sems su ye nas gang // 'gugs byed mang pos cig <u>tu dril</u> // <u>phaṭ gis</u> gtor la hūṃ gis bsdu // bdag po de'i 'od dus pas // mthu dang rdzu 'phrul ldan pas thams // thabs kyi 'phro 'du mang po las // bdag la thabs kyi rgyud yod pas // de'i mthu dang rdzu 'phrul rnams // ston mi nus par dgos pa'o /*

[38] Again, Mtshams brag and Sgang steng's ordering here is exactly the same as that in Sde dge.

[39] *T189v.5: / mthu dang rdzu 'phrul phyis mi nus par bya ba'i le'u ste nyi shu rtsa gsum pa'o //*

[40] The chapter opens T186r.6-186v.1: *de nas kī lā yas drag po'i sngags dang khro tshogs kyis phur pas gdab cing bsgral ba'i phyir / sdang ba zhe la bzhag rjes nyon mongs pa'i zhe sdang ting nas g.yos nas / shin du gdug pa'i nga ro dang gang sgras drag po'i 'phrin las kyi tum tshig tu 'di skad brjod do //*

[41] *D80r.5: // de nas yang kī lā yas / de'i mthu dang rdzu 'phrul mi 'byung bar bya ba'i phyir 'di skad brjod do /*

[42] *D79v.4-5: / mngon spyod phrin las myur du mdzod // ghṛhṇa <u>ghṛhṇa badzra</u> / <u>bhandha bhandha badzra</u> / ma tha ma tha badzra / ha na ha na badzra / dzwa la dzwa la*

that the section following the mantras in Sde dge seems to fit much more readily than the alternative passage given in Gting skyes at this point (see above).

We can reach no firm conclusions concerning the placement of the text constituting Sde dge/ Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng's Chapter 24 since it is not found in the Southern Central group editions. Yet, while its inclusion might not seem entirely necessary to the text as a whole, its theme of ritually slicing up the remains of the negative forces whose consciousnesses have been killed/ liberated in the previous chapter would certainly seem appropriate here.

Finally, Sde dge/ Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng's Chapter 25 not only coheres well as a chapter with a single topic as mentioned above, but where the extra text finishes and we begin to again run parallel with Gting skyes, the two parts of the verse fit together well,[43] unlike the situation where this chapter end in Gting skyes was seemingly inappropriately attached to the earlier text in Chapter 23 (see above).

VI. Concluding Reflections

Examining this evidence has therefore convinced me that we are faced with a situation in which an ancestor of the Southern Central editions had displaced a few folios from Chapters 17 to 19 and 23 to 25, losing one entirely, while an ancestor of the Bhutanese editions had displaced one folio in Chapter 4. Only Sde dge appears to have all its folios in accordance with the 'correct' earlier ordering of the text. There are two possible explanations for this. The first, perhaps most likely explanation, is that the exemplars used by Sde dge did not share the muddles which our other now extant editions all have. The second is that one or more of Sde dge's exemplars *did* share some folio misplacement(s), but that the learned editors of Sde dge sorted out and corrected the errors. We are not at this stage in a position to choose between these two possibilities.[44] In either case, the investigation would seem to confirm the

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badzra / ma ra pra ma rda na ye hūṃ phaṭ / pa ra bidya na mu ru mu ru hūṃ phaṭ / ghṛhṇā pā ya ghṛhṇā pā ya hūṃ phaṭ / su ru su ru badzra / bhindha bhindha badzra / pa tsa pa tsa badzra / rim gyis 'jug la de bzhin te // gnyis med mkha' la bsgral ba yin /

[43] *D80v.1: de yi 'od zer bsam yas pas // de yi mthu dang rdzu 'phrul* rnams // phaṭ kyis gtor la hūṃ gis bsdus /

[44] This may change if further surviving *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum* editions come to light in Tibet, and we are able to form a clearer idea of the exemplars which Sde dge relied upon.

reliability of the Sde dge edition which Tibetan scholars have ascribed to it.[45] Equally, it might suggest that—at least in the case of this text, which admittedly seems to be more muddled in its ordering than many *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum* texts— the editors of the other extant editions are unlikely to have had a range of exemplars at their disposal when making their editions. Had they done so, they could hardly have missed the discrepancies in the ordering. Indeed, it seems likely that an editor of the ancestor of the Southern Central group did notice the problem with chapter numbering and emended it to make the text internally consistent.[46] Had such an editor had alternative editions available, he would surely have consulted them and discovered the fate of the missing and mis-ordered chapter titles. This is a sobering reflection on the state of the *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum* heritage today, when we remember, as Thub bstan chos dar (2000: 4-16) informs us (see also Robert Mayer's article in this volume), that historically, several of the various major new editions of the *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum* were said to have consulted a number of renowned previous editions.

There is also a puzzle concerning the additional postscript and colophon at the end of the text in the Southern Central group witnesses, which is missing in both Sde dge and our Bhutanese editions. It is possible that it was once shared by an ancestor of all our editions, and lost by an ancestor of Sde dge, Mtshams brag and Sgang steng. It is also conceivable that it may be a clue indicating that we might in fact be dealing with different recensions of the text, and that the ancestors of Sde dge, Mtshams brag and Sgang steng never had this postscript and colophon. However, it does not appear to be entirely consistent with the colophon shared by all the editions, which is at the end of the final chapter, so it might have been appended erroneously by an ancestor of the Southern Central editions. Until we have progressed further in our text critical work, a judgement on this would seem premature. Yet while the exact relationships between the editions is not entirely certain, we can at least have confidence that the extant *Myang 'das* versions can be

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[45] Of course, although the Sde dge edition may represent the most readable and carefully edited edition, this is not to say that it is in itself an adequate source for studying *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum* traditions. It too has its errors, even if they may not often be on the kind of scale of folio movements which I discuss in this paper, and clearly, only a study of multiple editions can shed light on historical developments from earlier editions. Indeed, Sde dge's active editorial interventions might, in some cases, have obscured rather than recovered earlier readings.

[46] See note 5 above.

divided into three groupings which correspond to geographical regions, that is, the Sde dge, the Southern Central and the Bhutanese editions.

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[47] Note that we find corrections in red ink through much of the text of the *Myang 'das* in this edition. I have used the sigla Rc to refer to such corrected words in the Rig 'dzin edition.

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APPENDIX

MYANG NGAN LAS 'DAS PA'I RGYUD CHEN PO

A COMPARISON OF THE ORDERING OF CONTENTS FOUND IN THE SDE DGE, MTSHAMS BRAG/ SGANG STENG, AND GTING SKYES/ RIG 'DZIN/ NUBRI *RNYING MA'I RGYUD 'BUM* EDITIONS

Discursive summary

there are three sequences, one of which is represented by gTing skyes, Rig 'dzin and Nubri (which are often also quite close from a text critical viewpoint), one which is represented by the mTshams brag and sGang steng, which are from Bhutan and virtually identical twins genetically, and one by the sDe dge xylograph edition alone. Most of the sDe dge's overall structure is exactly the same as mTshams brag and sGang stend but it agrees with gTing skyes, Rig 'dzin and Nubri in the

first of the placements of text outlined below. (Apart from its distinc-
tiveness from all the other editions, Sde dge's genetic relationships with
the other two major groupings is not yet entirely clear.) The following
comparison, phrased in terms of text 'moving' up or down, is purely
descriptive of the ordering in different editions. It is not intended to
imply that Sde dge's ordering, against which the other editions are com-
pared, must necessarily represent a 'correct' standard. Nonetheless, for
ease of reference, I have divided the passages into 'text blocks,' which
I have labelled in accordance with the sequence found in Sde dge,
which I believe most likely to be 'correct' (i.e., reflecting an earlier
order), apart from the final Block L which is missing in Sde dge
(although this is not necessarily an 'error' of Sde dge).

1st difference: about one folio of text corresponding with Sde dge
49r.7-50r.3 [Block B], is moved down in Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng,
and inserted between the yig rkang which we find in Sde dge's 50v.6.
Gting skyes, Rig 'dzin and Nubri follow Sde dge in this difference.

2nd difference: about two folios of text corresponding with Sde dge
68r.5-70r.1 [Block F], including Sde dge's ch. 18 title, are moved up in
Gting skyes/Rig 'dzin/Nubri, and inserted between the *yig rkang* which
we find in Sde dge's 66v.3.
Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng follow Sde dge in this difference.

3rd difference: about two and a half folios of text corresponding with
Sde dge 70v.5-72r.7 in [Block H] are moved down in Gting skyes/ Rig
'dzin/ Nubri (187r-189v), inserted before the text commencing at Sde
dge's 79v.4.
Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng follow Sde dge in this difference.

4th difference: Gting skyes/ Rig 'dzin/Nubri omit about one folio of
text found in Sde dge/ Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng [Block J], including
two chapter headings. This additional text is found in Sde dge 79v.4-
80v.1, at exactly the place where Gting skyes/ Rig 'dzin/ Nubri give pas-
sage three [Block H], which is found higher up in Sde dge/ Mtshams
brag/ Sgang steng.

5th difference: Gting skyes, Rig 'dzin and Nubri share about one
side of extra postscripts and colophons at the end of the text [Block L],
which is omitted in Sde dge, Mtshams brag and Sgang steng.

In terms of the ordering of text blocks, the different editions are ordered
as follows:

Sde dge: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K
Mtshams brag:) A, C, B, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K
Sgang steng:)
Gting skyes:)
Nubri:) A, B, C, D, F, E, G, I, H, K, L
Rig 'dzin:)

In terms of chapter title and content differences,
(1) The first movement [ordering of Blocks B and C] does not make any difference to the chapters - the section is moved within chapter 4.
(2) The chapter titles run parallel up to and including ch. 16 (D: 66v.2; T: 171r.7). Then the second text block corresponding with Sde dge's 68r.5-70r.1 [Block F] (including ch. 18 title, */ phur bu byang chub sems su bsgrub pa'i le'u ste bco brgyad pa'o //* D: 69v.4-5) moves up in Gting skyes/ Rig 'dzin/ Nubri, above Sde dge/ Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng's ch. 17 title (given in D: *phur bu mya ngan las 'das pa'i rgyud chen po las / khro bo gsang ba nye bar bsgrub pa'i le'u ste bcu bdun pa'o //* 67v.3). Thus, we find that Gting skyes/ Rig 'dzin/ Nubri's ch. 17 and 18 titles correspond to those in Sde dge/ Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng but are placed and numbered in reverse order (T: */ phur bu byang chub sems su sgrub pa'i le'u ste bcu bdun pa'o //*
173v.2; */ khro bo gsang ba nye bar bsgrub pa'i le'u ste bcwo brgyad pa'o //* 175r.3-4).
3) No chapter titles occur in the third passage [Block H], which is moved down, although this section which is within Gting skyes/ Rig 'dzin/ Nubri's ch. 23 (T: */ mthu dang rdzu 'phrul phyis mi nus par bya ba'i le'u ste nyi shu rtsa gsum pa'o //* 189v.5), is found within the earlier Chapter 19 in Sde dge/ Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng. Thus, Gting skyes/ Rig 'dzin/ Nubri's ch. 19 only runs from Gting skyes 175r to 177r, while Sde dge's ch. 19 runs from its 69v to 72v.
(4) Chapters 20 to 22 run parallel. Then after the shared opening to ch.23, Sde dge/ Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng include extra text not found in Gting skyes/ Rig 'dzin/ Nubri [Block J], but lose much of the text in Gting skyes/ Rig 'dzin/ Nubri's ch. 23 which is found higher up. The additional text includes two extra chapter titles, Sde dge/ Mtshams brag/ Sgang steng's ch. titles 23 and 24. Finally, their ch. 25 title occurs just after they resume parallelling Gting skyes/ Rig 'dzin/ Nubri, and it corresponds to Gting skyes/ Rig 'dzin/ Nubri's ch. 23 title. The follow-

ing chapters correspond, but Sde dge/Mtshams brag/Sgang steng's numbering continues to run ahead. Thus, Gting skyes, Rig 'dzin and Nubri end with ch.26, and Sde dge, Mtshams brag and Sgang steng end with ch.28.

TABLE

Text Blocks	Sde dge volume Zha	Mtshams brag Volume Chi	Sgang steng volume Chi	Gting skyes Volume Sa	Rig 'dzin Volume Sa	Nubri Volume Sha
Block A	46r line 1	115r(229) line 5	102v line 5	141v (282) line 1	113v line 1	44r (title page)
	up to 49r line 7	up to 120v (240) line 1	up to 107v line 1	up to 147r (293) line 5	up to 118r line 1	up to 50r line 2
Block B	from 49r line 7	from 121v (242) line 4	from 108v line 2	from 147r (293) line 5	from 118r line 1	from 50r line 2
	up to 50r line 3	up to 122v (244) line 5	up to 109v line 1	up to 148r (295) line 5	up to 118v line 7	up to 51r line 2
Block C	from 50r line 3	up to 120v (240) line 1	from 107v line 1	from 148r (295) line 5	up to 118v line 7	up to 51r line 3
	up to 50v line 6	up to 121v (242) line 4	up to 108v line 2	up to 149r (297) line 6	up to 119v line 5	up to 52r line 3
Block D	from 50v line 6	from 122v (244) line 5	from 109v line 1	from 149r (297) line 6	from 119v line 5	from 52r line 3
	up to 66v line 3	up to 147r (294) line 1	up to 131r line 7	up to 171v (342) line 2	up to 138v line 3	up to 75r line 2
Block E	from 66v line 3	from 147r (293) line 1	from 131r line 7	from 173v (346) line 6	from 140v line 3	from 77v line 2
	up to 68v line 5	up to 149v (298)line 1	up to 133v line 3	up to 176r (351) line 2	up to 142v line 2	up to 80r line 1
Block F	from 68r line 5	from 149v (298) line 1	from 133v line 3	from 171v (342)line 2	from 138v line 3	from 75r line 2
	up to 70r line 1	up to 152r (303) line 2	up to 136r line 2	up to 173v (346) line 6	up to 140v line 3	up to 77v line 2

Text Blocks	Sde dge volume Zha	Mtshams brag Volume Chi	Sgang steng volume Chi	Gting skyes Volume Sa	Rig 'dzin Volume Sa	Nubri Volume Sha
Block G	from 70r line 1	fron 152r (303) line 3	from 136r line 2	from 176r (351) line 2	from 142v line 2	from 80r line 1
	up to 70v line 5	up to 153r (305) line 7	up to 137r line 4	up to 177r (353) line 3	up to 143v line 2	up to 81r line 3
Block H	from 70v line 5	from 153r (305) line 7	from 137r line 4	from 187r (373) line 5	from 151r line 5	from 91v line 3
	up to 72r line 7	from 155v (310) line 6	up to 139v line 2	up to 189v (378) line 3	up to 153r line 5	up to 93v line 6
Block I	from 72r line 7	from 155v (310) line 6	from 139v line 2	from 177r (353) line 3	from 143v line 2	from 81r line 4
	up to 79v line 4	up to 166v (332) line 5	up to 149v line 6	up to 187r (373) line 5	up to 151r line 5	up to 91v line 3
Block J	79v line 4-80v line 1	166v (332) line 5-167v (334) line 7	149v line 6-150v line 7	Not found in Gting skyes	Not found Rig 'dzin	Not found in Nubri
Block K	from 80v line 1	from 167v (334)line 7	from 150v line 7	from 189v (378) line 3	from 153r line 5	from 93v line 6
	to 82r line 5	to 170v (340) line 3	to 153r line 7	to 191v line 7	to 155r line 7	to 96r line 6
Block L	Not found Sde dge	Not found in Mtshams Brag	Not found in Sgang steng	192r line 1-192r line 7	155r line 7-155v line 6	96v line 1-96v line 6

TEXTUAL CRITICISM OF THE *RNYING MA'I RGYUD 'BUM* TRADITION

Robert Mayer (Oxford, UK)

Anyone who has looked at Cathy Cantwell's paper presented in this volume will be aware of the importance of critically editing *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum* (henceforth NGB) texts. Cantwell's paper shows how one of the widely quoted and more famous NGB texts, the *Phur bu mya ngan las 'das pa*, differs remarkably between its different editions. This is quite typical: our surviving NGB tradition is often highly variable. Just as we find with the *Phur bu mya ngan las 'das pa*, different editions of the same text can quite often have differing chapter arrangements and differing numbers of chapters, different colophons, even quite different passages of text. More rarely, we also find two versions of the same text (or very nearly the same text) within the same NGB edition. In addition, all NGB texts have numerous smaller textual variants of every kind. An average from collating two fairly typical Mahāyoga Tantras from the six available editions found in the NGB (ignoring such accidentals as punctuation) yielded one variant every six or seven syllables. If we include punctuation, we get an average of one variant every three or four syllables.[1] Collating additional editions of these two texts would inevitably yield yet more variants. In short, not only are all original NGB documents long lost to us, but the surviving copies differ from one another. The outcome of this is that the extant NGB tradition is frequently unreadable through textual corruption, which takes many forms: the longer lacunae, interpolations, displaced passages and displaced folia affecting long passages such as Cantwell describes, as well as all the usual briefer, more routine scribal errors of orthography, dittography, haplography, and so on. Eyeskip and the con-

[1] Although we take words as more primary than syllables in editing, our software made a count by syllables much easier to achieve; I leave it to the reader to estimate an equivalent statistics in words.

fusion of homophones are probably the two greatest causes of error. The notorious technical obscurity of much NGB subject matter has also contributed to scribal difficulties, so that the density of errors and variants typically rises in direct proportion to the conceptual difficulty of a passage. The sad situation we find ourselves in today is that a great many NGB text versions have substantial portions incomprehensible even to the most learned Tibetan lamas of the particular traditions concerned.

Traditionally, in actual social usage, NGB collections have mainly been understood as concrete repositories of Dharma to rest on a shrine, or as potent sources of blessing for conferring of *lung* by a mechanical reading aloud. This is their main use, and they have not generally been understood as texts for systematic analytic study, so their comprehensibility or incomprehensibility has not been a life or death issue to the tradition, whose true scholarly base draws instead on the parallel commentarial tradition. This ritualistic usage is often seen as an ancient and widespread pattern in Buddhism, notably in Mahāyāna. Gregory Schopen and Paul Williams, for example, argue that early Mahāyāna comprised a collection of textual cults, each taking as their primary religious practice the reverential worship of a specific sūtra as sacred object and source of blessings (Schopen 1975; Williams 1989: 21-22). The pattern persists in contemporary Mahāyāna traditions like Nichiren Shoshu and related groups, where devotional worship of their scripture, the *Lotus Sūtra*, is far more primary than its study, and where direct study of the *Lotus Sūtra* is never contemplated except through the medium of Nichiren's commentaries.

Most Tibetan canonical corpora retain various features of ritual usage to some degree, but the NGB probably retains them more completely than most. This is partly because of the NGB's unusually esoteric nature as a collection comprising exclusively the tantric scriptures of Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga. This esotericism has also entailed that direct access to NGB texts has always been limited by stringent initiatory qualification. This is not unique to the Rnying ma pa of course: such initiatory secrecy is so important to Vajrayāna in general that ignoring it constitutes the seventh of the well-known Fourteen Common Tantric Root Downfalls. Nevertheless the upshot has been that extremely little of the NGB has ever been the subject of regular monastic classroom study and very few lamas (let alone the general public) ever read widely within it. The only exceptions are a tiny hand-

ful of texts that were for technical reasons somewhat less esoteric and widely recited by laity and clergy alike (such as the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*); a further tiny handful of important more esoteric initiatory texts like the main *Guhyagarbhatantra* or the *Kun byed rgyal po* were widely studied by closed groups of initiates. The fact that so very few of the approximately 1,000 NGB texts have their own commentaries graphically illustrates how seldom they were studied.[2]

It is only in the last few years that external pressures of globalisation and modernisation have begun the process of transforming notions of the NGB from a ritually-secret repository of spiritual blessing to a collection of texts for unrestricted analytic study and popular reading. Modern technologies of text reproduction and Western understandings of the nature and purpose of text have contributed a great deal to this process. With possibly the sole exception of Tarthang Tulku's deluxe new votive editions, recent NGB reproductions by modern technologies have generally been made by methods that implicitly suggest the collection as an intellectual rather than devotional item (sometimes, even when this was not intended).[3] It is unclear what the consequences of

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[2] It is important to realise how extremely few indeed among the approximately 1,000 NGB texts proper have their own individual commentaries: perhaps only three that could be considered genuinely widespread, i.e. the most famous of the many *Guhyagarbha* tantras, the *Mdo dgongs 'dus*, and the *Kun byed rgyal po* (including component parts of it that can stand on their own). Especially in monasteries that specialize in the Snying thig cycles, the Seventeen Tantras of the Rdzogs chen Esoteric Instruction Class (*Man ngag sde rgyud bcu bdun*) are also systematically studied. In addition, of course, there are another two texts placed in both the Kanjur and the NGB—the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* and the *Guhyasamāja*—which have copious commentarial literature in the Tenjur and elsewhere, but these are not specifically NGB texts. More recently, the new expanded *Rnying ma bka' ma* collections have turned out to contain commentaries on no less than six of the Yang gsang Rdzogs chen tantras. Commentaries on the other eleven have been lost, but seem to have existed at some stage. There are also a few tiny commentaries on some Sems sde texts, and some interlinear notes on Klong sde texts (Jean-Luc Achard, personal communication, 10 February 2004). However, the fact that the discovery of these commentaries came as something of a surprise merely underscores how rare it is for individual NGB texts to have their own commentary. The *Rgyud* section of the Kanjur bears some general resemblance: not very many of its texts were regularly studied in the classroom, although perhaps more than the NGB.

[3] An important (and in this case intended) development in this process is David Germano's visionary project at the University of Virginia to first critically edit—and eventually translate into English—the entire NGB into a new academically-oriented NGB Master Edition, to be made freely available to the world via the internet. The texts will also be marked up with xml tags to facilitate searching, a process which necessarily entails placing a new intellectual structuring onto the texts that follows a Western academic gaze. Germano has set out his goals as follows:

this progressive transformation will be, and it seems an interesting and important topic within the study of religion and the anthropology of literature, which I hope to return to elsewhere. But in this paper, I am more concerned with another facet of globalisation—the technicalities of editing NGB texts by modern Western methods.

In general, it seems incontrovertible that if we want to render the NGB texts fully readable—which I think is a goal broadly shared by

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"The initial aim is to index comprehensively each individual edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Nyingma* in SGML and XML, and create a master cross-referenced index. The second major goal is to create digital images of the original manuscripts along with electronic editions that can then be searched and reformatted using Unicode Tibetan script fonts. The third aim is to utilize these different electronic editions systematically to facilitate the creation of critical editions. This will allow scholars to determine the historical relationships between the various editions, and will yield valuable insight into their historical development. The fourth aim is to solicit translations of each text, which will eventually result in the entire collection being translated into modern European languages. Our long-term plan is that each text will have associated with it a research archive of translations, digitized images of the original manuscript, editions of the original Tibetan, analytical summaries, text critical analysis, relevant iconographic images, and so on. All of these materials will be interlinked via SGML/XML through the catalogues, so that a plurality of editions, research, and contextualizing information can be accessed through the catalogues of the texts" (Germano and Mayer 2000; for an earlier but identical statement of goals, see also Germano 1998).

By the time Germano's NGB Master Edition is completed, the NGB will have been transformed from a Tibetan ritual item closely guarded by initiatory secrecy, into a global academic and popular textual resource freely available to all: a shared part of the world cultural heritage. The mounting on the internet in a critically-edited and marked-up form, followed by the translation into English (if it happens as originally planned), will be of great significance, and I believe some of D.F. McKenzie's better known perspectives can usefully be adapted to analyse this important transformation. With most Tibetan monasteries now becoming internet-connected, even they will find it easier to consult an online edition in Tibetan Unicode than laboriously find, unwrap and search through cumbersome un-indexed traditional volumes. In this respect, it is conceivable that Germano's project might, with hindsight, transpire to have been the single most significant development in the NGB's long history. While such figures as Ratna Gling pa and 'Jigs med Gling pa merely influenced the readings of NGB texts and its doxographical compilation in some editions, Germano's project will accomplish not only these tasks, but also the transformation of the NGB's predominant mode of consumption from the ritual to the textual, from an initiatory-controlled source of blessings to an unrestricted global world heritage internet text resource for academic exploitation, religious instruction and public browsing alike. To some degree, 'ownership' of the NGB will shift from an informal network of leading Tibetan monasteries to a secular American university, largely by virtue of the latter's superior abilities to exploit the new technologies of text. I should add, my concerns about the as yet largely unanalysed possible unintended consequences of such a large scale transformation have caused me to begin a reconsideration of my active involvement, hopefully only until these issues are adequately resolved.

Tibetan lamas and modern scholars alike (even if there might be sharp differences regarding preferred modes of publication and usage)—we usually need to edit them first. That is not to say that Tibetan scholars did not themselves engage in editorial activity: on the contrary, we know from both historical and text-critical evidence that Tibetan scholars did apply highly erudite and sophisticated editorial methods. Nor are we saying that Tibetan scribes were terrible: there are whole chapters where even the most careful collation can find hardly any differences between some editions, irrefutable evidence that Tibetan scribes could be wonderfully accurate. Nevertheless, the NGB has fared little better than most other manuscript traditions of nearly 1,000 years duration, and is probably in as much need of editing as any Western tradition of such antiquity. And it is my belief that modern Western editing has a lot to offer NGB scholarship that traditional editing techniques can not—ultimately for the simple reason that traditional methods of transport and of text reproduction did not permit the gathering together of a great many NGB editions into one place for a single team of editors to consult. Hence no traditional editors could ever engage in the fully representative collation which is generally seen to be the indispensable foundation of any adequate textual criticism. This had the further consequence that sophisticated techniques based on exhaustive collation never developed. But undoubtedly, many lama editors of the past would have rejoiced at bringing all major extant NGB editions together to assist their work; unfortunately, the possibility was not available to them.

Modern Western textual criticism has evolved over many centuries of intensive practice and methodological debate into a highly sophisticated and varied discipline with numerous brilliant exponents. Western textual criticism co-exists with a group of related textual disciplines, such as palæography and the various kinds of bibliography, each with its own highly developed methods and rich literature. Major Western texts are usually critically edited several times over, typically in various different ways, and even minor texts receive detailed text-critical attention. Cathy Cantwell and I are currently examining the most appropriate methods of modern textual criticism for NGB texts. Inevitably we find that some of the modern techniques have little to offer the NGB, all the more so since leadership in textual scholarship has since the mid-20th century moved away from Classical and Biblical studies, into the field of Renaissance and later literature in English, most of which

has little in common with NGB studies.[4] In addition, we are constantly reminded of what E. J. Kenney (1974: 98) has called "the only completely and universally valid principle of textual criticism ever formulated"—i.e., A.L. von Schlözer's dictum, so powerfully amplified at a later date by Pasquali, that "there is something in criticism which cannot be subjected to rule, because there is a sense in which every case is a special case". In looking at NGB texts, we are constantly reminded that no single method can ever be applied successfully across the whole collection, nor even across a single text: every text and every problem within every text can be unique and must be approached on its own terms, beyond any simple recourse to method. As West points out, criticism is understood far more through application and observation than through theory. Nevertheless, we need to develop general, historically-rational perspectives through which to approach these difficult and obscure texts, if only to make sure we avoid making needless mistakes.

In general, Buddhist notions of Dharma, a term encompassing spiritual reality as well as text, differ profoundly from modern Western notions of authored literature, and these have to be taken into account when editing NGB texts. Fundamental to Buddhist notions of Dharma as text is the idea of expressing in language self-existent spiritual realities that persist eternally and independently of anyone's beliefs about them, yet remain immensely elusive, accessible only to the most subtle and enlightened minds. It is the ongoing purpose of the Sangha, the Buddhist community, to maintain the provision of a clear expression of these elusive truths. Hence, Tibetan religious literature takes the form of an ongoing communal project: authors lovingly reproduce previous successful texts word for word, seeing no benefit in altering these except on those often quite few points where they see some distinct advantage or improvement in presenting a slightly different formulation. To the Western sensibility, this is redolent of plagiarism and an

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[4] For example, the recent orthodoxy of the Greg-Bowers eclectic edition, while excellent for much modern literature, seems of little use to NGB scholars. Greg's key distinction between accidentals and substantives has nothing like the same implications in NGB literature; we have no copy-texts with authorial accidentals; and no authorially sanctioned later states of the text from which to infer substantives; nor are we even dealing with single-authored texts, as the Greg-Bowers philosophy of fidelity to authorial intention largely presupposes. On the contrary, our texts need not be composed in a single historical period, let alone by a single author. However, it is not inconceivable that some works by modern authors such as Gendun Chopel might benefit from an adaptation of this treatment.

institutionalised lack of originality; but to the traditional Tibetan sensibility, such a communal approach to religious composition seems vastly preferable to the unrealistic vanity of attempting a wholesale rewriting of already well-taught truths, merely for the sake of it. If the modern Western author seeks to articulate the voice of their unique individual genius, traditional Tibetan religious authors more typically sought to articulate (only where necessary, often silently, and sometimes anonymously) some small additional contribution, rearrangement or repair to a vast communal literary undertaking that had already received the full attention of the best minds of the Buddhist Sangha and its scholarship stretching back over the centuries. In addition to the above considerations that apply to much Buddhist literature, approaches to textual criticism of the NGB should also be founded on an understanding of the particular Rnying ma notions of Dharma, which can vary from those of other Tibetan traditions in their more dynamic understanding of Dharma as an ongoing revelation through *gter ma*. But even *gter ma* generally reproduces a very great deal of earlier text, and in fact probably differs as much or even more in its framing narrative than in its underlying basic principles of literary composition. Very little work has yet been done on the various presuppositions of Tibetan religious literature in general or of Rnying ma literature in particular, and here also we see a major need for a sustained study, which we hope to achieve elsewhere.[5]

More contemporary text critical scholars like D.F. McKenzie and Jerome McGann have moved towards an understanding of texts as social constructs, emphasising the role of the 'interpretive community' over authorial intention, or seeing text production as part of a much broader horizon of meanings. This general approach is in many ways better suited to the anonymous, composite, NGB texts that typically developed by the adaptation and reworking of previously existing text by many different authors at different times, usually to meet new demands or needs. The two major theorists, McKenzie and McGann, both mainly address more modern texts, where the problems faced are very different to ours (although aspects of McKenzie's work on literacy in 19th century New Zealand are occasionally pertinent). However, a number of Medievalist scholars like Charlotte Brewer, T.W. Machan

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[5] Griffiths 1999 addresses some of these issues within Indian Buddhist literature and with some reference to Tibetan practice, but his perspective is slightly different to the one I propose.

and A.J. Minnis have also begun to apply these perspectives to editing Middle English literature. Here the overwhelming concern has been to question radically the basic assumptions of distinction between author and scribe that informed much previous Middle English textual criticism. They argue that while most Middle English texts were completely anonymous, and most Middle English scribes were understood to be an integral part of the creative process rather than mere mechanical copyists, established Middle English critical editing (such as Kane and Donaldson's *Piers Plowman*) is predicated on a humanistically-derived false assumption of a radical separation of roles between author and scribe. Hence the newer scholars demand a much greater appreciation by text editors of social, historical and cultural factors in the production of medieval texts. There are certain similarities (also immense differences) between Middle English and NGB textual cultures; nevertheless editors of Buddhist canonical works of many kinds have for the last great many years already been approaching texts much as these recent thinkers suggest. Consequently, the proposed revolution in editing Western texts is largely already taken into account by those involved with Buddhist texts. For complex reasons of academic history, Buddhist scholarship is better placed with regard to historical-anthropological textual analysis than are Western literatures—it does not have centuries of intellectual baggage to unburden, and the very nature of Buddhist texts has invoked social, historical and cultural analysis from the outset (see for example the works of Gombrich). One should add, Mahāyāna Buddhism itself approaches significant aspects of the current post-structural ideas in textual criticism with its pervasive hermeneutics of Dharma as polysemous skilful means. However, little of this contemporary debate addresses a more basic consideration for the NGB: to render its often highly corrupt manuscript transmission comprehensible by anyone at all.

One editorial technique as far as I know not applied in Tibetan monasteries but widespread in the West over recent centuries—especially in Biblical and Classical scholarship where all early texts are long lost—is stemmatic analysis. This involves systematic analysis of the textual variants found within different editions of a text—more specifically, their shared errors—with a view to ascertaining the relationships between them. One outcome is often a genealogical tree that tries to show which manuscripts were copied from which, a so-called *stemma codicum*. In many cases, people have tried to work back to an archetype

text (the ancestor of the extant tradition) on this basis. Stemmatic analysis has its roots in Renaissance Humanism: in 1489, Politian famously worked out the relationships between different manuscripts of Cicero's letters by tracking the appearance of a significant error through different editions over time. Gradually gaining in strength and sophistication, stemmatic methods became hugely influential after Lachmann's dramatic presentations in the 19th century, and stemmatic analysis has remained central to Western critical editing ever since. Despite periodic waves of controversy about its effectiveness, one is nowadays unlikely to find credible modern textual critics unable to do stemmatic analysis, just as one is unlikely to find major modern painters with no drawing skills at all, whether they choose to use them or not. Stemmatics seems to me to be an area where Western techniques can be moderately helpful to editing NGB texts, although with important limitations. I hasten to add that this is not the only area of Western textual criticism that is useful to us. For example, Kane and Donaldson's techniques of 'deep editing' Langland are also very promising,[6] McKenzie's sociological outlook is important, the European approaches to constantly changing text through 'Genetic Editing'[7] has important points of con-

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[6] 'Deep editing' involves profound 'distrust' of the text, and each error is tackled individually; there is no basis upon whole editions. However, there are major differences between our subject matter and Kane and Donaldson's, so that while they ultimately (and controversially) relied on aesthetic judgments to distinguish between Langland's own work and that of later scribes, any NGB 'deep editing' must instead rely on an encyclopaedic and historically accurate knowledge of Tantrism. Moreover, our texts are usually anonymously created composites built from existing Tantric materials, and only rarely if ever the outpourings of an individual poetic genius like Langland (as Kane and Donaldson believed); this somewhat alters the target of the entire editorial process—we can and often must seek out several strata of text as important parallel objectives of textual criticism, while Kane and Donaldson sought only the authorially sanctioned outputs of the single poet Langland himself. Nevertheless our editorial experience has shown it is abundantly clear that *all* surviving editions of some NGB texts are scribally corrupt at some points—often sharing the same corruption. The 'deep editor' would thus dare to cite materials from entirely outside the extant NGB sources—such as Dunhuang texts—to propose elucidations or even emendations. This should never ever be done silently, of course, but it should be done, usually in the form of notes to accompany the text (especially since such proposed elucidations or emendations might have been quite unknown to the original anonymous author-redactor of the text being edited: traditional text-critical notions of 'work' and 'text' need careful redefinition for the NGB, where newer texts are almost always compiled from recycled blocks of earlier texts, which might themselves have been corrupt!). But Tantric literature is at the same time both highly technical and highly repetitive, which makes such procedures much less radical than they might at first appear. Hence the value and importance of 'deep editing' for NGB texts.

[7] 'Genetic editing' looks at a text in movement over time; it is used for example to

tact with our work, and the more recent cladistic analysis might also
have something to offer in due course. But it is stemmatic analysis that
I will discuss here, since it seems for several reasons the obvious first
starting point for an exploration of how to edit NGB texts: it was devel-
oped for the Western literatures whose transmissional problems most
closely resemble those of Tibetan canonical literatures, and it has
already successfully been applied to several Kanjur texts, most notably
by Helmut Eimer and Paul Harrison. In this paper, I want to look at
what stemmatic analysis cannot at the moment offer NGB scholarship,
what it can at the moment offer NGB scholarship, what it has already
offered NGB scholarship, and what it might in the future offer NGB
scholarship.

Currently, only six NGB collections survive in available form, and
one more is currently becoming accessible. Already available are the
Sde dge xylograph, and the manuscript collections of Mtshams brag,
Gting skyes, Rig 'dzin tshe dbang nor bu, Kathmandu, and Nubri. Our
research project at Oxford is currently in the middle of photographing
the Sgang steng manuscript collection in Bhutan;[8] and we also know of
a further Bhutanese manuscript collection at Sbra me'i rtse, which we
hope to photograph soon. We also hear of further survivals in Tibet.
Some of these seven represent separate editions of the NGB; others
seem to be simple copies. We are still in the process of working out
which are which, and to what degrees.

Although we remain very far off indeed from a comprehensive enu-
merative bibliography of pre-1950s NGB collections, we can see that
this small surviving sample represents a catastrophic loss—probably
over 90%—of the collections that existed 50 years ago. E. Gene Smith
once suggested to me that NGB collections might have numbered in the
hundreds, since every major monastery following Rnying ma rites
would have needed one. In his recently published Sde dge NGB cata-
logue, Thub bstan chos dar (2000) also writes of numerous and varied
collections in the past, but nowadays we only know the names of some
of the more famous ones, as Thub bstan chos dar lists (his record is

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look at Balkan oral epics that are still evolving as of now. A similar process has also
been used by Gabler, Steppe and Melchior for Joyce's *Ulysses*. The difficulty is a hor-
ribly impenetrable apparatus—but this might be remedied with digital presentations.

[8] Finance for this photography has been very kindly offered in full by the UK's Arts
and Humanities Research Board as part of one of our Research Awards. The photogra-
phy itself is being done on our behalf by Dr Karma Phuntsho.

more complete and detailed than earlier enumerations by F.-K. Ehrhard and Dan Martin).[9] These include an early proto-NGB collection made by Kun spangs sgrags rgyal and kept at Gtsang 'ug bya lung, the foundation of Zur po che Shākya 'byung gnas (984-1045). Many people date this as early as the 11th or 12th century; yet it apparently still remained extant as late as 'Jigs med gling pa's day, since he reports having consulted it. We read of a collection written in gold in the opening years of the 13th century, commissioned by Mnga bdag 'gro mgon dpal as a funerary offering for his father Nyang ral nyi ma'i 'od zer (to this day, many NGB editions include Nyang ral's gter ma); a NGB made in the 14th century by Zur bzang po dpal, said to have been after his second visit to Buyantu Khan's court in Peking; one made by Ratna gling pa in the 15th century; three made by Gong ra lo chen gzhan phan rdo rje in the 16th century; one that was kept at O rgyan smin grol gling, of unknown date; a further one made by Smin gling gter chen in the 17th century and also kept at O rgyan smin grol gling; one made by the 5th Dalai Lama and taken to Kokonor; one kept at Stag bu brag dmar dgon; one made by 'Jigs med gling pa; one made by the second Rdzogs chen incarnation in the 17th century; an older one kept at Kaḥ thog which predated Dge rtse Paṇḍita's early 19th century Sde dge xylograph; one made by a lama from Go 'jo at an unknown date; one made by the Mtsho na chief Padma bstan skyong with followers of Rdo rje snying po; one made by 'Bri gung rig 'dzin chos kyi grags pa; and one kept at Dpal spungs. No doubt there were many others; it is hard to imagine major Rnying ma foundations like Zhe chen or Dpal yul without an NGB.

But such severe truncation is not unusual among old manuscript traditions of many sorts (for example, the Greek and Latin classics); and while it determines that only a small fraction of the total set of relationships can be shown, it does not in itself preclude stemmatic analysis.

More important than the loss of witnesses is horizontal transmission, or the use of different exemplars to make a single new edition, which complicates stemmatic analysis considerably. Historical sources tell us this certainly did happen in NGB production. Thub bstan chos dar tells us the surviving Sde dge xylograph was made using exemplars from the monasteries of Rdzogs chen, Kaḥ thog, Stag bu brag dmar, and Dpal spungs; as well as those made by 'Jigs med gling pa, a lama

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[9] Much of their material was unpublished; for a survey, see Mayer 1996: 223-32.

from Go 'jo, and the 5th Dalai Lama. All seven of these Dge rtse Paṇḍita comprehensively reviewed, re-ordered and edited to make the famous edition of 414 texts (including his own *dkar chag*) in 26 volumes that serves today as an *editio princeps*. Likewise the now lost edition by 'Jigs med gling pa of 388 texts (also in 26 volumes) used exemplars from the ancient Zur 'Ug bya lung manuscripts, those from Ratna gling pa's seat Lhun grub pho brang, one or both of the editions from O rgyan smin grol gling, the edition made by Gang ra lo chen, the edition from Kong po Thang 'brog monastery, and the 5th Dalai Lama's edition; and from these he created his own edition. As Achard has shown (2002), 'Jigs med gling pa's approach was highly eclectic and very meticulous: aware of the differences between the various versions available to him, he made his choices between them carefully. However, not all major new NGB editions were conflated in this way: the 5th Dalai Lama seems to have taken as his sole source the edition made by his Rnying ma pa Guru Smin gling gter chen; but then Smin gling gter chen's edition was itself based on several earlier editions, including the ancient 'Ug bya lung manuscripts, two of the copies made by Gong ra lo chen gzhan phan rdo rje, an earlier Smin sgrol gling edition, and others.

We do not yet know very much about the exact forms of horizontal transmission that occurred in the NGB traditions—there are many different forms that could (and probably did) occur, with different implications for stemmatic analysis. For example, in some cases, individual texts might represent comprehensive conflations from several witnesses, which is of great consequence to stemmatic analysis; in other cases, doxographical outlines from a preferred authority might be used at a structural level only, leaving textual content unaffected, with zero impact on stemmatic analysis. At the moment, we do not know the exact patterns or frequency of horizontal transmission in the NGB tradition; but I think we must now take as our working assumption that significant levels of horizontal transmission in some form or another did occur at several important junctures in the NGB transmission, and that this will impact on stemmatic analysis.

As every student soon learns, some prominent scholars (notably Maas) believed that according to its theory, stemmatic analysis could not easily accommodate horizontal transmission.[10] Others, notably

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[10] "No specific has yet been discovered against contamination" ("Gegen die kontamination ist noch kein Kraut gewachsen")—the famous last words of Maas's celebrated work (Maas 1958).

Pasquali, showed that contamination was so ubiquitous in real life that it could not be ignored, while West explored practical ways in which stemmatic analysis could try to work with it. Other scholars—such as the medievalists Kane and Donaldson working on Langland's *Piers Plowman*, or many Biblical scholars—have found themselves dealing with manuscript traditions seemingly too complex to stemmatise. Yet others have denied the validity of stemmatic analysis altogether; we will come to those shortly.

In the case of the NGB, I believe that for the time being, until or unless scholarship advances on several fronts, we must distinguish clearly between *historical* and *pragmatic* stemmatic analysis—what Kantorowicz called *Stammbaum* and *Stammtafel*. The first is not currently a good option for NGB studies, while the second is as of now both possible and necessary.

By historical stemmatic analysis (*Stammbaum*) I mean the classic and more ambitious form of the process that gained such popularity from the 19th century. It seeks to establish a genealogical tree that represents the proven and exact historical relationships of the texts. Hence it requires the resultant stemma to be taken as the basis of editorial choices (Kenney 1973: 134). It also often implies the possibility of the reconstruction through stemmatic analysis of an archetype (i.e. the latest common ancestor of all surviving manuscripts). All of this, I believe, is extremely difficult with the NGB tradition at our current level of knowledge. The loss of about 90% of our witnesses, when combined with the prevalence of horizontal transmission and the paucity of external historical data, makes this whole approach too hazardous for now. In addition, as M.L. West has pointed out (1973: 14), ". . .if only two manuscripts are preserved from a contaminated area of the tradition, there will be nothing to show that it is contaminated: whatever errors they share can be attributed to a common exemplar. It needs a third copy to show that things are more complicated". Of the four surviving areas of the NGB tradition, we have two manuscripts for three of them, and only a single witnesses for the other: this makes analysis of contamination difficult.[11]

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[11] The problem of open recensions that can arise in Kanjur scholarship—where the Tibetan tradition derives from multiple translations from Sanskrit that interact with one another over time—will not usually take exactly the same form with NGB texts, many of which we believe to originate with a Tibetan composition that was presumably unitary at its first inception. But there are quite different possibilities for open recensions, which I will discuss at length elsewhere. I have already looked at some of these in

Although a historical stemma is currently unsuitable, what we can and should do for now is construct pragmatic stemmata, or *Stammtafeln*. By this I mean non-historical diagrams merely demonstrating the relationships of surviving witnesses according to clear patterns of shared variants. Following Timpanaro's suggestion, in certain cases we could even make several alternative pragmatic stemmata to show different possible scenarios. In other words, even if we cannot show with certainty the historical processes by which they came about, we certainly can and should show what the existing patterns of shared variants look like. It was only by such a process of making a pragmatic stemma that Cathy Cantwell and I have discovered evidence highly suggestive of four distinct areas or groupings within the extant NGB tradition (we could also describe this as three, one of which subdivides into two, see below). This is of course extremely valuable information, which no one has discovered before, and which no one could ever discover except through the process of collation. We hope to refine our understanding of it further by more collations. The charting of variants and the minute examination that precedes stemmatic analysis also exposes invaluable data on separate recensions, redactional events, marginal notes, corrections to the text, comparative readability of texts, lacunae, paleography, and so on. All this is so helpful to scholarship that it seems inconceivable to me to attempt an NGB text in any truly sensitive way without such data. Pragmatic stemmata can thus give indispensable focus to scholars who need to consult different editions for variant readings—of which there are so many—even if they cannot give the exact data of a historical stemma.

In the 1990s I made a preliminary pragmatic stemma of an important Mahāyoga text called the *Phur pa bcu gnyis*,[12] using the five editions of the NGB then available. Since then we have seen four major developments: (i) all the Nubri and (ii) much of the Sgang steng editions are now available for collation;[13] (iii) we have made great advances in descriptive bibliography because all of the available NGBs are now catalogued or at least substantially understood doxographical-

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[12] It is counted as one of the Eighteen Tantras of Mahāyoga, a particularly significant grouping.

[13] At the time of writing, our Research Project's photography of the Sgang steng ms is not yet complete, but by the time this paper is published, we hope it will be.

ly,[14] as is one of the important lost editions;[15] (iv) and largely thanks to Thub bstan chos dar and Jean-Luc Achard, we know much more about the external histories of the NGB tradition as a whole. Hence we now have a fuller basis on which to make pragmatic stemmata of NGB texts and to interpret them. In a moment I will show how the picture looks at present, in the light of our recent information.

But first I want to look at a problem I faced when making my preliminary stemma of the *Phur pa bcu gnyis* (Mayer 1996: 243-62). It concerns the critique of stemmatic analysis made by Joseph Bédier in 1928. In analysing 110 stemmata made by textual scholars up to his day, he found no fewer than 105 of them to be what he called 'bifid' trees, where the original archetype always divided into two branches, and only two branches. Yet common sense tells us it is highly unlikely that each archetype which ever gets copied is copied twice and only twice. This, Bédier and his modern followers have argued, was a device of dubious validity that has allowed editors to avoid being forced into difficult decisions, by positing two branches of equal stemmatic validity between which one could not choose rationally; hence one remained free to choose whichever of the two one preferred. Bédier's critique was powerful enough to irrevocably dent the aura of certainty that had previously accompanied stemmatic analysis, but certainly not powerful enough to sink it altogether. Hence it remains a central issue of debate today, and prominent scholars such as the late Sebastiano Timpanaro

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[14] The Gting skyes edition was comprehensively catalogued (including all chapter titles and colophons etc) in Kaneko 1982; his work is now being reformatted for internet publication by David Germano's team. The breakthrough work for the Mtshams brag NGB came with Anthony Barber's text index included with the Tapei Edition of the Tibetan Tripitaka; that has now been much expanded into a full internet version including all chapter titles and colophons etc. by David Germano's team. The Sde dge was partially catalogued in full detail, including all chapter titles and colophons etc, in an unpublished work by Giacomella Orofino; similar unpublished work was done by Jean-Luc Achard ; while shorter catalogues omitting chapter titles were produced by Thub bstan chos dar, Jean-Luc Achard, Giacomella Orofino, Cathy Cantwell, Adelheid Pfandt and others. Of these, the Thub bstan chos dar version was published in a useful book (2000), while Achard's appeared in a convenient electronic journal (2003). Much of this previous work is now also being transformed into an internet version by David Germano's team. The Rig'dzin NGB was comprehensively catalogued by Cathy Cantwell and myself in an internet version, although a paper version is also in process (see Cantwell, Mayer and Fischer 2000). F.-K. Ehrhard has made available xeroxes of a traditional dkar-chag for the Nubri edition, and also clarified its doxographical relation to the Kathmandu edition (see Ehrhard 1997).

