

## BuddhistRoad

Dynamics in Buddhist Networks in Eastern Central Asia 6th–14th Centuries

### BuddhistRoad Paper 7.1

In cooperation with

Nyang ral's Codification of rNying ma

Literature and Ritual

---

---

**THE *PHURPA* ROOT TANTRA OF  
NYANG-REL NYIMA ÖZER'S (1124–1192,  
TIB. MYANG RAL NYI MA 'OD ZER)  
*EIGHTFOLD BUDDHA WORD*,  
*EMBODYING THE SUGATAS* (TIB. *BKA'*  
*BRGYAD BDE GSHEGS 'DUS PA*)  
CORPUS: A THEMATIC OVERVIEW  
AND PHILOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

DYLAN ESLER



## BUDDHISTROAD PAPER

Peer reviewed

ISSN: 2628-2356

DOI: 10.46586/rub.br.155.131

BuddhistRoad Papers are licensed under the Creative Commons—Attribution NonCommercial—NoDerivates 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).

You can find this publication also on the BuddhistRoad project homepage:

<https://buddhistroad.ceres.rub.de/en/publications/>

Please quote this paper as follows:

**Esler, Dylan, “The Phurpa Root Tantra of Nyang-rel Nyima Özer’s (1124–1192, Tib. Myang ral Nyi ma ’od zer) Eightfold Buddha Word, Embodying the Sugatas (Tib. bKa’ brgyad bDe gshes ’dus pa) Corpus: A Thematic Overview and Philological Analysis,” *BuddhistRoad Paper 7.1* (2020).**

### CONTACT:

Principal Investigator: Prof. Dr. Carmen Meinert

BuddhistRoad | Ruhr-Universität Bochum | Center for Religious Studies (CERES)

Universitätsstr. 90a | 44789 Bochum | Germany

Phone: +49 (0)234 32-21683 | Fax: +49 (0) 234/32- 14 909

Email: [BuddhistRoad@rub.de](mailto:BuddhistRoad@rub.de) | Email: [carmen.meinert@rub.de](mailto:carmen.meinert@rub.de)

Website: <https://buddhistroad.ceres.rub.de/>

BuddhistRoad is a project of



Centrum für Religionswissenschaftliche Studien  
Center for Religious Studies

RUHR  
UNIVERSITÄT  
BOCHUM

RUB

### SPONSORS:



Deutsche  
Forschungsgemeinschaft

The project Nyang ral’s Codification of rNying ma Literature and Ritual has received funding from the German Research Foundation (DFG) (ref. No ME 2006/3-1).



European Research Council  
Established by the European Commission

The BuddhistRoad project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 725519).

THE *PHURPA ROOT TANTRA* OF NYANG-REL NYIMA ÖZER'S  
(1124–1192, TIB. MYANG RAL NYI MA 'OD ZER) *EIGHTFOLD  
BUDDHA WORD, EMBODYING THE SUGATAS* (TIB. *BKA' BRGYAD  
BDE GSHEGS 'DUS PA*) CORPUS: A THEMATIC OVERVIEW AND  
PHILOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

DYLAN ESLER

*Abstract*

This article is an in-depth study of the *bDe bar gshegs pa thams cad kyi phrin las* (var. *'phrin las*) *'dus pa phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [The *Phurpa Root Tantra* that Comprises the Activities of all the Sugatas; hereafter *Phurpa Root Tantra*], a seminal text on the tantric deity Vajrakīlaya from the *bKa' brgyad bDe gshegs 'dus pa* [Eightfold Buddha Word, Embodying the Sugatas; henceforth KD] corpus revealed by Nyang-rel Nyima Özer (1124–1192, Tib. Myang ral nyi ma 'od zer) in 12th century Tibet. The study consists of two main parts: a detailed thematic overview of the contents of the *tantra*'s thirteen chapters, and a philological analysis of selected variants found among the different editions of the text, an analysis which elucidates the relationships between the various textual witnesses and allows us to construct a stemma. Given the increasing awareness among specialists of the formative role played by the KD corpus in the codification of the Nyingma (Tib. *rnying ma*) school of Tibetan Buddhism, this article lays the groundwork for future investigations of this vast repertoire of tantric material. Our enquiry shows that despite being revealed by a named and famous visionary, the *Phurpa Root Tantra* shares significant features with the (usually anonymously produced) scriptures of the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* [Ancient Tantra Collection; henceforth NGB]. The paper thus contributes to the ongoing scholarly discussion concerning processes of scriptural production in the context of Tibetan tantric religion.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The research for this article was conducted in the context of the DFG-funded research project 'Nyang ral's Codification of rNying ma Literature and Ritual', based at the Center for Religious Studies (CERES), Ruhr-Universität Bochum (RUB). I am grateful to the other project members, Prof. Carmen Meinert, Dr Cathy Cantwell and Prof. Robert Mayer, as well as Lopon P. Ogyan Tanzin Rinpoche, who acted as academic consultant to the project, for their helpful comments and insights. The detailed discussions I had with Dr Cantwell and Lopon P. Ogyan Tanzin on specific textual passages were very fruitful in

## 1. Introduction

The *bKa' brgyad bDe gshegs 'dus pa* [Eightfold Buddha Word, Embodying the Sugatas; henceforth KD] is a pivotal cycle of tantric teachings that focuses on the deities of the eightfold Buddha word (Tib. *bka' brgyad*). The cycle was revealed and compiled (the two activities go hand in hand)<sup>2</sup> by the 12th-century visionary Nyang-rel Nyima Özer (1124–1192, Tib. Myang ral nyi ma 'od zer),<sup>3</sup> who played a formative role in the codification of what was to become the Nyingma (Tib. *nying ma*, 'ancient') school of Tibetan Buddhism. It is no exaggeration to say that he set the template for many distinctive elements of this school, notably: the centrality of Padmasambhava;<sup>4</sup> the ideological connection of

---

this regard. My thanks are also due to Dr Lewis Doney, whose detailed observations have helped me to improve this article in more ways than one. Any errors that remain are, of course, my own.

<sup>2</sup> See Cathy Cantwell, "Different Kinds of Composition/Compilation within the Dudjom Revelatory Tradition," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 36–37 (2013–2014): 243–280; Cathy Cantwell, "Re-presenting a Famous Revelation: Dudjom Rinpoche's Work on the 'Ultra Secret Razor Lifeforce Vajrakīlaya' (*yang gsang srog gi spu gri*) of Pema Lingpa (*padma gling pa*, 1450–1521)," *Buddhist Studies Review* 33.1–2 (2016): 181–202; and Cathy Cantwell, *Dudjom Rinpoche's Vajrakīlaya Works: A Study in Authoring, Compiling and Editing Texts in the Tibetan Revelatory Tradition* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2020), 15–17, 352–356.

<sup>3</sup> On the spelling Myang ral as being the older spelling of the name, see Cathy Cantwell, "The Action Phurpa (*'phrin las phur pa*) from the *Eightfold Buddha Word, Embodying the Sugatas (bKa' brgyad bDe gshegs 'dus pa)*, Revealed by Nyang-rel Nyima Özer (1124–1192, Tib. Myang ral Nyi ma 'od zer)," *BuddhistRoad Paper* 7.2 (2020, in press): 3, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Lewis Doney, "Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer and the *Testimony of Ba*," *Bulletin of Tibetology* 49.1 (2013): 7–37; Lewis Doney, *The Zangs gling ma: The First Padmasambhava Biography. Two Exemplars of the Earliest Attested Recension* (Andia: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, 2014); Daniel A. Hirshberg, *Remembering the Lotus-Born: Padmasambhava in the History of Tibet's Golden Age* (Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2016). See also Jacob Dalton, "The Early Development of the Padmasambhava Legend in Tibet: A Study of IOL Tib J 644 and Pelliot tibétain 307," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124.4 (2004): 759–772; Cathy Cantwell and Robert Mayer, "Representations of Padmasambhava in Early Post-Imperial Tibet," in *Tibet After Empire: Culture, Society and Religion between 850–1000*, ed. Christoph Cüppers, Robert Mayer, and Michael Walter (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2013), 19–50; Robert Mayer, "'We Swear Our Grandparents Were There!' (Or, What Can the Sex Pistols Tell Us About Padmasambhava?). The Making of Myth in 10th-Century Tibet and 20th-Century England," in *The Illuminating Mirror: Tibetan Studies in Honour of Per K. Sørensen on*

the Nyingma school to the golden age of the Tibetan Empire (Tib. Bod chen po, ca. 7th c. to 842) as a defensive strategy in the ongoing polemics that opposed ‘the ancients’ to the schools of the second diffusion of Buddhism (Tib. *phyi dar*);<sup>5</sup> the importance of the family unit and of genealogical descent as a non-monastic carrier of religious authority and charisma;<sup>6</sup> the establishment of the system of ‘catenate reincarnation’,<sup>7</sup> which was to have such a defining influence on Tibetan Buddhism as a whole; the subdivision of the Quintessential Instruction Section (Tib. *man ngag sde*) of Dzokchen (Tib. *rdzogs chen*) into the rubrics of Apex Pith (Tib. *a ti*), Crown Pith (Tib. *spyi ti*), and Ultra Pith (Tib. *yang ti*);<sup>8</sup> the notion of an open scriptural canon that could accommodate cultural adaptation of Indic textual and ritual models to a Tibetan environment<sup>9</sup> and that celebrated ongoing processes of revelation, including of spiritual treasures (Tib. *gter ma*), as a means of revivifying the stream of transmission;<sup>10</sup> and the seamless integration of profound metaphysical ideas into the fabric and performance of rituals of pragmatic magic.<sup>11</sup> While these elements were not all invented by Nyang-rel out of nothing, he was responsible for bringing together such disparate strands of tantric lore into a cohesive framework.

---

*the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, ed. Olaf Czaja and Guntram Hazod (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2015), 341–355.

<sup>5</sup> A forerunner in this was Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo (fl. 11th c., Tib. Rong zom Chos kyi bzang po). See Lopon P. Ogyan Tenzin, “Assessing the Greatness of Tibet’s Early Translations according to Rong-zom Mahāpaṇḍita,” trans. Dylan Esler, *Temenos Academy Review* 16 (2013): 21–42.

<sup>6</sup> Doney, *The Zangs gling ma*, 11. See also Dominic Sur, “Constituting Canon and Community in Eleventh Century Tibet: The Extant Writings of Rongzom and his *Charter of Mantrins* (*sngags pa’i bca’ yig*),” *Religions* 8.3 (2017): 1–30. For an ethnographical study of a contemporary *sngags pa* community, see Nicolas Sihlé, *Rituels bouddhiques de pouvoir et de violence: La figure du tantriste tibétain* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Hirshberg, *Remembering the Lotus-Born*, 67.

<sup>8</sup> See David Germano, “The Funerary Transformation of the Great Perfection (*Rdzogs chen*),” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 1 (2005): 21–24, 27; and Jean-Luc Achard, “The View of *sPyi ti Yoga*,” *Revue d’Études Tibétaines* 31 (2015): 1–20.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Mayer, “Indigenous Elements in Tibetan Tantric Religion,” *Mongolo-Tibetica Pragensia* 14: *Ethnolinguistics, Sociolinguistics, Religion and Culture* 7.2 (2014): 37–40.

<sup>10</sup> Matthew T. Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 163.

<sup>11</sup> Mayer, “Indigenous Elements in Tibetan Tantric Religion,” 43–44.

The KD corpus that Nyang-rel revealed is transmitted both as a separate collection of texts and as part of the scriptures of the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* [Ancient Tantra Collection; henceforth NGB]. In this respect, it should be noted that the very idea of the NGB collection goes back to Nyang-rel's immediate successors, and possibly even to Nyang-rel himself, since one of the earliest NGB editions was compiled by Nyang-rel's second son and main heir, Drogön Namkha Pel (12th–13th c., Tib. 'Gro mgon Nam mkha' dpal), as part of the funeral rites performed following his father's death.<sup>12</sup>

### 1.1. *Vajrakīlaya and the Rite of Liberation Through Killing*

The deities of the eightfold Buddha word are a set of eight wrathful meditational deities (Tib. *yi dam*) that are part of the Mahāyoga tantric tradition. While the Nyingma school reveres all of the deities of this group, the deity Vajrakīlaya, associated with the *phurpa* (Tib. *phur pa*, 'ritual dagger'), attained a particular renown that radiated even beyond the confines of the Nyingma school. Prominent among the fierce activities associated with Vajrakīlaya is the rite of liberation through killing (Tib. *sgrol ba*), in which an 'enemy'—symbolising at once the practitioner's inveterate ego-clinging personified by Rudra and an actual fiend, whether human or demonic—is liberated through the ritual stabbing of an effigy (Skt. *liṅga*) made of dough. The ritual, during which the adept must fully identify meditatively with the deity Vajrakīlaya, thus transforming ordinary hatred into wrathful compassion, culminates in sending the enemy's consciousness to a pure field.<sup>13</sup> The

---

<sup>12</sup> Robert Mayer, *A Scripture of the Ancient Tantra Collection: The Phur-pa bcu-gnyis* (Oxford: Kiscadale Publications, 1996), 224–225.

<sup>13</sup> Cathy Cantwell and Robert Mayer, *The Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra and the Vajra Wrath Tantra: Two Texts from the Ancient Tantra Collection* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007), 20–21. For a fuller discussion of the ritual and its background, see Cathy Cantwell, "To Meditate upon Consciousness as Vajra: Ritual 'Killing and Liberation' in the rNying-ma-pa Tradition," in *Tibetan Studies, Volume 1: Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995*, ed. Helmut Krasser et al. (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1997), 107–117; and Carmen Meinert, "Between the Profane and the Sacred? On the Context of the Rite of 'Liberation' (*sgrol ba*)," in *Buddhism and Violence*, ed. Michael Zimmermann (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2006), 99–130. For a comparison of the Tibetan and Chinese contexts for the assimilation of tantric ritual violence, see Carmen Meinert, "Assimilation and

benefit of the ritual is held to be manifold: on an inner level, the practitioner's ego-clinging is annihilated; outwardly, the enemy is liberated of his entrenched tendencies to perpetuate vicious deeds that would otherwise have further bound him to the lower realms of *samsāra*; the person(s) for whom the ritual is performed is/are free of the obstacles caused by the enemy's negative influence; and the adept, if successful, actually gains vitality from the performance of the ritual. The danger, of course, is to engage in this practice motivated by ordinary hatred, in which case the practitioner's lifespan is shortened due to the karmic effects of taking life, since there has been failure to actually liberate the consciousness of the enemy.

### 1.2. *The Phurpa Root Tantra and its Significance*

Given the importance of Vajrakīlaya within the KD corpus, the present article specifically concentrates on one text of the Vajrakīlaya cycle, the *bDe bar gshegs pa thams cad kyi phrin las* (var. *'phrin las*) *'dus pa phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [The Phurpa Root Tantra that Comprises the Activities of all the Sugatas; hereafter *Phurpa Root Tantra*] in thirteen chapters. Like the other texts of the KD corpus, the *Phurpa Root Tantra* is found both as part of the independent KD collection (see Section 1.5.1) and within the various NGB collections (see Section 1.5.2). In the KD versions, the transmitted text of the *Phurpa Root Tantra* includes fairly detailed annotations,<sup>14</sup> but these are absent from the NGB versions. The significance of the *Phurpa Root Tantra* lies in the fact that it provides the ideological and ritual matrix for the other textual productions of Nyangrel's Vajrakīlaya cycle. It also serves the purpose of authenticating the entire Vajrakīlaya cycle, by presenting itself as the infallible utterance of Buddha speech (Skt. *buddhavacana*) revealed within the pure field of Akaniṣṭha. It is important to understand that in the context of tantric scriptural revelation, a cycle may gradually be expanded over time. This is because the texts comprising the initial revelation often lack the architecture needed to form a fully viable tradition of practice, so it

---

Transformation of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet and China: A Case Study of the Adaptation Processes of Violence in a Ritual Context," *Zentralasiatische Studien* 45 (2016): 341–360.

<sup>14</sup> KYI is an exception in this regard: while bibliographically counted among the KD versions, KYI does not carry the KD annotations and is stemmatically part of the South Central NGB group. See Section 3.1.2.

becomes necessary to supplement them with empowerment (Skt. *abhiṣeka*) liturgies, required in order to ensure the corpus' continued transmission, extensive evocations (Skt. *sādhana*) suited both for solitary and group practice, as well as additional rituals serving both worldly ends and the removal of obstacles towards enlightenment. It would seem that the KD corpus must have undergone such an expansion, since the accounts of its revelation mention seven volumes, but most present-day editions comprise thirteen volumes. It is thus likely that Nyang-rel himself composed post-revelatory supplementary materials.<sup>15</sup> While the supplementary texts may not initially have the status of revealed scripture *per se*, they can acquire this status over time, and the root *tantra* of the cycle imbues all the subsequent materials with the aura of its sanctity.

### 1.3. *Tantric Processes of Revelation and Compilation*

A question arises concerning the manner in which such tantric scriptures are discovered, and Nyang-rel's biographies offer varying accounts regarding his first treasure discovery, that of the KD corpus. In Nyang-rel's *gSal ba'i me long* [Clear Mirror] biography, his teacher Rashak Tertön (d.u., Tib. Ra shag gter ston) hands over several inventories (Tib. *kha byang*) to him in preparation of his first treasure discovery. The discovery itself involves Nyang-rel recovering the texts from behind the back of a Vairocana statue in the imperial period Khothing (Tib. mKho mthing, var. Kho thing) Temple in Lhodrak (Tib. lHo brag). On the other hand, in the *Dri ma med pa* [Stainless] biography, the discovery of the KD corpus consists in Rashak Tertön simply giving him four sacks within which are contained twenty tantric scriptures and their brief evocations,<sup>16</sup> yet the implication is still that Nyang-rel received the sacks based on his karmic predispositions, and that for him their content is treasure. Furthermore, the role of Nyang-rel's other master, Druptop Ngödrup (fl. 12th c., Tib. Grub thob dNgos grub), is also highly interesting, for he is said to have bestowed upon him a number of

---

<sup>15</sup> Hirshberg, *Remembering the Lotus-Born*, 101–102. The issue is discussed with special reference to the invocation manual of the *Action Phurpa* text in Cantwell, “The Action Phurpa.”

<sup>16</sup> Hirshberg, *Remembering the Lotus-Born*, 100, 129.



indispensable supplementary materials, including the empowerment rites, regarding the very corpus Nyang-rel had previously recovered/received as treasure.<sup>17</sup> This strongly suggests that the boundaries between revealed treasures (Tib. *gter ma*) and transmitted literature (Tib. *bka' ma*) were rather fluid at that time.<sup>18</sup> Dudjom Rinpoche's history would tend to corroborate this impression: it recounts that when Nyang-rel met Druptop Ngödrup and told him that he had the treasures of the KD corpus, Druptop Ngödrup bestowed upon him the orally transmitted texts of the *rDzong 'phrang srog gsum* [The Fortress, Chasm and Life-force]; thereupon, Nyang-rel proceeded to merge both traditions into a single stream.<sup>19</sup> The *Fortress, Chasm and Life-force*<sup>20</sup> is a corpus of shorter teachings regarding the three Inner Tantras—a preliminary investigation suggests that they are organised according to various rubrics, including those called 'fortresses', 'chasms' and 'life-forces'; the teachings themselves appear to go back to Nupchen Sangyé Yéshé (ca. 844 to second half of 10th c., Tib. gNubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes) and his disciple Yönten Gyatso (fl. 10th c., Tib. Yon tan rgya mtsho)—known under their secret names Dorjé Yang Wangter (Tib. rDo rje yang dbang gter) and Terzhé Tsel (Tib. gTer bzhad rtsal), respectively—although it is Nyang-rel who seems to have compiled them in their present form.

While the accounts regarding the precise circumstances of the discovery of the KD corpus thus differ, Daniel Hirshberg points out that Nyang-rel's biographies do not present his methods of treasure discovery, or even the materials he reveals, as something utterly new, rather portraying him as the karmically predestined vessel for well-established

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 102, 104.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Mayer, "Rethinking Treasure (Part One)," *Revue d'Études Tibétaines* 52 (2019): 172–173.

<sup>19</sup> Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History*, trans. Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein, vol. 1 (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991), 757.

<sup>20</sup> *rDzong 'phrang srog gsum gyi chings kyi man ngag*, in *sNga 'gyur bka' ma* [Transmitted Literature of the Early Translation School], ed. Kah thog mKhan po 'Jam dbyangs, 120 vols (Chengdu: Kah thog, 1999), vol. Ha/29: 15–425. For more on this important source, see Cathy Cantwell, "The Supreme Pacification (zhi ba'i mchog) Ritual Revealed by Myang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1124–1192), its Precedent in the Dunhuang Text, IOL Tib.J 331.III, and the Relationship between the Revelatory (gter ma) and Transmitted (bka' ma) Textual Traditions," *Journal of Tibetology*, Special Issue: *New Directions in Gter ma Studies*, ed. Jue Liang (forthcoming).

traditions.<sup>21</sup> Looking at the *Phurpa Root Tantra*, we can say that it presents a remarkable degree of continuity, both stylistically and in terms of content, with the *tantras* of the NGB. It appears that the main difference between treasure discovery and the prior modes of scriptural revelation in India and Tibet lies in the fact that the treasure revealers took on a more public profile, which contrasted with the anonymous scriptural production of previous centuries. As suggested by Robert Mayer, there was a great degree of continuity between the ways that Nyang-rel revealed the KD corpus and the manner in which tantric scriptures had been anonymously produced before him, both in Tibet and in India, and it would be unwarranted to believe that Nyang-rel would have suddenly radically changed the format of scriptural production he inherited from his mentors.<sup>22</sup>

Equally interesting is the clear indication from Nyang-rel's biographies that his treasure discoveries (including that of the KD corpus mentioned above) were of a physical nature; they were objects and scriptures physically recovered from actual locations in his area of activity.<sup>23</sup> This conforms to the ethos of several textual discoveries of the 11th and 12th centuries, which are presented as artefacts from the imperial period being rediscovered in abandoned temples,<sup>24</sup> and it is probable that at least some of them include passages of varying length from genuinely recovered physical texts.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, Cathy Cantwell's detailed text-critical work on the Dunhuang manuscript IOL Tib J 331.III confirms that a substantial section of Nyang-rel's *phurpa* revelations is a verbatim reproduction of this older manuscript.<sup>26</sup> A further example of such textual reuse is provided by a work belonging to a rather different genre: in his hagiography of Padmasambhava, the *Zangs gling ma* [Copper Island], Nyang-rel incorporates with little variation a verse from the *Thabs zhags* [Noble Noose of Methods] commentary (IOL Tib J

---

<sup>21</sup> Hirshberg, *Remembering the Lotus-Born*, 104.

<sup>22</sup> Mayer, "Rethinking Treasure (Part One)," 172.

<sup>23</sup> Hirshberg, *Remembering the Lotus-Born*, 96.

<sup>24</sup> Doney, *The Zangs gling ma*, 10.

<sup>25</sup> Mayer, "Rethinking Treasure (Part One)," 147.

<sup>26</sup> See Cantwell, "The Action Phurpa."

321).<sup>27</sup> There seems little reason to suppose that these would be the only cases in point.

This is not to suggest, however, that all Nyang-rel did was discover old manuscripts and piece them together anew—although the rearrangement of authoritative and hallowed textual material was surely part of his trade.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, practices of writing in pre-modern times and cultures are best *not* approached from the perspective of modern notions concerning ‘originality’ and ‘novelty’;<sup>29</sup> in the Tibetan context, for instance, novelty would have been considered mere fabrication, the ideal being instead to transmit to posterity the words of the tantric scriptures and great masters of the past, perhaps adapted afresh to new circumstances.<sup>30</sup> But such adaptation may itself involve much creativity. As hinted at above, it is highly probable that for Nyang-rel, discovering or being handed over texts as treasure was but the initial trigger for an entire editorial process of compilation and redaction that culminated in the vast textual collections he bequeathed to posterity. Moreover, Hirshberg reminds us that the sources for Nyang-rel’s production of treasure were not only textual, but also oral, since he appears to have woven popular songs, notably about Padmasambhava’s exploits, into his compilations, and mnemonic, referring to Nyang-rel’s recollections of his past life as Tri Songdétsen (r. 742–ca. 800, Tib. Khri Srong lde’u btsan).<sup>31</sup> This brings us to a significant point about Nyang-rel’s revelations, including that of the *Phurpa Root Tantra* here under

---

<sup>27</sup> Cathy Cantwell and Robert Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods, The Lotus Garland Synopsis: A Mahāyoga Tantra and its Commentary* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2012), 93.

<sup>28</sup> See Robert Mayer, “*gTer ston* and Tradent: Innovation and Conservation in Tibetan Treasure Literature,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 36–37 (2013–2014): 227–242.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Elisa Freschi, “Proposals for the Study of Quotations in Indian Philosophical Texts,” *Religions of South Asia* 6.2 (2012): 161–189. I also discuss this regarding Nupchen Sangyé Yéshé’s use of quotations in his *bSam gtan mig sgron* [Lamp for the Eye of Contemplation]; see Dylan Esler, “The Lamp for the Eye of Contemplation, The *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* by gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes: Hermeneutical Study with English Translation and Critical Edition of a Tibetan Buddhist Text on Contemplation” (PhD diss., Université catholique de Louvain, 2018), 20–22.

<sup>30</sup> Cathy Cantwell and Robert Mayer, “A Noble Noose of Methods, the Lotus Garland Synopsis: Methodological Issues in the Study of a Mahāyoga Text from Dunhuang,” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 5 (2009): 23.

<sup>31</sup> Hirshberg, *Remembering the Lotus-Born*, 188, 191.

consideration. Nyang-rel's single most important source of inspiration in the discovery of his treasures was his conception of himself as being the authentic reincarnation of Tri Songdétsen, and the concomitant belief that his memories were genuine recollections of past events experienced in his life as king, when he was Padmasambhava's main disciple and royal sponsor.<sup>32</sup> This is apparent in the colophon to our root *tantra*, where not only is the text said to have been translated and established by Padmasambhava and Vairocana,<sup>33</sup> thus linking the *tantra*'s arrival on Tibetan soil to two of the most prestigious figures in the early dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet, but the text is also described as being the 'exemplar belonging to the king' (Tib. *rgyal po'i bla dpe*),<sup>34</sup> an expression which we find in the colophons of all the root *tantras* in the KD corpus<sup>35</sup> and which resonates with the colophon of the '*Phrin las phur pa* [Action Phurpa] text studied by Cantwell.<sup>36</sup> By recalling his past life as Tri Songdétsen, Nyang-rel was in effect recovering the texts that were part of his past spiritual inheritance. This may seem unusual to modern sensibilities, but it would be less so in a culture which views an individual's mental continuum as extending backwards in time for countless lives.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, as Per K. Sørensen has shown, such a re-enactment of the past incorporates past events and figures as

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>33</sup> See below, rt. colophon 2.

<sup>34</sup> See below, rt. colophon 3.

<sup>35</sup> Taking the KAH edition as an example, the expression *rgyal po'i bla dpe* is found in the following root *tantras*: *Zhi ba 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Pacifying Root Tantra], KAH, vol. Kha/2: 581.2; *Che mchog 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Chemchok Root Tantra], KAH, vol. Kha/2: 681.5; *dPal khrag 'thung 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Glorious Heruka Root Tantra], KAH, vol. Ga/3: 85.4; *bCom ldan 'das dpal gshin rje gshed 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Yamāntaka Root Tantra], KAH, vol. Ga/3: 180.5; *bCom ldan 'das dbang chen 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Maheśvara Root Tantra], KAH, vol. Ga/3: 271.2; *Ma mo 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Mother Goddesses' Root Tantra], KAH, vol. Ga/3: 429.6; *Rig pa 'dzin pa 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Awareness-Holders' Root Tantra], KAH, vol. Ga/3: 472.3; *'Jig rten mchod bstod sgrub pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Worldly Worship and Praise Root Tantra], KAH, vol. Ga/3: 544.1. While the expression is absent from the colophon of *Drag sngags 'dus pa rdo rje rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Fierce Mantra Root Tantra], KAH, vol. Ga/3: 599, this seems to be due to a misplaced folio, for we find it for instance in the M edition: *Drag sngags 'dus pa rdo rje rtsa ba'i rgyud*, M, vol. Ya/24: 983.6. This topic will be further developed in Cantwell, "The Supreme Pacification Ritual."

<sup>36</sup> Cantwell, "The Action Phurpa."

<sup>37</sup> Hirshberg, *Remembering the Lotus-Born*, 192.

foreshadowing those of the present, a present in which they are held to find their prophetic fulfilment.<sup>38</sup>

When reading the *Phurpa Root Tantra* one often gets the impression of moving rather abruptly from one idea to the next. One can thus pass without any warning from a verse dealing with the ultimate nature of phenomena to another that details the technicalities of performing a magical ritual, then back again to the rarefied atmosphere of Tantric Buddhist metaphysics.<sup>39</sup> This could give us a hint regarding the manner in which such scriptures were compiled from pre-existing segments. Such segments, whether discovered in physical locations, revealed in visionary encounters or received from great masters, no doubt had the aura of being sacred Buddha speech, but to those who recovered them they may well have already seemed a hotchpotch of rather arcane material. Those, like Nyang-rel and his anonymous forerunners in India and Tibet, who revealed/compiled the *tantras* had the challenging task of weaving together these segments into a more-or-less coherent order, and perhaps to expand upon or clarify the connections where necessary.<sup>40</sup> Their primary concern was not logical rigour, but rather the preservation

---

<sup>38</sup> Per K. Sørensen, “In his Name: The Fake Royal Biography—Fabricated Prophecy and Literary Imposture,” *Revue d’Études Tibétaines* 52 (2019): 322.

<sup>39</sup> For a definition of the term ‘metaphysics’ (which unfortunately is often used for anything and everything), see Dylan Esler, “Traces of Abhidharma in the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* (Tibet, Tenth Century),” in *Text, History, and Philosophy: Abhidharma across Buddhist Scholastic Traditions*, ed. Bart Dessein and Weijen Teng (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 316–318.

<sup>40</sup> It may be instructive to look at texts such as the *tantras* not as static end-products, but rather as dynamic processes that interweave multiple textures of meaning, each iteration representing a unique tapestry. Cf. Erika Greber, “Textbewegung/Textwebung: Texturierungsmodelle im Fadenkreuz von Prosa und Poesie, Buchstabe und Zahl,” in *Textbewegungen 1800/1900*, ed. Matthias Buschmeier and Till Dembeck (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007), 24–48. I am grateful to Dr Knut Martin Stünkel for drawing attention to this essay during his KHK lecture delivered at the CERES, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, on October 28, 2019. Similar processes may be seen to be at work in the Hebrew Bible; cf. Michael A. Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Texture: A Literary Reading of Selected Texts* (London: Oneworld Publications, 1998). Of course, in the tantric context, the metaphor of weaving takes on a particularly poignant significance, since the word *tantra* literally means ‘loom’ and ‘warp’ (just as *sūtra*, which designates the Buddha’s discourses, means ‘thread’). See Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2001), 436, 1241.

of the precious fragments<sup>41</sup> of Buddha speech that provided the mythological and ritual framework for the tantric tradition and that were considered to be merely the earthly reflection of the scriptures' ideal archetype, an archetype that remained guarded by *ḍākinīs* in the tantric pure fields.<sup>42</sup> The annotations, which, as mentioned above, are part of the transmitted text of the *Phurpa Root Tantra* in the KD versions, would seem to be an attempt to fill in the wider context for the *tantra's* terse statements and make explicit connections that would otherwise not always be obvious. As it appears that they go back to an early recension of the *Phurpa Root Tantra* (see below, Section 3.1.5), it cannot be excluded that they descend from Nyang-rel himself.

#### 1.4. Similarities to Other NGB Scriptures

As a *tantra* revealed by a named visionary, yet in all likelihood incorporating earlier material, the *Phurpa Root Tantra* has several characteristics in common with other (usually anonymously produced) NGB scriptures. There too, we have an identifiable moment of redaction, but this does not exclude compilation from pre-existing parts, some of which are shared between several *tantras*.<sup>43</sup> It is highly likely that many of the awkward spellings and ungrammatical constructions in the *Phurpa Root Tantra* were already present in the text's archetype (see Section 3.1.7). This is something that is frequently encountered with the NGB *tantras*, and may be explained by the way these *tantras* were compiled from earlier textual fragments that already contained various kinds of errors<sup>44</sup> and that probably seemed cryptic even to their compilers. It follows that, in the philological analysis of such material, the criteria of orthographical or grammatical correctness, or even the notion of 'what makes better sense', can only be used with caution in trying to reconstruct the earlier readings. A further peculiar feature of the NGB *tantras*, which again is shared by our *Phurpa Root Tantra*, is the way in which the tradition itself operates on the basis of a distributive model of knowledge, according to which a rather wide latitude of regional

---

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Cantwell and Mayer, *The Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra and the Vajra Wrath Tantra*, 41; and Cantwell, *Dudjom Rinpoche's Vajrakīlaya Works*, 319.

<sup>42</sup> Cantwell and Mayer, "A Noble Noose of Methods, the Lotus Garland Synopsis," 4.

<sup>43</sup> Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 19.

<sup>44</sup> Cantwell and Mayer, *The Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra and the Vajra Wrath Tantra*, 82.

variation among editions is tolerated, since it is held that no single NGB version can be considered complete and perfect in every detail.<sup>45</sup> In such circumstances, as pointed out by Mayer, the goal of text-critical work on these scriptures must shift away from the notion of recovering an original ideal text to the more pragmatic concern of identifying hyparchetypes that allow us to depict the significant phases in the transmission and codification of a textual tradition and the relationships between the various extant editions.<sup>46</sup>

### 1.5. *Brief Description of the Various Editions*

Twelve editions were consulted for the philological analysis of the *Phurpa Root Tantra*.<sup>47</sup> Among the KD versions, PH and Y were not consulted, as they were assessed to be very close to TSH and X respectively. Furthermore, R and G-b were consulted somewhat less systematically than the other editions, mainly in order to confirm patterns of affiliation observed, respectively, among the South Central NGB and Bhutan NGB groups.

#### 1.5.1. *KD Versions*

TSH = mTshams brag KD edition, 13 vols. BDRC Resource ID: W22247. “Reproduced from the complete mTshams-brag manuscript reflecting the tradition of Gon-ra Lo-chen Ṅag-dbañ-gzhan-phan-rdo-rje.” Paro: Ngodrup, 1979–1980. The *Phurpa Root Tantra* is found in vol. 3: 321–387. Contains the KD annotations. Handwritten *dbu can* script. Typically, six lines of text per page.

PH = Phur sgrub dgon pa KD edition, ten vols. Endangered Archives Programme: EAP310/3/1/3, photos 113–136. Phurdrup Gonpa, n.d. The *Phurpa Root Tantra* is found in vol. Ga/3: 1r–36r. Contains the KD annotations. Handwritten *dbu can* script. Black ink on cream coloured Bhutanese paper made from daphne bark. Margins are drawn in red ink. Folios are ca. 48 × 7.5 cm. Typically, six lines of text per page.

---

<sup>45</sup> See Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 22; and Cantwell and Mayer, *The Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra and the Vajra Wrath Tantra*, 79.

<sup>46</sup> Mayer, *A Scripture of the Ancient Tantra Collection: The Phur-pa bcu-gnyis*, 182–188.

<sup>47</sup> For the sigla used, see the list of abbreviations and sigla provided at the end of this paper.

KAH = Kah thog KD edition, 13 vols. BDRC Resource ID: W1KG12075. “Reproduced from the sole known surviving set of prints from the Kah-thog blocks from the library of H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche.” The preface in the first volume also adds: “Only during the last century does there appear to have been a printed redaction of the cycle. The blocks for printing this cycle were preserved at Kah-thog in Khams. Bdud-'joms Rin-po-che possesses the unique set of these prints and has graciously made them available for publication. This set is perhaps incomplete.” Gangtok: Sonam Topgay Kazi, 1978. The *Phurpa Root Tantra* is found in vol. Ga/3: 273–374. Contains the KD annotations. According to the bibliographic description, this is a *dbu can* print, though it must be admitted that in places it looks somewhat like a manuscript. Typically, six lines of text per page.

KYI = Kyirong Lama KD edition, four vols. BDRC Resource ID: W1KG9588. “Reproduced from a collection from the library of Kyirong Lama Kunzang now preserved in the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.” The preface in the first volume also adds: “In these volumes the reader will find a collection of these texts which had belonged to Kyirong Lama Kunsang, a Nyingmapa teacher from Western Tibet who settled in Nepal.” Dalhousie: Damchoe Sangpo, 1977–1978. The original manuscript thus stems from Kyirong (Tib. sKyid grong) in south-western Tibet. The *Phurpa Root Tantra* is found in vol. 2: 257–310. Handwritten *dbu can* script. Typically, six lines of text per page. While bibliographically speaking, KYI is one of the KD versions, it does not include the KD annotations and its readings are those of the South Central NGB group, so for all practical purposes it can be counted among the South Central NGB group.

X = KD edition of unknown provenance, eight vols. BDRC Resource ID: W2PD17479. No bibliographical information provided. However, it is probably connected to Pelyül (Tib. dPal yul) Monastery (see below, rt. additional colophon B). The *Phurpa Root Tantra* is found in vol. 2: 1r–52v (PDF 659–762). Contains the KD annotations. Elegant handwritten *dbu med* script. Black writing on light brown paper. Annotations, as well as closing words of each chapter, given in red ink. Typically, seven lines of text per page.

Y = KD edition of unknown provenance, nine vols. BDRC Resource ID: W2PD20239. No bibliographical information provided. As there is



no additional colophon, we have no clues regarding its place of production.<sup>48</sup> The *Phurpa Root Tantra* is found in vol. 2: 1r–50v (PDF 689–790). Contains the KD annotations. Elegant handwritten *dbu med* script. Black writing on light brown paper. Annotations, as well as closing words of each chapter, given in red ink. Typically, seven lines of text per page.

### 1.5.2. NGB Editions

None of the NGB editions contain the KD annotations.

D = sDe dge NGB edition, 26 vols. BDRC Resource ID: W21939. “The Collected Tantras of the Nyingma. Degge blockprint edition of the Nyingma canon.” Dégé Parkhang, n.d. The *Phurpa Root Tantra* is found in vol. Ba/15: 46v.1–63v.3. *dBu can* print. Red ink printed on pinkish paper. Typically, seven lines of text per page. Due to the poor legibility of the BDRC scans, I have used photographs from the Bodleian Library’s collection (Aleph System Number: 015418300) kindly provided by Prof. Robert Mayer.

#### *Bhutan NGB Group:*

G-a = sGang steng A NGB edition, 46 vols. Endangered Archives Programme: EAP039/1/3/1/24, photos 293–314. Gangtey Monastery. As per the information provided on the EAP website and by Cantwell and Mayer,<sup>49</sup> the original is to be dated ca. 1640–1650. The *Phurpa Root Tantra* is found in vol. Ya/24: 291r–312r. Handwritten *dbu can* script. Black ink on brown paper. Typically, eight lines of text per page.

G-b = sGang steng B NGB edition, 46 vols. Endangered Archives Programme: EAP039/1/3/2/24, photos 343–369. Gangtey Monastery. As per the information provided on the EAP website, the original is to be

---

<sup>48</sup> Nicholas Trautz speculates that this nine-volume edition may be identical to a nine-volume edition mentioned in various 18th-century sources as circulating in eastern Tibet, though this seems to be contradicted by the fact that at least some of those sources refer to a block-print, not a manuscript. Cf. Nicholas Trautz, “Curating a Treasure: The *Bka’ brgyad bde gshes ’dus pa* in the Development of the Rnying ma Tradition,” *Revue d’Études Tibétaines* 55 (2020): 511, n. 47. Of course, this does not exclude the possibility of there being a close connection between Y and such an eastern Tibetan block-print.

<sup>49</sup> Cantwell and Mayer, *The Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra and the Vajra Wrath Tantra*, 68.

dated ca. 1728–1735.<sup>50</sup> The *Phurpa Root Tantra* is found in vol. Ya/24: 343v–369r. Handwritten *dbu can* script. Black ink on light brown paper. Typically, seven lines of text per page.

GR = dGra med rtse NGB edition, 46 vols. Endangered Archives Programme: EAP105/1/1/25, photos 287–308. Drametse Monastery, n.d. The *Phurpa Root Tantra* is found in vol. Ya/24: 288r–308v. Handwritten *dbu can* script. Black ink on brown paper. Typically, seven lines of text per page.

M = mTshams brag NGB edition, 46 vols. BDRC Resource ID: W21521. Photo-offset edition of the mTshams brag manuscript. “The Mtshams brag manuscript of the Rñiñ ma rgyud ’bum.” Thimphu: National Library, Royal Government of Bhutan, 1982. The original manuscript can probably be dated ca. 1728–1748,<sup>51</sup> though these dates are merely an estimate. The *Phurpa Root Tantra* is found in vol. Ya/24: 757–808. Elegant handwritten *dbu can* script. Black ink. Typically, seven lines of text per page.

