

# The Bird-faced Monk and the Beginnings of the New Tantric Tradition, Part Two

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**Abstract:** Part One of this essay was published in a volume commemorating my friend Gu ge Tsering rgyal, *Tibetan Genealogies. Studies in Memoriam of Guge Tsering Gyalpo (1961–2015)*, ed. G. Hazod and Shen Weirong (Beijing: China Tibetology Publishing House, 2018: 403–450). There I introduced the newly recovered and published work on the main corpora of tantric literature and its classification, etc. that was written by Lo tsā ba Rin chen bzang po (958–1055), who, in a variety of prophetic passages, is also known as the "bird-faced monk" (*dge slong bya'i gdong can*).<sup>1</sup> That portion of my essay consisted of three parts: A lengthy preamble, [1] A survey of Rin chen bzang po's biographies, his exant writings, and the environment in which he worked, [2] his classification of Buddhist tantric literature, and [3] the question of spurious tantras and allegedly questionable religious practices during the eleventh century. In this, the second part of the essay, I study two passages from his *Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam bzhag, Exposition of the Tantras* that are cited by Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1552–1624). I first began working on these fragments some seven years ago and thus well before the text of his *Exposition* had come to my attention. With the publication of the Lo tsā ba's *Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam bzhag*, the wonderful world of the

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<sup>1</sup> The nick-name "bird-faced monk" (*dge slongbya'i gdong can*) occurs in the translator's colophon of the translation of the *\*Āryavajrapāṇinīlāmbadaravajrapātālatantra*, for which see BKA', vol. 87: 510. Lo tsā ba Rin chen bzang po (958–1055) is no doubt the person behind that name. What lies behind the abbreviations that are used in this article can be found on the last page.

karma of publishing and tbrc.org has now made it possible for my essay to be a bit more comprehensive, and it concludes with an appendix that consists of a title list of tantras that belong to the four classes of tantric literature that Rin chen bzang po distinguished at the end of his work.

Ter nagedachtenis van Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po.

#### **IV. On two Quotations on the meaning of *tantra* from Rin chen bzang po's *Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam bzhag***

Let us now first fast forward some five and a half centuries from the era of Rin chen bzang po to a certain Lha rje Blo gros bzang po who, it turns out, must be identified as Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan, a scholar and physician whose many writings on a wide variety of subjects go a long way in informing us of the interest he took in old and rare manuscripts and in pursuing fairly unusual topics of inquiry.<sup>2</sup> Among them is a rather sophisticated treatise that he had written in 1576 at the astonishing age of twenty-four.<sup>3</sup> In this work, he goes to great lengths defending the doctrinal authenticity and the orthopractical and experiential integrity of

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2 For him, see J.D. Gentry, *Substance and Sense: Objects of Power in Life, Writings and Legacy of the Tibetan Ritual Master Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan*, unpublished Harvard University doctoral dissertation (Cambridge, MA, 2014), and now his truly outstanding *Power Object in Tibetan Buddhism: The Life, Teachings, and Legacy of Sokdokpa Lodrö Gyeltsen*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2016.

3 SOG1, 171 [= SOG2, 143; SOG3, 145]. He wrote this work in Bsam gtan gling monastery, in Mon yul, that is, in Bum thang, in present day Bhutan. The editor/publisher of SOG2 dated this work to 1636 [*'dzin byed kyi lo = me mo byi*] in the table of contents. Writing in 1605, Sog bzlog pa himself stated in his *Chos kyi rjes su brang ba dag la gdam du bya ba legs bshad bdud rtsi'i dga' ston* [in the *Gsang sngags snga 'gyur la bod du rtsod pa snga phyir byung ba rnam kyi lan du brjod pa nges pa don gyi 'brug sgra*], in *Collected Writings of Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan*, vol. I, New Delhi: Sanje Dorji, 1975: 599 [= ed. Padma tshul khriims, Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1997: 337, 339], that he had completed this work at the age of twenty-four, so that he must have finished it in the *me mo byi*-year of the previous sexagenary cycle, that is, in 1576. SOG1, 171-173; SOG 3, 145, have a printer's colophon by Gzhan phan chos kyi blo gros who states that the printing blocks of Sog bzlog pa's work were carved by order of a certain 'Jam pa'i rdo rje at Bstan gnyis dar rgyas gling monastery, alias Zhe chen monastery. Gzhan phan chos kyi blo gros is better known as Zhe chen Rgyal tshab IV 'Gyur med Padma rnam rgyal (1872–1926).

the texts, ideas and practices of the Old School (*rnying ma*).<sup>4</sup> Standing as a proleptic testimony to his later success in excavating rare books from their places of hiding, this piece was not even his first foray into the world of scholarship, for in it he already refers to his own treatise on the stages of the spiritual path (*lam rim*). That the Lha rje must actually be identified as Sog bzlog pa is evidenced by the fact that this work is listed in the catalog of his collected oeuvre and that he signed this very name to his replies to queries that had been raised much earlier by Gter ston Ratna gling pa (1403–1479) in response to a request by Shākya rab 'phel, who like Sog bzlog pa, had been a disciple of Gter ston Zhig po gling pa (1524–1583). Indeed, Sog bzlog pa was the author of a very informative biography of this rather controversial "treasure-text revealer" (*gter ston*) whose fame also included being a great "repeller of Mongols" (*sog bzlog pa*).<sup>5</sup> Finally, he also signs himself as Gdong dkar 'Tsho byed Blo gros rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po, where *'tsho byed*, "healer," implies the same thing as *lha rje*.<sup>6</sup> "Blo gros bzang po" is thus an abbreviation of "Blo gros rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po." To what extent he really was a practising physician is unclear. Writing a disquisition on the problems surrounding the authorship of the medical text of the *Rgyud bzhi*, he concluded his little, learned tract by saying<sup>7</sup>:

*bdag gi[s] rgyud bzhi'i tshig don mi shes kyang //*  
*g.yu thog sangs rgyas dngos kyi rnam thar dang //*  
*brgyud pa'i lo rgyus gtam bzang rnar chags pas //*  
*ji bzhin smras pa'i spobs pa thob phyir bkod //*

Though I do not understand the categories of the *Rgyud bzhi*,  
 Since the good news, the story of G.yu thog, an actual *buddha*, and,

4 SOG1, 8, 99 [= SOG2, 8, 85; SOG3, 95, 126]. Shortly after the response to the first query, in SOG1, 12-13 [= SOG2, 11-12; SOG3, 96], he cites a fairly little-known letter Sha gad Lo tsā ba – his full name was Yar 'brog Sha gad Lo tsā ba Shes rab bzang po – sent to Dar ma rgyal mtshan (1237–1305), alias Bcom ldan [rig{s} pa'i] ral gri, concerning what must have been a rare Sanskrit manuscript of the *Guhyagarbhatantra*. Dpa' bo II Gtsug lag phreng ba (1504–1566) also refers to this encounter and to the Lo tsā ba having sent him the manuscript; see his *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, vol. 1, ed. Rdo rje rgyal po, Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1986: 538.

5 See, respectively, the *Gsung 'bum gyi tho byang*, in *Collected Writings of Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan*, vol. I, New Delhi: Sanje Dorji, 1975: 3, and the *Dri ba rnam par rgyal ba'i dris lan lung rig[s] 'byung gnas*, in *Collected Writings of Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan*, vol. II, New Delhi: Sanje Dorji, 1975: 145-189.

6 See his *Rdzogs chen pa sprul sku zhig po gling pa gar gyi dbang phyug rtsal gyi skyes rabs rags bsdus dang rnam thar*, in *Collected Writings of Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan*, vol. I, New Delhi: Sanje Dorji, 1975: 109.

7 See his *Rgyud bzhi'i bka' [b]sgrub nges don snying po*, in *Collected Writings of Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan*, vol. II, New Delhi: Sanje Dorji, 1975: 241. Samten G. Karmay made use of this work in his "The Four Tibetan Medical Treatises and their Critics," in *The Arrow and the Spindle. Studies in History, Myths, Rituals and Beliefs in Tibet*, Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point, 2009: 229-237.

The chronology of its line of transmission,  
Has come to my ear, I write because I have acquired the courage of  
speaking exactly what is the case.

We also gather from the catalog of his writings that he had even written a biography of G.yu thog Yon tan mgon po, whom he believed to have been contemporaneous with Rje btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216) and whom he believed to have been the author of the *Rgyud bzhi*. No trace of this work has been found so far. The literary activity of writing biographies of G.yu thog seems to have been in the air for reasons that may be connected to the somewhat earlier publication of the *circa* 1546 Grwa thang xylograph of the *Rgyud bzhi* by Zur mkhar ba. Sog bzlog pa's junior contemporary 'Ja' tshon snying po (1585–1656) had also composed a biography of G.yu thog and these were important precedents for the much more influential and thus the better-known biographies of the so-called elder and younger G.yu thog that Dar mo Sman rams pa Blo bzang chos grags (1638–after 1697) compiled in 1680.<sup>8</sup>

What is worth noting is that Sog bzlog pa states at the outset of his defense of the Old School that Rin chen bzang po did not confute the Old School tantric literature in his *Sngags log sun 'byin*,<sup>9</sup> but only took aim at the literal interpretation of the orthopraxis of tantric literature (*gsang sngags sgra ji bzhin par spyod pa rnam*) as a whole. This is an echo of Gser mdog Pañ chen Shākya mchog ldan's (1428–1507) earlier characterization of Rin chen bzang

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8 For 'Ja' tshon snying po's work, see my "Za hor and Its Contribution to Tibetan Medicine, Part Two: Sources of the Tibetan Medical Tradition," *Zangxue xuekan* 藏学学刊 / *Bod rig pa'i dus deb*/Journal of Tibetology, vol.12, 2015: 64, n.1. An English translation of the biography of "the elder" G.yu thog Yon tan mgon po by way of Dar mo Sman rams pa's edition of the earlier work by G.yu thog Lhun grub bkra shis is of course available in Rechung Rinpoche, *Tibetan Medicine*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973: 147–327. The Tibetan texts of the biographies of "the elder" and "the younger" G.yu thog as edited and presented by Dar mo sman rams pa can be found in *G.yu thog gsar rnying gi rnam thar*, ed. Dbang 'dus, Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1982: 1-313, 315-348. Dalai Lama V Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1685) states in his autobiography that he wrote the concluding prayer to the blockprint of this work on May 14, 1680; see *Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho'i rnam thar*, vol. 3, Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1991: 340.