[15] Achard (2002) discusses 'Jigs med gling pa's NGB edition.

and Michael D. Reeve have continued the debate in similar terms into our time.

Bédier's criticism focused on the implausibly high incidence of bifidity at the initial branching out from the original archetype; yet many stemmata tend to branch into two all the way through, not only from the archetype. Paul Harrison's stemma of the *Drumakinnararājaparipṛcchāsūtra*, for example, is bifid not only from the archetype but also at six out of its total of ten junctures (Harrison 1992: xxxvi). And except from its hypothetical archetype, my stemma of the *Phur pa bcu gnyis* was similarly bifid at all three of its junctures [see fig. 1], and that was what bothered me. I worried that bifidity was inherent to the logic of stemmatics. Note that stemmata made by computers using cladistic analysis tend to excessive bifidity, branching into two at many junctures even where human scholarship knows this to be false. As Robinson and O'Hara point out (1996), if stemmatic logic is pursued too mechanically, it manufactures spurious bifidity, because chance coincidences of shared errors can be mistaken for evidence of a shared hypearchetype where none actually existed.

This particularly concerned me regarding the placement of the highly corrupt version from the Kathmandu NGB manuscript when, as a student, I made my stemma of the *Phur pa bcu gnyis*—was Kathmandu really on a separate branch to Gting skyes and Rig 'dzin? Should we accept its abundant and often major single errors as stemmatic evidence? Or was this all just one-off chaos? And were its sporadic correct readings against Gting skyes and Rig 'dzin's shared errors mere coincidence and casual conjectural correction—or something more? Because the manuscript was so corrupt, the signal-to-noise ratio was very poor. Eventually, Paul Harrison, who was visiting Oxford at the time, advised me tentatively to produce the stemma the way it is. Happily, our new data completely vindicates Paul Harrison's advice. My recent collation of Nubri shows it shares a significant proportion of Kathmandu's major errors in opposition to all other editions, including Gting skyes and Rig 'dzin, confirming Kathmandu as belonging to a branch separate from the Gting skyes and Rig 'dzin. However, we are now also compelled to revise my overall placement of that branch, as I will show below.

Interestingly, three other NGB texts that Cathy Cantwell and I have collated since then—a short text called the *Sho na dkar nag gi rgyud*, a medium length text called the *Rdo rje khros pa rtsa ba'i rgyud*, and a

long text called the *Phur bu mya ngan las 'das pa'i rgyud*—all appear to show signs of a similar or sometimes identical set of stemmatic relationships as the *Phur pa bcu gnyis*. However, all four collations have been of similar types of Mahāyoga texts within the NGB, which might prove a major factor. Moreover we have not had time for really fully exhaustive analyses of these three other texts as yet; and of course it is absolutely crucial methodologically to analyse every text independently rather than looking at whole collections—individual texts can always show quite individual patterns.

Our newly acquired descriptive bibliographical knowledge also illuminates the relations between our editions, and, perhaps ironically, very powerfully defends the validity of my original *Phur pa bcu gnyis* stemma's bifidity at each of its three branches. The recent catalogue of the Rig 'dzin edition made by Cathy Cantwell and myself, when compared with Kaneko's exhaustive catalogue of Gting skyes (Kaneko 1982), shows the collections of Gting skyes and Rig 'dzin to be doxographical near-identical twins. These two are different to Kathmandu and Nubri, which Ehrhard has shown to form another pair of doxographical near-identical twins (Ehrhard 1997). Mtshams brag and Sgang steng give every indication of forming yet another pair of doxographical near-identical twins (our photography of the first 11 volumes of Sgang steng, when compared with the title index to Mtshams brag, shows this to be the case at least with the first 11 volumes; and both collections comprise 46 volumes). However, the Sde dge is doxographically unique, as is the lost 'Jigs med gling pa edition, whose surviving *dkar chag* has been analysed by Achard (2002). Thus, our overall situation is that, with our available versions of the *Phur pa bcu gnyis*, the *Sho na dkar nag gi rgyud*, the *Rdo rje khros pa rtsa ba'i rgyud*, and the *Phur bu mya ngan las 'das pa'i rgyud*, internal stemmatic affiliations of these four individual texts seem to coincide closely with the external doxographical structural affiliations of the larger collections to which they belong: as within, so without. With these four texts, our findings so far of unaided textual criticism march neatly in step with our findings so far of descriptive bibliography. Theoretically, this need not be the case at all: the choice or availability of exemplars that governs spelling and other textual matters, and the choice of doxographical arrangements for the collection as a whole, absolutely need not coincide, and there are very definitely cases in the NGB transmission where they do not. For example, Cantwell has found that in a very few instances, Rig 'dzin

seems to contain the same versions of some texts as Mtshams brag, rather than the text versions contained in Gting skyes (Rig 'dzin Vol Zha text 4, Vol. Tha text 1 and Vol Pa text 6). In addition, Rig 'dzin contains several texts found in Mtshams brag but omitted in Gting skyes.[16]

The fact that the findings of textual criticism and descriptive bibliography do coincide in the cases we have collated so far possibly points to a further important factor: geography. The importance of geography for most pre-modern manuscript transmissions is widely remarked and is already established as a major factor in Kanjur transmission. As with the Kanjur, the vast size of the NGB collections probably intensified the geographical effect: since it must have been exceptionally difficult to borrow and then transport extremely valuable and extremely massive NGB editions over long distances, it must surely have been more feasible to take *ma phyi* from comparatively nearby. Our research has found evidence for what looks like a distinctive regional grouping of extant NGB editions (we would be on much surer ground, however, if more editions had survived). To illustrate: the coincidence of doxographical structure and stemmatic affiliation we have found so far between the Nubri edition and the Kathmandu edition which came originally from Skyid grong, strongly suggests a connection to their origins in such closely neighbouring geographical locations (in this case, they also come from a similar sectarian background, the Byang gter tradition). Similarly, we know that Waddell procured the Rig 'dzin edition while accompanying the Younghusband invasion of Tibet, and we also know that the Rig 'dzin's doxographical (and in the case of the four texts analysed so far, also its stemmatic) close relative Gting skyes comes from the region directly adjoining Younghusband's route into Tibet.[17] The Mtshams brag and Sgang steng from Bhutan, according to all analyses made so far, are both doxographically and stemmatically near-identical, and we already have good reason to believe the Bhutanese Sbra me'i rtse edition will follow suit. The Sde dge from Khams might so far appear doxographically, and (for our four texts) stemmatically unique, but we have not yet gained access to any other editions from its region.

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[16] She has listed them in her paper "Distinctive features of the edition" on the Rig 'dzin website: go to http://ngb.csac.anthropology.ac.uk:16080/csac/NGB/Doc/Contents.xml and follow the links.

[17] Gting skyes is only a few miles to the west of Younghusband's route, but over 150 miles east of Skyid grong and Nubri.

To support this geographical hypothesis from historical sources, we read that the *ma phyi* of even the grandest editions of the past were often reasonably local: Ratna gling pa's, Smin gling gter chen's, the 5th Dalai Lama's, and 'Jigs med gling pa's *ma phyi* or *ma dpe* were all from Dbus and Gtsang, plus a single edition from Kong po; none were from far-off east Tibet or Bhutan; and even the single edition from Kong po was a famous 16th century copy exported there from Gtsang by Gong ra lo chen gzhan phan rdo rje, so it should really count as a Gtsang edition. Likewise, five out of seven of the exemplars used by Dge rtse Paṇḍita for his Sde dge xylograph were from Khams or nearby; although for this extraordinary enterprise the 5th Dalai Lama's edition was also imported from Kokonor in Amdo, and 'Jigs med gling pa's from Central Tibet (but in this case, as Achard deduces, it might well have been only the *dkar chag* of the 'Jigs med gling pa edition, rather than the whole edition itself).

It is premature, after only four collations (not all of which have yet been intensively analysed), to come to any broad conclusions about the NGB as a whole; nevertheless, it makes sense to use the pattern that has emerged so far as a hypothesis to test when making future collations. What we see so far suggests (as an hypothesis to test) that Sde dge's huge textual variance from all the other versions quite possibly represents a largely Eastern (if conflated) inheritance, as well as its editors' well-known recensional intervention. Mtshams brag's and Sgang steng's numerous shared textual particularities quite possibly represents a distinctive Bhutanese tradition, of which Sbra me'i rtse might also turn out to be a member. The two other sets of doxographical near-twins, Gting skyes and Rig 'dzin and Nubri and Kathmandu, probably represent the Gting skyes and Skyid grong regions respectively, although here we might better describe all four together as representing a single Southern Central tradition that subdivides into two branches; this might be preferable because the textual variance between the Gting skyes and Skyid grong branches, while discernable, has so far not been very pronounced. However, as Helmut Eimer has reminded me, what we cannot yet say is whether or not the NGB tradition resembles the Kanjur in having two main lines of transmission plus many regional editions: our extant witnesses might nearly all be seen as regional, and apart from Sde dge, we have no other certain representatives from the great centres of Central Tibet and Khams.[18]

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[18] Personal communication, 14 March 2004.

With the *Phur pa bcu gnyis*, the *Sho na dkar nag gi rgyud*, the *Rdo rje khros pa rtsa ba'i rgyud*, and the *Phur bu mya ngan las 'das pa'i rgyud*, external factors of geography and doxography, and internal factors of the patterns of variant readings, all seem so far to be chiming in perfect harmony. But we should expect life might become less tidy in other texts: our cataloguing activities have already turned up examples where Rig 'dzin has a few texts that are closer to Mtshams brag's version than to Gting skyes'. Moreover, as learning increases, more complexities will no doubt have to be encountered: for example, we can expect Sde dge's affiliations to sometimes have moved closer to the Central and Southern tradition through horizontal transmission via the 5th Dalai Lama's edition, which Dge rtse Paṇḍita praised as so useful in establishing doubtful readings for his xylograph; but at the moment we have no way to identify such passages.

Finally, I must revisit my 1996 stemma of the *Phur pa bcu gnyis*, which requires a readjustment after our collating of Nubri for the first time (we do not yet have a copy of Sgang steng's *Phur pa bcu gnyis*). Take note that this is a summarised discussion of a pragmatic stemma, not a historical one; and that we do not yet have any concrete evidence of horizontal transmission, so we can only proceed as though there is none. The sigla used are: D = Sde dge; K = Kathmandu; M = Mtshams brag; N = Nubri; R = Rig 'dzin (formerly W for Waddell); T = Gting skyes.

In the *Phur pa bcu gnyis*, a striking features is the uniqueness of D. In hundreds of instances D has correct readings against errors shared by all other editions. Some are major, some indicate deliberate editorial intervention, others are minor, typical of scribal factors. We have obvious evidence of recensional activity in D, through marginal notes not found elsewhere that explicitly report editorial activity. Also, D's Sanskrit renderings are uniformly regularised to 18th century norms, where all other editions share Sanskrit readings that resemble the older Kanjur editions in not marking long Sanskrit vowels and other archaisms. In addition, D has a few unique errors, usually but not always quite trivial. Of course, we have external evidence that D is the product of major editorial activity and of conflation: but the direct internal evidence for this is not interpretable by us now. Since, as far as we know, none of D's *ma phyi* or exemplars are extant, we have no certain way of knowing which of its readings against the errors of TRNK and M might be inherited—i.e., where D might have followed correct

exemplars against the errors of the other surviving editions, or which are recensional, i.e., where D's editors have emended the tradition themselves. Even those explicitly recensional interventions recorded in its marginal notes might conceivably derive from its no longer extant *ma phyi*, rather than from the Sde dge editorial team. It is even logically possible (if rather improbable) that its corrected Sanskrit came from some of its exemplars. Nor can we know which readings might derive from which of D's several exemplars.

If the NGB parallels the Kanjur's evolutionary pattern, Mtshams brag and Sgang steng might represent an old tradition because their doxography is quite messy: all other editions are better ordered. But there might be other reasons for these Bhutanese editions' doxographical untidiness, we should not jump to conclusions of antiquity on this evidence alone. Stemmatically in the *Phur pa bcu gnyis*, M shares a great many errors with TRNK against D, although TRNK also share a number of errors against DM's correct readings. Overall, M is closer to the TRNK family than to D. This could suggest TRNK are descended directly from M—but this does not seem to be the case, since M has unique errors all of its own, including very major omissions of indispensable text, that are not omitted in either TRNK or D. So it looks like TRNK and M shared a common ancestor at some point, but that TRNK are not direct descendants of M.[19]

As for the relationships between TRNK: here, as mentioned above, I can improve my initial stemma. While it was correct that TR and K belonged to different branches of the tradition, the collation of N now reveals the relation of those branches to each other more clearly. In collating N, we found that it shares significant major errors with K that no other edition has: for example, in Chapter 2, only N and K omit three lines of verse,[20] while in Chapter 3, only N and K conflate two lines to

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[19] We have not yet collated Sgang steng's version of the *Phur pa bcu gnyis*, but if, after collation, it turns out to show the same kind of extremely close relation to Mtshams brag as evidenced in the *Phur bu mgan 'das* and the *Rtsa rgyud rdo rje khros pa*, we will have adequate evidence to change the stemma: a further hypearchetype will need to be introduced as the common ancestor of the M and Sgang steng versions of the *Phur pa bcu gnyis*. According to some external sources, such a common ancestor did exist—in the South Tibetan common exemplar of the three Bhutanese NGB copies held at Sbra me'i rtse, Mtshams brag and Sgang steng. Dr Karma Phuntsho will be writing an account of this shortly.

[20] */ chos sku byang chub sems las byung // rgyu yi dus na de nyid gsal // rig pa rim par gsal byas te /*

produce a single nonsensical and unmetrical line.[21] There are several other such shared errors. For exactly this reason, N's shared errors with K also now show that K (or NK) can not derive from an hypearchetype c that was also the ancestor of the parent of T and R, as my initial stemma hypothesised (see Fig. 1). At the time, I expressed great concern that the disastrously corrupt K's sporadic agreements with DM in correct minor readings against TR's shared errors might be purely coincidental; all these readings were decidedly trivial, and since K was such an extraordinary mess throughout, it would be rash, I argued at length, to see any stemmatic patterns in it at all. Yet this was all I had for the positioning of K's branch on the stemma, so I used it very provisionally, hedged in by caveats. With N now collated into the picture as well, it is clear my caveats were well founded: there is a strong probability that K's sporadic agreements with DM against many of TR's trivial errors were coincidental. At least, N mostly does not share them—yet most of N's really major errors are carried by K as well. Current stemmatic theory reinforces my view that one should not use trivial errors as a basis without due caution: it is sounder to rely on really major shared errors that can not be attributed to coincidence, casual conjectural correction by a scribe, or regional style—and in some ways fortunately, NGB texts are often rich in such major errors. The conflation of two lines to produce a single nonsensical unmetrical line in Ch. 3 of the NK versions of the *Phur pa bcu gnyis* is just such an example. Neither coincidence nor conjecture are at all likely to independently provide such an agreement in error, and the probability of any two texts coincidentally sharing several such major errors becomes extremely remote.

However I have found no occasions where TR have major errors not shared also by NK; although, the converse does happen, since NK share major errors not found in TR. Hence in my new stemma (Fig. 2), I will show TR as deriving from an hypearchetype c which is also an ancestor of the text d from which NK derive. Thus TR and K (now joined by N), swap positions from the old stemma. As anticipated, the collation of N has thus enabled a much better view of the whole picture.

I should add, K can not be a parent of N because K has a huge mass of errors, sometimes extremely major, not shared by N (or any other text for that matter). Nor is N likely to be the parent of K, since N has

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[21] */ dngos grub thams cad 'byung ba'i gnas // bde gshegs ngo mtshar khyod la 'dus / > / dngos grub thams cad ngo mtshar khyod la 'dud /*

significant errors and some omissions not shared by K (or any other text).[22] There is of course a remote possibility of horizontal transmission into K that enabled it to avoid these errors of N, but it is most improbable that a copy as slapdash as K was produced with enough care to select correct readings from a second source. T and R also have some major unique errors all of their own, which ostensibly rule out parental relations either way—but since their major unique errors are few, the exclusion of such a relationship is very much less certain.

We have not yet identified clear instances of horizontal transmission among TRNK and M and with only one or two witnesses available for each area of the tradition, any that might exist will be hard to identify. Obviously, the search for such evidence is a key concern. But even if it is found, there is a reasonable chance it might not change the basic structure of this pragmatic stemma, although some broken lines would have to be added to the diagram to represent the horizontal transmission. Of course, we could also add an arbitrary number of broken lines issuing out of and into empty space, to show the unknown number of lost witnesses that must have existed, but that would be a bit messy and achieve no purpose. I hope that people looking at this pragmatic stemma recall we are not showing an historical diagram, much less the many lost editions. We are only showing the apparent relationships between our available extant witnesses according to their textual variants: groupings rather than proven relationships.

Finally, what can we hope for from future NGB stemmatic analysis? With any luck, we might succeed in restoring portions of some of the famous editions of the past now lost to us. Even at this extremely early stage, we can envisage recreating lost hypearchetypes for some texts— for example, common ancestors of TR and NK, or of the Bhutanese editions.

In addition to stemmatics, standard eclectic or rational methods, and a highly adapted form of 'deep editing', are probably our best avenues in further developing the editing of NGB texts. Both of these need to be applied with the mixture of radical scepticism and patient conservatism typical of all good editing: while one must question every reading, one must also avoid changing transmitted readings without sound cause. Above all, we must remain aware that our goals are plural rather than

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[22] For example, N omits three lines that K and all other versions include : (1) */ 'da' dka'i gsung ni rnam par dag /*; (2) */de nas yang gsang ba mchog gi bdag po des /*; (3) */ yang dag nyid las thams cad byung /*

singular: as well as the restoration of a single original version of the text, which might often have existed, we are also interested just as much (or even more) in processes, contexts, and layers. We recognise that in Rnying ma pa culture, many of the major NGB editors through history were, as *gter ston*, endowed with the religious authority to reveal scripture in their own right. Hence any editorial changes they made to NGB texts should carry as much weight as original readings, and be presented in parallel as legitimate alternatives. One task is to try to identify such changes, which were traditionally made silently. We are also interested in locating the previous materials from which the NGB texts were often constructed. At the same time, we recognise that Rnying ma pa culture unambiguously rejects incoherencies arising from scribal errors and other transmissional problems; hence our tasks as editors is also to identify and eliminate such error, which is of course the more traditional task of textual criticism. A further major priority must be to gather as much external historical understanding of the NGB editions as possible, and this should include anthropological and cultural perspectives as well as historiography. At this stage we still have remarkably little understanding of how, why, and by whom these revered yet anonymous texts were composed, and how and by whom they were used. Even if the NGB's hermeneutics might transcend history, its textual criticism as we envisage it is also an historical and sociological exercise.

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Fig 1: Old stemma of the PCN, without the Nubri version

D = Sde dge xylograph NGB

M = Mtshams brag ms NGB

K = Skyid grong ms NGB

R = Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu ms NGB
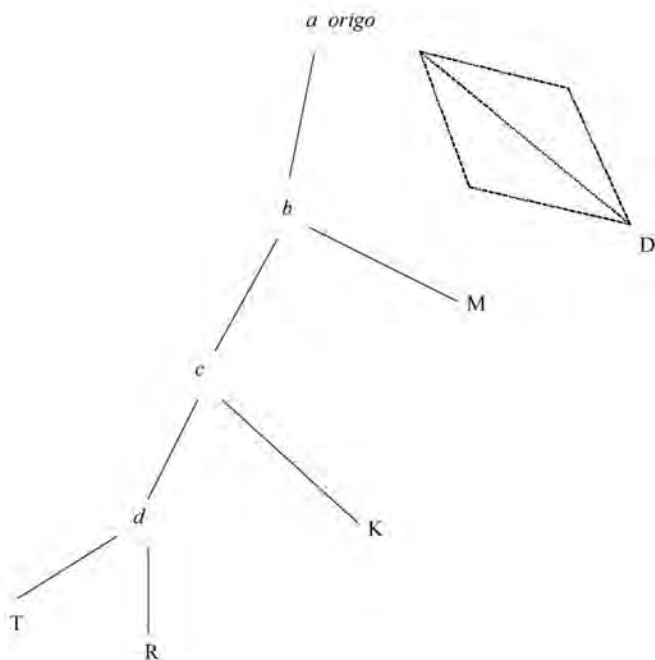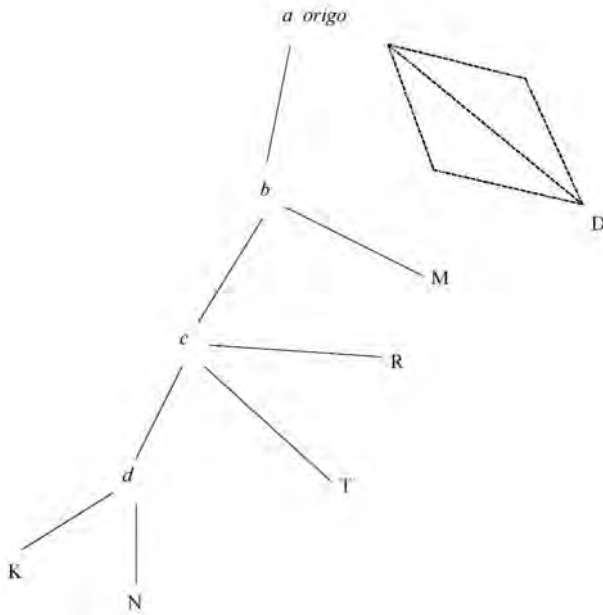
T = Gting skyes ms NGB

Fig 2: New stemma of the *Phur pa bcu gnyis*, including the Nubri version

D = Sde dge xylograph NGB
M = Mtshams brag ms NGB
R = Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu ms NGB
T = Gting skyes ms NGB
N = Nubri ms NGB
K = Skyid grong ms NGB

PART THREE

GSAR MA LITERATURE

IMPERIAL AGENCY IN THE *GSAR MA* TREASURE TEXTS DURING THE TIBETAN RENAISSANCE: THE *RGYAL PO BLA GTER* AND RELATED LITERATURE*

RONALD M. DAVIDSON (FAIRFIELD, USA)

The Tibetan renaissance, c. 980–1240, was a complex period, with many aspects that are still poorly understood—whether we are speaking of questions about translation decisions, the relationships of Central Tibet with the areas of Tsong kha and Gu ge Pu hrang, the internal dynamics and religious positions of the great clans within the period of fragmentation, the nature of popular and aristocratic religious activity during the late ninth and early tenth centuries, to name but a few of several difficult topics. I have attempted to grapple with some of these elsewhere, but many remain refractory to clear formulation, in part because of a paucity of documentation.[1] Among the more important questions, though, is one that does not lack an absence of documents but a enjoys an illusory surfeit: that of the treasure texts, first visible as a nexus of conditions in the period of the tenth to thirteenth centuries. It is my opinion that the complexity of the treasure tradition as a whole, and its position in the Tibetan renaissance in particular, has been excessively reified, with later treasure models (especially those from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) being taken as sufficient descriptions. Moreover, the rather polemical treatment of treasure texts by authors ancient and modern has obscured at least as much as it has clarified, because such exchanges have too often attempted to assign either positive or negative moral value to the activities of *gter ston* without sufficient consideration of the social world of *gter ma*, the Tibetan communities, and their horizons of religious expectations.

This paper will argue that early *gter ma* were understood first and foremost as the legacy of the Tibetan emperors, especially Srong btsan sgam po, and were presented as fulfilling their intention to care for the Tibetan people following the fragmentation of the empire and the sub-

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[1] Davidson 2005.

sequent reemergence of the four horns of Central Tibet as a locus of spirituality during the renaissance. These *gter ma* were almost invariably located in the Dbus gtsang temples sacred to the emperors, temples that were depicted as continually exuding the relics of the emperors—the *gter ma* themselves. These imperial relics, both textual and material, constituted the sacred legacy and continuing stewardship of the emperors, whose position as emanations of the great bodhisattvas and descendents of beings of clear light endowed the treasure texts and their ritual manuals with the charisma of the emperors' divine will. Because of the evolving ritual zeitgeist, the narrative of the emperors' stewardship was most successful when it became bundled with a ritual system representing both popular religion and the dynastic heritage. Despite their quasi-Rnying ma affiliation, many of the *gter ma* specifically focusing on the emperors gained broad acceptance and became part of the received lore of Tibetan identity, since all Tibetans were portrayed in some sense as the heirs of the emperors. Such acceptance was, in part, dependent on the textualisation of Tibet through the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when the oral narratives of ancient emperors became increasingly influenced by the authority of the later tantric translations in this manner, so that the imperial myths became reinterpreted on textual lines. Textualisation also meant that Tibet itself came to be seen as both the residence and the source of texts, so that that the testaments attributed to the emperors, and the temples wherein they were found, infused the entire Tibetan landscape with the spiritual intentions of the royal persons.

I. THE PROBLEM OF *GTER MA* CATEGORIES

One of the more disquieting aspects of the modern academic assessment of *gter ma* is the relative lack of acknowledgement that *gter ma* production was not a static process, that the representation and understanding of *gter ma* changed over time, with several different models sometimes being simultaneously observed by contemporary authors. Synthetic apologetic treatises, like those of Guru Chos dbang (1212–1270) or Ratna gling pa (1403–1478) have attempted to separate these models by various hierarchical strategies, especially that of the bodies of the Buddha or through physical/ vocal/ mental (*sku gsung thugs*) categories, or other kinds of *gter ma*, but no single typology has

been durable. Those, like myself, first introduced to the material by the relatively late classifications of physical treasure (*sa gter*), mental treasure (*dgongs gter*), and pure vision (*dag snang*), for example, may be surprised (as I was) to find that this tripartite typology is nowhere to be seen in the early period. Instead, other classifications were employed in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries; especially notable was the differentiation of treasure as either Dharma treasure (*chos gter*) or wealth treasure (*nor gter*). Typological change over time is what we should expect of an emerging tradition, but it does call into question some phenomenological presumptions (natural orders of inspiration) or some of the axioms of the apologetic stance (textual categories as inherent within Buddhism) occasionally presented in modern *gter ma* interpretations. Both defensive positions require greater durability of *gter ma* classifications than is in fact seen within the texts.

Another peculiarity of the development of *gter ma* is that there seem to be no surviving polemics against *gter ma* per se prior to those found in the early thirteenth century neo-conservatives 'Bri gung 'Jigs rten mgon po, Sa skya Paṇḍita, and Chag lo Chos rje dpal.[2] Indeed, most of the literature through the twelfth century seems oblivious to objections about *gter ma*, even in polemical works attacking indigenous Tibetan composition. This might be considered in conjunction with the reality that *gter ma* appear prior to the formation of Buddhist orders in Tibet and emerge at a time when lineage or clan descent are of paramount importance, rather than institutional denomination. In considering *gter ma* in the eleventh to twelfth centuries, I have been drawn to the issue of *Gsar ma gter ma*, by which I would narrowly mean *gter ma* that is widely accepted by the *Gsar ma* traditions, much of which was generated within those very lineages. This material is inherently interesting, not the least reason being that some of the works are very old and enjoy a breadth of recognition so extensive that even later writers who condemn *gter ma* in general seldom question the validity of texts included in this category, often glossing over their status as *gter ma* at all.

That fact has not been lost on the apologists, for Ratna gling pa, in his *Gter 'byung chen mo*, discusses *Gsar ma gter ma* in two places: those discovered in India approximately at the time of their introduction

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[2] Two of these have been studied by Martin 2001: 156–57; 'Bri gung pa historical works tend to depict the formulation of the *dgong gcig* as happening in the early thirteenth century; e.g., see *'Bri gung gdan rabs gser phreng*, pp. 83–84; Chag lo's refutation is found in the *Sngags log sun 'byin gyi skor*, pp. 13.3–14.2.

to Tibet, and those discovered by *Gsar ma* traditions in Tibet. This convenient differentiation is actually emblematic of many of the difficulties of the early treasure texts. For Ratna gling pa (as for many other apologists), all of the Buddhist canon is *gter ma*, since all of it has in some way been hidden or occluded, whether in a specific locale or within the consciousness of the lineage or in the treasury of the *tripiṭaka*.[3] Accordingly, he articulates a model that the great tantras of India were treasure texts, revealed by individual siddhas, who were the *gter ston*.[4] A full-fledged assessment of his position on Indian texts, however, would take up much space, for works of quite disparate origins are included in his assessment.

In the case of Ratna gling pa's category of *Gsar ma* treasure texts in Tibet, the situation is a bit more straightforward, if only because the volume of material is more restrained. After denouncing narrow-minded clerics who do not see that their own *Gsar ma* lineages accept various kinds of treasure, he describes what he calls *Gsar ma gter ma*:

> First there are the treasures hidden by the Dharma-protecting king Srong btsan sgam po. These are five: the outer sūtra cycle, the inner *dhāraṇī* cycle, the secret instruction cycle, the cycle of acts of final decree, and the cycle of the ritual systems conferring both benefit and harm.[5]

In elaborating these categories, Ratna gling pa includes the most important materials for the cult of the emperors.[6] The first of these five categories includes sūtras of curious import: the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, the *Lha mo dri ma med pa'i mdo*, the *Bram ze gzungs kyi snye ma'i mdo*, the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*, and the *Ākāśagarbha-sūtra*, all said by Ratna gling pa to have been translated by Thon mi Sambhota and buried, to be uncovered and retained later. The *dhāraṇī* cycle consists of the *Amoghapāśa-dhāraṇī* and related texts, the *Seng ge sbra'i gzungs*, the *Phyags stong spyan stong gi gzungs*, etc. The secret instruction cycle consists of meditative instructions that Avalokiteśvara himself taught

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[3] This is the topic of the first chapter, *Gter 'byung chen mo gsal ba'i sgron me*, pp. 4.3–39.3.

[4] *Gter 'byung chen mo gsal ba'i sgron me*, pp. 46.1–48.4.

[5] *Gter 'byung chen mo gsal ba'i sgron me*, p. 53.3–4: *dang po chos skyong ba'i rgyal po chen po srong btsan sgam pos lha sa 'phrul snang du sbas pa'i gter la / phyi mdo skor / nang bzungs kyi skor / gsang ba man ngag gis skor / mdzad pa bka' chem gyis skor / phan gnod las tshogs kyi skor dang lnga sbas las /*

[6] Summarised from *Gter 'byung chen mo gsal ba'i sgron me*, pp. 53.4–58.2; I have retained his spellings of *Bka' chem mtho lding ma* (for *Bka' 'chems mtho mthings ma*), etc., to illustrate the orthographic variation found in such texts.

Srong btsan sgam po and were written down by the emperor. The fourth cycle, that of the acts of final decree, is described in three ways: the acts of final decree (*mdzad pa bka' chem*), the decrees on scrolls (*bka' chem shog dril*), or as the cycle set to letters by Thon mi Sambhota. The first indicates the discoveries from the Ke'u tshang temple: the *Bka' chem mtho lding ma*, the *Gab pa mngon byung*, the *Gser gyi spu gri*, the *Bka' chem ka khol ma*, etc. The second denotes the discoveries by Atiśa in the Jokhang. The Thon mi Sambhota cycle identifies the texts written by Thon mi: the emperor's scroll decree, the queens' decree *Bka' chem dar kar gsal ba*, and the decrees of ministers, particularly the *Bka' chem zla ba 'dod jo*, etc.[7] Finally, the fifth category includes texts buried in the pillars of "leafy", "snake headed", the "spreading capital", the "lion headed", and so on. They would be found by figures like lama Zhang g.Yu brag pa (1123–1193). Moreover, other *Gsar ma* treasure texts would be buried by Mar pa or Sgam po pa and be discovered by later Bka' brgyud or Rnying ma authorities.

Ratna gling pa's categorisation demonstrates that he is struggling with various factors. He seems to be drawing his typological inspiration from the *Maṇi bka' 'bum dkar chag*, for example, but expands on its genre categories. The *Maṇi bka' 'bum dkar chag* sets out three groupings of texts: the *sūtra* cycle, the *sādhana* cycle and the instructional cycle (*zhal gdams kyi chos skor*), but Kapstein has shown that a fourth section, the *Gab pa mngon phyung gi skor*, was surreptitiously included as time passed.[8] However, Ratna gling pa not only has more categories but also includes in each of the categories more and disparate texts than are found in the *Maṇi bka' 'bum*. Particularly noticeable are the other works said to be the decree or pronouncement (*bka' 'chems*) of Srong btsan sgam po: the *Bka' 'chems ka khol ma*, the *Bka' 'chems mtho mthings ma*, and the other texts said to have been retrieved by Indians from imperial sites. This literature is sufficiently important that Ratna gling pa strangely includes it in all the subcategories in the fourth cycle (acts of final decree) and implied its inclusion in the fifth category as well. We will see that all these ideas build on the models of *gter ma* found first within the text of the *Bka' 'chems ka khol ma* and altered or reinscribed in later texts.

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[7] *Bka' 'chems ka khol ma*, pp. 235, 315.

[8] *Maṇi bka' 'bum*, fols. 5b6–6a1, 10a3, 11a1–4; Kapstein 1992: 80. For the discoverer of the *Maṇi bka' 'bum*, see Blondeau 1984.

II. The Lost Imperium as the Source of Treasure

The *Bka' 'chems ka khol ma* and related literature articulate the impe-
rial myth of Srong btsan sgam po as an emanation of the bodhisattva
Avalokiteśvara, as is well known. It has certain qualities that it shares
with other works in the eleventh to twelfth centuries, and I believe that
the received *Bka' 'chems ka khol ma* is a twelfth century work, based
in large part on the historical figures specified in the prophecy (*lung
bstan pa*) section toward the end of the text. One section emphasises the
agency of Dwags po Sgom pa tshul khrims snying po (1116–1169), who
calmed the threat of civil war brought on by the feuds between factions
of the Eastern Vinaya (*smad 'dul*) monks, for they had already burned
part of the Jokhang in Lhasa.[9] These texts articulate a pattern of con-
tinued royal involvement with Tibet, at a time when Tibetans were
painfully aware that their culture was unacceptably exposed to the
vagaries of the outside world. Because of the collapse of the Tibetan
imperium and the fragmentation of Tibet through three popular insur-
rections, Tibetans had lost one of the two legal systems (*khrims*) that
they had enjoyed earlier: that of the king's law (*rgyal khrims*) and that
of the dharma (*chos khrims*). In the language of Mkhas pa lde'u, they
relied on religion to protect Tibet, as a person relies on the blessing of
a silk protection thread (*dar mdud*) to keep his life safe.[10]

Indeed, the language of the eleventh-twelfth century *gter ma* docu-
ments requires a period of pure religion and polity, followed by a peri-
od of dramatic decline, with the possibility of resurgence afterwards.
The texts agree that during this time, there was a consistent pattern of
uncovering loot from the old dynasty—the wealth treasure (*nor gter*).
As Nyang ral says,

> At the time when these treasures will appear, people will eat cattle dung
> for their wretched food and clothe themselves in goat hair garments.
> They will loot every monastery and burn the retreat huts. They will traf-
> fic in sacred pronouncements and estimate the dead by the thousand. For
> ethical action they will spread moral pollution and strife, wearing iron

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[9] *Bka' 'chems ka khol ma*, p. 287.10: *snying po'i mtha' rten skyes chen dam pa ni |*:
taken by Bka' brgyud pa authors (e.g., *Mnyam med sgam po pa'i rnam thar*, p.
169.5–10) to refer to Dwags po sGom pa tshul khrims snying po.

[10] *Mkhas pa lde'u chos 'byung*, p. 397.

coats on their bodies. Teachers will act as generals, and monks will slaughter with swords. They will make their monasteries into redoubts and make their retreats inside the village. Mantrins will increase their families and put poison in the bad food. Chieftains will renege on their oaths and kill heroes on their knives. Tibetans will fall into separate sections like lamellar armor broken into its component plates. Fathers and sons will quarrel; fathers and children will kill their relatives. War gods and demons will call out while thieves guard precipitous cliff trails. 'Gong po demons will reside in the hearts of husbands; Bsen mo demons will reside in the hearts of women; The'u rang spirits will reside in the hearts of children; all will have come under the influence of devils. Since the eight classes of gods and spirits have been disturbed, the misfortune of disease and famine will arise.

At that time, three inabilities will occur: The earth will not be able to maintain the treasures. All the Dharma treasures and treasures of wealth will be opened. Gold, silver and jewels will be uncovered. The wealth entrusted to the protectors of religion (*dharmapāla*) will be unable to be protected, so that the wealth dedicated to the Triple Gem will be looted. Finally, Dharma will not be able to be practised by Bande. Because they cannot practise religion, they will sell it to others for money. Without their own practice, in pursuit of fame they will explain Dharma to others.[11]

However, another direction taken in the defense of *gter ma* is that the kings look after Tibet during this time, by providing the wealth treasure (*nor gter*) to those in need and the Dharma treasure (*chos gter*) to those who can practise, these sometimes being the same. This royal involvement with Tibet is most firmly embodied in the category of *bla gter*, the king's personal treasure, the legacy of the imperial persons.[12]

The early renaissance period narrations indicate that Tibetans

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[11] *Zangs gling ma*, pp. 132–33: *gter 'di rnams 'byung ba'i dus su ꧁ zas ngan lci ba za zhing gos ngan re ba gyon ꧁ chos 'khor thams cad bcom zhing dben gnas thams cad sreg ꧁ bka' la nyo tshong byed cing mi bsad stong du 'jal ꧁ las su dme 'khrugs byed cing lus la lcags slog gyon ꧁ dge bshes dmag dpon byed cing dge slong gru ru gsod ꧁ dgon gnas 'thab ra[gs] byed cing dben gnas grong dkyil byed ꧁ sngags pa nang rgyas byed cing zas ngan dug sbyor byed ꧁ gtso bos mna' za byed cing dpa' bo gri khar gsod ꧁ bod rnams khrab rgyun chad pa bzhin du sil bur 'gro ꧁ pha dang bu gnyis 'thab cing pha spun nang dme byed ꧁ dgra bla bdud btsan 'bod cing ꧁ ar pas lam 'phrang srung ꧁ khyo ga'i snying du 'gong po zhugs ꧁ bud med snying la bsen mo zhugs ꧁ byis pa'i snying du the'u rang zhugs ꧁ thams cad bdud kyi dbang du gyur ꧁ lha srin sde brgyad 'khrugs nas ni ꧁ nad dang mu ge'i bskal pa 'byung ꧁ de'i dus su mi thub rnam gsum 'byung ꧁ sa yis gter mi thub ste ꧁ chos gter dang nor gter thams cad kha 'byed ꧁ gser dngul rin po che'i kha 'byed ꧁ chos skyong la gtad pa'i dkor mi thub ꧁ dkon mchog nor la rku 'phrog byed ꧁ bandes bsgrub chos mi thub ste ꧁ rang gis bsgrub mi thub par gzhan la nor phyir btsong ꧁ rang nyams len med par grags 'dod gzhan la bshad ꧁*

expected that the statues, jewels, and texts of the earlier period were the sacred relics of their ancestors (*yab mes kyi thugs dam*), whether in the form of treasure or texts. The preeminent example of the latter was the *Gnyan po gsang ba*, the *Ferocious Secret*, a box from Lha tho tho ri gnyan btsan that contained a group of four sūtra relics said to be the legacy of Lha tho tho ri, a legacy kept inscribed in lapis letters on a golden tablet at Khra 'brug temple.[13] Similarly, as is indicated in early *gter ma* self-descriptions, *gter ma* were expected to include much sūtra literature, an aspect of *gter ma* that has been most frequently over-looked in favor of the tantric *gter ma*. Yet, not only do Ratna gling pa and the *Maṇi bka' 'bum dkar chag* begin their categories of *gter ma* with sūtras, collections of sūtras have been consistently discussed in various individual *gter ma*. This is as we should expect, given that the dynastic period was the great era of sūtra translations into Tibetan, so that the textual legacy found in the imperial libraries was centred on the Mahayanist canon.

Indeed, the development of apocryphal *sūtras* seems to have been important in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Their titles are employed in treasure texts and by *gter ma* apologists, sūtras with appel-lations like the *Chu klung sna tshogs [rol pa'i] mdo* and the *Snying rje sna tshogs rol pa'i mdo*.[14] I have not been able to trace several of these sūtras to the canon, and texts like the *Chu klung sna tshogs [rol pa'i] mdo* may prove to be empty titles into which quotes are filled as the need arises, in the manner of the 500,000 verse *Hevajra-tantra* or other missing texts with no evidence beyond quotations. We do see the "river" (*chu klung*) image or the "play" (*rol pa*) theme repeated within

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[12] Stein (1986: 193, n.58) understood this as "trésor royal".

[13] The phrase "sūtra relic" is employed in the *Rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me slong*, p. 61.4 for the *Gnyan po gsang ba*; see also *Dba' bzhed*, pp. 24–25; Sørensen 1994: 150; Haarh 1969: 335–38; Stein 1986: 188–93; Richardson 1998: 74–81; *Mkhas pa'i dga ston* 1, pp. 168–70; *Rgya bod yig tshang chen mo*, p. 137.6; *Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud*, pp. 164.8–166.7. The four sūtras are the *Bhi ma la mu ta'i dpal spang skong phyag brgya ba*, the *Kāraṇḍavyūha*, the *Klu'i dpal spang skong phyag rgya ba*, and the *Mi dge ba bcu las log* (*Bka' 'chems ka khol ma*, pp. 108.1–3, 298.15–18). There is another list of sources ostensibly translated by Thon-mi, the *Dam chos tsin dha maṇi zhes yi ge drug ma'i gzungs*, the *Chu klung sna stshogs rol pa'i mdo*, the *Chu klung ba tsa'i mdo* and the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka-sūtra*; *Bka' 'chems ka khol ma*, p. 107.13–15.

[14] *Bka' 'chems ka khol ma*, pp. 14.17, 15.8–9, 107.13–14. The *Chu klung sna tshogs [rol pa'i] mdo* and a *Snang ba rol pa'i mdo* are quoted in the *Maṇi bka' 'bum*, pp. 173.3–175.4; the *Chu klung sna tshogs [rol pa'i] mdo* is also quoted in the earliest of *gter-ma* defences, Guru Chos dbang's *Gter 'byung chen mo*, p. 91.6.

the names of many of these works. In this light it is interesting that one of the 'Indian *Gsar ma*' texts mentioned by Ratna gling pa employed the river language in an apocryphal work that was partly included in Kong sprul's *Gdams ngag mdzod*. This is the *Ā li kā li gsang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa chu klung chen po'i rgyud*, a work on niṣpannakrama yoga, most likely the composition of Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas.[15] In distinction, the citations from the sūtras like the *Chu klung sna tshogs [rol pa'i] mdo* generally identify the cultic practices focusing on Avalokiteśvara or other normative Mahayanist ideas, which were fused with the cult of the emperors, the sense of loss of the dynastic power, and the idea of the emperors' continuing concern for the royal temples and the people of Tibet.

That ideology was enhanced by the assertion of some early treasure texts, as in the Great Chronicle of the *Maṇi bka' 'bum*, that they constituted in some sense an extension of the king's soul or person (*rgyal po'i bla*).

> Because the King [Srong btsan sgam po] possessed prescient awareness (*abhijñā*), he entrusted this Testament [i.e., the *Maṇi bka' 'bum*] to the translators, saying, "Make two copies of these my teachings. Inscribe one in letters of gold and silver on a blue 'river silk', and deposit it as the King's Personal treasure in the treasury at Khra 'brug. Inscribe the second on a scroll of Chinese paper and hide it under the foot of Hayagrīva in the Mahākāruṇika temple [at Bsam yas]".[16]

The notion of the soul/ life or person (*bla*) was an indigenous Tibetan idea, for the Tibetan theological anthropology maintained that humans were inhabited by a number of elements, including various (sometime

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[15] *Āli kā li gsang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa chu klung chen po'i rgyud*, in *Dam chos snying po zhi byed las rgyud kyi snyan rgyud zab ched ma*, vol. 1, pp. 6–114; three selected chapters with annotations have been published in *Gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 9, pp. 2–16.

[16] *Maṇi bka' 'bum*, fol. 96a.4–6: *rgyal po la mngon par shes pa mnga' bas lo tssha ba rnams la bka' chems btad nas nga yis bshad pa'i chos 'di rnams dpe gnyis su gyis la / gcig chu dar sngon po la gser dngul gyis bris la phra 'brug dkor mdzod du / rgyal po'i bla gter du sbos / gcig rgya shog la shog dril du bris la / thug rje chen po'i lha khang gi rta mgrin gyi zhabs 'og tu sbos /* The Punaka edition cited here reads the temple name incorrectly as *phra 'brug*, but the Zhol spar khang (fol. 90b6) has *khra 'brug*; this treasury was probably at the Khra 'brug palace; see *Bka' 'chems ka khol ma*, p. 104.7–8. The temple is the Ārya-palo (i.e. Āryāvalokiteśvara) temple close to the south entrance of the compound, which was built first by Khri Srong lde'u btsan; its certification here by Srong btsan sgam po is an anachronism; *Sba bzhed*, p. 339.5–6; *Sba bzhed zhabs btags ma*, p. 32.1–4. The "river silk" is *chu dar*, a board-like or felt-like material made from pounding water weeds (*Tshig mdzod chen mo,* p. 802b); the water

five) gods, as well as a vital force (*srog*) and a life identity.[17] We have tantalisingly little early information about such ideas, for they contradict much of Buddhist doctrine, but at best they seem somewhat vague, as many ideas of self actually appear to us. Indeed, the majority of the descriptions were written down much later, long after Buddhist institutions were victorious, and these native Tibetan ideas became expressed primarily in epic and medical literature. The treasure descriptions, in fact, are something of an anomaly, for they are among the earliest surviving references to these ideas, which certainly predate the *gter ma* phenomenon.

As the 'person/ soul' treasure (*bla gter*) of the emperor, buried texts would be inherently valuable, for they represented his final statement or testament (*bka' 'chems*) as his inheritance left to subsequent generations, and the principal articulation of this statement will be looked at later. So important was this idea that even when the *bla gter* became included in a list of various kinds of treasure in the late twelfth century, it was often given pride of place as first on the list, and its initial place of burial was shifted from the Jo khang to Bsam yas—and the king changed from Srong btsan sgam po to Khri Srong lde'u btsan—with much of the ideology otherwise intact.

> Now for the manner in which the treasures are to be hidden: In the treasuries within each of the three stages of the Dbu rtse [temple in Bsam yas], the Kings' personal treasure (*rgyal po'i bla gter*) is to be hidden. That is the treasury of the Dharma. It should also be hidden in the Bu tshab gser khang gling, erected by the three Ladies, in the Khams gsum zangs khang gling, in the Dge rgyas bye ma'i gling—in these three distinguished temples the King's personal treasure is to be hidden.[18]

Guru Chos dbang declares that the King's personal treasure liberates its essential meaning in 1100 ways, for it includes both Dharma and wealth treasures.[19] Moreover, when the fourteenth century author U rgyan

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weed described by *chu bal (mo)* remains uncertain, and the attempt by Arya 1998, p. 65b, to identify it with spirogyra varians (a form of algae) may not be correct, since a solid paper would seem to need fibers. The consistent reference to *chu dar* in *gter ma* means it may have been an early (sacred?) form of paper employed by Tibetans before the importation of Chinese products; see *Bka' thang sde lnga*, pp. 160.19, 195.21; it is first on the list of materials on which *gter ma* may legitimately be copied (*bris gzhi*) in Guru Chos dbang's *Gter 'byung chen mo*, p. 102.4.

[17] The best material on the ideas of the *bla* is collected in Karmay 1998: 310–38; see also Tucci 1980: 190–93.