S = Sangs rgyas gling NGB edition, 46 vols. Note that vols 11, 12 and 41 are missing. High quality colour digital photographs have been made available by Prof. Robert Mayer and Mr Ngawang Tsepag via the Oxford University Research Archive (ORA) under the title ‘The Ancient Tantra Collection from Sangyeling’. Sangyeling Monastery, ca. early 18th century. The *Phurpa Root Tantra* is found in vol. Ya/24: 297r–318v. Elegant handwritten *dbu can* script. Black ink on greyish paper. Typically, seven lines of text per page.

#### *South Central NGB Group:*

T = gTing skyes NGB edition, 36 vols (though originally 33 vols). BDRC Resource ID: W21518. “Reproduced from manuscripts preserved at Gtiñ-skyes Dgon-pa-byañ monastery in Tibet under the direction of Dingo Khyentse Rimpoche.” Thimphu: Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, 1973–1975. The original manuscript, which was brought from Tingkyé Gönjang (Tib. gTing skyes dgon byang) to Sikkim, where it is presently kept, may date to ca. 1830 (according to Dan Martin’s estimate).<sup>52</sup> The

---

<sup>50</sup> For a catalogue of the edition, see Cathy Cantwell, et al. “The sGang steng-b rNying ma’i rgyud ’bum Manuscript from Bhutan,” *Revue d’Études Tibétaines* 11 (2006): 16–141.

<sup>51</sup> Cantwell and Mayer, *The Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra and the Vajra Wrath Tantra*, 69.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

*Phurpa Root Tantra* is found in vol. Āḥ/32: 217–262. Handwritten *dbu can* script. Black ink. Typically, seven lines of text per page.

R = Rig 'dzin tshe dbang nor bu NGB edition, 33 vols. Note that vols Ta/9 and Om/31 are missing, and so is vol. Ga/3, of which only the title page survives. Held at the British Library, London; the Bodleian Library, Oxford; and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The manuscript was probably produced by a disciple of Rigdzin Tséwang Norbu (1698–1755, Tib. Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu) in the borderlands of south-western Tibet and Nepal, ca. late 18th century.<sup>53</sup> The *Phurpa Root Tantra* is found in vol. Āḥ/32: 87r–105r. Elegant handwritten *dbu can* script. Black ink on off-white paper. Typically, seven lines of text per page.

## 2. Thematic Overview

Apart from the Tibetan title already mentioned above, the *tantra* is also provided with a pseudo-Sanskrit title,<sup>54</sup> no doubt serving the purpose of establishing the Indian pedigree of the text and of the Vajrakīlaya cycle as a whole.<sup>55</sup> The colophon informs us that the *tantra* is condensed from the *Vidyottama la 'bum sde* [The Hundred Thousand Words on Supreme Esoteric Science; hereafter *Supreme Esoteric Science*];<sup>56</sup> this latter text, referred to also in the *Phur 'grel 'bum nag* [The Black One Hundred Thousand Words Phurpa Commentary; hereafter *Black One Hundred Thousand*] for instance,<sup>57</sup> is in many ways considered to be the root of the *phurpa* tradition as a whole. It is somewhat unclear, however, whether

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 72. For a detailed description, see Cathy Cantwell, “Distinctive Features of the Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu (Waddell) Edition of the rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum,” in *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism: Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies, Leiden 2000*, ed. Helmut Eimer and David Germano (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 359–376. For a catalogue of the edition, see Cathy Cantwell, Robert Mayer, and Michael Fischer, *The Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu Edition of the rNying ma rgyud 'bum: An Illustrated Inventory* (Canterbury: Centre for Social Anthropology and Computing, University of Kent, 2002), accessed October 11, 2019. [https://www.tbrc.org/ngb/Title\\_page\\_main.html](https://www.tbrc.org/ngb/Title_page_main.html).

<sup>54</sup> For a discussion of the latter, see below, rt. 1.1.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Hirshberg, *Remembering the Lotus-Born*, 101, n. 197.

<sup>56</sup> For details of the colophon, see below, rt. colophon 1.

<sup>57</sup> Martin J. Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue: The Vast Commentary on Vajrakīla That Clearly Defines the Essential Points* (Berlin: Edition Khordong, 2002), 141.

the *Supreme Esoteric Science* is a mythological source said to exist in a pure field, or a more down-to-earth text or textual collection.<sup>58</sup>

### 2.1. Chapter 1: Introduction

D 46v.1–48r.2 = G-a 291r.4–293r.4, GR 288r.5–290r.3, (G-b 343v.5–346r.4,) M 757.4–762.5, S 297r.1–299r.2,  
T 217.1–221.3, (R 87r.7–89r.3,) TSH 322.1–328.6, KAḤ 274.1–283.2, KYI 258.1–263.4, X 1v.1–6r.5

The first chapter provides an introduction to the deities of the *maṇḍala*: the setting, where the Buddha’s words making up this *tantra* are heard, is the supreme secret place of Akaniṣṭha’s open dimension (Tib. *dbyings*). There arises a blackish wind which shakes up the charnel ground; from the wisdom (Tib. *ye shes*; Skt. *jñāna*)<sup>59</sup> of jealousy, the palace is established, within which is the crystallisation of the activities of all the buddhas, the youthful form of Vajrasattva in union with his consort Khorlo Gyédepma (Tib. ’Khor lo rgyas ’debs ma).<sup>60</sup> Although here called Vajrasattva, this must be understood as referring to the wrathful form Vajrakīlaya; this is confirmed both by the epithet ‘youthful’ (Tib. *gzhon nu*; Skt. *kumāra*) and by the name of his consort Khorlo Gyédepma.

The deities of their entourage are mentioned: the four supreme sons relating to the four surrounding families (Buddhakīlaya, Ratnakīlaya, Padmakīlaya, Karmakīlaya), as well as the ten wrathful ones—Hūṃkāra, Vijaya, Nīladaṇḍa, Yamāntaka, Acala, Hayagrīva, Aparājita, Amṛtakuṇḍalin, Trailokyavijaya, Mahābala—and their respective consorts. These deities are further surrounded by messengers as well as by ordinary people, auditors (Skt. *śrāvaka*), independent buddhas (Skt. *pratyekabuddha*) and bodhisattvas.

---

<sup>58</sup> Cathy Cantwell and Robert Mayer, *Early Tibetan Documents on Phur pa from Dunhuang* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008), 42–44; and Martin J. Boord, *The Cult of the Deity Vajrakīla, According to the Texts of the Northern Treasures Tradition of Tibet* (Tring: The Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1993), 106.

<sup>59</sup> The Bhutan NGB group has the variant *YAM* instead of ‘wisdom’ (Tib. *ye shes*). See below, rt. 1.4.

<sup>60</sup> On the problems with associating the Sanskrit name Dīptacakrā with Khorlo Gyédepma, see Cantwell and Mayer, *Early Tibetan Documents on Phur pa from Dunhuang*, 153–157.

After this brief initial description of the palace and its deities, the *bhagavat* manifests as a terrifying wrathful form, endowed with an utterly peaceful mind and with great compassion. From this wrathful form further wrathful emanations are emitted. An elaborate praise of Vajrakīlaya is sung in unison by the latter; the praise contains a description of Vajrakīlaya and of his attributes. Vajrakīlaya is depicted as having three faces, six arms, and four legs. The right face is red<sup>61</sup> in colour and symbolises the *sambhogakāya*; the left face is dark toned white<sup>62</sup> and symbolises the *nirmāṇakāya*; and the central face is dark blue and symbolises the *dharmakāya*; his nine eyes stare into the non-referential *dharmadhātu*. With his upper hands he holds a nine-pronged and a five-pronged *vajra*, symbolising the completion of the qualities of the nine stages and the stopping of the five continua of becoming, respectively; with his middling hands he holds a mass of flames and a trident, which respectively symbolise the burning of the afflictions and the stopping of the three poisons; and with his lower hands he holds a *phurpa* that strikes the three existences. His four legs symbolise the activity of the four immeasurables (Skt. *apramāṇa*).

## 2.2. Chapter 2: The Maṇḍala of Vajrakīlaya, Principle of Activity

D 48r.2–50v.1 = G-a 293r.4–296r.7, GR 290r.3–293r.3, (G-b 346r.4–349v.5,) M 762.5–770.1, S 299r.2–302r.5,  
T 221.3–227.6, (R 89r.3–91v.3,)

TSH 329.1–338.2, KAḤ 283.2–296.6, KYI 263.5–271.1, X 6r.5–13r.7

The second chapter is concerned with the way Vajrakīlaya's form encompasses the root of all enlightened activities. The chapter begins by pointing out the principle of emanating a ruthlessly wrathful form from within the state of great peace and compassion. Vajrakīlaya is then described as the activity principle of all the *tathāgatas*. His *mantra* is

<sup>61</sup> D gives 'white', but this looks like an editorial intervention.

<sup>62</sup> The Bhutan NGB group along with the KD versions give *dkar nag*, and this appears to be the older reading; it would seem that the unusualness of this expression, which here indicates 'dark toned white' (not 'black and white'), prompted various emendations in the other branches of the transmission: D has 'maroon' (Tib. *dmār nag*), in line with its emendation of the colour of the right face, which it has changed to 'white' (see previous note), whereas the South Central NGB group proposes 'dark green' (Tib. *ljang nag*), perhaps attempting to link it to the colour associated with activity, the domain of the *nirmāṇakāya*. See below, rt. 1.10.

said to be the quintessence of the potency accomplished on the stage of all the buddhas, and as such it can cause the entirety of the three realms to waver. Vajrakīlaya's purpose is to tame those arrogant beings, such as Īśvara, etc., who cannot be tamed through the buddhas' more peaceful means;<sup>63</sup> these arrogant beings are made to faint in fear, and are then blissfully revived through the *bhagavat*'s light-rays, thus being turned into servants of the Buddhist doctrine.

Next the text reproduces, with some variation, several verses from the *rDo rje phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi dum bu* [Vajrakīlaya Root Tantra Fragment; hereafter *Vajrakīlaya Root Fragment*]:

May the wisdom body of all the buddhas, the fiercely wrathful form blazing from within the state of the *vajra dharmadhātu*, be generated by me as the wealth of the [deity's] awakened body!<sup>64</sup>

A few lines below we have:

<sup>63</sup> This is a reference to the myth of Rudra, as Īśvara/Śiva are all names of the same deity, who in the Tantric Buddhist context comes to personify the wilful ignorance and visceral arrogance of ego-clinging. See Robert Mayer, "The Figure of Maheśvara/Rudra in the rÑin-ma-pa Tantric Tradition," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 21.2 (1998): 271–310; Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*, 176; Jacques Scheuer, "Entre démons, dieux, Bouddhas: Des frontières fluides—À propos de quelques relations bouddhisme/hindouisme," in *Dieux, génies, anges et démons dans les cultures orientales & Florilegium Indiae Orientalis*, Jean-Marie Verpoorten in honorem, ed. Christophe Vielle, Christian Cannuyer, and Dylan Esler (Brussels: Société Royale Belge d'Études Orientales, 2017), 101–116.

<sup>64</sup> *sangs rgyas kun gyi ye shes sku/ ngang nyid rdo rje chos dbyings las/ 'bar ba'i khro bo mi bzad pa/ sku yi dbyig tu bdag bskyed cig/*. The Tibetan is here given after G-a 294r.4.

For the canonical version of this and the following verse, cf. *rDo rje phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi dum bu*, in *bKa' 'gyur* (sDe dge), vol. 81: 87.2–3. For a translation (with edition of the Tibetan text), see Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 80. Note that here the verses are quoted in reverse order. The most notable differences to the present recension are: (1) the lines *rdo rje'i de nyid rang bzhin las/ chos kyi dbyings kyi ngo bo nyid/* appear instead of *ngang nyid rdo rje chos dbyings las/*; (2) we have *sku yi gter du* instead of *sku yi dbyig tu* and its variants; and (3), with regard to the next verse, *'khor ba* instead of *srid pa* (this occurs twice).

A recension closer to that quoted here is found in *rDo rje khros pa zhe sdang gcod* [Vajra Wrath Cutting through Hatred], in *bKa' 'gyur* (sDe dge), vol. 99: 443.6–7. We also find these verses in Chapter 3 of the *rDo rje khros pa* [Vajra Wrath Tantra], critically edited in Cantwell and Mayer, *The Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra and the Vajra Wrath Tantra*, 246–247.

May the awareness-holders (Skt. *vidyādhara*) of Vajrakumāra accomplish existence as *vajra*! Existence [being transformed into] the deity Vajrakīlaya, may we accomplish the wisdom wrath!<sup>65</sup>

After these verses, we have a discussion of the ultimate nature of the *phurpa* as being uncompounded throughout the three times, as being unoriginated, birthless and hence indestructible like the diamond, its nature being emptiness. At the same time, the *phurpa*'s ultimate nature of emptiness does not exclude its functioning on the level of procuring accomplishment (Skt. *siddhi*). Such accomplishment is linked to the *phurpa*'s identification with the whole of existence (Skt. *bhavakīla*),<sup>66</sup> whereby *saṃsāra* itself is transformed through striking it with the cosmic *phurpa*,<sup>67</sup> and is made possible, practically speaking, by the blessings emanating from the pulsating light-rays that manifest from the non-dual union of Vajrakīlaya and Khorlo Gyédepma.

After a list of *kīlaya mantras*, the *tantra* goes on to discuss the *phurpa* of phenomenal existence, explaining that it is through the *bodhicitta* generated during the male and female deities' sexual embrace that a seed syllable appears, from which pulsating light-rays strike the open dimension consisting of the universe and its inhabitants. The *phurpa* is brought to strike all the phenomena that appear, and is said to encompass both worldly and supramundane aspects within its consummate realisation.

There then follows a brief description of the ten wrathful ones and their attributes, together with their consorts—the ten wrathful ones are said to serve the purpose of liberating sentient beings and of accomplishing all deeds.<sup>68</sup> They are depicted, in terms similar to the main deity, as having three faces, six arms, and four legs. Their upper hands hold a *vajra* and a blood-filled skull cup, whereas their lower hands

---

<sup>65</sup> *rdo rje gzhon nu'i rigs 'dzin rnams/ srid pa rdo rje grub par mdzod/ srid pa rdo rje phur pa 'i lha/ ye shes khro bo grub par mdzod/*. The Tibetan is given after G-a 294r.6–7.

<sup>66</sup> On the way the cosmic *phurpa* of existence (Skt. *bhavakīla*) is visualised in the context of tantric practice, see Boord, *The Cult of the Deity Vajrakīla*, 71, 73, 163, 167. On this cosmic identification with Mt. Meru, the *axis mundi*, as a factor that may have contributed towards the *phurpa*'s appeal to the Tibetans, see Cantwell and Mayer, *The Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra and the Vajra Wrath Tantra*, 21.

<sup>67</sup> Cantwell and Mayer, *Early Tibetan Documents on Phur pa from Dunhuang*, 160.

<sup>68</sup> For a detailed discussion of the functions of the ten wrathful ones, see Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 185–191.

churn the stuff of existence with a *phurpa*. It is in their middling hands that they hold their distinctive attributes: the light blue Hūṃkāra holds a bow and arrow; the white Vijaya holds a wheel and a trident; the blue Nīladaṇḍa holds a flame of fire and a club; the dark blue Yamāntaka holds a skull-ornamented club and an axe; the blue-green Acala holds a sword and a noose; the red Hayagrīva holds a noose and a razor; the light red Aparājita (here called Ṭakkirāja, Tib. 'Dod rgyal) holds a skull cup and a tail fan; the dark green Amṛtakuṇḍalin holds a crossed *vajra* and a bell; the azure coloured Trailokyavijaya holds a noose made from a snake and a *vajra*; and the conch coloured Mahābala holds a hammer and a noose.

The female consorts have the same colours as their male counterparts, and hold their attribute in their right hand, while proffering a blood-filled skull cup with their left: Nāḍī (Tib. sGra 'byin ma) holds a mace; Vajragarvā (Tib. sNyems ma) holds a sword; Vajranakhī (Tib. rDo rje sder mo) a hook; Śmāśānikā (Tib. Dur khrod bdag mo) a skull-ornamented club; Udūkhalā (Tib. gTun khung ma) holds a hammer; Vajracandālī (Tib. rDo rje gtum mo) holds a razor blade; Vajraśarāṭopā (Tib. rDo rje mda' snyems) holds a hammer; Vāyuvegā (Tib. Rlung 'byin ma) an axe; Vajraghātakā (Tib. rDo rje gsod ma) holds a curved knife; and Vajrāveśī (Tib. rDo rje skul byed ma/skul byed rdo rje) a trident.<sup>69</sup>

From the *phurpa* of existence there radiate forth the emanated brothers and sisters; the *tantra* describes them as having two hands and one face each (something which needs specifying in a tantric context!), as having a similar colour to that of the principal deity, and as being situated to the right and left sides of the central deity. The KD annotations add the information that there are ten sisters on the left side, identified as female killers (Tib. *gsod byed ma*), and ten brothers on the right side, identified as male carnivores (Tib. *za byed pa*). This corresponds to a common Nyingma list of these deities (whereby it must be noted that not all the killers are winged, nor all the carnivores fanged).<sup>70</sup> In their left hand, they each hold a *phurpa* bearing their

<sup>69</sup> The Sanskrit reconstructions of these names are merely tentative; cf. Ibid., 316–318. See also the table in Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 359–362.

<sup>70</sup> Cathy Cantwell and Robert Mayer, “The Winged and the Fanged,” in *From Bhakti to Bon: Festschrift for Per Kværne*, ed. Hanna Havnevik and Charles Ramble (Oslo: The



respective emblem. The main distinction lies in their faces, which are said to correspond to their fearsome appearance at the time of their past subjugation. Moreover, each of the couples is linked, in the KD annotations, to one of the ten wrathful ones. Thus, the tiger-headed carnivore and vulture-headed killer are linked to Vijaya; the yak-headed carnivore and raven-headed killer are linked to Nīladaṇḍa; the stag-headed carnivore and owl-headed killer are linked to Yamāntaka; the leopard-headed carnivore and crow-headed killer are linked to Acala; the cat-headed carnivore and hoopoe-headed killer are linked to Hayagrīva; the wolf-headed carnivore and hawk-headed<sup>71</sup> killer are linked to Aparājita alias Ṭakkirāja; the lion-headed carnivore and bat-headed killer are linked to Amṛtakunḍalin; the bear-headed carnivore and weasel-headed<sup>72</sup> killer are linked to Trailokyavijaya; the pig-headed carnivore and lizard-headed killer are linked to Hūmkāra; and the brown bear-headed carnivore and rat-headed killer are linked to Mahābala.

The *tantra* then alludes to the four female doorkeepers of the *maṇḍala*;<sup>73</sup> they each hold a *phurpa* in the left hand, while holding in the right hand their respective emblems: the white hoopoe-headed goddess in the east, holding a hook; the yellow magpie-headed goddess in the south, holding a noose; the red owl-headed goddess in the west, holding a chain; and the green hawk-headed goddess in the north, holding a bell.

Next, we have the *phurpas* identified with the four supreme sons, each one of whom is associated with one of the four Buddha families—since the *vajra* family is at the centre of the *maṇḍala* of Vajrakīlaya, the four families are those of the *Tathāgata*, of the Jewel, of the Lotus, and of Activity. The four sons are described as having three faces, six arms, and four legs, and as being, respectively, white, yellow, red, and bluish green; they are adorned with the charnel ground ornaments. The characteristics and emblems of the four sons are as follows: Buddhakīlaya is said to have a blue right face and a red left face, his central face being white.

---

Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 2015), 158. See also Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 299, 302.

<sup>71</sup> Note that the KD versions mistakenly have ‘fox’ (Tib. *wa*) instead of ‘hawk’ (Tib. *khra*). See below, rt. 2.5.

<sup>72</sup> Here the Bhutan NGB group mistakenly has ‘owl’ (Tib. *srin bya*) instead of ‘weasel’ (Tib. *sre mo/sre mong*). See below, rt. 2.6.

<sup>73</sup> On the four doorkeepers, cf. Cantwell and Mayer, *Early Tibetan Documents on Phur pa from Dunhuang*, 138–139.

His top two right hands hold a *vajra* and a noose, whereas his top two left ones hold a battle axe and a sword. Ratnakīlaya is depicted as having a white right face and a red left face, with a yellow central face. His two upper right hands bear a staff (Tib. *beng*) and a sword, while with his two top left hands he holds a battle axe and a mace (Tib. *be chon*). Padmakīlaya has a white right face, a yellow left face and a red central face. In his upper hands he bears a sword in his right and a spear in his left, while his middling hands hold a bow and arrow. Karmakīlaya has a white right face, a red left face and a green central one. His top two right hands hold a spear and a hook, and his two upper left hands bear a curved knife and a sword. With their lower set of hands, each of them holds a gigantic *phurpa*, the size of which equals Mt. Meru, yet each of the *phurpas* differs from the others in being associated with one of the four tantric activities.

After this rather detailed description of the deities of Vajrakīlaya's *maṇḍala*, the chapter concludes by addressing two inward levels of the *phurpa*: it first makes the point that the *phurpa* of the *dharmatā*, which represents the ultimate nature of the *phurpa*, pervades the entirety of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, including all the reified entities making up the visible (Tib. *gzugs su snang*), audible (Tib. *sgra*), and mental (Tib. *dran dang bsam*) levels of experience. The *tantra* then briefly alludes to the *phurpa* of the non-duality of the two truths, which embodies the inseparability of expedient means (Skt. *upāya*) and discerning knowledge (Skt. *prajñā*). Here we can see how the text seamlessly weaves together multiple levels of ritual, meditative and metaphysical discourse.

### 2.3. Chapter 3: Different Kinds of Phurpas

D 50v.1–51r.7 = G-a 296r.8–297v.4, GR 293r.3–294r.4, (G-b 349v.5–351r.2,) M 770.1–772.6, S 302r.5–303r.7,

T 227.6–230.2, (R 91v.3–92v.1,)

TSH 338.2–341.6, KAḤ 296.6–303.2, KYI 271.2–273.6, X 13r.7–16v.5

The third chapter of the *tantra* starts with an explanation of the pure intentionality (Tib. *dgongs pa*) of awakened mind (Tib. *thugs*), and leads us through various steps towards an understanding of the material *phurpa* and its function. We are first presented with a variety of levels of understanding of what the *phurpa* is, as well as what it strikes (and we

can see in this listing an echo of the famous set of four *phurpas*).<sup>74</sup> We are told that the *bodhicitta*, i.e. essential awareness, strikes on all levels, whereas the non-duality of the *dharmatā* and wisdom strikes all beings. The wisdom of realisation strikes the equality of the *dharmatā*, while the wisdom that knows everything without exception strikes all the phenomena of conceptual thought—these latter two would seem to correspond respectively to the wisdom that knows things as they are (Skt. *yātvādbhāvikañāna*) and the wisdom that knows things in their diversity (Skt. *yāvādbhāvikañāna*).

We then move on to the *phurpa* that is visualised as a deity in meditative praxis, which is said to strike all the phenomena pertaining to relative truth (Skt. *saṃvrtisatya*) and which might be held to correspond to the training in pure vision (Tib. *dag snang*).<sup>75</sup> This is followed by the *phurpa* of great compassion, said to strike the realms of all sentient beings, and the material *phurpa*, which strikes and liberates the enemies seeking to harm one.

The *tantra* then shifts back to the rarefied atmosphere of non-dual understandings of the *phurpa*'s nature, evoking the unelaborated wisdom awareness (Tib. *rig pa'i ye shes*) of the *dharmadhātu*<sup>76</sup> that strikes the vast expanse (Tib. *klong*) beyond birth and cessation.

This limitless expanse then paves the way for another type of womb, the mother-like space of equality, which is struck by the *bodhicitta* in its white and red aspects—this, of course, alludes to the practice of sexual yoga and to the male and female sexual fluids. We then have the *phurpa* of the *saṃbhogakāya* relating to changeless clarity, and the *phurpa* of the *nirmāṇakāya*, which manifests within *saṃsāra* in order to illuminate the six realms of becoming and relieve the suffering of the beings born therein.

---

<sup>74</sup> On the four *phurpas*, see below.

<sup>75</sup> For a good account of the practice of pure vision in the early Nyingma tradition as represented by Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo, see Heidi I. Köppl, *Establishing Appearances as Divine: Rongzom Chözang on Reasoning, Madhyamaka, and Purity* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 2008), esp. 100–102 (English translation), 119–121 (Tibetan text).

<sup>76</sup> The wording suggests that this corresponds to the wisdom of the *dharmadhātu* (Skt. *dharmadhātujñāna*), which is central among the five wisdoms. Cf. Herbert V. Guenther, *Matrix of Mystery: Scientific and Humanistic Aspects of rDzogs chen Thought* (Boulder: Shambhala, 1984), 85.

The *tantra* once again returns to the deity visualised during meditation, but this time in relation to its emanations that perform the four activities of pacifying (Skt. *śānti*), increasing (Skt. *puṣṭi*), dominating (Skt. *vāśa*), and fiercely exterminating (Skt. *māraṇa*). At this point, we are briefly introduced to the four supreme sons, whose task it is to liberate the obstacle/enemy personified as Rudra. These four supreme sons are *nirmāṇakāya* forms of Vajrakīlaya, with *heruka* upper bodies and *phurpa*-shaped lower bodies, and are associated with the material *phurpa*.<sup>77</sup> Interestingly, their work of liberating the enemy is here linked to ‘an effort pertaining to the three places’ (Tib. *gnas gsum rtsol bas*), and the KD annotations gloss this as relating to the landowner deities (Tib. *sa bdag*).<sup>78</sup> While the exact implications of the gloss are unclear, the passage seems to allude to the tripartite division of the cosmos (into heavens, earth, and netherworlds), with the gloss underscoring the importance of the local *sa bdag* cults, both in relation to the taming of the earth as a setting for Vajrakīlaya’s activity, as implied here,<sup>79</sup> and, more widely, regarding the revelation of scripture and other cultural treasures, of which this *tantra* is indeed an instantiation.<sup>80</sup>

The material *phurpa* having thus been evoked by way of the four supreme sons, its various parts are associated with specific doctrinal categories, such as the five wisdoms, four immeasurables, eight releases, ten strengths, and four types of fearlessness. As we thus gradually move from the centre to the periphery of the *maṇḍala*, we now come to the four female messengers, each of whom is assigned specific characteristics corresponding to the four tantric activities. Here two further groups of four are introduced: four substances (moonstone,<sup>81</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Robert Mayer, “Pelliot 346: A Dunhuang Tibetan Text on rDo rje Phur pa,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 27.1 (2004): 145–146, incl. n. 16. See also Cantwell and Mayer, *Early Tibetan Documents on Phur pa from Dunhuang*, 39, 72–73.

<sup>78</sup> The full gloss reads *sa bdag dpal phur pa sras/* (Tibetan given after TSH 340.4), thus connecting the *phurpa* sons with the landowner deities.

<sup>79</sup> For an account of the taming of these local deities by Padmasambhava as described in the *Black One Hundred Thousand*, see Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 122–123.

<sup>80</sup> Mayer, “Rethinking Treasure (Part One),” 150.

<sup>81</sup> Lopon P. Ogyan Tenzin points out that *chu shel* renders the Sanskrit *candrakānta*, which refers to the moonstone. Cf. J. S. Negi, *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary*, vol. 3 (Sarnath: CIHTS, 1993–2005), 1207; Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, 386.

ambrosia, a mirror,<sup>82</sup> and mustard-seed); and four *maṇḍalas* (the natural *maṇḍala*, the seminal nucleus that is the *maṇḍala* of *bodhicitta*, the *maṇḍala* of meditative absorption (Skt. *samādhi*), and the *maṇḍala* of reflection). To understand how these material and ritual groups relate to each other, we need to observe the manner in which these *maṇḍalas* respectively correspond to the four *phurpas* (except that here the order of the second and third *phurpas* is reversed): the *phurpa* of wisdom awareness (associated with the ultimate nature of reality ~ the natural *maṇḍala* = the moonstone); the *phurpa* of the secret *bodhicitta* (associated with the practice of sexual *yoga* ~ the *maṇḍala* of the seminal nucleus = ambrosia); the *phurpa* of compassion (associated with the generation phase ~ the *maṇḍala* of meditative absorption = the mirror); and the *phurpa* of material substance (associated with the activity of killing ~ the *maṇḍala* of reflection = the mustard-seeds).<sup>83</sup> The association of the rite of killing with the *maṇḍala* of reflection may seem counter-intuitive at first, but becomes clearer when one takes into consideration the fact that in order for this rite to be spiritually efficacious, the practitioner needs to realise that all appearances (including the enemy to be liberated and the wrathful emanations that execute the deed) are mere insubstantial reflections, their nature being emptiness.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, the Tibetan word translated as ‘reflection’, *gzugs brnyan*, contains the component *gzugs* (‘form’); as pointed out by Lopon P. Ogyan Tanzin, *gzugs* is frequently used to refer to the effigy to be stabbed in the course of the practice.<sup>85</sup>

In terms of accomplishing the above-mentioned *maṇḍalas* in the course of meditative practice, this occurs by means of the main wisdom deity, the five families of supreme sons and their hundred and eight emanations. It should be noted here that these numbers are not hard and

---

<sup>82</sup> The Bhutan NGB group reverses the order, placing ‘mirror’ before ‘ambrosia’ (Tib. *me long bdud rtsi*).

<sup>83</sup> On the four *phurpas*, see Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 259–264. On such variations in their ordering, see Cantwell and Mayer, *The Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra and the Vajra Wrath Tantra*, 37, n. 1.

<sup>84</sup> See Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 165.

<sup>85</sup> For examples of this usage, see Cantwell and Mayer, *Early Tibetan Documents on Phur pa from Dunhuang*, 111, 113 (for *gzugs*) and 172–173 (for the same usage with *gzugs brnyan*). The actual performance of the rite of killing is accomplished through the pelting of mustard-seeds visualised as the deity’s emanations. Cf. *Ibid.*, 119.

fast, as we witness a level of fluctuation in these numerical categories within our *tantra*.

The *tantra* goes on to discuss the emanations, which are described as outer, inner, and secret, and as having the form of a *phurpa*: they have a triangular blade, a knot at the waist and are placed in a twenty-one-fold triangle. Moreover, the emanations perform *mudrās*, emblematic gestures, and are endowed with mantric seed syllables.

The purpose of the hundred and eight emanations is to perform the activities of maddening, assembling, and killing Rudra,<sup>86</sup> who in the KD annotations is said to be impaled upon a six-spoked wheel. It is only through these steps that the ritual can be said to have been concluded successfully.<sup>87</sup>

#### 2.4. Chapter 4: Propitiation and Evocation

D 51r.7–53r.4 = G-a 297v.4–299v.7, GR 294r.4–296r.5, (G-b 351r.3–353v.2,) M 772.6–777.6, S 303r.7–305v.1, T 230.2–234.5, (R 92v.1–94r.5,) TSH 341.6–348.3, KAḤ 303.2–313.4, KYI 273.6–278.6, X 16v.5–21v.7

The fourth chapter concerns the ritual meditations of propitiation (Skt. *sevā*) and evocation (Skt. *sādhana*). The practitioner is advised to go to a solitary place, to delight his master and to draw a boundary so as to prevent obstacles from arising.<sup>88</sup> He then engages upon the standard set of three meditative absorptions of Mahāyoga, viz. the meditative absorption of thusness, the all-illuminating meditative absorption, and

---

<sup>86</sup> 'chol dang 'dus dang bsad pa dang/. The Tibetan is given after D 51r.5.

<sup>87</sup> Lopon P. Ogyan Tenzin explains that the expression *mtha' bsdus* is often used in a ritual context together with *las kyi* (the latter is indeed found in the KD annotations). The sense is that the ritual has been successfully brought to conclusion, with the implication that after liberating the victim and sending his consciousness to a pure field, the practitioner receives the latter's merit and remaining life-force, thereby increasing his own longevity. The rite is described in Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 230. Of course, failure to properly liberate the victim's consciousness is akin to ordinary killing and will have the adverse effect, shortening the practitioner's lifespan.

<sup>88</sup> This is, of course, very much the standard procedure for serious contemplative practice in the Buddhist tradition; it is well described by Nupchen Sangyé Yéshé in his *Lamp for the Eye of Contemplation*; see Esler, "The Lamp for the Eye of Contemplation," 30–35.

the meditative absorption of the causal seed syllable,<sup>89</sup> in this case *HŪM*. These three meditative absorptions proceed from meditating on the unborn emptiness of all phenomena, through the all-pervading luminosity and natural compassion of the mind, to the crystallisation of the mutual inseparability of both aspects (emptiness and compassion/luminosity) in the form of a seed syllable, which then becomes the source of the visualisation of the entire *maṇḍala* of the deity.

The deity's palace (Tib. *gzhal med khang*; Skt. *vimāna*) is constructed using the syllable *BHRŪM* as its basis, and while the practitioner meditates on the wisdom being (Skt. *jñānasattva*) and his consort in his heart, the other deities of the *maṇḍala* are installed in his body according to the following scheme, which we also find in the *Noble Noose of Methods*:<sup>90</sup> at the top of the head is Hūmkāra; on the forehead is Vijaya; at the throat is Hayagrīva; at the heart is Amṛtakuṇḍalin; at the navel is Yamāntaka; at the secret place is Mahābala; on the right shoulder is Nīladaṇḍa; on the left shoulder is Trailokyavijaya; on the right leg is Acala; on the left leg is Aparājita. The four female gate-keepers are found in the palms of his four hands.

Next is a description of self-initiation using the basic structure of the four empowerments: by visualising the deities of the five Buddha families in union with their consorts above the crown of the adept's head, the stream of nectar pouring down from them purifies all stains and corresponds to the vase empowerment (Tib. *bum pa'i dbang*; Skt. *kalaśābhiṣeka*). As the ambrosia reaches the level of the throat, reification (Tib. *ngos 'dzin*) is cleansed, which corresponds to the secret empowerment (Tib. *gsang ba'i dbang*; Skt. *guhyābhiṣeka*). As the five wisdom goddesses dissolve into the practitioner, he experiences bliss, this being the empowerment of wisdom through discerning knowledge (Tib. *shes rab ye shes kyi dbang*; Skt. *prajñājñānābhiṣeka*).<sup>91</sup> The final state of non-dual dissolution is then described as the fourth empowerment.

---

<sup>89</sup> For a discussion of these with reference to the Dunhuang manuscripts, see Sam van Schaik, "A Definition of Mahāyoga: Sources from the Dunhuang Manuscripts," *Tantric Studies* 1 (2008): 58–63.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 76.

<sup>91</sup> The implications of this term are discussed in Herbert V. Guenther, *The Life and Teaching of Nāropa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 269–270.

Here again, we find verses from the *Vajrakīlaya Root Fragment*, but they are interspersed with lines from our text: “the pledge of liberating compassionately” is said to effect union with the *jinās*, so “it is not killing and oppressing”.<sup>92</sup> The manner in which these lines are interwoven with our text is rather typical for way the *tantras* were compiled, involving the reuse and rearrangement of existing textual segments that are shared between several scriptures;<sup>93</sup> after all, the redactors of the *tantras* (whether they were anonymous or, as became increasingly the case during Nyang-rel’s time, named individuals)<sup>94</sup> were at once creative editors and visionary revealers, the two roles going hand in hand.<sup>95</sup> Here the supreme propitiation is described as the pulsating light-rays that enables the application of all activities.

At this point, the text somewhat cryptically alludes to the blessing and arousal of the male and female organs (called the ‘open dimension of space’ and the ‘secret place’ respectively), from which rays of light pulsate as a *mantra* is repeated to invoke the ten wrathful ones, their consorts and the set of twenty *khra thabs* (‘multiform means’) male deities.<sup>96</sup> This ushers forth a rather abrupt statement concerning the *phurpa* of existence, which is said to be related to birth from the womb. The implication seems to be that the whole of liberated existence takes birth in a pure dimension. More specifically, this appears to relate to the practice of transferring the consciousness of the object of the wrathful rite (see Chapter 7), whereby the consciousness is drawn into the *phurpa* and merged into the syllable *HŪM*, and then sent off with the syllable *PHAṬ* to the wombs of the female deities in union with their male counterparts, so as to ensure rebirth in a pure field. This would tie in rather nicely with the allusion to the deities’ sexual organs mentioned above. In this way, the twin rites of union and liberation are brought

---

<sup>92</sup> *rDo rje phur pa rtsa ba’i rgyud kyi dum bu*, in *bKa’ ’gyur* (sDe dge), vol. 81: 87.1, translated and edited in Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 79: *snying rjes bsgral ba’i dam tshig ni/ [...] bsad cing gnan pa ma yin te/*. The Tibetan is here given after G-a 298v.2–3.

<sup>93</sup> Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 19.

<sup>94</sup> Mayer, “Rethinking Treasure (Part One),” 171–172.

<sup>95</sup> Hirshberg, *Remembering the Lotus-Born*, 137.

<sup>96</sup> On this set of male emanations, see Cantwell and Mayer, *Early Tibetan Documents on Phur pa from Dunhuang*, 185, n. 21.



together in the wrathful rite to free the consciousness from its rigidified negative tendencies.<sup>97</sup>

A further association that seems relevant to this context occurs in the *Black One Hundred Thousand's* discussion of three manners of practising the generation phase (Skt. *utpattikrama*). The method intended for those of inferior faculties generates the deities of the various levels of the *maṇḍala* in the manner of the four types of birth. The primordial *maṇḍala* is generated in the manner of preternatural birth (Skt. *upapāduka*); the ten wrathful kings (alluded to at this point in our text, in connection with the *phurpa* of existence) are generated from the passion of the male and female consorts in the manner of birth from a womb (Skt. *jarāyuja*); the twenty animal-headed emanations are generated from white and red seminal nuclei in the manner of birth from an egg (Skt. *aṇḍaja*); finally, the twelve protectors are generated in the manner of birth from warmth and moisture (Skt. *saṃsvedaja*).<sup>98</sup>

As the ten wrathful ones are evoked by their names (or seed syllables), rays of light are emitted and reabsorbed, and this causes their seats to manifest in the form of ten Brahmanical gods, subsumed yet subdued within the Buddhist pantheon:<sup>99</sup> Indra to the east, Agni to the south-east, Yama to the south, Rākṣasa to the south-west, Nāga to the west, Vāyu to the north-west, Yakṣa to the north, Aiśānī to the north-east, Bhūmipati at the nadir, and Brahmā at the zenith.

Having thus visualised the deities of the *maṇḍala*, it is time to consecrate the deity imagined, the pledge being (Skt. *samayasattva*), through the enlivening presence of the wisdom being. This is done by imagining a blazing blue *HŪṂ* at the heart of the visualised deity, which invokes the wisdom beings of the entire *maṇḍala* of deities; the latter descend upon the *maṇḍala* in luminous forms corresponding to those of the deities they are meant to enliven.

---

<sup>97</sup> On the explanation given in Chapter 23 of the *Noble Noose of Methods*, see Cantwell and Mayer, *Early Tibetan Documents on Phur pa from Dunhuang*, 189; Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 78–79, 195, 322–323; cf. the similar explanations found in the *Black One Hundred Thousand*, in Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 230, 281.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 311.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Scheuer, “Entre démons, dieux, Bouddhas: Des frontières fluides,” 109–110.

The deities can now be considered, from the emic point of view of the ritual performance, to be actually present. The ritual thus progresses to a presentation of offerings (outer, inner, and secret) and to a gentle reminder of the deities' pledge to aid the adept by showing the signs of success in the practice. This then culminates in receiving the blessings, embodied in the ambrosia symbolising the *bodhicitta*, the latter term connoting, in a Mahāyoga context, both the seminal fluids retained through yogic praxis and the ultimate nature of mind.<sup>100</sup> The state that is now accessed is beyond form, sound, and thought, indicating that all the structuring principles of conceptual elaboration have ceased. This is not to say, however, that this state is completely disembodied, since the *tantra* specifies that “non-dual union with the element of space”<sup>101</sup> is arrived at while performing the *mudrās* of summoning (Tib. *dgug*), binding (Tib. *gdam*), and bringing down (Tib. *dbab*).

Having reached, in a sense, the climax of the ritual, the adept is to repeat the deity's *mantra*. During the repetition, the luminous *mantra* chain emerges from the male deity's mouth, entering the consort's mouth and descending to her vagina; it then re-enters the male deity's body through the male organ, thence to ascend to the heart, and thus continue its trajectory in a circular motion. In like manner, the *dharmakāya* itself is invited to thus descend through the female deity towards her womb, there irradiating light and giving birth to the supreme sons.

As mentioned above in the context of Chapter 3, the supreme sons are associated with the material *phurpa* and are visualised with the lower part of their bodies having the shape of a *phurpa*. Their particular role is especially linked to accomplishing the wrathful activities of the ritual. To this end, their wisdom beings are invoked and dissolved upon them, offerings presented to them and their special blessings imbibed in the form of the four substances consisting of black grain, poison, blood, and ambrosia. As the adept visualises himself as the main deity and repeats

---

<sup>100</sup> Sam van Schaik, “The Sweet Sage and the *Four Yogas*: A Lost Mahāyoga Treatise from Dunhuang,” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 4 (2008): 14–15, n. 48. For an in-depth philosophical study of the multivalence of the term *bodhicitta*, see Dorji Wangchuk, *The Resolve to Become a Buddha: A Study of the Bodhicitta Concept in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism* (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 2007), esp. 206–232.