9 With a good number of rather significant different readings, A mes zhabs Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams (1597–1659) reproduces the relevant *Sngags log sun 'byin* texts of Pho brang Zhi ba 'od (1016–1111) and 'Gos Lo tsā ba I Khug pa lhas tsas (11<sup>th</sup>c) in his *Jo gdan bla ma mang thos bshes gnyen pas dris lan yid kyi mun sel*, in *Collected Works*, ed. Si khron bod yig dpe rnying myur skyob 'tshol sgrig khang, vol. 40, Lhasa: Bod ljongs dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2012: 28-32, 32-35. It would seem that he had no access to Rin chen bzang po's work.

po's agenda,<sup>10</sup> which included the remark that his goal had been to put forth a hermeneutic for the provisional and definitive intent of the Highest Yogatantras and that he did not list the titles of what he considered to be inauthentic (*yang dag ma yin pa*) tantras, but rather confuted those practices that had taken place on the basis of having taken certain specimen of tantric literature literally by citing passages from the upper two types of tantras, that is, the Yoga- and Highest Yogatantras, and from some Mahayana sutras and authoritative commentaries. All these remarks are borne out by a fifty-two-folio manuscript of what is purportedly his *Sngags log sun 'byin*, that Dr. Sha bo Mkha' byams kindly made available to me a few months ago. Indeed, the main thrust of this work involves a detailed explication of the way in which the antinomial expressions found especially but not exclusively in the *Guhyasamājantra* literature ought not be taken literally (*sgra ji bzhin pa*). And much later this very feature is also indicated by Mkhas dbang Sangs rgyas rdo rje (1569–1645) where he states that Rin chen bzang po mainly (*gtso bor*) dealt with this subject in his work.<sup>11</sup> But once again, we are confronted with a problem. 'Gos Lo tsā ba II Gzhon nu dpal (1392–1481) refers to what he calls Rin chen bzang po's *Sngags log sun 'byin* in his 1472 study of difficult passages in the *Kālacakra* corpus. He points out that while Rin chen bzang po cites severally from the corpus, he did not fully translate it at the time.<sup>12</sup> This was of course left to Paṇḍita Śrībhadrabodhi and Gyi jo Lo tsā ba Zla ba'i 'od zer. But the problem with 'Gos Lo tsā ba II's remark is that the manuscript of the *Sngags log sun 'byin* that is currently available not once cites passages from the *Kālacakra* corpus.

As is indicated by the title of Sog bzlog pa's work, it consists of a series of replies to

10 For what follows, see his *Le'u gsum pa rig 'dzin sdom pa'i skabs kyi 'bel gtam rnam par nges pa*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 7, Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2013: 144-145. To be sure, as is evident from his *Gsang sngags snga 'gyur la bod du rtsod pa snga phyir byung ba rnams kyi lan du brjod pa nges pa don gyi 'brug sgra*, 509-538, 538-541, Sog bzlog pa was most probably familiar with this work as well as undoubtedly with Gser mdog Paṇ chen's undated reply to Bya pa Skal bzang chos kyi rgya mtsho'i sde who had sent him a letter apropos of queries of the above treatise. This letter was titled or subtitled *Dogs gcod kyi yi ge legs bshad sgo dbye* and Gser mdog Paṇ chen's undated response to it was his *Gser gyi thur ma las brtsams pa'i dogs gcod kyi 'bel gtam rab gsal rnam nges sam nges don rab gsal*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 17, Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2013: 375-410.

11 See the afterword of his untitled inquiry into problematic doctrines and works of ambiguous provenance that is contained in his *Collected Works*, vol. V, Kathmandu: Acarya Shedup Tenzin, 1995: 593. Glo bo Mkhan chen Bsod nams lhun grub (1456–1532) appears to cite this work in his undated *Sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i dris lan lung gi tshad ma 'khrul spong dgongs rgyan*, in *Dpal sa skya'i sdom gsum phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 7, ed. Si khron bod yig dpe mnying bsdu sgrig khang (Chengdu: ?, ?), 153: ...'jig rten las 'das pa'i rig pa'i mdo zhes bya ba'i rgyud kyang...gso sbyong bshad ces grag ces 'byung bas nag gso sbyong yin no zhes gsungs so //. However, the text of this quotation is not found in the manuscript. Glo bo Mkhan chen's title suggests that it is a nod to Go rams pa Bsod nams seng ge's (1429–1489) 1476 response, subtitled *Sdom gsum 'khrul spong*, to the series of controversial questions Gser mdog Paṇ chen had posed concerning Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Sdom gsum rab tu dbye ba*.