[18] *Zangs gling ma*, p. 130.7–11: *de yang gter kha sbas lugs ni ꞉ dbu rtse rim gsum gyi gter mdzod re re ru ꞉ rgyal po'i bla gter re re sbas so ꞉ chos kyi gter mdzod sbas ꞉*

gling pa discusses the list of treasure types, virtually all of the Buddhist canon—including the Rnying ma tantras—are identified as part of the King's Personal Treasure, far exceeding the textual content included in any of the other seventeen kinds of *gter ma*.[20]

While it is used in different senses, as a noun the term *bla* is usually understood as the soul/ self and as an adjective it means superior or appropriate, but in the older texts these meanings are difficult to disentangle. I believe that this word is often used in the sense of the king's (or other) exalted person, much as the term for person (*puruṣa*) indicates a self in India, as well as denoting divinity and authority embedded in the world (*prakṛti*). *Mutatis mutandis*, much of this applies to the Tibetan word *bla* as well, for it may describe essential or exalted items, without which the individual ceases to be. So, when Srong btsan sgam po unified Tibet, he made his personal palace (*bla'i pho brang*) at Phying nga stag rtse, while the queen and princes settled elsewhere.[21] As Khri Srong lde'u btsan began to organise the monks in his empire, the important monk Sba Gsal snang was installed as the Person of the Dharma (*chos kyi bla*), with the military title of Commander of the Right Guard.[22] A little later, when time came for the construction of Bsam yas, Sba Gsal snang asked to be excused from constructing the temple of the imperial person (*bla'i gtsug lag khang*) at Bsam yas but instead be allowed to build a temple in his home area of Ba lam glag, east of Lhasa.[23] Elsewhere, it is mentioned that physicians were appointed Srong btsan sgam po's personal physicians (*rgyal po'i bla sman*) with their practice evidently on the king's exalted person (*rgyal po'i bla spyad*).[24] These uses harmonise with the *gter ma* category, for

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jo mo gsum gyis bzhengs pa yi ⁝ bu tshab gser khang gling ⁝ khams gsum zangs khang gling ⁝ dge rgyas bye ba'i gling ⁝ khyad par gyi gling gsum du bla gter re re sbas ⁝

[19] *Gter 'byung chen mo*, p. 98.5–6.

[20] *Bka' thang sde lnga*, pp. 166–77; see also *Bka' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa'i chos skor*, p. 211.6, where a group of one hundred eight *rgyal po'i bla gter* are mentioned as hidden by Nyang ral in his previous lives.

[21] *Mkhas pa lde'u chos 'byung*, pp. 254.21–255.1.

[22] I.e., *g.yas kyi tshugs dpon; Dba' bzhed*, p. 60, fol. 14a7; *Sba bzhed*, p. 34.7; the title *chos kyi bla* is left out of *Sba bzhed zhabs btags ma*, p. 27.10.

[23] *Sba bzhed*, p. 35.14; *Dba' bzhed*, fol. 15a2; *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, p. 333.13; missing in *Sba bzhed zhabs btags ma*, p. 26.11. The identity of the *bla'i gtsug lag khang* with *Bsam-yas* is evident in the *Sngon gyi gtam me tog phreng ba*, Uebach 1987: 112 (*Bod kyi lo rgyus deb ther khag lnga*, p. 28.2), where the same episode mentions Bsam yas; for the Ba lam glag temple, see *Dba' bzhed*, pp. 41, n.90, 63, n.203.

the King's personal treasure (*rgyal po'i bla gter*) is often placed at the head of a list of other analogous compounds, like incantation treasure (*mthu gter*), mind treasure (*thugs gter*), medicine treasure (*sman gter*), and so forth.[25] We are even told that the personal text of the royal ancestor (*yab mes kyi bla dpe*) was buried in 'Kho 'thing temple in Lho brag.[26] This is in conformity with the frequent colophon citations in the Bka' brgyad treasures of Nyang ral that many works were the personal texts (*rgyal po'i bla dpe* or *phyag dpe*) of one or another of the emperors.[27]

These and other indications support the premise that most early *gter ma* were tied intimately to the emperors, so that the texts and other treasures of the King's personal treasure would be in some sense an extension of, or manifestation from, his person. While they may have been written by the great saints or the celestial bodhisattvas and translated by divine translators, their burials were effected by imperial decree on behalf of later Tibetans and represented the continued embodiment of the emperors' spirituality in the form of texts. In this regard, Tibetans understood that the individual or community 'person' could be located in a specific object. So, we often read of a person establishing her soul or life in a turquoise, in a mountain, a tree, or other natural material. This phenomenon is even celebrated in some traditional wedding songs, where the bride's party formally challenges the groom's entourage to identify their locale and its mountains. In response, one of the groom's beer bearers replies,

> The aft mountain like an arrogant elephant is the soul-peak of the great father!
> The fore mountain like a heaped up maṇḍala is the soul-peak of the great mother!
> The right mountain like a coiled white scarf is the soul-peak of the lusty son!
> The left mountain like a coiled purple scarf is the soul-peak of the innocent daughter!
> This place like an eight-petal lotus is the common ground of delight in all happiness![28]

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[24] *Rgya bod yig tshang chen mo*, p. 192.8, 192.15.

[25] *Zangs gling ma*, pp. 130–132.

[26] *Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud*, p. 437.5.

[27] E.g., *Bka' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa'i chos skor*, vol. 2, p. 196.6; vol. 4, pp. 95.6, 178.2, 331.3, 565.4, etc.

Each of these 'soul-peak' translates *bla ri*, a mountain representing the person or life of an individual. Clans may become represented by totemic animals, so that sheep, yaks, horses, deer, cattle, oxen, goats, and so on become "emblems of the clan's soul" (*bla rtags*).[29] Communities may also have such an aggregate soul, and some documents indicate that the suppression of Buddhism by Dar ma Khri 'U dum btsan caused the soul-mountain of Tibet to crumble.[30]

As we encounter them in texts, the soul/ person (*bla*) and the individual, family or community gods (*lha*) are mutually reinforcing and even fluid categories. Some of the terms interchange the spellings (*bla/ lha*) as in the case of the gods of aggression (*dgra lha/ bla*) or in the Yum bu palace, designated as either a personal/chief fortress (*bla mkhar*) or filled with divinity (*lha sgang*), which amounted to much the same thing.[31] For example, epic literature indicates that the first king to be buried in the tombs, Gri gum btsan po, caused his own demise by the loss of his gods.[32] While preparing for battle against his enemy, Lo ngam rta rdzi, Gri gum bound on his person a number of items, including a black silk turban on his head, a fox corpse (pelt?) on his right shoulder and a dog corpse on his left. These respectively caused his hunting god (*mgur lha*), his god of aggression (*dgra lha*), and his god of masculinity (*pho lha*) to fade away. Consequently, when Dri gum swung his sword around, he sliced off the magical rope and ladder (*rmu thag rmu skas*) leading to the celestial realms, requiring him to have a tomb on earth.[33] This tomb was constructed in the earliest royal necropolis area around Mt. Gyang to, where it was understood as the mound or tent of the royal souls (*gyang to bla 'bubs*).[34] Eventually, the entombment of the kings and emperors of Tibet will be understood to establish a place for the residence of their collective spirits and identified with many of the properties of the Buddha's relics in stūpas, so that the king's residual presence in the tomb protects all of Tibet.[35]

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[28] *Gna' rabs bod kyi chang pa'i lam srol*, p. 37: *rgyab ri glang chen 'gyings 'dra zer / yab chen a pha'i bla ri yin // mdun ri maṇḍal spungs 'dra zer / yum chen a ma'i bla ri yin // g.yas ri dar dkar 'khyil 'dra zer / stag shar gzhon pa'i bla ri yin // g.yon ri dar smug 'khyil 'dra zer / dman chung bu mo'i bla ri yin // sa gzhi padma 'dab brgyad zer / dga' skyid longs spyod 'dzoms so yin //*

[29] Karmay 1998: 327–28.

[30] Karmay 1998: 314.

[31] *Rgya bod yig tshang chen mo*, p. 136.13; *Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud*, p. 164.8.

[32] *Tun hong nas thon pa'i bod kyi lo rgyus yig cha*, pp. 34–35 (= Pelliot 1287).

[33] Haarh 1969, p. 144; *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, p. 161.15–21.

[34] Haarh 1969: 381, and Macdonald 1971: 222, n.133, have pointed out that a tent provided the fundamental metaphor for the tombs, a point that Karmay (1998: 225) does

III. TREASURES IN THE ONCE AND FUTURE IMPERIUM

The renaissance literature describing the imperium understands that
Srong btsan sgam po was the law-giver, decreeing the sixteen regula-
tions that were described as the Dharma of men (*mi chos*) and bringing
the Buddhist Dharma of gods (*lha chos*) to Tibet. But *gter ma* narra-
tives often celebrate the difficulties in getting the Tibetan people inter-
ested in Buddhism and related the various stratagems that the emperors
needed to gain Tibetan acceptance. This implied, among other things,
the idea that Tibetans would mature over time and that the Tibetan peo-
ple required different approaches, which included the multimedia vehi-
cles of texts, paintings and stories. As the will of the emperor, the *gter
ma* were the continually evolving vehicle for Tibetan Buddhist educa-
tion. As the *Pillar Testament* affirms in its formula for *gter ma* compo-
sition,

> Having constructed [the Jokhang] in that way, [we know that] the beings
> of this Tibetan land of snows were not worthy of being converted by the
> Tathāgata, and could not drink the nectar of the holy Dharma because
> they had no confidence in the holy word. Their minds did not accept the
> Dharma of awareness, and they were not able to train in the three train-
> ings. However, they have been converted by my [Srong btsan sgam po's]
> laws of Dharma and of the kingdom. So then paint a series of paintings
> [on the Jokhang] in that way [demonstrating Dharma]. Then impel the
> ignorance of these beings of the land of snows into learning [through the
> paintings]. Write what is to be done into a story, so that they will have
> confidence in the texts. Thus you will dampen their distress at learning
> and, swelling their interest, will set them to Buddhist training. Having
> first written Bon doctrines, you then place them in the three trainings of
> the Dharma.[36]

This formula is very interesting and reasonably early, and shows both
the movement to preserve Tibetan understanding through painting and
narratives—which was sometimes classified as human religion (*mi
chos*)—as well as the sense that Tibet was benighted by Indian stan-

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not accept for questionable reasons, although he is to be commended for discovering
the site.

  [35] This line of thought is particularly noticeable in Rnying ma pa literature; see
chapter 38 of the *Gtam gyi tshogs theg pa'i rgya mtsho* by 'Jigs med gling pa, pp.
278–303. This chapter was used by Tucci 1950: 1–5, and Haarh 1969: 114–17, 362–64,
381–391.

dards. The text also recognises that this dedication to the superiority of Indian ideals was generated at some cost. If all authenticity is derivative of Indian Buddhism, then Tibet was fated to labour under the cloud of extraterritorial images of the ideal, denying a simple confidence in indigenous Tibetan spirituality. The mitigating factors included the agency of the emperors in their treasure burials, combined with the supernormal abilities of the translators and the treasure revealers.

In the period of potential resurgence, when the treasure is revealed, the validation of royal dynastic temples is an important theme. Indeed, the *Bka' 'chems ka khol ma* projects where future treasures are to be discovered in a section that has proven to be one of the more influential in *Gter ma* literature but heretofore has been accorded little notice. The section, which follows immediately after the directions on how to write *gter ma* and paint pictures—presented above—indicates where they were to be buried and, by extension, where they were to be revealed. In the middle of his instructions on the construction of the Jokhang, Srong btsan sgam po is depicted as telling his Nepalese Queen to bury treasures all around this temple and in other temples of the empire.

> In order to spread the holy Dharma in this snowy land of Tibet, hide the Dharma treasure at a spot close to the 'leafy' pillar [of the Jo khang]. By virtue of its qualities, the Dharma will spread through all the beings of this snowy land, my ministers, and royal descendants. Therefore, in order to protect them from ones who would do them harm, hide the treasure of the ferocious incantational magic at a spot close to the 'snake-headed' pillar. By virtue of its blessing, no kind of harm will be inflicted on any person or being having faith in Lhasa. In order to ensure no harm is inflicted by evil mantras and to turn back armies from border states, hide the reversing treasure at a spot close to the 'lion milking' (?) pillar. By virtue of its blessing, no kind of harm will be inflicted on any person or being having faith in Lhasa. Hide the medical practice treasures at a spot close to the 'leafy' pillar...[there follows many more Jokhang instruc-

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[36] *Bka' 'chems ka khol ma*, p. 258.2–12: *de ltar byas pas bod yul kha ba can gyi sems can rnams / de bzhin gshegs pa'i gdul byar ma gyur pa bka' la yid mi ches pas dam pa'i chos kyi bdud rtsi 'thung du mi btub pa / rig pa'i chos la blo mi 'gro ba / blab pa gsum la bslab tu mi btub pa'i sems can 'di rnams nga'i chos khrims dang rgyal khrims gyis 'dul ba yin pas de lta bu'i rgyud ris kyang bri'o / de nas kha ba can gyi sems can ma rig pa 'di lta bu la slob tu gzhug go bya ba sgrung du bris la lung la yid ches su gzhug go / ces gdung bar du gags la 'bur du gtod nas bzhag go / bon bris nas chos bslab pa gsum la bkod /* cf. statements in Guru Chos-dbang's *Gter 'byung chen mo*, p. 83.6–84.1; Gyatso 1994: 280–83.

tions]...Moreover, hide the treasure appropriate to the Klu at Khra-'brug temple in G.yo ru. Hide the Eternal Bon treasure at Mkho mthing temple in Lho brag. With that, great benefit will occur for subsequent ordinary people. Hide the astrological treasure at the Glong thang sgrol ma temple in Khams. Hide the essential mantra treasure at the Bur chu temple in Kong po. Hide the meditation instruction treasure in the Khrom pa rgyan temple in Gtsang. By its virtue, many siddhas will arise in Gtsang. Hide the treasure of the many divisions of the royal lineage in the Dpal chen temple of Chang. By virtue of that, the imperial lineage will not be cut off.[37]

The sites mentioned in this passage were not only important eleventh century temples, but in the imperial period they had acted as repositories for copies of imperial pronouncements, so that real and imagined imperial documents became intermixed in the early renaissance.[38] Moreover, this section of the *Bka' 'chems ka khol ma* was to become the model for a great many future *gter ma* prophecies, and was expanded on from the late twelfth century onward.[39] Such statements validated past apocryphal scriptures, for they were the consequence of an imperial intention, and vindicated future compositions, for the future unwritten texts became revealed as the hidden scriptures from the past.

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[37] This passage translates *Bka' 'chems ka khol ma*, pp. 258.14–259.8, 260.17–261.7: *bod kha ba can gyi yul khams 'dir dam pa'i chos dar ba'i phyir / ka ba shin lo can dang nye ba'i sar chos kyi gter sbos shig / de'i yon tan gyis nga'i rigs rgyud dbon sras blon po rnams dang kha ba can gyi sems can rnams la dam pa'i chos rgyas par 'ong gis / de rnams la gnod pa byed mkhan bsrung bar bya ba'i phyir / ka ba sbrul mgo can dang nye ba'i sar drag sngags mthu'i gter sbos shig / de'i byin rlabs kyis ra sa la mos pa'i mi dang sems can la cis kyang mi tshugs so / mtha'i rgyal khams kyi dmod sde zlog par byed pa dang ngan sngags kyis mi tshugs par bya ba'i phyir / ka ba sengge la zan ma dang nye ba'i sar phyir bzlog gi gter sbos shig / de'i byin rlabs kyis lha sa la mos pa'i mi dang sems can thams cad la gnod pa cis kyang mi tshugs so / ka ba shin lo can dang nye ba'i sar sman dpyad kyi gter rnams sbos shig / ...[260.17] gzhan yang g.yon ru khra 'brug tu klu chog gi gter sbos shig / lho brag mkhon mthing lha khang du g.yung drung bon gyi gter sbos shig / des phyis kyi skye bo 'jig rten pa la phan pa rgya chen po yong ba yin / khams kyi glong thang sgrol ma'i lha khang du rtsis kyi gter sbos shig / kong po bur chu'i lha khang du snying po sngags kyi gter sbos shig / gtsang khrom pa rgyan gyi lha khang du don khrid sgom gyi gter sbos shig / gtsang du grub thob man po yong ba de'i yon tan yin no / byang gi dpal chen lha khang du / rgyal rabs sil ma mang po'i gter sbos shig / des rgyal brgyud gdung mi 'chad pa yin no /*. For ease of reading in the translation, I have altered the *ra sa* of 259.1 to *lha sa*, which is the reading for the same sentence 259.5–6; the meaning of *seng ge lag zan ma* of 259.4 is not clear to me; apparently it has been changed in later narratives to *ka ba seng ge can*, the lion pillar (*Bka' thang sde lnga*, p. 159.9).

[38] *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, 1: 372–376.

[39] *Zangs gling ma*, pp. 130 132; *Bka' thang sde lnga*, pp. 74–75, 155–207, 529–532; *Padma bka' thang*, pp. 548–557; cf. the quotation in *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, vol. 1, pp. 246–247.

Two things are worthy of note here. First, the list stands in contrast to the elaborate temple system built up by Klu mes, Lo ston, and the other Eastern Vinaya (*smad 'dul*) monks that formed groups and organised revenue or taxation associations. In the 246 temples I have been able to trace to the "ten men from Dbus gtsang" or their immediate disciples, there are very few shared between this resurgent monastic movement and the emergent *gter ma* protagonists. The question is important, since the Eastern Vinaya monks would often become first ensconced in an old imperial temple, and they had first received ordination in the imperial temple at Dan tig, which was included in the Ral pa can list of thirty establishments under his reign.[40] The Eastern Vinaya curriculum was derived from the imperial curriculum and they maintained a Vinaya that was introduced during Khri Srong lde'u btsan's rule. Yet, while Khra 'brug temple is one of the more important for the author of the *Bka' 'chems ka khol ma*, it does not appear to have been a residence for these Eastern Vinaya monks. Similarly, Kho mthing is revealed in *gter ma* literature as an significant site, where multiple discoveries were effected. Conversely, the imperial edifice of Ka chu was an important site for Klu mes, but it does not appear as a treasure temple in the lists I have seen. Most important, of course, is the position of the Jo khang in Lhasa, as well as the other Lhasa temples, such as Ra mo che and the Klu khang. These are important in *gter ma* mythology, but the Eastern Vinaya monks were restricted from access to them, if the note in Bu ston's *chos 'byung* is to be believed.[41]

Second, we may also reflect on the strategy within many works from the renaissance period of attributing their discovery to a person unlikely or impossible—persons identified as *gter ston* because of antiquity, fame, political importance, or any number of other reasons. So the *Bka' 'chems ka khol ma* is most famously attributed to Atiśa, an attribution that is extremely unlikely, and some of the reasons for this I have given elsewhere.[42] The rhetorical strategy of connecting everything to Atiśa—whether the prophecy about the founding of Sa skya or apocryphal connection with other persons—is ubiquitous in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The best example I can give is to cite the putative connection between Atiśa and Ba ri lo tsā ba Rin chen grags pa (1040–1111?). Not only does this occur in the *Rnam thar yongs grags*,

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[40] These have been investigated in Uebach 1990.

[41] *Bu ston chos 'byung*, Szerb ed., p. 62.15

[42] Davidson 2004.

but it is inscribed in two colophons (To. 1886 & To. 2704) that claim these texts were translated by Atiśa and Ba ri at Tho ling.[43] However, Atiśa left Tho ling in 1045 and Ba ri was born in 1040; for these canonical colophons to be true, Ba ri would had to have learned Sanskrit by about the age of three and to have concluded work with the Bengali scholar in West Tibet by the age of five. But according to his hagiography written by Bsod nams rtse mo, Ba ri did not leave Khams until 1058 at the age of eighteen, four years after Atiśa's demise in Snye thang, so there is little point in pursuing the connection.[44] This strategy is also recognised by some in the case of the *Bka' 'chems mtho mthing ma*, and Ratna gling pa attributes its discovery to Paṇ chen Śākyaśrī, equally unlikely.[45] We moreover have *gter ma* texts attributed to 'Brog mi lo tsā ba, Sgam po pa, and other improbable *gter ston*.[46]

Even in the case of *gter ma* attributed to Rnying ma authorities, there is much to question. The best example I know is the discovery of the *Snying thig* tantras. They were said to have been initially buried by Myang ban at the order of Khri Srong lde'u btsan and recovered by Ldang ma lhun rgyal at Dbu ru Zha'i lha khang. He conferred them on Lce btsun Seng ge dbang phyug, who practised and reburied them, to be further discovered by Lce sgom nag po, who himself has other *gter ma* attributed to him by Ratna gling pa. However, we may legitimately observe that the strategy of 're-revelation' (*yang gter* or *ldab gter*) has as its primary purpose the projecting into the past of revelations actually effected at a later time. Consequently, I would place the twelfth century Lce sgom nag po at the centre of this process of *Snying thig* treasure formation, rather than his eleventh century predecessors like Ldang ma lhun rgyal.

The important point with respect to this self-consciously political literature is that its explicit goal is the validation of specific royal lineages and royal sites at the juncture when there is both a nostalgia for the

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[43] *Rnam thar yongs grags*, pp. 201–202.

[44] *Bla ma ba ri lo tsā ba rin chen grags kyi rnam thar*, p. 258.4.

[45] *Gter 'byung chen mo gsal ba'i sgron me*, p. 54.5. We note in Jackson (1990: 70) that a *gter ma* revelation is sought by the translators of Paṇ chen Śākyaśrī, but to no avail; the *gter ma* connection may be the result of building on the well known episode of Paṇ chen Śākyaśrī discovering Sanskrit manuscripts, especially of the *Guhyagarbha*, in Bsam yas; Jackson 1990: 22, n.12, 69. Many of the most important mythic portions of the *Bka' 'chems mtho mthing ma* have been edited from a unique manuscript in Sørensen 2000, and they show no sign of a Paṇ chen Śākyaśrī connection.

[46] This question is discussed in Davidson 2005, chapter six.

lost imperium and a real struggle for power among aristocratic clans in the eleventh to twelfth century. Moreover, both these clans and the imperial lineages were being threatened by a number of factors, including the new tantric translations and the aggressive conduct of the Eastern Vinaya monks. *Gter ma* was an essential part of the nativist response on the part of Rnying ma lineages, aristocratic clans, and the hopeful remnants of the imperial line. Thus, in each instance of *gter ma*, the discovery of texts and wealth in the remains of imperial sites contributes to the imperial legacy, the typological categorisation of *gter ma*, the continuing sense of the loss of imperial rule and the hope for its reemergence. Yet by the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries, the context for *gter ma* had markedly changed, so that the understanding of the process and the categories of *gter ma* were transformed in Rnying ma apologetics, which came to de-emphasise the imperial will and progressively to elevate the status of Padmasambhava and his twenty five disciples.

IV. CONCLUSION: THE TEXTUALISATION OF THE TIBET LANDSCAPE

In his overall assessment of the importance of texts in the twelfth-century European mini-renaissance, Brian Stock has observed,

> If one takes ancient and medieval society as one's laboratory, then two types of transition can be seen to be acting together. There was a distinct shift from the oral to the written, for instance, when Frankish customs were replaced after the ninth century by the literate jurisprudence of Roman and canon law. But there were also subtle changes in traditions that were becoming more self-consciously literate, as when the *chanson de geste* was written down and read aloud from a text in response to the needs of sedentary courtly audiences, while retaining the oral-formulaic style of its past. It is not difficult to see how a movement from the oral to the written can alter the way in which a society sees itself. It is less often recognised that archaisms or anachronisms, taking the form of the oral or the written, can also influence perceptions, attitudes, and practices.[47]

A somewhat similar process appears in the case of the early *gter ma*, for the Tibetan origin myth, the imperial mythologies, the fascination with Avalokiteśvara, and the sense of loss for the empire seem to per-

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[47] Stock 1990: 8.

vade early treasure texts, which bring into written form the oral lore of the tenth to twelfth century.

Especially with the category and content of *Rgyal po'i bla gter*, we also find the textualisation of the emperors' persons, so that the intentions of the imperial will were effected by the continuing process of scriptural revelation. The mythic decrees of the emperors have been inscribed in these works, which include stories and operate in conjunction with the received paintings in the surviving imperial temples. Eventually, the imperial person becomes extended from the pillars of temples into the interiors of caves, mountains, rocks, and the very fabric of Tibet, where new treasures are located. Indeed, the process that begins with the textualisation of Srong btsan sgam po's self ends with landscape of Tibet inscribed as the self of the emperors.

These texts synthesise several cosmic ideologies, Tibetan imperial origins, and the protection of Tibet by the emperors, who are the manifestations of Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī and Vajrapāṇi. In these works, Tibet is revealed for the first time as the field of the activity of Buddhas and bodhisattvas. No longer the stepchild of Indian cosmology, the border-country of Tibet becomes the focus of divine emanation, for Tibetans themselves are descended from the bodhisattvas' previous manifestations. The gods of individual valleys (*yul lha*), heretofore of localised power and authority, eventually became shared by the Tibetan people, so that pilgrimage to the sites of the Buddhist divinities now inhabiting those areas is authenticated as religiously efficacious. The power of the texts was so effective, that these works became popularly accepted as indistinguishable from translated Indian works, so that the Indian religion of Buddhism really became Tibetan in scope, nature and domain.

Little wonder, then, that while concluding his section on *Gsar ma gter ma*, Ratna gling pa observes that,

> In that way, these treasures hidden by Srong btsan sgam po are generally not discriminated as either *Gsar ma* or *Rnying ma*, but are established as authoritative by all, since there is no dispute about their status.[48]

To a greater or lesser extent this is true, and exact formulation of the Fifth Dalai Lama's government after 1642 would have been inconceivable without the broad acceptance of the Srong btsan sgam po *gter ma*.

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[48] *Gter 'byung chen mo gsal ba'i sgron me*, p. 56.4–5: *de ltar rgyal po srong btsan sgam po'i sbas gter rnams la / phyir gsar rnying gi bye ba med na yang / kun gyis tshad mar 'jog cing rtsod pa med pa'i phyir na /*

Consequently, the issue of *gter ma* in Tibet is actually simpler than has often been acknowledged: it is not *whether* treasure texts are accepted, but *which* are acceptable, so that the struggle of authenticity is over which varieties are to be taken as veridical.

This means that Tibetans in the renaissance period—faced with the remains of their imperial temples, sensing the fractious impotence of their political leaders, and overwhelmed by the authority of the translations done by the great tantric translators—seemed to expect that the documents coming out of the imperial sites would communicate the intention of the emperors of the past, especially the law-giver Srong btsan sgam po. Consequently, Tibetans in the various communities participated in the *gter ma* enterprise, by anticipating that the sacred ground of Tibet would yield texts, affirming them as they were composed, and practising them as they needed. In this manner, the Tibetan phenomenon of *gter ma* appears driven as much by popular expectation and ubiquitous acclaim as by the desire for individual *gter ston* to validate their lineages, valleys, clans and personal mystic visions.

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TANTALISING TRACES OF THE LABOURS OF THE LOTSĀWAS: ALTERNATIVE TRANSLATIONS OF SANSKRIT SOURCES IN THE WRITINGS OF RJE TSONG KHA PA

CHRISTIAN K. WEDEMEYER (CHICAGO, USA)

I. INTRODUCTORY REFLECTIONS

Much has been made, in both scholarly and more popular literature, of the marvel of the Tibetan translations of Buddhist texts between the eighth and the fourteenth centuries. In particular, the Tibetan translations have been praised for their alleged extreme precision—an exactitude the presumption of which has led some to attempt 'back translating' of works from Tibetan into Sanskrit.[1] Walter Eugene Clarke, in his 1951 Presidential Address to the American Oriental Society, enthusiastically praises the Tibetan translations, by way of contrasting them favorably with their counterparts in Chinese, writing:

> The Tibetan translations are marvelous for their word-for-word fidelity to the original. They are of great help in dealing with badly mutilated texts and in giving a clear impression of the original. With a good knowledge of Tibetan and of Buddhist Sanskrit the Tibetan texts could be rewritten in a Sanskrit that would approximate very closely to the original.[2]

[1] For example, in the 1930s, Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana described his work to "restore some of the great works of the Buddhist logicians, from Tibetan to Sanskrit"—in particular the *Pramāṇavārttika* of Dharmakīrti. See Sāṅkṛtyāyana 1935: 21. Similar efforts continue to this day at, for example, the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi, India.

[2] Clark 1951: 210.

On the whole, of course, there is some truth to this. The normative
practice enjoined of Tibetan translators was to adhere to a rather strict
policy of following prescribed translation-equivalents—which termi-
nology is set out in the *Bye brag tu rtogs par byed pa chen po* (a.k.a.
the *Mahāvyutpatti*). Guidance, prescription and proscription, was also
to be had from a companion work, the *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*—
which encourages, for instance, the preservation of the syntax of the
Sanskrit original, including (in so far as possible) retaining verbal pre-
fixes (*upasarga*) and word order. The compilers of this work were care-
ful to stress that deviation from the Sanskrit syntax is allowable in order
to produce a comprehensible Tibetan product;[3] however, in practice,
translators seem to have been somewhat reluctant to follow this advice,
seeking instead to preserve these elements of syntax even when the
result was a rather artificial (not to say clumsy and misleading)
Tibetan.[4]

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[3] The *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* specifies that the method of translating the Holy
Teaching should be such that, without deviating from the meaning, the translation
should be easy to understand in Tibetan. That if verses can be rendered into Tibetan
without disturbing the Sanskrit word-order, it should be done so. However, if this is not
the case, they (as well as any prose passages) should be rearranged for ease of under-
standing word and sense (*dam pa'i chos bsgyur ba'i lugs ni don dang mi 'gal la bod
skad la yang gar bde bar gyis shig | dharmma bsgyur ba la rgya gar gyi skad kyi go
rims las mi bsnor bar bod kyi skad du bsgyur na don dang tshig tu 'brel zhing bde na
ma bsnor bar sgyur cig | bsnor na bde zhing go ba bskyed pa zhig yod na | tshigs bcad
la ni rtsa ba bzhi pa'am | drug pa'ang rung ste | tshigs su bcad pa gcig gi nang na gang
bde ba bsnor zhing sgyur cig | rkyang pa la ni don gang snyegs pa yan chad kyi tshig
dang don gnyis ka la gar bde bar bsnor zhing sgyur cig |*). It further stipulates that
upasarga-s should be translated literally and as an extra element only if they have a
semantic effect; those which do not add anything semantically (i.e. *upasarga*-s used
pleonastically) need not be translated as an extra element, but rather the entire verb may
be translated according to the meaning (*pari dang | sam dang | upa lta bu la sogs te |
tshig gi phrad dang rgyan lta bur 'byung ba rnams bsgyur na don dang mthun zhing
'byor pa'i thabs ni | yongs su zhe'am | yang dag pa zhe'am | nye ba zhes sgra bzhin du
sgyur cig | don lhag par snyegs pa med pa rnams ni tshig gi lhad kyis bsnan mi dgos
kyis* [*sic* for *kyi*] *don bzhin du thogs shig |*). See Ishikawa 1990: 2–3. For a valuable dis-
cussion of this, see Kapstein 2003: esp. pp. 755–58.

[4] Contrary to the flexibility dictated by the *Bam gnyis* (see above, note 3), it would
seem that *de facto* prevalent Tibetan translation practice in the *Phyi dar* period dictat-
ed retaining all Sanskrit *upasarga*-s and word-order. In regard to the former, the trans-
lator could then choose whether also to translate literally the root *dhātu* (apparently a
rarer practice) or to follow the literally-translated *upasarga* with a Tibetan verb render-
ing the meaning of the entire *upasarga-dhātu* complex. An example of the former may
be found in Lo chen Rin chen bzang po's translation of verse 16 of the
Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa of Āryadeva (*Sems kyi sgrib pa rnam par sbyong ba*, Tōh.
1804), wherein he renders the term *vyavasthitiḥ* ('distinction') with the literal *rnam par
gnas*, instead of e.g. *rnam par 'byed*. An example of the second, more common, type (as
found, for example, in Lo chen's translation of the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, chapter 5)

On the other hand, the widespread myth of the absolute precision (and the consequently-assumed univocality and transparency) of the Tibetan translations is misleading in a number of ways.[5] It occludes, for example, a) the variety of the Sanskrit manuscripts imported into Tibet during these periods. Univocality of translation implies univocality of the translated—a situation which we know, from a variety of sources (including some we will consider below), not to have been the case. There were numerous lines of manuscript transmission for many (if not most) of the works imported to Tibet; any one translation—no matter how faithful, no matter how transparently it renders its source—gives access to only one 'original'.[6]

It further overlooks b) the variation in the quality of these manuscripts. As will be seen in more detail in what follows, it can be determined from surviving materials that many of the Tibetan translations were based upon idiosyncratic texts. In addition, it neglects c) variation in the quality of the translations. Even those which may likely have been based on reliable texts, simply do not translate their source texts with consistent accuracy. While most translations do tend to follow a strict set of lexical equivalencies—which suggest 'word-for-word

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is translating *anu bhū* ('to experience') as *rjes su myong ba*, rather than the literal **rjes su 'gyur ba* (which latter is actually prescribed in the *Mahāvyutpatti* as one of three possible equivalents for *anuvidhānam*). As an example of preserving Sanskrit word-order, one may consider Lo chen's rendering of the line from the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, Chapter 17, *daśa-kuśalān karma-pathān kurvanti jñāna-varjitāḥ* | as *dge ba bcu'i las kyi lam | byed pa ye shes spangs pa'o* |. In this instance, as Tibetan is an SOV language, the retaining of the inflected verb in clause-medial position is confusing. I would have suggested, for example, *dge ba bcu'i las kyi lam | ye shes spangs pa rnams byed do* |.

[5] It may be noted that I am by no means the first to point this out. The inadequacy (or, rather, the tentativity) of Sanskrit reconstruction based on Tibetan translations has been indicated by, for example, Bhikṣu Prāsādika, in the Foreword to his own attempt at reconstructing the text of the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, wherein he notes the rather different results obtained by P.L. Vaidya and V. Bhattacharya in reconstructing Āryadeva's *Catuḥśataka* (though it might also be entertained that a rather partial command of Tibetan idiom also played a hand here). See Prāsādika and Joshi 1981: ix–x. As he notes therein, Étienne Lamotte had already made a similar point in his 1962 French translation of the same scripture.

As will be seen below, however, I make the case anew in light of new and rather different materials. Given the widespread currency of the myth of reconstructability, I believe the point is worth making again.

[6] An exception, of course, would be a translation based upon multiple source texts, in which case the translation would consequently be an 'eclectic' one and hence would—unless remarkably successful in its critical enterprise—if 'reconstructed', provide an 'original' text that may never have existed.

fidelity'—significant variation is seen in the areas of syntax and morphology. Deviations of the translators and their collaborators are evident in the misconstrual (or, at least, alternative construal) of Sanskrit idioms, alteration of grammatical case and number, unwarranted 'rectification' of cited passages, and the like.

Finally, this conception fails to take cognisance of the fact that d) the *seeming* uniformity of Tibetan translations is attributable neither to the translators themselves nor to the restrictive imperial guidelines, but to historical developments in canon and its associated technology (in particular the influence of xylography) which resulted in the disappearance of variant translations. That is to say, it is not the case that the Tibetan translations are so uniform due to the uniformly extreme fidelity of their translators. Rather, what one sees is the result of an extrinsic historical development, which resulted in the standardisation of the Tibetan Buddhist canons.

With the work of assembling the Tibetan translations of Indian Buddhist literature into the great collections of *Bka' 'gyur* (containing *sūtra*-s and *tantra*-s) and *Bstan 'gyur* (*śāstra*-s), a process was initiated which ultimately led to the standardisation and univocality of canonical reference works in the latter half of the second millennium. While the prototypical 'Jam Lha khang canon (early fourteenth century) included several 'redundant' translations (i.e. included more than one translation of any given Indic work), the subsequent editing of the *Bka''gyur* and *Bstan 'gyur* by Kun dga' Rdo rje and Bu ston Rin chen grub in the early-mid-fourteenth century eliminated those which had been included previously. Those translations selected for inclusion in the canonical collections assumed thereby a privileged status and soon eclipsed the alternative translations that had not been so selected. This process was accelerated considerably by the later adoption of the practice of block-printing (reaching its apogee with the xylographic canons of the eighteenth century),[7] which allowed the mass reproduction—and

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[7] According to Jackson 1983: 5, though the xylographic reproduction of Tibetan books had started in Mongolia as early as the thirteenth century, "large printing projects were quite rare [in Tibet proper] until the fifteenth century". The *Bka' 'gyur* was first set into a xylographic edition at the beginning of the fifteenth century (specifically, 1410), when the Peking (*Yunle*) edition was prepared. The *Bstan 'gyur*, on which we will largely focus below, seems not to have been rendered xylographically until after 1683. Cf. Smith 2001: 312–13, fn. 551. As Gene Smith has further indicated (Smith 2001: 183), "Bu ston and his Zhwa lu redaction would come to exercise an overwhelming influence on all of the xylographic editions".

thus wider and easier availability—of the standard collections. With the ready availability of the now 'standard' versions, manuscript copies of the excluded works were no longer 'needed', and so were no longer produced. As a result, almost none of the excluded translations have come down to us today.[8] Thus, I would argue, the apparent uniformity of the Tibetan translations of Sanskrit Buddhist texts is not (as usually maintained) exclusively—or even chiefly—the result of widespread standards of fidelity in translation. Rather, it is an epiphenomenon of factors which have led to there only *being* one canonical translation.[9]

In this light, I believe it behoves scholars of Tibetan literary history, religion and culture to revisit this issue—to reassess the nature and status of Tibetan translations, their qualities and limitations, in light of their original, historical polyvocality during the period between the tenth and fourteenth centuries (gradually tapering off until the eighteenth, whereupon univocality quickly becomes the standard). Several bodies of material which can shed light on the details of the processes of Tibetan translation make this task possible, and closer attention to these should allow this work to proceed. Some of these materials have already been noted and exploited (at least for the light they shed on the Indic source texts, if not the dynamics of Tibetan translation). For instance, although Bu ston chose Jinākāra and Nag tsho Lotsāwa's translation of the *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa* (*Sems kyi sgrib pa rnam par sbyong ba zhes bya ba'i rab tu byed pa*) attributed to Āryadeva for

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[8] One notable exception is the Phug brag Bka' 'gyur, which preserves many alternative translations not found in other canonical editions. See Samten 1992a, Samten 1992b, and Eimer 1993. Futher, Ronald Davidson indicated to me, during a discussion between sessions at the 2003 Oxford IATS Seminar, that he had seen complete alternative translations conserved in the collected works of Sa skya translator/paṇḍita-s. He cautioned, however, that such 'alternative translations' frequently turn out to be little more than recensions of earlier translations, lightly-revised or even merely reattributed.

[9] In fact, it would seem as if, as time went by, the xylographic canons, in concert with a certain Tibetan monastic conservatism, functioned to suppress more contemporary translations as well. As Yoshiro Imaeda has indicated, when Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas undertook the preparation of a new xylographic edition between 1730 and 1733—at least the seventh such xylographic print of the *Bka' 'gyur*—he was constrained by the objections of a certain 'great abbot' (*mkhan chen*) from including new translations prepared by Tāranātha and himself. Imaeda also comments, however, that (according to the *dkar chag* of the *Rgyud sde kun btus*) certain new translations of *Bstan 'gyur* materials were inserted into the Sde dge redaction in the nineteenth century by 'Jam dbyangs Mkhyen brtse'i dbang po. So, one may note that the practice of xylography seems to have worked both ways—though I would argue that its exclusionary function far outweighed such rare moments of its transmitting new or alternative texts. Cf. Imaeda 1981: 229–30 and 234–35.

inclusion in the (Zha lu MS) *Bstan 'gyur*[10]—thereby marginalising other versions which may have existed in the Old Snar thang *Bstan 'gyur* MS—somewhere in the transmission process of the Snar thang, an alternative translation of this work (by Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna and Khu Dngos grub) crept into a Snar thang xylographic version under the title *Sems rin po che rnam par sbyong ba*.[11] Both of these are available in a published romanised, as well as xylographic, form and are well suited for undertaking the type of research and analysis I suggest below.[12]

However—turning at last to the central point of this paper—there are other, less obvious, sources which may also be of use to scholars working in this area. I would here draw attention to a previously-overlooked source of valuable materials in this regard: passages from alternative translations which have survived the standardising processes of canon formation and xylography through being incorporated as citations into Tibetan scholastic treatises. Such citations seem to exist in the works of several Tibetan authors. One source of such materials which has attracted my attention as of particular importance and scope, is that found in the writings of Rje Rin po che Blo bzang grags pa, also known as Rje Tsong kha pa. In what follows, I will explore some of the textual remains preserved in Tsong kha pa's *œuvre*, examining them and the 'standard' translations against the extant Sanskrit materials,[13] and begin

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[10] As reported in the 'catalogue section' of his *Chos 'byung*: *slob dpon 'phags pa lhas mdzad pa'i sems kyi sgrib sbyong nag tsho'i 'gyur*. See Nishioka 1983: 83.

[11] This fact was first noted by Prabhubhai Patel in his posthumously-published work *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa of Āryadeva* (Patel 1949), wherein he makes use of both translations. The inclusion of this text (and its consequent availability to modern scholarship) may perhaps be attributable to the fact that the work not only bears a distinct title, but is ascribed in its colophon to the authorship of Indrabhūti, rather than Āryadeva. Bu ston may (like Patel) have noted this fact, and excluded the text, and a less astute successor may have reintroduced it.

[12] See, for example, Patel 1949: 175ff. Another important, potential source is the criticism leveled by Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po against the Jo nang new translation of the *Kālacakra Tantra*, commissioned by Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan. In this work (*Sa bzang bsod nams dpal gyi dris lan*), Ngor chen compares this translation against the 'standard' version. Cf. Stearns 1999: 189 fn 79.

[13] There is a legitimate objection which may be raised at this point. It could reasonably be argued that it is not valid, in comparing the Tibetan translations against extant Sanskrit texts, automatically to privilege the received Sanskrit texts as if they constituted a necessarily reliable standard. As has been noted more than once, since many Buddhist Sanskrit texts have come down to us only in nineteenth-century copies, often riddled with errors introduced over the course of time, they are not always more reliable witnesses to the state of the text in an earlier period than the Chinese or Tibetan translations. These latter can sometimes bear witness to an older and more reliable state of the text. It is thus problematical, when faced with a divergence between the Sanskrit

to explore what they reveal about the diversity of translations in the early *Phyi dar* period, discursive strategies of legitimation of authority in fourteenth/fifteenth century Tibetan scholastic discourse, and the benefit these sources provide for contemporary scholars of the textual traditions of India and Tibet.

II. The Corpus

Before (and seemingly also during) the lifetime of Rje Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357–1419)—a half-century after the redaction of the Zha lu canon, yet over two centuries before the widespread adoption of block-printing—a variety of translations were still available to Tibetan religious in manuscript form; and tantalising traces of these 'alternative' texts are to be found in his surviving works. While such passages are found in both his exoteric and his esoteric writings, it is in his writings on the esoteric Tantras that one finds the bulk of this material. In these works, for example, Tsong kha pa makes frequent reference to such alternative translations, often expressing a preference in his exegesis for one or the other over the 'standard' translations of Śraddhākaravarman and Lo chen Rin chen bzang po.

Such citations are particularly widespread in his works on the Guhyasamāja Tantric system, such as his *magnum opus* on Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva's presentation of the yogic system of five stages,[14] his pair of commentaries on two of the explanatory tantras (*vyākhyātantra, bshad rgyud*) of the Guhyasamāja system,[15] and his voluminous interlinear sub-commentary (*mchan gyi yang 'grel*) on the *Pradīpod-*

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and the Tibetan, to presume a privileged status to the Sanskrit.

While this is no doubt true in many cases, in the discussion below we will be dealing with works for which earlier manuscript evidence exists and is quite consistent. Most of the examples are drawn from the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, a work which I know quite well (having edited and translated it, see Wedemeyer 2006) and in which the two extant Sanskrit MSS are in overall concord.

[14] *Rim lnga gsal sgron*: *Rgyud kyi rgyal po dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i man ngag rim pa lnga rab tu gsal ba'i sgron me*; in Rje Tsoṅ kha pa 1978c.

[15] The commentaries on the *Enquiry of the Four Goddesses Tantra* (*Caturdevīparipr̥cchā, Lha mo bzhis zhus*) and the *Gnosis Vajra Compendium* (*Jñānavajrasamuccaya, Ye shes rdo rje kun las btus pa*): the *'Dus pa'i bshad rgyud lha mo bzhis zhus kyi rgya cher bshad pa srog rtsol gyi de kho na nyid gsal ba*, and the *Dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i bshad pa'i rgyud ye shes rdo rje kun las btus pa'i ṭīkka*; in Rje Tsoṅ kha pa 1977: 350–449 and 450–586, respectively.

dyotana of Candrakīrti.[16] In this latter work, reference to alternative translations of the root text appear on virtually every folio—including versions by 'Gos Khug pa Lhas btsas (fl. eleventh century), Chag Chos rje dpal (1197–1264), and Pa tshab Nyi ma grags (b. 1055), in addition to that of Lo chen Rin chen bzang po (958–1055), readings in independently-translated commentaries, and, apparently, several Sanskrit manuscripts. As such, the corpus is quite large, and what follows—my own first foray into mining the richness of this resource—will be necessarily tentative and incomplete.

Given the vast dimensions of the corpus, I will focus in what follows on citations of alternative translations, and the use Rje Rinpoche makes of them, in his major work on the yogic practice of the Guhyasamāja Tantra, the *Brilliant Lamp of the Five Stages* (*Rim lnga gsal sgron*).[17] In this work, one finds roughly 108 distinct references to alternative translations of Indian *tantra*-s and *śāstra*-s in a work of 344 folios—that is, approximately one every three folios. It thus falls somewhat in the middle between the extreme frequency of such citations in the *mchan 'grel* on the *Pradīpoddyotana* and their more sparse citation in his other works.

In all, in this text, eight works of the *Guhyasamāja* literature are cited in alternative forms, five *tantra*-s and three *śāstra*-s. The former include the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* itself, its 'Appendix Tantra' (*Uttara Tantra*), the explanatory tantras *Vajramālā* and *Sandhyāvyākaraṇa*, and the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga Tantra*; the latter comprise the *Pañcakrama* of Nāgārjuna, the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* of Āryadeva, and the *Pradīpoddyotana Commentary* of Candrakīrti. The alternative translations cited are: Chag and Pa tshab's translations of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* and its *Uttara Tantra*; Chag's translation of the *Sandhyāvyākaraṇa*; translations of the *Vajramālā* by Zhi ba 'od (and, separately, its further revision by Dar ma brtson 'grus), Rwa Lo tswā ba, a version nested in another commentary, citations found in the old translation of the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, and unnamed 'others'; a separate translation of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* (in addition to its many cited versions); translations of the *Pañcakrama* by Chag and another 'new' translation (presumably by Pa tshab, but unspecified);

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[16] *Sgron gsal mchan*: *Rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgya cher bshad pa sgron ma gsal ba'i tshig don ji bzhin 'byed pa'i mchan gyi yang 'grel*, in Rje Tsoṅ kha pa 1978a and b.

[17] See above, note 14.

two 'old' and two 'new' translations of the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* (the latter being those by Chag and Pa tshab); and versions of the *Pradīpoddyotana* by Chag, Pa tshab, and 'Gos Khug pa Lhas btsas. In addition, and of particular interest, is the fact that Rje Rinpoche also refers to several Sanskrit manuscripts (*rgya dpe*), including several of the *Pradīpoddyotana*, two variant manuscripts of the *Vajramālā*, and at least one each of the *Uttara Tantra*, *Pañcakrama*, and *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*. This is most intriguing, given the period and the conventional wisdom that Tsong kha pa did not know Sanskrit, and we will have occasion to remark on it below.

III. ANALYSIS OF SELECTED EXAMPLES

In his exegesis of the esoteric literature available to him, Tsong kha pa indicates many of the typical problems addressed in classical textual editing. He describes the following: bad Tibetan texts (*bod dpe ma dag pa*, pp. 58 and 426), translations based on bad Sanskrit texts (*rgya dpe ma dag pa las bsgyur ba*, p. 58), old scribal errors (*bris nor ring du brgyud pa,* p. 156), as well as several forms of variant readings (pp. 367 and 425). Many of his criticisms are delivered *ex cathedra*, without justification, yet there are a significant number of cases wherein the relevant texts are cited, compared, and judged. In these instances, we have the materials to evaluate in more detail the nature and qualities of the cited translations and reflect on the use made of them by Tsong kha pa.

In the first example,[18] Tsong kha pa cites two versions of two brief passages from the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*—Lo chen's and Chag's. The Sanskrit of both is clear and univocal in the extant MSS. The first reads, "the one who understands isolation of body, speech, and mind, having obtained the tenth stage, attains the phantasmical samādhi"; the second is a dependent clause reading "having made manifest a buddha-body". Interestingly, both translators have rendered the (nominal) past passive participle *adhigata* as a (verbal) gerund (suggesting a 'reconstruction' of **adhigamya*),[19] but the sense is not materially altered. There are only two substantial differences. In the first passage, Lo chen has omitted

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[18] The complete, parallel texts of all examples discussed below, including the relevant comments of Tsong kha pa, are included in the Appendix.