<sup>101</sup> *nam mkha'i khams dang gnyis med sbyar/*. The Tibetan is given after G-a 299r.8.

Vajrakīlaya's *mantra*, light-rays radiate from his heart, dissolving into the *phurpas* visualised as the four supreme sons. The signs of success are that the *phurpas* should begin to quiver, leap up, and emit light and sounds.

### 2.5. Chapter 5: The Eight Charnel Ground Accoutrements

D 53r.4–54v.4 = G-a 299v.7–301v.5, GR 296r.5–298r.2, (G-b 353v.2–355v.5,) M 777.7–782.2, S 305v.1–307r.7,

T 234.5–238.5, (R 94r.6–95v.7,)

TSH 348.4–354.5, KAḤ 313.4–324.1, KYI 278.6–283.4, X 21v.7–27r.5

The fifth chapter is devoted to the symbolism and magical qualities of the eight charnel ground accoutrements. Somewhat confusingly, while the list of eight is given in full in the chapter's introduction and in the body of the text, we also find a statement that, "when indicated causally, they can be counted as six",<sup>102</sup> and in the chapter's conclusion the skulls and human skin are left out of the list—presumably, this is an indication of how one might arrive at a count of six. Let us now have a look at the eight charnel ground accoutrements and their significance.

(1) The elephant hide symbolises the great strength of the Great Vehicle, whereby it must be observed that the term here refers to Mahāyoga rather than to the conventional Mahāyāna. The notion of strength (Tib. *stobs*) signifies that the Mahāyoga approach subsumes (Tib. *shong*) all lower vehicles, but also that it equalises sin and virtue, to the extent that even the five boundless sins need be no impediment for obtaining accomplishment. Such accomplishment can be attained without having to relinquish the afflictions and sensual pleasures. The elephant hide is also connected to conquering ignorance.

(2) The tiger skin signifies the beauty (Tib. *mdzes*) of establishing the afflictions as wisdom and the heroism (Tib. *dpa'*) of knowing the five poisons to be, by nature, the five Buddha families. It also connotes a kind of compassion that is both impartial and fierce, for just as the tiger overpowers all lesser herbivores, this compassion is able to conquer the imprints (Skt. *vāsanā*) all at once and to act as an antidote to the visceral arrogance personified by Rudra.

---

<sup>102</sup> *rgyu yis mtshon na don drug ldan*/. The Tibetan is given after GR 296r.7. Note that G-a 300r.1 here has the nonsensical *mchon* instead of *mtshon*.

(3) The coloured patterns on the serpent indicate that the conduct of a *mantrin* can be both heroic, as far as he himself is concerned, and fearsome when seen from the viewpoint of an external observer—this is doubtless an allusion to the unconventional forms of behaviour engaged in by a tantric adept.<sup>103</sup> Moreover, the fact that the snake crawls is a symbol of striving for the benefit of self and others; the fact that it is flexible indicates that different approaches may be called for depending on individual needs and dispositions, and that no one should be discarded on account of his wrong views or of the violence of his passions, since the tantric adept must hold all with compassion.

(4) The human skin is said to be fearsome and unpleasant, and is described as being endowed with fat, blood, serum, and pores, as being cold and flexible, as offering protection from the wind and as having all of its limbs intact. The text also mentions that such an emblem will strike fear into ordinary people who lack the high view of the *tantras*, as well as into those practising the lower vehicles. Next (and it is somewhat unclear how this relates to the human skin) are mentioned various kinds of teaching—provisional or definitive, transmitted verbally or beyond words, suddenly arisen or written down, outer, hidden or symbolic—and the text emphasises how all these teachings depend on the master (Skt. *guru*), underlining the importance of pleasing him in order for the blessings to occur. By practising the instructions transmitted in this context, the adept can reverse the karmic winds and receive all the blessings related to the ground, path, and fruition, as well as the view, conduct, and tantric pledges.

(5) The three kinds of skull<sup>104</sup>—dry, putrid, and wet<sup>105</sup> (Tib. *rlon*, i.e. freshly severed)—are associated with awakened body, speech, and mind, and with the three bodies (Skt. *trikāya*). The dry skull, white and clean, symbolises the *dharmakāya*, which is free from elaboration (Skt.

---

<sup>103</sup> On the interpretation of which, see Christian K. Wedemeyer, “Beef, Dog, and Other Mythologies: Connotative Semiotics in Mahāyoga Tantra Ritual and Scripture,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 75.2 (2007): 383–417.

<sup>104</sup> For a discussion of the background of the use of skulls in tantric ritual, see David B. Gray, “Skull Imagery and Skull Magic in the *Yoginī* Tantras,” *Pacific World, Third Series* 8 (2006): 21–39.

<sup>105</sup> While the latter two types are given in reverse order in the text, there seems no reason to suppose that the association with the three bodies is in any way different to what we usually find in tantric literature.

*prapañca*) and beyond conceptual signs (Skt. *nimitta*). The putrid skulls, emitting the fragrance of death and in varying stages of decay, represent the infinite spectrum of colours evocative of the *sambhogakāya*. The wet skulls symbolise the *nirmāṇakāya*, particularly in its guise as the six *munis* who appear for the benefit of sentient beings. In this connection, the *tantra* elaborates somewhat on the special characteristics of such a *nirmāṇakāya*: after passing into *nirvāṇa*, his bodily remains are relics. Moreover, while he lives in this world with his family, parents, and relatives for the sake of propagating the teaching, he actually belongs to the class of a non-returner or to that of having but one more rebirth in *saṃsāra*. As a sign of his impending enlightenment, he is endowed with clarity regarding his former lives. It may be recalled here that retrocognition (Skt. *pūrvanivāsānusmṛtijñāna*) is one of the supracognitions (Skt. *abhijñā*) that are a cognitive prelude to full enlightenment.<sup>106</sup> He is also devoid of conceptualising signs with regard to the obscurations of sentient beings and the levels of existence which they experience as their habitat.

(6) The marks of wet blood (Skt. *rakta*) indicate a passionate concern to compassionately engage with sentient beings, as well as a readiness and ability to take on multifarious forms adapted to their specific needs and predispositions. Such flexibility is possible by virtue of the infinite potentiality of the wisdom of the *dharmadhātu* (Skt. *dharmadhātujñāna*), which is open to the endless variety of phenomenal existence without ever wavering from the unchanging state.

(7) The next item on the list—the white ash<sup>107</sup>—is a particularly good example of the inextricable, albeit seemingly incongruous, combination of ghoulish lore and metaphysical ideas. The ash is associated with the effortless performance of activities—the implementation of which, the KD annotations inform us, is assigned to a zombie.<sup>108</sup> We are also told that it is a quick door (Tib. *sgo myur*), and the KD annotations provide

---

<sup>106</sup> David J. Kalupahana, *A History of Buddhist Philosophy: Continuities and Discontinuities* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994), 25. The issue is discussed in some detail in Esler, “The Lamp for the Eye of Contemplation,” 570–573.

<sup>107</sup> Lopon P. Ogyan Tenzin comments that such white ash is obtained by burning a corpse’s bones.

<sup>108</sup> On *phurpa* practice as a means of taming zombies, see Boord, *The Cult of the Deity Vajrakīla*, 41–45. On Tibetan zombie lore generally, cf. Turrell Wylie, “Ro-langs: The Tibetan Zombie,” *History of Religions* 4.1 (1964): 69–80.

the helpful clarification that the door refers to another's mouth, and that the quickness refers to the speed with which that person vomits if the ash is poured down his throat. The ash also serves the purpose of eliminating flesh, blood, and skin, being a kind of charnel ground soap! Symbolically, this is associated with the *heruka*'s ability to eliminate the darkness of ignorance by generating the illuminating light of wisdom, and with his swiftness in taming demons by the application of the fierce means at his disposal.

(8) The molten fat from the human body is said to be a supreme remedy which is not quick to be eliminated.<sup>109</sup> While it is inappropriate for ordinary people, it is soothing<sup>110</sup> for the *mantrin*. This is used to symbolise the tantric vehicle itself, which is far from being suitable for all candidates, yet which is considered a highly effective remedy against the various afflictions and which does not waste any of the raw material found in *samsāra*.

Towards the end of the chapter, we are also provided with a mythical precedent regarding the *heruka* costume, since these are said to be the accoutrements originally worn by Rudra. When the buddhas sent the *heruka* to defeat Rudra, they endowed him with a form as terrifying as that of his demonic opponent.<sup>111</sup> The conclusion then, in a sense, disarms the violence inherent in the scene by reminding us of the ultimate nature of such insignia as emptiness, free from the conceptual signs of action and agent. The manifestation of wrath is simply part of the spontaneous display of the buddhas' forceful compassion.

## 2.6. Chapter 6: The Burnt Offering

D 54v.4–56r.2 = G-a 301v.5–303r.6, GR 298r.2–299v.3, (G-b 355v.5–357v.4,) M 782.3–786.1, S 307r.7–309r.2,  
T 238.6–242.1, (R 95v.7–97r.6,) TSH 354.5–359.3, KAḤ 324.1–330.5, KYI 283.5–287.4, X 27r.5–30v.4

<sup>109</sup> Here I follow the South Central NGB group, which has *bsal mi myur*; the KD versions and D read “cannot be eliminated” (Tib. *b/gsal mi nus*), whereas the Bhutan NGB group reads “is not eliminated” (Tib. *gsal mi 'gyur*). See rt. 5.10.

<sup>110</sup> Here *rab gsal* (‘clear’, Skt. *prasannā*) has the sense of being something ‘soothing’ for the *yogin*. Cf. Negi, *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary*, vol. 14, 6330; Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, 696.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Mayer, “The Figure of Maheśvara/Rudra,” 289.

The sixth chapter deals with the performance of the wrathful burnt offering (Skt. *homa*)<sup>112</sup> and thus provides a wealth of technical ritual details. First is described the fire pit, the locus of the ritual. It is to be triangular in shape, a full cubit in width and in height, and the wall surrounding it should be three fingers wide. The names of the enemies to be destroyed, along with signs representing them, are to be placed in the centre of the pit. *Phurpas* symbolising the supreme sons are to be placed on the outside of the pit. The pit should then be smeared with earth that is blackened by the ash of burnt corpses, preferably from places where people have been murdered with swords and which have salt deposits; the earth should be mixed with the urine of camels and donkeys. Having thus smeared the fire pit, it should be strewn with black flowers and grains.

Next are described the qualities of the wood that is to be piled in the fire pit. In line with the fierce nature of the ritual, the wood to be selected should be coarse and thorny, and particularly hot when burning. The area around the fire pit should be surrounded with the branches of poisonous plants, and various wrathful decorations (viz. black ribbons, parasols, victory banners, canopies) are to be used to adorn the *maṇḍala*. Moreover, the offering cake (Tib. *gtor ma*)—which should be ten fingers in height and have twenty-two sharp edges (lit. ‘sharp blades’, Tib. *mo dbal*)—is itself to be decorated with black pennants and curtains. The ingredients used to make the offering cake are provided in a list of rather gruesome delicacies, not all of which must have been easy to come by: poison, blood, black grain oil, black millet, salt, black mustard (Skt. *kṛṣṇasarṣapa*),<sup>113</sup> part of a Nimb tree, ash from a corpse, black sesame (Skt. *kṛṣṇatila*), aconite (Tib. *btsan dug*),<sup>114</sup> black flowers, blue grit, and

---

<sup>112</sup> On which, cf. Tadeusz Skorupski, *The Sarvadurgatipariśodhana Tantra: Elimination of All Evil Destinies: Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts with Introduction, English Translation and Notes* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), 68–72 (English translation), 220–225 (Sanskrit and Tibetan texts). See also Tadeusz Skorupski, “Tibetan Homa Rites According to the gTer ma Tradition,” *The Tibet Journal* 20.4 (1995): 2–46.

<sup>113</sup> Only the Bhutan NGB group (and X) gives the correct reading *ske tshe*; the D and KD versions (barring X) have *skye tshe*, whereas the South Central NGB group has *skor tshe*, both being psychological errors.

<sup>114</sup> The Tibetan text again gives merely *dug*, but according to Lopon P. Ogyan Tanzin, this refers to aconite (Tib. *btsan dug*), a small quantity of which is mixed into the water used to knead the dough of the offering cake.

gravel, the flesh and blood of those who delight in killing, the urine of a donkey, a camel's flesh and blood, a crow's feathers, thorns, ground bones, one's enemies' excrement and urine, soil from an ant hill (Tib. *grog mkhar*), hellebore (Tib. *spru ma*), and lizard's urine.<sup>115</sup>

The best time to perform the wrathful burnt offering is said to be during the waning phase of the moon, in the evening, at dusk, at midday, or at midnight. Generating the *vajra* pride of identifying himself fully with the deity, the practitioner should wear black clothes that are moist with blood and poison, and, pressing his left foot against the back of the right one,<sup>116</sup> he should gaze towards the northern direction, which is associated with the wrathful activity of fierce extermination. At this point is mentioned the king of ambrosia together with his consort, and this probably refers to Amṛtakunḍalin. While the text is too concise to say so explicitly, it is probable that this refers to the deity (and statue/icon) before whom the offering is to be presented, for the *yogin* is advised to place the water of activity, which has been consecrated by the repetition of the *mantra* (Tib. *sngags bzlas las kyi chu*), to the right of the consort, whereas the other substances of the burnt offering are placed to the left.

The visualisation which the practitioner is to engage in is detailed as follows: from a syllable *A*, which the KD annotations specify as being imagined in front, manifests a moon disc; the syllable then transforms into a nine-pronged *vajra*, which is marked with the syllable *A*. Light-rays are radiated and reabsorbed, and the *vajra* transforms into the main deity, whose characteristics are as previously described (see Chapter 1). It is not absolutely clear whether the deity is only visualised in front of the practitioner (as is indicated by the KD annotations), or whether the *yogin* also identifies with the deity himself. In any case, the one would

---

<sup>115</sup> Here I suggest emending the transmitted reading, which has the unfitting *dmigs pa'i bdud rtsi* ('the imagined ambrosia'). The annotation in the KD versions further qualifies the ambrosia as fivefold (Tib. *lnga*), but all this seems to be a psychological error caused by homophony with the, perhaps unusual, *rmig pa'i bdud rtsi* ('lizard's ambrosia or urine'); the latter would seem a rather fitting ingredient considering the previous items listed. Moreover, it is quite possible for the KD annotation to accommodate this reading, since the five ambrosias can well be imagined to inhere within the urine of a lizard. On the hermeneutical issues raised by such substances in the context of Mahāyoga tantric ritual, see Esler, "The Lamp for the Eye of Contemplation," 631–633.

<sup>116</sup> It might be noted that such a posture resembles the spike of a *phurpa*.



not necessarily exclude the other. Above the head of the main deity are the buddhas of the five families, while the wisdom being is visualised within the main deity's heart. From a syllable *BHYO* situated at the central deity's secret place manifests the female consort, and from a *HŪM* in his heart rays of light are radiated upwards and reabsorbed downwards, inviting the wisdom being to dwell in the centre of the *maṇḍala*. Vajrakīlaya's retinue consists in the supreme sons and the guardian deities who perform the fierce activities. Once the *maṇḍala* has been visualised, the *yogin* must consecrate the imagined deity of the pledge being by invoking the wisdom being: the enlivening presence of the latter is signalled by the preparation of his seat, as well as the activities of prostrating and presenting offerings and praises.

The ritual action now turns towards the fire pit, in the centre of which is imagined Agni, the god of fire, depicted as black in colour, as dwelling upon a black lotus, and as grimacing angrily. The fire is started with a flame taken from the house of an outcaste or from the cremation ground. Scattering ambrosia (= urine?) with one's left hand is used as purifying water, while foul-smelling black offering water is presented to please Agni, who is described as the holder of black attires (Tib. *nag po 'i cha lugs 'dzin pa*). Meditating that the ladle (Tib. *gzar*) is endowed with the individual offering *mantras*, the *yogin* picks up the pouring ladle with his left hand, scooping up the mixture of oil, urine, and poison, and presenting it seven or twenty-one times to the deity's (i.e. the fire's) gaping mouth. This is done while repeating a *mantra*, and having delighted Agni in this way, one requests the accomplishment to drive away obstructors. After presenting the other offerings into the fire, one examines the flames—the KD annotations describe this as a 'fire divination'.<sup>117</sup>

At this stage, the practitioner invites the central deity and his retinue to dwell in the centre of the fire and again proceeds to delight the deities with various substances. Taking the goblet (Tib. *dgang gzar*; Skt. *pātrī*) and pouring ladle (Tib. *blugs gzar*; Skt. *sruva*), he presents all the various substances in turn, followed by the grain oil and poison. This is done a hundred or a thousand times. A similar procedure is carried out

---

<sup>117</sup> Among the KD versions, only KAḤ correctly has the annotation *me pra*; TSH gives the minor variant *me spra*, whereas X omits the annotation altogether.

for each of the deities of the retinue, using a specific offering *mantra* in each case. At the ritual's culmination, the practitioner summons the life-force of the enemy into the effigy, inserting the latter into the poisonous grain oil. The effigy is cut into pieces and presented to each of the deities in turn, starting with the central one. Here are found a few verses from the *Vajrakīlaya Root Fragment*: “O you sinful ones who have transgressed the injunctions, let your heart be scorched in the *vajra* fire, and your body and speech be smashed to dust!”<sup>118</sup> The final stage of the practice consists in transferring the consciousness of the enemy to an appropriate pure field, thereby liberating the obstructing forces from the sufferings of *samsāra*. At this point, all the phenomena of appearance-existence are held to blaze in the fire of realisation. All impurities having been thus consumed by the fire, the deities depart to their own abodes, and the ritual concludes.

### 2.7. Chapter 7: Transference and Liberation

D 56r.2–57r.7 = G-a 303r.6–304v.8, GR 299v.3–301r.5, (G-b 357v.4–359v.5,) M 786.1–790.1, S 309r.3–310v.5,

T 242.1–245.6, (R 97r.6–98v.6.)

TSH 359.3–364.5, KAḤ 330.5–339.2, KYI 287.4–291.5, X 30v.4–35r.1

Continuing in the line of the previous chapter, the seventh chapter explains in detail the procedures required to successfully deal with the enemy's consciousness, technically termed perpetual transference (Tib. *gtan 'pho ba*) and liberation (Tib. *bsgral ba*).<sup>119</sup> The initial task is to summon the enemy's consciousness and dissolve it into the effigy, after which the effigy's heart must be targeted (with the *phurpa*) until indications of success begin to occur—such indications can occur in dreams (or when the consciousness shifts abode),<sup>120</sup> in waking reality, or during meditative experiences, all depending on the talents of the individual *yogin*. Once the signs of success have arisen, the visualisation

---

<sup>118</sup> *rDo rje phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi dum bu*, in *bKa' 'gyur* (sDe dge), vol. 81: 90.3, translated and edited in Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 89: *bka' las 'das pa'i sdig can rnam/ rdo rje me dbal snying bsregs nas/ lus ngag rdul phran bzhin du rlog/*. The Tibetan is here given after G-a 303r.3–4.

<sup>119</sup> Much of the material presented here is discussed in greater detail in the *Black One Hundred Thousand*; see Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 224–234.

<sup>120</sup> On this variant, see below, rt. 7.1.

to be performed is as follows: in the heart of the main deity is Mahesvara upon a sun disc (who—the KD annotations tell us—manifests from a syllable *HRĪḤ*); red light radiates from him, transforming the three realms into an ocean of blood. The main deity inhales this blood, becoming intoxicated with wrath, and this offering is described as the “thorough liberation of the three realms”.<sup>121</sup> At this point the adept sucks up the remainder of the blood, thereby increasing his power and his ability to engage in fierce activities. He summons the enemy’s consciousness into the effigy, and as he repeats the *mantra*, the whole universe is filled with wrathful emanations. Here is found a rather long exhortation reminding the emanations of their past pledges (Skt. *samaya*) made in the tantric pure field of Akaniṣṭha, and this exhortation includes verses from the *Vajrakīlaya Root Fragment*:

The time for great pledges has come! O you emanations of the blessing of those who are totally applied, the time of the great emanations has come! O you vassals and female messengers, the time of the great emissaries has come!<sup>122</sup>

And:

One should generate the supreme *bodhicitta*. We awareness-holders are successors of the *jinās* of the three times. The enemies and obstructors, who are harmful and malevolent, and the demons and obstacle-makers, who snatch away the accomplishments and are violent, are summoned here instantly through the blessings of the great wrathful one, and liberated properly through subjugation (Skt. *abhicāra*). Their body and speech being destroyed down to their atoms, make them experience suffering!<sup>123</sup>

<sup>121</sup> *khamṣ gsum yongs sgrol mchod pa'o*. The Tibetan is given after TSH 360.1.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. *rDo rje phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi dum bu*, in *bKa' 'gyur* (sDe dge), vol. 81: 89.1–2, translated and edited in Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 85: *dam tshig chen po'i dus la bab/ kun gyis sbyor ba'i byin rlabs sprul/ sprul pa chen po'i dus la bab/ de nas bka' sdod pho nya mo/ phyag brnyan chen po'i dus la bab*. The Tibetan is here given after G-a 303v.3–4.

<sup>123</sup> *rDo rje phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi dum bu*, in *bKa' 'gyur* (sDe dge), vol. 81: 89.2–4, translated and edited in Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 85–86: *hyang chub mchog la ni sems bskyed cing/ dus gsum rgyal ba'i gdung sob pa'i/ rigs 'dzin bdag cag rnams la ni/ gnod cing gdug pa'i dgra dang bgegs/ /bdud dang bar du gcod pa dang/ dngos grub 'phrog cing 'tshes ba rnams/ khro bo chen po'i byin rlabs kyi/ yud tsam gyis ni 'dir bkug nas/ mngon spyod tshul bzhin bsgyal ba dang/ lus ngag rdul du shig nas kyang/ sdug bsngal nyams su myong bar mdzod*. The Tibetan is given after G-a 303v.4–7.

Saying this, the wrathful messengers fill the world to catch the obstacle-makers, and, repeating specific *mantras*, the *yogin* summons the enemies to enter the effigy, overpowers them and renders them senseless. The enemies are then held with a hook, beaten with weapons and bound with a noose. The practitioner proceeds to strike the effigy with the activity *phurpa* and black grains, and to throw upon it substances smeared with blood and poison, before cutting it with various weapons—all these activities are accompanied by specific *mantras*, and they culminate in the enemies being utterly overwhelmed. At this point the practitioner, who visualises himself as the principal deity Vajrakīlaya, imagines a *HŪM* syllable in his heart, whence wrathful emanations radiate, entering the hearts of the enemies to be tamed. Describing their infinite faults and evil actions performed since time immemorial, the deity becomes furious and, cutting the enemies' heart veins (Tib. *snying rtsa*), absorbs their vitality into himself.

The text then proceeds to elucidate some of the symbolic associations connected to the activities of stabbing the effigy. The remains of the enemies are identified in the KD annotations with the scattered thoughts relating to the various sense-consciousnesses, so as hook-wielding emanations are sent out to catch the enemies, their absorption into the effigy is likened to the return of outward-directed consciousness to the indeterminacy of the universal ground consciousness (Skt. *ālayavijñāna*). Likewise, the stabbing of the effigy with the *phurpa* is connected to the liberation of the five aggregates (Skt. *skandha*). The practitioner's hands as he holds the *phurpa* are blessed by the consorts of the Buddha families,<sup>124</sup> and the *phurpa*'s tip, upon which is found the enemy consciousness, is marked by the syllable *A*,<sup>125</sup> signifying the birthless state of emptiness into which the enemy consciousness has been purified. Moreover, the stabbing is performed while clearly recalling the three visions of the practitioner as the main deity, Vajrakīlaya, the *phurpa* as

---

<sup>124</sup> On the identification of the fingers with the male and female buddhas, cf. Cantwell and Mayer, *Early Tibetan Documents on Phur pa from Dunhuang*, 24.

<sup>125</sup> The *Black One Hundred Thousand* gives a somewhat more elaborate description, saying that a syllable *A* is imagined on the crown of the white deity Hūṃkāra (visualised above the main deity's head), on the tip of the *phurpa* (as mentioned here) and on the heart of the enemy. See Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 228.

the supreme son, and the enemy to be liberated as Rudra.<sup>126</sup> As the practitioner repeats the appropriate *mantra*, a continuous stream of *bodhicitta* reaches the tip of the *phurpa*. The text here cryptically alludes to the descent of Hūṃkāra as a trigger for the cleansing of the evil destinies<sup>127</sup> by the stream of nectar. This would seem to refer, albeit in a very condensed fashion, to three processes that in the *Black One Hundred Thousand* are described separately but here are accomplished simultaneously: the god Hūṃkāra above one's head dissolves into the main deity; the practitioner rolls the *phurpa*; and strikes the enemy therewith. Light-rays then radiate from the syllable *A* on the *phurpa*'s tip and return, thereby purifying the enemy's sins and obscurations.<sup>128</sup> This entire process might be conceived, as seems to be suggested here, as a flow of purifying nectar that is concomitant with the descent of the supreme son (i.e. the *phurpa*), triggered by Hūṃkāra. In our *tantra*, Hūṃkāra's descent causes the stream of nectar to radiate light-rays that pervade the directions of space, and as they are reabsorbed, they collect the majesty of all sentient beings; this visualisation serves both to enhance the *yogin*'s longevity and to cleanse the enemy's obscurations.

The tip of the *phurpa* is now marked with a syllable *PHAT*, which is used in the process of transferring the consciousness to a pure field and forcing the enemy's spiritual liberation. The *yogin* repeats the *Vajrakīlaya mantra* over the substances that are to be thrown on the effigy, imagining that the thorny goddesses (Tib. *gze ma*)<sup>129</sup> spread forth

---

<sup>126</sup> See *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> Although *gnas ngan* could be taken as an abbreviation for *gnas ngan len* (Skt. *daṣṭhulya*), a reference to rigidified negative tendencies ('atrophies'; see Negi, *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary*, vol. 7, 2922), it seems more likely in this context that *gnas ngan* signifies the 'dismal abodes', referring to the evil destinies of *saṃsāra*.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 229.

<sup>129</sup> The *gze ma* goddesses are mentioned in Chapter 19 of the *Myang 'das* [Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra], where they are described as three-legged iron messenger deities; see Cantwell and Mayer, *The Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra and the Vajra Wrath Tantra*, 27–28, 197–202. This description could suggest a ritual implement or weapon of some sort, perhaps akin to a caltrop. However, the *gze ma* do not otherwise seem to be encountered in Nyingma tantric materials and their mention in the above *tantra* remains a puzzle, so their occurrence here is all the more noteworthy. They are found as part of the pantheon of the Bon *phurpa* tradition, where they are considered to be emanations of the ten principal deities. Cf. Cathy Cantwell and Robert Mayer, "The Bon Ka ba nag po and the Rnying ma phur pa Tradition," *Journal of the International Association for Bon Research* 1 (2013): 45–47. In more recent Bon texts, they are described as *khra thabs gze ma*; see Cantwell

everywhere. This causes rays of light to melt the seed syllables of the six realms of becoming, and a host of messenger deities to descend upon the enemy, whereby he is knocked out into realising the ultimate *dharmatā*. His radiance is then absorbed into the heart of the practitioner visualised as Vajrakīlaya.

Here we have another set of verses from the *Vajrakīlaya Root Fragment*, this time addressed as an exhortation to the protector deities of Vajrakīlaya's retinue: "O you host of serfs, retainers and messengers, the time of your pledges has come! Quickly perform the activity of subjugation, according to what you committed to previously!"<sup>130</sup> With these words, the oath-bound protectors descend upon the enemy like a downpour of weapons, striking him with their *phurpas* and other substances and reducing his flesh to a heap of rotten waste (Tib. *rul myags*).

## 2.8. Chapter 8: The Rite of Fierce Subjugation

D 57r.7–58r.7 = G-a 305r.1–306r.3, GR 301r.5–302v.1, (G-b 359v.5–361r.5,) M 790.1–793.1, S 310v.5–312r.2,

T 245.6–248.4, (R 98v.6–99v.6,)

TSH 364.6–368.4, KAḤ 339.2–344.4, KYI 291.5–294.5, X 35r.2–37v.6

The subject of the eighth chapter is the ritual of fierce subjugation, which is the central ritual of destructive magic and of liberation through killing. The first activity to be performed is the blessing of the weapons used during the rite. This is done by pouring poison over them. The physical appearance of the effigy with its various bodily parts is briefly described, after which it is chopped to pieces while reciting these threatening verses from the *Vajrakīlaya Root Fragment*: "Whoever

---

and Mayer, "The Winged and the Fanged," 157, n. 7. (One might recall here that in Nyingma sources the *khra thabs* are male emanations.) The more common meaning of the term *gze ma* refers to a type of goat's head weed technically known as *Tribulus terrestris* and otherwise called 'puncture vine'. See Dan Martin, *Tibetan Vocabulary*, Version 29 (August 2017), s.v. *gze ma ra mgo*. It is not inconceivable that the plant's thorny characteristics came to be associated with the *gze ma* deities (or the caltrop-like weapon they possibly represent)—hence my tentative translation as 'thorny goddesses'.

<sup>130</sup> *rDo rje phur pa rtsa ba 'i rgyud kyi dum bu*, in *bKa' 'gyur* (sDe dge), vol. 81: 89.7, translated and edited in Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 87–88: *bran dang pho nya bka' nyan tshogs/ khyed kyi dam tshig dus la bab/ sngon chad ji bzhin dam bcas pa 'i mngon spyod phrin las myur du mdzod/*. The Tibetan is given after G-a 304v.5.

among the sinful ones transgresses the injunctions of the *vajra* secret, the wrathful Mahābala must cleave their brains into a hundred morsels!”<sup>131</sup> One then strikes the effigy with weapons while repeating a specific *mantra* and remaining in one-pointed meditative absorption, and imagines that the enemy is reduced to dust.

As in the previous chapter, having destroyed the enemy, the *yogin* must now plunder (Tib. *dbrog*) his potency and magical powers, absorbing them into himself and making them his own. The *Vajrakīlaya Root Fragment* is again quoted to this effect:

O you who are endowed with a malevolent and hateful mind, whether you be gods or demons, you create obstacles for me: you must be bereft of your potency and magic!<sup>132</sup>

It is now necessary to destroy any remaining karmic imprints of the enemy, so as to prevent him from returning to his mischievous ways, something that is done by beating the remainders of the effigy with a pestle (Tib. *gtun*; Skt. *musala*) and mortar (Tib. *gtun khung*; Skt. *udūkhala*), identified, respectively, with the male and female sexual organs of the divine couple, all the while repeating a *mantra* and saying the appropriate verses from the *Vajrakīlaya Root Fragment*:

Beat, O *vajra* blazing pestle! Being beaten by the *vajra* hammer in the blazing mortar of the female wrathful deity, even the gods are smashed to pieces.<sup>133</sup>

Once the rite of beating has been performed, the practitioner imagines that the female consort presents the leftovers in the form of a skull cup

---

<sup>131</sup> *rDo rje phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi dum bu*, in *bKa' 'gyur* (sDe dge), vol. 81: 90.1, translated and edited in Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 88: *rdo rje gsang ba'i bka' las ni/ sdig can gang zhig 'da' byed pa/ stobs chen khro bo chen po yis/ klad pa tshal pa brgya ru khos/*. The Tibetan is given after G-a 305r.1–2.

<sup>132</sup> *rDo rje phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi dum bu*, in *bKa' 'gyur* (sDe dge), vol. 81: 90.2, translated and edited in Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 88–89: *gdug cing sdang sems ldan pa yi/ lha 'am 'on te bdud kyang rung/ bdag la bar chad byed pa rnam/ mthu dang rdzu 'phrul med par gyis/*. Here the Tibetan is given after GR 301v.1–2. Note that G-a 305r.5 has the unfitting *mthun* for *mthu*.

<sup>133</sup> *rDo rje phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi dum bu*, in *bKa' 'gyur* (sDe dge), vol. 81: 90.2–3, translated and edited in Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 89: *rdungs shig rdo rje 'bar ba'i gtun/ khro mo 'bar ba'i gtun khung du/ rdo rje tho bas brdungs byas nas/ lha yang rung ste brlag par 'gyur/*. The Tibetan is given after G-a 305r.6–7.

filled with blood and flesh to the central deity, who eats the offering with delight.

Here we find a description of a practice of healing (Tib. *gso ba*), presumably called for by the rather violent nature of the preceding ritual action. The KD annotations specify that this healing ritual concerns both the *yogin* and the enemy, that is, both the performer of the rite and its object. The three factors that make the practice effective are the ultimate *dharmatā*, the power of Vajrakīlaya's *mantra*, and the buddhas' blessings and fearlessness. First the practitioner must roll the *phurpa* and strike the effigy's heart while repeating Vajrakīlaya's *mantra* seven, fourteen or twenty-one times. This causes the aggregates, sense-bases (Skt. *āyatana*), and constituents (Skt. *dhātu*) making up the conglomerate of the enemy's personality to transform into divine emanations that are subsequently absorbed by the *phurpa*—this corresponds to healing the enemy. The *yogin* should again repeat the *mantra* one hundred and eight times while rolling the *phurpa* above his head and imagining that the deities enter him—this corresponds to the healing of the *yogin* and of the material *phurpa*.

We then have another brief description of the practice of ejecting the enemy's consciousness into a pure field. This is connected to the sexual union of the male and female deities, which triggers the descent of *bodhicitta* to the *phurpa*'s tip, from where the syllable representing the enemy's consciousness is ejected into the sky-like womb of the female deity (cf. also Chapter 7). The visualisation of the deities is linked to the syllable *HŪM*, whereas the ejection of the enemy consciousness into the pure field that ensures its liberation is associated with the sound *PHAṬ*.

There follows a further set of similar visualisations, which the KD annotations connect to the vessel of ambrosia used to confer empowerment for the sake of others.<sup>134</sup> These begin with a supplication to the wisdom being in Akaniṣṭha and the conferral of empowerment through the melting of the wisdom deity into light and its absorption into the syllable *HŪM*. This is followed by propelling the consciousness into the womb of the female deity in mystical embrace with her male partner, accompanied by the syllable *PHAṬ*. The *tantra* specifies that the

---

<sup>134</sup> *gzhan don mdzad par dbang bskur ba la bdud rtsis snod 1 tu*/. The Tibetan is given after X 37r.4.



conferral of empowerment is connected to the *sambhogakāya*, whereas propelling the consciousness into the pure field of Akaniṣṭha (= the womb of the female deity) corresponds to the *nirmāṇakāya*. Indeed, following the propelling of consciousness with the syllable *PHAṬ*, the text mentions the twelve deeds of a *nirmāṇakāya*, as well as the practice of sexual union as a means to bring the enemy to the *vajra* abode (Tib. *rdo rje gnas*). The idea seems to be that the ejection of consciousness paves the way for a *nirmāṇakāya*'s activities.

At the conclusion of the ritual, the effigy should be placed in the skull of one whose life has been cut short, who has died of leprosy or in warfare, and it should be suppressed in an inauspicious place, imagining that Mt. Meru weighs down upon it.<sup>135</sup>

### 2.9. Chapter 9: The Meditative Absorption of Fierce Subjugation

D 58v.1–59r.6 = G-a 306r.3–307r.4, GR 302v.1–303v.2, (G-b 361r.5–362v.2,) M 793.1–795.5, S 312r.2–313r.4,

T 248.4–250.6, (R 99v.6–100v.5.)

TSH 368.5–371.5, KAḤ 344.4–348.5, KYI 294.5–297.4, X 37v.6–40r.2

The ninth chapter continues to explore the rite of subjugation, but focuses less on the external aspects and more on the phases of meditative absorption for specific *mantras* that the ritual entails. The first meditative absorption involves light-rays radiating from the practitioner's five places (viz. forehead, throat, heart, navel, genitals) as an invocation to the buddhas, and then returning with the blessings of the accomplishments pertaining to awakened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities.

The practitioner, visualised as the deity in union with his female consort, now imagines that from both partners' hearts rays of light radiate like firebrands, revealing the true nature of existence as the deity's *maṇḍala* and invoking the blessings and empowerments of the buddhas. The *mantra* to be recited at this point is said in the text to be beyond all others in its power and to enable the vanquishing of demons.

The next meditative absorption consists in imagining sparks of light emanating from the deity's body and from the wrathful substances; they

---

<sup>135</sup> More on the rite of suppression may be found in Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 234–239.

annihilate the obstructors, like meteors hitting upon the liquefied earth. More rays of light are sent forth to capture the life-force of the obstructive forces and to enslave the arrogant worldly gods.

From the dark blue pores of the wrathful deities residing in the ten directions emanate further retinues. The wrathful ones, together with their retinues, are then dispatched against the enemy as one pelts the effigy with the various wrathful substances, and the enemy is liberated.<sup>136</sup> The final task is for the wrathful emanations and messengers to partake of the enemy, devouring him until his aggregates remain no more;<sup>137</sup> of course, there is a double entendre here, evoking the type of *nirvāṇa* obtained at death, which is said to be without a remainder of the aggregates (Skt. *nirupadhiśeṣanirvāṇa*).<sup>138</sup> The indication that the foe has successfully been destroyed and liberated is said to be the arising of warmth in the adept's body.

## 2.10. Chapter 10: The Four Tantric Activities

D 59r.6–60v.3 = G-a 307r.4–308v.6, GR 303v.2–305r.3, (G-b 362v.2–364v.2,) M 795.5–799.5, S 313r.4–314v.6,

T 250.6–254.3, (R 100v.5–102r.4,)

TSH 371.5–376.5, KAḤ 348.5–356.4, KYI 297.4–301.5, X 40r.2–43v.7

The tenth chapter elucidates the rituals of the four tantric activities of pacifying, increasing, dominating, and fiercely exterminating, which are respectively associated with the poisons of stupidity, pride, desire, and jealousy.

(1) The activity of pacifying is introduced by way of a play on lines from the *Vajrakīlaya Root Fragment*: “The Buddha wrath cuts through stupidity; like a blazing white weapon, it shines as a drop arising in the open dimension of space.”<sup>139</sup> These same verses are then repeated, with

<sup>136</sup> Cf. Cantwell and Mayer, *Early Tibetan Documents on Phur pa from Dunhuang*, 119.

<sup>137</sup> *phung po lhag med rol par bya*/. The Tibetan is given after G-a 307r.1.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Esler, “Traces of Abhidharma in the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*,” 343.

<sup>139</sup> *rDo rje phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi dum bu*, in *bKa' 'gyur* (sDe dge), vol. 81: 86.7, translated and edited in Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 79. Here, the word *buddha* is substituted for *vajra*, the colour white for blue, and the affliction of stupidity replaces that of hatred: *sangs rgyas khros pas gti mug gcod/ mtshon byed dkar po 'bar lta bu/ namkha'i* [= *nam mkha'i*] *dbyings nas thigs pa shar*/. The Tibetan is given after G-a

appropriate modifications, for the other activities. The syllable *OM*, symbolising non-discursiveness (Tib. *mi rtog*), is used to purify the reified entities that constitute ordinary perception. From the *dharmadhātu*, identified with the sky-like womb of the female deity, emerges a syllable *BHRŪM*, which is the source of the divine palace.

The adept thinks of his body as containing all the deities. Above his body, he meditates on a wheel with the white syllable *OM*, which radiates forth rays of light, invoking the wisdom being Cakrakumāra alias Buddhakīlaya to dwell above the crown of his head. Surrounding him in the four directions are the other Kīlaya deities of the four families, starting with Vajrakīlaya. In the practitioner's heart is Hūmkāra in mystical embrace; the text here (and in the corresponding sections for the other activities) has 'etc.' (Tib. *sogs*), implying that the other deities among the ten wrathful ones are also appropriately placed, though they are not specified. From the white *OM* above the *yogin*'s head emanate wheels, which completely fill his body; he meditates on his consciousness as a wheel. Reciting the pacification *mantra*, the practitioner strikes using the *phurpa* relating to pacifying, which is round in shape and made of silver or of white wood. This rite is used to pacify the obstructors pertaining to the various classes of spirits, particularly those of the gods, serpent-spirits (Skt. *nāga*) and goblins (Skt. *yakṣa*), as well as illnesses and fears, including the fear of death.

(2) When performing the activity of increasing, the meditator must use the syllable *TRAM* in order to cleanse his habitual concrete perception of things. It is also from a yellow *TRAM* situated on his forehead that the invocatory rays of light issue forth, inviting Ratnakumāra alias Ratnakīlaya to dwell upon his forehead, surrounded by Buddhakīlaya and the other supreme sons. Hūmkāra is now to be meditated on at the navel; from the *TRAM* previously imagined emanate jewels filling the body of the adept, who meditates on consciousness as being a jewel. Repeating the specific *mantra* for this activity, the *yogin* strikes his *phurpa* of increasing, which is square and made of gold or yellow wood. The objective of the rite is to increase all positive

---

307r.5–6. A similar procedure is observed below, thus linking these verses to each of the different Buddha families.

circumstances for oneself and others, including longevity, merit, wisdom, power, wealth, and descendants.<sup>140</sup>

(3) For the activity of dominating, the practitioner first concentrates on the syllable *HRĪḤ* in order to desolidify his tendency to reify the world. He again focuses on a red *HRĪḤ* in his throat, whence light-rays radiate and return, transforming into Padmakumāra alias Padmakīlaya. The latter is surrounded by the four supreme sons situated in the four directions, beginning with Ratnakīlaya. Hūmkāra<sup>141</sup> is visualised on the *yogin*'s forehead, with the other deities among the ten wrathful ones in their respective places (again, left unspecified in the text). From the bright red *HRĪḤ* issue forth lotuses, and the *yogin*'s bodily aggregates and his consciousness are meditated on as having the nature of a lotus. The adept repeats the appropriate *mantra* and strikes with his *phurpa* of domination, which is crescent-shaped and made of copper or of red wood. The purpose of this rite is to dominate and control all those holding wrong views (Skt. *mithyādr̥ṣṭi*), especially those who are arrogant and haughty.