12 See the *Dpal dus kyi 'khor lo'i dka' 'grel snying po'i don rab tu gsal ba'i rgyan*,?Pho brang Rgyal bzang smon mkhar xylograph, 2b.

queries (*dris lan*) – some fourteen of these are isolated in the New Delhi manuscript by means of an ornamental Rin spungs *shad*<sup>13</sup> - in a work that he took to have been the Karma pa VIII's directive (*chab shog*) to adherents of the Old School. Unfortunately, he provides few details about the circumstances under which this directive was written - indeed, he may not have known much about these - and its highly contentious if not inflammatory content, except towards the end where he apparently recorded its colophon. There it was stated, among other things, that the Karma pa had written it in Central Tibet in a rat (*byi ba*) year. More about this will follow below.

There was at least one earlier reaction to this directive. 'Dul 'dzin Mkhyen rab rgya mtsho had already responded to this very same work in the fire-serpent year, that is, in 1557. Calling himself a Sngags 'chang, a tantric practitioner, this native from G.yag sde in Rtsang [= Gtsang] rong or simply Rong<sup>14</sup> states that he had composed his highly learned treatise at the behest of Ngag dbang kun dga' chos 'byor, an erstwhile disciple of the Karma pa himself and the abbot of the Tshogs sde dge 'dun sgang religious community, as well as at the behest of the then governor of Yar rgyab principality that is located in what is present-day Grwa nang.<sup>15</sup> He also writes that he had taken his inspiration from the writings of Zla ba grags pa, a close disciple of Ratna gling pa, Gter ston Bsam gtan gling pa, Padma brtse ba chen po – the Bhutanese manuscript has the correct Sman rtse ba chen po<sup>16</sup> -, Mkhas grub Sna tshogs rang grol, and one whose name includes Śrī, that is, Dpal.<sup>17</sup>

Now contrary to Sog bzlog pa's contribution, which is a systematic response to some of the issues that were raised in the letter, 'Dul 'dzin's work exhibits none of these features. With seventeen sections (*tshoms*) in all, the first thirteen sections consist of an introduction

13 SOG1, 5-153 [= SOG2, 4-128; SOG3, 93-140]. SOG1, 153-161 and 161-169 [= SOG2, 128-134 and 135-141; SOG3, 140-142 and 142-144] contain, respectively, reflections on the treasure-text (*gter ma*) traditions and the Karma pa hierarchs and their earlier re-embodiments.

14 See 'DUL1, 303, 380, 390 [= 'DUL2, 404, 491, 504]. He is probably the same Mkhyen rab rgya mtsho who is noted as a Sngags 'chang in 'Brug chen IV Padma dkar po's (1525–1592) autobiography; see his *Sems dpa' chen po padma dkar po'i rnam thar thugs rje chen po'i zlos gar*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 3, Darjeeling: Kargyud Sungrab Nyamso Khang, 1973: 461.

15 For what follows, see 'DUL1, 83-84, 610-611 [= 'DUL2, 118-121, 773]. For the early history of the Tshogs sde dge 'dun sgang community, see J. Heimbels, "The Jo gdan tshogs sde bzhi: An Investigation into the History of the Four Monastic Communities in Śākyaśrībhadrā's Vinaya Tradition," in *Nepalica-Tibetica. Festgabe für Christoph Cüppers*, Band 1, ed. F.-K. Ehrhard and P. Maurer, Andiast: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies GmbH, 2013: 215 ff. For Yar rgyab, see now M. Fermer, "Putting Yar rgyab on the Map," in *Fifteenth Century Tibet: Cultural Blossoming and Political Unrest*, ed. V. Caumanns and M. Sernesi, Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2017: 63-96.

16 'DUL1, 379 [= 'DUL2, 490] registers a certain Rgyal dbang rje Sman rtse Chos rje Bsam grub rgyal po as an erstwhile disciple of Ratna gling pa.

17 This may refer to Don grub legs pa dpal 'bar whom he characterizes as one of his principal teachers in 'DUL1, 296 [= 'DUL2, 387].

to Buddhism and its historical development in India together with a detailed account of the rise and spread of the Old School's Word (*bka' ma*) and Treasure-text (*gter ma*) traditions and their respective exponents. Section thirteen includes a survey of the *gter ma* traditions that flourished among some important members of the New School, that is, especially among the Bka' brgyud school. The actual response to the issues addressed in what was allegedly the Karma pa's tract only begins at section fifteen, that is, at more than half way through the text, at the fourth rubric (*spyi don bzhi pa*) – read "the first rubric" - and 'Dul 'dzin uses the format of first presenting the issue at hand which he then follows up with a detailed reply.<sup>18</sup> This section contains some twenty-one problems areas in as many such "rubrics." It would appear that Sog bzlog pa was not familiar with 'Dul 'dzin's treatise, at least I have not detected any evidence that he might have known it.