[19] In what follows, I use a prefixed asterix (*) to mark the hypothetical, 'back-translated', reconstructions I believe are implied by the cited Tibetan text.

reference to 'isolation' and has rendered the 'body, speech, and mind' in the Tibetan honorific register. The latter is a stylistic choice and may be passed over without comment. The former suggests either that Lo chen was working from a Sanskrit text which lacked the reading *viveka*, that the term was accidentally (or intentionally) omitted by him, or that the term *rnam par dben pa* was lost in the process of manuscript transmission of his translation. It is impossible to adjudicate between these hypotheses without further data.

We are on firmer ground, however, with the latter variant, i.e. 'buddha deeds' vs. 'buddha body'. The surviving Sanskrit texts both read *buddhakāya*; Lo chen's rendering of this as 'buddha deeds' (*sangs rgyas kyi bya ba*) indicates that he understood the text to read *buddhakārya*.[20] While one must allow for the possibility of erroneous reading (and/or sloppy handwriting), this suggests evidence for a (potentially significant) variant reading which has not been transmitted by the extant Sanskrit manuscript sources.

Tsong kha pa, in his comments, does not assert that Chag's translation is better per se; his only comment is that Chag's translation "clarifies the earlier translation" (*'gyur snga ma gsal du btang ngo*). This suggests that he may have believed 'isolation' to be an interpolation by Chag—that is, an interpretative translation on his part—rather than an omission by Lo chen. In the second case, it is not at all clear to me how reading 'body' clarifies the reading 'deeds'. Either deeds or body would be appropriate enough in this context, so the preference of one over the other remains something of a mystery. We have here an example where the text Tsong kha pa prefers indeed appears to be superior, though it is not clear upon what line of reasoning his preference depends.

Our next example also lends us little or no insight into the editorial criteria of Tsong kha pa, but it does provide a rather striking example of the variability (and sometimes rather dubious reliability) of Tibetan translations. In example two, drawn from the *Pañcakrama* (*Rim pa lnga pa*) attributed to Nāgārjuna, the Sanskrit texts read "The forty prototypes are momentary and born from the extreme void" (*catvāriṃśat prakṛtayaḥ kṣaṇikāś cātiśūnya-jāḥ* ।).[21] The 'standard' translation of Lo

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[20] Many thanks to Prof. Helmut Eimer and Dr Isabel Onians for stressing this point, which I had overlooked in my original presentation.

[21] *Pañcakrama* II.20cd; cf. Mimaki and Tomabechi 1994: 18.

chen has several problems. For one, it renders the technical term *prakṛti* by *mtshan nyid* (which usually translates *lakṣaṇa* and, to my knowledge,[22] is nowhere else attested as an equivalent for *prakṛti*). Further, it reads a relative pronoun (*gang yin pa, *yaḥ*) not found in the source; and it reads the word 'born from the extreme void' (*atiśūnyajāḥ*) as a genitive (*shin tu stong pa'i, *atiśūnyasya? *atiśūnyatāyāḥ?*) modifying a nominal 'moment' (*skad cig, *kṣaṇa*), rather than as two independent, quasi-adjectival terms modifying the prototypes (*prakṛti*).[23]

In this context, Tsong kha pa cites the 'alternative' translation of Chag. But is his translation any better? Chag does render the central term *prakṛti* by the authorised term *rang bzhin*. However, his grammar is equally—albeit differently—problematical. He successfully captures the essence of the final, predicative term *atiśūnyajāḥ*. But rather than signaling the predicative role of the term 'momentary' (*kṣaṇika*), he renders this as the primary (nominal plural) subject 'moments' (*skad cig rnams, *kśaṇāḥ?*) modified by 'forty prototypes' in the genitive (*rang bzhin bzhi bcu'i, *catvāriṃśataḥ prakṛtyāḥ? prakṛteḥ?*).

Thus, we have here a rather clear example in which two alternative translations of a Sanskrit source text exist, each gives a divergent impression of the original text, and yet *neither* adequately captures its meaning (or grammar). Chag's translation is clearly closer to the mark, adequately translating the basic lexical units, though it too misconstrues the subtending grammar.[24] Were a Sanskrit text not available, 'back-translating' either form of this half-verse would likely provide a misleading sense of the Sanskrit original.

Tsong kha pa makes no explicit comment on the alternative text. In his discussion, he cites a lengthy passage from the *Pañcakrama* (in Lo chen's translation) which presents the forty prototypes (*prakṛti*) associated with the luminance-radiance (*ālokābhāsa*) level of the subtle mind, and discusses its significance. At the conclusion of this com-

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[22] It does not appear in any of the Tibetan-Sanskrit lexicons (*Mahāvyutpatti*, L. Chandra, J.S. Negi), nor have I personally witnessed such a usage. Matthew Kapstein (personal communication) believes, however, he has seen it elsewhere. Even if it is not a unique case, this is nonetheless at least a rare, atypical usage and contrary to the prevalent rendering of what is a central technical term of the Mahāyoga Tantras.

[23] Though, as Matthew Kapstein has commented, "the relativising use of the genitive is a common way of dealing with appositional strings in Sanskrit" (personal communication), I do not find Lo chen's use of it here effective as it rather loses the force of the *upapada* compound.

[24] One would prefer, for example: *rang bzhin bzhi bcu skad cig pa | shin tu stong pa las skyes te |*.

mentary, he says "with regard to the last two lines, Chag's translation reads...".[25] We may infer from the mere fact of his drawing attention to this alternative text, that Rje Rinpoche here preferred Chag's (marginally better) translation to that of Lo chen.

In example three, however, the situation is rather different. Tsong kha pa cites two versions of a statement from the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, contrasting the Lo chen translation with the 'two new translations' (*'gyur gsar gnyis*). In this case, it is fairly clear that the latter are, in fact, not only preferable to the former, but actually more successfully live up to the reputation of Tibetan translation. The Sanskrit texts read: *tilamātreṣv api vastuṣu parigraha-buddhiṃ pari-tyajet |* ("one should forsake the mind [desiring to] take possession of objects even [those] merely the size of a sesame seed"). The two new translations communicate this meaning quite nicely, with only the expedient of changing the word order slightly. That is, the main clause is intact and word-for-word (*yongs su 'dzin pa'i blo dor bar bya'o*). The locative phrase at the beginning is modified slightly to better accommodate Tibetan idiom (though it loses the plural number), reading: *dngos po til 'bru tsam la yang*.[26]

Lo chen's standard translation takes a different approach, being more rigorous with regard to preserving the word order, yet less rigorous with regard to preserving Sanskrit prefixes (*upasarga*-s).[27] The main verb is rendered by the equivalent *spangs par bya'o*, rather than *dor bar bya'o*. While this is unobjectionable, the manner in which the remainder of the sentence is translated causes problems for Tibetan understanding. Following the Sanskrit word order precisely, Lo chen has rendered the object phrase as follows: *til 'bru tsam la'ang dngos por 'dzin pa'i blo*. This is a more mechanical rendering and—except for the loss of the plural number and the prefix *pari*—it may be more easily 'back-translatable'. However, the loss of the plural number (and the attendant use of the locative ending *r*, rather than a locative particle) creates major difficulties for the interpretation of the translation in a Tibetophone context. The instinct of a reader is to construe *dngos por* as subordinate to *'dzin pa*, rather than construing it with *til 'bru tsam*

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[25] *rkang pa tha ma gnyis la chag 'gyur las |* (Rje Tsoṅ kha pa 1978c: 424).

[26] This is likely merely an accommodation to Tibetan idiom (like my own English rendering, which also uses the singular). Nonetheless, it is important to note that it suggests a 'back-translation' of **vastuni tilamātre 'pi*.

[27] For alternative examples of this see above, note 4.

la'ang.[28] Thus, a Tibetan would interpret this to mean, "one should forsake the mind which grasps at the [substantial] reality of even a sesame seed".

This is, indeed, how Tsong kha pa interprets this passage in Lo chen's translation; and it is on this basis that he criticises it. Given these two slightly different translations—"one should cast off the mind [desiring to] take possession of objects even the size of a sesame seed" and "one should abandon the mind which grasps at the [substantial] reality of even a sesame seed", Tsong kha pa comments,

> Concerning the second [of the four distinctive intentions], since the translation found in the two new translations, to wit "one should forsake the mind [desiring to] take possession of objects even the size of a sesame seed", is better, one should take this to refer to not taking, i.e. not accumulating, goods even [the size of] a sesame seed. One should not take this to refer to 'object grasping' in the sense of conceptual insistence on reality.

In this case, I believe we can reconstruct the reasoning behind Rje Rinpoche's comments. Although, again, it is not explicitly so stated, one can with some confidence infer that Tsong kha pa was basing his editorial judgment on the context of the passage. The other three of the four 'special intentions' under discussion are: to abandon having (conventionally speaking) a good time and to meditate on the suffering of the (conventionally) happy; to give up concern for life and limb; and to give up desire for *siddhi*-s. Thus, all four are oriented around sacrificing things which, conventionally speaking, are desired: fun, possessions, a nice body, and superpowers. In this list, grasping at substantial existence does not seem to fit. It is on this basis—rather than, say, philological concerns—that, I believe, Tsong kha pa preferred one over the other.

In our next example (no. 4), drawn once more from the *Pañcakrama*, we again find Rje Rinpoche citing Chag's translation—implicitly endorsing it over that of Lo chen. He does not cite Lo chen's text, but merely gives Chag's translation in the context of describing the central idea of the Tantric goal of communion (*yuganaddha* or *zung 'jug*). If we measure the two versions against the Sanskrit text, we find mixed results.

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[28] This was, for example, my own experience when I first translated this text, without reference to either Tsong kha pa's comments or the Sanskrit texts. Cf. Wedemeyer 1999: 347.

In the first of the two verses cited, Chag's translation is clearly better. Lo chen misinterprets the *dvandva* compound *svādhiṣṭhāna-pra-bhāsvarau* as a genitive *tatpuruṣa* (*bdag byin brlab pa'i 'od gsal*)—very strange given its dual ending. He further misconstrues *tayoḥ* as locative (*de nyid la*), rather than genitive (**de nyid kyi*)—possible, but highly improbable. He does, however, preserve the gerund form of the verb to know (*jñātvā→shes nas*). Chag loses the gerund—putting the verb 'to know' in the indicative—and leaves the genitive implicit (*de dag kho na* rather than *de dag kho na'i*) but correctly construes the rest of the grammar.

The second verse is another story, however. Here, the last two lines are identical. Both translators lose the optative sense of the Sanskrit *bhavet*—obviating accurate 'back-translation', but capturing the sense adequately enough. The translations diverge in their renderings of the first two lines. The Sanskrit text begins with the two nouns *saṃvṛti* and *paramārtha* ('conventional' and 'ultimate' [reality])—each in the accusative singular—joined by the conjunctive particle *ca*. The second line begins with the indeclinable *pṛthak* ('separately, individually'), continues with the gerund *jñātvā* ('having known, knowing') and concludes with *vibhāgataḥ*—that is, the term *vibhāga* ('division, section') with an ablative suffix—in this case, presumably, giving an adverbial significance ('proportionately, in their own measure').

Here, Chag correctly translates *jñātvā* as a gerund (*shes nas*), yet construes *vibhāga* (*rnam dbye*) as its object and puts conventional and ultimate reality in a genitive relationship to it, while translating *pṛthak* (suitably enough) as *so sor*. Lo chen on the other hand, while altering the gerund, successfully interprets conventional and ultimate reality as the objects of *shes pa*, marking them with the dual particle *dag*. I believe he also seeks to capture the adverbial import of *vibhāgataḥ* with the phrase *so so'i char*.

Thus, I believe that—while Tsong kha pa was correct to prefer Chag's translation of the first verse—with the second verse, he should have stuck with good old Lo chen. Both translations reveal idiosyncratic choices on the part of their translators. Indeed, both reveal their translators failing reliably to construe the grammar of the Sanskrit texts on which they were working. Neither would allow consistently accurate reconstruction of the original Sanskrit.

The next pair of translations (see no. 5) is quite interesting. The pas-

sage is from the famous description in the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* of the enlightenment process of Buddha Śākyamuni.[29] Lo chen's translation reads "having arisen from the phantasmical samādhi, [the Lord] taught beings". Chag's translation is more involved. It reads, "having arisen by means of the phantasmical samādhi, [the Lord] turned the wheel of Dharma for beings who were to be disciplined". How to evaluate these two versions?

As it turns out, these two Tibetan translations correspond (with some very minor variants) to the divergent readings of the two extant manuscript witnesses of the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*.[30] The opening, gerundive phrase is consistent between the two; the object of the gerund being in the accusative in the Sanskrit, the variation between the ablative and the instrumental in our two Tibetan versions are merely two idiosyncratic attempts to render the phrase in idiomatic Tibetan. The main clause of the sentence, however, diverges in the two manuscripts. Lo chen's version corresponds in the main to the text found in the Calcutta-Kathmandu MS, which reads *janebhyo dharmaṃ pravartitavān* ([the Lord] set forth the Dharma for beings). Lo chen cut some corners in rendering 'set forth the Dharma' as 'taught', but it seems clear that the text he had before him read something like this one. Chag's version, on the other hand, corresponds exactly to the text found in the Ngor manuscript, which reads *vineya-janebhyo dharma-cakraṃ pravarttitavān*.[31]

Thus, in this case, the two divergent translations given in Tsong kha pa's comment reflect two divergent states of the text—presumably reflecting two divergent manuscript traditions. Neither, then, is

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[29] 'Famous' among the Tibetan religious élite, at least. Mkhas grub rje considers this to be the *locus classicus* for the *'Phags lugs* understanding of the "method by which the Teacher, the Lord, became enlightened" (*ston pa bcom ldan 'das sangs rgyas tshul*). Cf. Lessing and Wayman 1968: 34.

[30] These MSS are composed of three manuscript parts. The first MS consists of two halves of one (nearly complete) palm leaf manuscript, now divided between the Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Nepalese National Library. The second MS is available as a nearly-complete photograph (taken by Rahul Sāṅkṛtyāyana) of a text in the library of Ngor monastery in Tibet. The photograph is now in the archives of the Bihar Research Society, Patna. For more information, see Christian K. Wedemeyer, *Āryadeva's* Lamp that Integrates the Practices (*Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*): *The Gradual Path of Vajrayāna Buddhism according to the Esoteric Community Noble Tradition* (forthcoming [2006]) for more information on the manuscripts, a critical edition of the original Sanskrit and Lo chen's Tibetan translation, an annotated English translation, and textual analysis.

[31] Actually, it doesn't correspond exactly to the Ngor text. The MS reads *vijaneya-janebhyo*. However, this can be emended unproblematically to *vineya-janebhyo*.

If this reading is correct, Lo chen's translation may be confidently declared misguided. What, however, of Chag's? There is a certain sense in which Chag's rendering could be understood as, in fact, correct. Each element of the Sanskrit clause is rendered in the Tibetan text in an exacting way; and, as Tibetan does not mark gender, we have no way of determining whether Chag intended *gang* to imply *yaḥ* or *yat*. That said, however, in a Tibetophone context, the translation could only have been (mis-) construed as we have done above (i.e. reading *gang* as *yaḥ*). To my knowledge, *gang* does not function in Tibetan as an indeclinable in the same way as *yat* does in Sanskrit; it is only and always a relative (or interrogative) pronoun. In the final analysis, there is no compelling evidence that Chag understood the grammar of the sentence. If he did, he was clearly less concerned about whether that meaning would be understood by a Tibetan reader than with mechanically rendering the lexical elements, preserving even the word-order. His rendering may be 'exact' in a certain technical sense but, read as natural Tibetan, it does not accurately convey the meaning of the passage.

In example seven, Tsong kha pa notes two variant versions of a verse from the *Guhyasamājottaratantra*. The verse describes the breath as composed of the five gnoses and as the nature of the five elements; which breath should be emitted in the form of a drop and fixated either on 'the tip of the nose' (as found, according to Rje Rinpoche, in Lo chen's translations of the *Pañcakrama* and *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, the two old translations of Chapter 12 of the *Pradīpoddyotana*, and some Indian manuscripts) or, 'on the tip of the lotus nose' (the reading allegedly found in Chag's translation of the *Pañcakrama* and *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, all translations of *Pradīpoddyotana* Chapter 6, the two new translations of *Pradīpoddyotana* Chapter 12, and some other Indian manuscripts). Tsong kha pa expresses his preference for the former rendering, commenting:

> Although it is clear that both variants occur in the Indian texts, because the practice of vajra recitation of the three-syllabled (*yi ge gsum, tryakṣara*) on the winds of the four maṇḍalas at the upper nose is taught in the *Caryāmelāpaka* by means of the six-lined verse '*ye shes lnga'i*' and so on, [the version] without 'lotus' (*padma*) is manifestly [the] correct [one].

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paramānanda-mūrti-svarūpaṃ niṣpadyate | yan nāmarūpātmako mahāvajradhara iti | saṃsāra-bandhanān nirmuktatvān mokṣa ity ucyate |. The last clause uses the ablative to convey this sense of 'because', 'since'. Our clause, the penultimate, uses the indeclinable *yat* to communicate the same sense.

What is noteworthy here is that both readings are, in fact, to be found in the surviving Sanskrit manuscript record. However, the reading without *padma* is only found in the manuscripts of the *Uttaratantra* itself, and the reading with *padma* is not attested in any extant text of the *Uttaratantra*. Conversely, however, the reading with *padma* is the *only* reading found in the surviving manuscripts of the commentarial literature—the *Pañcakrama*, *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, and *Pradīpoddyotana*. What does this mean? Tsong kha pa's comment that both readings are clearly found in the Sanskrit texts would suggest that this is the source of the discrepancy—that we have here another example of two independent lines of manuscript transmission. How, then, are we to interpret the consistent difference in the Sanskrit MSS of the source texts? The answer—which contradicts Tsong kha pa's testimony—is, I believe, to be found in what we know of Tibetan translational practice.

As the excellent work of Anne MacDonald on the translation of Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā* has demonstrated,[36] it was not uncommon for Tibetan translators—when faced with a quotation from a *sūtra* or *śāstra* in a work they were translating—to 'cut and paste' the translation of the cited passage(s) from a previous Tibetan version of that scripture, rather than to translate the citation afresh from the manuscript before them. I have myself independently confirmed this based on Lo chen's translation of the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, in which—rather than translating a verse as found nested in the source text (also a citation of the *Uttaratantra*)—he inserted a translation of the verse as found in his earlier translation of the scripture cited, *even though the change made the entire passage a non sequitur*![37] I suspect, then, that what we have here is such a case of textual eclecticism in the four trans-

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[36] This work was initially presented at the XIIIth Conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, Bangkok, Thailand, under the title, "From Prasannapadā to Tshig gsal: Remarks on an 11th/12th Century Translation Project". More recently, notice of this feature has appeared in article entitled "Interpreting *Prasannapadā* 19.3–7 in Context: A Response to Claus Oetke". See MacDonald 2002, and MacDonald 2003: 163–64. Further details are forthcoming in a book on *Prasannapadā* Chapter One. Many thanks to Dr MacDonald for providing this reference.

[37] This occurs in Lo chen's translation of Chapter Four of the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* (*Spyod pa bsdus pa'i sgron ma*). After a longish discussion of the doctrine of the eighty 'prototypes' (*prakṛti, rang bzhin*) encoded in the subtle mind, Āryadeva provides a scriptural verse to give a stamp of authority to his exposition. He cites the following verse: "Whatever is born from conditions, By means of sense-organs and objects, is mentation. That mind [is] called 'eighty'. The syllable '*tra*' is derived from 'protection' (*trāṇana*)". The extant Sanskrit (which makes perfect sense in this

lations without *padma*, three of which are the work of Lo chen. This would, of course, cast doubts on Tsong kha pa's information about the Sanskrit manuscripts. Given the preponderance of evidence, I find the claim that "both [readings] occur in the Indian manuscripts" (*rgya gar gyi dpe la yod med gnyis byung ba*) highly unlikely.

Furthermore, from our perspective, Tsong kha pa's editorial preference appears not only to be mistaken with regard to the correct reading of the *Pañcakrama*, but to be rather manifestly based on circular argumentation. For the version of the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* to whose authority he refers in arguing for the reading without *padma*, is none other than the Lo chen redaction—in both of which texts, Lo chen substituted the 'standard' reading of the source tantra for the idiosyncratic reading of the commentarial *śāstra*. To so argue for the rectitude of the Lo chen translation (of the *Pañcakrama*) based on the testimony of one of the very texts whose reading is in doubt (the Lo chen translation of the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*) seems methodologically problematical, and evidently led our author astray.[38]

In our next and final example, one sees another clear case where the preference of one translation over another went terribly wrong based on presumably dubious grounds. This passage (see no. 8) presents the two Tibetan texts given by Tsong kha pa alongside the extant Sanskrit text. While the Sanskrit text is quite clear, the Tibetan translations (that by Lo chen and the 'two new' translations) diverge quite remarkably. The two new translations, while not entirely 'exact', are rather close to it. There are two minor variants,[39] but the sense is intact: that is, "one should practise the practices completely without elaboration by the insane penance according to the process expressed in the explanatory tantra(s)".

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context) reads: *pratītyotpadyate yad yad indriyair viṣayair manaḥ | tan manas tv aśīti-khyātaṃ tra-kāras trāṇanārthata iti ||* (cf. Wedemeyer forthcoming [2006]). However, Lo chen—instead of translating this verse as found—inserted the translation of the 'standard' version of this verse from the *Uttaratantra*, although this latter verse, which does not mention the number eighty, is thus a non sequitur in this context.

[38] Also at play here, presumably, is Tsong kha pa's signature view on Tantric practice in which *prāṇāyāma* may be practised at a variety of 'nose-tips' including, especially, the 'heart nose', and not merely the 'lotus nose', presumably located in the groin.

[39] They read *tshul dang rim pa* ('method and process') where the Sanskrit reads merely 'process' (*krama*); and they omit the term 'practices' (*spyod pa, caryā*) in the expression 'practices completely without elaboration' (Skt. *atyanta-niṣprapañca-caryā*, Tib. *shin tu spros pa med*).

Lo chen's translation, however, conveys an entirely different sense. For one, the main predicate is not 'should be practiced' (*caritavyaṃ*, *spyad par bya*), but 'should be explained' (*bshad par bya*, *vācayitavyaṃ?).[40] The object is the same 'practices completely without elaboration', but the other two parts of the sentence (which are actually separated in the Sanskrit text by the object) are integrated into the phrase "according to the process expressed in the *Scripture of the Mad* [*Spiritual*] *Discipline*" (*smyon pa'i brtul zhugs bshad pa'i mdo las gsungs pa'i rim pa*). In so doing, Lo chen has, in essence, created a reference to an Indic scripture which never existed.

Tsong kha pa comments as follows:

> The extensive citation in the *Caryāmelāpaka* that begins "I shall explain the practices completely without elaboration according to the process expressed in the *Scripture of the Mad* [*Spiritual*] *Discipline*", is from the Sixteenth Chapter of the *Vajramaṇḍalālaṃkāra Tantra*. Concerning this, although the two new translations of the *Caryāmelāpaka* read "one should practice the practices completely without elaboration by the mad [spiritual] discipline according to the process expressed in the explanatory tantra", Lo chen's translation "*Scripture of the Mad* [*Spiritual*] *Discipline*" is better. That chapter teaches the practices of [spiritual] discipline, which is also called 'mad [spiritual] discipline', so the 'explaining' means 'explaining the mad [spiritual] discipline' and it does not indicate an explanatory tantra of the Guhyasamāja.

To understand this judgment, one needs to refer back to the extensive introductory section of the *Rim lnga gsal sgron*, in which Tsong kha pa surveys the literature of the *Guhyasamāja*, and devotes considerable attention to the issue of explanatory tantras (*bshad rgyud*). He ends up basing his enumeration primarily on whether or not works are explicitly cited as such in the central works of Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, and Candrakīrti upon which he relies so heavily in general. However, in this discussion, in which he concludes that the *Vajramaṇḍalālaṃkāra* does not so qualify as an explanatory tantra (which conclusion is subsequently used, as we have seen, to invalidate the 'two new translations'), he has apparently not considered the testimony of the new translations

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[40] This variant could very well be the result of a corruption in the process of transmitting the text of Lo chen's translation. *Spyad* and *bshad* are similar in sound and such shifts are understandable in manuscript transmission. If so, this corruption had presumably crept in before the time of Tsong kha pa (if we exclude the possibility of his own work having been altered by later editing to conform to the received text of Lo chen).

of the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, but based himself solely on Lo chen's redaction. Thus, once again, we see Tsong kha pa's exegesis reflecting a marked preference for Lo chen, based upon an implicit privileging of his work. We may infer here that the Lo chen corpus had already acquired a distinctive renown in the Tibetan world, such that his works were considered 'standard' (by at least one major thinker) already by the early fifteenth century.[41]

IV. SUMMARY REFLECTIONS

As we have observed in the foregoing, in early second-millennium Tibet (ca. tenth to fifteenth centuries), a range of alternative translations of Sanskrit scriptural works had been produced and were available to Tibetan religious. This corpus—though ostensibly constrained by rigorous standards of consistency—was equally (or nearly) as diverse as the cacophony of competing translations of the *Mūlamadhya-makakārikā* which confronts the contemporary (esp. Anglophone) student of Buddhism. To overlook these translations and their authors is to disregard an important aspect of intellectual and spiritual life in Tibet and to misunderstand the very processes which enabled Buddhism in Tibet as we know it to develop and thrive. In the following pages, I will indicate in brief three areas to which this evidence makes a substantial contribution to scholarly understanding, noting as well several avenues for future research.

First, it may be observed that the evidence of these alternative translations establishes quite clearly that—even working under the exacting normative regimen of the standards prescribed in the glossary and handbook of the imperial translation system—the products of individual Tibetan translators exhibit a wide range of variant renderings of their Sanskrit originals. Though one finds only slight variation in the Tibetan words used to translate Sanskrit lexical items (e.g. either *mtshan nyid* or *rang bzhin* for *prakṛti*), variability with regard to syntax and morphology is legion. One sees widespread license being taken with the rendering of verbal forms (past passive participles being ren-

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[41] It is worth noting that, as Ronald Davidson has indicated, Tibetan tradition continued to refer to the Lo chen translation of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, even though this version was excluded by Bu ston from the Zha lu Kanjur in favour of its extensive revision by Blo gros Brtan pa. See Davidson 1981: 13 (incl. fn. 38).

dered as gerunds [ex. 1], gerunds rendered in the indicative [ex. 4],
etc.). One witnesses all manner of deviation in the rendering of inflect-
ed nominal forms (e.g. nominative plural rendered as genitive singular,
ex. 2), adjectival forms being rendered as nominal (*kṣaṇika* as **kṣaṇa*,
ex. 2), inflected objects being rendered as if they were in compound
(*vastuṣu*, ex. 3), loss of *upasarga*-s ([*yongs su*] *'dzin pa* for *parigraha*
[ex. 3]), misconstrual of compounds (*dvandva* for *tatpuruṣa*), and the
like. One also notes divergent strategies for parsing Sanskrit sentences
(ex. 7). At times, one or the other of the alternative translations seems
to be more accurate. At others, neither seems adequately to render
either the words or the sense of the Sanskrit.

Hence, the widespread notion of the 'painstaking accuracy' or the
'meticulously faithful rendering'[42] of Sanskrit originals produced by
Tibetan translators ought accordingly to be qualified. As suggested
above, depending upon one's perspective, this conception either a) is
quite simply mistaken, or b) may more profitably be viewed as an
epiphenomenon of the distinctive historical process of canon formation
in Tibet and its attendant technologies. The attempt to impose standards
of consistency by the ninth-century imperial court attests ever-so-clear-
ly to the existence at that time of divergent translations. We may confi-
dently conclude from the evidence of the translations later produced
under the guidelines of this redactional régime that it also represents a
wholly theoretical ideal incapable of realisation due both to the
vagaries of language and to the humanity of translators.[43]

Furthermore, it is important to note that the very existence of such
variant texts was itself not historically neutral. Rather, as they apparent-
ly constituted one vehicle of discursive struggle in Tibetan religious
culture, the historian of religions overlooks them at her own risk. As

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[42] Cf. Snellgrove concerning the Tibetan translators: "every one of their texts is an
extraordinary linguistic feat, for no other translators have ever succeeded in reproduc-
ing an original with such painstaking accuracy. Relying upon them alone, there is no
reason why the exact contents of any Buddhist text should not become known to us".
Snellgrove 1959: viii. Or, somewhat later, Gene Smith's remark: "When foreign schol-
ars first compared some of the Tibetan translations of Sanskrit texts found in the *Bka'
'gyur* and *Bstan 'gyur*, they were impressed by the meticulously faithful rendering that
the translators achieved". Cf. Smith 1959: 181.

[43] Or, rather, as it actually enjoins a wholly-realistic syntactic flexibility on the
would-be translator (as indicated in note 3 above), even the imperial system itself does
not in fact correspond to the ideal practice as envisioned by many modern commenta-
tors. Contemporary translators of Tibetan Buddhist texts—who might otherwise be
tempted to emulate the imagined practices of the great Tibetan lotsāwas—would be
well-advised to bear this observation in mind.

can be seen from their citation in the writings of Tsong kha pa, the existence of alternative renderings of authoritative texts provided an avenue by which those advancing competing interpretations could establish their case. Tsong kha pa is not alone in citing alternative translations—this also being an exegetical strategy employed by Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1292–1361), Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456), and numerous others. Hence, I believe it is fair to say that such citations reveal a practice distinctive of Tibetan scholasticism between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, the study of which will shed further light on the dynamics of scholastic discourse in this period.

What's more, the citation of such alternative texts and the attendant acknowledgement of the insecurity of the readings found in texts presenting authoritative works, raises further questions of a more general nature concerning the existence and/or nature of a tradition of editorial practice in traditional Tibet. They indicate and assume both an awareness of textual diversity and an acknowledgement of the legitimate claims of competing voices.[44] Though there is evidence of a similar practice of textual criticism among contemporaneous Indian critics,[45] it is not as clear to what extent a developed tradition may have existed in Tibet. Tsong kha pa, albeit a rather unsuccessful editor himself (for reasons we will return to briefly below), seems nonetheless to indicate something of the indigenous Tibetan practice of textual editing. Elsewhere, awareness of—and editorial action regarding—alternative manuscript readings is in evidence around this period of Tibetan history. For instance, David Jackson has drawn attention to the work of Gong dkar ba (1432–1496) in editing and xylographing the *Sa skya bka' 'bum*, asserting that "one of Gong dkar ba's goals in sponsoring the printing must have been to get beyond the errors of scribes by establishing and disseminating a standardised text for these crucial works".[46] However, aside from a brief reference by Pieter Verhagen to a forth-

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[44] At the same time, however, the trend of Tsong kha pa's preferences also suggest that—although the process of xylography had not yet dramatically changed the textual landscape in Tibet—the Lo chen corpus had already by the early fifteenth century become the 'standard' against which the 'others' were judged, presumably reflecting the already growing influence and prestige of the manuscript *Bka' 'gyur*(s) and *Bstan 'gyur*(s).

[45] Thus, for instance, it is not uncommon to find references to variant readings (*pāṭhāntara*), interpolations (*prakṣipta*), wrong readings (*apapāṭha*), and the like among Indian commentators. Cf. Sarma 1982: 281–88. See also von Hinüber 2000: esp. p. 25.

[46] Jackson 1982: 16.

coming article by Leonard van der Kuijp which allegedly explores the
(apparently more successful) practice of textual editing by Skyogs ston
Lo tsā ba Rin chen bkra shis (b. fifteenth century),[47] I know of no work
which has addressed this subject in any detail.[48] If there is one striking
thing about Tibetan high culture, it is a kind of hyper-textuality. Integral
as editorial practice is to handling text, it would seem that a closer
attention to the characteristics of indigenous Tibetan textual criticism is
a desideratum.

Second, this corpus of citations also provides some insight into the
more narrow question of Tsong kha pa's use of these alternative texts,
his command (if any) of the Sanskrit language, and the discursive
strategies in play in his writings. On first glance, his works give the dis-
tinct impression of a scholar who has a working command of Sanskrit,
such that he can judge the relative quality of alternative translations, not
merely on the basis of exegetical expediency, but on linguistic grounds
and in light of Sanskrit textual materials (i.e. *rgya dpe*). He cites, for
example, various terminological discrepancies: e.g., the translation of
dhanaṃjaya as either *gzhu las rgyal* or *nor las rgyal* (*Rim lnga gsal
sgron*, p. 249); and divergent renderings of the term *śyāma* as either
ljang gser or *ljang sngon* (*ibid.*, p. 257). In one instance (p. 423), he
recognises that the variant readings *lhan skyes* and *tsham tshom med pa*
are based on a confusion of *sahasa* (*sic* for *sāhasa*, the correct reading)
with *sahaja*. He notes that this former term may be validly rendered by
either *tsham tshom med pa* (as Chag renders it) or *dka' ba la sbyor ba*
(as do the 'old translations'), thus suggesting some familiarity with
Sanskrit-Tibetan translational idiom.[49] However, he elsewhere (p. 424)
equates the term *rang bzhin* (in its Tantric usage) with *svabhāva*, rather

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[47] Cf. Verhagen 1996: 279 wherein he cites "a forthcoming article [by] Leonard van
der Kuijp" which "describes a unique document providing evidence for the fact that
textual criticism was still being applied to the translated literature, even at that time
[late fifteenth/early sixteenth centuries]".

[48] As this article was nearing completion, I was delighted to hear that Prof. Kurtis
Schaeffer has written on the principles of textual editing set forth by Bu ston Rin po
che, and employed in editing the *Bka' 'gyur*. See Schaeffer 2004. He has also written
on editorial practices involved in the production of one of the xylographic canons
(Schaeffer, unpublished [1998]) and a Tibetan 'collected works' project (Schaeffer
1999).

[49] He notes, however, that his discussion is based on the comments of 'earlier schol-
ars' (*sngon gyi mkhas pa dag*).

than *prakṛti*—portending perhaps a closer familiarity with Madhyamaka Sanskrit than Mahāyoga-Tantric Sanskrit.

Nonetheless, I believe the materials I have examined above lend strong support to the view that Tsong kha pa did not, in fact, have facility with Sanskrit, nor did he consult the Sanskrit manuscripts he cites (as indicated, for instance, by the testimony of no. 7 above). While there are examples wherein the translation he prefers is in fact better (nos. 1, 2, 3, 4a), there are also many examples in which this is not the case; and even some of the former reveal that extra-linguistic factors were guiding his choice (e.g. no. 3). There are other places in his work, furthermore, where his preference cannot possibly be based on philology per se, but rather must be based on purely æsthetic judgment. For example, his preference (p. 671) for Pa tshab's *a ra li rdzogs par byed* over Lochen's *a ra li sgrub par byed*, for Sanskrit *āralliḥ sampādayati* cannot be adjudicated on other than æsthetic grounds. In the causative, the Sanskrit root *pad*, coupled with the prefix *sam*, has a range of meanings, comprehending the semantic range of both *sgrub par byed* and *rdzogs par byed*. This suggests that Tsong kha pa's preferences did not proceed from a thorough knowledge of Sanskrit or Sanskrit-Tibetan translation conventions.

Thus, I believe we are entitled to conclude that the copious citations of alternative translations, and the spurious claim of reference to Sanskrit texts, reveal not the workings of a philologically-based editorial practice, but rather a rhetorical strategy operative in Rje Rinpoche's esoteric writings in which, following the pattern established by figures such as Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251/2), Tsong kha pa sought to validate his mode of exegesis, and to establish his credentials as a pre-eminent teacher, by a claim of privileged access to sources of exegetical legitimacy. The religious landscape of the *Phyi dar* period was largely defined by competing claims to religious authority. In this context, one approach to legitimating such authority was to attempt to demonstrate a superior degree of knowledge of, or other relationship to, the Indic tradition—the ultimate source of religious legitimation in this context. As Georges Dreyfus has indicated, "[Dge lugs] scholasticism...has tended to present itself in Tibet as the inheritor and sole legitimate interpreter of the classical Indian Buddhist tradition".[50] I think it is fair to say that this tendency is already manifest in the formative works of its founder, Rje Rinpoche.

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[50] Dreyfus 2003: 148.

The sheer mass of references to alternative translations, Sanskrit texts and terms, provides a *prima facie* case that this feature of Tsong kha pa's writing is in no way peripheral to his literary persona. Rather, he seems to be making a rather strong statement about the type of tradition he advocates and its sources of authority. Like Sa paṇ, who critiqued his contemporaries for their provincial Tibetan ignorance (himself professing an intimate claim to knowledge of the original Indian sources), the conceit of precision of translation as setting his work apart from the run-of-the-mill, sloppy old Tibetan interpretations is central to the authorial identity Tsong kha pa seeks to project. His frequent invectives against 'earlier Tibetan scholars' (*sngon gyi bod kyi mkhas pa*, etc.) can only be effective against the background of a claim to distinctive, unmediated access to the Indic tradition. As is clear, this was accomplished, in part, through appeal to alternative translations. The fact that his claim to authoritativeness on these grounds would seem to be (by and large) specious, only serves to make the situation more intriguing. He would seem to have counted on the fact that there were none to contradict him—that is, no contemporary with the Sanskritic credentials to undermine his work, or the ability to counterpose the authority of his alternative readings. Given the documented existence of such persons, the source(s) of his confidence bears further inquiry.[51]

Finally, this corpus of texts, in providing a rare glimpse of some of the many voices speaking for the Indian literary heritage, constitutes a tremendous resource for contemporary textual criticism, including so-called '*Bka' 'gyur* (and *Bstan 'gyur*) Studies'. Passages cited in the

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[51] As noted above, several near-contemporaries of Tsong kha pa did seem to have such expertise (pending closer analyses such as this one), so it seems doubtful that he might have believed he could successfully 'bluff' in this regard. If we do, in fact, conclude that he did not actually cite Indic texts he himself personally consulted, his citation of alternative translations also becomes somewhat dubious. In conversation at the IATS Seminar in Oxford, Prof. Ronald Davidson suggested that Tsong kha pa had likely derived (not to say 'lifted') his citations wholesale from other sources. It does seem likely that the majority of the texts he takes to be superior were indicated as such by other sources he deemed trustworthy (such as the works of Bu ston)—though there are writings attributed to him which strongly suggest their author was consulting such alternative texts directly (See e.g. *Bshad rgyud rdo rje phreng ba'i zin bris rje nyid kyis gnang ba* in Rje Tsoṅ kha pa 1999).

One of the major questions unfortunately left unaddressed in the present essay is the identity of these presumed sources. Some of the citations of the *Pradīpoddyotana*, for instance, seem to come from the writings of Bu ston. However, I have not been able to identify the source of his citations of the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* treated herein. I have unfortunately not been able to check the writings of Red mda' ba Gzhon nu blo gros as suggested to me by Prof. Kapstein, though I agree that this is a likely source.

works of scholastics such as Tsong kha pa are sometimes the only extant versions of these independent voices, and are thus an important source for the literary history of Tibet. They can also be of immense value in the task of editing Sanskrit literature.[52]

While we must, it seems, surrender our corporate faith in the rectitude and consistency of the Tibetan translations, what we gain is far more valuable than what we imagined we had to lose. As we have seen in the above examples, the extant fragments of alternative translations give us invaluable information on and insight into the various states of texts in early second-millennium Tibet. One encounters variant readings which may be taken into account in editing and interpreting Indic works. One observes divergent manuscript readings reflected in various Tibetan translations—suggesting once again that we take seriously the proposition that variation in Tibetan may be legitimately based on variation in the source texts. One also finds further confirmation of the findings of Anne MacDonald regarding the (apparently common) practice of Tibetan translators who—quite likely seeking to attain the kind of mythic consistency of canonical translations we have problematised—regularly cannibalised previously completed Tibetan translations, 'cutting and pasting' cited passages into their own new translations.

In this material, one encounters translations which are far preferable, far more faithful to the original, than those preserved in the canonical collections. It should be clear from the above that to rest satisfied with the Lo chen corpus (or other canonical translations) as 'the' Tibetan version is to limit ourselves unnecessarily and, in certain cases, to rely on definitively unreliable texts. Throughout the examples given above, we can see that the 'lost' translations of Chag are often markedly superior to those of Lo chen. This would all commend, as a methodological principle, that scholars of Tibetan Buddhist literature—in particular, those Indologists or 'Indo-Tibetanists' who are interested in Tibetan translations largely for the insight they give into lost or corrupted

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[52] Of course, it should not be forgotten that Sanskrit texts can be of great use also in the editing of their Tibetan translations. Not only are their many instances where genitive and instrumental particles have become confused in the course of transmission, but there are other, more gross differences, which can be rectified. For instance, it is not uncommon for homophones to be confused in the transmission of Tibetan translations. Thus, for instance, in Lo chen's translation of the CMP, in Chapter Three, the received text reads *bstan* for *brtan*; elsewhere in the same chapter, the text reads *bzlas* for *'das*; and later in Chapter Seven, one encounters *gzod nas* for *gdod nas*. Cf. Wedemeyer (forthcoming [2006]).

Sanskrit originals—pay closer attention to the idiosyncrasies of the translator(s) of each specific text with which they are working.[53]

In recent years there has been tremendous growth in so-called '*Bka' 'gyur* Studies', which has shed invaluable light on the creation and development of these canons. This research, in establishing stemma of the major exemplars, is an important contribution to the task of editing the translations included therein. However, these translations are only one part of a much larger story of the Tibetan translations of Buddhist texts. If the goal is reliable editions, consulting extra-canonical translations is also a desideratum—not only for the work of editing the Indic originals, but also in editing the 'standard translations' themselves.[54] All of this would also suggest a research desideratum of cataloguing these alternative texts, to make them available to modern editors. It may also be worthwhile—in addition to mining the scholastic commentarial literature—to search for any surviving texts of these 'lost' translations. Some of these are to be found in non-canonical collections, *gsung 'bum*, and the like. In addition, a Nepalese colleague of mine once suggested to me that the Tibetan collection of the National Library of Nepal may contain some of these (presumably manuscript) texts, though others I have spoken with have expressed skepticism that any such will turn up. Let us hope these latter are mistaken.

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[53] Nearly twenty years ago, Leonard van der Kuijp made an important foray in this direction in an article entitled "A Text-Historical Note on *Hevajratantra* I:v:1–2" (van der Kuijp 1985). In this piece, he refers to the *Hevajratantra* edition of Snellgrove. The latter is a perfect example of text-critical scholarship taking the canonical version as "the [*sic*] Tibetan text". Van der Kuijp, on the contrary, draws on an 'alternative' translation by Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po to illustrate the textual history of the *Hevajratantra* in the early-mid second millennium, and notes references to other (presumably no longer extant) translations by G.yi jo Lo tsā ba and Shong Lo tsā ba.

[54] For example, as indicated above (note 40), example eight shows a case where Lo chen's text reads *bshad par bya* for what should be (based on the Sanskrit and Chag) *spyad par bya*. I personally believe this to be a case of 'old scribal error' (in Tsong kha pa's terms, *bri nor ring du brgyud pa*), which predated Tsong kha pa. That is, sometime in the process of manuscript tranmission, between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries, the syllable *spyad* was altered to *bshad*. Whether copied from an oral recitation or directly copied from a text, it is easy enough for (homophones or) such pseudo-homophones to creep into the textual transmission. One may compare in this regard the comments made by David Snellgrove regarding the tribulations of having his edited text of four *rnam thar* copied by scribes in rural Dolpo: "[With] even the best of scribes...as there are so many ways of writing the same sound in Tibetan, there is constant risk of error if he tries to write a whole passage without glancing back at the text he is copying"; cf. Snellgrove [1964] 1992: 69–70.

V. Conclusion

In sum, I believe it is profitable to pay closer attention to this corpus of texts, lying concealed within the writings of scholastic authors and elsewhere. They are a uniquely rich source regarding the early literary history of Tibet; they can shed light on individual authors' approach to the rhetoric of legitimation in early second-millennium religious contestation; and they are underutilised witnesses which promise to be of great aid both in the work of editing Tibetan religious literature and broader research into canon and criticism in traditional Tibetan culture.

As we have seen, the landscape of Tibetan translation is by no means the uniform and mechanical place some authors make it out to be. The agency and creativity of the Tibetan translators, their triumphs and their bungles, need to be taken very seriously by modern scholars. They should no longer be treated as invisible (if occasionally venerated), transparent media through which the Sanskrit Buddhist literary culture was transmitted to Tibet. Their works should be treated as works in the true sense, and attributed to those individuals to whose labours they are owed. Scholars should no longer refer to the products of specific *lotsāwa*-s as 'the Tibetan text'—but should refer them to their proper authors, the translator(s). To do otherwise is not only rude; it is scientifically and historically imprecise. Tibetan translations are not ahistorical entities floating 'out there' to be exploited by Tibetans and scholars alike, anymore than is the work of modern scholars. Like the latter, they are historical products, with their attendant idiosyncrasies, ideological encodings, and multiple cultural entanglements—all of which are susceptible to analysis, if scholars will attend to them.

From the materials examined herein, a new and more detailed picture emerges of the great translators and their works—one, not of automaton *lotsāwa*-s mechanically rendering texts like a kind of premodern Babelfish,[55] but of creative, intelligent, and fallible human beings engaged in the challenging task of interpreting Sanskrit Buddhist literature through the medium of classical Tibetan. For all that I have, in the foregoing, identified numerous shortcomings of their work, this is by no means to disparage it. Rather, it is merely a call for a more nuanced understanding of these translations as cultural and historical products, and for further reflection on their use by contemporary

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[55] That is, the electronic translation programme available on the Internet from AltaVista.

scholars of Indian and Tibetan Buddhism. Indeed, in the end, we might very well be justified in admiring the 'marvel of the Tibetan translations of Buddhist texts between the eighth and the fourteenth centuries' (with which sentiment this paper began)—not on the basis of some putative, mythical univocality and transparency, but as a tremendous, polyvocal monument to the spirit of willed human work on the part of the Tibetan intelligentsia.