(4) In the context of the fourth activity, that of fiercely exterminating, the syllable of non-discursiveness to be focused on for the purification of the perceptual world is the letter *HA*. This green syllable *HA*, situated upon a crossed *vajra*, arises all over the *yogin*'s body and pulsates rays of light, whereby the wisdom being and four mystical couples<sup>142</sup> come to dwell at the adept's secret place (i.e. his genital region)—Karmakumāra alias Karmakīlaya at the centre, the four supreme sons and their consorts, starting with Padmakīlaya, being situated in the four directions according to the pattern previously established. The practitioner meditates on Hūmkāra in his heart, the other deities among the ten wrathful ones being situated appropriately. From the green *HA* come forth blazing crossed *vajras*, filling the meditator's body. The *yogin* concentrates on consciousness as a sword marked by a crossed *vajra*. Repeating the specific activity *mantra*, the adept strikes with the *phurpa* related to

---

<sup>140</sup> Here *rigs 'dzin*, which is spelt this way in all the editions except KAḤ, is intended as such, and refers to one's 'family- (or clan-) holding descendants', not to an 'awareness-holder' (Tib. *rig 'dzin*; Skt. *vidyādhara*). This is confirmed by the KD annotations, which gloss *rigs* with *rgyud*, meaning 'lineage' (Tib. *brgyud*).

<sup>141</sup> D 60r.1 here gives Amitābha (Tib. *snang mdzad*), but this is clearly an error.

<sup>142</sup> *ye shes sems dpa' yab yum bzhi/*. The Tibetan is given after G-a 308r.6.

fierce extermination, which is triangular and made of iron or of black wood. The rite is undertaken in order to annihilate and liberate those who denigrate the practitioner's worldly achievements and trouble his meditative equipoise.

The chapter concludes by offering several further sets of distinctions among the four activities. In terms of the appropriate places where the rituals are to be performed, the activity of pacifying is to be done in the east, that of increasing in the south, dominating in the west, and fiercely exterminating in the north. Moreover, the victims of the rites are also different in each case, coming as they do from different social strata, though it will be observed that they do not exactly correspond to the four castes of the Brahmanical tradition:<sup>143</sup> the *phurpa* of pacifying strikes a *śramaṇa*, a mendicant, that of increasing strikes a king (Skt. *rāja* = *kṣatriya*), that of dominating a priest (Skt. *brāhmaṇa*), and that of fiercely exterminating a menial labourer (Skt. *śūdra*). Similarly, the *phurpa* of pacifying strikes an elderly person, that of increasing an adult, that of dominating a woman, and that of fiercely exterminating a ruffian. At the end of the chapter is found a final reminder concerning the importance of visualising the various deities in mystical embrace in their respective places, as this enables the application, in each case, of the appropriate activities.

### 2.11. Chapter 11: The Phurpa Protectors

D 60v.4–61v.2 = G-a 308v.6–309v.7, GR 305r.3–306r.5, (G-b 364v.2–365v.7,) M 799.6–802.4, S 314v.7–316r.2,

T 254.3–256.6, (R 102r.4–103r.4,)

TSH 376.5–379.6, KAḤ 356.4–361.4, KYI 301.5–304.3, X 43v.7–46v.2

The eleventh chapter deals with the *phurpa* protectors and thus with the pledges of the emanated emissaries (Tib. *phyag brnyan*), particularly the twelve brothers and sisters (Tib. *bcu gnyis lcam dral*). In front of an image,<sup>144</sup> wherein the wisdom being is established, must be built a *maṇḍala* palace consisting of seven intertwined triangles (the KD

---

<sup>143</sup> The *Black One Hundred Thousand*, on the other hand, is more consistent in its treatment of the four castes. Cf. Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 237–239.

<sup>144</sup> Lit. 'a great reflection': *gzugs brnyan chen po'i drung du ni'*. The Tibetan is given after G-a 308v.8.

annotations add that this rather complex structure can be imagined as two stacked crossed triangles)<sup>145</sup> surrounded by cutting wheels and scorching flames. The main text now enumerates various substances, but the KD annotations are particularly useful here in that they specify which offerings are intended for which guardian deities. Thus, gold, silver, copper, iron, and jewels are to be placed in the eastern triangle for the Śvānamukhā protectresses. A lake of blood, fat, milk, and butter is presented in the southern<sup>146</sup> triangle for the Semo (Tib. bSe mo) protectresses. And in the north-western triangle are placed the offerings for the Rematī sisters, consisting of the blood of men and horses who have been killed.<sup>147</sup>

The text now gives some instructions regarding the placement of various *phurpas* in the *maṅḍala*, though only the iron and copper *phurpas* are explicitly mentioned: the iron *phurpa*, eight fingers in height, should be placed in the head of a charnel ground fox; the copper *phurpa* is placed in the heart of a fox, wolf, jackal, or dog. At the centre of a *maṅḍala* of four precious substances is installed a skull cup from a barbarous land, within which are placed the hearts of a cross-bred (the KD annotations specify this as being a *dzo* (Tib. *mdzo*), a cross between a yak and a cow), a donkey, a cow, and a sheep.

The skull cup, which should have its sense-organs intact and within which are found a heart, flesh, and blood, is used as a vessel for the sacramental substances of semen,<sup>148</sup> blood, and menstrual blood, upon which the twelve sisters are said to depend for their sustenance. It is also specified that the skull should ideally come from someone whose lineage has been cut short.<sup>149</sup>

---

<sup>145</sup> *zur gsum gnyis brtsegs dmigs*. The Tibetan is given after KAḤ 357.2.

<sup>146</sup> While all the KD versions give the annotation ‘southern’ (Tib. *lho*), this may be an error for ‘south-western’, for if we cross two triangles, the resulting front triangle in the east has its counterparts in the south-western and north-eastern directions.

<sup>147</sup> On these groups of protectresses, see Cantwell and Mayer, *Early Tibetan Documents on Phur pa from Dunhuang*, 45–46; and Boord, *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue*, 145, 150, 340.

<sup>148</sup> The text gives *rdo thun*; given the context, this is probably a reference to semen.

<sup>149</sup> *ming gi rgyud med rigs med kyl*. The Tibetan is given after TSH 377.4–5. This is glossed in the KD annotations as *rabs chad*.

Next are described the twelve brothers,<sup>150</sup> who are said to be riding white, red, and black sheep and to carry triangular sacks. The *maṇḍala* is prepared with Mt. Meru at the centre, surrounded by the four continents, and terrifying victory banners made of carnivores and birds are brandished. Once the appropriate victuals have been offered, the practitioner generates the pride of identifying himself with the central deity Vajrakīlaya and calls upon the brothers and sisters, instigating them to go about the activities assigned to them, namely the liberation of the enemy's aggregates.

At the conclusion of the ritual, the adept stabs the effigy with his *phurpa*, pelts it with various sacramental substances and casts a magic missile (Tib. *zor*), finally burning the effigy in a fire pit. The enemies and obstructors are thus annihilated and the *yogin* imagines that his body, speech, and psyche become endowed with the three *maṇḍalas* (probably referring to awakened body, speech, and mind), whereby he quickly reaches accomplishment. Indications of success in the practice can manifest either as outward occurrences, as inner meditative experiences, or secretly in dreams (see Chapter 7).

## 2.12. Chapter 12: Different Kinds of Maṇḍalas

D 61v.3–62v.2 = G-a 309v.8–310v.8, GR 306r.5–307r.7, (G-b 365v.7–367r.5,) M 802.4–805.3, S 316r.2–317r.4,

T 256.6–259.3, (R 103r.4–104r.4.)

TSH 379.6–383.4, KAḤ 361.4–367.4, KYI 304.3–306.3, X 46v.2–49v.1

The twelfth chapter consists of a presentation of the various *maṇḍalas* associated with the deity Vajrakīlaya and his entourage. First to be discussed is the intrinsic awareness of the *yogin*'s wisdom mind, which is the root of all the *maṇḍalas*. Next is mentioned the *maṇḍala* of meditative absorption, which is comprised of the main deities of the five families relating to Vajrakīlaya, the buddhas of the three times, and the supreme sons, yielding a total of two hundred and fifty deities—the KD annotations tersely explain that there are fifty root deities and a further

---

<sup>150</sup> Some of the editions (viz. the Bhutan NGB group, as well as R, D, and X) give *drag po* instead of *dral po*. See below, rt. 11.5.

set of fifty for awakened body, speech, and mind each, as well as fifty wisdom beings.<sup>151</sup>

The *maṇḍala* of the wrathful ones of the ten directions is presented in terms of the unification of the supreme sons with their consorts, from which issue forth twenty emanations and as many subsidiary emanations. Together with the main deity's entourage, there is a total of one hundred and ten deities.

For the *maṇḍala* of subjugation, the *yogin* uses the five material *phurpas* to strike the effigy. The material *phurpas* are described as having three faces and six arms, and as being spiritually related to one of the five families. The four activities of pacifying, increasing, dominating, and fiercely exterminating are associated with differences in the shapes, colours, and substances of the *phurpas*. For instance, as already indicated in Chapter 10, the shapes can be round, square, crescent-shaped, or triangular, depending on the activity that is to be performed; these specific shapes apply to the heads of the *phurpa* and to its upper and lower knots. More generally, even within a single *phurpa*, various parts of the ritual weapon are associated with particular shapes and activities, as follows: the upper and lower knots tend to be round and hence linked to the activity of pacifying; the shaft of the *phurpa* is square and thus symbolises increasing; its waist is crescent-shaped, representing dominating; and the blade is triangular and connected to fierce extermination.

The *tantra* now details the various deities that are visualised as abiding in the various parts of the *phurpa*. The upper part of the *phurpa* is the divine palace, which consists of an eight-spoked wheel, at the hub of which is found the main deity Vajrakīlaya in mystical embrace with his consort. Above and below the principal couple are Hūṃkāra and Mahābala, together with the four sons and their consorts, while the other eight from among the ten wrathful ones rest on the eight spokes of the wheel. At the crescent-shaped waist of the *phurpa* are the sons of the eight wrathful ones, which the KD annotations specify as being sixteen. On the four sides of the square shaft are the four hybrid<sup>152</sup> door-keeping

---

<sup>151</sup> [...] *na rtsa ba 'i lnga bcu la sku gsung thugs ye shes sems dpa' lnga bcu ste/*. The Tibetan is given after KAH 361.6–362.1.

<sup>152</sup> Such hybrid animal-headed deities (Tib. *phra men* or *'phra men*) are referred to in the *Noble Noose of Methods* commentary, though in the present text the information



deities. On the triangular blade are the twelve worldly deities;<sup>153</sup> these would appear to be connected to the brothers and sisters (encountered in Chapter 11), since the latter are mentioned immediately afterwards (presumably as emanations of the twelve world-abiding deities), though they are here said to have doubled in number to twenty-four. All in all, the *phurpa* is said to have seventy-eight deities complete within its material structure, and the KD annotations clarify that this *maṇḍala* comprises fifty root deities, twenty-four guardians, and four messengers relating to the four activities.<sup>154</sup>

The fact that these deities appear as radiant luminescence without their nature being established as something concrete is explained as being the birthless *phurpa* of the *dharmakāya*; the completeness of all qualities within the deity's awakened body is said to be the *phurpa* of the *sambhogakāya*; and the blazing forth, from the deity's pores, of countless miniature wrathful emanations, who perform the various deeds of the deity *cum* practitioner, is associated with the *phurpa* of the *nirmāṇakāya*.

Furthermore, the fact that the *maṇḍalas* of these three bodies abide as self-originated wisdom<sup>155</sup> is explained as being the *maṇḍala* of the deity's awakened body (Tib. *sku yi dkyil 'khor*). The gnosemic seed syllables<sup>156</sup> of the five Buddha families and of Vajrakīlaya's *mantra* pertain to the *maṇḍala* of the deity's awakened speech (Tib. *gsung gi dkyil 'khor*). And the *maṇḍala* of the deity's awakened mind (Tib. *thugs kyi dkyil 'khor*) is symbolised by the drawing of seed syllables upon the emblems of the respective deities. Having established these various *maṇḍalas*, the *yogin*

---

provided is too scant to ascertain whether or not we are dealing with the same list; here the gender of the door-keeping hybrid deities would seem to be female. Cf. Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 76, 358–362. See also Cantwell and Mayer, “The Winged and the Fanged,” 158–159.

<sup>153</sup> *jig rten gnas pa bcu gnyis po*/. The Tibetan is given after G-a 310r.7.

<sup>154</sup> *ritsa ba'i lnga bcu bka' bsrungs nyer bzhi las bzhi'i pho nya bzhi ste*/. The Tibetan is given after TSH 381.6.

<sup>155</sup> The embodied nature of wisdom is discussed in Orna Almqvist, “The Materiality and Immanence of Gnosis in some rNying-ma Tantric Sources,” in *Yogic Perception, Meditation and Altered States of Consciousness*, ed. Eli Franco and Dagmar Eigner (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009), 241–262.

<sup>156</sup> Such seed syllables pertain to gnosemic language, which can be understood as a mode of primary utterance; see Guenther, *Matrix of Mystery*, 64–65, 79.

is encouraged to present offerings, to enjoin the deities to perform their activities and to partake of the accomplishments.

At this point, the *tantra* moves on to the material *maṇḍala* (Tib. *rdzas kyi dkyil 'khor*), which should be properly arranged. This is done by drawing the twenty-one triangles with their right measurements and by laying out the appropriate substances; it thus involves “accruing the substances, generating the deities and drawing [the *maṇḍala*] according to its measurements”,<sup>157</sup> as well as setting up ornaments that adorn the *maṇḍala*.

Having given all these detailed prescriptions for the material *maṇḍala*, the *tantra* points out that ultimately, accomplishing the *maṇḍalas* of a thousand and eight deities will hinge on the *bodhicitta*, which includes them all and is their very root.

Next to be discussed is the *maṇḍala* of activity (Tib. *las kyi dkyil 'khor*). This concerns the arrangement of the effigy, which is to be incinerated, the presentation of offerings to the deity that has been generated through visualisation, and the killing of the enemy. Thus, after exhorting the enemy with whom he has a karmic connection to be pious in his next life,<sup>158</sup> the *yogin* incinerates the effigy and sends off the enemy’s consciousness to its new abode. Incidentally, the exhortation towards virtue and piety directed towards the enemy reminds us of the importance of the altruistic motivation that is supposed to underlie the performance of such rituals of destructive magic.

The chapter’s conclusion explains that the meditative regime consisting of these various *maṇḍalas* includes all the deities of the five Buddha families, which the KD annotations specify are a thousand and eight in number. Through such training, the stages of propitiation and evocation, to which the KD annotations further add the fivefold application of activities (Skt. *karmayoga*), as well as the qualities pertaining to awakened body, speech, and mind, are all encompassed within the single seminal sphere (Tib. *thig le gcig*). Such a statement, like ones already encountered above, may be reconciling complex and elaborate ritual procedures with simpler and more essential forms of

---

<sup>157</sup> *rdzas {rnams/} bsag {la lha} bskyed cing {dal} tshad {dang} ldan {par/} bri/*. The Tibetan is given after TSH 382.6.

<sup>158</sup> *chos ldan pha rol bskul ba yis/*. The Tibetan is given after G-a 310v.6–7.

tantric practice, the latter being said to virtually contain, as it were, the essence of the former.

### 2.13. Chapter 13: On Later Deliverance

D 62v.2–63v.2 = G-a 311r.1–312r.3, GR 307r.7–308v.2, (G-b 367r.5–368v.6,) M 805.4–808.2, S 317r.5–318v.1,

T 259.3–262.5, (R 104r.4–105r.5.)

TSH 383.5–387.3, KAḤ 367.4–373.2, KYI 306.3–309.4, X 49v.1–52r.6

The thirteenth and final chapter of the *tantra* reveals the manner of later deliverance (Tib. *phyi ma'i tshul nges par 'byung ba*), indicating that it is a kind of testament for those of future generations to whom the *tantra* will be bequeathed, and who will attain deliverance through its means. The term 'deliverance' (Skt. *niḥsaraṇa*) used in this context would seem to indicate emancipation from the limiting conditions of *samsāra*, though in this tantric setting it need not necessarily carry the connotations of renunciation that usually adhere to the term.

The Buddha declares that in this degenerate age, when beings are particularly difficult to tame, he compassionately manifests in countless guises according to the needs and capacities of his disciples. Thus, appearing as a *śramaṇa*, he teaches the paths of the auditors and independent buddhas, whereas to others he shows the manner of compassionately acting for the welfare of beings, as is appropriate for the conduct of a bodhisattva. For yet others, who have attained purity of perception, he displays the appearance of a *sambhogakāya* endowed with the thirty-two characteristics and eighty illustrative attributes. When he is among the tame he is peaceful, but he can also take on a terrifying guise when confronted with those who are vicious. It is thus by conforming and adapting to the preconceptions of various beings that the Buddha manifests as a deity mystically embracing his consort, dwelling in a divine palace and surrounded by a rapturous retinue. The body that the Buddha takes on will depend on the karmic perception of his interlocutors, who may be gods, goblins, non-humans, titans, scent-eaters (Skt. *gandharva*), humans, animals, hungry ghosts, or even denizens of hell.

This principle of adaptability does not only apply to the form manifested by the Buddha, but also to the teachings he reveals. For individuals of lowly intellect attached to a sequential approach, the

Buddha gradually teaches how to turn away from worldly pursuits, followed by going for refuge (Skt. *śaraṇa*), absolution (Skt. *poṣadha*), training in the ten virtues, the nature of relative and absolute truth, mind-control, selflessness (Skt. *anātman*), and the middle way beyond extreme views. For those of middling capacities, there are the outward tantric teachings classified as Kriyātantra, Caryātantra alias Ubhayatantra, and Yogatantra. Those who are fortunate enough to be gifted with outstanding faculties are given the teachings of the three higher *tantras*, namely Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga. It will be noted that the contents of these various doxographical categories are not elaborated on any further, which suggests the underlying assumption that they were fairly well-known. Moreover, since our text is a *tantra*, its object is certainly not to provide exhaustive analyses of competing philosophical systems. Its aim is rather, by briefly evoking the different perspectives of Buddhist doctrine, to situate itself, as scriptural utterance, within the wider hermeneutical field of Buddha speech. Here the *tantra* reveals that by uniting expedient means and discerning knowledge—which the KD annotations gloss as being the empty *dharmadhātu* and wisdom—the meaning of the lower paths is accomplished, as are the other doctrinal categories relating to the fruition, such as the five bodies, the five principles,<sup>159</sup> the five wisdoms, the five paths, the ten stages, ten strengths, and the eighteen unmixed principles (Skt. *āveṇikadharmā*) of a Buddha. These factors are not accomplished, as would normally be expected using conventional (i.e. non-tantric) means of spiritual development, during three incalculable aeons (Skt. *asamkhyeyakalpa*), but rather instantaneously, as befits the tantric approach's claim to superiority.<sup>160</sup>

---

<sup>159</sup> This would seem to be a reference to the five modes of speech (Tib. *gsung lnga*) relating to the five bodies: (1) the speech of the birthless meaning (Tib. *skye med don gyi gsung*), (2) the speech of symbolic intent (Tib. *dgongs pa brda'i gsung*), (3) the speech of expressed words (Tib. *brjod pa'i tshig gi gsung*), (4) the *vajra* speech of inseparability (Tib. *dbyer med rdo rje'i gsung*) and (5) the speech of actual enlightenment (Tib. *mngon byang gi gsung*). See Tudeng Nima, *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* [The Large Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary] (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1998), 3014.

<sup>160</sup> The time needed to accomplish the fruition is also used by Nupchen Sangyé Yéshé as a criterion indicating the relative superiority of the tantric path. See Esler, "Traces of Abhidharma in the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*," 327. On the differences between sutric and tantric conceptions of the fruition, see Dylan Esler, "The Fruition in a Comparative Perspective," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 40 (2017): 159–188.

Nonetheless, even for those engaging on the tantric path, the differences in their talents imply that all cannot reach the result at the same speed: whereas those whose capacity is highest will attain enlightenment in a single life, the possibility is left open for other practitioners of lesser capacity to do so in three, five, or seven lifetimes at the most.

Having given this information regarding the highest attainment of enlightenment, the *tantra* then discusses, as an instance of the so-called common accomplishments (Skt. *sādhāraṇasiddhi*), the *yogin*'s mastery of the elements as a result of the practice, whereby it becomes possible for him to transform one element into another, changing water into fire, for example.

The Buddha concludes his speech to the assembly by warning his disciples not to trespass against the buddhas and not to fear his ferocious wisdom form. Thereupon, the assembly praises the *heruka* as the paragon of the buddhas of the three times and of all the *maṇḍalas*, emphasising the role of Vajrakumāra in performing the four tantric activities and the swiftness of his five forms (Tib. *gzhon nu lnga ldan*), which the KD annotations associate with awakened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities, in taming beings. Following this homage, the Buddha absorbs his retinue within himself, and his body radiates rays of light as he gladly remains absorbed in the state of equality free from elaboration, the non-abiding open dimension. The *tantra* is thereby concluded.

It may thus be observed that in its concluding chapter the *tantra* does two things: first, as an authoritative utterance of Buddha speech placed within the mythological setting of a *sambhogakāya* deity addressing his emanated retinue, the *tantra* justifies the unconventional methods taught within the body of the scripture by recourse to the hermeneutical device of various teachings being appropriate for different recipients. Secondly, by implying that these methods are especially destined for those of the degenerate age who are difficult to tame by any other means, the *tantra* also addresses the issue of establishing the transmission and continuity of its practices among future generations of adepts, for the age of degeneration can always be the present of strife and turmoil wherein people find themselves in need of powerful transformative magic.

### 3. Philological Analysis

#### 3.1. Relationship Patterns Observed among the Various Editions

The following patterns of affiliation can be observed among the different editions of the *tantra*.<sup>161</sup> As discussed above (see Section 1.4), it is highly probable that the *Phurpa Root Tantra*, like other NGB scriptures,<sup>162</sup> already contained orthographical and grammatical errors and various oddities in its archetype. Given this state of affairs, the philological analysis of indicative errors is undertaken not in order to reconstruct a perfect text—the like of which may never have existed—but with the more modest goal of seeking to highlight the patterns of affiliation that pertain among the different versions of our text.<sup>163</sup> In this regard, indicative errors (Germ. *Leitfehler*; Lat. *errores significativi*) are errors that allow us to deduce, through stemmatic analysis, significant moments in the transmission of the text;<sup>164</sup> they are thus to be distinguished from trivial errors that can easily be made by different witnesses independently of each other and from which it is just as easy to recover through conjecture. If several witnesses agree in sharing indicative errors, it follows that they are derived from a common hyparchetype.<sup>165</sup> In what follows, it must be emphasised that in a context such as ours, where the archetype itself may not correspond to the philologist’s notion of an ideal text, the word ‘error’ can include variants that are grammatically or otherwise correct, but that are shown through stemmatic analysis to deviate from the older reading. Conversely, it is quite possible for the older reading to contain non-standard spellings, or even apparent nonsense.

##### 3.1.1. The Bhutan NGB Group:

(1) Errors shared by G-a, GR, M, S indicative of a common Bhutan NGB hyparchetype:

---

<sup>161</sup> For the detailed analysis of selected examples underlying these observations, see Section 3.2.

<sup>162</sup> See Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 99; and Cantwell and Mayer, *The Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra and the Vajra Wrath Tantra*, 41, 81–82.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 25.

<sup>164</sup> Paul Maas, *Textkritik* (Leipzig: B.J. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, 1960), 26–27.

<sup>165</sup> Martin L. West, *Textual Criticism and Editorial Technique* (Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner, 1973), 32–33.

See rt. 1.1; rt. 1.2; rt. 1.3; rt. 1.4; rt. 1.8; rt. 2.1; rt. 2.6; rt. 2.7; rt. 3.1; rt. 3.5; rt. 4.3; rt. 4.4; rt. 4.5; rt. 4.8; rt. 4.10; rt. 5.1; rt. 5.2; rt. 5.3; rt. 5.6; rt. 5.10; rt. 6.1; rt. 6.3; rt. 6.5; rt. 6.6; rt. 6.8; rt. 7.2.; rt. 7.4; rt. 8.3; rt. 8.5; rt. 8.6; rt. 9.1; rt. 9.5; rt. 10.1; rt. 10.3; rt. 10.4; rt. 10.5; rt. 10.8; rt. 10.9; rt. 10.10; rt. 10.13; rt. 11.3; rt. 11.4; rt. 11.5; rt. 11.6; rt. 12.1; rt. 12.2; rt. 12.4; rt. 12.5; rt. 12.7; rt. 12.8; rt. 13.1; rt. 13.2; rt. 13.3; rt. 13.6; rt. 13.7; rt. colophon 2.

(2) Errors shared by GR and S indicative of a common hyparchetype:

See rt. 3.5; rt. 4.6; rt. 4.7; rt. 4.9; rt. 4.11; rt. 5.1; rt. 5.8; rt. 6.1; rt. 6.8; rt. 7.5; rt. 8.3; rt. 9.2; rt. 9.5; rt. 10.5; rt. 10.13; rt. 12.7; rt. colophon 1; rt. colophon 2.

(3) Errors of GR not found in S, indicating that S is not merely a copy of GR:

See rt. 6.2; rt. 10.10.

(4) Errors shared by G-b and M indicating that M descends from G-a via G-b:

See rt. 3.2; rt. 4.6; rt. 4.9; rt. 4.11; rt. 5.3; rt. 6.1; rt. 6.8; rt. 8.6; rt. 9.2; rt. 10.5; rt. 13.5.

### 3.1.2. *The South Central NGB Group:*

(1) Errors shared by T, R, KYI indicative of a common South Central NGB hyparchetype:

See rt. 1.3; rt. 1.6; rt. 1.7; rt. 1.10; rt. 2.1; rt. 2.3; rt. 2.4; rt. 2.6; rt. 2.7; rt. 2.8; rt. 3.4; rt. 3.6; rt. 4.1; rt. 5.4; rt. 5.6; rt. 6.2; rt. 6.6; rt. 6.7; rt. 6.8; rt. 7.5; rt. 8.2; rt. 8.4; rt. 8.6; rt. 8.7; rt. 10.1; rt. 10.2; rt. 10.3; rt. 10.4; rt. 10.5; rt. 10.6; rt. 10.9; rt. 10.11; rt. 10.12; rt. 11.1; rt. 11.2; rt. 11.4; rt. 12.1; rt. 12.2; rt. 12.6; rt. 12.7; rt. 13.3; rt. 13.4; rt. 13.5; rt. colophon 2.

(2) Errors shared by T, R indicative of a common hyparchetype separate from KYI:

See rt. 2.7; rt. 4.2; rt. 4.11; rt. 6.2; rt. 13.6.

### 3.1.3. *The KD/D Group:*

(1) Examples of editorial intervention in D:

See rt. 1.1; rt. 1.9; rt. 1.10; rt. 4.4; rt. 4.10; rt. 6.6; rt. 7.3; rt. 7.5; rt. 8.1; rt. 9.1; rt. 10.5; rt. 10.7; rt. 10.12; rt. 10.14; rt. 11.6.

(2) Errors shared by D and the KD versions indicative of a common KD/D hyparchetype:<sup>166</sup>

See rt. 1.5; rt. 2.1; rt. 2.7; rt. 3.3; rt. 4.2; rt. 4.3;<sup>167</sup> rt. 4.11; rt. 5.2; rt. 5.4; rt. 5.6; rt. 5.7; rt. 5.8; rt. 5.9; rt. 5.10; rt. 5.11; rt. 6.2; rt. 6.4; rt. 7.1; rt. 7.6; rt. 8.5; rt. 8.7; rt. 9.1; rt. 9.3; rt. 9.5; rt. 10.5; rt. 10.8; rt. 10.9; rt. 10.11; rt. 11.4; rt. 12.2; rt. 12.3; rt. 12.7; rt. 13.6.

(3) Errors shared by the KD versions indicative of a common KD hyparchetype separate from D:

See rt. 1.1; rt. 1.5; rt. 1.7; rt. 2.5; rt. 2.6; rt. 4.1; rt. 5.3; rt. 9.2; rt. 9.4; rt. 10.12; rt. 11.3.

(4) Possibility of D incorporating readings from X:<sup>168</sup>

See rt. 4.10; rt. 6.8; rt. 7.1; rt. 7.4; rt. 8.4; rt. 11.4; rt. 11.5.

(5) Possibility of D incorporating readings from KD annotations:

See rt. 5.5; rt. 10.2.

(6) Possibility of TSH and X sharing a hyparchetype separate from KAḤ:

See rt. 5.6; rt. 6.5; rt. 11.3; rt. 12.3.

(7) Possibility of KAḤ and X sharing a hyparchetype separate from TSH:

See rt. 5.2; rt. 7.4; rt. 10.2; rt. 10.12; rt. 11.4.

### 3.1.4. *Possibility of Shared Hyparchetype of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB Groups:*

See rt. 1.1; rt. 1.5; rt. 3.3; rt. 4.2; rt. 4.11; rt. 5.4; rt. 5.6; rt. 5.7; rt. 5.8; rt. 5.9; rt. 5.10; rt. 5.11; rt. 7.1;<sup>169</sup> rt. 7.6; rt. 8.5; rt. 8.7; rt. 9.1; rt. 9.3; rt. 9.5; rt. 10.8; rt. 11.4; rt. 12.3; rt. 12.7; rt. 13.6.

---

<sup>166</sup> NB: Given that many of these examples are not errors *per se*, it is possible to interpret some of them as suggesting a shared hyparchetype between the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups (see below, Section 3.1.4). In the latter case, we would have a bipartite stemma, and it would be impossible, when confronted with two alternative readings, to decide which of the two is older.

<sup>167</sup> This example (rt. 4.3) is not amenable to the possibility of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups sharing a hyparchetype.

<sup>168</sup> Such cases are technically termed instances of contamination; see West, *Textual Criticism and Editorial Technique*, 12–13.

<sup>169</sup> This example (rt. 7.1) is the strongest case in favour of a shared hyparchetype of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups, and it cannot be said to be conclusive evidence. It thus seems safer to assume that we have a tripartite stemma rather than a bipartite one.



### 3.1.5. Cases of KD Annotations Confirming Readings Other Than Those of the KD Versions:

See rt. 3.1; rt. 5.3; rt. 5.7; rt. 6.5; rt. 10.8; rt. 12.7.

### 3.1.6. Complicated Cases:

See rt. 2.2; rt. 5.5; rt. 11.5.

### 3.1.7. Examples Indicating Corruptions or Non-Standard Spellings in the Archetype:

See rt. 1.1; rt. 2.2; rt. 3.3; rt. 5.6; rt. 7.1; rt. 9.5; rt. 10.5.

## 3.2. Philological Analysis of Selected Examples

### General Features:

T, R, KYI *shad* written with sign resembling the *visarga* (ḡ), an archaic convention for the *gter shad* (ḡ).

TSH, KAḤ use the *gter shad*.

X, Y use the *gter shad* for the main text and the ordinary *shad* (ḡ) for the annotations.

The other editions (viz. D, G-a, GR, G-b, M, S) use the ordinary *shad*.

At the end of each chapter, X has the words making up the chapter number (e.g. *le'u dang po'o*) written in red ink. X also gives the annotations in red ink.

In the last few pages of the text (viz. T 260–262, to some extent also T 259), T leaves large spaces between each phrase.

### 3.2.1. Examples from Chapter 1

D 46v.1 = G-a 291r.4, GR 288r.5, (G-b 343v.5,) M 757.4, S 297r.1, T 217.1, (R 87r.7,) TSH 322.1, KAḤ 274.1, KYI 258.1, X 1v.1

#### rt. 1.1.

D *su ga ta sarba karma sa mā dza kī la ya mū la tantra nā ma/* : G-a, GR, M, S *a thā ga ta* [G-a *gata*] *kī la ya sarba karma ma le bi ru mū la tan tra* [GR, S *tantra*] *nā ma/* : T, KYI *a tha ga ga ta ki la ya sarba karma ma le bhi ru tan tra na ma/* : R *a tha ga ga ta kī la ya sarba karma ma le bhi ru tan tra na ma/* : TSH *a tha ga ta ki la ya sarba kar ma mu la bhi ru tan tra na ma/* : KAḤ *a thā ga ta kī la ya sarba karma mū la bhi ru*

*tantra nama/ : X a tha ga ta ki la ya/ sarwa karma mu la bhi ru tan tra na ma/*

### Comments

Here D's version is clearly an attempt to standardise the odd Sanskrit found in the other editions. It does so by disregarding the pseudo-Sanskrit of the other versions, basing itself on the Tibetan instead. For example, D ignores the odd *a tha ga ta* (for *tathāgata*), choosing *sugata* instead due to the Tibetan *bde bar gshegs pa*. D's reconstructed Sanskrit title is not without its problems, however: the natural word order in Sanskrit would be *sarvasugata* (not *sugatasarva*). What has clearly happened is that D's editors tried to back-translate from Tibetan (*bde bar gshegs pa thams cad*) to Sanskrit, yet without any regard for Sanskrit syntax. Indeed, the word order in Sanskrit (including in the non-standard Sanskrit) would suggest *sarvakarma* ('all activities'), but in the Tibetan, *thams cad* is found as a modifier of *bde bar gshegs pa*, not of *'phrin las* (var. *phrin las*).

Leaving D aside, we have three main sets of variation: (a) *ma le* vs *mū la*, (b) *bhi ru* vs *bi ru*, and (c) the final presence or absence of *mū la* before *tan tra*.

The agreement regarding (a) of the Bhutan NGB and the South Central NGB groups would tend to suggest that they have preserved the older reading (*ma le*), whereas the variant *mū la* has been introduced by the KD versions. Note, however, that in the alternative of the Bhutan NGB and the South Central NGB groups sharing a hyparchetype, we would be dealing with a bipartite stemma and it would be impossible to tell whether *ma le* or *mū la* is the earlier reading.

Regarding (b), the agreement of the KD versions and of the South Central NGB group indicates that *bhi ru* is the older reading, with the Bhutan NGB group having introduced the variant *bi ru*.

As far as (c) is concerned, the fact that the South Central NGB group and the KD versions agree on leaving out *mū la* before *tan tra* would suggest that *mū la* was inserted there by the Bhutan NGB group.

It should also be pointed out that if *ma le bhi ru* represents the older reading (as assumed above), this would indicate that the odd Sanskrit was already found in the archetype, which seems highly probable. Neither *ma le* nor *bhi ru* readily makes any sense. While it is conceivable

that *ma le* is an error for *mūla* (in which case the hyparchetype of the KD versions succeeded in recovering the correct reading through conjecture), this is not absolutely certain, since it could also be a corruption of the Sanskrit *milana* (‘meeting, contact’) or *melāpaka* (‘conjunction’).<sup>170</sup> Furthermore, it is especially unclear how *bhi ru* could mean anything like *’dus pa* (the corresponding word in the Tibetan title), which in Sanskrit would normally be *samāja* or else *saṃgraha* (the latter would in fact better correspond to *bsdus pa*).<sup>171</sup> Another possibility would be *bhīru* (‘fearful, timid, afraid’),<sup>172</sup> which could correspond to the Tibetan *’jigs byed* (‘terrifying’).<sup>173</sup> While the latter could fit, since the deities of the eightfold Buddha word are terrifying, it does seem to stretch the meaning of the Sanskrit, which primarily refers to the condition of being afraid. Moreover, there is no such word in the corresponding Tibetan title.

Entertaining for a moment the hypothesis that we might be dealing with the semblance of an instrumental plural (*\*mūlabhiḥ*), it would have to be admitted that whoever attempted to construct the Sanskrit title did not know the basic rules of Sanskrit declension, for the instrumental plural of *mūla* would be *mūlaiḥ*. Moreover, the ‘u’ following this pseudo-instrumental plural would still be unaccounted for. A further argument against this hypothesis is the reading order suggested by the alphabetical letters placed above the words in the Sanskrit title, which are found in the three KD versions bearing annotations. The reading order indicated there would be: *a tha ga ta {ka} sarva {kha} karma {ga} bhīru {nga} kīlaya {ca} mūla {cha} tantra {ja} nāma {nya}*. This suggests that *bhīru* and *mūla/male* do not belong together, although it hardly solves the other problems of the Sanskrit title.

In any case, our *bhi ru* is not a lone occurrence, since we also find it in the ‘Sanskrit’ titles of many of the other root *tantras* of the KD corpus.<sup>174</sup> Taking the KAḤ edition as our reference for these instances,

<sup>170</sup> Cf. Negi, *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary*, vol. 6, 2589–2590.

<sup>171</sup> See Lokesh Chandra, *Sanskrit-Tibetan Dictionary* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture/Aditya Prakashan, 2007), 651, 671.

<sup>172</sup> Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, 758.

<sup>173</sup> dMu dge bsam gtan rgya mtsho, *Saṃ bod skad gnyis shan sbyar* [Sanskrit-Tibetan Lexicon] (Lanzhou: Kan su’u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1996), 673.

<sup>174</sup> It is neither found in the title of the *Zhi ba ’dus pa rtsa ba’i rgyud* [Pacifying Root Tantra], KAḤ, vol. Kha/2: 500.1, nor in that of the *’Jig rten mchod bstod sgrub pa rtsa ba’i rgyud* [Worldly Worship and Praise Root Tantra], KAḤ, vol. Ga/3: 474.1.



and only slightly editing its Sanskrit titles, the *Che mchog 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Chemchok Root Tantra] has *śrī bhagavān mahā heruka bhīru mūla tantra nāma*;<sup>175</sup> the *dPal khrag 'thung 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Glorious Heruka Root Tantra] has *śrī heruka bhīru mūla tantra nāma*;<sup>176</sup> the *bCom ldan 'das dpal gshin rje gshed 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Yamāntaka Root Tantra] has *yama kṣetra bhīru mūla tantra nāma*;<sup>177</sup> the *bCom ldan 'das dbang chen 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Maheśvara Root Tantra] has *śrī bhagavān vāsaṅ* (sic!) *bhīru mūla tantra nāma*;<sup>178</sup> the *Ma mo 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Mother Goddesses' Root Tantra] has *mahā mama samāja bhīru tantra nāma*;<sup>179</sup> the *Rig pa 'dzin pa 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Awareness-Holders' Root Tantra] has *vidyā dhāraṇī bhīru tantra nāma*;<sup>180</sup> and the *Drag sngags 'dus pa rdo rje rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Fierce Mantra Root Tantra] has *vajra mantra bhīru santimara* (sic! = *śānti/saṃdhi māra/mara/mūla*?) *tantra nāma*.<sup>181</sup> While these occurrences do little to help solve the mystery concerning *bhīru*'s precise meaning, they do provide a wider context allowing us to deduce that in the mind of whoever established the correspondences between the Tibetan and Sanskrit titles, *bhīru* was probably taken to be connected to the idea of 'compendium' or 'summary', though it seems difficult to say more than that at present.

rt. 1.2.

D, T, TSH, KAḤ, KYI, X *rnam par rol par mdzad pa'i dur khrod* : G-a, GR, M, S *rnam par dag par rol par mdzad pa'i dur khrod*

Comments

Here the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype has introduced *dag par*, a psychological error caused by the fact that *rnam par dag par* is a frequently occurring expression, presumably brought to mind by the term *rnam par rol par*; we thus end up with the slightly cumbersome *rnam par dag par rol par*.

<sup>175</sup> *Che mchog 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud*, KAḤ, vol. Kha/2: 584.1.

<sup>176</sup> *dPal khrag 'thung 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud*, KAḤ, vol. Ga/3: 2.1.

<sup>177</sup> *bCom ldan 'das dpal gshin rje gshed 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud*, KAḤ, vol. Ga/3: 88.1.

<sup>178</sup> *bCom ldan 'das dbang chen 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud*, KAḤ, vol. Ga/3: 182.1.

<sup>179</sup> *Ma mo 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud*, KAḤ, vol. Ga/3: 376.1.

<sup>180</sup> *Rig pa 'dzin pa 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud*, KAḤ, vol. Ga/3: 432.1.

<sup>181</sup> *Drag sngags 'dus pa rdo rje rtsa ba'i rgyud*, KAḤ, vol. Ga/3: 546.1.

rt. 1.3.