Lastly, Lho pa Bya bral, "the last/lowestdisciple" of Padma gling pa (1450–1521), also penned a response to the alleged work of the Karma pa in a hare-year, meaning either in 1555 or, perhaps less likely, some duodenary cycle thereafter, while in [Ri ngogs] Dar rgyas chos gling.<sup>19</sup> The preface suggests that he may be identified as Don grub legs pa dpal 'bar whose name 'Dul 'dzin prefixes with the epithet Lho pa Thams cad mkhyen pa and of whom he states that he was in fact a disciple of Padma gling pa.<sup>20</sup> If that were the case, then Lho pa Bya bral may indeed have written his work as early as 1555! Sometime in 1550 or 1551, Rin chen phun tshogs chos kyi rgyal po (1508–1557), the seventeenth abbot of 'Bri gung monastery, traveled south and met with an assortment of Padma gling pa's disciples in Bu tshal/Bsam yas. His biographer Rin chen dpal styles one of these Chos rje Lho pa who had come with his students to see Rin chen phun tshogs chos kyi rgyal po from Dar rgyas chos sdings in Kong po, and he may very well be our Lho pa Bya bral.<sup>21</sup> Neither 'Dul 'dzin nor Sog bzlog pa refers to his work, which dispenses with a thick scholarly apparatus of the likes of 'Dul 'dzin, and Lho pa Bya bral in turn does not mention either one. However, at one point he cites a certain Rje Zhig po.<sup>22</sup> It is indeed tempting to identify him as Zhig po gling pa, one of Sog bzlog pa's masters, which

18 'DUL1, 436-568. Since "the fourth rubric" is followed on p. 448 by *spyi don gnyis pa*, "the second rubric," after which we have "the third rubric" on p. 452, etc., there is a problem of ambiguity until we realize that "the fourth rubric" points back to an earlier enumeration of topics and has nothing to do with the enumeration of the issues that G.yag sde 'Dul 'dzin addresses in this section. However, 'DUL1, 504-507, rubric twelve is followed by rubric fourteen, and 'DUL1, 512, has the next rubric fourteen! 'DUL2, 651, 659, have the very same problem.

19 See his *Rgyal ba'i dbang po karma pas rnying ma pa la dri ba chab shog tu gnang ba'i dri len chos dbyings 'od gsal*, Delhi: National Library of Bhutan, 1985.

20 See 'DUL1, 387-388 [= 'DUL2, 501-502], 'Dul 'dzin records him as the one who transmitted to him the *Dgongs pa kun 'dus* and other precepts via Padma gling pa.

21 See *Dpal ldan bla ma dam pa'i rnam par thar pa dad ldan gdung ba sel ba'i bdud rtsi*, Bir: Bir Tibetan Society, 1985: 397.

22 *Rgyal ba'i dbang po karma pas rnying ma pa la dri ba chab shog tu gnang ba'i dri len chos dbyings 'od gsal*, 6.

would possibly make him Sog bzlog pa's senior contemporary. But this is mere speculation.

But surprise, surprise, it now turns out that the Karma pa was not the author of this circular letter at all! Rather, the available evidence suggests that the author was an interloper who, apparently intent on creating intersectorian trouble for reasons so far only known to him, had circulated his tract using the Karma pa's name as its author!<sup>23</sup> At least this is what the Karma pa himself stated in *his* reaction to this letter, which essentially begins with him calling the author a fraud, a liar, and an ignoramus with low insight (*shes rab dman pa*), although he does set the stage by opening his work with a brief introduction to the bona fide Old and New School critiques such as those written by Rin chen bzang po, and 'Gos Lo tsā ba I. Reading the Karma pa's reaction it is clear that the anonymous author was not altogether at home in either the Old or the New School. Indeed, the Karma pa systematically demolishes those passages in this circular that he considered to be seriously illconceived and doctrinally wanting. There is also one instance where he comments on a point made by the author which, he says, would not merely be a tall tale for him, but also for someone like Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357–1419), thereby perhaps suggesting that he suspected that the writer was possibly a member of the Dge ldan pa, that is, the Dge lugs pa school.<sup>24</sup> And this raises a host of other questions that cannot be addressed here.

The Karma pa's work consists of two parts.<sup>25</sup> The first is the longest by far and is directed squarely against well over forty statements made by the author of the fraudulent open letter, whereas the second summarizes some of his own reservations with the Old School that we have partly encountered in the texts to which S.G. Karmay had already drawn our attention<sup>26</sup> as well as in his enormous commentary on 'Jig rten mgon po's *Dgongs gcig* precepts. The first item that is discussed by the Karma pa is the letter's colophon where the author had identified himself as the Karma pa. The interloper had written the following<sup>27</sup>:

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23 This does throw a slight wrench in D. Higgins' assumption that the Karma pa was indeed its author in his otherwise fine study; see his *The Philosophical Foundations of Classical Rdzogs chen in Tibet. Investigating the Distinction between Dualistic Mind (rnam shes) and Primordial Knowledge (ye shes)*, in *Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde*, Heft 78, Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 2013: 213 ff.

24 See MI1, 74 [= MI2, 403]. The Karma pa uses the term Dge ldan pa in MI1, 101 [= MI2, 477].

25 MI1, 55-100, 100-104 [= MI2, 351-473, 473-486]. For what it is worth, the catalog of the Tibetan collection of the Cultural Palace of Nationalities in Beijing listed a manuscript of this work in fifty-six folios under no. 003878(8).

26 *The Great Perfection (rdzogs chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, Leiden: Brill, 2007: 180-182, 188, 195, 230.