APPENDIX: COMPARATIVE TABLE OF TEXTS

'STANDARD' TRANSLATION	'ALTERNATIVE' TRANSLATION	SANSKRIT TEXT(S)
1. Citations of the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*: from Rje Tsoṅ kha pa 1978c: 587		
[Lo chen] sku dang gsung dang thugs mngon par rtogs nas [kyang] ¦ sa bcu thob pa ¦ sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin so sor thob cing ¦	[Chag] lus ngag sems rnam par dben pa mngon par rtogs nas kyang sa bcu thob ste ¦ sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin so sor thob bo ¦	kāya-vāk-citta-vivekādhiga-to 'pi daśa-bhūmiṃ prāpya māyopama-samādhiṃ prati-labhate ¦
sangs rgyas kyi bya ba mngon sum du byas nas	sangs rgyas kyi sku mngon sum du byas nas ¦	buddha-kāyaṃ sākṣāt kṛtvā
Tsong kha pa's comment: chag 'gyur las...zhes dang ¦ ...zhes 'byung bas ni 'gyur snga ma gsal du btang ngo ¦		
2. Citation of *Pañcakrama*: from Rje Tsoṅ kha pa 1978c: 424		
[Lo chen] mtshan nyid bzhi bcu gang yin pa ¦ shin tu stong pa'i skad cig ste ¦¦	[Chag] rang bzhin bzhi bcu'i skad cig rnams ¦ shin tu stong pa las skyes te ¦	catvāriṃśat prakṛtayaḥ kṣaṇikāś cātiśūnya-jāḥ ¦ (PK, II.20cd)
Tsong kha pa's comment: rkang pa tha ma gnyis la chag 'gyur las...		
3. Citation of the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*: from Rje Tsoṅ kha pa 1978c: 673.		
[Lo chen] til 'bru tsam la'ang dngos por 'dzin pa'i blo spang bar bya'o ¦	[2 New Translations] dngos po til 'bru tsam la yang yongs su 'dzin pa'i blo dor bar bya'o ¦	tilamātreṣv api vastuṣu parigraha-buddhiṃ paritya-jet ¦
Tsong kha pa's comments: gnyis pa ni 'gyur gsar gnyis las ¦ dngos po til 'bru tsam la yang yongs su 'dzin pa'i blo dor bar bya'o ¦ zhes bsgyur ba legs pas yo byad til tsam yang bsags te mi 'dzin pa la bya'i ¦ bden zhen gyi dngos 'dzin mi byed pa la mi bya'o ¦		
4. Citation of the *Pañcakrama*: from Rje Tsoṅ kha pa 1978c: 604.		
[Lo chen] de nyid shes pa'i rim shes nas ¦ bdag byin brlab pa'i 'od gsal la ¦ de nyid la ni 'dus pa gang ¦ zung du 'jug pa'i rim 'di yin ¦¦	[Chag] de nyid shes pas rim pa bzhin ¦ rang byin brlab dang 'od gsal shes ¦ de dag kho na 'dus pa gang ¦ 'di ni zung 'jug rim pa'o ¦¦	jñātvā krameṇa tattva-jñaḥ svādhiṣṭhāna-prabhāsvarau ¦ tayor eva samājaṃ yad yuganaddha-kramo hy ayam ¦¦ (PK V.11)

kun rdzob dang ni don dam dag	so so'i char ni shes gyur pa	gang du yang dag 'dres gyur pa	zung du 'jug par de bshad do ||	kun rdzob dang ni don dam gyi	rnam dbye so sor shes nas ni	gang du yang dag 'dres gyur pa	zung du 'jug par de bshad do ||	saṃvṛtiṃ paramārthaṃ ca pṛthag jñātvā vibhāgataḥ || saṃmīlanaṃ bhaved yatra yuganaddhaṃ tad ucyate || (V.13)

Tsong kha pa's comment: chag 'gyur las...|	

5. Citation of *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*: from Rje Tsoṅ kha pa 1978c: 565.

[Lo chen] sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin las bzhengs nas	'gro ba rnams la ston par mdzad pa yin no		[Chag] sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin gyis bzhengs nas	gdul bya'i skye bo rnams la chos kyi 'khor lo rab tu bskor ba yin no		[2 variant manuscripts] māyopama-samādhiṃ vyutthāya janebhyo dharmaṃ pravartitavān	(MS B), OR māyopama-samād- hiṃ vyutthāya vineya- janebhyo dharmacakraṃ pravarttitavān	(MS C)

Tsong-kha-pa's comment: chag 'gyur las |...| zhes 'byung ngo			

6. Citation of *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*: from Rje Tsoṅ kha pa 1978c: 608.

[Lo chen] gzugs kyi bdag nyid can gyi ming ni rdo rje 'chang chen po zhes bya'o		[Chag] gang ming dang gzugs kyi bdag nyid can rdo rje 'chang chen po		yannāmarūpātmako vajra- dhara iti	

Tsong kha pa's comment: gzugs kyi bdag nyid can gyi ming ni	zhes pa la chag 'gyur las	gang ming dang gzugs kyi bdag nyid can rdo rje 'chang chen po	zhes 'byung ba ltar *'grel pa zla 'od* las kyang	ming phung po lhag ma bzhi dang	gzugs gzugs phung la bshad do	de yang zung 'jug rdo rje 'chang de rlung sems tsam gyi bdag nyid du bstan pas	sngar grol ba po su zhig yin zhes pa'i lan no			

7. Citation of *Uttaratantra* (in CMP, PK, and PU): from Rje Tsoṅ kha pa 1978c: 313.

[Lo chen's PK and CMP Some Indian MSS, and Two old translations of PU ch. 12] ye shes lnga yi rang bzhin dbugs	'byung ba lnga yi ngo bo nyid	gong bu'i gzugs kyis phyung nas ni	sna yi rtse mor rab tu brtag ||	[Chag's CMP and PK All translations PU Ch. 6, Some Indian MSS, and The two new translations of PU Ch. 12] ye shes lnga yi rang bzhin dbugs	'byung ba lnga yi ngo bo nyid	gong bu'i gzugs kyis phyung nas ni	pad ma'i sna tser rab tu brtag ||	pañca-jñāna-mayaṃ śvāsaṃ pañca-bhūta-sva- bhāvakam	niścārya padma-nāsāgre piṇḍa-rūpeṇa kalpayet || (all other) OR niścārya piṇḍa-rūpeṇa nāsikāgre tu kalpayet || (UT.147)

Tsong kha pa's comment: le'u drug pa'i sgron gsal du *rgyud phyi ma* drang pa'i 'gyur thams cad dang	bcu gnyis pa'i 'grel par drangs pa'i 'gyur gsar gnyis dang	chag gis bsgyur ba'i *rim lnga* dang *spyod bsdus* las padma'i sna rtser zhes 'byung la	le'u bcu		

gnyis pa'i 'grel pa'i 'gyur rnying gnyis dag pa dang | *rgyud phyi ma* dang *rim lnga* dang *spyod bsdus* lo chen gyis bsgyur ba la padma zhes pa med pas | rgya gar gyi dpe la yod med gnyis byung bar gsal yang | *spyod bsdus* su dkyil 'khor bzhi'i rlung la yi ge gsum gyi rdor bzlas steng gi sna rtser byed ba | ye shes lnga'i zhes sogs rkang pa drug gis gsal bar bstan par gsungs pas | padma med par dag par mngon no |

8. Citation of *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*: from Rje Tsoṅ kha pa 1978c: 678.

[Lo chen] shin tu spros pa med pa'i spyod pa smyon pa'i brtul zhugs bshad pa'i mdo las gsungs pa'i rim pas kyang bshad par bya'o		[2 New (Chag and Pa tshab)] bshad pa'i rgyud las gsungs pa'i tshul dang rim pas smyon pa'i brtul zhugs kyis kyang shin tu spros med la spyad par bya		unmatta-vratenāpy atyanta-niṣprapañca-caryāyāṃ vyākhyātantrokta-krameṇa caritavyam	

Tsong kha pa's comment: *'dir spyod bsdus* las | shin tu spros med kyi spyod pa smyon pa'i brtul zhugs kyi mdo las gsungs pa'i rim pas kyang bshad par bya'o | zhes mang du drangs pa ni | *rdo rje snying po rgyan kyi rgyud* le'u bcu drug pa nas 'byung ngo | 'di la *spyod bsdus* 'gyur gsar gnyis las bshad pa'i rgyud las gsungs pa'i tshul dang rim pas smyon pa'i brtul zhugs kyis kyang shin tu spros med la spyad par bya zhes 'byung yang | lo chen gyis smyon pa'i brtul zhugs bshad pa'i mdo zhes bsgyur ba legs te | le'u der brtul zhugs kyi spyod pa bstan la | de yang smyon pa'i brtul zhugs su gsungs pas | bshad ces pa ni smyon pa'i brtul zhugs bshad ces pa'i don yin gyi 'dus pa'i bshad rgyud du ston pa min pa'i phyir |

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PART FOUR

INDO-TIBETAN PRAXIS AND HISTORY

IDENTIFYING THE UNNAMED OPPONENTS OF TSONG KHA PA AND MKHAS GRUB RJE CONCERNING THE TRANSFORMATION OF ORDINARY BIRTH, DEATH AND INTERMEDIATE STATE INTO THE THREE BODIES*

YAEL BENTOR (JERUSALEM, ISRAEL)

One of the main premises of Highest Yoga Tantra is that enlightenment may be achieved in a single embodiment, in this very lifetime. At the same time, enlightenment is equated with attaining the three bodies of the Buddha.[1] This might be perceived as involving a contradiction. If the body of the Buddha were to be attained by forsaking the present body and taking a new rebirth as an enlightened being, this would not constitute enlightenment in this very lifetime. How is it, then, that without undergoing death and rebirth, the present impure body—a product of karma and afflicting emotions—could be abandoned, and the body of the Buddha, adorned with the major and minor marks, be attained?

This paper will look at some of the answers to this question provided by early Dge lugs pa authors, especially by Tsong kha pa (1357–1419) and his disciple Mkhas grub rje Dge legs dpal bzang (1385–1438). The discussion will focus on some of their arguments against the opinions of opponents whom they do not name.[2] Though it may finally prove unfeasible to identify all the unnamed opponents in these works, we shall see that some of them are still to a certain degree identifiable. We shall begin by presenting the position of these two authors on this matter, then consider the opponents against whom they likely write, and finally look at the polemics themselves.

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[1] That is, the Dharma Body (*dharmakāya, chos sku*), Enjoyment Body (*sambhoghakāya, longs sku*), and Emanation Body (*nirmāṇakāya, sprul sku*).

[2] This is in conformity with the broader Tibetan tradition. As van der Kuijp (2003: 403) says: "In keeping with general Indo-Tibetan scholarly practice, none identify the authors or exponents behind the positions they cite of which they were critical".

THE POSITION OF THE EARLY DGE LUGS PA WRITERS:

We shall consider the position of these writers as it is expressed main-
ly in Tsong kha pa's *Rnam gzhag rim pa'i rnam bshad*, a commentary
on the *Vyavasthālīkrama* (*Rnam gzhag rim pa*) by Nāgabuddhi,[3] and
the *Bskyed rim dngos grub rgya mtsho* by Mkhas grub rje. These two
works formulated to a large extent the position of later Dge lugs pa
authors on this subject.

Tsong kha pa, and subsequently Mkhas grub rje, maintain that,
because there are unique correspondences between ordinary death and
the Dharma Body, between the ordinary intermediate state and the
Enjoyment Body, and between ordinary birth and the Emanation Body,
it is possible to transform the one into the other without ordinary death
intervening. The key for attaining enlightenment in this life through the
practice of the *sādhana* of the Highest Yoga Tantra lies in these unique
correspondences linking three levels: (1) the ground of purification,
meaning ordinary birth, death and intermediate state; (2) the fruit of
purification, meaning the three bodies of the Buddha; and (3) the puri-
fier, meaning the tantric practices of the generation and completing
processes.[4] These correspondences have a determining role in the trans-
formation of the ordinary states into the three bodies of the Buddha.

For those practitioners of the Highest Yoga Tantra who would be
awakened in this life, the ordinary death, which naturally occurs to peo-
ple in Dzambuling, would transform into the Dharma Body. And from

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[3] Or Nāgabodhi; in Tibetan he is called Klu'i blo or Klu'i byang chub.
[4] Even though the practice which is centered on the transformation of birth, death
and the intermediate state into the three bodies of the Buddha is the generation process
(*bskyed rim*), the actual transformation into these bodies is considered to take place not
during the generation process, but rather at the culmination of the completing process
(*rdzogs rim*). This apparent contradiction seems to be a result of a historical process, in
which initially the generation process may have been an autonomous transformative
process in its own right, leading to the attainment of complete enlightenment. But later
on, the emphasis was transferred to the completing process, and it received the ultimate
role, while the generation process became its preliminary step, in which only simili-
tudes of the true transformations take place. Still, these similitudes are regarded as
eventually enabling the ripening of the true transformations during the completing
process. Therefore, during the generation process, the practitioner's birth, death and
intermediate state are considered to transform not into the actual three bodies of the
Buddha, but into the three bodies of the completing process of the path, the analogical
and actual clear light and the pure and impure illusory bodies, which ultimately trans-
form into the true three bodies. In this paper however we shall limit ourselves to the dis-
cussion of the generation process alone.

that, instead of the ordinary intermediate state that would naturally occur, they would arise as the Enjoyment Body. Since it is a continuum of the same kind, without discontinuation for even a moment, which transforms into the three ultimate bodies of the Buddha, the awakening is regarded as occurring in this lifetime.[5]

The main points of contention, in the works by Tsong kha pa and Mkhas grub rje on the generation process mentioned above, stem from their understanding of the system of correspondences presented by Nāgabuddhi's *Vyavasthālīkrama* (*Rnam gzhag rim pa*). They maintain that the purpose of the *sādhana* is the transformation of the practitioner's own birth, death and intermediate state, and not the life cycle events of *others*. Furthermore, they assert that the practice is intended to effect the practitioner's birth, death and intermediate state that would take place in the future, and not those which already occurred in the *past*. Many of the criticisms made by Tsong kha pa and Mkhas grub rje in these works are against those who do not interpret the generation process in this way. Both these writers see the working of the *sādhana* as a coherent system, where each step of the practice has its special role, and in which every slight deviation from this systematic design would hinder the potentiality of the practice, and prevent the practitioners from accomplishing their goal of achieving Buddhahood.

WHO ARE THEIR OPPONENTS?

Now, after presenting the positions of the proponents, we shall attempt to identify who their opponents are, and then discuss the polemical issues. Since some of the arguments are aimed at those called 'early lamas' (*bla ma snga ma*), one might assume that these are attacks against the Rnying ma pa school. However, some of the most severe criticisms seem to point toward authors who explain the practice of the *Guhyasamāja* Tantra according to the *Ārya* tradition ('*phags lugs*), the tradition to which the *Vyavasthālīkrama* (*Rnam gzhag rim pa*) belongs, and not at those who explain the practice of other traditions. Although unnamed, the opponents are called by different designations that could provide hints as to their identities. Besides 'early lamas', opponents are called 'some people' (*kha cig*), 'early Tibetan lamas' (*bod kyi bla ma*

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[5] Mkhas grub rje 163-166.

snga ma), 'some lamas of the Tibetan Guhyasamāja' (*bod kyi 'dus pa'i bla ma kha cig*), 'some unlearned Tibetans' (*bod kyi ma sbyangs pa kha cig*), 'some later lamas' (*phyis kyi bla ma kha cig*), 'some lamas' (*bla ma kha cig*), and so on. These designations do not seem to be arbitrary. Each of these categories likely refers to a certain person or a certain group of people.

How can we find out who these opponents were? When we attempt to identify some of the Tibetan lamas in the lineages of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*—for example, in the *Blue Annals*, in A myes zhabs's *Gsang ba 'dus pa'i dam pa'i chos byung*, or in Tsong kha pa's own works[6]—we find lists of dozens of Tibetan teachers and their disciples. It is quite likely that some of the unnamed opponents may be found among them, however the works of most of them have not come down to us. Clues are found in later compositions of Dge lugs authors that comment on the works of Tsong kha pa and Mkhas grub rje on this subject. For example, both in his *Sgron gsal mchan* (vol. 6, p. 130.3–4) and in his *Rnam gzhag rim pa'i rnam bshad* (pp. 364.6–365.2), Tsong kha pa presents the opinions of both early lamas and later lamas on a certain point concerning the *sādhana* of the Guhyasamāja.[7] Nor bzang rgya mtsho (1423–1513), who was born fifteen years before Mkhas grub rje passed away, attributes the position of the early lamas in this matter to Bu ston Rin chen grub, and that of the later lamas to Red mda' ba Gzhon nu blo gros.[8] But when we examine Bu ston's commentary on one of the main *sādhana*s of the generation process of the Guhyasamāja, the *Piṇḍīkrama-sādhana* (*Mdor byas*) by Nāgārjuna,[9] we realise that the position which Nor bzang rgya mtsho attributes to Bu ston, is not in fact Bu ston's own position. Bu ston himself attributes

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[6] For these works see below.

[7] This point regards the grounds of purification of the meditation on the blessing of the body, speech and mind as well as on the triple-layered beings (*sems dpa' gsum brtsegs*) during the generation process. According to Tsong kha pa, early lamas apply the meditation on the triple-layered beings to the actual birth outside the womb, while later lamas apply both the blessing of the body, speech and mind as well as the triple-layered beings to birth outside the womb. But, Tsong kha pa himself maintains that such a position contradicts both the *Root Tantra of the Guhyasamāja* and the *Rnam gzhag rim pa*. In his *Bskyed rim Dngos grub rgya mtsho* (pp. 231.5-232.1), Mkhas grub rje repeats Tsong kha pa's statement.

[8] *Dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i bskyed rim gyi don gsal bar byed pa'i sgron me*, on fol. 123a.

[9] *Dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i sgrub thabs mdor byas kyi rgya cher bshad pa bskyed rim gsal byed*.

this position to 'Tibetan Lamas' (p. 778.5), while his own view is different.[10]

The First Panchen Lama, Blo bzang chos rgyan (1570–1662) provides a more accurate identification of the early and later lamas to whom Tsong kha pa referred. In his epitome of Mkhas grub rje's work on the generation process of the Guhyasamāja, the *Bskyed rim dngos grub rgya mtsho'i snying po* (p. 405.6), he explains that the early lamas referred to here are those who follow the system of 'Gos, while the position of the later lamas is that of those who follow the tradition of Bu ston. 'Gos Khug pa lhas btsas, who lived in the 11th century, played a role in the retranslation and revision of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*. He is also the author of *Gsang 'dus stong thun*, perhaps the earliest Tibetan treatise on the central yogic practices of the Guhyasamāja system. Indeed the position Tsong kha pa (*ibid*.) attributes to 'the early lamas' is found in the *Gsang 'dus stong thun* (p. 26.3–4),[11] while the position he attributes to 'later lamas' appears in Bu ston's commentary (pp. 771.6–772.3). Works that portray the history of the Guhyasamāja, such as the *Blue Annals* or A myes zhabs's *Gsang ba 'dus pa'i dam pa'i chos byung*, emphasise the role of both 'Gos[12] and Bu ston[13] among the holders of the teaching of the Guhyasamāja in Tibet. Likewise, both 'Gos and Bu ston appear in the lineage of Tsong kha pa's teachers of the Guhyasamāja in his own *Gsan yig*[14] and in his *Mtha' gcod rin chen myu gu* as well.[15] Moreover, the lineage prayer at the opening of the *sādhana*

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[10] The text of Red mda' ba is unfortunately not available to me.

[11] There are additional cases where the terms 'early lamas' or 'former lamas' seem to refer to 'Gos. For example, 'some former spiritual teachers' (*sngon dus kyi bshes gnyen kha cig*) in Tsong kha pa's *Rnam gzhag rim pa'i rnam bshad* (p. 333.2), or 'some former lamas' (*sngon dus kyi bla ma kha cig*) in Mkhas grub rje's *Bskyed rim Dngos grub rgya mtsho* (p. 206.2) seem to refer to 'Gos's *Gsang 'dus stong thun* (p. 24.5). In Tsong kha pa's *Mtha' gcod rin chen myu gu* (p. 135.1) 'Gos is listed as the first (*Rje 'Gos la sogs*) among 'the early lamas' (*bla ma snga ma rnams*).

[12] 'Gos Lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal, *Deb ther sngon po*, p. 318 (Roerich 1949/1979: 359), A myes zhabs, *Dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i dam pa'i chos byung*, pp. 47-48.

[13] 'Gos Lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal op. *cit*. 323, (Roerich *op. cit*.: 366), A myes zhabs, *op. cit*.: 50-51.

[14] Here are listed two main traditions of the Guhyasamāja, the traditions of Mar pa and of 'Gos respectively (p. 236.1ff.). Later are mentioned (p. 241.1-2) teachings received through the lineage of Bu ston, including Bu ston's commentary on the *Mdor byas* which was referred to above.

[15] Here, after listing the lineage leading to Mar pa, Tsong kha pa speaks about 'Gos who is said to have gone to India twelve times and to have studied with seventy teachers, some of whom Tsong kha pa mentions. He then describes the lineage of 'Gos in

of the *Guhyasamāja* used by the Dge lugs School includes Bu ston (p. 26.5), and among the recipients of the offering made toward the end of the practice are both 'Gos (p. 157.2) and Bu ston (p. 156.5, and p. 157.5).

It should be noted that only once does the First Panchen Lama mention the traditions of 'Gos and Bu ston in this work on the generation process of the Guhyasamāja. Throughout the rest of his work he refers to the opponents exactly as Tsong kha pa and Mkhas grub rje do, by calling them 'some people,' 'some Tibetan lamas,' and so on. However, in comparing the opinions attributed to the different unnamed opponents to those of 'Gos and Bu ston, it is possible to arrive at the conclusion that some of the criticisms are directed towards them.

Still, it is not the case that every time the terms 'early lamas' or 'former lamas' are used, they necessarily refer to 'Gos. At times, Mkhas grub rje, and occasionally Tsong kha pa as well, present arguments very similar to those made by Bu ston against certain opponents. However, while Bu ston calls these opponents simply 'Tibetan Lamas,' just because these lamas preceded Bu ston, Tsong kha pa and Mkhas grub rje call them 'early Tibetan Lamas.'[16] It is as yet unclear whether these Dge lugs masters personally inspected the works of these early opponents in every case. Similarly, not all mentions of 'later' people need necessarily refer to Bu ston.[17]

Tibet leading to Bu ston who is said to have revived the *Ārya* (*'phags pa*) tradition of the Guhyasamāja when it was in a danger of declining. As the *Blue Annals* has it as well ('Gos Lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal, op. cit., p. 323, Roerich 1949/1979: 366), Tsong kha pa says here that he studied with Khyung po lhas pa who was a disciple of Bu ston (pp. 139.2-142.2).

[16] To give only two examples: while Mkhas grub rje (p. 256.5) refers to those who speak about the ultimate tip of the nose as 'early lamas' (*bla ma snga ma kha cig*), Bu ston (p. 762.1) cites the very same statement as the opinion of 'some lamas' (*bla ma kha cig*). And, while Mkhas grub rje (p. 259.6) calls those who maintain that the seed syllables of the four mothers are the first syllable of their names 'early Tibetan lamas' (*bod kyi bla ma snga ma dag*), Bu ston (p. 764.6) identifies them simply as Tibetan lamas (*bod kyi bla ma dag*). There are many more such examples.

[17] For example, Tsong kha pa in his *Rnam gzhag rim pa'i rnam bshad* (pp. 363.7-364.1) disagrees with 'later scholars' (*phyis kyi mkhas pa*) and Mkhas grub rje (p. 223.6) maintains that the opinion of 'some early and later Tibetan lamas' (*bod kyi bla ma snga phyi kha cig*) in this matter is extremely inappropriate, while Bu ston (pp. 758.5-759.5) shares the opinion of Tsong kha pa and Mkhas grub rje. In other cases the inexplicit reference to Bu-ston does not include the term 'later' (see below).

SOME OF THE ISSUES OF POLEMICS:

After identifying some of the opponents, we shall explore a few matters on which Tsong kha pa and Mkhas grub rje disagreed with their predecessors in the lineage of the Guhyasamāja in Tibet. The first issue we will look at is concerned with the ground of purification of the generation process. 'Gos Khug pa lhas btsas, in his *Gsang 'dus stong thun* (pp. 27.4–5 and 31.5), maintains that the generation process has birth as its ground of purification, while the completing process has death as its ground of purification. In other words, he asserts that the generation process transforms the practitioners' birth, while the completing process transforms their death. Similarly, Bu ston (p. 684.4) states that the *sādhana* by Nāgārjuna on which he comments is the purifier of the process of samsaric birth. In his *Rgyud kyi mngon par rtogs pa rin po che'i ljon shing*, the early Sa skya pa Grags pa rgyal mtshan (p. 34.3.2–4) as well asserts that the ground of purification of the generation process is birth, while the ground of purification of the completing process is the death of sentient beings.

As we saw above, Tsong kha pa and Mkhas grub rje maintain that the ground of purification of the generation process encompasses all three processes of one's life cycle—birth, death and the intermediate state—which eventually will transform into the three bodies of the Buddha that correspond to them. In his *Rnam gzhag rim pa'i rnam bshad* (pp. 376.3–377.3), Tsong kha pa paraphrases the opinion of 'Gos Khug pa lhas btsas (pp. 28.6–31.1), while referring to him and to his teachers as 'former lamas' (*sngon kyi bla ma dag*).[18] Tsong kha pa's paraphrasing may be summarised in the following words: 'the former lamas' maintain that the grounds of purification of the two processes are incompatible—the ground of purification of the generation process is birth, while the ground of purification of the completing process is death of people other than the people of the first *kalpa* (the death of the people of the first kalpa being purified by the gathering of the Deities of Special Visualisation [*lhag mos*] into clear light during the generation process).

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[18] In this passage 'Gos Khug pa lhas btsas refutes the opinions of three of his teachers, Sprin gyi shugs can, Btsun mo can and Mngon shes can. Although Tsong kha pa does not mention the name of 'Gos himself, he does repeat the names of these three teachers. For these teachers see also the *Blue Annals* ('Gos Lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal, *op.cit.*, p. 319, Roerich 1949/1979: 360), and Tsong kha pa's *Gsan yig* (p. 238).

Apparently taking into account the opinion of Bu ston as well, Mkhas grub rje says (pp. 166.6–167.4) that most of the early and later Tibetan lamas of the Guhyasamāja explain that the generation process purifies birth, while the completing process purifies death. And in response to their position, Mkhas grub rje comments that if the generation process by itself could purify birth entirely, it would bring about the attainment of enlightenment, and the completing process would be ineffective. And likewise if the completing process by itself could purify death entirely, then the generation process would be futile as a cause for the supreme attainment.

Another point of contention is the identity of those whose births and deaths are purified. As we saw, according to Tsong kha pa and Mkhas grub rje, the tantric path purifies the practitioner's *own* birth, death, and intermediate state. And therefore the births, deaths and intermediate states which are purified are those of *human beings* who are born from a womb alone. Bu-ston (pp. 731.3–732.1) in his commentary on the *sādhana* of the generation process of the Guhyasamāja entitled *Piṇḍīkrama-sādhana* (*Mdor byas*) by Nāgārjuna, does note that he is explaining the practice in accordance with the birth of the people of Dzambuling, because the Buddha in his last existence attained enlightenment in the body of a person in Dzambuling. However he describes four different practices for purifying the four modes of birth: birth from egg, birth from womb, birth from warmth and moisture, and miraculous birth (pp. 730.3–731.1).[19]

In his *Bskyed rim dngos grub rgya mtsho* (pp. 148.6–149.6), Mkhas grub rje reproduces this passage almost word for word, while attributing it to 'some Tibetan lamas' (*bod kyi bla ma kha cig*), and concludes that this position is very inappropriate, because it contradicts the scriptures which he cites,[20] and because (pp. 151.3–4):

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[19] (1) For purifying birth from egg—generation of deities from a seed enclosed in the midst of embracing sun and moon. (2) For purifying birth from womb—generation in a manner of invoking with a song a seed that has entered into the womb of the Father-Mother and has dissolved there. (3) For purifying birth from warmth and moisture—generation from just a seed, signifying the consciousness of the intermediate being, on top of an open lotus, with a sun ray signifying warmth, and a moon signifying moisture, or a generation from just seed on top of a lotus and sun which have the essence of warmth and moisture. And (4) for purifying miraculous birth—the instantaneous generation of enlightened beings.

[20] Mkhas grub rje cites or mentions here the *Sdom 'byung* (ch. 2, vv. 11-17a and ch. 13, vv. 13-14), the *Rnam gzhag rim pa*, the works of Lūipa on Bde mchog

> Those who produce numerous systems of the generation process in this way demonstrate their mere delight in their own elaborations, but certainly they have not developed even the mere coarse understanding of the essential points of the two processes [the generation and completing processes].

Following Tsong kha pa's *Rnam gzhag rim pa'i rnam bshad* (pp. 306.1–322.3), Mkhas grub rje (pp. 151.4–161.5) maintains here that the tantric practice of the generation and completing processes is meant mainly for those disciples who practise the path of awakening in this life. Like Buddha Śākyamuni, such practitioners can only be people of Dzambuling, and therefore the position that the four modes of birth are still ahead of them is unacceptable.

In the *Rim lnga don bzhi ma* (p. 47) by Gser sdings pa,[21] who according to Tsong kha pa's *Gsan yig* (pp. 236–38) appears in his lineage of teachings on the Guhyasamāja, there is another system of four modes of generation that purify the four modes of birth. Here, birth from womb is purified by the five awakenings into manifestation (*mngon byang lnga*), birth from egg by the generation called The Three Rituals (*cho ga gsum*), birth from warmth and moisture by the generation with means and wisdom, and miraculous birth by an instantaneous generation. There are additional examples: Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216) has yet another system of four rituals of generation for purifying the four modes of birth (p. 35.1.3–5), and in the 14th century 'Ba' ra ba has a similar system,[22] while in the 18th century 'Jigs med gling pa delineates one more method,[23] and so on.[24] In the 19th century, in his work

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(Cakrasaṃvara), the *Mngon par* (*Abhidharma*) the *Sa sde* (*Yogācārarabhūmi*) and a work by Rdo rje dril bu (*Vajraghaṇṭapāda).

[21] Identified in Martin 1997: 33.

[22] 'Ba' ra ba delineates this system according to Kye rdo rje (Hevajra). Here, birth from womb is purified by the generation of the eight retinue goddesses, birth from egg by the generation of the fruitional Vajra Holder from a sphere of light, birth from warmth and moisture by the generation of the causal Vajra Holder through the five awakenings into manifestation (*mngon byang lnga*), and miraculous birth by the instantaneous generation of Kye rdo rje (p. 298.4-5).

[23] Here it seems that generation processes (1) completely without elaborations, (2) without elaborations, (3) with elaborations, and (4) with much elaboration purify respectively miraculous birth, birth from warmth and moisture, birth from womb, and birth from egg. These relationships however are not completely spelled out. 'Jigs med gling pa emphasises that the generation process for purifying birth from womb is the most important here (fols. 2b-4b). I would like to thank Gene Smith for sending me a copy of this text from Cairo several years ago.

[24] A system somewhat similar to that of 'Jigs med gling pa is found in 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse dbang po, pp. 670-671. Here the extensive, middle, brief and very brief generation processes purify respectively birth from egg, birth from womb,

on the generation and completing processes, Kong sprul Blo gros mtha'
yas has a list somewhat similar to that of Gser sdings pa.[25]

Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas further explains how the rituals of
generation purify (Tib. 74 [12] Eng. 38), and his explanation may be
paraphrased as follows: the first concentration, the meditative absorp-
tion of suchness (*de bzhin nyid kyi ting nge 'dzin*), purifies the *previous
death* of the practitioners; the second concentration, the absorption on
all appearances (*kun tu snang ba'i ting nge 'dzin*), purifies the mental
body of the *intermediate being* that is formed after that death; and the
third concentration, the absorption on the primary cause (*rgyu'i ting
nge 'dzin*), purifies the physical body of rebirth.[26]

Tsong kha pa rejects the opinion that the generation process can have
a retroactive effect in purifying the practitioner's previous death, previ-
ous intermediate state and rebirth in the present life. Obviously he does
not write against Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas, but he does attack
'Gos Khug pa lhas btsas (pp. 14.3–18.3) and Bu ston (p. 736.1–4), who
belong to his own tradition, for maintaining that the generation of the
first deities in the main part of the generation process[27] purifies the first
people of the kalpa.[28]

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birth from warmth and moisture, and miraculous birth. Three methods, including the
five awakenings into manifestation (*mngon byang lnga*) and The Three Rituals (*cho ga
gsum*), are applied for the purification of birth from womb. I would like to thank Dan
Martin for this reference.

[25] Tib. p. 73 [11], Eng. p. 37. Here birth from womb is purified by the five awaken-
ings into manifestation (*mngon byang lnga*), birth from egg is purified by the genera-
tion of the Four Vajras (*rdo rje bzhi bskyed*), birth from warmth and moisture by the
generation of the Three Rituals (*cho ga gsum*), and miraculous birth by instantaneous
generation.

[26] Kong sprul continues then to describe additional systems of purifiers and
grounds to be purified.

[27] These are the deities of Special Visualisation (*lhag mos kyi lha*).

[28] The reason the first deities should correspond to the first people of the *kalpa* is
because during the generation process, the generation of the celestial mansion of the
mandala in which these deities reside corresponds to the formation of the world; and
therefore it would be reasonable that the generation of the first deities in the celestial
mansion would be a meditation that corresponds to the formation of the first people that
inhabit the world (Tsong kha pa's *Rnam gzhag rim pa'i rnam bshad*, p. 321.3-5, Mkhas
grub rje pp. 147.6-148.2). Furthermore, unlike the later deities, the first deities are not
generated in stages from their seed syllables, emblems and so on, but are generated
instantly, and this correspond to the first people of the *kalpa* who are miraculously born
instantly (Tsong kha pa's *Rnam gzhag rim pa'i rnam bshad*, p. 322.2, Mkhas grub rje
p. 146.1-2).

Following Tsong kha pa's *Rnam gzhag rim pa'i rnam bshad*, Mkhas grub rje (p. 147.2–3) declares that the first people of the *kalpa*

> are not taken as the ground of purification, because there is no relation whatsoever between the birth of those sentient beings who passed away innumerable eons ago and the practitioners who are purifying [their own rebirths] by meditating on the path now, and who are of a different stream of being.[29]

In referring probably to 'Gos Khug pa lhas btsas (pp. 14.3–18.3) and Bu ston (p. 736.1–4), Mkhas grub rje says (p. 163.2–3):[30]

> Even though other early and later people who were learned in the Tibetan *'Dus pa* ([Guhya]samāja) explained that the evolution of the world and its inhabitants during the first *kalpa* is the ground of purification for meditation on the path now, our holy lama maintains that if you do not make a distinction between a ground of purification and [an object of] correspondence, it would be like burning the fire wood that was annihilated last year with the fire of this year, and he does not accept this method.

'Our holy lama' here is of course Tsong kha pa, who in his *Rnam gzhag rim pa'i rnam bshad* (p. 369.5–6 and p. 370.4) has very similar words.[31]

The main point of contention that is of a more sectarian character is the issue of Buddha-Nature (*tathāgata-garbha*). This issue is only one among several dozens of topics of dispute in Mkhas grub rje's *Bskyed rim dngos grub rgya mtsho* and not a central one. Still, we may point out, as was mentioned by Ruegg already in 1968 (p. 501), that also in his *General Presentation of the Tantra* (*Rgyud sde spyi rnam*),[32] a work obviously concerned with the Tantra, Mkhas grub rje devotes some attention to the Sūtra teaching on the *tathāgata-garbha*.[33] In his *Bskyed*

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[29] Elsewhere in the same work he addresses the opponent with the following question (Mkhas grub rje pp. 162.5-6, based on Tsong kha pa's *Rnam gzhag rim pa'i rnam bshad*, p. 369.5-6): "Let us know how by meditating now on a path which corresponds with them, the world and the inhabitants of the first *kalpa*, which have ceased to exist, would be purified".

[30] In following Tsong kha pa (*Rnam gzhag rim pa'i rnam bshad*, p. 370.3-4).

[31] The position of Mkhas grub rje here (p. 147.1-6) [again in following Tsong kha pa] is that it is not the generation of the first deities during the main part of the generation process, but their dissolution which is the crucial step. This dissolution of the first deities into clear light is a meditation that corresponds to the death in stages of a person of Dzambuling, which serves to purify the practitioner's coming death and eventually transform it into the Dharma Body. For meditating in correspondence with death, prior to that, a support that bears similarity to the dying person is needed, and for that purpose the first deities are generated.

[32] Ruegg 1968 and Lessing and Wayman 1968: 48-53.

[33] Mkhas grub rje maintains here (see Ruegg 1968: 504-505 and Lessing and

rim dngos grub rgya mtsho, the discussion related to the issue of Buddha-Nature is found in the context of the body mandala.[34] Mkhas grub rje strongly rejects here the opinion that all humans have existed from the very beginning as mandalas, that they themselves do not know it, and that in order to know it, they meditate by visualising something that already exists.[35] He says (p. 234.6):

> If one is a Buddha, but does not recognise this, then how could a Buddha who does not know even who he is, know all phenomena? Therefore such a very stupid Buddha, who does not know any knowable, would be most astonishing.

Mkhas grub rje provides here several arguments; however, the most important for our purpose is his statement (pp. 235.6–236.3) that this notion would violate the system of a ground of purification and its purifier. If, from the very beginning, the entire world abides as a celestial mansion—and all the sentient beings residing in it abide as enlightened beings—then, there would be no impure world and its inhabitants to provide the ground of purification for the generation process, and therefore any system of a ground of purification and a purifier, which is the basis of the generation process, would not be possible.[36]

While in this Dge lugs system there are three components—the ground to be purified, the path which purifies it, and the purified

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Wayman 1968: 50-51) that if there were no Buddha-Nature (*sugata*-essence) in the continuum of sentient beings, there would be no cause for awakening in their continuum, and therefore it would not be possible for them to awake. However, he does not accept the position that the Buddha-Nature is identical with the Essence Body (*ngo bo nyid sku, svābhāvika-kāya*) and that it exists in the continuum of all sentient beings.

[34] This argument evolves around a line by Rdo rje dril bu pa in his work devoted to the initiation into the mandala of Cakrasaṃvara, in which he says (Toh. 1431, D. vol. 21, p. 438.5-6): "These sentient beings are not dual with the naturally existing mandala". In commenting on this work, Tsong kha pa (in his *Rnal 'byor dbang phyug dril bu lugs bde mchog lus dkyil gyi dbang chog rin po che'i bang mdzod*, on pp. 58-61), explains that 'the naturally existing mandala' is the body mandala which has been complete since the practitioner's birth, as compared with painted and colored powder mandalas that are newly contrived by painters or the makers of the mandala. Mkhas grub rje continues this discussion in his *Bskyed rim dngos grub rgya mtsho* (pp. 234.1-239.2 and 250.5-252.6) as well as in two of his other works: *Gnam lcags 'khor lo*, and *Dge bshes kon ting gug śrī ba la phul ba*.

[35] P. 234.2. He then explains (pp. 234.3-4) that this contradicts the notion that beings are born through karma and afflicting emotions and experience suffering, as the first noble truth describes. Or else, he says, it would lead to the conclusion that mandalas are formed by karma and afflicting emotions, and that sentient beings experiencing samsaric suffering are necessarily enlightened Buddhas.

[36] For more of Mkhas grub rje's arguments see, pp. 234.1-238.3.

result—in some of the non Dge lugs presentations which hold different views with regard to Buddha-Nature there are four divisions. 'Ba' ra ba in the 14th century (p. 245) and Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas in the 19th century,[37] for examples, divide the ground to be purified into two: the ground of purification (*sbyang gzhi*) and that-which-is-to-be-purified (*sbyang bya*). Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (*ibid.*) states that, while the ground of purification is the permanent, stable, and unconditioned nature of things which permeates all beings with the Buddha-Nature, that-which-is-to-be-purified means the adventitious blemishes of delusion resulting from the primordial ignorance that obscures this Buddha-Nature. Thus, the term *sbyang gzhi* has different meanings according to the school. While in the Dge lugs pa tradition it refers to the ordinary samsaric state, according to others it is the true nature of things.

For Mkhas grub rje, the position that all beings have existed from the very beginning as mandalas, while they themselves do not recognise that they exist in this way, means that *saṃsāra* is not possible (p. 234.5). He maintains that: "The position that all the parts of the fruit truly exist in the cause in an non-apparent manner, from the very beginning would be the unimpaired tradition of the Saṃkhya School" (p. 235.4–5).[38] While in his *Bskyed rim dngos grub rgya mtsho Mkhas grub rje* does not name his opponents in this matter, when discussing the *tathāgata-garbha* issue in his *Rgyud sde spyi rnam*, he does explicitly mention his disagreement with the Jo nang pa, and refers to a certain difference of opinion with Bu ston.[39]

In conclusion: in this paper we have looked at samples of only some of the polemical issues in the writings of Tsong kha pa and Mkhas grub rje with regard to the transformation of birth, death and the intermediate state into the three bodies of the Buddha. Of course, the very fact

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[37] Jamgön Kongtrul 1996, Tib. p. 72 [10], Eng. p. 36.

[38] He continues (p. 235.5-6): "Further, it would follow that if the bodies of all sentient beings have from the very beginning truly existed as mandalas, then any killing would necessarily be the grave sin of killing a Tathāgata. And it would follow that all those who perform the ten non-virtuous actions are Buddhas. How could I exhaustively describe the endless similar consequences of such a position?"

[39] According to Mkhas grub rje, while accepting that the Buddha-Nature is identical with the Essence Body (*ngo bo nyid sku, svābhāvika-kāya*), Bu ston, unlike the Jo nang pa, does not maintain that it exists in the continuum of all sentient beings. And unlike the Jo nang pa, he considers the second turning of the Wheel of Dharma to be of definite rather than provisional meaning (see Ruegg 1968: 502-503 and Lessing and Wayman 1968: 48-51).

that they did not name their opponents makes it difficult, but I believe we can identify some of them with a fair degree of certainty. Most notable among these opponents are 'Gos Khug pa lhas btsas and Bu ston Rin chen grub, teachers belonging to the very same lineage of the *sādhana* of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* held by Tsong kha pa and Mkhas grub rje. That on certain points they did not follow and in fact criticised members of their own lineage may lead us to reconsider or rethink our understandings of Tibetan ideas on the nature of lineage.

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BLENDING THE SŪTRAS WITH THE TANTRAS: THE INFLUENCE OF MAITRĪPA AND HIS CIRCLE ON THE FORMATION OF *SŪTRA MAHĀMUDRĀ* IN THE KAGYU SCHOOLS

KLAUS-DIETER MATHES (HAMBURG, GERMANY)

SŪTRA MAHĀMUDRĀ IN THE KAGYU SCHOOLS

The Kagyu schools usually emphasise the practice of *mahāmudrā* and the Six Yogas of Naropa, which are described as the path of liberation and skillful means respectively. While the Six Yogas must be combined with the path of liberation, the latter is considered as being self-sufficient, in that not-specifically-Tantric *mahāmudrā* practice can lead to the goal in a similarly efficient way. Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (1813–1899) in his *Shes bya kun khyab mdzod*,[1] besides the generally accepted *mantra mahāmudrā*, distinguishes further both a *sūtra mahā-mudrā* and an essence *mahāmudrā*. Mantra *mahāmudrā* is transmitted through the Vajrayāna path of method, which involves Tantric empowerment. Essence *mahāmudrā* leads to the sudden or instantaneous realisation of one's natural mind (*tha mal gyi shes pa*). It requires a realised master who bestows a particular type of blessing called the 'empowerment' of vajra-wisdom on a receptive and qualified disciple.[2]

Sūtra mahāmudrā is characterised by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche as being connected with the Pāramitāyāna, while at the same time being in accordance with Tantra, and mainly consists in resting one's mind in

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Abbreviations used:

SS   *Sthitisamuccaya*
TA   *Tattvāvatāra*
TD   *Tattvadaśaka*
TDṬ   *Tattvadaśakaṭīkā*

[1] Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas, *Shes bya kun khyab mdzod*, vol. 3: 375f.
[2] See Ponlop Rinpoche in Callahan 2001: xxvif.

the state of non-conceptual wisdom. He further describes the method of this approach as being hidden in the Sūtras, wherefore *sūtra mahāmudrā* is also called the hidden or secret path of the *Sūtra*s (*mdo'i gsang lam*).[3] In other words, Ponlop Rinpoche bases his definition of *sūtra mahāmudrā* on 'Gos Lo tsā ba Gzhon dpal's (1392–1481) summary of Sahajavajra's (11th cent.) *Tattvadaśakaṭīkā*, which runs as follows:

> In essence it is the *pāramitā*s, it is in accordance with the *mantra[yāna]*, and its name is *mahāmudrā*.[4]

What makes this *mahāmudrā* approach (be it *sūtra* or essence *mahāmudrā*)[5] so special—in comparison with the ordinary Mahāyāna path—is the use of direct cognitions even while investigating one's mind during *vipaśyanā*. Whereas in Pāramitāyāna a direct vision of the reality of emptiness (or in the language of the Kagyupas: *mahāmudrā*, a term that primarily comes from the tantras) is normally admitted only from the first Bodhisattva-level onward, Sgam po pa (1079–1153) is said to have produced a realisation of *mahāmudrā* even in those beginners who had not obtained Tantric empowerment.[6] Even though Sgam po pa does not use the term *sūtra mahāmudrā*, he distinguishes such a path of direct perception from a general Mahāyāna path of inferences and a Vajrayāna path of blessing:[7]

> As to taking inference as [one's] path, having examined all phenomena by arguments, [such as] being beyond one and many,[8] one says that there is no other [ontological] possibility and posits that everything is empty.

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[3] Ponlop Rinpoche in Callahan 2001: xxv.

[4] The lines "*ngo bo pha rol tu phyin pa / sngags dang rjes su mthun pa ming phyag rgya chen po*" (*Deb ther sngon po,* vol. 2: 847, ll. 18–19) are not a direct quotation from the TDṬ, but Gzhon nu dpal's condensed assessment of the latter (see Mathes 2003: 137, ll.17–23). In fact, though, Sahajavajra does say in the introduction of his TDṬ that the *pāramitā*-based pith-instructions are in accordance with Mantrayāna (TDṬ (Peking Tanjur), 176a[4-5]), and in the commentary on TD 7cd he uses the term *mahāmudrā* for pith-instructions on reality, the latter itself being called *mahāmudrā* (TDṬ, 190a[6-7]).

[5] It should be noted that Kong sprul's distinction between three types of *mahāmudrā* is neither found in the early *mahāmudrā* works nor always adhered to by modern Kagyupas.

[6] Gzhon nu dpal, *Deb ther sngon po*, vol. 2: 847, ll. 2–4.

[7] The common English translation 'blessing' for Tibetan *byin rlabs* (Skt. *adhiṣṭhāna*) is followed here, but it should be noted that the meaning of the Skt. root *adhi-ṣṭhā* 'to govern', 'to mount [a chariot]', etc., implies a powerful guiding influence of the guru on the disciple. Further research needs to be done on this.

[8] That means, phenomena cannot be ascertained as either single individuals (wholes) or plural composites (parts).

[This is the path of] inference.

    [The practice of] inner channels, energies and drops, the recitation of *mantras*, and so forth, based on the stage consisting of the generation of the deity's body is the path of blessing.

    As to taking direct perceptions for [one's] path, the right guru teaches one's co-emergent mind-essence to be the *dharmakāya* in terms of luminosity. Having thus been given an accurate pith-instruction of definitive meaning, one takes, with regard to this 'co-emergent mind' (*shes pa lhan cig skyes pa*) which has been ascertained in oneself, the natural mind as the path, without being separated from any of the three: view, conduct and meditation.[9]

For Sgam po pa, this last approach of direct perception is supreme and of definitive meaning, in that it is based on direct cognitions as opposed to inferences, as on the general Mahāyāna path. Sometimes Sgam po pa even criticises ordinary Vajrayāna for descending to the level of conceptualisation.[10]

    In their not-specifically-Tantric meditation manuals, *mahāmudrā* masters—such as Sgam po pa,[11] Dwags po Bkra shis rnam rgyal (1512–1587)[12] or the Ninth Karmapa Dbang phyug rdo rje (1556–1603)[13]— sometimes describe these direct cognitions as a straight or naked looking (*cer lta* or *rjen lhang lta*). With the help of 'pointing-out' (*ngo sprod*) instructions, even not very advanced practitioners can work with such direct visions of the nature of mind, and thus emptiness, well below the path of seeing or the first Bodhisattva-level. At this point Thrangu Rinpoche emphasises that the scope of this direct vision is restricted to the emptiness of one's mind.[14] To be sure,

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[9] Sgam po pa, "Tshogs chos yon tan phun tshogs": 296, l. 5–297, l. 1: / *de la rjes dpag lam du byed pa ni / chos thams cad gcig dang du bral gyi gtan tshigs kyis gzhig* [text: *gzhigs*] *nas / 'gro sa 'di las med zer nas thams cad stong par byas nas 'jog pa ni rjes dpag go // lha'i sku bskyed pa'i rim pa la brten nas rtsa rlung dang thig le dang / sngags kyi bzlas brjod la sogs pa byin rlabs kyi lam mo // mngon sum lam du byed pa ni bla ma dam pa cig gis sems nyid lhan cig skyes pa chos kyi sku 'od gsal bya ba yin gsung ba de lta bu nges pa'i don gyi gdams ngag phyin ci ma log bstan pas / rang la nges pa'i shes pa lhan cig skyes pa de la lta spyod sgom gsum ya ma bral bar gnyug ma'i shes pa lam du khyer ba* [...].

[10] Jackson 1994: 34.

[11] Sgam po pa, *Dwags po lha rje'i bka' 'bum*, vol. kha: 131.

[12] Dwags po Bkra shis rnam rgyal, *Phyag rgya chen po'i khrid yig chen mo gnyug ma'i de nyid gsal ba*: *passim*.

[13] See Callahan 2001: 145.