D, X *bskyod cing 'khrugs par byed pa'i* : TSH, KAḤ *bskyod cing 'khrug par byed pa'i* : T *skyed cing skrag par byed pa'i* : R, KYI *bskyed cing 'khrug par byed pa'i* : G-a, GR, S *'khrug cing bskyod par byed pa'i* : M *'khrug cing skyod par byed pa'i*

*Comments*

The Bhutan NGB group have through spoonerism reversed the order of the words, whereas the South Central NGB group commit a psychological error in reading *skyed* (var. *bskyed*) for *bskyod*.

rt. 1.4.

D, KAḤ *phrag dog gi ye shes las* : TSH *phra dog gi ye shes las* : X *'phrag dog gi ye shes las* : T, KYI *phra dog gi ye shes/ las* : G-a, GR *phrag<sup>182</sup> dog gi yaṃ las* : M *phrag dog gi yaṃ las* : S *phrag dog gi yam las*

*Comments*

The variant of the Bhutan NGB group (*yaṃ* as the seed syllable of jealousy—and of the air element) here has the potential of triggering a whole independent commentarial tradition. Lupon P. Ogyan Tanzin notes, however, that this variant makes little sense when compared to the mainstream reading preserved in all the other versions.

rt. 1.5.

D *bde bar gshegs pa thams cad kyi las kyi rgyal po* : G-a, GR, M, S *de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi las kyi rgyal po* : R, KYI *de bzhin gshegs [R gshye] pa thams cad [R thamd] kyi las kyi rgyal po* : T *de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi rgyal po* : TSH, KAḤ, X *bde bar gshegs pa thams cad kyi rgyal po*

*Comments*

Here, the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups' readings overlap to a considerable extent, thus suggesting that the older reading is *de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi las kyi rgyal po*. In the KD versions and D, *de bzhin gshegs pa* has been replaced by the synonym *bde bar gshegs pa*.

<sup>182</sup> G-a inserts *ga* postscript below the line.

Furthermore, *las kyi* has been dropped in the KD versions (but is preserved in D, suggesting that D is not simply copied from the latter) and in T.

On the other hand, it is also possible to explain the agreement between the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups by a shared hyparchetype of both groups. In such a case, we would be dealing with a bipartite stemma, and it would be impossible to decide whether *bde bar gshegs pa* (D and the KD versions) or *de bzhin gshegs pa* (Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups) represents the older reading.

rt. 1.6.

D, G-a, GR, M, S, R, KAḤ, X *dbyug pa sngon po dang/* : TSH *dbyug pa sngon pos dang/* : T, KYI *dbyig pa sngon po dang/*

*Comments*

Among the South Central NGB group, T and KYI both have the erroneous reading *dbyig pa*, whereas R correctly has *dbyug pa*. The error presumably goes back to the South Central NGB hyparchetype. Given that *dbyug pa sngon po* is the name of a known deity, Nīladaṇḍa,<sup>183</sup> it is quite likely that R emended the error through conjecture, or perhaps even unreflectively.

rt. 1.7.

D *spyod par byed ma dang/* : G-a, GR, S, KAḤ *bskyod byed ma dang/* : M *skyod byed ma dang/* : T, R, KYI *bskyod ma dang/* : TSH, X *bskyed byed ma dang/*

*Comments*

Here the older reading (*bskyod byed ma*) has been preserved by the Bhutan NGB group and KAḤ. This has been variously corrupted by D to *spyod par byed ma* and by the KD versions to *bskyed byed ma*; given that *bskyod byed ma* is a known deity name, referring to Sañcālinī,<sup>184</sup> it is likely that KAḤ emended the KD hyparchetype's erroneous reading through conjecture, *bskyed* and *bskyod* being visually quite close.

---

<sup>183</sup> Negi, *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary*, vol. 9, 4013; cf. Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 359.

<sup>184</sup> Negi, *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary*, vol. 1, 294.

The South Central NGB group has omitted *byed*, contracting the term to *bskyod ma*.

D 47r.1 = G-a 291v.5, GR 288v.6, (G-b 344v.1,) M 759.2, S 297v.2, T 218.3, (R 88r.1,) TSH 325.1, KAḤ 278.1, KYI 260.2, X 3v.3

rt. 1.8.

D, T, TSH, KAḤ, KYI, X *ye shes tshad med gru chad sgo bzhi rdzogs/* : G-a, GR, M, S *ye shes tshad med gru bzhi sgo bzhi rdzogs/*

### Comments

While the Bhutan NGB variant is not particularly consequential, it does demonstrate the pattern of shared errors among the Bhutan NGB editions of the text, indicating that they share the lHa lung hyparchetype.<sup>185</sup>

rt. 1.9.

D *g.yas kyi zhal gdong dkar bar bstan pa ni/* : G-a, GR, M, S, TSH, X *g.yas kyi zhal mdog dmar bar bstan pa ni/* : KAḤ *g.yas kyis zhal mdog dmar bar bstan pa ni/* : T, KYI *g.yas kyi zhal mdog dmar bar bston pa ni/* : R *g.yas kyi zhal mdog dmar bar ston pa ni/*

### Comments

Here the agreement of the Bhutan NGB group, the KD versions and the South Central NGB group indicates that *zhal mdog dmar bar* is the earlier reading, with D having emended the text to *zhal gdong dkar bar* (see also rt. 1.10).

D 47v.1 = G-a 292r.7, GR 289r.7, (G-b 345r.4,) M 760.6, S 298r.5, T 219.5, (R 88v.1,) TSH 326.5, KAḤ 280.2, KYI 261.6, X 4v.4

rt. 1.10.

D *g.yon*<sup>186</sup> *zhal dmar nag sprul sku'i 'gro don mdzad/* : G-a, GR, M, S, TSH, KAḤ, X *g.yon zhal dkar nag sprul skus 'gro don mdzad/* : T, R, KYI *g.yon zhal ljang nag sprul sku 'gro don mdzad/*

### Comments

Here, it seems most likely that the Bhutan NGB group and the KD versions (barring KYI, which practically must be considered part of the

<sup>185</sup> Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 25, 29.

<sup>186</sup> Page change in D.

South Central NGB group) are preserving the older reading (*dkar nag*), precisely because it is the more difficult one (Lat. *lectio difficilior*);<sup>187</sup> the agreement of the Bhutan NGB group and KD versions also lends weight to this reading. On the other hand, the readings proposed by D (*dmar nag*) (see also rt. 1.9) and the South Central NGB group (*ljang nag*) are the result of editorial emendation.

### 3.2.2. Examples from Chapter 2

D 48v.1 = G-a 293v.4, GR 290v.3, (G-b 346v.5,) M 763.7, S 299v.2, T 222.3, (R 89v.2,) TSH 330.4, KAḤ 285.4, KYI 264.5, X 7r.7

#### rt. 2.1.

D, TSH, KAḤ, X *nga nyid rdo rje chos dbyings las/* : G-a, GR, M, S *ngang nyid rdo rje chos dbyings las/* : T, R, KYI *rang nyid rdo rje chos dbyings las/*

#### Comments

This demonstrates the distinction between the three groups: D and the KD versions with *nga nyid*, the Bhutan NGB group with *ngang nyid*, and the South Central NGB group with *rang nyid*. Since the meaning is in all cases very close, it is impossible to tell which of the three variants is older.

#### rt. 2.2.

D, M *sku yi dbyig tu bdag skyed cig/* : G-a, S *sku yi dbyig tu bdag bskyed cig/* : GR *sku yi dbyig tu dag bskyed cig/* : TSH *sku'i dbyig du bdag bskyed cing/* : T *sku'i dbyings su bdag bskyed cing/* : KAḤ *sku yi dbyings su bdag bskyed cing/* : R *sku'i dbyibs du bdag bskyed cing/* : KYI *sku'i dbyib du bdag bskyed cing/* : X *sku yi dbyibsu [= dbyibs su] bdag bskyed cing/*

#### Comments

† Here we have two sets of variation, the first concerning *dbyig* (vs *dbyib/s* vs *dbyings*), the second concerning the final particle *cing* (vs *cig*).

<sup>187</sup> On this principle in textual criticism, see Maas, *Textkritik*, 11; and West, *Textual Criticism and Editorial Technique*, 51.



The picture is complicated by the fact that the variants are distributed across the different groups, yet this is probably the result of coincidence.

Taking *dbyig* as the older reading, it appears that the hyparchetype of the KD versions and D introduced the variant *dbyibs*, as found in X. D and TSH recovered *dbyig* through conjecture (which is quite feasible, given that these are well-known verses from the *Vajrakīlaya Root Fragment*),<sup>188</sup> whereas KAḤ introduced the visual error *dbyings*. (A psychological error taking *dbyig* for *dbyibs*, followed by a visual corruption of *dbyibs* to *dbyings* seems more likely than *dbyig*>>*dbyings*>>*dbyibs*, although this is open to question.)

As far as the South Central NGB group is concerned, it appears that the reading *dbyib/s* (as witnessed by KYI and R) was present in the South Central NGB hyparchetype; this was then further corrupted to *dbyings* by T.

Turning now to the sentence final particle, the fact that *cing* is found in the South Central NGB group and in the KD versions would indicate that it is the older reading. The Bhutan NGB hyparchetype and D emended this to *cig* through familiarity with the *Vajrakīlaya Root Fragment*'s verses.

This leads us to an alternative possibility for the *dbyig* vs *dbyib/s* variant, which is that the older reading, witnessed by members of the KD/D group and the South Central NGB group, had *dbyib/s*, and that this early reading was already an error for *dbyig* of the *Vajrakīlaya Root Fragment*'s verses. Since these verses were well-known, the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype, as well as D and TSH, independently succeeded in recovering *dbyig*. On the other hand, KAḤ as well as T independently introduced the further corruption *dbyings*. While this independently occurring shared error may look surprising, it is easily explainable either as a visual error (see above), or through psychological association, given that *dbyings* occurs two verses above in the same quotation from the *Vajrakīlaya Root Fragment*.

D 49v.1 = G-a 295r.1, GR 291v.6, (G-b 348r.5,) M 766.6, S 300v.7, T 225.1, (R 90v.2,) TSH 334.4, KAḤ 291.1, KYI 268.1, X 10v.2

---

<sup>188</sup> See above, note 64.

rt. 2.3.

D *rlung 'byin ma ni dgra stwa'o/ rdo rje gsod byed ma gri gug/* : X *rlung 'byin ma ni dgra stwa'o/ rdo rje gsod byed ma*<sup>189</sup> *griug [= gri gug/]* : TSH, KAḤ *rlung 'byin ma ni dgra sta'o/ rdo rje gsod byed ma gri gug/* : G-a, GR, G-b *rlung 'byin ma ni dgra sta'o/ rdo rje gsod ma gri gug dang/* : S *rlung 'byin ma ni dgra sta'o/ rdoe [= rdo rje] gsod ma gri gug dang/* : M *rlung 'dzin ma ni dgra sta'o/ rdo rje gsod ma gri gug dang/* : T, R, KYI *gsod byed ma ni dgra sta'o/*

#### Comments

The two verses of this example need to be looked at together with the next one in order to fully understand the variant introduced by the South Central NGB group.

In the present example, the South Central NGB group has conflated the two verses into a single one, while also associating the wrong weapon (the battle axe, *dgra sta*, instead of the curved knife, *gri gug*) with *gSod byed ma*. It is likely that the error was introduced by the South Central NGB hyparchetype.

rt. 2.4.

D, G-a, GR, M, S *skul byed rdo rje rtse gsum 'dzin/* : TSH, KAḤ *bskul byed rdo rje rtse gsum 'dzin/* : X *bskul byed rdoe [= rdo rje] rtse 3 'dzin/* : T, KYI *rdo rje skul byed ma ni gri gug/ gsod ma rdo rje rtse gsum 'dzin/* : R *rdo rje skul byed ma ni gri gug/ gsod ma rdoe [= rdo rje] rtse gsum 'dzin/*

#### Comments

Here, the South Central NGB group have made two verses out of a single one, by associating the curved knife (*gri gug*, instead of the trident, *rtse gsum*) with *rDo rje skul byed ma*, and then repeating the deity *gSod ma* (already mentioned in the previous verse, cf. rt. 2.3) and linking her to a trident. Again, the error probably goes back to the South Central NGB hyparchetype.

D 50r.1 = G-a 295v.4, GR 292r.7, (G-b 349r.1,) M 768.4, S 301v.2, T 226.4, (R 91r.3,) TSH 336.3, KAḤ 293.6, KYI 269.4, X 12r.1

<sup>189</sup> X inserts *ma* above the line.

rt. 2.5.

D, T *byi la pu shud spyang ki khra/* : G-a, GR, M, S *byi la pu shud spyang khyi khra/* : R *byi la pu shud spyang gi khra/* : KYI *byi la pu bzhud spyaki [= spyang ki] khra/* : TSH, KAḤ, X *byi la pu shud spyang ki wa/*

#### Comments

Here we have *khra* on the one hand, and *wa* on the other. Since *khra* is supported by all editions except the KD versions, we can deduce that it is the older reading and that *wa* is a variant introduced by the hyparchetype of the KD versions. Moreover, the standard list of hybrid (*'phra men*) deities found in the *Noble Noose of Methods* also confirms *khra*.<sup>190</sup>

rt. 2.6.

D *seng ge pha wang sre mo dom/* : G-a, GR, M, S *seng ge pha wang srin bya dom/* : T *seng ge pha wang po mo dom/* : R *seng+ge pha wang pre mo dom/* : KYI *seng ge pha wang pre mong dom/* : TSH, KAḤ *seng ge pha wang sre mong dom/* : X *seng ge pha wong sre mong dom/*

#### Comments

Here the variation is between *sre mo* (var. *sre mong*, *pre mong*, *pre mo*) and *srin bya*. Since *srin bya* is only found in the Bhutan NGB group, we can deduce that it is a variant going back to the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype. Furthermore, *sre mo/sre mong* as the older reading is also confirmed by the *Noble Noose of Methods*' list of *'phra men* deities.<sup>191</sup>

With regard to the other editions, the minor variation between *sre mo* (D) and *sre mong* (the KD versions) can be considered stylistically variant spellings of the same word. As far as the South Central NGB group is concerned, assuming that the archetype was in *dbu med*, it is likely that the South Central NGB hyparchetype mistook *sre* for *pre* (both look similar in *dbu med*), thus introducing the variants *pre mo* and *pre mong*.

---

<sup>190</sup> Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 302.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

rt. 2.7.

D *rim bzhin g.yas bsnams g.yon phur bu/* : X *rim bzhin g.yas bsnams g.yon phur bu/* : TSH, KAḤ *rims bzhin g.yas bsnams g.yon phur bu/* : G-a *rims bzhin g.yas gnas phur bu 'dril/* : GR, G-b, M, S *rim bzhin g.yas gnas phur bu 'dril/* : T, R *rim bzhin g.yas nas g.yon phur bu/* : KYI *rim bzhin g.yas gnas g.yon phur bu/*

*Comments*

Here the variants illustrate the three groups in the text's transmission. The KD/D group has *bsnams g.yon phur bu*; the South Central NGB group has *nas* (var. *gnas*) *g.yon phur bu*; and the Bhutan NGB group has *gnas phur bu 'dril*. Since the South Central NGB and the KD/D groups' readings are very close, we can assume that they must represent the earlier reading, with *gnas phur bu 'dril* having been introduced by the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype.

Within the South Central NGB group, we can also observe the variation between *g.yas nas* (T and R) vs *g.yas gnas* (KYI). Since KYI's reading (*gnas*) is shared by the Bhutan NGB group, this might be taken as an indication that *gnas* was part of the older reading (i.e. *gnas g.yon phur bu*), but that the strangeness of this reading prompted various emendations (to *nas* in R and T, and to *bsnams* in the KD/D group).

rt. 2.8.

D, G-a, GR, M, S, KAḤ *dbang gi kī la ya zhes pa/* : TSH, X *dbang gi ki la ya zhes pa/* : T, KYI *pad ma ki la ya zhes pa/* : R *padma kī la ya zhes pa/*

*Comments*

Here we have a case of the South Central NGB hyparchetype introducing a variant (*pad ma* instead of *dbang gi*), presumably because the older reading (*dbang gi*), which is found in all the versions except those of the South Central NGB group, while quite accurate in terms of Padmakīlaya's association with the activity of dominating, did not quite fit the pattern observed in the previous passage of calling each of the supreme sons by his name (i.e. Buddhakīlaya, Ratnakīlaya, etc.).

D 50v.1 = G-a 296r.6, GR 293r.2, (G-b 349v.4,) M 769.7, S 302r.4, T 227.5, (R 91v.2,) TSH 338.1, KAḤ 296.4, KYI 270.6, X 13r.5

### 3.2.3. Examples from Chapter 3

rt. 3.1.

D, TSH, KAḤ, X, T, KYI *ma lus sems can khams la'o* / : G-a, GR, M, S  
*ma lus sems can khams la gdab* /

Annotations

*ma lus*\*\*\*{TSH, KAḤ *pas* : X *om.*}

*sems can*\*\*\*{TSH, KAḤ *gyi* : X *gyi*}

TSH *la'o*\*\*\*{*gdab par bya*} : KAḤ *la'o*\*\*\*{*gdab par bya*} : X  
*khams*\*\*\*{*gyi gdabs par bya*}

Comments

Here we have the Bhutan NGB group with *la gdab* on the one hand, and all the other versions with *la'o* on the other. Interestingly, the Bhutan NGB reading, which presumably goes back to the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype, seems to be supported by the KD annotations, which gloss *la'o* with *gdab par bya* or variants thereof. This would indicate that the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype incorporated the KD annotation as part of the main text, and corroborates the hypothesis of the relative antiquity of the KD annotations.

rt. 3.2.

D, GR, S, T, TSH, KAḤ, KYI, X *mngon gyur longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku* / : G-a, G-b, M *sngon gyur longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku* /

Comments

The variant introduced by G-a is a homophonic error (*sngon gyur* for *mngon gyur*), which has been taken over by G-b, and thence by M.

D 51r.1 = G-a 297r.2, GR 293v.3, (G-b 350r.7,) M 771.4, S 302v.6, T 228.7, (R 92r.2,) TSH 340.1, KAḤ 300.1, KYI 272.4, X 15r.1

rt. 3.3.

D, TSH, KAḤ,<sup>192</sup> X *rigs lnga khro bcu sgo ba bzhi/* : G-a, GR, M, S, R  
*stobs bcu mi 'jigs rig pa bzhi/* : T *stobs bcu mi 'jigs rig pa bzhin/* : KYI  
*stob bcu mi 'jigs rig pa bzhi/*

#### Comments

Here the variation concerns the entire line. The agreement between the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups would suggest that their reading (*stobs bcu mi 'jigs rig pa bzhi/*, with minor variants as noted) is the older one, the hyparchetype of the KD/D group having introduced the variant *rigs lnga khro bcu sgo ba bzhi/*. With regard to the reading shared by the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups, we can observe the non-standard spelling *rig pa* instead of *rigs pa* ('types' of fearlessness) that would be expected. It is likely that this non-standard spelling was already found in the archetype.

Nonetheless, if we assumed the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups to be derived from a shared hyparchetype, it would be impossible, due to the bipartite nature of the stemma, to determine which of the two readings is the older one.

rt. 3.4.

D, X *blos bcas zhe gdug gnag par ldan/* : TSH, KAḤ *blos bcad zhe gdug gnag par ldan/* : G-a *blo bcad zhe sdug mag*<sup>193</sup> *par ldan/* : GR, M, S *blo bcad zhe sdug brnag par ldan/* : T, KYI *blob bcas zhe gdug brtag par ldan/* : R *slob bcas zhe gdug brtag par ldan/*

#### Comments

T and KYI share a nonsensical error (*blob bcas*), which probably goes back to the South Central NGB hyparchetype. R's reading (*slob bcas*) could easily be a conjecture in this case.

rt. 3.5.

D, KAḤ, X *'chol dang 'dus dang bsad pa dang/* : TSH *'chol dang 'dus dang gsad pa dang/* : T, KYI *chol dang 'dus dang gsad pa dang/* : G-a,

---

<sup>192</sup> The distinction in KAḤ between main text and annotations is not made clearly here and on several pages (KAḤ 299–300).

<sup>193</sup> G-a inserts a faint *ba* prescript, emending to *brmag*.

M 'chol dang lus dang bsad pa dang/ : GR, S 'tshol dang lus dang gsad pa dang/

*Comments*

The Bhutanese NGB versions share the error *lus* for *'dus*. Additionally, GR and S have mistaken *'chol* for *'tshol*.

*rt. 3.6.*

D, G-a, GR, M, S *bang rim gsum pas mtha' bsdus te/* : X *bang rim gsum pas mtha' bsdus te/* : TSH, KAḤ *bang rims gsum pas mtha' bsdu ste/* : T, R, KYI *bang rim gsum pas mtha' blta bu ste/*

*Comments*

Yet again, T, R, and KYI share a non-standard variant (which is also non-metrical), probably going back to the South Central NGB hyparchetype.

*3.2.4. Examples from Chapter 4*

D 51v.1 = G-a 297v.5, GR 294r.5, (G-b 351r.4,) M 772.7, S 303v.1, T 330.3, (R 92v.2,) TSH 342.1, KAḤ 303.4, KYI 274.1, X 17r.1

*rt. 4.1.*

D *phyi nang bsrung ba 'bad pas brtsam/* : G-a, M, S *phyi nang srung bas 'bad pa brtsam/* : GR *phyi nang srungs bas 'bad pa brtsam/* : T *phyi nang bsrung ba 'bad pas tsam/* : R, KYI *phyi nang bsrung ba 'bad pas btsam/* : TSH *phyi nang bsrung la 'bad pas rtsal/* : KAḤ *phyi nang bsrungs 'bad pas rtsal/* : X *phyi nang bsrung ba 'bad pas rtsal/*

*Comments*

Here, the earlier reading is *brtsam* (and its unorthographical variants), as witnessed in all editions except the KD versions, which have *rtsal* instead. Since the latter is not found in D, we can assume that it was introduced by the KD hyparchetype, and that D is a separate descendant of the KD/D hyparchetype.

The South Central NGB versions share the error *b/tsam*, whereby R and KYI have *btsam* and T has *tsam*. This indicates that the South Central NGB hyparchetype had *btsam* and that T further corrupted this to *tsam*.

rt. 4.2.

D, TSH, KAḤ *nam mkha'i dkyil nas thigs pa shar/* : X *namkha'i* [= *nam mkha'i*] *dkyil nas thigs pa shar/* : G-a, GR, M, S *nam mkha'i dbyings nas thigs pa shar/* : T, R *nam mkha'i dbyings nas sdig par bsham/* : KYI *namkha'i* [= *nam mkha'i*] *dbyings nas thigs par shar/*

#### Comments

Here we have two acceptable readings, and it is rather hard to tell which is older. On the one hand, we have the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups' reading (*dbyings nas*), whereas on the other we have the D and KD versions' reading (*dkyil nas*). The fact that the reading *dbyings nas* is shared by the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups would indicate that it is the older reading, with *dkyil nas* having been introduced in the hyparchetype of D and the KD versions.

However, if we posited a shared hyparchetype for the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups, then we would have a bipartite stemma and it would be impossible to tell which reading is older.

The fact that T and R introduce the homophonic error *sdig par bsham*, which is avoided by KYI, indicates that T and R share a hyparchetype, whereas KYI has descended from the South Central NGB hyparchetype separately.

D 52r.1 = G-a 298r.8, GR 294v.6, (G-b 351v.7,) M 774.3, S 304r.2, T 231.5, (R 93r.2,) TSH 344.1, KAḤ 306.3, KYI 275.4, X 18v.1

rt. 4.3.

D, TSH, X *mgrin par babs pas dngos por 'dzin/* : KAḤ *mgrin par bab pas dngos por 'dzin/* : G-a, GR, M, S *mgrin par bcas pas dngos 'dzin sangs/* : T, R, KYI *mgrin pa bab pas dngos 'dzin sbyangs/*

#### Comments

This verse needs to be looked at together with the next one in order to understand D's editorial intervention in the second verse.

Here we have two sets of variation: *mgrin pa/r bab/s pas* vs *mgrin par bcas pas* on the one hand, and *dngos 'dzin sangs/sbyangs* vs *dngos por 'dzin* on the other. In the first instance, *mgrin pa/r bab/s pas* is the older reading, as it is shared by the KD/D group and the South Central



NGB group, with the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype having introduced the psychological error *mgrin par bcas pas*.

In the second instance, *ngos 'dzin sangs* (Bhutan NGB group) and *ngos 'dzin sbyangs* (South Central NGB group) are close enough semantically to be considered a single reading representative of the older reading (though it is hard to tell whether *sbyangs* was corrupted to *sangs* in the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype, or whether *sangs* was corrupted to *sbyangs* in the South Central NGB hyparchetype—the former appears slightly more likely, with *sbyangs* representing the earlier reading). The hyparchetype of the KD/D group thus introduced the variant *ngos por 'dzin*. This reading does not fit the context, however, which describes the descent of the stream of *bodhicitta*; reaching the level of the throat (*mgrin par*), reification is purified and Amitābha manifests as the fruit of the secret empowerment—to hold in this context (as D and the KD versions suggest) that there is reification when the ambrosia reaches the throat makes little sense. This discrepancy was noticed by the editors of D, who went on to emend the text of the next verse.

rt. 4.4.

D *bsal ba'i 'bras bu snang mtha' yas/* : G-a, GR, M, S *gsad pa'i 'bras bu snang mtha' yas/* : T, R, KYI, TSH, KAḤ, X *gsang ba'i 'bras bu snang mtha' yas/*

#### Annotations

*gsang ba'i*\*\*\*{TSH *dbang gi* : KAḤ *dbang gis* : X om.}

*'bras bu*\*\*\*{TSH, KAḤ *dag* : X om.}

TSH, KAḤ *snang*\*\*\*{*ba*} : X *mtha'*\*\*\*{*'i*}

#### Comments

The agreement of the South Central NGB group and KD versions makes it logically probable that *gsang ba'i* was the original reading, which became variously corrupted in D (*bsal ba'i*, an editorial emendation attempting to make sense of the previous verse, the latter being mistaken in the KD/D group) and in the Bhutan NGB group (*gsad pa'i*, a visual error whereby the postscript *nga* was mistaken for *da*). As a result of D's editorial emendation, which attempts to link both verses as a single phrase and which incidentally is incompatible with the KD annotations

(the latter link {*dbang*} to *gsang ba'i*, thus explaining that this relates to the secret empowerment), Amitābha is no longer the fruit of the secret empowerment, but becomes the fruit of eliminating reification.

rt. 4.5.

D, TSH, KAḤ, X 'di ni *bsnyen pa'i mchog yin no/* : T, KYI 'di ni *bsnyen pa mchog yin no/* : G-a, GR, M, S 'di ni *mnyes pa'i mchog yin te/*

*Comments*

The Bhutan NGB group's reading (*mnyes pa'i* instead of *bsnyen pa'i*) is a homophonic error going back to the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype.

rt. 4.6.

D, GR, S, T, TSH, KAḤ, KYI, X *methun pa'i gzugs la rab tu dbab/* : G-a, G-b, M 'thun *pa'i gzugs la rab tu dbab/*

*Comments*

Here the variant (*'thun*) shared by G-a, G-b, and M would seemingly go back to the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype and represents an archaic spelling for *methun*;<sup>194</sup> it would have been copied from G-a to G-b, and thence to M. The fact that GR and S do not share this variant could indicate either that there is a separate hyparchetype in the Bhutan NGB transmission that does not contain that variant and from which GR and S descend, or simply that GR and S independently and unreflectively corrected it to the more standard spelling *methun*.

D 52v.1 = G-a 299r.1, GR 295v.1, (G-b 352v.3,) M 775.6, S 304v.4, T 232.6, (R 93v.2,) TSH 345.6, KAḤ 309.2, KYI 276.6, X 19v.6

rt. 4.7.

D, G-a, M, KAḤ *sems kyi chos la sku mi mnga'/'* : X *sems kyi chos la sku mi mnga'/'* : GR, S *sems kyi chos la bskul mi mnga'/'* : T, KYI *sems kyis chos la sku mi mnga'/'* : TSH *sems kyi chos kyi sku mi mnga'/'*

---

<sup>194</sup> rNam rgyal tshe ring, *Bod yig brda rnying tshig mdzod* [Dictionary of Archaic Tibetan Lexemes] (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2001), 241.

*Comments*

Here, G-a and M (along with the other versions) are preserving the older reading, whereas the shared error of GR and S would appear to indicate a separate hyparchetype within the Bhutan NGB transmission.

*rt. 4.8.*

D, T, TSH, KAḤ, KYI, X *khro bo rdo rje 'du 'phro mdzad/* : G-a, GR, M, S *khro bo rdo rje 'du 'bral mdzad/*

*Comments*

Here we have a psychological error going back to the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype, with *'du 'bral* instead of *'du 'phro*.

D 53r.1 = G-a 299v.3, GR 296r.2, (G-b 353r.5,) M 777.3, S 305r.5, T 234.1, (R 94r.2,) TSH 347.5, KAḤ 312.2, KYI 278.3, X 21r.5

*rt. 4.9.*

D, GR, S, T, KAḤ, KYI, X *rgyan ldan 'bar ba'i klong na bzhugs/* : TSH *brgyan ldan 'bar ba'i klong na bzhugs/* : G-a, G-b, M *rgyan ldan 'bar ba'i glong na bzhugs/*

*Comments*

Here the error shared by G-a and M (reading *glong* for *klong*) either was introduced by G-a (and copied in G-b and M) or goes back to the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype. In the latter case, the nature of the error is such that GR and S (or their shared hyparchetype) could have easily emended the text by inferring the correct reading.

*rt. 4.10.*

D *ye shes khro bo de 'dra dbab/* : X *ye shes khro bor de 'dra dbab/* : G-a, GR, M, S *ye shes 'khor lo de 'dral dbab/* : T, KYI *ye shes 'khor lo de 'dras dbab/* : TSH, KAḤ *ye shes 'khor lo de 'dra dbab/*

*Comments*

The agreement of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups as well as two of the KD versions on *'khor lo* would suggest that this is the older reading, with D and X having introduced the variant *khro bo/r*. It is

probable that X introduced this variant and that D, which tends to have conflated readings from several sources,<sup>195</sup> incorporated it.

Regarding the other variant, the Bhutan NGB group is clearly in error with *'dral* instead of *'dra*.

rt. 4.11.

D, TSH, X *ldeg 'bar 'od dang sgra 'byin dang/* : KAḤ *ldog 'bar 'od dang sgra 'byin dang/* : G-a, G-b, M *ldeg 'phang 'od dang sgra 'byin dang/* : GR, S *ldeg 'phar 'od dang sgra 'byin dang/* : T *ldeg par 'od dang sgra sbyin dang/* : R *ldeg par 'od dang sgra 'byin dang/* : KYI *ldeg 'phar 'od dang sgra sbyin dang/*

#### Comments

Here, the fact that we have representatives of both the South Central NGB group (KYI) and the Bhutan NGB group (viz. GR and S) giving *'phar* indicates that this is the older reading. The KD versions and D have introduced the reading *'bar*. In the Bhutan NGB group, G-a has introduced the reading *'phang* (probably by mistaking the postscript *ra* for *nga*), and this reading has been taken over in M (via G-b). Since GR and S have preserved the older reading *'phar* as mentioned, this would suggest a shared hyparchetype that must be descended from the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype rather than from G-a. As far as the South Central NGB group is concerned, since KYI is alone in preserving the older reading, with T and R introducing *par*, it is likely that T and R share a hyparchetype, whereas KYI separately descends from the South Central NGB hyparchetype.

Another explanation is, however, possible: if we took *'bar* as being the older reading, we would have a bipartite stemma, with the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups deriving from a common hyparchetype. The common hyparchetype would have introduced the reading *'phar* (preserved in GR, S, and KYI), which was variously corrupted to *'phang* (G-a, M) and to *par* (T, R).

---

<sup>195</sup> While being produced in East Tibet, D is believed to have incorporated readings from several sources, including from Central Tibet. See Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 16–17, 24.

### 3.2.5. Examples from Chapter 5

#### rt. 5.1.

D, KAḤ, X *nyid kyi sku yi dpa' bo'i chas/* : G-a, M *nyid kyi sku yi cha lugs kyi/* : GR, S *nyid kyi sku'i cha lugs kyis*<sup>196</sup> : T *nyid kyis sku'i dpa bo chas/* : KYI *nyid kyis sku'i dpa bo'i chas/* : TSH *nyid kyi sku'i dpa' bo'i chas/*

#### Comments

The agreement of D, the KD versions, and the South Central NGB group on the reading *sku'i* (var. *sku yi*) *dpa bo'i* (var. *dpa bo*) *chas* would indicate that this is the older reading. The Bhutan NGB group have introduced the variant *cha lugs kyi/*, with GR and S having the ergative *kyis* instead of the genitive *kyi* and omitting the *shad* that follows.

#### rt. 5.2.

D, KAḤ, X *stag lpags mdzes shing dpal 'bar 'dzin/* : G-a, GR, M, S *stag lpags brjid cing dpa' bar 'dzin/* : T *stags lpags mdzes shing dpa' bar 'dzin/* : TSH, KYI *stag lpags mdzes shing dpa' bar 'dzin/*

#### Comments

Here we have two sets of variation, *mdzes* vs *brjid* on the one hand, and *dpa' bar* vs *dpal 'bar* on the other. In the former case, only the Bhutan NGB group has *brjid*, so this is a clear instance of a variant introduced by the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype. In the second case, the agreement of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups as well as TSH on *dpa' bar* suggests that this is the older reading, with *dpal 'bar* having been introduced in the hyparchetype of D and the KD versions. The fact that TSH does not follow *dpal 'bar* could suggest the possibility of a hyparchetype shared by KAḤ and X separate from TSH.

D 53v.1 = G-a 300r.4, GR 296v.2, (G-b 354r.1,) M 778.5, S 305v.6, T 235.3, (R 94v.3,) TSH 349.4, KAḤ 315.2, KYI 279.5, X 22v.4

#### rt. 5.3.

D, T, R, KYI *thugs rjes dbye bsring yongs mi mdzad/* : G-a, GR, S *thugs rjes dbye bsrel ye mi mdzad/* : G-b, M *thugs rjes dbye bsre ye mi mdzad/* :

<sup>196</sup> GR and S omit the *shad*, continuing straight to *yon tan khyad par 'di bshad do/*.

TSH *thugs rje dbye' bsrang yong mi mdzad/* : KAḤ *thugs rje dbye bsrang yong mi mdzad/* : X *thugs rjes dbye bsrangs yongs mi mdzad/*

#### Annotations

TSH *thugs rje*\*\*\*{*-s sems can la nye ring du/*} : KAḤ *thugs*\*\*\*{*sems can nye ring du dbye ba dang thugs rjes*} : X *thugs rjes*\*\*\*{*semn [= sems can] nye ring du/*}

TSH *dbe*\*\*\*{*dbye' ba de thugs rjes/*} : KAḤ om. ann.—see prev. ann. : X *dbye*\*\*\*{*ba dang thugs rjes/*}

TSH {*thugs rjes*}\*\*\**bsrang*\*\*\*{*ba*} : KAḤ {*thugs rjes*}\*\*\**bsrang* : X om. ann.

#### Comments

Here we have two cases of variation: the first concerns *dbye bsring* vs *dbye bsre/l* vs *dbye bsrang/s*, the second concerns *yong/s mi mdzad* vs *ye mi mdzad*. The second case poses no particular problem: the older reading is *yongs mi mdzad*, and the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype has introduced the variant *ye mi mdzad*. The first case, however, is more complicated, as none of the transmitted readings make sense. Nonetheless, the agreement between D and the South Central NGB group allows us to deduce that the earlier reading must have been *dbye bsring*. While this reading ('to divide and prolong') makes no sense in the context, the KD annotations give us a clue as to the intended meaning, since they have {*sems can la nye ring du/*}, or variants thereof, thus indicating partiality towards sentient beings, a partiality which this compassion (*thugs rjes*) does not take part in (*yongs mi mdzad*). This suggests that the original reading (or, at the very least, the sense that was being conveyed) must have been *dbye bsri* ('to prefer'), which is precisely a synonym for *nye ring*; this was then corrupted to the earliest transmitted reading, *dbye bsring*. The KD hyparchetype then introduced the corruption *dbye bsrang* by dropping the *gi gu* vowel sign, whereas the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype introduced the variant *dbye bsrel*. The latter reading was further corrupted to *dbye bsre* in G-b, and this reading was copied by M; incidentally, this allows us to establish that M is dependent on G-b and is not a direct descendant of G-a, thus confirming

the hypothesis put forward by Cantwell and Mayer in their work on the *Noble Noose of Methods*.<sup>197</sup>

rt. 5.4.

D, TSH, KAḤ *mnyen zhing lcug la dri ma 'byar/* : X *mnyen zhing lcugs la dri ma 'byar/* : G-a *mnyen zhing lcugs la ri mo 'byol/* : GR *mnyen zhing lcug pa ri mo 'byol/* : M, S *mnyen zhing lcug la ri mo 'byol/* : T, R, KYI *mnyen zhing lcug ma ri mo 'brel/*

#### Annotations

*mnyen*\*\*\*{TSH, KAḤ *lus* : X *lus/*}

TSH {*gzhan la/*}\*\*\**'byar*\*\*\*{*bar byed*} : KAḤ *dri ma*\*\*\*{*gzhan la*} *'byar* \*\*\*{*bar byed*} : X {*gzhan la/*}\*\*\**'byar*\*\*\*{*bar byed/*}

#### Comments

The agreement of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups would suggest that *ri mo* is the older reading. Of the two groups, the reading preserved by the Bhutan NGB group (*ri mo 'byol*, probably indicating ‘spiralling patterns’) would seem to be the older one, as it would lend itself more readily to being corrupted to *ri mo 'brel* on the one hand (as found in the South Central NGB group), and *dri ma 'byar* (KD/D group) on the other. Furthermore, of the three readings, it is the most difficult one (Lat. *lectio difficilior*), hence also the one most likely to cause confusion to scribes.

If, however, the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups descended from a common hyparchetype, then we would have a bipartite stemma, and it would be impossible to give more weight to this reading than to that proposed by the KD versions and D, especially considering that the KD annotations tend to support the latter reading, since they mention the scent sticking on others (*dri ma {gzhan la} 'byar*). Nonetheless, the annotations cannot be taken as an infallible guide, since it is possible that they simply have incorporated the variant of the KD/D hyparchetype.

---

<sup>197</sup> Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 29.

rt. 5.5.

D *spyod pa 'di nyid sngags shing 'jigs/* : G-a, GR, M, S, TSH, KAḤ  
*spyod pa 'di nyid dpa' zhing 'jigs/* : T, KYI, X *spyod pa 'di nyid sdang  
 zhing 'jigs/*

Annotations

{TSH, KAḤ *sngags kyi* : X *sngags kyi/*}\*\*\**spyod pa  
 'di nyid*\*\*{TSH, X *sngags pa rang la/* : KAḤ *sngags pa rang la* }  
 TSH, KAḤ *zhing*\*\*{*theg 'og rnam*s/} : X *sdang*\*\*{*theg 'og rnam*s/}  
*'jigs*\*\*{TSH *par byed pa byed pa dang/* : KAḤ, X *par byed pa  
 dang/*}

Comments

† Here the case is complicated by the fact that we have two variants, but the KD versions are split between them. Thus the Bhutan NGB group and two of the KD versions (viz. TSH and KAḤ) have *dpa' zhing*, whereas the South Central NGB group and X have *sdang zhing*. Since both variants are supported by members of the two groups, it is impossible to tell which is the earlier reading. D is alone in introducing *sngags shing* and may have done so unreflectively by mistaking the KD annotations {*sngags pa rang la/*} for the main text.

rt. 5.6.

D, KAḤ *rigs ldan pa dang zlum pa dang/* : TSH *rig ldan pa dang zlum  
 pa dang/* : X *rig ldan pa dang zlum pa dang/* : G-a, GR, M, S *ring ldan  
 pa dang zlum pa ltar/* : T, KYI *mi ldan pa zlum pa ltar/*

Annotations

TSH *rig*\*\*{*sngar gyi bzang ngan dang/*} : KAḤ *rigs*\*\*{*sngags kyi  
 bzang ngan*} : X *rig*\*\*{*sngags kyi bzang ngan dang/*}  
 TSH *zlum*\*\*{*dbyibs*} : KAḤ *ldan pa*\*\*{*dbyibs*} : X  
*zlum*\*\*{*dbyibs/*}

Comments

Here we have a case where the earlier reading *rigs ldan pa*, witnessed by KAḤ and D, is not necessarily orthographically the most correct. Indeed, *rigs* is often found in older texts with the sense of *rig* ('esoteric science'),



sometimes occurring alongside the proper form,<sup>198</sup> though the converse (i.e. the use of *rig* for *rigs* ‘family’) doesn’t appear to be frequent (however, see above, rt. 3.3, where at least one case of just such a usage can be found). The form *rig ldan pa* found in TSH and X would thus appear to be an editorial emendation, which could possibly go back to a hyparchetype of TSH and X, but may just as well have been made independently and unreflectively by TSH and X. In the Bhutan NGB group, the reading becomes *ring ldan pa*, whereas in the South Central NGB group, we have *mi ldan pa*.