27 For all the following three passages from the Karma pa's work, see MI1, 55 [= MI2, 353]. The more or less corresponding passages for the first [1a] and third [2a] of these in 'Dul 'dzin's work can be found in 'DUL1, 564, 437-438 [= 'DUL2, 716, 564], and in SOG1, 164, 5 [= SOG2, 137, 4-5; SOG3, 143, 93]. Passage [1] is absent from Lho pa Bya bral's work, but passage [2a] can be found in his *Rgyal ba'i dbang po karma pas rnying ma pa la dri ba chab shog tu gnang ba'i dri len chos dbyings 'od gsal*, 3-4.

[1a] *karma pas / te gro bla ma rdzogs chen pa grags ldan la bzlo ba...byi ba lo hor  
zla brgyad pa'i yar ngo la snye mor bris pa dge bar gyur cig /*

Proclaimed by the Karma pa to the well-known Rdzogs chen Lama in Te gro...  
composed in Snye mo during the moon's waxing period of the eighth lunar hor-  
month of the rat-year; may there be happiness!

All this was a rather unpleasant hoax; Mi bskyod rdo rje writes:

[1b] *de yang shing pho byi ba'i lo snye mor bdag bsdad pa'i dus der te gro na rdzogs  
chen pa'i bla ma grags ldan su yang med pa'i phyir de la bzlo yig byas so zhes  
pa ni skur 'debs kyi rdzun chen por snang ngo //*

Now, because there was not any well-known lama who was an adherent of  
Rdzogs chen in Te gro when I was staying in Snye mo in the wood-male-rat year  
[sic], to say that I issued a proclamation (*bzlo yig*) to him appears to be a great  
slandorous lie.

To be sure, the reading "wood-male-rat year" presents us with a problem, since no such year  
occurred in the Karma pa's lifetime; the two most proximate wood-male-rat years were,  
roughly, 1504 and 1564! If he had originally written "rat year," which a later editor changed  
to the wood-male-rat year, then we have the following options: 1516, 1528, 1540, or 1552. I  
think we can easily dispense with the first one. And this leaves 1528, 1540, or 1552. Taking  
his biography by his contemporary Dpa' bo II in hand, we learn from an entry – it is placed  
between 1548 and 1554- that 1552 or the water-male-rat year must indeed have been the year  
in question.<sup>28</sup> What is more, we also learn from him that the Karma pa had written his response  
while he was a guest of the ruler of Yar rgyab, who was probably the same one at whose request  
'Dul 'dzin had composed his reply some five years later and three years after the Karma pa's  
passing. It is therefore remarkable, and I am unable to explain this away, that 'Dul 'dzin makes  
no mention of the fact that the Karma pa may not have been the author of this letter! But he

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28 *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, ed. Rdo rje rgyal po, vol. 2: 1295, 1297. J. Rheingans, *The Eighth Karmapa's Life and his Interpretation of the Great Seal*, unpublished University of the West of England doctoral dissertation, Bristol, 2008: 144-145, n. 181, suggests that it was written in 1553, an ox-year. My thanks go out to J. Rheingans for sharing his dissertation with me. We find the same in his *The Eighth Karmapa's Life and His Interpretation of the Great Seal, A Religious Life and Instructional Texts in Historical and Doctrinal Contexts*, in *Hamburg Buddhist Studies*, vol. 7, Bochum/ Freiburg: project verlag, 2017: 106.

does apparently cite the colophon in its entirety, which began with:

*yang rnying ma'i gang zag 'dris chung bar 'dug pas ['] rtogs dka' bar dgongs te [']  
snyan dngags [ngag] dang mngon brjod dang sdebs sbyor sogs kyis [kyi] ma bsgrib  
[sgribs] par [']bol rtsom du bgyis [gyis] pa 'di legs par brtags te lan ldon ['don] par  
gyis shig /<sup>a</sup>*

a The text in brackets indicates the variant readings found on p. 716 of the Bhutanese ms.

Furthermore, considering that [my work] is difficult to comprehend by an Old School person who had trivial questions, do properly investigate and issue a response to this easy read that is not obscured by ornate poetry, poetic diction, prosody, etc.!

And we find the very same line in Sog bzlog pa's work. Thus, we may conclude that 'Dul 'dzin and Sog bzlog pa might have taken their cue from the remarks of the Karma pa's colophon and accordingly proceeded to take issue with the anonymous author's critical statements about the Old School. But this would create other problems.

The second of the forty or so problematic remarks by the anonymous author that immediately follows the above and the Karma pa's first comment is:

[2a] *yang yi ge der / rnal 'byor gyi theg pa zhes bris gda' ba / bod 'dir grags pa'i  
gsung rab rnams su theg pa gsum las rnal byor gyi theg pa zhes mi 'byung bas  
brda' la rmongs pa'o //*

Further, the expression "the yoga vehicle" figures in that document; since, apart from the three vehicles, "the yoga vehicle" does not occur in the scriptures that are known in this Tibet, the author was deluded about the expression.

Comparing the Karma pa's text of [2a] with the corresponding ones in 'Dul 'dzin, Lho pa Bya bral, and Sog bzlog pa, we notice that he abbreviated the passages of the text with which he took issue. And many of the actual entries of the author's opinion about sundry doctrinal niceties elicited from the Karma pa a number of choice expressions to the effect that what the fraud had said "merely shows that he himself is the bigger fool" (*rang nyid ches blun po'o zhes ston par zad de*) or that his statement was "a grand confused tale" (*'chal gtam chen po*), to list but two of them.<sup>29</sup>

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29 MI1, 70, 95 [= MI2, 392, 460].