[14] Thrangu Rinpoche, personal communication [August 2003].

while ordinary *vipaśyanā* practice requires an analytical or intellectual assessment of emptiness which is mainly based on Madhyamaka reasonings,[15] Bkra shis rnam rgyal, for example, starts (!) the presentation of *vipaśyanā* in his *Phyag rgya chen po'i khrid yig chen mo* with the following pith-instructions:

> Assume the same body posture as before (i.e., as in *śamatha* practice) and gaze straight [ahead] without blinking or shifting. With lucid and non-conceptual *śamatha* as a basis, one should keep one's attention vividly present. In this state look nakedly (*rjen lhang gis*) into the mind itself to see what shape, colour etc. it has.[16]

Thrangu Rinpoche has pointed out that this investigation is performed by the inward-looking mental consciousness on the basis of direct cognition. It should be noted that he generally considers such *mahāmudrā* teachings, or rather the path of direct cognition, to be Vajrayāna. In other words, he does not claim that they constitute a third path beyond the Sūtras and Tantras. 'Gos Lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal justifies this *mahāmudrā* approach of direct cognition in his *Ratnagotravibhāga* commentary, pointing out that there is, according to the *Vairocanābhisambodhitantra*, a set of preliminary Bodhisattva levels, and thus a direct seeing already on the level of engagement through conviction (*adhimukticaryā*), which for him includes the path of accumulation.[17] Padma dkar po (1527–1592) goes one step further and claims that such a *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* practice (i.e., the initial use of direct cognition justified on the basis of the *Vairocanābhisambodhitantra*) must be preceded by Tantric empowerment, even though it does not belong to the path of skillful means (*thabs lam*).[18]

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[15] A brief study of Kamalaśīla's commentary on the *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* (156a–157a) shows that he reinterprets the text's central term for practice, *amanasikāra* ('not becoming mentally engaged'), restricting its literal meaning to the fruit of one's *vipaśyanā* practice, i.e., the non-conceptual meditative stabilisation focusing on suchness. This non-conceptual meditation must be caused by logical inferences common to his Madhyamaka tradition. Thus, analytic meditation turns into non-conceptual abiding in the same way as a fire kindled from rubbing pieces of wood burns these very pieces.

[16] Dwags po Bkra shis rnam rgyal: op. cit., 27, ll. 3–6: *lus gnad sngar bzhin las mig tsham tshum dang 'gyur ba med par har re gtad / shes pa gsal sing ge ba la mi rtog pa'i zhi gnas kyi steng du lhang nge bzhag la / de'i ngang la sems de nyid la rjen lhang gis bltas te dbyibs dang kha dog la sogs pa ji lta bu zhig 'dug*. My translation of these lines mainly follows the one by Erik Pema Kunsang and only contains minor changes on the basis of Thrangu Rinpoche's teachings of this text at the Kamalashila Institute in Germany in August 2003.

[17] See Mathes 2003: 42, ll. 24–5, 73, l. 2 – 74, l. 26.

[18] See Broido 1987: 35.

Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251), for one, was not terribly fond of this blend of the Sūtras and Tantras, as can be seen from his well-known critique which Gzhon nu dpal summarised in his *Blue Annals*:

> Sa skya pa (i.e., Sa skya paṇḍita) maintains that there is no conventional expression for *mahāmudrā* in the *pāramitā* tradition, and that the wisdom of *mahāmudrā* is only the wisdom arisen from empowerment.[19]

In his study of early *mahāmudrā* teachings connected with the 'white self-sufficient remedy' (*dkar po chig thub*), David Jackson summarises Sa paṇ's critique of the underlying premises as follows: (1) that a single method or factor (even insight into emptiness presented as *mahāmudrā*) could suffice soteriologically, (2) that the wisdom of *mahāmudrā* could arise through an exclusively non-conceptual method, and (3) that *mahāmudrā* could ever be taught outside of the Mantrayāna.[20] Jackson further points out that Sgam po pa quotes from several apocryphal Ch'an sūtras, such as the *rDo rje ting nge 'dzin gyi mdo* (*Vajrasamādhisūtra*), that were translated at an early time into Tibetan from Chinese, and questions whether Sgam po pa had direct access to Chinese materials, or whether he took these quotations from earlier Sino-Tibetan 'simultaneist' (*cig car ba*) traditions such as are recorded in the *Bsam gtan mig sgron* of Gnubs sangs rgyas ye shes.[21] Carmen Meinert recently observed signs of an early spread of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism and its assimilation in the Sino-Tibetan border area, on the basis of two short Tibetan Dunhuang documents, namely, a short root text and a commentary on it (S.tib.689-1 and P.tib.699). The root text must be read as Ch'an instruction on the nature of mind. It uses the term 'looking at mind' (Tib. *sems la bltas*, Chin. *kanxin*), which is glossed by the commentary as 'non-conceptual meditation' (Tib. *myi rtog par bsgom*).[22]

Even though such a non-conceptual approach to meditation on the nature of mind is strikingly similar to the above-mentioned *mahāmudrā* path of direct cognition, the question remains whether the use of direct

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[19] Gzhon nu dpal, *Deb ther sngon* po, vol. 2: p. 847, ll. 9–12: *'di la chos rje sa skya pas pha rol tu phyin pa'i lugs la phyag rgya chen po'i tha snyad med cing / phyag rgya chen po'i ye shes gang yin pa de ni dbang las skyes pa'i ye shes kho na yin no zhes bzhed.*

[20] Jackson 1994: 72.

[21] *ibid.*: 23–24.

[22] Meinert 2002: 289–90, 299.

cognition even by beginners reflects the influence of such Sino-Tibetan traditions,[23] or is a continuation of the late Indian traditions of Maitrīpa (b. 1007/10?) and his circle. It is not the object of this paper, however, to investigate possible Chinese or Sino-Tibetan influences (which I do not want to rule out), but to take a closer look at the Indian tradition, in which the proponents of Kagyu *mahāmudrā* claim to stand.

In reply to Sa paṇ's objection that there is no conventional expression of *mahāmudrā* in the *pāramitā* tradition, and that the wisdom of *mahāmudrā* is only the wisdom arisen from empowerment, Gzhon nu dpal refers in his *Blue Annals* to Jñānakīrti's *Tattvāvatāra*, Sahajavajra's *Tattvadaśakaṭīkā* and Rgod tshang pa (1189–1258), who explains that Sgam po pa's *pāramitā mahāmudrā* is in line with the assertion of Maitrīpa.[24] In his *Ratnagotravibhāga* commentary, Gzhon nu dpal further informs us that according to Rgod tshang pa, Maitrīpa's *mahāmudrā* teachings even go back to Saraha and Śavaripa.[25] This opinion is also shared by the Eighth Karmapa Mi bskyod rdo rje (1507–1554), who explains in his commentary on the *Madhyamakāvatāra* that Maitrīpa realised that his doctrine of not becoming mentally engaged (i.e., *mahāmudrā*)[26] has the same meaning as the Madhyamaka taught by Saraha the elder, Saraha the younger (i.e., Śavaripa), Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti.[27] Moreover Dwags po Bkra shis rnam rgyal claims in his *Zla ba'i 'od zer*, that Maitrīpa received from Śavaripa essence *mahāmudrā* teachings which were not based on Tantras.[28]

It would go beyond the scope of this paper to investigate to what extent the works of the above-mentioned Indian masters can be brought in line with *sūtra* or essence *mahāmudrā*. Suffice it to remark that

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[23] The common feature of non-conceptuality is not very telling, as can be seen from Gnubs Sangs rgyas ye shes' distinction of four different types of the non-conceptual according to the schools of Rim gyis pa, Cig car pa, Mahāyoga, and Rdzogs chen (see Meinert 2003: 187–89).

[24] Gzhon nu dpal, *Deb ther sngon po*: vol. 2: 846–8.

[25] See Mathes 2003: 5, ll.12–5.

[26] The Sanskrit word *amanasikāra* encapsulates the practice of *mahāmudrā* here (see Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas: *Shes bya kun khyab mdzod*, vol. 3: 375, ll. 19–20). Padma dkar po distinguishes three different conceptions implied by *amanasikāra*: (1) the denial that there is a place where the object of perception abides. (2) a repudiation of mental events and mentation. (3) appropriate mental engagement in emptiness, the negative prefix *a-* standing for non-origination (or emptiness). It is of interest that these meanings are mainly based on Tantric sources (See Broido 1987: 57).

[27] Mi bskyod rdo rje, *dBu ma la 'jug pa'i rnam bshad*: 5, ll. 4–5.

[28] Lhalungpa 1993:101.

Maitrīpa's Amanasikāra-Madhyamaka, as Mi bskyod rdo rje prefers to call it,[29] means that not to fabricate anything by 'not becoming mentally engaged' (*amanasikāra*) is the only way mind can approach Madhyamaka-emptiness, which is characterised by 'being free from mental fabrications' (*niṣprapañca*). Such a state is realised with the help of pith-instructions.[30]

II. SARAHA'S *DOHĀKOŚAGĪTI*

Before we turn to Maitrīpa and his followers, a brief glance at Saraha is appropriate. Saraha is well known for having abandoned traditional life, in order to seek liberation by revolutionary yogic techniques which mark the beginning of what was later called *mahāmudrā*.[31] In his *Dohākośagīti* Saraha is thus not only critical of non-Buddhist systems but also of traditional Mahāyāna and even Tantric practices. This becomes clear in the following *dohā*:

> No tantra, no mantra, nothing to meditate on, no meditative concentration—
> These are all causes which confuse one's mind.
> Do not corrupt the mind-essence,
> Whose nature is pure, with meditative concentrations.
> Rest in the bliss of your true nature and cause it no torment.[32]

And there are the lines:

> Do not think that you [liberate] yourself by having bound the [subtle] winds.
> Wood[-bending] yogin, do not remain [with your mind] fixed on the tip of the nose![33]

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[29] Mi bskyod rdo rje: op. cit., 9, ll. 6–7.

[30] See also Kong sprul's definition of *sūtra mahāmudrā*: "vis-à-vis the objective part of *niṣprapañca* and luminosity, which is in accordance with the Sūtra tradition, the subjective part remains in equipoise through *amanasikāra* pith-instructions" (*mdo lugs dang mthun pa'i spros bral 'od gsal gyi yul la / yul can yid la mi byed pa'i gdams pas mnyam par 'jog pa dang /*). See *Shes bya kun khyab mdzod*, vol. 3: 375, ll. 18–20.

[31] For an account of different stories relating to Saraha's life, see Schaeffer 2000: 15–66.

[32] *Dohākośagīti* (Peking Tanjur): 76a[2-3]: *rgyud med sngags med bsam bya bsam gtan med // de kun rang yid 'khrul par byed pa'i rgyu // rang bzhin dag pa'i sems* [a][*nyid] la //*[a] *bsam gtan dag gis mi bslad de // bdag gi de nyid bde la gnas shing gdung bar ma byed cig /*

a According to *Phyag chen mdzod*, vol. oṃ: 287, l. 3.

[33] *ibid.*: 77b[4]: */ rlung bcings pa la rang nyid ma sems kye // shing gi rnal 'byor sna rtser ma 'dug cig /*

According to Karma 'Phrin las pa (1456–1539), these lines mean:

> Having heard "Do not think that you liberate yourself by the mere absorption in the *samādhi* of bliss which results from having bound the [subtle] winds in the [energy] channels!" one may ask why? It is like the forceful bending of wood. Yogin, since you wish to abide in co-emergent [bliss], do not remain with your mind fixed on the tip of the nose of the *cakra*s, because thoughts will spread [again] as before, once you are not employing these skillful means.[34]

This critical attitude towards certain aspects of formal Tantric practice is perfectly in line with what later became the practice used on the path of liberation (*grol lam*), on which the winds are made to enter into the central *avadhūtī* channel naturally by realising the nature of mind. Even though the Indian, Nepalese and Tibetan transmissions of Saraha's dohās differ considerably, it is safe to say that they share a critical attitude towards more traditional forms of Buddhism including Tantra,[35] and that they emphasise the direct realisation of co-emergent bliss or wisdom with the help of a qualified guru. They represent a late form of Mahāyāna Buddhism that developed in the Mahāsiddha milieu towards the end of the first millennium.

III. MAITRĪPA AND HIS CIRCLE

Maitrīpa (also known under the names of Maitrīgupta and Advayavajra) interrupted his career as a scholar for a retreat among the *śavara* tribes where he is said to have received *mahāmudrā* teachings and Tantric instructions from the mythical Śavareśvara alias Śavaripa, who is considered a disciple of Saraha. On the advice of Śavareśvara, Maitrīpa returned to the academic milieu and started to compose a number of controversial treatises.[36] Together with his disciples, Maitrīpa thus considerably contributed to integrating the new teachings and practices of the Mahāsiddhas into mainstream Buddhism. Thanks to a manuscript

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[34] Karma 'Phrin las pa: *Do hā skor gsum gyi ṭīkā 'bring po*: 76, l. 5 – 77, l. 1: *rtsa rlung bcings pa'i bde ba'i ting nge 'dzin la mnyam par bzhag pa tsam gyis rang nyid grol bar ma sems cig kye zhes thos nas / de ci'i phyir zhe na / shing btsan thabs su bkug pa dang 'dra ste / rnal 'byor pa lhan cig skyes pa la gnas par 'dod pas 'khor lo rnams gyi sna rtser sems 'ching ba gtso bor byas nas ma 'dug cig / thabs de nyid dang bral tsam na rtog pa sngar bzhin 'phro bar 'gyur bas so /*

[35] cf. Schaeffer (2000: 7), who discerns in Saraha's *Dohākośa* a sarcastic critique of social, ritual, scholastic and meditational practices.

[36] For a detailed description of Maitrīpa's life see Tatz 1987: 695–711.

kept in the National Archives in Kathmandu,[37] a collection of Maitrīpa's works is still available in its original Sanskrit. The latter was published under the title *Advayavajrasaṃgraha*.[38] A study of Maitrīpa's works and those of his disciples shows that Tantric concepts are used freely even in the more general Mahāyāna expositions. Maitrīpa's *Tattvadaśaka*, a relatively short presentation of reality in ten verses, is one such not-specifically-Tantric work.

III.1 *Maitrīpa's* Tattvadaśaka *and Sahajavajra's* Tattvadaśakaṭīkā

As we have seen above, the *Tattvadaśaka* (TD) and its commentary by Maitrīpa's disciple Sahajavajra play an important role in justifying the not-specifically-Tantric forms of *mahāmudrā*, which are said to be Pāramitāyāna in essence and at the same time in accordance with Vajrayāna. The following translation is based on the Japanese edition of the Sanskrit and Tibetan, to which I have added a few minor changes.[39] My additions in brackets are in accordance with Sahajavajra's commentary. The *Ten [Verses] on Reality (Tattvadaśaka)* are as follows:

> Homage to you, suchness, which has no association to existence and non-existence,
> Because, [when] stainless, this very [suchness] has the form of enlightenment as realisation.[40] (1)
> Somebody who wishes to know suchness for himself[41] [finds it] neither in terms of *sākāra* nor *nirākāra*;
> Even the middle [path] (i.e., Madhyamaka) which is not adorned with the words of a guru, is only middling.[42] (2)
> This true state [of *skandhas*] is enlightenment—in terms of its own-being, [the state of] having abandoned attachment;

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[37] Microfilmed by the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (Reel No. B 22/25).

[38] Ed. by B. Bhattacharya in 1927 and also by the Japanese Study Group of Sacred Tantric Texts (Mikkyō-seiten kenkyūkai) of Taisho University, Tokyo, from 1988–1991.

[39] I am indebted to Dr Diwakar Acharya (Hamburg), for his helpful assistance.

[40] TD (Mikkyō-seiten kenkyūkai 1991:92): *sadasadyogahīnāyai tathatāyai namo namaḥ / anāvilā yataḥ saiva bodhato bodhirūpiṇī //*

[41] The genitive of the participle (*icchataḥ*) is taken as the logical subject here.

[42] TD: 92: na ᵃ*sākāranirākāre tathatāṃ*ᵃ *jñātum icchataḥ / madhyamā madhyamā caiva guruvāganalaṅkṛtā //*

a According to Bhattacharya's edition. The Japanese study group proposes *sākārā nirākārā tathatā*.

Attachment is born from confusion, and confusion is taken to be without a basis.[43] (3)

What is reality? It is the form of things, and form is indeed non-form (i.e. emptiness),

For[44] non-form is also form in terms of the own-being of the fruit [to be accomplished] and the [co-emergent] cause [of suchness].[45] (4)

Thus [all] phenomena which are of one taste are unobstructed and without an abode.

They are all luminous—as [experienced] in the *samādhi* [of realising] reality as it is.[46] (5)

This *samādhi* occurs through engaged *[bodhi]citta*,

Because reality arises without interruption for those acquainted with its abode.[47] (6)

The world itself, which is free from knowledge and knowable objects, is taken to be non-duality;

And [even] vain adherence to a state free of duality is taken, in like manner, to be luminous.[48] (7)

By the power of having realised this reality, the yogin, whose eyes are wide open,

Moves everywhere like a lion, by any means[49] [and] in whatever manner[50].[51] (8)

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[43] TD: 92: *bodhir asau bhaved bhāvaḥ saṅgaṃ tyaktvā svabhāvataḥ / āsaṅgo bhrāntito jāto bhrāntir asthānikā matā //*

[44] Nothing corresponds to Skt. *yataḥ* in the Tibetan.

[45] *ibid.* : *kiṃ tattvaṃ vastuno rūpaṃ rūpaṃ cārūpakaṃ yataḥ / arūpaṃ ca bhaved rūpaṃ phalahetusvabhāvataḥ //*

[46] *ibid.* : *evam ekarasā dharmā nirāsaṅgā nirāspadāḥ / prabhāsvarā amī sarve yathābhhūtasamādhinā //*

[47] TD: 94: *yathābhūtasamādhiś ca bhavet prasthānacittataḥ / ajasraṃ jāyate tattvaṃ yasmāt tatpadavedinām //*

[48] *ibid.* : jñānajñeyavihīnaṃ[a] *ca jagad evādvayaṃ matam / dvayahīnābhimānaś ca tathaiva hi prabhāsvaraḥ //*

a The manuscript from the National Archives in Kathmandu (NGMPP reel no. B 22/25, fol. 36b, l. 3) reads -*ne* instead of -*naṃ*. Based on the Tibetan, I take the compound *jñānajñeyavihīnaṃ* as an attribute qualifying *jagad*, and so follow Bhattacharya's edition.

[49] Sahajavajra (TDṬ (Peking Tanjur), 191b[8]) glosses *gang des (yena tena)* as "by [living on] any food. Whether it is [good] food or not, it must be eaten the way it is found. Here one should not cling to any thoughts about what one likes and what not" (*zas kyis so // bza' dang bza' min de bzhin du // ji ltar rnyed pa bza' bar bya // 'dod dang mi 'dod rnam rtog rnams // 'dzin pa 'dir mi bya'o /*)

[50] The TDṬ (*ibid.*: 191b[8]–192a[1]) glosses *ji ltar de ltar (yathā tathā)* as "whoever it is, by way of his body, speech and mind" (*gang dang [gang] de'i lus dang ngag dang yid kyi rnam pas so /*). In other words, the yogin fully experiences the non-dual reality of every moment in any situation without harbouring any notions about what he likes or does not like.

[51] TD: 94: *etattattvāvabodhena yena tena yathā tathā / vivṛtākṣo bhramed yogī keśarīva samantataḥ //*

[The yogin] who has left the [eight] worldly *dharma*s behind and adopt-
ed a mad form of conduct
Does everything without a reference point, being adorned with the
'blessing from within' (*svādhiṣṭhāna*).[52] (9)
What has been taught as stainless reality, what has been called non-dual-
ity—
The gifted ones are worthy of its knowledge, after having excluded from
it similarity and dissimilarity.[53] (10)

According to Padma dkar po's descriptive headings of Maitrīpa's
amanasikāra cycle, the *Tattvadaśaka* is an 'ascertainment of the object
of experience',[54] namely, reality. A brief glance at these ten verses
reveals a wide range of approaches to reality, or suchness, as it is
referred to[55] in the first three verses. Maitrīpa starts by defining such-
ness along the lines of Madhyamaka as neither existent nor non-exis-
tent, and then equates, probably under the influence of the
Ratnagotravibhāga,[56] stainless suchness with enlightenment. In the
second verse we are warned not to follow lower philosophical tenets
which define suchness as a consciousness, whether accompanied by
forms of cognitive content (*sākāra*) or not (*nirākāra*). Nor should one
seek to grasp suchness with the help of middling Madhyamaka, unen-
hanced by the words of a guru. This implies that the remaining eight
verses are enhanced by such words and in line with supreme
Madhyamaka. Suchness as enlightenment is then taken as the true state
free from attachment, the latter arising from a baseless confusion (TD
3). In verse 4, the logical subject then switches to reality, which is taken
as the form of things on the basis of an allusion to the famous statement
"form is emptiness and emptiness is form" (TD 4), and subsequently as
the one taste of all phenomena, that is, luminosity. This is how it is
experienced in the *samādhi* of realising reality as it is (*yathābhū-*

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[52] *ibid.*: *lokadharmavyatīto 'sau unmattavratam āśritaḥ / sarvaṃ karoty anālam-
baḥ svādhiṣṭhānavibhūṣitaḥ //*
[53] *ibid.*: *uktam anāvilaṃ tattvam advayaṃ yac ca bhaṇyate / samāsamam ato hitvā
jñātum arhanti dhīdhanāḥ //*
[54] Tib. *spyod pa'i don gtan la dbab pa* (see Broido 1987: 56).
[55] Sahajavajra explains suchness in his commentary (TDṬ (*ibid.*): 176a[7]) as "the
way phenomena exist" (*chos rnams ji lta ba bzhin du yod pa*), which is in accordance
with the definition of reality as the "form of things" in TD 4a.
[56] See *Ratnagotravibhāgavyākhyā* on I.25, where stainless suchness is taken as the
transformation of the basis on the level of a Buddha (Johnston 1950: 21, ll. 9–10).

tasamādhi). The latter is cultivated through engaged *bodhicitta* (TD
5–6). Helpful concepts on the path, such as that the world is beyond
duality, are also realised to be luminous by nature (TD 7), and the yogin
moves everywhere like a lion on the strength of having realised reality
in such a way (TD 8). What then follows (TD 9) could be Tantric in ori-
gin: such a yogin is said to have adopted a mad form of conduct (*unmat-
tavrata*) and to be adorned with 'the blessing from within'
(*svādhiṣṭhāna*), the latter being the technical term for the third stage of
the *Pañcakrama*.[57] But from the *Kudṛṣṭinirghātana* it becomes clear
that Maitrīpa understands *unmattavrata* as an extreme form of
Mahāyāna conduct which results from having perfected the six
pāramitās.[58] Moreover, Sahajavajra's explanations of the terms *unmat-
tavrata* and *svādhiṣṭhāna* are not-specifically-Tantric either.[59] To sum
up, the *Tattvadaśaka* propagates a direct approach to reality which is in
accordance with Vajrayāna, but mainly made possible through pith-
instructions.

Sahajavajra informs us in the introduction to his *Tattvadaśaka* com-
mentary that he wishes to summarise the *pāramitā* pith-instructions
which are in accordance with the secret Mantrayāna. It is not clear,
though, whether those instructions directly refer to the ten verses of the
root text or the ones he received based on the latter. The relevant pas-
sage is as follows:

> Having bowed to the gurus, I will compose in a proper way an explana-
> tion of the *Tattvadaśaka*. [First] I will present the stage of penetrating the
> meaning established through Pramāṇa, Madhyamaka and authoritative
> scriptures (*āgama*) taught by scholars, and then I wish to summarise the
> *pāramitā* pith-instructions which are in accordance with the tradition of
> the secret Mantra[yāna]. Thus, as to the subject-matter of the discourse
> (i.e., the *Tattvadaśaka*), it is [the level] which must be accomplished, that
> which accomplishes, and the nature of reality. It is precisely the nature

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[57] See Mimaki & Tomabechi 1994: 31–39.
[58] Maitrīpa: *Kudṛṣṭinirghātana* (Japanese edition), 14, ll. 10–5.
[59] TDṬ (*ibid.*): 193b6: "Mad conduct (*unmattavrata*) means acting without the
thoughts of the mental faculty" (*smyon pa'i brtul zhugs ni yid kyis bsam pa med par
byed nyid do*). And TDṬ:194a[3-4]: "He is adorned with *svādhiṣṭhāna* means that he
blessed himself in terms of the nature of [his] mind-stream, which is connected with
the nature of uncontrived reality. That which emanates from [his] nature of suchness
naturally adorns him" (*rang byin brlabs pas rnam brgyan pa'o zhes bya ba ni rang nyid
gnyug ma'i de kho na nyid kyi bdag nyid du 'byor pa'i sems kyi rgyun de'i bdag nyid
du byin gyis brlabs pa'o // de bzhin nyid kyi rang bzhin las 'phro ba rang bzhin gyis
rgyan pa...*).

of the three *kāyas*—their *dharmatā*—which is otherwise called Prajñāpāramitā.[60]

What does Sahajavajra exactly mean by *pāramitā* pith-instructions? From his commentary on TD 2cd it becomes clear that they are what middling Madhyamaka lacks, "being adorned with the words of the guru":

> [Maitrīpa] said "Even the middle [path] (i.e., Madhyamaka) which is not adorned with the words of the guru, is only middling", because it [only] negates the particular features [of the *sākāra* and *nirākāra* doctrines which separate the latter from Madhyamaka],[61] and what remains [becomes] a postulated object. As for the intention behind [presenting reality] here [as][62] *yuganaddha*-suchness,[63] which is adorned with the pith-instructions of the right guru, namely, Bhagavatī, it has been taught [in order to] captivate the minds of learned ones. This is because all phenomena are the unborn reality.[64]

The Eighth Karmapa Mi bskyod rdo rje reads these lines in his *Madhyamakāvatāra* commentary in the following way:

> 'Negates the particular feature[s]' means that [the tenets of] the followers of Cittamātra are negated, and to postulate what remains as a really

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[60] TDṬ (*ibid*.): 176a^4-6: *de la btud de de nyid bcu pa'i rnam bshad yang dag brtsams par bya // de nas slob dpon 'di'i zhal sna nas tshad ma dang dbu ma dang lung gis (text: gi) grub pa'i don la 'jug pa'i rim pa rgyas par bstan nas sngags kyi lugs kyi rjes su mthun pa'i pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag mdor bsdus pa mdzad par bzhen pas rab tu byed pa'i brjod par bya ba bsgrub par bya dang sgrub par byed pa dang / de kho na nyid kyi bdag nyid gzhan shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa zhes bya ba'i ming can chos nyid kyi bdag nyid kyis sku gsum kyi ngo bo nyid kho na...* (My corrections are based on the readings of Sahajavajra's commentary contained in the *Phyag chen mdzod*).

[61] See TDṬ (*ibid*.): 181a8–b1: where *bye brag* is used in the context of distinguishing *nirākāra*-Yogācāra from *nirākāra*-Madhyamaka.

[62] This understanding is supported by Mi bskyod rdo rje's (*dBu ma la 'jug pa'i rnam bshad*, 9, ll. 1–3) reading of this TDṬ passage: *...'di ni dbu ma bcom ldan 'das ma bla ma dam pa'i man ngag gi rgyan gyis brgyan pa'i zung du 'jug pa'i de bzhin nyid kyi ngo bo nye bar bstan pa ni. ...*

[63] A little further down in the commentary Sahajavajra (TDṬ, 183a^8) calls himself a follower of 'Yuganaddhavāda'. *Yuganaddha*('union into a pair')-suchness refers to reality in terms of a union into the pair of the arisen and non-arisen, which are taken as the two truths, namely, dependent arising and emptiness (*ibid*., 182b^3-5).

[64] TDṬ (*ibid*.): 182b1–3: */ bla ma'i ngag gis ma brgyan pa'i / dbu ma'ang 'bring po tsam nyid do // zhes bya ba smras te / bye brag rnams bkag nas / lhag ma khas blangs pa'i yul yin pa'i phyir // 'dir bcom ldan 'das ma bla ma dam pa'i man ngag gi rgyan (text: gis brgyan) gyis brgyan pa'i zung du 'jug pa'i de bzhin nyid kyi dgongs pa ni mkhas pa rnams kyi yid yid 'phrog par byed pa nye bar bstan te / gang gi phyir yang chos thams cad ni ma skyes pa'i de kho na nyid do /*

existing knowledge[65] is called Madhyamaka. It is middling
Madhyamaka. Since this is not a pure Madhyamaka tradition, the mean-
ing of Madhyamaka is explained, after adorning it (i.e., middling
Madhyamaka) with the teachings of Nāgārjunapāda and so forth (i.e.,
Āryadeva and Candrakīrti).[66]

In other words, one may remove the thorny points of the lower tenets
such as a self-awareness, which exists in its own right, but is apt to
claim the true existence of what still remains after going beyond
Cittamātra. This remainder must then be adorned with the instructions
of Nāgārjuna, which basically means that it must follow the dictum that
everything is empty of an own-being.

It is not at all evident, though, that this was Maitrīpa's and
Sahajavajra's intention. In fact, the 'word of a guru' is not necessarily
the words of Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva or Candrakīrti, since Sahajavajra
mentions these three masters only in his preceding commentary on TD
2ab (i.e., the refutation of *nirākāra* and *sākāra*), in the context of the
defining characteristics of dependent arising as maintained by these
three.[67] In his commentary on TD 2cd Sahajavajra glosses then 'word
of a guru' with 'pith-instructions of the right guru, i.e., Bhagavatī', the
latter here being a personification of Prajñāpāramitā. In other words,
pith-instructions are given by the right teacher who embodies
Prajñāpāramitā in the sense of having attained 'perfection of know-
ledge' (*prajñāpāramitā*). This is clear from Sahajavajra's commentary
on TD 4, in which reality is taken as the form of things on the basis of
an allusion to the famous statement "form is emptiness and emptiness
is form". The explanation of TD 4 concludes in the following way:

> Therefore the suchness of things has been taught to be reality. These
> [teachings] are *pāramitā* pith-instructions, adorned with the pith-instruc-
> tions of the right guru. This [reality] must become clear from the lotus
> of [one's] guru's mouth—he in whom one has taken real delight; it is not
> [to be obtained] elsewhere.[68]

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[65] i.e., non-dual wisdom, which may be taken (by the Jonangpas, for example) as
going beyond Cittamātra.

[66] Mi bskyod rdo rje (op. cit., 9, ll .3–6): *bye brag rnam par bkag nas zhes sems
tsam pa rnam par bkag nas lhag ma shes pa bden grub khas len pa la dbu mar brjod
pa ni dbu ma 'bring po ste dbu ma'i lugs rnam par dag pa de ma yin pas / 'di ni bla
ma klu sgrub zhabs sogs kyi lung gyis rgyan nas dbu ma'i don 'chad do /*

[67] TDṬ (*ibid.*): 182a[6].

[68] *ibid.*: 186b[3-5]: *de'i phyir dngos po'i de bzhin nyid ni de kho na nyid du bstan pa'o
// de dag ni pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag bla ma dam pa'i man ngag gis brgyan*

In this context it is interesting what Gzhon nu dpal says about Maitrīpa in the introduction to his *Ratnagotravibhāga* commentary:

> The lord of this doctrine (i.e., the *Ratnagotravibhāga*)—*the* father, the Venerable Maitrīpa—and his son (i.e., Sahajavajra) assert that the emptiness taught in the *Madhyamakāvatāra* is middling Madhyamaka, and 'awareness-emptiness' (*rig stong*) is the tradition of supreme Madhyamaka.[69]

Gzhon nu dpal obviously wants us to understand TD 2cd in the sense, that even the Madhyamaka of Candrakīrti is only middling, if it is not adorned with pith-instructions. Maitrīpa's *Tattvadaśaka*, on the other hand, is then implicitly adorned with pith-instructions and thus supreme Madhyamaka. Even though the term 'awareness-emptiness' itself is not found in the *Tattvadaśaka*, the latter says in TD 5 that all phenomena which are of one taste, are unobstructed, without an abode, and experienced in the *yathābhūtasamādhi* as being luminous. Sahajavajra explains 'one taste' as "the one taste in terms of suchness", 'unobstructed' as "not superimposing an own-being", and 'without an abode' as "not arisen".[70] It goes without saying that these terms define emptiness in accordance with Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti. What makes Maitrīpa's Madhyamaka supreme is the direct experience[71] of this emptiness as natural luminosity, which is equated with self-awareness by Sahajavajra, and this is exactly what Gzhon nu dpal is referring to by means of his compound awareness-emptiness. The luminous nature of phenomena can be experienced in the *samādhi* [of realising] reality as it is (*yathābhūtasamādhi*) which is taken by Sahajavajra as the path of uniting *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* into a pair:

> 'Luminous' refers to self-awareness, in view of its being naturally free from stains. One may ask, How does one see the phenomena of reality, whose nature is such a suchness? Therefore [Maitrīpa] said "as [experienced] in the *samādhi* [of realising] reality as it is". The latter is a path which is endowed with *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* united into a pair.[72]

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pa'o // de yang yang dag par shin tu mnyes par byas pa'i bla ma'i zhal gyi padma nyid las (text: la) gsal bar bya'o / gzhan du ni ma yin no /

[69] Mathes 2003: 16, ll. 16–7.

[70] TDṬ (*ibid.*): 186b[7-8]: *ro gcig pa ni de bzhin nyid du ro gcig pa'o / ... / thogs pa med cing zhes bya ba ni rang bzhin sgro btags med pa'o // gnas med par zhes bya ba ni ma skyes pa ste /*

[71] The term 'direct experience' is justified on the grounds, that the ultimate nature (emptiness) cannot be ascertained as being luminous or awareness through inferential valid cognitions (see also Gzhon nu dpal's *Ratnagotravibhāga* commentary (Mathes 2003: 15, ll. 8–12).

In the light of this explanation, TD 2cd implies that supreme Madhyamaka is adorned with pith-instructions whose main purpose is to enable a direct experience of emptiness as luminosity with the help of a path of uniting *śamatha* with a particular form of *vipaśyanā*. Without this adornment one has to rely on the reasonings of 'middling Madhyamaka'. This is supported by Sahajavajra's commentary on TD 1. Having delineated the subject-matter as (a) reality, (b) that which accomplishes (meditation) and (c) that which must be accomplished (enlightenment), Sahajavajra addresses the objection that these topics are the subject of valid cognition etc. with the interesting remark that suchness is here approached through pith-instructions:

> This is true, but the suchness which was formerly established by valid cognition as something which exists, is here established as *yuganaddha* [suchness] by way of pith-instructions. These are not taught here, because arguments which establish [it], such as 'on account of being free from one and many' have been adduced [in my explanations of TD 1]. The reason for this is that accomplishment through conduct is not a topic [of relevance to] suchness, reality, etc., for knowledge alone lacks skillful means because of lacking the pith-instructions of the right guru.[73]

Sahajavajra concludes this remark by referring to his commentary on TD 2cd. This is pretty straightforward: when one is merely concerned with knowing reality, the reasonings of middling Madhyamaka will do, but when it comes to skillful means, suchness must be established as the union of dependent arising and emptiness,[74] or skillful means and exalted knowledge, with the help of pith-instructions. In his commen-

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[72] TDṬ (*ibid.*): 187a[1-2]: *'od gsal zhes bya ba ni rang bzhin gyis (text: gyi) dri ma spangs pas rang rig pa ste / (...) /de ltar gyur pa'i de bzhin nyid kyi bdag nyid kyi de kho na nyid kyi chos rnams ji ltar mthong zhe na / de'i phyir ji ltar 'byung ba'i ting nge 'dzin gyis zhes bya smras te / zhi gnas dang lhag mthong zung du 'jug pa dan ldan pa'i lam ni ji ltar 'byung ba'i ting nge 'dzin no /*

[73] *ibid.*: 178b[4-6]: *de ni bden te / 'on kyang de dag sngar gnas pa'i yod par tshad mas rab tu grub pa'i de bzhin nyid 'dir man ngag gi sgo nas zung 'jug par (text: pa) rab tu sgrub pa yin te / de dag ni 'dir ma bstan te (text: to) // gcig dang du ma dang bral ba'i phyir zhes bya ba la sogs pa'i yang rab tu sgrub pa'i rigs (text:rag) pa nyid dran pa'i phyir // gang gi phyir spyod pas rab tu sgrub pa nyid de bzhin nyid de kho na nyid la sogs pa'i dngos po ma yin te / bla ma dam pa'i man ngag dang bral bas shes kyi cha 'ba' zhig ni thabs dang bral ba'i phyir ro /*

[74] *ibid.*: 182b[5]: *skyes pa dang ma skyes pa dag gi zung du 'jug pa nyid ni de kho na nyid du rtogs par bya ste /*

tary on TD 6 (in which engaged *bodhicitta* is taken as the foundation of one's *yathābhūtasamādhi*), Sahajavajra explains the path of preparation as the path of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* united into a pair and properly endowed with the skillful means of generosity, etc.—also known as engaged *bodhicitta*. It is achieved by combining meditative stablisation and analysis,[75] and this in turn leads to a stable *śamatha* concordant with the exalted knowledge. Sahajavajra refers to Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanākrama* for information on further levels, but also points out a major difference with Kamalaśīla's approach:

> The differentiations within the tradition of *pāramitā*, [or] engaged *[bodhi]citta*, are presented in short and [also] in detail in the *Bhāvanākrama* and other works of Kamalaśīla. One should look them up there; they are not written here for fear that they may be too long. No such an engaged *[bodhi]citta* is intended in them,[76] [however,] because in this [*Bhāvanākrama*] it is not pure, having been produced on the basis of analysis, wheras here [in the *Tattvadaśaka*] it must be directly meditated upon[77] with a non-analytical mind.[78]

And a little further down Sahajavajra quotes from an unknown source the following verse:

> [As to the expression] 'realisation' among the thousands of collections of teachings, its meaning in 'realisation of emptiness' is to analyse [emptiness]. That of [the pith-instructions of] the right guru is not analytical.[79]

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[75] It should be noted that Sahajavajra does not always use the term 'analysis' (*dpyad pa*) as the opposite of pith-instructions; see Sahajavajra's commentary (TDT *ibid.*: 192a[7]), "... emptiness, which is analysed on the basis of the pith-instructions of the right guru" (*bla ma dam pa'i man ngag gis dpyad pa'i stong pa nyid*). On f. 190b[2], however, he opposes "detailed analysis" to "pith-instructions of the right guru" (*rnam par dpyad pa'am / bla ma dam pa'i man ngag gis dngos po mi dmigs pa*).

[76] I.e., the works of Kamalaśīla.

[77] According to the reading in Gzhon nu dpal's quote: "right from the beginning" (*dang po nas*); see Mathes 2003: 55, l. 9.

[78] TDṬ (*ibid.*): 189a[1-2]: ... *'jug pa'i sems pha rol tu phyin pa'i tshul gyi rab tu dbye ba dbye ba rnams ni ka ma la shī la'i sgom pa'i rim pa la sogs par bsdus pa dang rgyas par bzhag ste* (corrected according to Gzhon nu dpal's quote. See Mathes 2003: 55, ll. 6–7; the Peking Tanjur reads: / *kā ma la shī la la sogs pa'i sgo nas bstan te*) / *de nyid du rtogs par bya'o // 'dir rgyas pa'i 'jigs pas ma bris so // de lta bur gyur pa'i 'jug pa'i sems ni 'dir dgongs pa ma yin no / 'dir de dpyad pa las byas pas yongs su ma dag pa'i phyir ro // 'dir dpyad pa med pa'i sems kyis mngon* [text: *kyi sngon*] *du bsgom bya ba nyid do /*

[79] TDṬ (*ibid.*): 189a[5-6]: / *chos kyi phung po stong phrag rnams // rtogs pa zhes bya stong pa nyid // rtogs pa'i don ni dpyad pa yin // bla ma dam pa'i dpyad pa med [/]*

It is not clear though, at what point the non-analytical practice of the pith-instructions begins. Thus, Sahajavajra explains that on the path of preparation phenomena are ascertained as being neither one nor many, and doubts are abandoned by repeated phases of analysis.[80] On the other hand, engaged *bodhicitta* in the tradition of Kamalaśīla is considered impure, in that it is produced by analysis, while according to Gzhon nu dpal's reading of the passage quoted above, non-analytical meditation starts right from the beginning. The obvious answer is that even initial *vipaśyanā* sessions can be performed by resorting to direct cognitions on the basis of pith-instructions, without excluding non-inferential types of analysis.[81] Moreover, pith-instructions may, of course, contain inferential statements, and thus may also be accompanied by inferential analysis. Sahajavajra quotes numerous Madhyamaka reasonings himself, especially at the beginning of his commentary, and in his explanations of the next verse (TD 7) he explains *amanasikāra* as the "non-apprehension of things which is achieved either by precise analysis or the pith-instructions of a guru",[82] which not only shows that Madhyamaka reasoning is adduced to show the doctrinal foundations of his tradition, but also that it may be used during meditation practice. Still, it does not play the same crucial role as in Kamalaśīla's approach.[83]

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[80] *ibid*.: 188b[2-3]: "Then, having remained in meditative stabilisation, one analyzes again all phenomena with the eye of wisdom. Having analysed [them], one needs to meditate again. Thanks to this [practice], one rids oneself of the seeds of doubt" *(de nas slar yang ting nge 'dzin la gnas pas shes rab kyi mig gis chos thams cad dpyad par bya'o // dpyad nas slar rim par bsgom (text: bgom) par bya'o // de yi tshom kyi sa bon sel bar 'gyur ro /)*

[81] According to Thrangu Rinpoche, it is possible to ascertain phenomena (such as mental events) as being neither one nor many by investigating their colour, shape etc. with the help of direct cognitions of one's introverted mental consciousness during *vipaśyanā*. See also Gzhon nu dpal's *Ratnagotravibhāga* commentary, where such a pith-instruction is described (Mathes 2003: 16, l. 24 – 17, l. 7).

[82] TDṬ (*ibid*.): 190b2: *rnam par dpyad pa'am / bla ma'i man ngag gis dngos po mi dmigs pa nyid ni yid la mi byed pa'o /*

[83] This is also observed by Gzhon nu dpal in his commentary on the "abandoning of characteristic signs" in the *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga* (Mathes 2003: 114, ll. 9–12): "Kamalaśīla maintains that the [interpretative] imagination that must be given up can only be given up through the exalted knowledge of thorough investigation. [On the other hand,] it is maintained in the commentary on Maitrīpa's *Tattvadaśaka* that it is not given up by thorough investigation, but by the 'meditative stabilisation which [experiences] reality exactly as it is.' The latter knows as luminosity [even] the own-being of that which must be given up. Here it is reasonable to follow Maitrīpa, who [re]discovered this treatise [of the *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga*]".

Of particular interest is the following commentary on TD 7, in which these pith-instructions and the reality they reveal are called *mahāmudrā*. Sahajavajra starts by defining non-duality in terms of his so-called Yuganaddha-Madhyamaka as being "*bodhicitta*, or the reality of non-dual knowledge, whose nature is skillful means and exalted knowledge".[84] As an introduction to his explanation on the second part of the verse (TD 7cd), the following objection is addressed: to define reality in the above-mentioned way has the fault of bearing the characteristic sign of an interpretative imagination of reality, in the same way as the practice of *yathābhūtasamādhi* is accompanied by the characteristic sign of an interpretative imagination of the remedy, and such characteristic signs must be abandoned by not becoming mentally engaged, as preached in the *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī*. TD 7cd is then taken as Maitrīpa's answer to such a possible objection. It says that nothing—not even the characteristic signs of attainment, etc.—is really abandoned, but everything is simply realised as natural luminosity:

> [Maitrīpa] said:
> And [even] vain adherence to a state free of duality is taken, in like manner, to be luminous. (TD 7cd)
> [Sahajavajra comments:]
> The underlying intention here is as follows: in order that those who do not know reality thoroughly realise [that] reality, it was taught that one must give up the three interpretative [imaginations] and likewise the four extremes completely. This is because it has been said [in Maitrīpa's *Sekanirdeśa*, verse 36] :
> "He who does not abide in the domain of the remedy is not attached to reality, and who does not desire the fruit, knows *mahāmudrā*".
> Here *mahāmudrā* [refers to] the pith-instructions on the reality of *mahāmudrā*.[85]

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[84] TDṬ (*ibid.*): 189b[6]: *thabs dang shes rab bdag nyid kyi shes pa gnyis med pa'i de kho na nyid byang chub kyi sems so /*

[85] *ibid.*: 190a[4-6]: */ gnyis dang bral bar rlom pa yang // gang phyir de ni 'od gsal 'dod [/] ces bya ba smras te / ᵃ'di (text 'dir) ni 'dir dgongs pa yin te / de yongs su shes pas de kho na nyid doᵃ [/] de kho na nyid rtogs par bya ba'i phyir dpyod pa gsum rnam par spang bar bya bar (text: ba) bstan pa yin te / mtha' bzhi yongs su spong ba bzhin no // gnyen po'i phyogs la mi gnas shing // de nyid la yang chags min gang (text:mi chags pas) // gang gi'ang 'bras bu mi 'dod pa (text: pas) // de yis (text: yi) phyag rgya chen po shes // zhes bya ba'i tshig gis so // 'dir yang phyag rgya chen po zhes bya ba ni phyag rgya chen po'i de kho na nyid kyi man ngag ste /* My emendations are according to Gzhon nu dpal's quote (Mathes 2003: 462, ll. 16–9).

a Gzhon nu dpal, who quotes this passage on p. 462, ll. 15–6, has a different reading: *'dir dgongs pa ni 'di yin te / de kho na nyid yongs su mi shes pa dag gis ni...* The translation follows this reading.

It should be noted that both the pith-instructions and the revealed real-
ity are here called *mahāmudrā*. Sahajavajra further points out that the
vain adherence to non-duality, that is, the interpretative imagination of
reality, does not exist as anything other than its luminous nature.
Abandoning the characteristic signs of these imaginations by not
becoming mentally engaged thus leads to the realisation of their lumi-
nous nature, which is achieved by not focusing on the supposed own-
being of phenomena through precise analysis or the pith-instructions of
a guru.[86] To sum up, nothing is really abandoned, but phenomena are
ascertained as what they are: in the light of analysis they lack an own-
being, and in *yathābhūtasamādhi* they are experienced as luminosity. It
should be noted that this supreme Madhyamaka of pith-instructions is
referred to as *mahāmudrā* in a purely non-Tantric context. That is, ini-
tial direct experiences of emptiness as luminosity do not require Tantric
empowerment, but are made possible here with the help of pith-instruc-
tions.

The commentary on the following verse (TD 8) again clearly shows
that Sahajavajra takes this *mahāmudrā* approach of pith-instructions to
be different from both Pāramitāyāna and Mantrayāna. The root stanza
is as follows:

> By the power of having realised this reality, the yogin, whose eyes are
> wide open, moves everywhere like a lion, by any means [and] in whatev-
> er manner.

Sahajavajra immediately adds to this stanza:

> The yogin, who accurately realised previously taught non-dual reality
> with the help of pith-instructions of the right guru.[87]

Further down Sahajavajra then distinguishes such an approach from the
Mantrayāna and Pāramitāyāna:

> If you wonder "In that case, what are the differences [between that and]
> a yogin of the way of Mantrayāna"? [The answer is:] There are great dif-
> ferences with regard to what is to be accomplished and that which
> accomplishes, given that [the yogin's practice] is without the sequence of
> the four *mudrās*, and given that complete enlightenment by way of equa-
> nimity, [that is] without the taste of the great bliss resulting from the

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[86] TDṬ (*ibid.*): 190b^8–191a^2.
[87] TDṬ (*ibid.*): 191b$^{5-6}$: [...] *sngar bstan pa'i gnyis su med pa'i de kho na nyid du*
(text: *ni*) *bla ma dam pa'i man ngag gis nges par rtogs pa'i rnal 'byor pas so /.*

pride of being a deity, takes a long time. On the other hand, it differs from the yogin of the way of Pāramitāyāna, because it is especially superior by virtue of accurately realising the suchness of the union into a pair, [i.e.,] emptiness analysed on the basis of the instructions of the right guru. Therefore, this is free from engaging in austerities. Those who ascertain very well the reality of one taste as being emptiness, are like [skillful] village people grasping a snake. Even though they touch the snake, they are not bitten. Some call this the wisdom of reality [or] *mahāmudrā*.[88]

In other words, the practice of realising *mahāmudrā* on the basis of pith-instructions is clearly distinguished from both Pāramitā- and Mantrayāna. Sahajavajra concludes his presentation of this distinction by the interesting remark that the mere union of skillful means and exalted knowledge in itself is not *mahāmudrā*:

It has been said: "The Victorious One explained that the meditation is supreme yoga [because of] having united skillful means and exalted knowledge, and it is the absorption (lit. 'union') in *mahāmudrā*[89] which is the meditation [here]". The followers of [Mantra]yāna point out that the mere meditation of uniting skillful means and exalted knowledge is not *mahāmudrā* meditation, since otherwise it would follow that the traditions of *pāramitā*s and *mantra*s were not different. [But it is] not by reason of deeds of generosity, etc., that Pāramitāyāna is inferior.[90]

In other words, it is not skillful means such as generosity, that makes ordinary Pāramitāyāna inferior to Sahajavajra's *mahāmudrā* approach

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[88] *ibid.*: 192a^5–b^1: *'o na gsang sngags kyi tshul gyi rnal 'byor pa dang bye brag ci yod ce na // phyag rgya bzhi'i rjes su 'gro ba med pa'i phyir dang / lha'i nga rgyal gyi bde ba chen po'i ro med pas // btang snyoms kyi rnam pas mngon par byang chub pa dus ring pos rdzogs pa'i phyir / bsgrub par bya ba dang sgrub par byed pa nyid kyi rnam pas (text: pa) bye brag nyid shin tu che'o // gzhan gyis (text: gyi) pha rol tu phyin pa'i tshul gyi rnal 'byor pa las 'di khyad par yod de / bla ma dam pa'i man ngag gis dpyad pa'i stong pa nyid zung du 'jug pa'i de bzhin nyid nges par rtogs pas shin tu khyad par 'phags pa'i phyir ro // de'i phyir 'di nyid dka' ba'i spyod pa med pa 'di nyid ni stong du ro gcig pa'i de kho na nyid shin tu nges pa dag ni yul gyi grong gis sbrul 'dzin pa ltar sbrul la rtse yang de'i 'bigs par mi 'gyur ro // 'di nyid la de kho na nyid kyi ye shes phyag rgya chen po zhes kha cig brjod /*

[89] 'Union with *mahāmudrā*' does not mean that one unites with an objective reality called *mahāmudrā*, it rather refers to a realisation that lies beyond a perceived object and a perceiving subject (oral information from Chetsang Rinpoche).