Here the question might arise whether, in terms of meaning and apart from the archaic spelling conventions just alluded to, *rigs iso*. ‘family’ could be intended in this context. The text is describing the qualities of the skulls, and it must be admitted that both *rigs ldan pa* and *rig ldan pa* would fit: the former would suggest that the skulls come from those of a good or bad caste (as is implied by the annotations in TSH, reading *sngar gyi*), whereas the latter would suggest that they are inscribed with good and bad *vidyāmantras* (the annotations in KAḤ and X read *sngags kyi*). It seems, however, that we cannot give too much weight to TSH’s *sngar gyi*: it is appended to *rig* (not *rigs* as would be fitting) and, more significantly, assuming the hyparchetype of the KD versions was in *dbu med*, a reversed *da* written as an abbreviation for *-gs* could easily have been mistaken for a final *ra* by TSH, with the grammatical change from *kyi* to *gyi* being made even unreflectively.

The second variant is *ltar* in the Bhutan NGB group and South Central NGB group on the one hand, and *dang* in the KD versions and D on the other. Given that the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups agree against the KD versions and D, we can presume that *ltar* is the older reading. However, it is not inconceivable that the earlier reading was *dang* and that this was corrupted to *ltar*. In that case, we would have to assume that the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups share a hyparchetype, and we would be faced with a bipartite stemma.

D 54r.1 = G-a 300v.6, GR 297r.3, (G-b 354v.4,) M 780.1, S 306v.1, T 236.5, (R 95r.3,) TSH 351.4, KAḤ 319.1, KYI 281.3, X 24v.3

---

<sup>198</sup> Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 5, n. 14, 34. Cf. Cantwell and Mayer, *Early Tibetan Documents on Phur pa from Dunhuang*, 204–206, incl. n. 68.

rt. 5.7.

D, TSH, KAḤ, X *yongs rdzogs srid kyi pho brang rags/* : G-a, GR, M, S  
*yongs rdzogs srid kyi phra dang rags/* : T, R, KYI *yongs rdzogs bsrid*  
*kyi 'phra dang rags/*

#### Annotations

{TSH *rang rang gi las 'bras*<sup>199</sup> : KAḤ *rang rang gi lam 'bras* : X  
*rangng [= rang rang] gi las 'bras/*\*\*\**yongs*\*\*\*{TSH, KAḤ, X *su*  
*rdzogs*\*\*\*{TSH *par smin pa'i* : KAḤ *pa smin pa'i* : X *pa smin pa'i/*  
*srid*\*\*\*{TSH *pa 3* : KAḤ *pa gsum* : X *pa 3/*  
{TSH, X *phra ba dang/* : KAḤ *om.*}\*\*\**pho*\*\*\*{TSH *sems can sgrib*  
*pa/* : KAḤ *sems can sgrib pa* : X *seṃn [= sems can/ sgrib pa*<sup>200</sup>  
*brang*\*\*\*{TSH, KAḤ *pa bar ma dang/* : X *bar ma dang*  
*rags*\*\*\*{TSH, X *pa'i rigs dang/* : KAḤ *pa'i rigs dang*}

#### Comments

The agreement of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups would suggest that *phra dang* (var. *'phra*) is the older reading, with the variant *pho brang* having been introduced as a psychological error by the hyparchetype of D and the KD versions. Alternatively, if we posited a common hyparchetype for the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups, the bipartite stemma that would result would preclude the possibility of deciding which is the older reading.

However, in this case the KD annotations give us a clue as to the greater antiquity of the reading preserved by the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups, for although the main text of the KD versions has *pho brang*, the annotations in TSH and X (KAḤ has omitted this annotation) gloss this with *phra ba dang/*. This suggests that the KD hyparchetype must have preserved some memory of *phra ba* as being the correct (or, at least, an alternative) reading, despite incorporating *pho brang* in the main text.

<sup>199</sup> The annotation sign (*mchan rtags*) is missing here in TSH, the annotation being written beneath the line.

<sup>200</sup> This annotation is broken up in X, with *seṃn/* placed below the line and *sgrib pa* above.

rt. 5.8.

D, KAḤ, X *rakta rlan gdong dmar nag ldan/* : TSH *rag ta rlan gdang dmar gnag ldan/* : G-a *rakta rlan sher dmar nag ldan/* : GR, S *rakta rlan shes dmar nag ldan/* : M *rakta rlan gsher dmar nag ldan/* : T, R, KYI *rag ta brlan gsher dmar nag ldan/*

#### Comments

Here the agreement of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups makes it likely that *rlan gsher* (and its variants) is the older reading, with *rlan gdong* (var. *gdang*) having been introduced in the hyparchetype of D and the KD versions.

Alternatively, if the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups were assumed to share a hyparchetype, we would be dealing with a bipartite stemma, which would preclude the possibility of deciding which among both readings is the oldest one.

Among the Bhutan NGB group, GR and S have introduced the orthographical mistake *shes*, a psychological error presumably going back to their shared hyparchetype.

Interestingly, TSH preserves, along with the South Central NGB group, the archaic spelling *rag ta* for *rakta*, which is encountered in old texts.<sup>201</sup> It is possible that this represents the earlier reading, and that the other versions sought to standardise the spelling; in any case, it is only a minor variant.

rt. 5.9.

D, KAḤ, X *nye bar dgongs shing ngang la gnas/* : TSH *nye bar dgongs cing ngang la gnas/* : G-a, GR, M, S *nye bar mi gos ngang la gnas/* : T, KYI *nye bar mi gol ngang la gnas/*

#### Annotations

*nye bar*\*\*\*{TSH *gdul bya'i don la thugs chags la/* : KAḤ *gdul bya'i don la thugs chags pa/* : X *gdul bya'i don la thugs rje chags la/*}

TSH *cing*\*\*\*{*dus* ????<sup>202</sup> *chos nyid/*} : KAḤ *shing*\*\*\*{*dus la ma bab na chos nyid/*} : X *shing*\*\*\*{*dus la ma babs na chos nyid/*}

<sup>201</sup> Cantwell and Mayer, *Early Tibetan Documents on Phur pa from Dunhuang*, 110–111.

<sup>202</sup> TSH is illegible at this point.

*nang la\*\*\** {TSH, KAḤ *mi 'gyur bar* : X *la mi 'gyur bar*/}

*Comments*

Here we have a significant variant between the KD versions and D (*dgongs shing*) on the one hand, and the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups (*mi gos*, var. *mi gol*) on the other; as both readings are intelligible, it is difficult to decide which must be the earlier reading.

If D and the KD versions are preserving the older reading, we will have to posit a shared hyparchetype for the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups in order to explain their shared variant; in such a case, we will be dealing with a bipartite stemma.

The alternative possibility is that the earlier reading is preserved by the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups (in which case a common hyparchetype from which both groups are descended need not be posited), with the hyparchetype of D and the KD versions having introduced the alternative reading.

In support of D and the KD versions having the older reading, we can mention the KD annotations, which discuss passionate concern for the sake of those to be tamed, and would perhaps seem to better fit with *dgongs shing*. This argument should not be pressed too far, however, since the annotations would still make sense in the alternative reading, in which case the implication would be that one abides in the ‘untainted’ (*mi gos*) or ‘non-deviating’ (*mi gol*) state, while being close (*nye bar*) to beings—this closeness being glossed as one’s passionate concern for their welfare.

*rt. 5.10.*

D, TSH *'gyu ba'i nad sel bsal mi nus*/ : KAḤ, X *'gyu ba'i nad sel gsal mi nus*/ : G-a, GR, M, S *mgu ba'i nad sel gsal mi 'gyur*/ : T *'gyur ba'i nang sel bsal mi myur*/ : R, KYI *'gyu ba'i nad sel bsal mi myur*/

*Comments*

Here we have two sets of variation: *'gyu ba'i* vs *mgu ba'i* vs *'gyur ba'i* on the one hand, and *nus* vs *myur* vs *'gyur* on the other. In the first instance, the earlier reading is *'gyu ba'i*, as preserved by the KD/D group and by members of the South Central NGB group; among the latter

group, T has introduced the corruption 'gyur ba'i, whereas *mgu ba'i* is a variant going back to the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype.

As far as the second set of variants is concerned, the relative closeness of *myur* and 'gyur, witnessed by the South Central NGB group and by the Bhutan NGB group respectively, would suggest that either of them represents the earlier reading, whereas *nus* is a variant introduced by the KD/D group. To decide whether *myur* or 'gyur represents the older reading is somewhat speculative (especially considering that all (three!) variants could fit the context), but it is nonetheless possible to suggest that *myur* would lend itself more easily, visually and phonetically speaking, to being transformed into *nus* on the one hand and into 'gyur on the other.

Alternatively, if we assumed that *nus* is the older reading, it would follow that the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups share a common hyparchetype; in such a case, *myur* and 'gyur would be variants respectively introduced by the South Central NGB and Bhutan NGB groups.

D 54v.1 = G-a 301r.8, GR 297v.5, (G-b 355r.7,) M 781.5, S 307r.3, T 238.1, (R 95v.4,) TSH 353.5, KAḤ 322.5, KYI 282.6, X 26v.1

rt. 5.11.

D, KAḤ *rang gi snang ba sangs rgyas mthu'* : TSH *rang gi snang pa sangs rgyas mthu'* : X *rang gi snang ba sangyas [= sangs rgyas] mthu'* : G-a *ngang gis snang bas sangs rgyas mthu'* : S *ngang gis snang bas sangs rgyas mthu'* : GR, M *ngang gis snang bas sangs rgyas mthu'* : T, KYI *ngang gi snang ba sangs rgyas mthu'* : R *ngang gi snang ba sangyas [= sangs rgyas] mthu'*

#### Comments

It would seem that the older reading (*ngang gis*) has been preserved by the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB (var. *ngang gi*) groups, with D and the KD versions introducing the slightly different reading *rang gi*. Nevertheless, the possibility remains that we have a bipartite stemma, with the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups sharing a hyparchetype; in such a scenario, it becomes impossible to tell which of the two is the older reading.

### 3.2.6. Examples from Chapter 6

#### rt. 6.1.

D, TSH, KAḤ, X *mu ran sor gsum slar bstod de/* : R *mu ran sor gsum slar stod de/* : T *mu rad sor gsum slar stod ste/* : KYI *mu rang sor gsum slar stod ste/* : G-a, G-b, M *mu ran sor gsum klad stod de/* : GR, S *mu ran sor gsum glad stod de/*

#### Comments

The older reading is represented by D, the KD versions, and the South Central NGB group, with the Bhutan NGB group introducing the errors *klad* (G-a and M) and *glad* (GR and S). Moreover, within the South Central NGB group, only R has the correct *mu ran*, whereas T and KYI have *mu rad* and *mu rang* respectively. It is likely that R arrived at the correct *mu ran* through conjecture.

#### rt. 6.2.

D *gri sa tshangs sgo can dag gi/* : TSH, KAḤ, X *gri sa tshangs sgo can dag gis/* : G-a, G-b, S *gri sa tshwa sgo can dag gis/* : GR *bri sa tshwa sgro can dag gis/* : M *bri sa tsha sgo can dag gis/* : T, R *gra sa tsha bo can dag gis/* : KYI *gra sa tsha go can dag gis/*

#### Comments

Here the earlier reading seems to be preserved by the Bhutan NGB group, particularly by G-a and S, which have *gri sa tshwa sgo* (indicating a place where someone has been murdered with a sword, and a salt deposit). In this case, we do not have the usual bifurcation of G-a and M on the one hand vs GR and S on the other; here, the correct reading *gri sa* has been preserved in G-a and S, but not in GR and M, both of which erroneously give the homophonic *bri sa*. This would indicate that S cannot be a simple copy of GR, unless it corrected it through conjecture.

D and the KD versions have corrupted *tshwa sgo* (var. *tsha sgo*) through psychological error to *tshangs sgo*, meaning ‘aperture of Brahmā’ (*brahmārandhra*). This makes no sense whatsoever in the context, which refers to suitable places from which the earth to be mixed into the fire pit should be taken.

Within the South Central NGB group, KYI has *tsha go*, which is less corrupt than *tsha bo* in T and R, thus indicating that KYI probably

descends from the South Central NGB hyparchetype separately from the hyparchetype shared by T and R.

D 55r.1 = G-a 302r.2, GR 298r.7, (G-b 356r.3.) M 783.1, S 307v.4, T 239.3, (R 96r.4.) TSH 355.4, KAḤ 325.3, KYI 284.3, X 28r.1

rt. 6.3.

D, TSH, KAḤ, X *ba glang chu dang bdud rtsi sbyar/ bdud rtsi rgyal po yum dang bcas/* : G-a, GR, M, S *ba lang chu dang bdud rtsi sbyar/ bdud rtsi rgyal po yab yum dang/* : T *ba lang chu dang bdud rtsi'i rgyal po yum dang bcas/* : R, KYI *ba lang chu dang bdud rtsir sbyar/ bdud rtsi'i rgyal po yum dang bcas/*

#### Comments

Here the older reading (*yum dang bcas*) is preserved by the KD/D group and the South Central NGB group, with the Bhutan NGB group introducing the reading *yab yum dang* instead, a psychological error going back to the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype. The South Central NGB group has the minor variants *bdud rtsir* and *bdud rtsi'i*, but these are insignificant. Among the South Central NGB group, T conflates the two lines through eyeskip; the error was probably made by T when copying the South Central NGB hyparchetype.

rt. 6.4.

D, TSH, GR *gtso bo dang mthun rigs kyis dbyung/* : KAḤ *gtso bo dang mthun rigs kyi dbyung/* : X *gtso bo dang mthun rigs kyi dbyungs/* : G-a, G-b, M *gtso bo dang 'thun rims kyis dbyung/* : S *gtso bo dang mthun rims kyis dbyung/* : T, KYI *gtso bo dang 'thun rim gyis dbyung/* : R *gtso bo dang mthun rim gyis dbyung/*

#### Comments

The older reading *mthun rim* (var. *'thun* and *rims*) is indicated by the agreement of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups, whereas *mthun rigs* has been introduced by the hyparchetype of D and the KD versions. In this example, the latter variant clearly appears as erroneous, given the construction *gyis/kyis dbyung*, which makes good sense with *rim/s*, but does not fit well with *rigs*.

D 55v.1 = G-a 302v.3, GR 299r.1, (G-b 356v.6,) M 784.3, S 308r.6, T 240.5, (R 96v.4,) TSH 357.3, KAḤ 327.6, KYI 285.5, X 29r.5

rt. 6.5.

D, T *bsrung dang phyogs bcing nges par bya/* : G-a, GR, M, S *bsrung dang phyogs bcing ting 'dzin gyi/* : TSH, X, R, KYI *bsrung dang phyogs cing nges par bya/* : KAḤ *gsungs dang phyogs bcings nges par bya/*

#### Annotations

TSH *bsrung\*\*\*{pa}* : X *bsrung\*\*\*{ba/}* : KAḤ *gsungs\*\*\*{ba}*  
TSH *cing\*\*\*{pa}* : X *cing\*\*\*{ba/}* : KAḤ *bcings\*\*\*{ba}*

#### Comments

Here the older reading would seem to be *bcing nges par bya*, as preserved in D, T, and KAḤ (the latter has the minor tense variant *bcings*). The Bhutan NGB group has introduced a completely different reading, *bcing ting 'dzin gyi*, which must go back to the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype. With regard to the older reading, two of the versions from the South Central NGB group (viz. R and KYI) and two of the KD versions (viz. TSH and X) have *cing* instead of *bcing/s*. However, this appears to be a homophonic error, which is rather easy to make. The Bhutan NGB group, despite introducing the major variant *ting 'dzin gyi*, confirms *bcing*, not *cing*. Furthermore, the KD annotations all have *ba* (or *pa*, in the case of TSH) appended to *cing*. This only makes sense for a verb (i.e. *bcing\*\*\*{ba}*), not for the conjunctive particle *cing*. This shows that the KD annotations have preserved the trace of the older reading *bcing*, despite the error two of the KD versions introduce (*cing* in TSH and X). The fact that KAḤ reads *bcings* instead of the error of the other KD versions suggests a possible hyparchetype shared by TSH and X separate from KAḤ.

rt. 6.6.

D *dmigs pa'i gzugs bcas gzhug cing dgug/* : G-a, GR, M, S *gdug pa'i gzugs byas gzhug cing dgug/* : T *gdug pa'i gzugs bcas gzu?<sup>203</sup> cing dbug/* : R *gdug pa'i gzugs bcas gzhug cing dbugs/* : KYI *gdug pa'i gzugs bcas*

<sup>203</sup> The letter *ga* is missing in T, with a space being found instead of the letter.



*gzhug cing dbug/* : TSH *gdug pa'i gzugs bcas gzhugs cing dgug/* : KAḤ,  
X *gdug pa'i gzugs bcas gzhug cing dgug/*

*Comments*

Here *gdug pa'i* represents the older reading, as preserved in all versions except D, which has emended the text to *dmigs pa'i*. The next set of variation is *gzugs bcas* vs *gzugs byas*; the fact that the South Central NGB group, the KD versions, and D all have *gzugs bcas* indicates that this is the earlier reading, with the Bhutan NGB group having introduced the variant *gzugs byas*. Finally, the last set of variation is *dgug* vs *dbug/s*; since the Bhutan NGB group, the KD versions, and D all have *dgug*, the latter represents the earlier reading, *dbug/s* being a variant introduced by the South Central NGB hyparchetype.

rt. 6.7.

D, G-a, GR, M, S, KAḤ, X *lus ngag rdul phran bzhin du rlog/* : T, R,  
KYI *lus ngag rdul phran bzhin du ldogs/* : TSH *lus ngag rdul phran  
bzhin du lhogs/*

*Comments*

The South Central NGB group is alone in reading *ldogs* instead of *rlog*. This variant *ldogs* ('to reverse/revert') is clearly an error here for *rlog* ('to smash').

D 56r.1 = G-a 303r.4, GR 299v.2, (G-b 357v.2,) M 785.7, S 309r.1, T  
241.6, (R 97r.5,) TSH 359.1, KAḤ 330.3, KYI 287.2, X 30v.1

rt. 6.8.

D, X *slar yang rjes mthun rol pa ston/* : G-a, G-b, M *slar yang  
rdzas 'thun rol pa rten/* : GR, S *slar yang rdzas mthun rol pa rten/* : T, R,  
KYI *slar yang rjes mthun rim pa bstan/* : TSH *slar yang rjes mthun rol  
pa sten/* : KAḤ *slar yang rjes mthun rol pa bsten/*

*Comments*

Here we have three sets of variation: (a) *rjes mthun* vs *rdzas mthun* (var. *'thun*); (b) *rol pa* vs *rim pa*; and (c) *ston* vs *bstan* vs *rten* vs *b/sten*. In the first instance, it is clear that *rjes mthun* is the older reading, since it is preserved by all the versions except the Bhutan NGB group, which has introduced the variant *rdzas mthun* (var. *'thun*). Among the Bhutan

NGB group, one may note the discrepancy between *rdzas 'thun* on the one hand, and *rdzas mthun* on the other. It is likely that the archaic spelling *'thun* was found in the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype and was copied into G-a, and thence into G-b and M. The hyparchetype of GR and S probably sought to standardise this to *mthun*.

In the second instance, *rol pa* represents the older reading, the variant *rim pa* having been introduced by the South Central NGB hyparchetype.

In the third instance, it would seem that it is the South Central NGB group that has preserved the older reading (*bstan*), since this reading lends itself both to the homophonic distortions found in the Bhutan NGB group (*rten*) and TSH and KAḤ (*bsten*), and to the tense variation witnessed in D and X (*ston*).

### 3.2.7. Examples from Chapter 7

#### rt. 7.1.

D *rmi dang mngon sum nyams la rtags/* : G-a, GR, M, S, R *'pho dang mngon sum nyams la brtags/* : T *'pho dang mngon gsum nyams la brtag/* : KYI *'pho dang mngon gsum nyams la brtags/* : TSH *rmi dang mngon gsum nyams la brtag/* : KAḤ *rmi dang mngon sum nyams la brtag/* : X *rmi dang mngon sum nyams la rtags/*

#### Comments

This is the strongest example so far indicating a shared hyparchetype of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups. Given the context, which describes the various circumstances in which indications of success may occur, the reading *'pho*, found in the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups, seems particularly ill-fitting. It thus might look as though the earlier reading is *rmi*, with *'pho* having been introduced by the hyparchetype of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups. Nonetheless, even in this case one cannot exclude the possibility that *'pho* might represent the earlier reading—it would then suggest that for persons of lowly calibre the indications occur at the time of dying (corresponding to the consciousness ‘shifting’ its abode). Furthermore, *'pho* could also be the corruption of a now lost earlier reading. The hyparchetype of the KD versions and D would then have introduced the variant *rmi*, presumably in an attempt to emend the text.

A further variant occurs regarding *rtags* vs *brtag/s*. From the context, it is clear that *rtags* is intended. Nonetheless, given that the homophonic *brtag/s* is found in almost all the versions except D and X, it is likely that it in fact represents the earlier reading, with D and X having recovered through conjecture the intended *rtags*. This brings us to the important point that in the case of the NGB *tantras*, the earliest recoverable text may quite reasonably contain erroneous readings, since such texts often appear to have been compiled from pre-existing segments that were not themselves free from errors.<sup>204</sup>

D 56v.1 = G-a 303v.6, GR 300r.3, (G-b 358r.6,) M 787.3, S 309v.2, T 243.2, (R 97v.6,) TSH 361.1, KAḤ 333.2, KYI 288.5, X 31v.6

rt. 7.2.

D *yud cig gis ni 'dir bkug nas/* : G-a, GR, M, S *yud tsam gyis ni 'dir bkug nas/* : T, R, KYI, TSH *yud tsam cig gis 'dir bkug nas/* : KAḤ *yud gcig gis gnas 'dir bkug nas/* : X *yud tsam gis ni 'dir bkug nas/*

*Comments*

While the variants do not affect the meaning of the sentence, it is nonetheless possible to deduct from the agreement of the South Central NGB group and (the otherwise unrelated) TSH concerning *yud tsam cig gis* that this represents the earlier reading. Moreover, in view of the fact that it contains both the words *tsam* and *cig*, it is the reading that would lend itself most easily to being corrupted to *yud tsam gyis ni* on the one hand (as witnessed in the Bhutan NGB group and X, the latter introducing the minor variant *gis* instead of *gyis*), and *yud cig gis ni* (in D) or *yud gcig gis gnas* (in KAḤ) on the other.

rt. 7.3.

D *badzra ging ka ra hūṃ hūṃ a ā/* : G-a, GR, M, S, T, R, KYI, TSH, X *badzra hūṃ ka ra hūṃ hūṃ a a/* : KAḤ *badzra hūṃ ka ra hūṃ hūṃ a āḥ/*

*Comments*

Here we witness D's attempt to emend the *mantra* from *hūṃ ka ra* to *ging ka ra*. The latter would refer to the Sanskrit word *kiṅkara*, meaning

<sup>204</sup> Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 19.

‘servant’ or ‘slave’—this could fit the context, since the *mantra* occurs as part of an invocation of the messengers (*pho nya*).

rt. 7.4.

D *oṃ badzra ku mā ra bhuddha he ru ka ratna he ru ka padma he ru ka kī li kī la ya hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ/ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ/* : G-a *oṃ badzra shrī ku mā ra buddha he ru ka/ ratna he ru ka/ padma he ru ka/ karma he ru ka/ kī li kī la ya huṃ phaṭ/ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ/ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ/* : GR, S *oṃ badzra shri ku mā ra buddha he ru ka/ ratna he ru ka/ padma he ru ka/ karma he ru ka/ kī li kī la ya huṃ phaṭ/ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ/ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ/* : M *oṃ badzra shrī ku mā ra buddha he ru ka/ ratna he ru ka/ padma he ru ka/ karma he ru ka/ ki li ki la ya huṃ phaṭ/ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ/ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ/* : T *oṃ badzra shi ku ma ra bu ta he ru ka rad na he ru ka/ pad ma he ru ka/ ki li ki la ya hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ/* : R *oṃ badzra shrī ku ma ra buddha he ru ka rad na he ru ka/ padma he ru ka/ karma he ru ka/ kī li kī la ya hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ/* : KYI *oṃ badzra shri ku ma ra bu ta he ru ka<sup>205</sup> rad na he ru ka/ pad ma he ru ka/ kar ma he ru ka/ ki li ki la ya hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ/* : TSH *oṃ badzra shrī ku ma ra bhū ta he ru ka rad na he ru ka pad ma he ru ka kar ma he ru ka ki li ki la ya hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ/ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ/* : KAḤ *oṃ badzra ku mā ra buddha he ru ka ratna he ru ka padma he ru ka karma he ru ka kī li kī la ya hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ/ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ/* : X *oṃ badzra ku ma ra bhuddha he ru ka ratna he ru ka padma he ru ki li ki la ya hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ/ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ/*

#### Comments

Here we have three sets of variation: (a) the presence or absence of *shrī* after *badzra*; (b) the presence or absence of *karma he ru ka*; and (c) the end of the *mantra*, which is either *hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ/ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ/* or *huṃ phaṭ/ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ/ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ/*. Regarding (a), the presence of *shrī* in all the versions except D, KAḤ, and X would indicate that the older reading contained *shrī* and that this was dropped in two of the KD versions (KAḤ and X), D having probably taken over this omission from X.

<sup>205</sup> A space is left here in KYI, but no *shad* is found.

As far as (b) is concerned, the fact that *karma he ru ka*, apart from being required contextually, is found in all the versions other than D, T, and X would suggest that it was found in the earlier reading and was dropped in one of the versions of the South Central NGB group (i.e. T) and in one of the KD versions (i.e. X); again, the omission in D can probably be accounted for by influence from X.

Finally, regarding (c), the reading *hūṃ phaṭ/ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ/ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ/* is only found in the Bhutan NGB group, so it can safely be concluded that it was introduced by the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype, the older reading being *hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ/ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ/* (allowing for minor variants in punctuation).

Other minor variants include the corruption of *buddha* to *bhū ta* in TSH, yielding *ku ma ra bhū ta*, and X's dropping of *ka* in *he ru ki li*, resulting from eyeskip.

rt. 7.5.

D *rdegs shig grogs dang bral bar gyis/* : G-a, M *rtogs shig grogs dang bral bar gyis/* : GR, S, TSH *rtogs cig grogs dang bral bar gyis/* : T, R, KYI *gdig cig srog dang bral bar gyis/* : KAḤ *rtogs shig grogs dang khral bar gyis/* : X *rtog l grogs dang bral bar gyis/*

*Comments*

The agreement of the Bhutan NGB group and the KD versions regarding *rtogs* establishes this as the earlier reading, whereas D has introduced the variant *rdegs* (probably an attempted emendation) and the South Central NGB group have *gdig*. While this is not a particularly significant variant, one may note the agreement in error of GR and S for *cig*, indicating a shared hyparchetype of both editions.

D 57r.1 = G-a 304r.8, GR 300v.4, (G-b 359r.3,) M 788.6, S 310r.4, T 244.4, (R 98r.6,) TSH 363.1, KAḤ 336.3, KYI 290.2, X 33v.1

rt. 7.6.

D, TSH, KAḤ *sras mchog hūṃ mdzad la sogs gdab/* : X *sras mchog hūṃ mdzad la sogs gdabs/* : G-a, GR, M, S, T, R, KYI *sras mchog hūṃ mdzad la sogs dbab/*

*Comments*

The discrepancy is between *gdab* (var. *gdabs*) on the one hand and *dbab* on the other. Either the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups' reading (*dbab*) is older (the hypothesis favoured here), with *gdab* going back to the hyparchetype of D and the KD versions, or else the opposite is true, which would imply a shared hyparchetype of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups and a bipartite stemma. As both readings can make sense, it is hard to decide which is the older, though it must be said that *dbab* seems more fitting in the context.

3.2.8. *Examples from Chapter 8*

D 57v.1 = G-a 305r.1, GR 301r.6, (G-b 359v.5,) M 790.2, S 310v.5, T 245.6, (R 98v.6,) TSH 364.6, KAḤ 339.3, KYI 291.5, X 35r.2

*rt. 8.1.*

D *ta thā ya ta thā ya hūm phaṭ/* : G-a, GR, M,<sup>206</sup> T, R, KYI *tad ya tha tad ya tha hūm phaṭ/* : S *tad ya tha hūm phaṭ/* : TSH *tad ya thā tad ya thā hūm phaṭ/* : KAḤ *tadya ya thā tadya ya thā hūm phaṭ/* : X *tadya tha tadya tha hūm phaṭ/*

*Comments*

The agreement of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups, as well as the KD versions, on *tadyathā tadyathā* (or variants thereof) goes to show that D's reading (*tathāya tathāya*) is an editorial emendation.

*rt. 8.2.*

D, GR, G-b, M, S, TSH, KAḤ *mthu dang rdzu 'phrul med par gyis/* : X *mthu dang rdzrul [= rdzu 'phrul] med par gyis/* : G-a *mthun*<sup>207</sup> *dang rdzu 'phrul med par gyis/* : T, KYI *mthu' dang rdzu 'phrul med par*<sup>208</sup> *byos/* : R *mthu dang rdzu 'phrul med par byos/*

<sup>206</sup> On its first occurrence, *tad* is misspelt *had* in M, but the letter *ha* has been corrected to *ta*.

<sup>207</sup> G-a inserts a mark above the postscript *na*, presumably to indicate that it is a mistake.

<sup>208</sup> The particle *par* has been inserted below the line in KYI.

*Comments*

The South Central NGB group has introduced the variant *byos* instead of *gyis*. Among the Bhutan NGB group, G-a has the unfitting *methun* instead of *mtu*, but a small mark above the postscript *na* indicates that this is an error.

rt. 8.3.

D, KAḤ *tadya thā/ ha na ha na hūṃ phaṭ/* : X *tadya thā ha na ha na hūṃ phaṭ/* : G-a *tad ya tha tad ya tha ha na<sup>209</sup> hūṃ phaṭ/* : G-b, M *tad ya tha tad ya tha ha na ha na hūṃ phaṭ/* : GR *tad ya ta tad ya ta ha na ha na hūṃ phaṭ/* : S *tad ya ta tad ya ta ha na hūṃ phaṭ/* : T, KYI, TSH *tad ya tha ha na ha na hūṃ phaṭ/* : R *tadya tha ha na ha na hūṃ phaṭ/*

*Comments*

The agreement of D and the KD versions, as well as the South Central NGB group, on *tadyathā* (or minor variants thereof) indicates that this represents the earlier reading, whereas the alternative variant (*tad ya tha tad ya tha* = *tadyathā tadyathā*) has been introduced by the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype. Moreover, with regard to the spelling of *tad ya tha*, GR and S both have *tad ya ta*, suggesting that this spelling goes back to their shared hyparchetype.

D 58r.1 = G-a 305v.3, GR 301v.7, (G-b 360v.2,) M 791.6, S 311v.1, T 247.2, (R 99r.7,) TSH 366.5, KAḤ 341.6, KYI 293.3, X 36r.7

rt. 8.4.

D, X *bdag nyid stong pa'i gnas su dril/* : G-a, GR, M, S, TSH, KAḤ *bdag nyid steng gi gnas su dril/* : T, KYI *bdag nyid stong gi gnas su dril/* : R *bdag nyid stong gi gnasu [= gnas su] dril/*

*Comments*

The agreement of the Bhutan NGB group and two of the KD versions on *steng gi* indicates that this is the earlier reading. The South Central NGB group has introduced the variant *stong gi*, whereas D and X have *stong pa'i*. Both these variants can be explained as a visual error mistaking the 'greng bu for a *na ro*. Furthermore, it is conceivable that D has taken over X's reading in this case.

<sup>209</sup> Upon its second occurrence, the word *ha na* has been inserted above the line in G-a.

rt. 8.5.

D *pha rol sems rgyud nam mkha' gdon/* : G-a, GR, M, S *pha rol sems rgyud nam mkhar gnon/* : T, KYI *pha rol sems rgyu nam mkhar gdon/* : R *rol sems rgyu nam mkhar gdon/* : TSH *pha rol sems rgyu nam mkha' gdon/* : KAḤ *pha rol sems rgyu nam mkha' la gdon/* : X *pha rol sems rgyu namkha'i [= nam mkha'i] gdon/*

#### Annotations

*pha rol*\*\*\*{TSH *gzas pa po'i/* : KAḤ *gzas pa po'i* : X *gzas pa po/*}

*rgyu*\*\*\*{TSH *'i yi ge bsgom pa la* : KAḤ *yi yi ger bsgom pa la* : X *yi ger bsgom pa la/*}

TSH *nam mkha'*\*\*\*{*la*} : KAḤ, X om. ann.—KAḤ incorporates *la* into main text

#### Comments

Here we have three sets of variation: (a) *sems rgyu* vs *sems rgyud*; (b) *nam mkha'* vs *nam mkhar*; and (c) *gdon* vs *gnon*. Regarding (a), the fact that all versions except D and the Bhutan NGB group have *rgyu*, which the KD annotations additionally explain as being the *causal* syllable that is meditated on {*yi ger bsgom pa pa la*} (an explanation which fits with *rgyu* but not with *rgyud*), goes to show that *rgyu* is the older reading, whereas the Bhutan NGB group and D introduced the psychological error *rgyud* due to the association with ‘mental continuum’ (*sems rgyud*).

As far as (b) is concerned, we have two groupings: D and the KD versions with *nam mkha'*, and the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups with *nam mkhar*. While *nam mkhar* is more correct grammatically and is supported by the agreement of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups, thus suggesting that the variant *nam mkha'* was introduced by the hyparchetype of D and the KD versions, it cannot be excluded that the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups derive from a common hyparchetype, in which case the bipartite nature of the stemma makes it impossible to decide which is the earlier reading, particularly since this variant cannot be considered a major one.

Concerning (c), since all versions except the Bhutan NGB group have *gdon* (the future tense of *'don*), it can safely be assumed that this is the earlier reading, with the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype having introduced the variant *gnon*.



rt. 8.6.

D *dbang bskur bas ni 'od 'bar gyur/*: G-a, S *dbang bskur ba'i ni 'od 'bar 'gyur/*: GR *dbang bskur bas ni 'od 'bar 'gyur/*: G-b, M *dbang bskur ba ni 'od 'bar 'gyur/*: T, R, KYI *dbang bskur bas ni 'od 'bur 'gyur/*: TSH, X *dbang bskur bas ni 'od 'brur gyur/*: KAḤ *dbang bskur bas ni don 'brur*<sup>210</sup>

*Annotations*

{TSH, KAḤ *byang sems kyi*: X *byang sems kyi*}\*\*\**dbang*

TSH *'od*\*\*\*{*kyi yig ge*}: X *'od*\*\*\*{*kyi yi ge/*}: KAḤ *don*\*\*\*{*gyi yi ger*}

*'brur*\*\*\*{TSH, KAḤ *de gsal bar*: X *de gsal bar/*}

*Comments*

Here we have two sets of variation: (a) *bskur bas ni* vs *bskur ba ni* vs *bskur ba'i ni*; and (b) *'bar* vs *'brur* vs *'bur*. As far as (a) is concerned, the agreement of all the versions except the Bhutan NGB group (barring GR) on *bskur bas ni* indicates that this is the older reading. Looking at the Bhutan NGB group, since G-a and S (which usually sides with GR) share the error *bskur ba'i ni*, this suggests that this error most likely goes back to the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype. While this error is not particularly significant, we can nonetheless observe how the other Bhutan NGB editions sought to recover therefrom through conjecture: GR correctly recovered *bskur bas ni*, whereas G-b (and M following the latter) emended the reading to the equally grammatically plausible *bskur ba ni*.

Regarding (b), the context of the passage would seem to confirm the reading proposed by the KD versions, which have *'brur*. This is supported by the KD annotations, since they append {*kyi yi ge/*} to *'od*, indicating that *'brur* is to be read as 'seed syllable' (i.e. *'brur kyi yi ge*). Moreover, taking *'brur* as the older reading, it is easy to see how this could have been corrupted through the dropping of the subscript *ra* to the nonsensical *'bur* in the South Central NGB hyparchetype, and again how D and the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype could have, unreflectively and

<sup>210</sup> KAḤ breaks off in mid-sentence, omitting both the verb *gyur* and the *shad*.

independently of each other, introduced the psychological error 'bar, which occurs so frequently alongside 'od.

rt. 8.7.

D, TSH, KAḤ *tog dkar rgyal tshab dam pa yis/* : X *tog dkar rgyal tshabs dam pa yis/* : G-a, GR, M, S *dus btab rgyal tshab dam pa yis/* : T, R, KYI *dub gab rgyal tshab dam pa 'i/*

#### Comments

Here we have basically two readings (since the South Central NGB group's variant is merely a corruption): *tog dkar* (= Skt. *Sitaketu*)<sup>211</sup> on the one hand, and *dus btab* (= Skt. *Divasa*)<sup>212</sup> on the other. The fact that *dus btab* is supported by both the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups would indicate that it is the earlier reading, which in the South Central NGB hyparchetype became corrupted to *dub gab*. The fact that D and the KD versions share the reading *tog dkar* supports the assumption that they share a hyparchetype.

Nonetheless, since it cannot be excluded that the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups share a common hyparchetype (in which case we would be dealing with a bipartite stemma, making it impossible to decide which of the two readings, *tog dkar* or *dus btab*, is the earlier one), we must also consider the possibility that *tog dkar* represents the earlier reading, with the hyparchetype of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups introducing the variant *dus btab*, which then became further corrupted to *dub gab* in the South Central NGB hyparchetype.

#### 3.2.9. Examples from Chapter 9

D 58v.1 = G-a 306r.3, GR 302v.1, (G-b 361r.5,) M 793.1, S 312r.2, T 248.4, (R 99v.6,) TSH 368.5, KAḤ 344.4, KYI 294.5, X 37v.6

rt. 9.1.

D *drag shul rgyud kyi ting nge 'dzin/* : G-a, GR, M, S *drag sngags rgyun gyi sa ma ti/* : T, KYI *drag sngags rgyun gyi ting nge 'dzin/* : R *drag sngags rgyun gyi tinge [= ting nge] 'dzin/* : TSH, KAḤ, X *drag shul rgyun gyi ting nge 'dzin/*

<sup>211</sup> Negi, *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary*, vol. 5, 1695.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 2226.

*Comments*

Here we have three sets of variation: (a) *drag shul* vs *drag sngags*; (b) *rgyud kyi* vs *rgyun gyi*; and (c) *ting nge 'dzin* vs *sa ma ti*. Regarding (a), the agreement of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups on *drag sngags* would indicate that this is the older reading, with the variant *drag shul* having been introduced by the hyparchetype of D and the KD versions—unless, of course, we assume that the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups share a common hyparchetype, in which case we would have a bipartite stemma that would preclude the possibility of deciding whether *drag shul* or *drag sngags* is earlier.

As far as (b) is concerned, the fact that all versions except D have *rgyun gyi* allows us to safely assume that this is the earlier reading, with the variant *rgyud kyi* going back to D and resembling an editorial intervention. Finally, as regards (c), the agreement of all versions except those of the Bhutan NGB group on *ting nge 'dzin* suggests that this represents the older reading, *sa ma ti* being a variant introduced by the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype. The same variant occurs at the chapter's conclusion (see rt. 9.5).

rt. 9.2.

D *mngon du spyod pa'i phrin las bshad/* : G-a *sngon du spyod pa'i phrin las bshad/* : G-b, M *sngon du spyod pa'i 'phrin las bshad/* : GR, S *mngon du spyad pa'i 'phrin las bshad/* : T, R, KYI *mngon du spyod pa'i 'phrin las bshad/* : TSH *mngon du spyod pa'i 'phrin las gcad/* : KAḤ *mngon du spyod pa'i phrin las bcad/* : X *mngon sum spyod pa'i 'phrin las bcad/*

*Comments*

We have two sets of variation: (a) *sngon du* vs *mngon du*; and (b) *bshad* vs *bcad* (var. *gcad*). In the case of (a), the context clearly requires *mngon du spyod pa* (Skt. *abhicāra*), and *sngon du* is simply a homophonic error, which either goes back to the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype itself (and was corrected by the hyparchetype of GR and S) or was introduced by G-a and copied into G-b and M. Note also the variation in tense (*spyad pa* instead of *spyod pa*) found in GR and S which, though not terribly significant, nonetheless indicates that GR and S have a separate hyparchetype.

Regarding (b), the agreement of all the editions except the KD versions on *bshad* suggests that this is the older reading, with the homophonic error *bcad* (var. *gcad*) going back to the hyparchetype of the KD versions.

rt. 9.3.

D, TSH, KAḤ *bdag nyid khro bo'i tshogs kun gyis/* : X *bdag nyid khro bo'i tshogs kun gyi/* : G-a, GR, M, S *bdag nyid khro bo rdzas kun gyi/* : T, KYI *bdag nyid khro bo'i rdzas kun gyis/* : R *bdag nyid khro bo'i rdzas kun gyi/*

#### Comments

Here the agreement of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups on *rdzas* would indicate that this is the earlier reading, with *tshogs* having been introduced by the hyparchetype of D and of the KD versions. The alternative scenario would be that we have a bipartite stemma, with the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups sharing a hyparchetype; in such a case, it would be impossible to decide whether *rdzas* or *tshogs* represents the earlier reading.