There is no question that Sog bzlog pa had the very same text in mind that the Karma pa himself had criticized earlier. The same holds for 'Dul 'dzin and Lho pa Bya bral. And I believe we can also accept that the Karma pa had written this work that was ever so critical of the interloper's piece, if only because it is registered in the earliest catalog of his writings, namely, the one that was compiled by his disciple Zhwa dmar V Dkon mchog yan lag (1525–1583).<sup>30</sup> Towards the end of his treatise, Sog bzlog pa cites a directive (*chab shog*) that the Karma pa had apparently sent to Ngag dbang bkra shis grags pa rgyal mtshan (1488–1564), the Phag mo gru ruler whose court was located in Sne'u gdong– the Phag mo gru nominally ruled over Central Tibet during this time –, in which he had allegedly stated the following<sup>31</sup>:

*deng sang dbu ru byang phyogs rgyud 'di na //*  
*gter bton lchang lo can sogs bdud sprul gyis*[read: 'gas]//

At present, in this Dbu ru, region in the north,  
 Demonic re-embodiments such as the  
 treasure-revealer Lchang lo can....

No friend of the Bka' brgyud pa school as a whole for a variety of politico-historical reasons, Dalai Lama V Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) cites these same two lines in his 1666 catalog of Rje btsun Bsam gtan gling pa's *A ti'i chos skor* cycle of esoteric instructions.<sup>32</sup> He quotes these first and foremost in the context of the Karma pa having, in his opinion, falsely accused G.yung ston Rdo rje dpal (1287–1365) for manufacturing a fake copy of the Sanskrit manuscript of the *Guhyagarbhatantra* from the Kathmandu Valley, that he had written the lines *contra* Gter ston Lchang lo can, and that he had thus belittled (*zur za*

30 See the text in the Karma pa's oeuvre, the *Rgyal ba thams cad kyi ye shes kyi sku rnam pa thams cad pa'i thugs can karma pa mi bskyod rdo rje bzhad pa'i gsung 'bum gyi dkar chag*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 1, ed. Karma Bde legs, Lhasa: 2004: 10, and also the manuscript of the same in Zhwa dmar V, in *Selected Works*, vol. 2, Gangtok: Dzongsar Chhentse Labrang, 1974: 210. A history of the Karma pa's writings and their printing is found in Rheingans, *The Eighth Karmapa's Life and His Interpretation of the Great Seal, A Religious Life and Instructional Texts in Historical and Doctrinal Contexts*, 43 ff.

31 SOG1, 164 [= SOG2, 137; SOG3, 143]. The recently published edition of the Karma pa's oeuvre contains two such directives; see the *\*Dpon sa gong ma la gnang ba'i chab shog zhal yig tshigs bcad du yod pa* and the *Sne gdong rtse chag shog*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 3, ed. Karma Bde legs, Lhasa: 2004: 63-65, 102-111. The Karma pa also wrote a very interesting guide to good governance for the Sne'u gdong court; see *Bod rgyal po chen po'i rgyal thabs kyi mdzad pa gtam du byas pa sne'u gdong rgyal po la gnang bar in po che'i phreng ba*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 3, ed. Karma Bde legs, Lhasa: 2004: 43-58.

32 For what follows, see his *Rje btsun bsam gtan gling pa'i a ti'i chos skor gyi dkar chag theg mchog rin cen do shal*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 27, ed. Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe mnying 'tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2009: 591, 594-595.

ba) Rin chen phun tshogs chos kyi rgyal po, the re-embodiment of Lha sras Rgyal po, that is, Mu tig btsan po (ca. 800), one of the sons of king Khri srong lde btsan.<sup>33</sup> Lcang lo can is the name of a small private chamber atop the Mi 'gyur rdo rje palace of 'Bri gung monastery. Also known as Gter ston Gnam lcags me 'bar, the treasure revealer is none other than Rin chen phun tshogs, who had unearthed such revelatory literature as the *Dam chos dgongs pa yang zab* cycle at Lcang lo can in *circa* 1540–1543. Evidently, Dalai Lama V's source for the above was a comment the Karma pa had made in connection with the text in his huge exegesis of the *Dgongs gcig cycle*.<sup>34</sup>

G.yung ston himself made no mention of his alleged connection with such a Sanskrit manuscript in his admittedly brief autobiography that largely consists of a record of the instructions he had received from his teachers.<sup>35</sup> But he was already criticized by 'Bri gung Dpal 'dzin for what the Dalai Lama V had alleged; the former had written<sup>36</sup>:

*g.yung ston rdo rje dpal zhes pas //*  
*'phangs med gser gyi me tog dang //*  
*gsang ba snying po'i rgya dpe bcas //*  
*bu ston rin chen grub la phul //*

*'gyur bcos mdzad cing rgyud 'bum du //*  
*bzhugs par gsol ba btab pa'i tshe //*

33 Dalai Lama V devotes one entire section on him [and 'Bri gung Rig 'dzin Chos kyi grags pa's (1595–1659)] revelations in his 1680 record of teachings received, for which see his *Zab pa dang rgya che ba'i dam pa'i chos kyi thob yig gangā'i chu rgyun*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 4, ed. Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2009: 168-184. His activities as a treasure-text revealer have been summarized in Gu ru Bkra shis' 1807–1809 *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung*, ed. Rdo rje rgyal po, Xining: Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1990: 541-544.