[90] *ibid.*: 192a$^{1-3}$: *thabs dang shes rab mnyam sbyor ba // bsgom pa nyid ni rnal 'byor mchog // phyag rgya chen por mnyam sbyor ba // bsgom pa ru ni rgyal bas bshad // ces pa'o / thabs dang shes rab mnyam par sbyor ba bsgom pa tsam ni phyag rgya chen po bsgom pa ma yin te / pha rol tu phyin pa'i tshul dang / sngags kyi tshul tha dad med par thal bar 'gyur ba'i phyir ro zhes sngags pa dag go // sbyin pa la sogs pa'i bya ba'i sgo nas pha rol tu phyin pa'i theg pa dman pa ma yin te /*

of pith-instructions. The latter only differs from Pāramitāyāna in its meditation of absorption in *mahāmudrā*. Given that *mahāmudrā* stands for the reality revealed by pith-instructions (see above), the only difference between it and the ordinary union of skillful means and exalted knowledge then is the particular approach of a mainly non-analytical (or direct) realisation of reality or suchness. Now, it becomes clear what Sahajavajra means in his introduction by "*pāramitā* pith-instructions which are in accordance with Mantrayāna": exalted knowledge, with which the skillful means of generosity etc. are united, is here not the ordinary (mainly analytical) kind, but the kind characterised by "absorption in *mahāmudrā*", which is as efficient as in Mantrayāna. *Pāramitā* pith-instructions thus contain a Tantric element, which distinguishes them from Pāramitāyāna.

Traditionally, there is no such thing as a direct realisation of suchness below the first Bodhisattva level in Pāramitāyāna. The latter is only possible in Mantrayāna. Sahajavajra still follows such a traditional distinction between Sūtras and Tantras in his *Sthitisamuccaya*,[91] in which a summary of the four traditional 'positions' (*sthiti*) of the Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, Yogācāra, and Madhyamaka is immediately followed by a presentation of Mantrayāna. A brief glance at the first verses of the Mantra section shows a non-analytical approach that must be firmly based on the tradition of the *mantras* in the *Sthitisamuccaya*:

> Having thus (i.e., in accordance with Madhyamaka) analysed and determined [reality] as being free from the four extremes,
> [This very] reality, which neither abides, arises nor ceases, nor has any defining characteristic, (V.1)
> Must be experienced through self-awareness as dependent arising in the tradition of the *pāramitā*s.
> If one follows the tradition of the *mantras*, by virtue of the teaching on the sequence of the four *mudrās*, (V.2)
> [Reality is realised] without confusion, [even] when not analysed. This is

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[91] The two identical Sanskrit manuscripts (one [B 25/15] consists of old photos of the other [B 24/4]) whose title page and colophon are missing were provisionally catalogued under the title *Kośakārikā* by the National Archives in Kathmandu and consequently by the NGMPP (Reel Nos. B 24/4 and B 25/15). The text was identified by Matsuda (1995: 848–843 [=205–10]) as Sahajavajra's *Sthitisamuccaya* (SS).

[92] SS: 11a³–b¹: *vicāryaivaṃ sthirīkṛtya catuṣkoṭivivarjitam / apratiṣṭham anutpāda[m a]nirodham alakṣaṇam // pratītyajaṃ svasaṃvedyaṃ tattvaṃ pāramitānaye / mantranītiṃ* (text: *nīta*) *samāśritya caturmudrānvayāgamāt // avicāram asaṃdigdham viśiṣṭānubhavād guroḥ / śūnyatāyāḥ svasaṃvedyaṃ prajñopāyamahāsukham //* I thank Diwakar Acharya for helping me to decipher the Nepalese manuscript.

because of the special experience of emptiness [obtained] from the guru.
It is the great bliss of exalted knowledge and skillful means, which must
be experienced through self-awareness.[92] (V.3)

This amounts to saying that there are only two ways of realising reality
or emptiness: either by analysis within Pāramitāyāna, or without analy-
sis, according to the tradition of Mantrayāna. This is particularly clear
in SS V.7cd: "When [one's practice] is free from investigation, how can
it be free from the tradition of *mantras*?".[93] A combination of the ordi-
nary skillful means of the Pāramitāyāna (i.e., without the skillful means
of *mudrās* and great bliss) with the Tantric element of directly realising
reality is not found anywhere in the *Sthitisamuccaya*, which raises the
question whether the position in the *Tattvadaśakaṭīkā* reflects a later
development in Sahajavajra's life, or even a trend that integrated not-
specifically-Tantric *mahāmudrā* instructions (such as we have already
identified in Saraha's works) into mainstream Buddhism.

III.2. *Jñānakīrti's* Tattvātāra

Such a trend can also be identified in Jñānakīrti's *Tattvāvatāra*, in
which three approaches to reality are distinguished, namely, those of
Mantrayāna, Pāramitāyāna and 'the path of freeing oneself from attach-
ment' (i.e., Śrāvakayāna). Each of these three has again three distinct
forms for adepts with sharp, average and inferior capacities. The inter-
esting point here is, that the practice of Pāramitāyāna adepts with sharp
faculties is referred to as *mahāmudrā*:

> As for someone with sharp faculties who practices the *pāramitā*s dili-
> gently, through having performed the meditations of calm abiding and
> special insight, he is certainly endowed with *mahāmudrā*[94] [already] at
> the level of an ordinary being. This, then, is a sign of the irreversible
> [state attained] through correct realisation.[95]

In a way similar to Sahajavajra, Jñānakīrti uses the term *mahāmudrā* in

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[93] SS: 11b4: *parāmarṣaṃ vinaiva syāt kathaṃ mantranayaṃ vinā //*

[94] The text in the *Phyag chen mdzod* (vol. hūṃ: 728, l. 1) reads *phyag rgya chen po las byung ba* ("what has arisen from *mahāmudrā*") instead of *phyag rgya chen po*.

[95] *Tattvāvatāra* (TA): 727, l. 6–728, l. 1 (cf. Gzhon nu dpal: *Deb ther sngon po*, 847, 13–6): *pha rol tu phyin pa la mngon par brtson pa'i dbang rab ni / zhi gnas dang lhag mthong bsgoms pas so so'i skye bo'i gnas skabs nyid na phyag rgya chen po dang nges par ldan pa yang dag par rtogs pas phyir mi ldog pa'i rtags nyid dang /*

a non-Tantric context to describe a direct approach to reality:

> Another name for the very great mother Prajñāpāramitā is *mahāmudrā*,
> given that the latter's nature is that of non-dual wisdom. [...] [Such wis-
> dom] must be attained by the Tathāgatas. And this exactly is the 'prac-
> tice of non-duality, [namely] *mahāmudrā'*. [96]

Moreover, Jñānakīrti relates *mahāmudrā* with the traditional fourfold
Mahāyāna meditation by equating 'Mahāyāna' in *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*
X.257d with *mahāmudrā*. The *pādas* X.257cd 'A yogin who is estab-
lished in a state without appearances sees Mahāyāna'[97] thus mean that
one finally sees or realises *mahāmudrā*.[98] In his *Ratnagotravibhāga*
commentary,[99] Gzhon nu dpal must have had such Indian sources in
mind, when he read the four *mahāmudrā* yogas into the *Laṅkāvatārasū-
tra*[100] and the *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga*.[101]

IV. CONCLUSION

It could be shown that both Sahajavajra's *Tattvadaśakaṭīkā* and
Jñānakīrti's *Tattvāvatāra* contain not-specifically-Tantric *mahāmudrā*
teachings which are a synthesis of the Tantric element of directly real-
ising emptiness or reality in a non-analytical way with general
Mahāyāna or Pāramitāyāna. Our study of the *Tattvadaśakaṭīkā* has
shown that no Tantric empowerment or such skillful means as great
bliss are required by this type of *mahāmudrā*, which merely depends on
the pith-instructions of one's guru. According to the *Tattvadaśakaṭīkā*,

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[96] TA: 734, ll. 3–5: *yum chen mo shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa nyid kyi mtshan
gzhan ni phyag rgya chen po ste / de ni gnyis su med pa'i ye shes kyi ngo bo nyid yin
pa'i phyir ro / [...] de ni de bzhin gshegs pa rnams kyis bsgrub par bya ba'o / phyag
rgya chen po gnyis su med pa'i sbyor ba'ang de nyid de /*

[97] *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (Nanjio 1923: 298, l. 18): *nirābhāsasthito yogī mahāyānaṃ sa
paśyati //* These *pādas* mark the end of a traditional description of the fourfold
Mahāyāna meditation in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*.

[98] TA: 802, ll. 2–3: *... theg pa chen po zhes bya ba la / mtshan gyi rnam pa gzhan
du na phyag rgya chen po zhes bya ba ste / de mthong bar 'gyur ro zhes gsungs pa ni
/ snang med gnas pa'i rnal 'byor pa / de yis theg pa chen po mthong /*

[99] See Mathes 2003: 62, l. 17–66, l. 25 (*Laṅkāvatārasūtra*) & 465, ll. 4–16
(*Dharmadharmatāvibhāga*).

[100] See Nanjio 1923: 79, l. 16–82, l. 4.

[101] See Mathes 1996: 102–103.

ordinary Pāramitāyana is not inferior to this non-Tantric *mahāmudrā* in terms of generosity, which shows that all *pāramitā*s remain relevant in this particular Indian tradition.

By arguing that *mahāmudrā* is just another name for Prajñāpāramitā and for what is intended by the word 'Mahāyāna' in *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* X.257d, Jñānakīrti tried to link non-Tantric *mahāmudrā* meditation with the Sūtras, wherefore it should no longer be maintained that not-specifically-Tantric *mahāmudrā* is a later Tibetan invention. The label '*sūtra mahāmudrā*' (Tib. *mdo lugs phyag rgya chen po*) came into use only later in Tibet, however. Even though it cannot be ruled out that the *mahāmudrā* practices of the Kagyupas inherited Ch'an elements from early Sino-Tibetan traditions, it should be noted that *sūtra*-based *mahā-mudrā* teachings have Indian roots which can be clearly identified. To sum up, the blending of the Sūtras with the Tantras is something that definitely started in India and not in Tibet.

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THE TRANSMISSION OF *BSNYUNG GNAS* IN INDIA, THE KATHMANDU VALLEY AND TIBET (10TH–12TH CENTURIES)

ROBERTO VITALI (DHARAMSALA AND KATHMANDU)

Some of the religious movements that brought the cult of Spyan ras gzigs to a preeminent position on the plateau during *bstan pa phyi dar* enjoyed a relative popularity, but were then obscured by the establishment of the autochthonous tradition based on the Spyan ras gzigs *gter ma*, the *Ma ṇi bka' 'bum*. Two early transmissions of *bsnyung gnas* ('fasting') should be included among the Spyan ras gzigs movements imported to Tibet, and in this paper I will focus my attention on their genesis and evolution in India, the Kathmandu Valley and Tibet during the periods before and roughly contemporary with the rediscovery of *Ma ṇi bka' 'bum*.

DGE SLONG MA DPAL MO AND THE TRANSMISSION OF *BSNYUNG GNAS*

In the literature concerned with fasting, dge slong ma Dpal mo is acknowledged as the initiator of the transmission of *bsnyung gnas* that eventually reached Tibet. She is seen by the Tibetan tradition under a manifold perspective, one that goes beyond *bsnyung gnas* exclusively. She is included among the eighty or eighty-four *mahāsiddha*, and appears in the texts dedicated to Rdo rje Phag mo as a practitioner of her cult. The material dealing with her *bsnyung gnas* practice makes a point of including accounts of her achievements of *siddhi*, and focuses on the miracle she performed like a second Cinnamastā, the deity known to the Buddhists as Cinnamuṇḍā, of whose teachings she was a lineage holder (Benard 1994).

   Dge slong ma Dpal mo is usually thought to have been born at Khri brtan, the capital of Kashmir, as the daughter of king Dharma pa la and sister of Indra bodhi.[1] Her brother Indra bodhi, however, can hardly be

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[1] Zla ba gzhon nu, *Dge slong ma Dpal mo'i rnam thar* f. 1b lines 5–6; and Blo gros mgon po, *Dge slong ma Dpal mo mtsho'i rnams* (sic) *thar* f. 2a lines 2–4.

considered a Kashmiri, as he would not fit as such into the dynastic panorama of North-West India during that period. The Indra bodhi-s known to the Tibetan tradition are commonly considered to have been kings of U rgyan and masters of *Tantra*. The *dge slong ma*'s brother too was a master of *Tantra*, but the period in which he lived does not match those of the kings of the same name from U rgyan. Thus the assertion that he was her brother should be considered historically suspicious. This confusion may be due to the existence of several different persons with the name Lakṣmīṃkara (Legs rmin ka ra, i.e. dge slong ma Dpal mo), such as the *Tantra* master and sister of the U rgyan king Indra bodhi.[2]

On the other hand, in some of her biographies, she claims to be the daughter of paṇḍita Zla ba gzhon nu.[3] This contradiction, already noted by Ratna shri, one of her *bsnyung gnas* biographers, confirms that her royal birth is not entirely ascertained. The notion that she was the daughter of Zla ba gzhon nu, even if read in the spiritual sense, is equally controversial, because he is usually said to have been one of her two most important disciples, and purportedly authored one of her biographies.[4]

As can readily be imagined, the dates of her life are not available, but her biographies say that she encountered masters such as Lu yi pa, thus linking her with the 10th century.[5] Her disciple Zla ba gzhon nu was a teacher of Jo bo rje Atiśa,[6] whose activities spanned the first half of the 11th century.

Several statements in her biographies indicate that she was not the first practitioner of *bsnyung gnas*, but provide no clue as to who the previous lineage holders were, and thus its origin in India is not clarified in the presently available Tibetan sources. The fact that she went to perform *bsnyung gnas* at Li kha ra shing 'phel in Bengala indicates Eastern India as one cradle of the practice during her time.[7]

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[2] See e.g. *Deb ther sngon po* p. 652 lines 16–18.

[3] Zla ba gzhon nu, *Dge slong ma Dpal mo'i rnam thar* f. 9b line 5.

[4] Ratna shri, *Bsnyung gnas bla ma'i rnam thar* p. 97 line 1. Most of the biographical material about her seems to have filtered into the Tibetan tradition from India, for it betrays a conspicuous degree of adaptation. In such cases, a Tibetologist might ponder how the biographical accounts of Indian masters linked with traditions transferred from India to Tibet became available to Tibetans during earlier or later periods, given that India is not especially reputed for historical literature, and the biographical genre in particular.

[5] Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 324 line 1.

[6] *ibid*. vol. II p. 327 line 2.

[7] *ibid*. vol. II p. 323 lines 2–6.

Apparently, she began fasting after being afflicted with leprosy. Her condition was so bad that she lost the use of her right arm and was obliged to eat like an animal, her skin turned so rough that she was disfigured, and she had pain in the whole of her body.[8] On the advice of Indra bodhi,[9] who appeared to her in a vision,[10] she went to perform *bsnyung gnas* at Li kha ra shing 'phel and was completely healed. Hence it seems that her alleged brother Indra bodhi was a practitioner of Spyan ras gzigs. There is no record of her *bsnyung gnas* teacher, but her biographies say that her *guru* had the forbidding name Rigs ngan phag tshang ('bad caste, pig sty'),[11] seemingly a Tantric practictioner, and thus someone who matched the other side of her twofold personality (nun and master of fasting and *Tantra*).[12]

The fact that Indra bodhi is indicated as *yab* in relation to the *dge slong ma* in some biographies is a source of controversy, because practically all the biographies say that they were brother and sister. This brings me to the miracle she performed: her activities caused the subjects of the Kashmir kingdom to gossip that she had broken her vows by performing a *lhan gcig skyes pa* dance at the Zhag rgyad cemetery. She resented this, and to prove that their criticism was groundless, she cut off her own head and placed it on the tip of her walking stick. The severed head miraculously spoke, exclaiming that it could only re-join her neck if her vows were intact, and then did so.[13] The interpretation of this miracle offered by all the sources is that she thus established her reputation as a *siddha*, a reading remarkably divergent from the Hindu understanding of Cinnamastā's self-decapitation as the suppression of the ego. This is the miracle after which her official portraiture is styled.

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[8] Ratna shri, *Bsnyung gnas bla ma'i rnam thar* p. 93 line 2–4.

[9] Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 322 lines 5–6, or 'Jam dbyangs gzhon nu according to other sources.

[10] Ratna shri, *Bsnyung gnas bla ma'i rnam thar* p. 94 lines 3–6.

[11] Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 321 line 5.

[12] By omitting the name of her *bsnyung gnas* teacher (unless the advice of Indra bodhi or 'Jam dpal gzhon nu are to be considered as actual teachings), her biographies give the impression that *dge slong ma's bsnyung gnas* teacher was the disease itself, and that fasting in India was a major technique of purification, as it became understood in Tibet.

[13] Zla ba gzhon nu, *Dge slong ma Dpal mo'i rnam thar* f. 9b line 7–f. 10a line 3; Ratna shri, *Bsnyung gnas bla ma'i rnam thar* p. 96 lines 5–7; and Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 322 lines 1–5.

Her interaction with the famous *siddha*-s Sa ra ha, Bir wa pa and Lu yi pa is another indication of her Tantric practice.[14] She was invited to perform a *vajra* song by the latter two, but only obliged at the insistence of her *guru*, Rigs ngan phag tshang.[15] This is probably another sign of the association of the cult of Spyan ras gzigs with esoteric practice, found in Tibet during the successive period (La stod Dmar po, for instance, comes to mind).

Conspicuously, most of the biographies do not adduce the reason why people thought that she had broken her vow, and give the impression that the omission is voluntary.[16] An addendum in the biography of dge slong ma Dpal mo by ri khrod pa Blo gros mgon po contains an extended version of the event appended to the usual expurgated account of her miracle.[17] This author says that according to the Rdo rje Phag mo literature she was accused of having an incestuous Tantric relationship with her brother. The subjects of Kashmir wanted to punish them but she retorted that they could not punish her brother the king lest the royal lineage be disrupted, and she could not be punished either, because she too belonged to the royal family. She stripped naked in front of them, smeared herself with ashes in the manner typical of a *siddha*, and decided to inflict the punishment herself by cutting off her own head.

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[14] Zla ba gzhon nu, *Dge slong ma Dpal mo'i rnam thar* f. 9b line 7–p. 19 line 3.

[15] The *dge slong ma*'s refusal to perform a *vajra* song upon the request of Lu hi pa and Bir wa pa is not explained in the sources. She had actually performed one beforehand and a *vajra* dance on another occasion.

[16] Ratna shri, *Bsnyung gnas bla ma'i rnam thar* p. 96 lines 5–6 goes to the extent of saying that the *dge slong ma* had broken her vows because of leprosy.

[17] Blo gros mgon po, *Dge slong ma Dpal mo mtsho'i rnams* (sic) *thar* f. 19b line 1–f. 20a line 3: "The account of this is clearer if one reads the texts of Phag mo. Having then obtained spiritual powers, since King Indra bodhi had [her for] a *phyag rgya* (*mudrā*, 'consort'), the people who were his subjects said: 'The *dge slong ma* should be punished by law'; the *dge slong ma* replied: 'If the king is subjected to the law, this will be harmful for future kings'. The *dge slong ma* added: 'You, subjects, should gather tomorrow for my punishment by law'. Then, having gathered, the subjects requested the *dge slong ma* to come to receive the punishment by law in the presence of the crowd. The *dge slong ma* stripped naked and rubbed her body with ash, and holding a *gri khug* (sic for *gri gug*) in her right hand, a skull in her left hand and a *kha stam* (*katwanga*) under her arm, she came out from the palace and passed through the midst of the crowd. People said: 'The *dge slong ma* is an incestuous woman who accompanied her brother. (f. 20a) She is not allowed [to do that]. Even now she came out crossing the midst of the crowd with her body naked'. The *dge slong ma* retorted: 'Since I am the daughter of the king, although you people [wish to] punish me, you cannot punish me. I will punish myself'. With the *gri khug* (sic) in her right [hand], she completely severed her head. After hanging it on the tip of her walking stick, she danced. People said: 'She has spiritual attainments', and developed faith in her".

Not much else is known about her in strict historical terms.[18] Even her long biography (available at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives) does not add much more except for some lengthy mystical passages. The tradition endorses the view that dge slong ma Dpal mo was a Tantric practitioner who turned to *bsnyung gnas* and the cult of Spyan ras gzigs to cleanse her defilements. In a passage of the biography by Ratna shri, dge slong ma Dpal mo herself describes the basics of the fasting practice: she says that *bsnyung gnas* and the cult of Spyan ras gzigs must be grounded in the four classes of Tantra and the monk's vow, the visualisation of Spyan ras gzigs and of his *mantra*, and the accumulation of recitations of the *mantra*.[19] These features were preserved in the transference of *bsnyung gnas* to Tibet, with some modifications that I will outline below.

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[18] Tradition holds that some objects which had belonged to her became especially sacred. Her robe was placed in the north-western *stūpa*, one of the four outside the boundary wall of Tho ling in Gu ge (Vitali 1999 p. 88 and p. 121). A life-size statue of Thugs rje chen po Bcu gcig zhal in *li ma* alloy was found at Pha bong kha by Gung ru ba Rgyal mtshan bzang po (1385–1450) and enshrined at Se ra (*Dpag bsam ljon bzang* p. 597 lines 9–11; and Kaḥ thog Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho, *Gnas yig* p. 13–15). In *Gu ru Bkra shis chos 'byung* p. 526 lines 1–4, dge slong ma Dpal mo is said to have hidden this statue as *gter*, although there is no record that she visited Tibet.

[19] Ratna shri, *Bsnyung gnas bla ma'i rnam thar* p. 97 line 3–p. 98 line 1: "[The *dge slong ma* said]: 'If one wonders from where the transmission of these teachings is imparted, to affirm that they are derived from the *rGyud sde bzhi* is not a contradiction. This (i.e. Bcu gcig zhal) actually is the Sangs rgyas of the Three Times. The hands and body actually stand for the [various] Sangs rgyas and Byang chub sems dpa'. The eyes on his palms actually stand for *Rnal 'byor bla med rgyud*. In particular, if one wonders how [the teachings] are grounded, they are grounded in general on *Kri ya rgyud*. They are derived from the *mantra* of Zhal bcu gcig pa and the transmission of Phyag stong spyan stong. If one wonders how to meditate, one should have first [completed the] preliminary practices, such as purification (*gso sbyong*), and it is essential to take a vow before [undertaking] meditation. From the sphere of the perception according to which I myself and all phenomena are [seen as] empty, one should visualise a white *Hri* as the seed of Thugs rje chen po. Uncountable rays of light are emitted from this [seed]. After touching all sentient beings of the three realms, [the rays of light] cleanse the stains of the defilements of sentient beings. By perceiving the transformation of sentient beings into the body of Spyan ras gzigs, one enters the door of these teachings, and closes it to the outer world. One should believe that the notion of Spyan ras gzigs has spread among all sentient beings. Even if someone else utters harsh words or beats [you], one should have the thought that this is Spyan ras gzigs' (p. 98) compassion'".

Refraining from food during the daytime while observing *muni* are routine aspects of the *bsnyung gnas* practice.

THE LINEAGE OF *BSNYUNG GNAS* AFTER DGE SLONG MA DPAL MO

Dge slong ma Dpal mo had two disciples; Zla ba gzhon nu and Ye shes bzang po. The latter is sometimes considered to have been the former's teacher.[20] Ye shes bzang po was led to embrace *bsnyung gnas* and became a follower of the *dge slong ma* again because of leprosy. He had blisters and pain like a flaming fire. To cure the disease, Ye shes bzang po was made to sit in a small pond prepared to cool his temperature, but to no avail: the water of the pond kept boiling despite being changed often. Dge slong ma Dpal mo was summoned to help him. She introduced him to the cult of Spyan ras gzigs and he was healed.[21] A further point of contact between dge slong ma Dpal mo and Ye shes bzang po is that he too is said to have been of royal blood.

Although scant and contradictory, information about her disciples is useful for delineating the direction taken by her transmission. As was often the case with the religious movements focused on the cult of Spyan ras gzigs brought to Tibet during *bstan pa phyi dar*, *bsnyung gnas* reached the plateau via the Kathmandu Valley. Its main transmission line was continued by Bal po Dpe nya ba, a native of Yam bu ya rgyal,[22] Kathmandu's ancient centre, where stood the palace of the king 'Bi ba lo ke.[23]

Dpe nya ba went to Bodhgaya, received the transmission of *bsnyung gnas* from dge slong ma Dpal mo's two disciples, Ye shes bzang po and Zla ba gzhon nu, and brought it to the Kathmandu Valley.[24] One should therefore acknowledge Bodhgaya, the central region of India in Tibetan understanding, as a centre of the fasting practice, in addition to eastern India. Little else is known about Dpe nya ba, but one can at least say that he was active in the 11th century when *bstan pa phyi dar* was in full swing across the northern border.

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[20] Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 326 line 4–p. 327 line 2.

[21] *ibid. p.* 325 line 1–p. 326 line 3.

[22] Yam bu ya 'gal, Yam bu Ya mkhal and several other spellings appear in the sources.

[23] Ratna shri, *Bsnyung gnas bla ma'i rnam thar* p. 104 lines 5–7; and Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 327 lines 2–4. This is another case of a Newar name transcribed into Tibetan which is difficult to decode, at least for me. The identification of 'Bi ba lo ke would be crucial to place Dpe nya ba in a more precise chronological context.

[24] Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 327 line 6–p. 328 line 2.

BA RI LO TSĀ BA AND THE CULT OF SPYAN RAS GZIGS

A contemporary of Dpe nya ba was Ba ri lo tsā ba Rin chen grags (1040–1112), whose ties with the early Sa skya pa tradition are well known. Ba ri lo tsā ba was a practitioner of the Spyan ras gzigs cult, although not of *bsnyung gnas*, and frequented Yam bu ya rgyal, the place of Dpe nya ba's residence.

He is the first of several masters discussed here whose biographies were written in remarkably different terms according to the perspectives of the different traditions to which they belonged. In Ba ri lo tsā ba's case, narrations of the episodes in his life depend on whether he is treated as an exponent of the Sa skya pa tradition or the cult of Spyan ras gzigs.

The poignant *rnam thar* written by slob dpon Bsod nams rtse mo (1142–1182)[25] tells quite a different story from the short biography by 'Gos lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal in the chapter of *Deb ther sngon po* dedicated to the cults of Spyan ras gzigs.[26] 'Gos lo tsā ba neglects the period

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[25] The identification of the author of this biography is based on the paraphrase of his name Bsod nams rtse mo found in its colophon, a practice common in Tibetan literary works. *Ba ri lo tsā ba Rin chen grags kyi rnam thar* p. 266 lines 4–5 reads: "By means of the recollection of bla ma [Ba ri lo tsā ba]'s qualities, the merit (*bsod nams*) of unlimited sentient beings is fully expanded and the peak (*rtse mo*) (i.e. Bsod nams *rtse mo*) of the two benefits (i.e. to oneself and others) is clearly seen. May the virtues of the noble *bla ma* be eternal! The biography of the *bla ma* was written at dpal ldan Sa skya".

[26] A summary of the life of Ba ri lo tsā based on the biography in *Deb ther sngon po* is as follows:

  • He was born at Sdom tshang in Khams in 1040 (*ibid*. p. 1189 lines 4–5).

  • He studied *Mngon pa* with an unidentified Kashmiri *paṇḍita* (*ibid*. p. 1189 lines 5–6).

  • Aged fifteen (1054), he went to Dbus and met Jo bo rje (*ibid*. p. 1189 lines 7–9). One cannot avoid noting that the timing of his arrival in Dbus Gtsang is controversial. This happened in 1058 according to Bsod nams rtse mo (see below). The difference between the two versions boils down to whether or not he met Jo bo rje, a question of no small significance.

  • He went to La stod Dpal thang (i.e. Dpal mo dpal thang), where he showed compassion for the animals, and then to the Kathmandu Valley (*ibid*. p. 1189 lines 9–15).

  • During his sojourn in India, Spyan ras gzigs appeared to him constantly. He dedicated himself to philanthropic activities (*ibid*. p. 1189 lines 15–p. 1190 line 18).

  • He went from the Kathmandu Valley to Gung thang, and then to Gro shod and Pu hrang, where he restored a triad of statues put up by Rin chen bzang po (*ibid*. p. 1190 line 18–p. 1191 line 7).

  • He went back to India where he obtained many teachings from Rdo rje gdan pa, including Spyan ras gzigs, and then returned to Tibet (*ibid*. p. 1191 lines 7–9), where he died in an unspecified year.

in Ba ri lo tsā ba's life during which he became associated with Sa skya, while Bsod nams rtse mo obviously focuses more on this. Concerning his travels to India, where he received initiations in Spyan ras gzigs, *Deb ther sngon po* has it that he went to India and the Kathmandu Valley twice, whereas Bsod nams rtse mo mentions a single journey.

A summary of the life of Ba ri lo tsā ba according to the biography by Bsod nams rtse mo is as follows:

• He was an adept of the six letter *mantra* and Spyan ras gzigs since his childhood.[27]
• He saw a *ḍākinī* in a dream who told him to go to Dbus Gtsang. He left in 1058.[28]
• On the way, Sgrol ma appeared to him and prophesied that despite an attack by robbers he would reach his destination safely. With her help, he made them go motionless and then disappear. He chose her as his tutelary deity.[29]
• When he took the *rab tu byung* vow from Zhang Yon tan rin chen in Dbu ru stod, Brtson 'grus grags gave him the name Rin chen grags. He received teachings transmitted by Jo bo rje, as well as the *khrid* of *Dbu ma* and *Pha rol tu phyin pa* from Brtson 'grus grags; and *Mngon pa, Byams chos* and Bka' gdams teachings from Gnya' ra ba Don grub.[30]
• In Lha sa, he had a vision of the Bcu gcig zhal statue of Ra sa 'Phrul

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[27] Bsod nams rtse mo, *Ba ri lo tsā ba Rin chen grags kyi rnam thar* p. 257 line 6–p. 258 line 2: "If one mentions the little of his history [that is known] in detail, his birth place was G.yar mo thang. His clan was Ba ri. Among the *tshang bzhi* ('four houses') of Mdo smad, [he was from] Gling kha. The names of his parents are not recorded. When he grew into a child, (p. 258) his behaviour was not that of a child, and he had faith and compassion. He only recited the six letters. In his dream, a white man with four hands, surrounded by light, placed his hands on the crown of his head, and pronounced the six letters twenty-one times".

[28] *ibid.* p. 258 lines 2–4.

[29] *ibid.* p. 258 line 4–p. 259 line 2: "On one of the two days he had to remain in 'Bom, he fell asleep leaning on leather ropes, and heard a voice similar to that of his companion A skyabs saying: 'You will be challenged by robbers; you will be protected by the gods; you will safely proceed to your destination'. He woke up while these words were uttered, and saw Sgrol ma and two retinue in front of him, one thumb in size, smiling and surrounded by boundless light. He prayed to her to accept him as [her] follower. Not long after, (p. 259) there were many continuous cries about many robbers. As soon as he told his companions: 'Do not run away: no harm at all will be done [to you]', the robbers stood still (*'dug*) suddenly at some distance (*pha tshad*) and disappeared while [his companions] wondered: 'Where did they go? Were they *mi ma yin*?' Thereafter, he accepted Sgrol ma as his tutelary deity".

[30] *ibid.* p. 259 lines 2–4.

snang which told him to go to Rgya gar (mainland India). By then he had spent fifteen years in Dbus Gtsang (1058–1073).[31]

• In 1073, he headed towards Magadha to meet Rdo rje gdan pa. On the way, he went to the Kathmandu Valley from Skyid grong with a colourful group of thirteen that comprised a master from Mustang, named Jo bo Byang chub grags, four *yogin* from Ka ma ru pa including one Pha la ma ti, and an unidentified *bla ma*.[32]

• His teacher in the Kathmandu Valley was the Ye rang (i.e. Patan) paṇḍita A nan ta, who gave him the empowerment of the Bde mchog *dkyil 'khor*; the blessing and the four stages (*gdan bzhi*) of Rdo rje rnal 'byor ma; and the *sādhana*, *Rgyud* and *Rdzogs rim* related to those two deities.[33]

• He went to Rgya gar and first met bla ma Ma ha yo gi. He was given teachings on Rdo rje Phag mo.[34]

• He got empowerments of *Gsang Sngags, Rgyud*, and *sādhana*-s from Rdo rje gdan pa the younger, as well as teachings on *Phal chen*, *Dkon brtsegs*, and oral instructions on *Ting nge 'dzin rgyal po*. In all he received 1,008 *sādhana* from Rdo rje gdan pa and paṇḍita Don yod rdo rje.

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[31] *ibid.* p. 259 line 6–p. 260 line 2: "On one occasion, he offered 100,000 prostrations and circumambulations to the Jo bo in Lha sa. Having given whatever material he had for the offerings [to the Jo bo] and made prayers, Spyan ras gzigs Bcu gcig zhal appeared to him one night (p. 260) in a dream, the size of a tall man, to the right of the Jo bo, and told him: 'Take many goods and go to Rgya gar. You will have many extraordinary achievements and will be beneficial to sentient beings'. When he decided thereupon to go to Rgya gar, he had spent fifteen years in Dbus Gtsang".

[32] *ibid.* p. 260 lines 2–4: "When he was thirty-four years old, in order to pay his respects to [Rgya gar] Dbus pa'i dge bshes Dar ma Rdo rje gdan [pa], he left for the Kathmandu Valley from Skyid grong for the pilgrimage to the holy places of Rgya gar, with two servants and two companions, one of them being Glo bo ba jo bo Byang chub grags, four [men] including Shri Pha la ma ti ba, the *yogin* of Ka ma ru pa, as well as the *bla ma* (?) and his three servants, altogether [a group of] thirteen".

[33] *ibid.* p. 260 lines 4–6: "In the Kathmandu Valley, he received many teachings such as the empowerment of dpal Bde mchog *dkyil 'khor*, the blessing and four stages (*gdan bzhi*) of Rdo rje rnal 'byor ma and the related *sādhana, Rgyud* and *Rdzogs rim* from paṇḍita A nanta, also known as the Ye rang *paṇḍita*. He said he was able to master most of those since he had learned some rudimentary (*gnas* sic for *gnad*) [local] language".

In *Gshin rje gshed chos 'byung* p. 91 line 3, Taranatha says that Ba ri lo tsā ba also met 'Bha ro phyag dum and paṇḍita Thugs rje chen po, the teachers of Rwa lo tsā ba Rdo rje grags (1016–?).

[34] Bsod nams rtse mo, *Ba ri lo tsā ba Rin chen grags kyi rnam thar* p. 260 line 6–p. 261 line 2: "Then he went to Rgya gar and first met bla ma Ma ha yo gi. He received teachings on Rdo rje Phag mo and her blessings. One night, (p. 261) during a *tshogs kyi 'khor lo*, the *bla ma* told him: 'Do you see Bcom ldan 'das Rdo rje Phag mo in the sky?' Having looked up, since he truly saw Bcom ldan 'das ma with four retinue, many breakthroughs in meditation (lit. 'many doors') were created [in his] mental continuum".

Rdo rje gdan pa gave him the *gtor chen* of Kha 'bar ma ('the deity flaming from the mouth'), which amounted to teachings to avert harm caused by the *mu stegs pa*-s;[35] the instructions on *Bha ya na*; and the *sbyin sreg* of the wrathful Mi g.yo ba.[36]
• He spent nine years in the Kathmandu Valley and Rgya gar (1073–1082) before returning to Tibet in the latter year.[37]

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[35] I wish to point out here that the masters of this cult did not adopt Spyan ras gzigs-style compassion exclusively. As said a few times in the present paper, they were also familiar with esoteric practices which, in some cases, crossed over into witchcraft. This was the case with Ba ri lo tsā ba, who sought advice on handling a dangerous situation from Rdo rje gdan pa, the teacher who had instructed him in the cult of Spyan ras gzigs. *Guru Bkra shis chos 'byung* p. 521 lines 6–19 says: "Ba ri lo tsā ba Rin chen grags, who was born at Khams bar lam Sdom tshad, went to Rgya gar. He became extremely learned by studying with bla ma Rdo rje gdan pa. The *lo tsā ba* was victorious in debate with mu stegs Skal ldan rgyal po. Following his defeat, the *mu stegs pa* said that he would inflict a curse by which [Ba ri lo tsā ba] would die after seven days. Hence the *lo tsā ba* was scared, and reported [the matter] to the *bla ma* who said: 'Do not be afraid. To the east of Rdo rje gdan, under a rock resembling a *g.yag* there is a rhino skin *ga'u* inside which there is a silver *ga'u* inside which there are fourteen syllables in golden letters known as *Mkha' 'gro tshe sgrub* ('*mkha' 'gro*'s power of longevity'), otherwise known as *Btsan mthu nag po* ('the powerful black curse'), or as *Byang ma 'bum sdug* ('100,000 skillful evils'). These instructions are the *mantra* essence of the mind of 1,000 Sangs rgyas and even if [one] is hit by 1,000 *phur* [*pa* or] lightning bolts, they allow one to sleep comfortably'. The *lo tsā ba* went there and extracted the wrathful *mantra* in fourteen letters. The lion faced *ḍākinī* actually came there and gave him [the *mantra*]. After the *lo tsā ba* accumulated [recitations of] the *mantra*, the curse was reversed and the *mu stegs pa* died by vomiting blood. He reported this to the *bla ma* who said: 'It was enough to keep the *mantra* on your body, but you accumulated [recitations], and it is not good that he died. To cleanse your defilement you must make a book written in gold'. After the *lo tsā ba* returned to Tibet, while serving as the *gdan sa* of Sa skya for a long time, he gave it to bla ma Sa skya pa Rtse ba chen po (i.e. Sa chen Kun dga' snying po), and this [book] is among [the works] known at present as the *Sa skya pa'i gser chos bcu gsum* ('the thirteen golden texts of the Sa skya pa')".

[36] Bsod nams rtse mo, *Ba ri lo tsā ba Rin chen grags kyi rnam thar* p. 261 line 2–p. 262 line 1: "At that time, since he went to see the undisputed *bla ma* known as bla ma Rdo rje gdan pa the younger, he received many empowerments of *Gsang Sngags, Rgyud, sādhana*-s, and teachings. He received oral teachings on *Phal chen, Dkon brtsegs*, and *Ting nge 'dzin rgyal po*. Moreover, he received 1,008 *sādhana* from [masters] such as Rdo rje gdan pa and paṇḍita Don yod rdo rje. From among those [teachings], he compiled the 108 most excellent, most profound and most useful ones. After they were translated by the *lo paṇ*, the *bla ma* took along with him the instructions and practices in groups of four each for their general correct understanding; the explanations of each one's *sādhana*; their oral instructions; the instructions bestowing blessings; the consequent *mantra* recitations (*rjes su bzlas*); and the instructions for those taking vows. Then he left and diffused them. Moreover, he said that bla ma Rdo rje gdan pa (p. 262) gave him a Kha 'bar ma'i *gtor chen* which is a teaching to avert the harm of the *mu stegs pa*; the instructions on Bha ya na; and the *sbyin sreg* of the wrathful Mi g.yo ba".

[37] *ibid.* p. 263 line 2.

• He was invited to Sa skya at an unspecified date, and made regent in 1102. He retired from the abbacy in 1110.[38]
• He is remembered for making the G.yu dkar mo, many *stūpa*, bridges and *dharamsala*.[39]
• He died when he was seventy-three years old (1112).[40]

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[38] *ibid.* p. 263 lines 4–5: "After bla ma Dkon mchog rgyal po invited him to Sa skya, the former received many teachings. [Ba ri lo tsā ba] rendered service for a long time, giving his faithful disciple all sorts of teachings. Upon bla ma Dkon mchog rgyal po's death, when [Ba ri lo tsā ba] was aged sixty-three (1102), the young *bla ma chen po* (i.e. Kun dga' snying po) requested him to stay at Sa skya *gdan sa*. He acted as abbot for fourteen years (1102–1110)".

[39] *ibid.* p. 263 line 6–p. 264 line 1: "He built a *rnam rgyal mchod rten* as *thugs dam*, and placed [inside it] *swatstsha*-s (i.e. *tsha tsha*-s) of Rnam rgyal [ma] amounting to 370,000 *mantra* of Rnam rgyal [ma], and (p. 264) many images from India and Tibet, bestowing blessings".

ibid. p. 264 lines 4–5: "Moreover, the extraordinary account of his making [images] such as G.yu dkar mo is well known to everyone, and [I] wish merely to mention it here. Moreover, he built many *stūpa*, and built many bridges. He built many *dharamsala*". Unfortunately, the account of the making of G.yu dkar mo is not so well known to present-day readers!

Sa skya Blo gros rgya mtsho, *Sa skya'i bstan 'dzin ngor rdzong tshar gsum dang gdan sa'i gnas yig* (p.75 lines 9–p.76 line 8) has a rather unassuming account which somewhat pertains to G.yu dkar mo: "Sgrol ma lha khang. As for the great G.yu dkar mo, brought to [Sa skya] by Ba ri lo tsa ba Rin chen grags, the master of the two languages, for the diffusion of the merit of the people, this receptacle holder is among the four wondrous images of [Sa skya].

The ones known as the Sgrol ma sems dpa' gsum brtsegs ('the pile of the three compassionate Sgrol ma') of G.yu dkar mo are as follows. Earlier Ba ri lo tsa ba came to this holy place (i.e. Sa skya) from Rgya gar with a young maiden, the miraculous transformation of rje btsun Sgrol ma, in the manner of a master with his disciple. He built a *gtsug lag khang* over this holy place similar to the demoness reclining supine. The master and disciple stayed there for a long time. On one occasion, the maiden, chased by a dog, rushed with a vessel towards the one known as the wealthy man Ra skya ba who resided in the west of this holy place. The old man, who had lit a fire, punched his clenched fist to separate (*mtshams*) the maiden and the dog. The footprints of the dog and the maiden, and the handprints of the old man, plus the traces of the fire, still exist at present as a sign for the diffusion of devotion (p.76). They are known as Sgrol ma khyi ded ma ('Sgrol ma chased by a dog). At that time, the *bla ma* told the maiden: 'Show [your true semblance], this [event] being a reason to show that [you] are a manifestation'. Having retorted: 'Not so', the maiden did not show [her true form]. He requested her persistently, and the maiden vanished inside the meditation statue of the *bla ma*, a silver image of Sgrol ma, one *mtho* (i.e. the distance from the thumb to the middle finger) high. Furthermore, she vanished into the sandalwood Sgrol ma, one *khru* (i.e. the distance from the elbow to the fingers) high. Likewise, the sandalwood Sgrol ma dam tshig sems dpa' ('Sgrol ma, deity of the vow'), the silver Sgrol ma ye shes sems dpa' ('Sgrol ma, deity of wisdom') and the woman-manifestation ting nge 'dzin sems dpa' ('Sgrol ma, deity of meditation') are known as the Sgrol ma sems dpa' gsum brtsegs. It is mind-blowing to see the wish-fulfilling statue in medicinal clay [of G.yu dkar mo] with these [previously mentioned images] installed in its heart".

[40] *ibid.* p. 264 line 5–p. 265 line 1: "Having greatly benefited sentient beings, he retired from the abbacy of Sa skya when he was aged seventy-one (1110). Between [his

As can be seen, the biography by Bsod nams rtse mo places no emphasis on Ba ri lo tsā ba's practice of Spyan ras gzigs, but it does have an interesting account concerning the area of Kathmandu associated with Dpe nya ba and the practice of *bsnyung gnas*. It says that Ba ri lo tsā ba engaged himself in helping Tibetans at the place named Thang chung of Yam bu ya rgyal. This is the heart of present-day Kathmandu city, traditionally known as Tundikhel, including what is now called Ratna Park.[41]

Ba ri lo tsā ba was embroiled in a dispute that involved the visiting Tibetans who were dispossessed of half of their goods by the local authorities when coming for trade, and were not even allowed a place to die if they succumbed to a tropical fever. It seems that Ba ri lo tsā ba, using methods untypical of a spiritual leader, was able to broker a hostel for the Tibetans at Tundikhel, and put an end to this harassment. A mes zhabs adds that the Thang chung of Yam bu ya rgyal (called by him Thang chen po) became known as Bod thang ('the Tibetans' open ground') after Ba ri lo tsā ba's intervention secured stable and safe shelter to the visiting Tibetans.[42]

ZLA BA RGYAL MTSHAN AND *BSNYUNG GNAS*

It was Dpe nya ba's disciple, Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan, a native of Mnga' ris Stag sna, who brought the *bsnyung gnas* teachings to

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abdication and death] two years elapsed, which he spent in meditation at Phug rong. When he was aged seventy-three (1112), on the fourteenth day of *dbyug pa zla ba*, he gave a speech at Gam (p. 265) [saying]: 'I am now passing from peace to peace'".

[41] *ibid.* p. 262 line 4–p. 263 line 2: "As soon as he arrived in the Kathmandu Valley, the locals snatched half of the goods from all travelers coming from Tibet to the Kathmandu Valley, and allowed them to keep [only] half. If their (i.e. the Tibetans') behaviour at that time was not good, the king's punishment was imposed. If [the Tibetans] were sick, there was no place for them to stay or die [since] they were evicted. For the sake of those people suffering, the *rin po che* paid [a bribe, and the Tibetans] were allowed to stay on a big plain alongside Yam bu ya 'gal, where they made a small house and earthen caves. The previous wrongdoings (p. 263) did not happen again. Permission was granted to the travelers to [get back] their own goods and purchase whatever they liked. Moreover, he made a big wooden house without solid walls, called *cho pa ri* ('hut' in Nepali), in a very good way. He said: 'If this collapses, you must rebuild it', and it is said that he left a huge amount of wealth with the locals [for that purpose]".

[42] See A mes zhabs's account in *Nag po chen po chos 'byung* vol. I p. 226 line 6–p. 227 line 6, seemingly derived from *Ba ri lo tsā ba Rin chen grags kyi rnam thar* by Bsod nams rtse mo.

Tibet, to areas across the border such as Skyid grong and farther away. He is credited with four feats which symbolised his spiritual attainments and qualified him as a Byang chub sems dpa'.[43]

The first feat occurred at an unspecified time after Ba ri lo tsā ba's sojourn in the Kathmandu Valley. Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan was an accomplished master by then, but it is not clear whether he received the transmission from Dpe nya ba in the Kathmandu Valley or India. He attracted a religious following (including *ḍākinī*-s and a *yogin*),[44] at the same Yam bu ya rgyal Thang chung (i.e. Tundikhel),[45] where Ba ri lo

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[43] Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 328 line 3.

[44] The *yogin* mentioned in the description of Zla ba rgyal mtshan's sojourn at Thang chung, wherein he was met by the *ḍākinī*-s who had come to the Kathmandu Valley to offer their reverence to Byang sems, is called Hang ngu rnal 'byor pa in the *Smyung gnas bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar* f. 20a lines 3–5 by Jo gdan mkhan chen Bsod nams bzang po (1341–1433), which reads: "First, when [Zla ba rgyal mtshan] went to the Kathmandu Valley, at a Buddhist *lha khang* (elsewhere identified as Bho ga bi ha ra), where there were murals depicting the group of thirteen deities of Bde mchog and moreover of many other deities of the Secret *Tantra*-s, there was a *dkon gnyer*, named Hang ngu rnal 'byor pa, who bestowed blessings".