D 59r.1 = G-a 306v.5, GR 303r.3, (G-b 362r.2,) M 794.5, S 312v.4, T 249.6, (R 100r.7,) TSH 370.3, KAḤ 347.1, KYI 296.3, X 39r.2

rt. 9.4.

D *brnag pa kho na nyid la de/* : G-a, M, T, R, KYI *brnag pa kho na nyid la ste/* : GR, M *brnag pa kho na nyid la te/* : TSH, KAḤ, X *gnag pa kho na nyid la de/*

#### Comments

The agreement of all editions except the KD versions on *brnag* suggests that it is the earliest reading, with *gnag* being a variant going back to the hyparchetype of the KD versions. The word *brnag pa* is an archaic form meaning ‘to think’ or ‘to recall’,<sup>213</sup> yet is also related to *mogs pa*, meaning ‘to call out’ or ‘to steal’,<sup>214</sup> and to *brnogs pa*, meaning ‘to hide’

<sup>213</sup> rNam rgyal tshe ring, *Bod yig brda rmying tshig mdzod*, 297.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 292; and bTsan lha ngag dbang tshul khriims, *brDa dkrol gser gyi me long* [The Golden Mirror that Unravels Lexemes] (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1997), 421.

or ‘to steal’.<sup>215</sup> It also has the sense of ‘cruelty’ or ‘wickedness’,<sup>216</sup> which is the meaning intended here and which was picked up on by the hyparchetype of the KD versions when it introduced the more standard *gnag pa*.

rt. 9.5.

D, KAḤ *drag po mngon du spyod pa'i ting nge 'dzin sprul pa chen po'i phrin las kyi le'u ste dgu pa'o/* : TSH *drag po sngon du spyod pa'i ting nge 'dzin sprul pa chen po'i 'phrin las kyi le'u ste/ dgu pa'o/* : X *drag po mngon du spyod pa'i ting nge 'dzin/ sprul pa chen po'i 'phrin las kyi le'u ste/ dgu pa'o/* : KYI *drag po mngon du spyod pa'i ting nge 'dzin sprul pa chen po'i 'phrin las kyi le'u ste dgu pa'o/* : T *drag po sngon du spyod pa'i ting nge 'dzin sprul pa chen po'i 'phrin las kyi le'u ste dgu pa'o/* : R *drag po sngon du spyod pa'i tinge [= ting nge] 'dzin sprul pa chen po'i 'phrin las kyi le'u ste dgu pa'o/* : G-a *drag po sngon du spyod pa'i sa ma ti sprul pa chen po'i phrin las kyi le'u ste dgu pa'o/* : G-b, M *drag po sngon du spyod pa'i sa ma ti sprul pa chen po'i 'phrin las kyi le'u ste dgu pa'o/* : GR, S *drag po mngon du spyod pa'i sa ma ti sprul pa chen po'i 'phrin las kyi le'u ste dgu pa'o/*

#### Comments

Here there are two main sets of variation: (a) *mngon du* vs *sngon du*; and (b) *ting nge 'dzin* vs *sa ma ti*. As far as (a) is concerned, it is likely that the earlier reading itself contained the erroneous *sngon du*, since we find it both in two of the South Central NGB editions and three of the Bhutan NGB editions (viz. G-a, G-b, M). The hyparchetype of D and the KD versions, KYI, and the hyparchetype of GR and S would have succeeded in recognising this as a homophonic error for *mngon du* and in recovering the correct reading. Alternatively, if we assume that the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB editions share a common hyparchetype, it would follow that the error was introduced in this hyparchetype, with KYI and the hyparchetype of GR and S having successfully recovered *mngon du*.

<sup>215</sup> bTsan lha ngag dbang tshul khrims, *brDa dkrol gser gyi me long*, 431.

<sup>216</sup> Martin, *Tibetan Vocabulary*, s.v. *brnag pa*.

Concerning (b), *sa ma ti* is clearly a variant introduced by the hyparchetype of the Bhutan NGB group, since it is only found in the Bhutan NGB editions.

With regard to the South Central NGB group, we may also observe that KYI has, rather untypically, emended two errors of the South Central NGB hyparchetype (though both are minor errors that could easily be corrected through conjecture): *sngon du* has been, as mentioned, emended to *mngon du*, and *'phrin las kyis* to the more standard *'phrin las kyi*.

### 3.2.10. Examples from Chapter 10

D 59v.1 = G-a 307r.7, GR 303v.4, (G-b 362v.5,) M 796.1, S 313r.6, T 251.1, (R 100v.7,) TSH 372.2, KAḤ 349.4, KYI 297.6, X 40r.7

#### rt. 10.1.

D *ōṃ dkar 'khor lo 'bar bar bsam/* : G-a *om dkar tsakra bar ba bsam/* : GR, M, S *om dkar tsakra 'bar ba bsam/* : T, R, KYI *om kar 'khor lo 'bar bar bsam/* : TSH, KAḤ *om dkar 'khor lo 'bar bar bsam/* : X *ōṃ dkar 'khor lo 'bar bar bsam/*

#### Comments

This example allows us to observe that for the word *'khor lo*, the Bhutan NGB group have introduced *tsakra* (transcribing the Sanskrit *cakra*), a variant which goes back to the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype.

The South Central NGB group has the variant *kar* for *dkar*, a variant presumably introduced in the South Central NGB hyparchetype.

#### rt. 10.2.

D *zlum por 'dus rdzas las la mngag/* : G-a, GR, M, S, TSH *zlum por 'dus byas rdzas la mngag/* : T, R, KYI *zlum por 'dus byas rdzas la sngags/* : KAḤ *zlum por 'dus pa'i rdzas la mngag/* : X *zlum po 'dus pa'i rdzas la mngag/*

#### Annotations

{TSH, X *dbyibs/* : KAḤ *dbyibs*}\*\*\**zlum*

*'dus*\*\*\*{TSH *byas pa/* : KAḤ *byas la* : X *om.*}

*rdzas*\*\*\*{TSH *kyi phur pa de zhi ba'i las/* : KAḤ *kyi phur pa de zhi ba'i las* : X *kyi phur pa zhi ba'i las*}

*Comments*

Here we have two sets of variation: (a) *'dus byas rdzas* vs *'dus pa'i rdzas* vs *'dus rdzas las* on the one hand, and (b) *mngag* vs *sngags* on the other. With regard to (a), the agreement of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups, as well as TSH, on *'dus byas rdzas* suggests this to be the older reading, with *'dus pa'i rdzas* possibly going back to the hyparchetype of KAḤ and X (if we accept such an unproven entity), or else having been introduced by KAḤ and X independently of each other. D's reading (*'dus rdzas las*) may itself have been influenced by the KD annotations, since it appears to incorporate a word from the annotations (i.e. {*las*}), which is part of the gloss for *rdzas*) into the main text. This would again confirm D's rather close affinity to the KD versions.

As far as (b) is concerned, the fact that only the South Central NGB group have *sngags* is a clear sign that this reading goes back to the South Central NGB hyparchetype, *mngag* being the earlier reading.

*rt. 10.3.*

D *kha dog rin chen trāṃ ser pos/* : G-a, GR, M, S *kha dog sngon chen traṃ ser po/* : T, R, KYI *kha dog rin chen dri ser po/* : TSH *kha dog rin chen traṃ ser pos/* : KAḤ *kha dog rin chen trāṃ ser po/* : X *kha dog rien [= rin chen] trāṃ.<sup>217</sup> ser pos/*

*Comments*

The variation is between *rin chen* vs *sngon chen* on the one hand, and *traṃ* (var. *trāṃ*, *trām*.) vs *dri* on the other. The fact that all versions except those of the Bhutan NGB group have *rin chen* is a clear indication that *sngon chen* is a variant going back to the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype.

Similarly, the agreement of all versions except the South Central NGB group on *traṃ* demonstrates that the variant *dri* was introduced by the South Central NGB hyparchetype.

<sup>217</sup> Here X adds a *visarga*-like *shad* after *trāṃ*.

rt. 10.4.

D, TSH, KAḤ *yul gsum mtshan ma rab brtan nas/* : X *yul 3 mtshan ma rab brten nas/* : G-a, GR, M, S *yul gsum mtshan mar rab mngags na/* : T, R, KYI *yul gsum mtshan ma brtan nas/*

*Comments*

The variation is between *rab brtan* and *rab mngags*. Since *rab mngags* is only found in the Bhutan NGB group, it is clear that this error was introduced by the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype. This is an instance of eyeskip, where the copyist took the word *mngag* from the previous sentence and reintroduced it here.

Furthermore, the omission of *rab* in the South Central NGB group is a metrical error attributable to the South Central NGB hyparchetype.

rt. 10.5.

D *ratna kī la ya zhes pa'o/* [—] *buddha kī la ya sogs dang/* : G-a, G-b *ratna kī la ya zhes pa/* [—] *bud dha ki la ya sogs dang/* : M *ratna kī la ya zhes*<sup>218</sup> [—] *buddha ki la ya sogs dang/* : GR, S *ratna kī la ya zhes pa/* [—] *buddha kī la ya sogs dang/* : T, KYI *rad na ki la ya zhes pa'i/* [—] *bud da ki la ya sogs dang/* : R *rad na kī la ya zhes pa'i/* [—] *bud dha ki la ya sogs dang/* : TSH *rad na ki la zhes pa'o/* [—] *'bu ta ki la ya sogs dang/* : KAḤ *ratna kī la ya zhes pa'o/* [—] *buddha kī la ya sogs dang/* : X *ratna ki la ya zhes pa'o/* [—] *bhuddha ki la ya sogs dang/*

*Comments*

While the variants in this example are only minor, they do nonetheless corroborate the patterns of affiliation already observed. D and the KD versions have *zhes pa'o*, whereas the Bhutan NGB group has *zhes pa* and the South Central NGB group has *zhes pa'i*.

Within the Bhutan NGB group, *ki la ya* (on second occurrence) is shared by G-a, G-b, and M, whereas GR and S have *kī la ya*. The variant may not be very significant, but we can still observe that either *ki la ya* was introduced by G-a (and thence copied into G-b and M), with GR and S preserving the earlier *kī la ya*, or that *ki la ya* represents the older Bhutan NGB reading, it having been standardised to *kī la ya* in the hyparchetype of GR and S. Given the occurrence of *ki la ya* in all the

<sup>218</sup> Here M changes page, and omits both *pa* and the *shad*.



other versions except D and KAḤ, the second option appears more likely. The earlier reading would thus seem to be *ki la ya*, and this was standardised to *kī la ya* in the hyparchetype of GR and S, as well as in D and KAḤ.

What is of greater significance than these minor variants, however, is the fact that none of the extant editions has preserved a line that is required for the passage to make sense: *mdun rgyab g.yas g.yon gnas bzhi ru/*. This line, or variants thereof, is found in the corresponding sections of the other Buddha families, and is here to be placed before *buddha kīlaya*. The fact that it has been omitted in all the extant editions of the text would indicate that it was, in all probability, missing in the archetype itself.

D 60r.1 = G-a 307v.8, GR 304r.6, (G-b 363v.1,) M 797.5, S 314r.1, T 252.4, (R 101r.7,) TSH 374.1, KAḤ 352.3, KYI 299.4, X 41v.4

rt. 10.6.

D 'di sbyor padma gzhon nu ste/ : G-a, GR, M, S, KAḤ, X 'di sbyor padma gzhon nur bskyed/ : TSH 'di sbyor pad ma gzhon nur bskyed/ : T, KYI 'di sbyor pad ma gzhon nu skyong/ : R 'di sbyor padma gzhonu [= gzhon nu] skyong/

Comments

Here the agreement of the Bhutan NGB group and of the KD versions on *gzhon nur bskyed* indicates that this is the older reading. The variant *gzhon nu skyong* goes back to the South Central NGB hyparchetype, whereas *gzhon nu ste* has been introduced by D.

rt. 10.7.

D dpral bar snang mdzad yab yum bsgom/ : G-a, GR, M, T, R, KYI, TSH, KAḤ dpral bar hūṃ mdzad yab yum bsam/ : S, X dpral bar hūṃ mdzad yumb [= yab yum] bsam/

Comments

We have two variants: (a) *hūṃ mdzad* vs *snang mdzad*, and (b) *bsam* vs *bsgom*. In the first instance (a), all versions except D agree on *hūṃ mdzad*, so it is clear that *snang mdzad* was introduced by D, either as a

deliberate emendation or else due to the unconscious psychological association of Amitābha with the lotus family.

In the case of (b), again all versions except D agree on *bsam*, so *bsgom* has evidently been introduced by D.

rt. 10.8.

D, TSH, KAḤ *gzhan yang rang gi gnas su bsgom/* : X *gzhan yang rang gi gnasu [= gnas su] bsgom/* : G-a, GR, M, S *gzhan rnams rang rang gnas su bsgom/* : T, KYI *gzhan rnams rang gis gnas su bsgom/* : R *gzhan rnams rang gis gnasu [= gnas su] bsgom/*

#### Annotations

*gzhan*\*\*\*{TSH, X *lha* : KAḤ *lta*}

*rang*\*\*\*{TSH, KAḤ, X *rang*}

#### Comments

Here we have two sets of variation: (a) *gzhan yang* vs *gzhan rnams*, and (b) *rang gi* (var. *gis*) vs *rang rang*. Regarding (a), the agreement of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups on *gzhan rnams* would indicate that this is the earlier reading, with the hyparchetype of D and the KD versions having introduced the variant *gzhan yang*. Of course, if we assumed that the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups share a hyparchetype, this would result in a bipartite stemma and it would be impossible to decide whether *gzhan rnams* or *gzhan yang* represents the older reading.

Nonetheless, in this instance it must be remarked that *gzhan rnams* not only fits the sense better, since the line is referring to the other deities of the eightfold Buddha word, but is also indirectly confirmed by the KD annotations, for although the KD versions have the reading *gzhan yang*, they gloss *gzhan* with {*lha*}.

As far as (b) is concerned, the fact that the South Central NGB group, as well as D and the KD versions, have *rang gi* would suggest that this is the older reading, *rang rang* going back to the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype.

Looking at the KD annotations, which gloss *rang* with {*rang*}, we can also get a possible clue indicating that the Bhutan NGB group may have incorporated a reading from the annotations into the main text. However,

given that the variation *rang rang* is not terribly significant, it must also be acknowledged that the hyparchetype of the Bhutan NGB group could have introduced this reading independently of the KD annotations.

rt. 10.9.

D, TSH, KAḤ *yul gsum mtshan ma brtan thob nas/* : X *yul gsum mtshan ma rten thob nas/* : G-a, GR, M, S *yul gsum mtshan ma gsal mthong nas/* : T, R, KYI *yul gsum mtshan ma mthong brtan nas/*

Comments

Here each of the three groups provides a slightly different reading: D and the KD versions have *brtan thob*, the Bhutan NGB group has *gsal mthong*, and the South Central NGB group has *mthong brtan*. Since all three are very similar in terms of meaning, it is impossible to say which represents the older reading.

rt. 10.10.

D, TSH, KAḤ *rnam shes rgya gram ral gri ste/* : X *rnam shes rgya gram ral gri ste/* : G-a, G-b, S *gnam lcags rgya gram ral gri ste/* : M *nam lcags rgya gram ral gri ste/* : GR *gnas lcag rgya gram ral gri ste/* : T, R, KYI *rnam shes rgya ram ral gri ste/*

Comments

The agreement of D and the KD versions, as well as the South Central NGB group, on *rnam shes* demonstrates that this is the older reading, with *gnam lcags* going back to the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype. Furthermore, *rnam shes* alone fits the context, as is witnessed by the corresponding section for the other Buddha families.

With regard to the Bhutan NGB group, it may also be observed that S does not follow the error of GR (*gnas lcag*), thus indicating that it is not merely a copy of GR, unless, that is, S corrected this through conjecture.

rt. 10.11.

D, KAḤ *om karma kī li kī la ya sarba mā ra ya hūṃ phaṭ/* : G-a, GR, M, S *om karma kī li kī la ya/ sarba mā ra ya ha hūṃ phaṭ/* : T, KYI *om kar ma ki li ki la ya sarba ma ra ha hūṃ phaṭ/* : R *om kar ma kī li kī la ya sarba ma ra ha hūṃ phaṭ/* : TSH *om kar ma ki li ki la ya sarba ma ra ya hūṃ phaṭ/* : X *ōm karma ki li ki la ya sarba ma ra ya hūṃ phaṭ/*

*Comments*

The variation is between *mā ra ya ha* vs *mā ra ya* vs *ma ra ha*. Here, only the Bhutan NGB group has preserved the *mantra* correctly, since D and the KD versions omit the syllable *ha*, whereas the South Central NGB group omits *ya*.

D 60v.1 = G-a 308v.2, GR 304v.7, (G-b 364r.4,) M 799.1, S 314v.3, T 253.6, (R 101v.7,) TSH 375.5, KAḤ 355.2, KYI 301.1, X 43r.4

*rt. 10.12.*

D *rgyud rtsub ldan pa gnad yin no/* : G-a, GR, M, S, TSH *rgyud rtsub ldan pa gdon yin no/* : T, KYI *rgyud tsub ldan pa rten yin no/* : R *rgyud tsub ldan pa rten yino [= yin no/]* : KAḤ, X *rgyud rtsub ldan pa gdan yin no/*

*Comments*

The agreement of TSH with the Bhutan NGB group suggests that *gdon* is the earlier reading. This is also corroborated when we look at the other two KD versions (viz. KAḤ and X), for their variant *gdan* could easily be explained as a corruption of *gdon* through the dropping of the *na ro*. This would imply that, in effect, the KD versions agree with the reading of the Bhutan NGB group, with the minor variant *gdan* either having been introduced in the KD hyparchetype (in which case TSH recovered the correct reading through conjecture), or was introduced in a hyparchetype of KAḤ and X separate from TSH.

The other variants, viz. *rtēn* and *gnad*, were introduced in the South Central NGB group and in D respectively. D's *gnad* looks like an attempt to emend an unsatisfactory reading.

*rt. 10.13.*

D, T, R, KYI, TSH, KAḤ, X *mkhas rtogs shes rab ldan pas spyod/* : G-a, G-b, M *mkha' stobs shes rab ldan pas spyod/* : GR, S *mkha' stobs shes rab ldan par spyod/*

*Comments*

This is a clear case of a variant (*mkha' stobs* instead of *mkhas rtogs*) going back to the hyparchetype of the Bhutan NGB group. We can also observe that a further minor variant (*ldan par* instead of *ldan pas*) has been introduced by the hyparchetype of GR and S.

rt. 10.14.

D *bar gcod sgrol ba'i phrin las so/* : G-a, KAḤ *tshar gcod sgrol ba'i phrin las so/* : GR, G-b, M, S, T, TSH, KYI, X *tshar gcod sgrol ba'i 'phrin las so/*

*Comments*

Here *bar gcod* is a variant introduced by D, perhaps representing emendation, though it could simply be a psychological variant; the earlier reading is *tshar gcod*, as witnessed by the agreement thereon of all the other editions.

3.2.11. *Examples from Chapter 11*

rt. 11.1.

D, TSH, KAḤ, X *khrag zhag 'o ma mar gyi mtsho/* : G-a, GR, M, S *khrag zhag 'o ma mar mtsho dang/* : T, R *khrag zhag 'o ma mar gyi tshel/* : KYI *khrag zhag 'o ma mar gyi mtshel/*

*Comments*

This is an instance of an error (*tshe*, var. *mtshe*) introduced by the South Central NGB hyparchetype. The earlier reading is *mtsho*, preserved in all the other versions.

rt. 11.2.

D, G-a, GR, M, S, TSH, KAḤ, X *mi rta myur du bsgral ba'i khrag/* : T, R, KYI *mi rtag myur du bsgral ba'i khrag/*

*Comments*

Here we have a psychological error (*mi rtag* instead of *mi rta*) going back to the South Central NGB hyparchetype.

rt. 11.3.

D, T, R, KYI, KAḤ *dur khrod rgyu ba'i mgo nang du/* : G-a, GR, M, S *dur khrod rgyu ba'i 'og nang du/* : X *druod [= dur khrod] rgyu ba'i 'og nang du/* : TSH *du khrod rgyu ba'i 'og nang du/*

*Annotations*

*dur khrod*\*\*\*{TSH, KAḤ *du* : X *du*}

KAḤ, X *rgyu ba'i*\*\*\*{KAḤ *wa mo* : X *wa mo*/} : TSH {*wa mo*}\*\*\*'og

TSH 'og\*\*\*{*bo'i*} : X 'og\*\*\*{*ba'i*/} : KAḤ *mgo*\*\*\*{*bo'i*}

*Comments*

Here the variation is between *mgo* and 'og. The Bhutan NGB group and two of the KD versions (viz. TSH and X) have 'og, whereas D, KAḤ, and the South Central NGB group have *mgo*. It would seem that *mgo* is correct, since the KD annotations, which gloss the word with {*wa mo*} and {*bo'i*} only make sense with *mgo*—despite the fact that two of the KD versions have 'og instead!

The question then arises why KAḤ does not follow the mainstream KD reading 'og. Either KAḤ was able to recover the correct *mgo* through conjecture, or this could indicate that TSH and X stem from a hyparchetype separate from KAḤ.

To summarise the above, it looks as though the homophonic error 'og was introduced independently in the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype and in the hyparchetype, either of the KD versions, or of TSH and X.

*rt. 11.4.*

D, X *wa dang spyang khyi 'phar ba khyam*/ : G-a, GR, M, S *wa dang spyang khu 'phar ba khyi*/ : T, R, KYI *wa dang spyang ki phar ba khyi*/ : TSH *wa dang spyang khyi 'phar ba khyi*/ : KAḤ *wa dang spyang khyi 'bar ba khyam*/

*Comments*

At the end of the line there is variation between *khyi* and *khyam*. The agreement of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups, as well as TSH, on *khyi* indicates that this is the earlier reading. The variant *khyam* was either introduced by the hyparchetype of D and the KD versions, with TSH having recovered the correct reading through conjecture, or it goes back to a hyparchetype of X and KAḤ separate from TSH. In the latter scenario, D would have incorporated the variant from X.

The alternative, if we posited a shared hyparchetype for the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups, would imply a bipartite stemma and the impossibility of deciding which of the two readings is the older

one. Nonetheless, the context clearly requires *khyi*, since we have an enumeration of several canines, so *khyam* can be considered an error.

We can also observe minor variants in the spelling of *spyang ki*, which corroborate the lines of demarcation between the three groups as follows: the South Central NGB group has *spyang ki*; the Bhutan NGB group has *spyang khu*; and D and the KD versions have *spyang khyi*.

D 61r.1 = G-a 309r.3, GR 305v.1, (G-b 364v.7,) M 800.4, S 315r.4, T 255.1, (R 102v.1,) TSH 377.5, KAḤ 358.3, KYI 302.4, X 44v.7

rt. 11.5.

D *drag po dkar dmar nag po yis/* : G-a, GR, M, S, R *drag po dkar dmar nag po yi/* : T, KYI *dral po dkar dmar nag po 'i/* : TSH *dral po dkar dmar nag pa 'i/* : KAḤ *dral po dkar dmar nag po yi/* : X *drago [= drag po] dkar dmar nag pa yi/*

Comments

† Here the variation is between *drag po* on the one hand and *dral po* on the other, whereby it must be observed that in this case the separation between the various groups is less neat than elsewhere. The Bhutan NGB group, R, D, and X have *drag po*, whereas two of the South Central NGB versions (viz. T and KYI) and two of the KD versions (viz. TSH and KAḤ) have *dral po*. Contextually speaking, both readings make sense: *dral po* (‘brother’) fits as a complement to *sring mo* (‘sister’) in the previous line, but *drag po* (‘fierce’) can be understood as an epithet of *dral po*, so it works equally well.

It appears that the South Central NGB hyparchetype and the KD hyparchetype have preserved the earlier reading, whereas the Bhutan NGB group introduced the variant *drag po*. It is probably because of the slight unusualness of *dral po* that individual editions from the South Central NGB group (i.e. R) and from the KD versions (i.e. X) introduced *drag po*; the same can be said of D, whereby we might also suspect D of incorporating X’s reading.

rt. 11.6.

D *drag po rnam kyis dmod pa ni/* : G-a, GR, M, S *drag po rnam kyi dmigs pa ni/* : X *drag po rnam kyi dmigs pa ni/* : T, KYI *drag po rnam*

*kyis dmyigs pa ni/ : R, KAḤ drag po rnams kyis dmigs pa ni/ : TSH dral po rnams kyis dmigs pa ni/*

*Comments*

Here we have two sets of variation: (a) *drag po* vs *dral po* on the one hand; and (b) *dmigs pa* vs *dmod pa* on the other. Regarding (a), while the variation already occurred above (cf. rt. 11.5), in this case it is obvious that *dral po* is a variant introduced by TSH, since all the other versions have *drag po*.

As far as (b) is concerned, the agreement of all versions except D on *dmigs pa* indicates that it is the older reading, with *dmod pa* being an instance of editorial intervention in D, probably triggered by the ungrammatical ergative particle *kyis* (only the Bhutan NGB group have the grammatically correct genitive particle *kyi*).

D 61v.1 = G-a 309v.5, GR 306r.2, (G-b 365v.4,) M 802.1, S 315v.6, T 256.3, (R 103r.3,) TSH 379.3, KAḤ 360.5, KYI 304.1, X 46r.4

3.2.12. *Examples from Chapter 12*

*rt. 12.1.*

D, TSH, KAḤ, X *yab yum nye ba'i sras gnyis las/ : G-a, GR, M, S yab yum nye ba'i sras bzhi la/ : T, KYI yab yum nye ba'i sras gnyid las/ : R yab yum de nye ba'i sras nyid las/*

*Comments*

Here the agreement of all the versions except those of the Bhutan NGB group on *gnyis* (*g/nyid* in the South Central NGB group is but a homophonic variant of the same) indicates that this is the earlier reading, *bzhi* being a variant introduced by the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype.

*rt. 12.2.*

D, KAḤ, X *zhi dang dbang rgyas drag po yis/ : TSH zhi dang dbang rgyas drag po'i/ : G-a zhi rgyas dbang la sogs pa yis/ : GR, G-b, M, S zhi rgyas dbang la sogs pa yi/ : T zhi dang dbang dang rgyas pa'i/ : R, KYI zhing dang dbang dang rgyas pa'i/*



*Comments*

Here we have three variants, each one representative of one of the three groups in the text's transmission: D and the KD versions have *zhi dang dbang rgyas drag po*; the South Central NGB group has *zhi dang dbang dang rgyas pa*; and the Bhutan NGB groups has *zhi rgyas dbang la sogs pa*.

*rt. 12.3.*

D, TSH 'og gnyis skyed pa zhabs kyi dbyibs/ : X 'og 2 sked pa zhabs kyi dbyibs/ : G-a, GR, M, S, T, R, KYI mgo gnyis sked pa zhabs kyi dbyibs/ : KAḤ mgo gnyis skyed pa zhabs kyi dbyings/

*Comments*

The variation is between *mgo gnyis* on the one hand, and *'og gnyis* on the other. The agreement of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups, as well as KAḤ, on *mgo gnyis* suggests that it is the older reading, *'og gnyis* being a variant introduced by the hyparchetype of the KD versions and D. The fact that KAḤ alone among the KD versions has *mgo gnyis* could either be a case of conjectural emendation on KAḤ's part, or might indicate the possibility of TSH and X sharing a hyparchetype separate from KAḤ. Note also KAḤ's corruption of *dbyibs* to *dbyings*.

Alternatively, if we posited a shared hyparchetype of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups, the bipartite nature of the resultant stemma would make it impossible to decide which of the two readings (*mgo gnyis* or *'og gnyis*) represents the earlier one.

D 62r.1 = G-a 310r.6, GR 306v.3, (G-b 366r.7.) M 803.5, S 316v.1, T 257.5, (R 103v.2.) TSH 381.2, KAḤ 363.6, KYI 305.4, X 47v.3

*rt. 12.4.*

D, TSH, KAḤ, X, R *khro brgyad kyis ni sras kun gnas/* : T, KYI *'khro brgyad kyi ni sras kun gnas/* : G-a, GR, M, S *khro rgyal bdud kyi sras kun gnas/*

*Comments*

Here we have a clear instance of the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype introducing the variant *khro rgyal bdud kyi* instead of the older reading

*khro brgyad kyi ni*, the latter being confirmed by all the versions except those belonging to the Bhutan NGB group.

rt. 12.5.

D 'og min gnas sogs bzhi la ni/ : T, R, KYI 'og min gnas sogs bzhi pa ni/ : G-a, GR, M, S 'og ma'i gnas logs bzhi la ni/ : TSH, KAḤ 'og min gnas logs bzhi la ni/ : X 'og min gnas log bzhi la ni/

#### Comments

Here we have two instances of variation: (a) 'og min vs 'og ma'i on the one hand; and (b) logs vs sogs on the other. Concerning (a), since only the Bhutan NGB group has 'og ma'i, we can deduce that the variant goes back to the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype, with 'og min being the earlier reading. For (b), only D reads sogs, indicating that logs represents the older reading.

rt. 12.6.

D bsgoms shing dgod pa'i ting nge 'dzin/ : G-a sgom zhing dgod pa'i ting nge 'dzin/ : GR, M, S, TSH, KAḤ, X bsgom zhing dgod pa'i ting nge 'dzin/ : T, KYI<sup>219</sup> sgo mo zhing dgod pa'i ting nge 'dzin/ : R sgo ma zhing dgod pa'i tinge [= ting nge] 'dzin/

#### Comments

The variation is between the verb *bsgom* on the one hand, and *sgo mo* (var. *ma*) on the other. Since all versions except those of the South Central NGB group have *bsgom* (albeit in different tense forms), we can deduce that *sgo mo/ma* is a variant introduced in the South Central NGB hyparchetype.

---

<sup>219</sup> The text extending from D 62r.4 (*sku gsum>>>yongs rdzogs dkyil 'khor che/*) to D 62v.1 (*bsnyen bsgrub<<<sku gsung thugs kyi ngang/*) has been accidentally omitted through eyeskip by the scribe of KYI, so that KYI 306.2 reads *sku gsum thugs kyi ngang/*. The scribe realised his error, however, and subsequently added the missing lines in *dbu med* script in the upper and lower margins of the page, indicating the correct point of insertion in the text with an insertion mark.

rt. 12.7.

D, TSH *bsag mchod gsad pa'i rgyu dang ni* / : G-a, G-b, M *sreg mchod bsad pa'i rgyu dang ni*<sup>220</sup> / : GR *sreg mchog gsang ba'i rgyu dang ni* / : S *sreg mchod gsang ba'i rgyu dang ni* / : T, R *srog mchod gsad pa'i rgyud rang ni* / : KYI *srog mchod gsad pa'i rgyu dang ni* / : KAḤ *bsags mchod bsad pa'i rgyu dang ni* / : X *bsag mchod bsad pa'i las*<sup>221</sup> *rgyu dang* /

#### Annotations

TSH {*rdzas rnams* ??<sup>222</sup>}\*\*\**bsag*\*\*\*{*cing lha bskyed la*} : KAḤ {*rdzas rnams*}\*\*\**bsags*\*\*\*{*shing lha bskyed la*} / : X *bsag*\*\*\*{*rdzas rnams bsags shing lha bskyed la*}

*mchod*\*\*\*{TSH, KAḤ *pa dbul ba dang* : X *pa dbul ba dang* /}

TSH *rgyu*\*\*\*{*ling ka bshams ba*} / : KAḤ *rgyu*\*\*\*{*ling+ga bshams pa*} : X *bsad*\*\*\*{*ling+ga bshams pa*}

#### Comments

Here the variation is between *sreg* vs *srog* vs *bsag/s*, whereby these variants can be assigned to the Bhutan NGB group, the South Central NGB group, and the KD/D group respectively. It would seem that *sreg* represents the earlier reading. This is indirectly supported by the KD annotations, which despite having *bsag/s* in the main text provide the gloss {*rdzas rnams*}, indicating ‘substances’. While this could at first sight be read as ‘accumulating substances’, the further gloss at the end of the line indicating the ‘effigy’ {*ling ka*} appears to hint at the fact that we are dealing with the incineration of the substances in the context of the burnt offering (Skt. *homa*), suggesting an interpretation along the following lines: “{arranging the effigy, which is} the cause of incinerating {the substances}, of offering {to the deity that has been generated}, and of killing”. A further confirmation in favour of *sreg pa* being the older reading comes from the reading of the South Central NGB group, *srog*, which can be considered a corruption of *sreg*.

Of course, if we accepted the hypothesis that the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups are derived from a single hyparchetype, the

<sup>220</sup> The particle *ni* has been inserted as a correction in G-a.

<sup>221</sup> The word *las* has been inserted above the line in X.

<sup>222</sup> TSH is illegible at this point. Letters appear to have been erased.

bipartite nature of the stemma would preclude the possibility of deciding whether *sreg/srog* or *bsag/s* represents the older reading.

Within the Bhutan NGB group, we may also note the variant *gsang ba'i* found in GR and S instead of *bsad pa'i*, suggesting that both these editions share a separate hyparchetype.

D 62v.1 = G-a 310v.6, GR 307r.5, (G-b 367r.3,) M 805.1, S 317r.3, T 259.1, (R 104r.3,) TSH 383.2, KAḤ 366.6, KYI 306.<sub>+2</sub> X 49r.4

rt. 12.8.

D, TSH, KAḤ, X, KYI *rigs can lnga la kun sbyangs pas/* : G-a, GR, M, S *rigs can lnga la kun sbyar bas/* : T, R *rigs can lnga kun sbyangs pas/*

*Comments*

Here we have an obvious example of the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype introducing the variant *sbyar ba* in place of the older reading *sbyangs pas*, the latter being corroborated by all the other versions.

### 3.2.13. Examples from Chapter 13

rt. 13.1.

D, TSH, KAḤ, X *de nas khro bo'i rgyal po yis/* : T, KYI *de nas 'khro bo'i rgyal po yis/* : G-a *de nas phrin las rgyal po yis/* : GR, M, S *de nas 'phrin las rgyal po yis/*

*Comments*

The editions of the Bhutan NGB group have *phrin las* (var. *'phrin las*) instead of *khro bo* (var. *'khro bo*) as found in all the other versions. This is a further case of a variant going back to the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype.

rt. 13.2.

D, T, KYI, KAḤ *la lar byang chub sems dpa' yi/* : R *la lar byang chub semda' [= sems dpa'] yi/* : X *la lar byang chub sems dpa' yi/* : TSH *la lar byang chub sems dpa'i/* : G-a, GR, M, S *kha cig byang chub sems dpa' yis/*

*Comments*

While the variant in question changes nothing in terms of meaning, we can nonetheless observe that the Bhutan NGB group has *kha cig* instead of *la lar* as witnessed in the other editions. This is yet another case of a variant introduced by the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype.

rt. 13.3.

D, TSH, KAḤ *rtag pa ma yin sdug bsngal dang/* : G-a, GR, M, S *brtags pa ma yin sdug bsngal dang/* : T, KYI *rtags pa ma yin sdug bsngal dang/* : R *rtags pa mi yin sdug bsngal dang/* : X *rtags pa ma yin sdul [= sdug bsngal] dang/*

*Annotations*

TSH {*'khor ba'i chos rnams/*}\*\*\**rtag pa* : KAḤ {*'khor ba'i chos rnams*}\*\*\**rtag pa* : X {*'khor ba'i chos rnams/*}\*\*\**rtags pa yin*\*\*\*{TSH *de 'chi bas* : KAḤ *te 'chi bas* : X *de 'chi bas/*}

*Comments*

The variation is between *rtag pa* (the KD/D group except X) vs *brtags pa* (the Bhutan NGB group) vs *rtags pa* (the South Central NGB group and X). The variants illustrate the distinction between the three groups. The earlier reading is *rtag pa*, as preserved in the KD/D group (barring X) and as confirmed in the KD annotations, which gloss 'impermanence' (*rtag pa ma yin*) with {*'khor ba'i chos rnams*}, referring to the transient phenomena of *saṃsāra*. The South Central NGB group (as well as X) has introduced the variant *rtags pa* and the Bhutan NGB group has introduced the variant *brtags pa*; both are homophonic errors, which are relatively easy to make.

rt. 13.4.

D *skyabs 'gro gso sbyang bslab gnas bcu/* : G-a, GR, M, S *skyabs 'gro gso sbyong bslab pa bcu/* : T *skyabs 'gro gso sbyong brla gnas bcu'/* : R

*skyabs 'gro gso sbyong brla' gnas bcu/ : KYI skyabs 'gro gso' sbyong brla gnas bcu'/ : TSH skyabs 'gro gso sbyong slab gnas bcu/ : KAḤ skyabs 'gro'<sup>223</sup> gso sbyangs bslab gnas bcu/ : X skyabs 'gro gso sbyong bslab gnas bcu/*

### Comments

Here we have two sets of variation: (a) *gso sbyong* vs *gso sbyang* (var. *sbyangs*); and (b) *bslab* (var. *slab*) *gnas* vs *brla* (var. *brla'*) *gnas*. As far as (a) is concerned, all the versions except D and KAḤ have *gso sbyong*, referring to the ritual of absolution (Skt. *poṣadha*) for monastics, so it is clear that *sbyang* and *sbyangs* are variants introduced by D and KAḤ respectively.

Concerning (b), the agreement of all versions except those of the South Central NGB group on *bslab gnas* demonstrates that this is the older reading, with *brla gnas* being an error going back to the South Central NGB hyparchetype.

D 63r.1 = G-a 311r.7, GR 307v.6, (G-b 367v.6,) M 806.4, S 317v.4, T 260.4, (R 104v.3,) TSH 385.1, KAḤ 369.6, KYI 307.4, X 50v.3

### rt. 13.5.

D, G-a, GR, S, TSH, KAḤ *sems dbang bsgyur te bdag med pa'i/* : X *sems dbang bsgyur te bdag med pa'i/* : G-b, M *sems dbang sgyur te bdag med pa'i/* : T, R, KYI *sems dbang bskur de bdag med pa'i/*

### Comments

The agreement of all the versions except those of the South Central NGB group on *dbang bsgyur* clearly indicates that this is the earlier reading, *dbang bskur* being a variant introduced by the South Central NGB hyparchetype.

Moreover, with regard to the Bhutan NGB group, the minor tense variant (*sgyur* instead of *bsgyur*) found in G-b and M suggests the dependence of M on G-b.

<sup>223</sup> In KAḤ the words *skyabs 'gro* and *sbyangs* are written in smaller script, giving the impression that they are part of the annotations, which, however, is not the case.

rt. 13.6.

D, TSH, KAḤ, X *yul gdug pa can 'dul ba'i rigs rnam s kyi don* [...] : G-a, GR, M, S, KYI *yul can 'dul ba'i rigs rnam s kyi don* [...] : T, R *yul chen 'dul ba'i rigs rnam s kyi don* [...]

*Comments*

Here the variation is between *yul gdug pa can* (KD/D group) vs *yul can* (Bhutan NGB group and KYI) vs *yul chen* (the South Central NGB barring KYI), a pattern again confirming the broad division between the three groups. While *yul gdug pa can* may be the most elegant reading, it would seem that the agreement of the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups on *yul can*—after all, T and R's *yul chen* is a mere homophonic variant—suggests this to be the older reading, with *gdug pa* being an insertion going back to the hyparchetype of the KD versions and D.

As mentioned, the variant *yul chen* found in T and R is a homophonic error; the fact that KYI does not share this error could either indicate that T and R share a hyparchetype separate from KYI, or simply that KYI recovered the correct reading (*yul can*) through conjecture.

Alternatively, if we accepted the hypothesis of a shared hyparchetype for the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups, we would have a bipartite stemma and it would be impossible to determine whether *yul gdug pa can* or *yul can* represents the older reading.

rt. 13.7.

D, KAḤ *phrin las bzhi dang gtso chen drag po mngon 'byung sbyin mdzad pa'i* : TSH *'phrin las bzhi dang gtso chen drag po mngon 'byung sbyin mdzad pa'i* : X *'phris [= 'phrin las] bzhi dang gtso chen drag po mngon 'byung sbyin mdzad pa'i* : G-a *phrin*<sup>224</sup> *las bzhi dang gtso chen drag po sngon 'byung bzhi mdzad pa'i* : GR, G-b, M, S *'phrin las bzhi dang gtso chen drag po sngon 'byung bzhi mdzad pa'i* : T, R, KYI *'phrin las bzhi dang gtso chen drag po mngon byung ston mdzad pa'i*

<sup>224</sup> G-a seems to have a faint 'a prescript written as an insert below the line, emending to *'phrin las*.

*Comments*

Here the variation is between *mngon 'byung* on the one hand, and *sngon 'byung* on the other. Since all the editions except those of the Bhutan NGB group have *mngon 'byung* (with the South Central NGB group introducing the minor variant *mngon byung*), it is clear that this represents the older reading, the variant *sngon 'byung* going back to the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype.

Within the Bhutan NGB group, we can also observe how a minor stylistic correction inserted below the line in G-a (correcting *phrin las* to *'phrin las*) has been carried on in the other Bhutanese versions.

D 63v.1 = G-a 312r.1, GR 308r.7, (G-b 368v.4,) M 807.7, S 318r.6, T 262.3, (R 105r.4,) TSH 387.1, KAḤ 372.5, KYI 309.2, X 52r.3

3.2.14. *Colophons*

*rt. Colophon 1.*

D *bcom ldan 'das bde bar gshegs pa thams cad kyi phrin las 'dus pa phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud/ bi dyo tta ma 'bum sde las bsdus pa rdzogs sol* : G-a *bcom ldan bde bar gshegs pa thams cad kyi phrin las 'dus pa phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud las/ bi to ta ma la 'bum sde bsdus pa rdzogs sol* : G-b *bcom ldan bde bar gshegs pa thams cad kyi 'phrin las 'dus pa phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud las/ bi to ta ma la 'bum sde bsdus pa rdzogs sol* : M *bcom ldan 'das bde bar gshegs pa thams cad kyi 'phrin las 'dus pa phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud las/ bi to ta ma la 'bum sde bsdus pa rdzogs sol* : GR, S *bcom ldan 'das bde bar gshegs pa thams cad [S thamd] kyi 'phrin las 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud las/ bi to ta ma la 'bum sde bsdus pa rdzogs sol* : T *bcom ldan 'das bde bar gshegs pa thams cad kyis 'phrin las 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud bi do ta ma la 'bum ste bsdus pa/ rtsogs rtsogs/* : R *bcomdas [= bcom ldan 'das] bde bar gshye [= gshegs] pa thamd [= thams cad] kyis 'phrin las 'dus pa phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud bi do ta ma la 'bum sde bsdus pa/ rtsogs rtsogs/* : KYI *bcom ldan 'das bde bar gshegs pa thams cad kyis 'phrin las 'dus pa phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud bi do ta ma la 'bum ste bsdus pa/ stsogs stsog/* : TSH *bcom ldan 'das bde bar gshegs pa thams cad kyi 'phrin las 'dus pa phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud/ bi to ta ma 'bum sde bsdus pa'o/ rdzogs s+ho/* : KAḤ *bcom ldan 'das bde bar gshegs pa thams cad kyi phrin las 'dus pa phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud/ bhi to ta ma 'bum sde bsdus pa'o/ rdzogs sol* : X *bcom ldan 'das*



*bde bar gshegs pa thamd [= thams cad] kyi 'phris [= 'phrin las] 'dus pa phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud/ byi to ta ma la 'bum sde bsdus pa'o/ rdzogsol*

*Comments*

T is alone among the South Central NGB group to omit *phur pa*, an error shared (and in all likelihood made independently) by GR and S of the Bhutan NGB group. Since the error does not occur in R and KYI, it is likely that T introduced it when copying the South Central NGB hyparchetype. Moreover, the fact that GR and S have this error, which is not found in G-a, G-b, and M, suggests that it was introduced by the hyparchetype of GR and S.

Among the Bhutan NGB group, G-a and G-b have the truncated *bcom ldan* rather than *bcom ldan 'das* as in GR and S. This suggests that the hyparchetype of GR and S (or perhaps even the Bhutan NGB hyparchetype) had the full form; the fact that M has *bcom ldan 'das* can be attributed to conjectural emendation.

*rt. Colophon 2.*

*D rgya gar gyi mkhan po slob dpon chen po padma 'byung gnas dang/ bod kyi lo tstsha ba bai ro tsa na bdag gis bsgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa'o/ : G-a, G-b, M rgya gar gyi slob dpon chen po padma 'byung gnas dang/ bod kyi lo tsa ba bai ro tsa na bdag gis bsgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa'o/ : GR shog ser nyer gcig la zhus/ rgya gar gyi slob dpon chen po padma 'byung gnas dang/ bod kyi lo tstsha ba bai' ro tsa na bdag gis bsgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa'o/ : S shog ser nyer gcig la zhus/ rgya gar gyi slob dpon chen po padma 'byung gnas dang/ bod kyi lo tstsha bai' ro tsa na bdag gis bsgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa'o/ : R rgya gar gyi mkhan po slob dpon chen po padma 'byung gnas dang/ bod kyi lo tsha ba bdag bai ro tsa nas bsgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa'o/ : T, KYI rgya gar gyis mkhan po blo dpon chen po pad ma 'byung gnas dang/ bod kyi lo tsha bdag bai' ro tsa nas bsgyur ci zhus ste bstan la phab pa'o/ : TSH rgya gar gyi mkhan po slob dpon chen po pad ma 'byung gnas dang/ bod kyi lo tshtsha ba bai' ro tsa na bdag gis/ bsgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa'o/ : KAḤ rgya gar gyi mkhan po slob dpon chen po padma 'byung gnas dang/ bod kyi lo tsā ba bai ro tsa na bdag gis bsgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa'o/ : X rgya gar gyi*

*mkhan po slob dpon chen po padma 'byung gnas dang/ bod kyi lo tstsha  
ba bai' ro tsa na bdag gis bsgyur zhing zhus te gtan la phab pa 'o/*

*Comments*

Note the peculiar homophonic errors in T and KYI (*rgya gar gyis* for *rgya gar gyi*, as well as *blo dpon* for *slob dpon* and *bstan la phab* for *gtan la phab*), as well as the differently placed *bdag* and ergative particle (*na+s* instead of *gis*—the latter being shared by R and hence going back to the South Central NGB hyparchetype). It is not inconceivable that these peculiar homophonic errors go back to the South Central NGB hyparchetype and that, whereas T and KYI took them over verbatim, R sought to standardise the spellings.

The Bhutan NGB group has omitted the word *mkhan po*. Note also that GR and S are the only editions to mention the fact that the *tantra* was copied on 21 folios of yellow parchment (*shog ser nyer gcig la zhus*). This probably refers to the number of folios taken up by the text in their shared hyparchetype, an information they both copied verbatim.

*rt. Colophon 3.*

D *rgyal po 'i bla dpe/ gter rgya/ sbas rgya/ gtad rgya 'o/ rgya rgya rgya/* :  
KAḤ, X *rgyal po 'i bla dpe/ gter rgya/ sbas rgya/ gtad rgya 'o/ rgya rgya  
rgya/ manga lam/* : TSH *rgyal po 'i bla dpe 'o/ gter rgya/ sbas rgya/ gtad  
rgya 'o/ rgya/ rgya/ rgya/* : G-a, GR, G-b, M, S *rgyal po 'i bla dpe 'o/ gter  
rgya/ sbas rgya/ gtad rgya/* : T, R *rgyal po 'i bla dpe 'o/ gter rgya/ sbas  
rgya/ gtad rgya 'o/* : KYI *rgyal po 'i bla dpe 'o/ gter rgya/ sbas rgya/ gtad  
rgya 'o/ gcig zhu/*

*Comments*

The term *bla dpe* seems to be an honorific of *ma dpe* that is probably peculiar to royal usage. In this regard, the component *bla* would suggest that the manuscript is ‘uppermost’ both in the sense of it being of exalted royal provenance and in the sense of it being the first in the line of transmission (cf. *ma dpe*).

TSH (*gcig zhuso*), KYI (*gcig zhu*) alone mention that the text was proofread once; TSH gives this information in smaller *dbu med* script (see below, additional colophon A).

*Additional Colophon A (TSH 387.5–7)*

TSH *gcig zhuso/ mtshan tsam thos kyang mi mthun kun 'joms pa'i/ rgyal kun 'phrin las 'dus pa'i rtsa rgyud 'dir/ ngal lci 'khur rnamś dad stobs kyis 'khyer nas/ yig 'bru mchan la ci lcogs zhus pa'i dge/ dus mtha'i me 'dra ba'i/ rdo rje phur pa yis/ byang chub bsgrub pa'i bdud dpung kun bsreg nas/ bshad sgrub gsang sngags cho ga'i 'phris [= 'phrin las] kyis/ nam yang rgyal bstan 'dzin skyong spel bzhin tu/ mkha' mnyam 'gro ba'i dpal du myur/ gyur cig/ sarba manggalam/*

*Translation*

Proofread once. This root *tantra* comprising the activities of all the *jinas*, hearing the mere name of which conquers all disagreeable [circumstances], was copied, as far as possible with the annotations on the component letters, [with an attitude of] bearing the heavy burdens of difficulty through the strength of faith. Through this virtue may Vajrakīlaya, like the fire at the end of time, incinerate the demonic armies [that obstruct] the accomplishment of enlightenment! Through the activity of this rite of the secret Mantrayāna of exegesis and accomplishment, may those who uphold and protect the *jina*'s teaching always spread forth; may their glory swiftly be equal to the sky! May all be auspicious!<sup>225</sup>

*Additional Colophon B (X 52v)*

X *mkhas grub pad ma 'i'i (sic! = ditto) phyag dpe la zhus pa'i rig 'dzin kung<sup>ts</sup> [= kun bzang] shreb [= shes rab] kyi phyag dpe la lan gsum zhus so/ 2 zhus/*

*Translation*

The manuscript of Rigdzin Kunzang Shérab (1636–1699, Tib. Rig 'dzin Kun bzang shes rab), copied from a manuscript of the sage and saint Padma (i.e. Padmasambhava), was proofread three times. Proofread twice.

<sup>225</sup> Given in Sanskrit: *sarva maṅgalam*.

*Comments*

This refers to Rigdzin Kunzang Shérap, the first throne-holder of Pelyül Monastery. He was considered,<sup>226</sup> among others, to be an emanation of the Buddha's son Rāhula, of Garab Dorjé (Tib. dGa' rab rdo rje), Mañjuśrīmitra and Śrīsiṃha—the patriarchs of the Dzokchen tradition—as well as of Lasum Gyelwa Jangchup (fl. 8th c., Tib. La gsum rGyal ba byang chub), who was among the first seven monks to be ordained in Tibet.<sup>227</sup>

Hailing from Dokham (Tib. mDo khams), he received the name Tsültrim Gyatso (Tib. Tshul khriṃs rgya mtsho) at the time of his lay (Skt. *upāsaka*) ordination. Teachings received include the NGB, Longchen Rabjam's (1308–1364, Tib. Klong chen Rab 'byams) *mDzod bdun* [Seven Treasuries], *Phyogs bcu mun sel* [Eliminating Darkness in the Ten Directions], and indeed Nyang-rel's KD; as well as the *dGongs pa 'dus pa'i mdo* [Sūtra Gathering the Intentions], Ratna Lingpa's (1403–1479, Tib. Ratna gling pa) revelations, the *bKa' 'gyur* [Translated Words of the Buddha], the *Lam 'bras* [Path and Fruition], and the *Zhi byed* [Pacification] and *gCod* [Cutting Through] of Padampa Sangyé (d. 1117, Tib. Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas); he became lineage-holder of Kathok (Tib. Kaḥ thog) Monastery's earlier tradition. His root teacher was Trülzhik Tönpa Gyeltsen (fl. 17th c., Tib. 'Khrul zhig sTon pa rgyal mtshan), and he received the *gNam chos* [Celestial Doctrine] revelations from Tertön Migyur Dorjé (1645–1667, Tib. gTer ston Mi 'gyur rdo rje).

His name Kunzang Shérap was given when he took full ordination from Karma Chakmé (1613–1678, Tib. Karma Chags med), also receiving the title Rigdzin (Tib. *rig 'dzin*; Skt. *vidyādhara*, 'awareness-holder') at the time, and becoming the religious heir of both Migyur Dorjé and Karma Chakmé (the ceremony in the latter case involved Kunzang Shérap wearing the Karmapa's crown and religious attire).

---

<sup>226</sup> The information provided here is derived from Tsering Lama Jampal Zangpo, *A Garland of Immortal Wish-Fulfilling Trees: The Palyul Tradition of the Nyingmapa*, trans. Sangye Khandro (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1988), 53–71. See also Dorji Wangchuk, "Das dPal-yul-Kloster in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Die Wiederbelebung einer klösterlichen Tradition der rNying-ma-Schule," *Buddhismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 11 (2006): 213–234.

<sup>227</sup> Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 1, 738; on Lasum Gyelwa Jangchup and his special ability to sit cross-legged in the sky, see *Ibid.*, 515, 536.

At the age of thirty, he was invited to become the head of the newly built Pelyül Monastery, erected by the new king of Dégé (Tib. sDe dge), Lhachen Jampa Püntsok (fl. 17th c., Tib. lHa chen Byams pa phun tshogs). Kunzang Shérap was enthroned as Migyur Dorjé's regent and accompanied Tertön Migyur Dorjé as his principal teaching assistant, until the latter passed away. He built a *stūpa* containing the remains of his teacher, and, obtaining the relic of his right hand as an object of worship, erected another *stūpa* at Pelyül monastery.

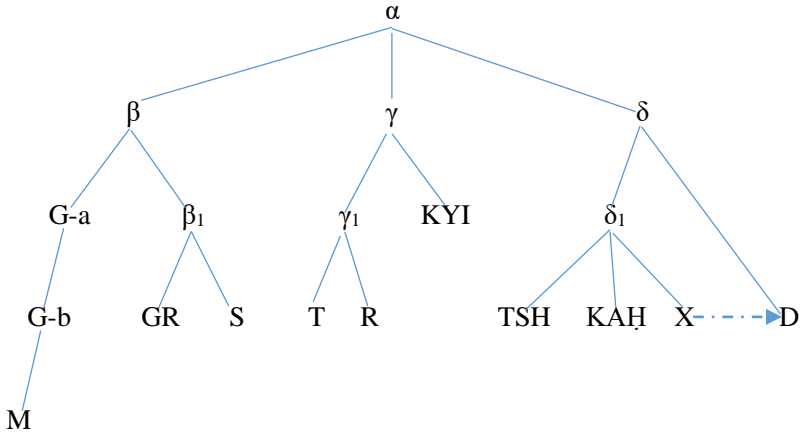
He is said to have spent much of his life in retreat, nourishing himself through 'extracting the elixirs' (Tib. *bcud len*)<sup>228</sup> and foregoing sleep almost entirely. Even after taking on the responsibilities of being the head of Pelyül, he would spend most of his time in contemplative retreat, eating but a single meal a day and strictly adhering to the rules of monastic discipline. His principle disciple and successor was his nephew Pema Lhündrup Gyatso (1660–1727, Tib. Padma lHun grub rgya mtsho), the second throne-holder of Pelyül.

---

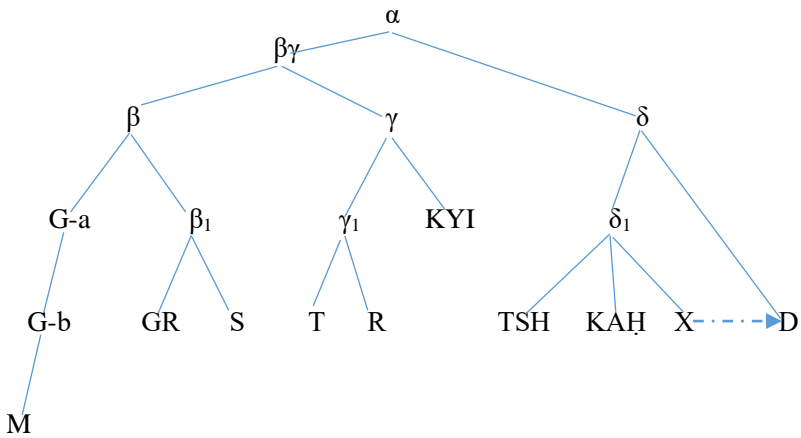
<sup>228</sup> On such practices of extracting the elixirs, cf. Barbara Gerke, "'Treating the Aged' and 'Maintaining Health': Locating *bcud len* Practices in the Four Tibetan Medical Tantras," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 35.1–2 (2012): 329–362; and Cathy Cantwell, "Reflections on Rāsayana, Bcud len and Related Practices in Nyingma (Rnying ma) Tantric Ritual," *History of Science in South Asia* 5.2 (2017): 181–203.

### 3.3. Proposed Stemma

#### 3.3.1. Main Stemma Proposed



#### 3.3.2. Alternative (Bipartite) Stemma



*Legend:*

$\alpha$  = archetype (= origo)

$\beta\gamma$  = hyparchetype of Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB group (in case of bipartite stemma)

$\beta$  = hyparchetype of Bhutan NGB group

$\beta_1$  = hyparchetype of GR and S

$\gamma$  = hyparchetype of South Central NGB group

$\gamma_1$  = hyparchetype of T and R

$\delta$  = hyparchetype of KD/D group

$\delta_1$  = hyparchetype of KD versions

The straight lines represent the direction of transmission through an indefinite number of copies; their length has no significance.

The arrow represents a tentative direction of influence.

*Bhutan NGB Group:*

G-a = sGang steng A

G-b = sGang steng B

M = mTshams brag

GR = dGra med rtse

S = Sangs rgyas gling

*South Central NGB Group:*

T = gTing skyes

R = Rig 'dzin tshe dbang nor bu

KYI = Kyirong Lama 4 vols

*KD/D Group:*

D = sDe dge

KD versions:

TSH = mTshams brag 13 vols

KAḤ = Kaḥ thog 13 vols

X = Unknown 8 vols

#### 4. Conclusion

The preceding philological analysis allows us to draw some conclusions regarding the relationships between the various editions of the *Phurpa Root Tantra*, which are visually depicted in the stemma (see Section 3.3.1). Unsurprisingly, regional affiliations are clearly visible,<sup>229</sup> so the Bhutan NGB editions form one group, and the South Central NGB editions (to which KYI must be added) another. Within the Bhutan NGB group, it is probable that GR and S share a separate hyparchetype, something which is easily explainable by the relative proximity of Tawang (Arunachal Pradesh, India), where Sangyeling Monastery is located, to Drametse Monastery in eastern Bhutan. Furthermore, the philological analysis of the *Phurpa Root Tantra* tends to confirm Cantwell and Mayer's hypothesis that M is not a direct descendent of G-a, but is rather derived from G-b,<sup>230</sup> and this despite the fact that, unlike with the *Noble Noose of Methods*, there are hardly any inserted corrections found in the G-a manuscript of the *Phurpa Root Tantra*.<sup>231</sup> So while it cannot be overstated how important it is to examine each NGB text individually rather than look at entire collections,<sup>232</sup> certain overarching patterns of affiliation are beginning to emerge. As far as the South Central NGB group is concerned, it is noteworthy that KYI, despite being bibliographically speaking a KD version, does not include the KD annotations and instead follows the readings of the South Central NGB group. This is again explainable by geographical features, given Kyirong's proximity to Tingkyé.<sup>233</sup> The KD versions that have preserved the annotations form a third group, to which D, which stands somewhat apart due to its eclecticism and the emendations introduced by its learned editors,<sup>234</sup> can also be counted.

---

<sup>229</sup> On such regional groupings, see Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 1, n. 2; and Cantwell and Mayer, *The Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra and the Vajra Wrath Tantra*, 16–19.

<sup>230</sup> Cantwell and Mayer, *A Noble Noose of Methods*, 29.

<sup>231</sup> There are a few, however: see above, rt. 1.4, rt. 3.4, rt. 8.2, rt. 8.3, rt. 12.7, rt. 13.7.

<sup>232</sup> Cantwell and Mayer, *The Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra and the Vajra Wrath Tantra*, 17.

<sup>233</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 18, 72.

<sup>234</sup> See *Ibid.*, 12, 18.



Moreover, several examples point towards the relative antiquity of the annotations, which at times support readings other than those of the KD versions (see Section 3.1.5). It is possible that the annotations represent Nyang-rel's own attempt to clarify the connections between the terse phrases of the *tantra*. It is even conceivable that the annotations were part of the text inherited by Nyang-rel and that, recognising their usefulness in elucidating the highly condensed and cryptic style of the *tantra*, he transmitted them along with the root text to his own disciples. According to this hypothesis, the annotations would have been subsequently removed when the *Phurpa Root Tantra* was incorporated into the NGB collections.

In the analysis of the examples, the question of the possibility of a shared hyparchetype for the Bhutan NGB and South Central NGB groups and of a resulting bipartite stemma (cf. Section 3.3.2) has repeatedly been raised, but no conclusive evidence compels us to accept this hypothesis.

In terms of content, the themes presented in the root *tantra*'s thirteen chapters provide a coherent mythological and ritual framework for the meditative transformation of the practitioner and his environment into the deity Vajrakīlaya and his *maṇḍala*, and for the application of Vajrakīlaya's activities, particularly that of 'liberation through killing'.

Stylistically, the somewhat piecemeal arrangement of ritual, meditative and metaphysical textual segments would suggest that Nyang-rel drew on earlier materials,<sup>235</sup> which even by his time may have seemed somewhat archaic or unusual, and which he wove into the fabric of this *tantra*. This would fit with what we know regarding the manner of redacting such *tantras*, where the activities of visionary revelation, of compiling older textual and other sources, and of editing and expanding them comprise various facets of the same process of scriptural production.

---

<sup>235</sup> On the *Eightfold Buddha Word* revelations as predating Nyang-rel, see Trautz, "Curating a Treasure," 500–502.

### *Abbreviations*

ann.	annotation
BDRC	Buddhist Digital Resource Center, <a href="https://www.tbrc.org/#!/footer/about/newhome">https://www.tbrc.org/#!/footer/about/newhome</a>
EAP	Endangered Archives Programme at the British Library, <a href="https://eap.bl.uk/">https://eap.bl.uk/</a>
IOL Tib J	Tibetan Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the British Library in London (formerly in the India Office Library (IOL))
KD	<i>bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa</i>
NGB	<i>rNying ma rgyud 'bum</i>
om.	omits
ORA	Oxford University Research Archive, <a href="https://ora.ox.ac.uk/">https://ora.ox.ac.uk/</a>
rt.	root text
var.	variant

### *Sigla*

DUN = Dunhuang manuscript IOL Tib J 331.III

#### *KD versions*

TSH = mTshams brag 13 Volumes, vol. 3: 321–387.

PH = Phur sgrub dgon pa 10 Volumes, vol. Ga/3: 1r–36r.

KAḤ = Kaḥ thog 13 Volumes, vol. Ga/3: 273–374.

KYI = Kyirong Lama 4 Volumes, vol. 2: 257–310.

X = Unknown 8 Volumes *dbu med*, vol. 2: 1r–52v.

Y = Unknown 9 Volumes *dbu med*, vol. 2: 1r–50v.

#### *NGB editions*

D = sDe dge, vol. Ba/15: 46v.1–63v.3.

#### *Bhutan NGB group:*

G-a = sGang steng A, vol. Ya/24: 291r–312r.

GR = dGra med rtse, vol. Ya/24: 288r–308v.

G-b = sGang steng B, vol. Ya/24: 343v–369r.

M = mTshams brag, vol. Ya/24: 757–808.

S = Sangs rgyas gling, vol. Ya/24: 297r–318v.

#### *South Central NGB group:*

T = gTing skyes, vol. Āḥ/32: 217–262.

R = Rig 'dzin tshe dbang nor bu, vol. Āḥ/32: 87r–105r.

*Conventions observed:*

Change of page numbers are noted using D as reference.

The various editions are referred to by page and line number, both of which are separated by a full stop (e.g. T 217.1). When folios are being referred to, ‘r’ stands for ‘recto’, ‘v’ for ‘verso’ (e.g. GR 288r.5).

When lines are written outside the page margins, these line numbers are preceded by a plus sign (+) and given in uppercase if they occur above the top margin, and in lower case if they occur below the lower margin (e.g. Kyi 306.<sup>+2</sup> refers to the second line of inserted text below the lower margin on p. 306 of the Kyi edition; or X 49v.<sup>+1</sup> refers to the first line of inserted text above the top margin on folio 49 verso of the X edition).

References to G-b and R are given in brackets, as these editions have only been consulted occasionally to confirm certain patterns of affiliation.

The examples used in the section concerning philological analysis have been numbered as follows: rt. 1.1. This refers to ‘root text, chapter 1, example 1’.

† The dagger symbol has been placed before the comments to examples that presented particularly convoluted cases in terms of their philological analysis.

Annotations are found in three of the KD versions of the text (viz. TSH, KAḤ, and X).

The annotation sign (*mchan rtags*) is represented by three asterisks (\*\*\*) linked to the word(s) or syllable(s) being elucidated.

Annotations are placed {within braces}, so as to distinguish them from the main text. In cases where the variants occur only among the annotations themselves, the sigla are placed {within braces} along with the annotations to which they belong. E.g. *ldan\*\*\**{TSH, KAḤ *yon tan du* : X *yon tan*/}

On the other hand, in cases where there is additional variation concerning the word(s) to which the annotations are appended, then the siglum is placed before the variant of the main text, the latter being followed by the annotations {within braces} of that particular source. E.g. TSH *ma\*\*\**{*yum*/} : KAḤ *dang\*\*\**{*yab yum*} : X *gnyis su\*\*\**{*yab yum*/}

Likewise, when one of the KD editions omits an annotation in a case where the variants occur only among the annotations themselves, the

information concerning the omission is placed {within braces}. E.g. *myur\*\*\**{TSH *du skyug pa dang*/ : KAḤ *du skyugs pa dang* : X om.}

However, when such an omission occurs in a case where there is additional variation concerning the word(s) to which the annotations are appended, the information concerning the omission is written as follows: siglum, followed by ‘om.’ (omits), followed by ‘ann.’ (annotation); ann. is added so as to specify that it is only the annotation, not the main text that is being omitted.

E.g. TSH *khriI\*\*\**{*ba'i*/} : KAḤ '*khriI\*\*\**{*ba'i*} : X om. ann.

### Bibliography

#### Resources

- Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC, formerly Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center, TBRC). Accessed November 24, 2019. <https://www.tbrc.org/>.
- Cantwell, Cathy and Rob Mayer. “The sGang steng-b rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum Manuscript from Bhutan.” *Revue d'Études Tibétaines* 11 (2006): 16–141.
- Cantwell, Cathy, Robert Mayer, and Michael Fischer. *The Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu Edition of the rNying ma rgyud 'bum: An Illustrated Inventory*. Canterbury: Centre for Social Anthropology and Computing, University of Kent, 2002. Accessed October 11, 2019. [https://www.tbrc.org/ngb/Title\\_page\\_main.html](https://www.tbrc.org/ngb/Title_page_main.html).
- Chandra, Lokesh. *Sanskrit-Tibetan Dictionary*. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture/Aditya Prakashan, 2007.
- Endangered Archives Programme (EAP), British Library. Accessed November 24, 2019. <https://eap.bl.uk/>.
- Martin, Dan. *Tibetan Vocabulary*, Version 29. August 2017.
- Monier-Williams, Monier, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2001.
- dMu dge bSam gTan rgya mtsho. *Sam bod skad gnyis shan sbyar* [Sanskrit-Tibetan Lexicon]. Lanzhou: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1996.
- rNam rgyal tshe ring. *Bod yig brda rnying tshig mdzod* [Dictionary of Archaic Tibetan Lexemes]. Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2001.
- Negi, J. S. *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary*, 16 Volumes. Sarnath: CIHTS, 1993–2005.
- Nima, Tudeng. *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* [The Large Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary]. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1998.
- Oxford University Research Archive (ORA). Accessed November 24, 2019. <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/>.
- bTsan lha ngag dbang tshul khriims. *brDa dkrol gser gyi me long* [The Golden Mirror that Unravels Lexemes]. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1997.

#### Primary Sources

*bCom ldan 'das dpal gshin rje gshed 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Yamāntaka Root Tantra]. KAḤ, vol. Ga/3: 87–180.

*bCom ldan 'das dbang chen 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Maheśvara Root Tantra]. KAḤ, vol. Ga/3: 181–271.

*Che mchog 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Chemchok Root Tantra]. KAḤ, vol. Kha/2: 583–681.

*'Jig rten mchod bstod sgrub pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Worldly Worship and Praise Root Tantra]. KAḤ, vol. Ga/3: 473–544.

*Drag sngags 'dus pa rdo rje rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Fierce Mantra Root Tantra]. KAḤ, vol. Ga/3: 545–599. Further edition consulted: M, vol. Ya/24: 940–983.

*rDo rje khros pa zhe sdang gcod* [Vajra Wrath Cutting Through Hatred]. In *bKa' 'gyur* (sDe dge), vol. 99: 443–446.

*rDo rje phur pa rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi dum bu* [Vajrakīlaya Root Tantra Fragment]. In *bKa' 'gyur* (sDe dge), vol. 81: 86–90.

*rDzong 'phrang srog gsum gyi chings kyi man ngag* [The Fortress, Chasm and Life-force]. In *sNga 'gyur bka' ma* [Transmitted Literature of the Early Translation School], edited by Kah thog mKhan po 'Jam dbyangs, 120 vols. Chengdu: Kah thog, 1999, vol. Ha/29: 15–425.

*dPal khrag 'thung 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Glorious Heruka Root Tantra]. KAḤ, vol. Ga/3: 1–85.

*Ma mo 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Mother Goddesses' Root Tantra]. KAḤ, vol. Ga/3: 375–430.

*Zhi ba 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Pacifying Root Tantra]. KAḤ, vol. Kha/2: 499–581.

*Rig pa 'dzin pa 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud* [Awareness-Holders' Root Tantra]. KAḤ, vol. Ga/3: 431–472.

### Secondary Sources

Achard, Jean-Luc. “The View of *sPyi ti Yoga*.” *Revue d'Études Tibétaines* 31 (2015): 1–20.

Almogi, Orna. “The Materiality and Immanence of Gnosis in some rNying-ma Tantric Sources.” In *Yogic Perception, Meditation and Altered States of Consciousness*, edited by Eli Franco and Dagmar Eigner, 241–262. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009.

Boord, Martin J. *The Cult of the Deity Vajrakīla, According to the Texts of the Northern Treasures Tradition of Tibet*. Tring: The Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1993.

Boord, Martin J. *A Bolt of Lightning from the Blue: The Vast Commentary on Vajrakīla that Clearly Defines the Essential Points*. Berlin: Edition Khordong, 2002.

Cantwell, Cathy. “To Meditate upon Consciousness as Vajra: Ritual ‘Killing and Liberation’ in the rNying-ma-pa Tradition.” In *Tibetan Studies, Volume 1: Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995*, edited by Helmut Krasser, Ernst Steinkellner, and Frank J. Korom, 107–117. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1997.

Cantwell, Cathy. “Distinctive Features of the Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu (Waddell) Edition of the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*.” In *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism: Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies, Leiden 2000*, edited by Helmut Eimer and David Germano, 359–376. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

- Cantwell, Cathy. “Different Kinds of Composition/Compilation within the Dudjom Revelatory Tradition.” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 36–37 (2013–2014): 243–280.
- Cantwell, Cathy. “Re-presenting a Famous Revelation: Dudjom Rinpoche’s Work on the ‘Ultra Secret Razor Life-force Vajrakīlaya’ (*yang gsang srog gi spu gri*) of Pema Lingpa (*padma gling pa*, 1450–1521).” *Buddhist Studies Review* 33.1–2 (2016): 181–202.
- Cantwell, Cathy. “Reflections on Rāsayana, Bcud len and Related Practices in Nyingma (Rnying ma) Tantric Ritual.” *History of Science in South Asia* 5.2 (2017): 181–203.
- Cantwell, Cathy. *Dudjom Rinpoche’s Vajrakīlaya Works: A Study in Authoring, Compiling and Editing Texts in the Tibetan Revelatory Tradition*. Sheffield: Equinox, 2020.
- Cantwell, Cathy. “The Action Phurpa (*’phrin las phur pa*) from the *Eightfold Buddha Word, Embodying the Sugatas (bka’ brgyad bDe gshegs ’dus pa)*, Revealed by Nyang-rel Nyima Özer (1124–1192, Tib. Myang ral Nyi ma ’od zer).” *BuddhistRoad Paper 7.2* (2020, in press).
- Cantwell, Cathy. “The Supreme Pacification (zhi ba’i mchog) Ritual Revealed by Myang ral Nyi ma ’od zer (1124–1192), its Precedent in the Dunhuang Text, IOL Tib.J 331.III, and the Relationship between the Revelatory (gter ma) and Transmitted (bka’ ma) Textual Traditions.” *Journal of Tibetology*, Special Issue: *New Directions in Gter ma Studies*, ed. Jue Liang (forthcoming).
- Cantwell, Cathy and Robert Mayer. *The Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra and the Vajra Wrath Tantra: Two Texts from the Ancient Tantra Collection*. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007.
- Cantwell, Cathy and Robert Mayer. *Early Tibetan Documents on Phur pa from Dunhuang*. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008.
- Cantwell, Cathy and Robert Mayer. “A Noble Noose of Methods, the Lotus Garland Synopsis: Methodological Issues in the Study of a Mahāyoga Text from Dunhuang.” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 5 (2009): 1–51.
- Cantwell, Cathy and Robert Mayer. *A Noble Noose of Methods, The Lotus Garland Synopsis: A Mahāyoga Tantra and its Commentary*. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2012.
- Cantwell, Cathy and Robert Mayer. “The Bon Ka ba nag po and the Rnying ma phur pa tradition.” *Journal of the International Association for Bon Research* 1 (2013): 37–53.
- Cantwell, Cathy and Robert Mayer. “Representations of Padmasambhava in Early Post-Imperial Tibet.” In *Tibet after Empire: Culture, Society and Religion between 850–1000*, edited by Christoph Cüppers, Robert Mayer, and Michael Walter, 19–50. Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2013.
- Cantwell, Cathy and Robert Mayer. “The Winged and the Fanged.” In *From Bhakti to Bon: Festschrift for Per Kværne*, edited by Hanna Havnevik and Charles Ramble, 153–170. Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 2015.
- Dalton, Jacob. “The Early Development of the Padmasambhava Legend in Tibet: A Study of IOL Tib J 644 and Pelliot tibétain 307.” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124.4 (2004): 759–772.



- Doney, Lewis. “Nyang ral Nyi ma ’od zer and the *Testimony of Ba.*” *Bulletin of Tibetology* 49.1 (2013): 7–37.
- Doney, Lewis. *The Zangs gling ma: The First Padmasambhava Biography. Two Exemplars of the Earliest Attested Recension.* Andiast: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, 2014.
- Dudjom Rinpoche. *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History.* Translated by Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991.
- Esler, Dylan. “Traces of Abhidharma in the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* (Tibet, Tenth Century).” In *Text, History, and Philosophy: Abhidharma across Buddhist Scholastic Traditions*, edited by Bart Dessein and Weijen Teng, 314–349. Leiden: Brill, 2016.
- Esler, Dylan. “The Fruition in a Comparative Perspective.” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 40 (2017): 159–188.
- Esler, Dylan. “The Lamp for the Eye of Contemplation, The *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* by gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes: Hermeneutical Study with English Translation and Critical Edition of a Tibetan Buddhist Text on Contemplation.” PhD diss., Université catholique de Louvain, 2018.
- Fishbane, Michael A. *Biblical Text and Texture: A Literary Reading of Selected Texts.* London: Oneworld Publications, 1998.
- Freschi, Elisa. “Proposals for the Study of Quotations in Indian Philosophical Texts.” *Religions of South Asia* 6.2 (2012): 161–189.
- Gerke, Barbara. “‘Treating the Aged’ and ‘Maintaining Health’: Locating *bcud len* Practices in the Four Tibetan Medical Tantras.” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 35.1–2 (2012): 329–362.
- Germano, David. “The Funerary Transformation of the Great Perfection (*Rdzogs chen*).” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 1 (2005): 1–54.
- Gray, David B. “Skull Imagery and Skull Magic in the *Yoginī* Tantras.” *Pacific World, Third Series* 8 (2006): 21–39.
- Greber, Erika. “Textbewegung/Textwebung: Texturierungsmodelle im Fadenkreuz von Prosa und Poesie, Buchstabe und Zahl.” In *Textbewegungen 1800/1900*, edited by Matthias Buschmeier and Till Dembeck, 24–48. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007.
- Guenther, Herbert V. *The Life and Teaching of Nāropa.* London: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- Guenther, Herbert V. *Matrix of Mystery: Scientific and Humanistic Aspects of rDzogs chen Thought.* Boulder: Shambhala, 1984.
- Hirshberg, Daniel A. *Remembering the Lotus-Born: Padmasambhava in the History of Tibet’s Golden Age.* Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2016.
- Kalupahana, David J. *A History of Buddhist Philosophy: Continuities and Discontinuities.* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994.
- Kapstein, Matthew T. *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation and Memory.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Köppl, Heidi I. *Establishing Appearances as Divine: Rongzom Chözang on Reasoning, Madhyamaka, and Purity.* Ithaca: Snow Lion, 2008.
- Maas, Paul. *Textkritik.* Leipzig: B.J. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, 1960.
- Mayer, Robert. *A Scripture of the Ancient Tantra Collection: The Phur-pa bcu-gnyis.* Oxford: Kiscadale Publications, 1996.



- Mayer, Robert. "The Figure of Maheśvara/Rudra in the rÑiñ-ma-pa Tantric Tradition." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 21.2 (1998): 271–310.
- Mayer, Robert. "Pelliot 346: A Dunhuang Tibetan Text on rDo rje Phur pa." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 27.1 (2004): 129–165.
- Mayer, Robert. "gTer ston and Tradent: Innovation and Conservation in Tibetan Treasure Literature." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 36–37 (2013–2014): 227–242.
- Mayer, Robert. "Indigenous Elements in Tibetan Tantric Religion." *Mongolo-Tibetica Pragensia '14: Ethnolinguistics, Sociolinguistics, Religion and Culture* 7.2 (2014): 35–53.
- Mayer, Robert. "'We Swear Our Grandparents Were There!' (Or, What Can the Sex Pistols Tell Us About Padmasambhava?). The Making of Myth in 10th-Century Tibet and 20th-Century England." In *The Illuminating Mirror: Tibetan Studies in Honour of Per K. Sørensen on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, edited by Olaf Czaja and Guntram Hazod, 341–355. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2015.
- Mayer, Robert. "Rethinking Treasure (Part One)." *Revue d'Études Tibétaines* 52 (2019): 119–184.
- Meinert, Carmen. "Between the Profane and the Sacred? On the Context of the Rite of 'Liberation' (sgrol ba)." In *Buddhism and Violence*, edited by Michael Zimmermann, 99–130. Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2006.
- Meinert, Carmen. "Assimilation and Transformation of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet and China: A Case Study of the Adaptation Processes of Violence in a Ritual Context." *Zentralasiatische Studien* 45 (2016): 341–360.
- Scheuer, Jacques. "Entre démons, dieux, Bouddhas: Des frontières fluides—À propos de quelques relations bouddhisme/hindouisme." In *Dieux, génies, anges et démons dans les cultures orientales & Florilegium Indiae Orientalis, Jean-Marie Verpoorten in honorem*, edited by Christophe Vielle, Christian Cannuyer, and Dylan Esler, 101–116. Brussels: Société Royale Belge d'Études Orientales, 2017.
- Sihlé, Nicolas. *Rituels bouddhiques de pouvoir et de violence: La figure du tantriste tibétain*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2013.
- Skorupski, Tadeusz. *The Sarvadurgatipariśodhana Tantra: Elimination of All Evil Destinies: Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts with Introduction, English Translation and Notes*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983.
- Skorupski, Tadeusz. "Tibetan Homa Rites According to the gTer ma Tradition." *The Tibet Journal* 20.4 (1995): 2–46.
- Sørensen, Per K. "In his Name: The Fake Royal Biography—Fabricated Prophecy and Literary Imposture." *Revue d'Études Tibétaines* 52 (2019): 284–335.
- Sur, Dominic. "Constituting Canon and Community in Eleventh Century Tibet: The Extant Writings of Rongzom and his *Charter of Mantrins* (sngags pa'i bca' yig)." *Religions* 8.3 (2017): 1–30.
- Tanzin, Lopon P. Ogyan. "Assessing the Greatness of Tibet's Early Translations according to Rong-zom Mahāpaṇḍita." Translated by Dylan Esler. *Temenos Academy Review* 16 (2013): 21–42.
- Trautz, Nicholas. "Curating a Treasure: The *Bka' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa* in the Development of the Rnying ma Tradition." *Revue d'Études Tibétaines* 55 (2020): 495–521.



- Tsering Lama Jampal Zangpo. *A Garland of Immortal Wish-Fulfilling Trees: The Palyul Tradition of the Nyingmapa*. Translated by Sangye Khandro. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1988.
- van Schaik, Sam. “A Definition of Mahāyoga: Sources from the Dunhuang Manuscripts.” *Tantric Studies* 1 (2008): 45–88.
- van Schaik, Sam. “The Sweet Sage and the *Four Yogas*: A Lost Mahāyoga Treatise from Dunhuang.” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 4 (2008): 1–67.
- Wangchuk, Dorji. “Das dPal-yul-Kloster in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Die Wiederbelebung einer klösterlichen Tradition der rNying-ma-Schule.” *Buddhismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 11 (2006): 213–234.
- Wangchuk, Dorji. *The Resolve to Become a Buddha: A Study of the Bodhicitta Concept in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*. Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 2007.
- Wedemeyer, Christian K. “Beef, Dog, and Other Mythologies: Connotative Semiotics in Mahāyoga Tantra Ritual and Scripture.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 75.2 (2007): 383–417.
- West, Martin L. *Textual Criticism and Editorial Technique*. Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner, 1973.
- Wylie, Turrell. “Ro-langs: The Tibetan Zombie.” *History of Religions* 4.1 (1964): 69–80.