The *ha ngu* (also spelled *ha du, hang ngu, hang du, ham thung* etc. in the sources) were a class of religious practitioners from the Kathmandu Valley, as can be seen from the fact that Rwa lo tsā ba imparted teachings to a congregation of 200 *ha du* (so spelled) on several occasions (see *Rwa lo tsā ba'i rnam thar* f. 91b line 4 for one of them). Stearns (2001: 206–207 n. 15) says that they were entrusted with the annual rites of Rato Matsyendranath and cites *Chag lo tsā ba'i rnam thar* as his source. Among the several noted Tibetan masters who associated with them was 'Brog mi lo tsā ba, whose *ha ngu dkar po* teacher was named Hang du (so spelled) dkar po Shan ta bha dra (*Nyang ral chos 'byung* p. 473 lines 12–13).

If the Zla ba rgyal mtshan episode refers to one *ha ngu* master in particular, this could have been the well known Ha ngu dkar po who gave instructions (Rdo rje Phag mo in particular) to a number of Tibetans including Dpyal pa Kun dga' rdo rje, one of the teachers of Zla ba rgyal mtshan's disciple Nyid phug pa (see below). Concerning Dpyal pa Kun dga' rdo rje, a passage in *Myang chos 'byung* p. 139 lines 7–17 says: "In particular, [Dpyal pa Kun dga' rdo rje] received many instructions such as *Rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i sbyin brlabs, Gzhung drug*, and *sbyin bsreg* from bla ma Ha ngu dkar po, and once he meditated, he had the vision of the tutelary deity. He obtained the powers of a *siddha*. He gave a prophecy concerning the location of the holy place Sman lung. Bla ma Ha ngu was pleased. He offered the Indian manuscripts of the cycle of Phag mo as *gsung gi rten;* he offered the *sku thang* of Phag mo as *sku'i rten*; and offered [objects symbolising] the vow that bestows blessings, such as the *thod sku* (i.e. a skull with a painted image?), *rus rgyan* ('bone ornaments'), and *ting shag* ('cymbals') as well as *dam tshig mi 'bral ba'i rten* ('objects symbolising the *samaya* between master and disciple'). Again he gave a prophecy. Dpyal pa Kun dga' rdo rje invited paṇḍita Stong nyid Ting 'dzin to Tibet. In particular, he settled at Sman lung and [Kun dga' rdo rje] received many cycles of teachings on *Gsang Sngags* and many instructions. Concerning the very many translations that were translated (*sic*), they were translations by Dpyal pa Kun dga' rdo rje, and are known as *Dpyal pa'i chos skor*".

[45] Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 328 line 3–p. 329 line 2.

tsā ba had had more mundane experiences. It seems that the situation was more conducive to religious practice for the people coming from the plateau at the time of Zla ba rgyal mtshan's visit, after Ba ri lo tsā ba had solved the problems faced by the Tibetans in the Kathmandu Valley.

The place of Zla ba rgyal mtshan's residence at Thang chung was the Buddhist temple Bho ga bi ha ra,[46] with images of Kye rdo rje and Bde mchog inside. It is probable but not sure that Bo gha bi ha ra was the centre of the *bsnyung gnas* practice which spread into Tibet. Although it is not clear where Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan received the transmission from Dpe nya ba, it can be seen from the available literary material that the forest of Li kha ra shing 'phel in Bengala, Bodhgaya in Magadha and Yam bu ya rgyal Thang chung in the Kathmandu Valley were all stages on the circuit along which the Spyan ras gzigs teachings passed from India to Tibet.

Two of Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan's four feats are staged at Skyid grong and concern his interaction with the Skyid grong Jo bo, 'Phags pa Wa ti. In the history of the various occasions on which the statue spoke to fortunate beings, it is commonly held that the first religious master to whom he spoke was Zla ba rgyal mtshan.[47] Another

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[46] *Nyang ral chos 'byung* p. 243 line 21–p. 244 line 1 includes this temple in its expanded version of the *srin mo gan rkyal* scheme (spelled 'Ba gha bi ha ra'), and thus credits its foundation to Srong btsan sgam po.

[47] On one occasion Jo bo 'Phags pa Wa ti bzang po spoke to Zla ba rgyal mtshan directly, and on another he talked indirectly about him, telling Ong po lo tsā ba that Zla ba rgyal mtshan was such a great master that there was no difference between him and Spyan ras gzigs (Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 329 lines 2–4). I cannot say whether 'Phags pa Wa ti spoke first to Zla ba rgyal mtshan or Ong po lo tsā ba, but in any case the authors writing about 'Phags pa Wa ti had the former in mind.

These two speeches were only preceded by the occasion in the mid seventh century when 'Phags pa Wa ti told the men of Skyid grong (the *Skyid mi grong bdun*) to put him down on the spot where the Skyid grong Jo bo'i lha khang was to be built. *'Phags pa Wa ti'i rnam thar* f. 16a lines 2–4 reads: "Concerning the flow of words [spoken by the statue], in a way similar to the above-mentioned case of ['Phags pa Wa ti] talking to the seven families of Skyid [grong], [he told] Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan: 'Do not be proud. You did not do anything [special]'. [Following this statement, the former] built 108 *lha khang*-s. ['Phags pa Wa ti] told Ong po lo tsā ba: 'Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan is a noble person'".

The wooden statue of 'Phags pa Wa ti has its mouth open. Does this indicate that it is a replica made after the original 'Phags pa Wa ti spoke to Zla ba rgyal mtshan, Ong po lo tsā ba or, earlier, to the Skyid mi grong bdun? If so, the image would not predate the first occasion (in the seventh century) in which it spoke, unless its open mouth is to be considered the sign of a miracle.

religious master—not mentioned in the documents on 'Phags pa Wa ti, who could contest Zla ba rgyal mtshan's right to be recognised as the first to whom the statue spoke—was Ngam rdzong ras pa's disciple Gung thang pa Rol pa'i rdo rje.[48] I interpret 'Phags pa Wa ti bzang po's speech to Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan as a manifesto of activities to be undertaken by the first proponent of the *bsnyung gnas* movement in Tibet.[49] The principles enunciated in 'Phags pa Wa ti's speech-manifesto were:

• To practise compassion (the Jo bo told him: "Restore the sight of one hundred blind men").
• To steer the *bsnyung gnas* movement towards monasticism (the Jo bo told him: "Build one hundred temples; provide sustenance to one hundred monks").
• And finally to contribute to the daily welfare of the people (the Jo bo told him: "Make one hundred roads that cross gorges").[50]

It should be noted that these recommendations do not pertain to the actual fasting practice, about which 'Phags pa Wa ti did not say a word (probably because the practice was properly performed by Zla ba rgyal mtshan). This corroborates the hypothesis that the main concern here was to organise the movement.

Despite Zla ba rgyal mtshan being credited with the foundation of an exhorbitant number of temples in Tibet, they seem to have been lost to the literary tradition, and little is known about them.[51] Bde chen ri khrod near Yon po lung in the area of Grom pa Rgyang is reported in Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho's *Dbus Gtsang gnas yig* to have been the *gdan sa* of Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan.[52] Another temple attrib-

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[48] *Lho rong chos 'byung* p. 153 lines 20–21.

[49] Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 331 line 4–p. 332 line 1.

[50] The relation between the cult of Spyan ras gzigs and civil engineering to improve the living conditions of the people is a theme of great interest that needs to be explored studying masters such as Zla ba rgyal mtshan, Ba ri lo tsā ba (see n.39 for a reference to him as a bridge builder) and Thang stong rgyal po.

[51] Ratna shri, *Bsnyung gnas bla ma'i rnam thar* p. 110 line 4–p. 112 line 5 says that Zla ba rgyal mtshan was able to succeed in the deeds assigned to him by 'Phags pa Wa ti thanks to the sponsorship of a rich woman originally from Skyid grong who had fled to the Kathmandu Valley after committing many wrongdoings in her native place. When she was old and sick, Zla ba rgyal mtshan cured her, brought her solace for her mistakes and initiated her into the cult of Spyan ras gzigs. He accomplished even more than 'Phags pa Wa ti had recommended (*ibid. p.* 112 lines 5–6 and p. 112 line 5–p. 113 line 1).

[52] *ibid.* p. 462 line 5.

uted to him is Mang mkhar Chos sdings,[53] situated in this Sa skya pa stronghold not far from Grom pa Rgyang. Nyams 'brog dgon pa which he founded stands in ruins in the north-western district of Mustang known as Tsho nub, where fasting was practised along with the cult of Kye rdor. It was destroyed by an earthquake during the time of the Glo bo *sde pa*, A ma dpal, in the 15th century, and its religious objects, including the reliquiary containing the relics of Zla ba rgyal mtshan, were brought to Rnam rgyal chos sde and Brag dkar chos sde.[54]

Zla ba rgyal mtshan interacted with a number of important masters in Tibet, most of them younger contemporaries who became his disciples. He gave instructions to Phag mo gru pa Rdo rje rgyal po (1110–1170) on the principles of the practice based on the system of *bsnyung gnas*.[55] *Lho rong chos 'byung* says that their interaction took place after Phag mo gru pa received the *bsnyen rdzogs* vow aged twenty-five (1134) and before he went to Sgam po aged forty-two (1151).[56] Zla ba rgyal mtshan met with Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158) who dedicated the *Zla rgyal ma* commentary to him. He also gave the *dge bsnyen* vow to rje btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1217), when the latter was eight years old.[57] He imparted teachings on *Bka' gdams Lam rim* to Dbang phyug rin chen, the nephew of La stod Dkon mchog mkhar and the latter's successor on the throne of Gnas rnying,[58] but it was not these disciples who undertook the dissemination of the *bsnyung gnas* practice he had introduced in Tibet. Fulfilling the wish of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po, he became the incumbent of 'Dzim, famous for its *'Dul ba* school founded during *bstan pa phyi dar*.

The few available dates of Zla ba rgyal mtshan that refer to his relations with well known Tibetan masters document that he was not an early proponent of *bstan pa phyi dar* and that the transmission of *bsnyung gnas* reached Tibet at a time when several other teachings from India had already made their way to the plateau.

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[53] E.g., by sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, *Bai ser* p. 268 lines 10–11.

[54] *Glo bo'i dkar chag dwangs shel me long* p. 155 line 1–p. 156 line 5.

[55] Zla ba rgyal mtshan told Phag mo gru pa how meditation sessions had to be organised: during the waxing moon meditation should be performed exclusively; during the waning moon it should be performed only until midday, followed by monastic activity in the afternoon (*Deb ther sngon po* p. 661 line 18–p. 662 line 1).

[56] *ibid.* p. 307 line 18–p. 311 line 5.

[57] Sa skya paṇḍita, *Bla ma rje btsun chen po'i rnam thar* p. 656 line 20–p. 657 line 1. This happened in 1154 rather than in 1149 as in the view of Stearns (Stearns 2001 p. 20), from whom I derive these notions.

[58] *Gnas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar* f. 13b lines 1–5.

THE OTHER *BSNYUNG GNAS* TRANSMISSION REACHING TIBET DURING
EARLY *BSTAN PA PHYI DAR*

Having shown how the main transmission of *bsnyung gnas* reached
Tibet, I will turn my attention to the other transmission I mentioned at
the beginning of my paper, the one introduced directly from India to
Tibet. This was imparted by Zla ba gzhon nu, dge slong ma Dpal mo's
disciple, to Jo bo rje Atiśa. Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan says that
Jo bo rje took the cult of fasting to Mnga' ris skor gsum in 1042, and
bestowed it upon pho brang Zhi ba 'od.[59] This transmission thus pre-
ceded the one brought by Zla ba rgyal mtshan.

   Sba bzhed zhabs btags ma confirms that Jo bo rje brought this trans-
mission of *bsnyung gnas* to Mnga' ris skor gsum and led many people
to adopt the practice.[60] This work mentions only Byang chub 'od as the
member of the royal family with whom Jo bo rje interacted, giving no
further detail or mentioning any direct relation with fasting. There is no
trace of any transmission from Zhi ba 'od onwards, and one wonders
whether it came to an end because it was not divulged further or
because the *bsnyung gnas* teachings, like others in Upper West Tibet,
dried up with the conclusion of the golden period of Mnga' ris skor
gsum, which coincided with Zhi ba 'od's death.

   Another transmission that reached Mnga' ris probably before or
around the same time as the one brought by Jo bo rje were the teach-
ings of Thugs rje chen po given by dge slong ma Dpal mo to Dpal gyi
bzang po, and by him to Rin chen bzang po.[61]

   Neither of the transmissions brought directly to Mnga' ris skor gsum
enjoyed particular popularity. On the one hand, one should note that the
principles of *bsnyung gnas* fitted quite well, at least in one respect, with
those of the accepted religious systems established by the edicts of lha
bla ma Ye shes 'od. The concept that Tantric practice had to be ground-
ed in the monastic vows was one of the basic tenets of *bsnyung gnas* as
outlined by dge slong ma Dpal mo herself (see above n. 19). Similarly,

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[59] Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 327 lines 2.
The transmission from Jo bo rje to Zhi ba 'od is historically possible because, although
Zhi ba 'od (b.1016, see Vitali 1996 p. 296) was a young man when Jo bo rje resided in
Mnga' ris skor gsum, he was old enough in 1042 to have become a fully fledged reli-
gious master.
[60] *Sba bzhed zhabs btags ma* p. 95 lines 12–13.
[61] It is unfortunately not dated in *Deb ther sngon po* p. 1214 lines 12–13.

the edicts of Ye shes 'od sanctioned that esoteric practice should be grounded in *'Dul ba*, and Tantrists had to take monastic vows. The masters of *bsnyung gnas* and Spyan ras gzigs who belonged to the lineage originating from dge slong ma Dpal mo through Zla ba rgyal mtshan down to Nyid phug pa (on whom see below) were trained in Spyan ras gzigs, *'Dul ba* and *Sngags*, and received monastic vows. On the other hand, some of the practices attributed to dge slong ma Dpal mo were not much different from those of the Tantrists who indulged in sexual union, for whom Ye shes 'od and other major proponents of *phyi dar* in Upper West Tibet expressed their dislike.

NYID PHUG PA CHOS KYI GRAGS PA AND THE SCHOLASTICISM OF HIS TIME

The *bsnyung gnas* disciple of Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan, grub thob Nyid phug pa Chos kyi grags pa, was a master with a remarkably composite personality whose life and deeds have not received the attention they deserve.

His life, too, is documented in rather different ways by the different biographies dedicated to him. The *bsnyung gnas*-oriented biographies (e.g. those by Ratna shri and Jo gdan Bsod nams bzang po) focus on his practice of fasting, while the others ('Gos lo tsā ba's *Deb ther sngon po* and Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan's *Bka' gdam chos 'byung*) portray a master whose wide-ranging education far exceeded the scope of *bsnyung gnas*. In brief, the biographies that cover Nyid phug pa's participation in the scholasticism of his time mainly cover the earlier part of his life, and those focused on *bsnyung gnas* the later part. The biography of Nyid phug pa by Las chen is the most complete and thus of most interest, for it combines the details of his *bsnyung gnas* biographies (missing in 'Gos lo tsā ba's treatment) with his mastery of other traditions. Here I will mainly refer to the biography by Las chen, especially for the scholastic phase of Nyid phug pa's life, supplemented by some significant notions concerning the ascetic phase provided by Ratna shri.

Nyid phug pa's birth and the origin of his family are the first point of contention between the sources although, in my view, their differences are not entirely contradictory. The *bsnyung gnas*-oriented biographies say that Nyid phug pa was born in Mnga' ris skor gsum, presumably in 1094, in a town by the improbable and descriptive name of

Chu 'bab ('water source'), to parents with equally improbable names.[62] 'Gos lo tsā ba and Las chen state that he was born to Pu hrang pa parents at Stag sde Seng ge lung. They add that he belonged to the clan of Se mkhar ba, i.e. Se chung mkhar ba, better known as Se ston Kun rig (1025–1112),[63] the disciple of 'Brog mi lo tsā ba (993?–1077?) and, on a lesser scale, of Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas. Se ston Kun rig hailed from La stod Mdog gzhung, and it will be shown below that Nyid phug pa, too, gravitated around the same area.

One should probably come to the conclusion that Nyid phug pa was born in La stod Byang, on the grounds of his kinship with the family of Se ston Kun rig. His parents, who had manifestly migrated to Pu hrang before his birth, took him to that region at a tender age,[64] and this is probably why the *bsnyung gnas*-oriented biographies say that he was born in Mnga' ris skor gsum.

The association of Nyid phug pa's family with Pu hrang might have been the reason behind the decision to send him to Dbus Gtsang in fire pig 1107, aged fourteen, to meet Zangs dkar lo tsā ba 'Phags pa shes rab (dates unknown), who was the most important master from Mnga' ris skor gsum in central Tibet.[65] They met in Bo dong, where Zangs dkar lo tsā ba was busy renovating the main temple.[66]

In the following years, Nyid phug pa received quite a remarkable number of transmissions. He was the disciple of several of the most important masters of the early 12th century, and had others as co-disciples. A summary of Nyid phug pa's *gsan yig* is excerpted in the following paragraphs according to Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan's *Bka' gdams chos 'byung*:[67]

• He took the r*ab tu byung* vow from Zangs dkar lo tsā ba in the same fire pig 1107 of their meeting. The *mkhan po* in the ordination ceremony was Khyung Rin chen grags, one of the four main disciples of Rngog Blo ldan shes rab (1059–1109). According to *Myang chos 'byung*, it took place at Glang pa 'Phang thang in Nyang stod, the temple of Khyung Rin chen grags.[68]

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[62] Ratna shri, *Bsnyung gnas bla ma'i rnam thar* p. 114 lines 3–4.

[63] Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 333 lines 1–2.

[64] *ibid.* vol. II: p. 333 line 3.

[65] *ibid*. vol. II: p. 333 lines 4–5.

[66] *Deb ther sngon po* p. 1176 lines 15–16.

[67] Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 333 line 4–p. 335 line 2.

[68] *Myang chos 'byung* p. 72 lines 19–21. Zangs dkar lo tsā ba himself may have been present, given that nearby Rkyang bu lha khang was the stronghold in Gtsang of masters from Mnga' ris stod, and a place where he is known to have stayed.

• He did not meet Rngog Blo ldan shes rab who died soon after Nyid phug pa came to central Tibet, but being in Bo dong in the shadow of his master Zangs dkar lo tsā ba gave him the chance to interact with 'Bum phrag gsum pa, the great master from Rgya gar, who came to Tibet in 1093 together with Rngog lo tsā ba and gravitated around this monastery.[69] 'Bum phrag gsum pa gave Nyid phug pa teachings for one month.

• The six year period spent with Zangs dkar lo tsā ba, during which he received instructions in Bde mchog and Rnam thos sras in particular, came to an end in 1113 when he took the *bsnyen rdzogs* vow from Mnga' ris 'Jam dbyangs, a master from [Gu ge?] Lho stod.

• Nyid phug pa's interaction with Khyung Rin chen grags, and perhaps also Zangs dkar lo tsā ba, both of whom were active in Nyang stod, brought him into contact with 'Bre Shes rab 'bar, then the greatest master in that area, and his associates. 'Bre Shes rab 'bar, the abbot of Gnas rnying, was a disciple of Rngog Blo ldan shes rab like Khyung Rin chen grags, but also a teacher of the latter.

• For eight years, Nyid phug pa studied *Shes rab Pha rol tu phyin pa* with 'Bre Shes rab 'bar, and received additional teachings on *Phar phyin* from La stod Dkon mchog mkhar (1084–1171), 'Bre's disciple and successor on the Gnas rnying throne. Dkon mchog mkhar was a fellow disciple of Nyid phug pa's master Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan, and also a teacher of Phag mo gru pa Rdo rje rgyal po, another disciple of Zla ba rgyal mtshan.

• Still in the same circuit of teachers active in the lands of Nyang stod, Nyid phug pa studied *Dbu ma* and *Tshad ma* with the same Khyung Rin chen grags, a master of these teachings as imparted to him by Rngog lo tsā ba, and Stod lung pa Rgya dmar pa who also resided at Khyung Rin chen grags's Glang pa 'Phang thang temple.

• Nyid phug pa learned *Mngon pa* from one of the great masters of this discipline of his time, namely Ngur smrig pa chen po, more commonly known as Brang ti Dar ma snying po.[70] Nyid phug pa's studies of *Mngon pa* (which he also pursued with Mchims chen mo, i.e. Mchims Brtson 'grus seng ge), were perhaps reflected in some episodes in his ascetic life mentioned below.

• He learned *Rigs tshogs* from the great Pa tshab lo tsā ba Nyi ma grags, and received *Byams chos* from Lcang ra ba,[71] a disciple of Btsan Kha

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[69] *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, Lo paṇ section p. 511 line 22–p. 512 line 4.

[70] For a lineage of *Abhidharma* including Ngur smrig pa Brang ti Dar ma snying po, see *Nyang ral chos 'byung* (p. 472 line 19–p. 473 line 5).

[71] It is spelled Rig tshogs in Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, Bka' gdams chos 'byung vol.II p.334 line 3.

bo che who was a master of these teachings and the associate of Pa tshab lo tsā ba during the latter's twenty-three year sojourn in Kashmir.
• Nyid phug pa did not neglect to learn the skill of translator, because he spent three years with dge bshes G.yung gshen to learn *Lo tsā ba'i chos drug*.
• Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan says that Nyid phug pa studied Kye rdor with Rngog Gzhung pa, but this is not established definitively.[72]
• Teachings on the *Tantra* of Rdo rje Phag mo were given to him by one of its major experts, Dpyal pa Kun dga' rdo rje, the son of Dpyal Bsod nams rgyal mtshan from Sman lung, who also imparted Kye rdor to him. Dpyal pa Kun dga' rdo rje's disciple, Mnga' ris Kyi ston, bestowed Rdo rje Phag mo upon him, as well as Bde mchog.[73]
• Nyid phug pa studied *'Dul ba and Mngon pa* with Mtha' bzhi Brtson 'grus 'bar, an associate of Zangs dkar lo tsā ba who travelled with him to Kashmir and also received teachings on Bde mchog from Kha che Dgon pa ba.[74]

He also obtained tenets of the main religious schools following their establishment:
• Bka' gdams pa teachings from Ne'u zur pa (1042–1118);
• Bka' brgyud pa teachings (*Na ro'i chos drug* from Dwags po Lha rje (1079–1153) and *Phyag rgya chen po* with Bal po Skye med, a master of this doctrine, who had several disciples including Rwa lo tsā ba Rdo rje grags);[75]
• and finally Sa skya pa's *Lam 'bras* with Mar sgom, the attendant of his kinsman Se ston Kun rig.

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[72] *Ibid*. vol.I p.334 line 4. Rngog Gzhung pa's dates in *Lho rong chos 'byung* (born in 1043, and said to have died aged sixty-eight in 1090 (which would actually be 1110), six years after the death of Mar pa *lo tsā ba* (given as 1095) (*ibid*. p.50 lines 19-20 and p. 52 lines 11–13) are too confused to allow confirmation that Nyid phug pa actually studied with him, although having come to central Tibet in 1107, it was at least theoretically possible.

[73] Concerning Rdo rje Phag mo, there are traces of the fact that masters of fasting often combined *bsnyung gnas* and the cult of Spyan ras gzigs with teachings on this deity, and thus Nyid phug pa seems to have followed prescribed orthodoxy. Dge slong ma Dpal mo was a lineage holder of Rdo rje Phag mo, and so was Ba ri lo tsā ba (a master of Spyan ras gzigs rather than fasting), who received teachings on Rdo rje Phag mo in Rgya gar from bla ma Ma ha yo gi. The Rdo rje Phag mo teachings given to Nyid phug pa by Dpyal Kun dga' rdo rje were imparted to the latter by Ha ngu dkar po in the Kathmandu Valley. A master with the same name interacted with Zla ba rgyal mtshan (see above n.44).

[74] *Deb ther sngon po* p. 286 lines 13–16.

[75] On Bal po Skye med see *ibid*. p. 1007 line 1–p. 1008 line 1.

One learns from other sources that Nyid phug pa attended upon more masters. He stayed at Stag tshal in Nyang smad to study *Byams chos lnga* with Mar pa Rdo rje ye shes, one of the four main disciples of Zangs dkar lo tsā ba;[76] and received the *khrid* of *Rten 'brel snying po* from Chos kyi g.yung drung; *Zhi byed don rgyud lnga pa* from Mal Kha ba can; as well as the doctrines and teachings of *Rgyal po btsun mo dmangs do ha skor gsum* and *Phyag chen yid bzhin nor bu* from Par phur ba.[77]

From this religious panorama one gets a glimpse of how composite and vibrant was the interaction in the scholastic scene of those years. A statement by Nyid phug pa summarises his studies well: "I did not listen to teachings of the Old *Tantra*, but there are no teachings on philosophy or instructions on the New *Tantra* in both Dbus [and] Gtsang that I did not listen to".[78]

NYID PHUG PA AND *BSNYUNG GNAS*

While Nyid phug pa was involved with all of the above mentioned masters, he had in the meantime chosen Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan as his root *guru*, and was deeply involved with his instructions.[79]

He also widened his mastery of the cult of Spyan ras gzigs by becoming a lineage holder of the transmissions of Don yod zhags pa and Bcu gcig zhal which he received from bla ma Lho pa, a disciple of the Bka' gdams pa master Kha rag sgom chung, and mkhan po

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[76] *Myang chos 'byung* p. 114 lines 10–12: "It is said that Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan's disciple grub thob Nyi phug pa obtained more teachings from Mar pa Rdor ye of Stag tshal such as *Byams chos lnga* and the latter one actually was Mar pa".

ibid. p. 115 lines 15–17: "Grub thob Nyi phug pa too received teachings [from Mar pa Rdor ye] extensively by staying at Stag tshal for a long time. Smon gro lo tsā ba Mar pa Rdor ye, who belonged to the group of Zangs dkar lo tsa's four disciples, was born at Smon gro of Mkhar kha of Stag rtse".

[77] *Jo bo yab sras las 'phros pa'i skyes bu dam pa 'ga' zhig gi byon pa'i tshul bstan rtsis* f. 6a lines 4–6: "The *bla ma*-s of Rang byung chen po Snying phu chen po (i.e. Nyid phug pa) were Rnal 'byor Chos kyi g.yung drung, Mal Ka ba can pa and Par phur ba Blo gros seng ge, altogether three. He received the *khrid* of *Rten 'brel snying po* from Chos kyi g.yung drung; he received *Zhi byed don rgyud lnga pa* from Mal Kha ba can pa; as well as the *gzhung* ('doctrines'), *gdams pa* ('teachings') of *Rgyal po btsun mo dmangs do ha skor gsum* [and] *Phyag chen yid bzhin nor bu* from Par phur ba".

[78] Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 335 lines 2–3.

[79] *ibid.* vol. II: p. 335 lines 3–4.

Thang pa.[80] Remarkably, the Don zhags and Bcu gcig zhal teacher of bla ma Lho pa was Ba ri lo tsā ba, and thus Nyid phug pa was linked to Ba ri lo tsā ba in the transmission of Spyan ras gzigs. This shows that there was common ground between Ba ri lo tsā ba's line of Spyan ras gzigs and the practitioners of *bsnyung gnas*, and justifies Ba ri lo tsā ba's inclusion in this paper from another angle.[81]

Going back to *bsnyung gnas*, the biography of Nyid phug pa by Ratna shri tells another story of the relations between Zla ba rgyal mtshan and Nyid phug pa. This *rnam thar* says that they only met for the first time in earth pig 1119, when Nyid phug pa, aged twenty-six, was directed by the prophecy of a *ḍākinī* to go and see Zla ba rgyal mtshan in Mang yul, and there is no trace of contact before then.[82] This date is too early to allow for the years spent by Nyid phug pa in his studies, beginning in 1107 (i.e. six years with Zangs dkar lo tsā ba, eight years with 'Bre Shes rab 'bar and three years with G.yung gshen, plus the time spent with all the other teachers). From this point on, the chronology in Nyid phug pa's life is marred by inconsistency of dates among the different biographies.

According to Ratna shri, it was Zla ba rgyal mtshan who led him to adopt the ascetic life fully, and practise meditation and the austerities of *bsnyung gnas* in the wilderness and solitude of the Rta sgo range, south of Dwang ra g.yu mtsho in central Byang thang.

It can only be speculated whether the old seat of his family in Mdog gzhung (spelled Ldog in the biography by Las chen and other sources), influenced Nyid phug pa's choice of Rta sgo as the destination for his practice, or whether this was due to Zla ba rgyal mtshan's advice, but in any case Nyid phug pa travelled to Rta sgo from neighbouring Mdog.[83]

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[80] *ibid.* vol. I: p. 342 line 2–p. 343 line 1.

[81] Ba ri lo tsā ba is the first Tibetan to appear in these lineages of Don yod zhags pa and Bcu gcig zhal; their transmission does not include dge slong ma Dpal mo or her successors. It was Bai ro tsa na rakshi ta who imparted these teachings to him at an unspecified locality (in Rgya gar or the Kathmandu Valley?), which he manifestly brought to Tibet.

[82] Ratna shri, *Bsnyung gnas bla ma'i rnam thar* p. 114 line 7–p. 115 line 1.

[83] *ibid.* p. 116 lines 3–4; and Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 335 lines 4–6. Following the example set by Nyid phug pa, Rta sgo became a major meditation place frequented by members of the monastic communities of Gnas rnying and its branch monastery Chos sdings in La stod Byang (see Vitali 2004). As said above, Nyid phug pa was a disciple of La stod Dkon mchog mkhar (the

The biography by Ratna shri recounts that, during his long years of hardship at Rta sgo, Nyid phug pa was comforted by a white man (the typical manifestation of Spyan ras gzigs), and supported by the local deity, Rta sgo *lha btsan*,[84] named 'Bum mi rje dge bsnyen in the con- cluding passage of the same biography.[85] This conveys the idea that Nyid phug pa was sponsored by the local nomad chieftain, after he had given teachings to five dogs, the transformations of the *lha btsan*, and cured his woman.

Las chen holds that he meditated at Rta sgo for eight full years and six years from summer to winter, fourteen years in all;[86] 'Gos lo tsā ba too says fourteen years, without articulating the details; while Ratna shri is of the opinion that he stayed at Rta sgo for seven years.[87]

According to Ratna shri, Nyid phug pa decided to move to Nyid phug (from which he derived his sobriquet) to benefit the locals who were suffering from the hail inflicted on their crops by the Rta sgo *lha btsan* to procure sustenance to him.[88] In more prosaic terms, it is possi- ble that Nyid phug pa, after completing the solitary austerities through which he gained *siddhi*, decided to favour the locals with Spyan ras gzigs-style compassion.

He built Nyid phug dgon pa (comprising a *lha khang*, a *gzim khang*, and a *bla brang*) at Khrabs Bu dkar po in the area of Khrabs lung.[89] The monastic community that he gathered at Nyid phug was quite large

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abbot whose renovation of Gnas rnying amounted to a second foundation). Gnas rnying was a major centre of the cult of Spyan ras gzigs in the subsequent period (*Myang chos 'byung* p. 115 lines 7–12), and the *Phar phyin* taught by Dkon mchog mkhar to Nyid phug pa was imparted by the latter in the area of La stod Byang and central Byang thang with remarkable results. Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (*Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 336 line 2–p. 337 line 3) says that dge bshes Ldog pa Byang chub grags pa developed prophetic knowledge, could perform circumambulations without touch- ing the ground and experienced *samādhi* after he received *Phar phyin* from Nyid phug pa at the Chun can monastery in Ldog.

[84] Ratna shri, *Bsnyung gnas bla ma'i rnam thar* p. 116 line 5–p. 117 line 7.

[85] *ibid.* p. 122 line 3.

[86] Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 335 line 7–p. 336 line 1.

[87] Ratna shri, *Bsnyung gnas bla ma'i rnam thar* p. 116 lines 4–5.

[88] *ibid.* p. 117 line 7–p. 118 line 4.

[89] *ibid.* p. 118 lines 4–7. It is called 'Dang 'Khrab lung by Jo gdan Bsod nams bzang po (*Smyung gnas bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar* f. 31b lines 5–6), who manifestly asso- ciates it with Dwangs ra g.yu mtsho. This area (known as Khrab lhas at present) is sit- uated to the north of Zang zang, north-west of Mdog gzhung and the Mus valley, and south of the Rta sgo range and Dwang ra g.yu mtsho.

given the sparse population of the area, numbering 130 residents including nuns;[90] and supported by the grant of an estate by an un-named local sponsor.[91]

After founding his monastery, Nyid phug pa's biographies take an *Abhidharma*-inspired turn, projecting his experiences into heavenly realms in the way typical of the Spyan ras gzigs tradition.[92] The crescendo towards heavenly imagery in the *bsnyung gnas* biographies of Nyid phug pa reminds me of the Bon po master Dbyil ston Khyung rgod rtsal about whom I spoke in Bloomington (Vitali 1998). Both Nyid phug pa and Khyung rgod rtsal are allowed to forsake the mundane plane for heavenly experiences, although the dreams of Nyid phug pa are replaced in Khyung rgod rtsal's *rnam thar* with his *'das log* experience and actual journey across Byang thang.[93]

When death was approaching, Nyid phug pa had a dream that reca-pitulated his life of *bodhisattva*-like endeavour in the service of sentient beings, wherein the more commonplace *Abhidharma*-inspired theme of reaching higher realms through the intervention of Spyan ras gzigs' sal-vatory compassion, or by means of climbing trees and ladders, was expressed as a poetic allegory. In this dream at the time of his death he saw confirmation of his contribution to the liberation of sentient beings in the image of many people following the path of liberation by cross-ing a frozen lake.[94] Apart from its beauty, the allegory could also be a

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[90] Among them there was one jo mo Rngog mo (Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 339 lines 2–3).

[91] *ibid*. vol. II p. 337 lines 3–4.

[92] Ratna shri, *Bsnyung gnas bla ma'i rnam thar* p. 119 lines 1–7 and Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 337 lines 4–p. 339 line 2.

[93] Ratna shri records two of Nyid phug pa's dreams. In one, he proceeded to a par-adise after his death and, in the other, he flew to a paradise after refusing to climb a ladder made with the bones of a Bodhisattva in order to reach it (Ratna shri, *Bsnyung gnas bla ma'i rnam thar* p. 119 lines 1–7). Another is added by Las chen (*Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 337 line 4–p. 339 line 2), wherein he dreamt that innumerable monks reached Po ta la. In the dream they were said to be his disciples, which confirms the existence of a sizeable monastic community at Nyid phug dgon pa.

[94] Ratna shri, *Bsnyung gnas bla ma'i rnam thar* p. 121 lines 4–6: "After that, at dusk, he dreamt that he had to cross a great lake and he proceeded on. The lake was frozen except for [a stretch] amounting to [some] walking distance. Since a few people had gone ahead and come back, he asked one man why that tract [of the lake] was not frozen, and he was told: 'The reason is that this time you failed to perform *bsnyung gnas* on an auspicious occasion. Had you not missed it this time, you could have liber-ated many sentient beings from the cycle of *samsara*'. He said on that occasion: 'I was of no benefit', and requested his attendant to observe *bsnyung gnas*".

rare expression of the indigenous lore of Byang thang, a land dotted by lakes including Dwang ra g.yu mtsho close to Nyid phug dgon pa, some of which could safely be crossed in winter. Ratna shri relates that the frozen lake allowed people to cross over to liberation from samsaric life, but one portion of it was not frozen, and this was due to the fact that Nyid phug pa missed his very last session of fasting before death. Without that omission, he would have liberated more people.[95]

The very last recommendations given by Nyid phug pa to his disciples according to the biography by Ratna shri are formulated in the spirit and terms of the *Sa dpyad* literature, and in particular on the prescriptions for tumulations. He told them to drop his dead body either on a nearby high mountain, or in the river below the monastery, or else to bury it at the junction of three roads. He prohibited them to cremate it lest harm would accrue to the disciples of the future generations.[96]

Nyid phug pa's death date is contested: 'Gos lo tsā ba and Las chen state that he died in the horse year 1186,[97] while Ratna shri says that he passed away at the age of seventy-seven, or in 1170, given that his birth date in 1094 seems reliable.[98] There is no hard evidence for either date, but the flat indication of the horse year 1186 has its obvious authority.

THE GENESIS AND EVOLUTION OF BSNYUNG GNAS IN TIBET:
A PERSPECTIVE

To conclude, I wish to outline a few aspects of the genesis and evolution of *bsnyung gnas* in Tibet. The practice of fasting had features typical of *bstan pa phyi dar*:
• The New Tantra on which *bsnyung gnas* was based.
• The great Indian masters involved in it, from dge slong ma Dpal mo,

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[95] One cannot avoid noting the sharp contrast between the renunciate attitude of a practitioner of fasting and the complicated requirements entailed in the disposal of his body after death. Both Ratna shri and Las chen record that he instructed his disciples to build a small *stūpa* below the monastery, where his heart had to be installed; a three *khru*-high tomb inside the *Dbu rtse* for his tongue; and to paint his portrait on the northern wall of the courtyard (Ratna shri, *Bsnyung gnas bla ma'i rnam thar* p. 121 lines 1–2; and Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 340 lines 1–3).

[96] Ratna shri, *Bsnyung gnas bla ma'i rnam thar* p. 121 line 6–p. 122 line 1.

[97] Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Bka' gdams chos 'byung* vol. II p. 341 lines 4–5.

[98] Ratna shri, *Bsnyung gnas bla ma'i rnam thar* p. 121 lines 2–3.

who booked a place for herself in the group of the eighty *mahāsiddha*, to Jo bo rje Atiśa.

• Its source in Kashmir and Rgya gar (mainland India), and its diffusion in Tibet via the Kathmandu Valley.

• The personal endeavour of individuals to make it take hold in Tibet (an accomplishment credited to Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan).

• Its early Tibetan proponents being engaged in the scholastic networking of their time (grub thob Nyid phug pa in particular).

• The effort to cope with the demanding requirements of personal practice, exemplified by the fourteen years spent by Nyid phug pa in meditation and the pursuit of austerities in the wilderness of the Rta sgo range.

• The foundation of temples like those of Zla ba rgyal mtshan and Nyid phug dgon pa, which became the centre of the early *bsnyung gnas* practice.

• And even some important sponsors of *bstan pa phyi dar* turned practitioners of *bsnyung gnas*, such as pho brang Zhi ba 'od.

Highly Tantric in India (the cult of Spyan ras gzigs was not only based on the utterance of the six syllable *mantra*, but was esoteric, as the life of the *dge slong ma* indicates), more monastic and vow-oriented in Tibet but still focused on the acquisition of *siddhi*, the *bsnyung gnas* movement was never to become a dominant system.

The introduction of *bsnyung gnas* in Tibet belonged to the often chaotic induction of religious currents and practices to the plateau, with no strategic aim of making them well-oiled systems that could draw upon the secular sphere for sustenance once they transcended the limited and local scale.

In a short span of time, and still during the lifetime of Zla ba rgyal mtshan, *bsnyung gnas* took on the dimensions of a monastic movement. Nyid phug pa pursued the steering of *bsnyung gnas* towards monasticism initiated by Zla ba rgyal mtshan. The latter was a lineage holder of the *'Dul ba* teachings introduced to Mnga' ris skor gsum during the early 11th century by paṇḍita Dharma pa la from Eastern India and his disciples known as the Pa la gsum. The earliest Tibetan lineage holder was Zhang zhung Rgyal ba shes rab from whom several transmissions stemmed, one of which reached Zla ba rgyal mtshan.[99]

The case of *bsnyung gnas* was not an isolated one because, during the 12th century, some of the movements of the previous century turned around and went monastic. If one considers that Ye shes 'od was able to summon by royal order from the lands of Mar yul, Gu ge, Pu hrang, Pi ti and neighbouring territories a mere 200 youths, and could do so only on a few occasions, the fact that Nyid phug pa could attract 130 monks and nuns to his monastery in a desolate land in central Byang thang in the mid 12th century speaks volumes about how things had evolved in the span of some 150 years.

However, the *bsnyung gnas* movement did not participate in the evolution of *bstan pa phyi dar* towards a new phase, in which religious schools were established as self-sufficient systems. The process is commonly considered to have begun with the foundation of the Bka' gdams pa school at Rwa sgreng, or else the Sa skya pa school at Sa skya, but at that early stage neither of these had yet reached sufficient dimensions and organizational complexity to be defined as religious schools. The actual impulse that led to this change took place later when, in the general atmosphere that benefited from a vibrant scholasticism, the monasteries expanded into organised schools. This was the major contribution of the 12th century to Tibetan history.

Bsnyung gnas remained a religious movement that had evolved from asceticism to embrace monasticism. One might also ponder whether Bon (or rather its formulation under the name of G.yung drung Bon) fitted into this panorama and shared at least the same evolutionary process as *bsnyung gnas*. I am of the opinion that its transition from an exclusively ascetic practice into the framework of monastic education,

[99] *Nyang ral chos 'byung* p. 472 lines 1–11: "Zhang zhung pa Rgyal ba shes rab received the vow from paṇḍi ta Pra dznya pa la. Since he then went to the Kathmandu Valley, he asked bram ze 'Dul 'dzin Pre ta ka for *'Dul ba* practice. Later, in Tibet, he received teachings, *So so thar pa* and abridged *'Dul ba* from the *mkhan po* of Kashmir, Dznya na shri. He received the root text and commentary of *Sum brgya pa* from the great Kashmiri *paṇ ḍi ta*, Bhuddha shan ti ba, after it had been translated by Dge'u lo tsā ba. He received root *Mdo* from paṇḍi ta Ya thang he ha ra who had been invited by lo tsā ba Gzhon nu mchog. Likewise, since [many] were ordained, earlier and later, such as Khyung po Skyong, [*'Dul ba*] was diffused [and transmitted in succession] to such [masters] as the latter's disciple Smon 'gro 'Dul 'dzin, the latter's disciple Hu ber Rgyal ba'i shes rab, Tshul khrims blo gros, the one called Dpal 'byor Zhing mo, and Byang chub sems dpa' Zla ba rgyal mtshan. This is known as *'Dul ba Stod lugs*".

'Dul ba Smad lugs too was transmitted to Zhang zhung Rgyal ba shes rab (see all the major sources concerned with *Vinaya*) but did not reach Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan.

pursued by the masters of the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* (this transfer occurred with the succession from Yang ston Shes rab rgyal mtshan to his sons 'Bum rje 'od and Klu brag pa), was the outcome of common views that found quite a widespread acceptance on the plateau during that cultural season.

The peculiar features of the *bsnyung gnas* movement were embodied by Nyid phug pa. Although a child of the vibrant scholasticism of his day, and despite his preaching, which was a major contribution to the full establishment of its monastic phase, Nyid phug pa did not attempt to transform *bsnyung gnas* into a religious school. Emphasis remained on the practice of austerities, and Nyid phug pa's final choice of asceticism rather than scholasticism demonstrates well where *bsnyung gnas* stood.

That the final evolution of *bsnyung gnas* failed to occur was probably due to its ascetic characteristics, but not for that reason alone: the case of the Bka' brgyud pa, who evolved from asceticism into a fully fledged religious school based on a network of monastic institutions and a lay system supporting it, is enough indication that asceticism was adapted to a wider context without losing its peculiar features entirely. The typical Bka' brgyud pa master blended within himself the roles of the ascetic, the monk bound to his daily duties and the skilled diplomat.

The *bsyung gnas* movement, merely by virtue of the fact that it remained focused on a cult as central to Tibetan culture as that of Spyan ras gzigs and did not expand into a religious school, came to be practised by several of the religious sects in what seems to have been an *ante-litteram ris med* manner (was this because it was utterly inoffensive in the game of religious politics played by Tibetans of all times?). The practice associated with Spyan ras gzigs became part of the system of almost every school and thus never took on sectarian connotations.

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CONCLUSION: PROMINENT PEAKS, OBSCURE VALLEYS, AND MIRAGES

Ronald M. Davidson and Christian K. Wedemeyer

Although it is difficult to synthesise many universal themes from the contributions to this volume, it is perhaps apparent that they all reveal both the highlights of the period and the areas still in twilight. As in the landscape of Tibet itself, the blinding illumination of the glaciated escarpments hides the crevasses and thin ice shelves that lie in wait for the unsuspecting traveler. Likewise, the apparent clarity of the curriculum of monastic scholasticism, the mathematical iconometry of Tibetan painting, the precision of the canon or the order of Tibetan institutions, all belie their ostensible characteristics by presenting extraordinary challenges for those who look more closely, seeking passage into the darker areas of its history.

One reason for this is indicated by many of the papers: the processes of reification and simplification of traditions in Tibet from the tenth century onward. The narrative of Indian Buddhism that was propagated among Tibetans after the consolidation of power by the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1642 was the result of centuries of ideological distillation—as the canon was constructed, alternative translations, indigenous visions of spirituality, and even significant elements of Indian Buddhism itself became displaced. As a result of this process, many of the more interesting and dynamic parts of the Buddhist life of Tibet, India, Central Asia and Nepal became occluded. Those of us who are privileged to study Tibetan Buddhism have seen this process recreated toward Tibet as well, so that the chimera of 'The Tibetan Tradition' dances above the pages of writing on Buddhist history as an uninvited spectre; no such entity being evident in Tibet itself. Similarly, we see the reification of all Chan authors into Heshang Mahāyāna, the combination of disparate scriptures in the formation of an Old Tantric Canon, the codification of Treasure texts into a cult of Padmasambhava, the identification of opponents of Tsong kha pa as 'previous lamas', and the selection of certain preferred translations at the expense of others. All these and more register a very human response to complexity, a hesitation toward

unknown or uncertain sources, a predilection for iconic forms, and a distaste for undomesticated variation in the word of the Buddha.

The papers speak as well of the opposite process—of the efflorescence of Tibetan spirituality. Three of the papers treat the popular cult of Avalokiteśvara, who by the twelfth century was already identified with the first emperor, Srong btsan sgam po, and the genealogy of the Tibetan people as descended from the great bodhisattva was firmly established by the end of the fourteenth century. Three of the papers also discuss the importance of indigenous Tibetan composition, whether of Treasure texts or of the Rnying ma Tantras themselves. The others all speak of the internalisation and 'indigenisation' of Buddhist ideas in Tibet, so that the country went from being perceived as the city of the dead (*pretapuri*) in the mythology of the maṇḍala of Cakrasaṃvara to an island of the Dharma in a sea of irreligion. By the end of the twelfth century, international interest in Tibet—first by the Tanguts and later by the grandsons of Chinggis Khan—began to grow, so that this period first saw Tibet become perceived as a truly Buddhist country.

Thus, we find in Tibet of this time the most trenchant of Buddhist propositions: a paradox of reality. It is both supremely Buddhist and struggling to become so. It is the field of activity of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, and the benighted land in which nothing of value can be found. It is both a city of the dead and a land of august spirituality. Such literary and figurative tensions should come as no surprise, for the Tibetans were trying to 'find themselves' on the steppe of Asia even while their peers succumbed to Islam (Iran and Central Asia), to xenophobia (China), to social and political fragmentation (India), and to forces beyond all their control. Tibet alone fashioned itself in its own image of the Buddha, becoming what India had never really been: the land of Buddhist divinity. Even while prying apart this self-representational construct, however, we should acknowledge our debt to those who participated in its fabrication—for theirs is an identity that has perennially captivated some of the best minds of Asia and the West, an imagined Tibetan utopia continually reasserting its claim to a reality that it never fully enjoyed in Tibet itself.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

YAEL BENTOR is Associate Professor of Indian Studies at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel.

CATHY CANTWELL is a Research Officer at the Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, UK.

RONALD M. DAVIDSON is Professor of Religious Studies at Fairfield University, Fairfield, CT, USA.

MATTHEW T. KAPSTEIN is Directeur d'études at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, France, and the Numata Visiting Professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of Chicago Divinity School, Chicago, IL, USA.

KLAUS-DIETER MATHES is a lecturer at Hamburg University, Hamburg, Germany, and the Numata Visiting Professor of Tibetology and Buddhist Studies at the University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria.

ROB MAYER is a Senior Research Officer at the Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, UK, and a member of Wolfson College.

CARMEN MEINERT is Research Fellow at the Department of Culture and History of India and Tibet at Hamburg University, Germany.

SAM J. VAN SCHAIK works at the British Library's International Dunhuang Project, researching early Tibetan Manuscripts.

ROBERTO VITALI is an independent researcher on Tibetan history based in Italy, India and Nepal.

CHRISTIAN K. WEDEMEYER is Assistant Professor of the History of Religions at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA.

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