34 See, respectively, his *Zab pa dang rgya che ba'i dam pa'i chos kyi thob yig gangā'i chu rgyun*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 4, ed. Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2009: 299, and p. 975 of the text of complicated origins in the Karma pa's *Collected Works*, vol. 4, ed. Karma Bde legs, Lhasa: 2004: 885-1139.

35 For a discussion of a portion of his life that is based on his autobiography, see the fine essay by Xie Guangdian 謝光典, "Yongdun duo'erzhibande yuanting zhixing - yiqi zizhuan wei zhongxin 雍敦朵兒只班的元廷之行 —— 以其自傳為中心 [Autobiography of g.Yung ston rDo rJe dPal ba (1287–1365): A Tibetan Buddhist at the Mongolian Court (as per p. 259)]," in *Xiyu lishi yuyan yanjiu jikan* 西域历史语言研究集刊 / *Historical and Philological Studies of China's Western Regions*, no. 7, ed. Shen Weirong, Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2014: 243-259. See also my forthcoming "A Tibetan Magus at the Yuan Court of Külüg Qayan (Wuzong Emperor): The Case of G.yung ston Rdo rje dpal bzang po (1287–1365)".

36 See his *Chos dang chos ma yin rnam par dbye ba'i bstan bcos*, tbrc.org, W1CZ885, 27b. The text quoted in Sog bzlog pa, *Gsang sngags snga 'gyur la bod du rtsod pa snga phyir byung ba rnam kyi lan du brjod pa nges pa don gyi 'brug sgra*, 394 [= ed. Padma tshul khriims, 134] shows a few minor different readings.

*rgya dpe brdzun mar des rig nas //*  
*gsol ba gsan du ma bzhed do //*

One called G.yung ston Rdo rje dpal,  
Offered Bu ston Rin chen grub,  
A golden flower<sup>37</sup> without ?preconditions,  
Along with a Sanskrit manuscript of the *Guhyagarbha*.

When he [= G.yung ston] requested [Bu ston] to emend the translation,  
And place it [read: bcug] in the *Rgyud 'bum* collection,  
[Bu ston] had understood that the Sanskrit manuscript was fraudulent,  
And did not wish to listen to the request.

Sog bzlog pa cites this passage and, saying that this was an occasion for some critical reflection,  
offered the following rebuttal<sup>38</sup>:

*bka' 'bum nang gi dris lan 'gar //*  
*gsang ba snying po'i lung mang drangs //*<sup>a</sup>  
*'grel pa de la thugs gtsigs<sup>b</sup> che //*

*mkhan chen thar pa lo tsā<sup>c</sup> ba //*  
*gsang ba snying po'i rgyud phyi ma //*  
*gsar 'gyur mdzad pa<sup>d</sup> thugs la mnga' //*  
*des na gtam 'di bden pa<sup>e</sup> dka' //*

*gal te bu ston mi bzhed kyang //*  
*slob dpon padma'i rang 'gyur dang //*  
*de rjes paṅ chen bi ma la //*  
*gnyags<sup>f</sup> ston dznyā na ku mā ras //*  
*lo tsā byas te yer par bsgyur //*

*mnga' bdag ral pa can gyi bar //*  
*'di yi bshad bka' shin tu dar //*  
*bar du bcom ldan ral gris bsgyur //*

37 The "golden flower" is a metaphor for a gift that accompanies a request.

38 *Gsang sngags snga 'gyur la bod du rtsod pa snga phyir byung ba rnam kyī lan du brjod pa nges pa don gyi 'brug sgra*, 394-395 [= ed. Padma tshul khriims, 134-135].

*slad du glo bo lo tsā ba //*  
*dpal ldan byang chub zhes byas bsgyur //*

*dus phyis 'bri gung lo tsā ba //*  
*nor bu dpal yes bsgyur ba dang //*  
*'di la sgyur<sup>a</sup> byed lnga tsam byung //*  
*de phyir<sup>h</sup> klan<sup>i</sup> ka rnyed pa med //*

- a Delhi, ed.: *gsang snying lung 'dren mang po snang //*
- b Delhi, ed.: *brtsis*.
- c Delhi, ed.: *tstsha*.
- d Delhi, ed.: *mdzad pa'ang*.
- e Delhi, ed.: *par*.
- f Delhi, ed.: *nyag*.
- g Delhi, ed.: *'gyur*.
- h Delhi, ed.: *phyin*.
- i Delhi, ed.: *glan*.

In some reply to queries in [Bu ston's] *Collected Writings*,  
Many passages of the *Guhyagarbha* are quoted,<sup>39</sup>  
He greatly valued the commentary [?].

The great scholar Thar pa Lo tsā ba,  
Translated anew the \**Guhyagarbhottaratantra*,<sup>40</sup>  
And understood it[s veracity].  
Hence, this tale is difficult to be true.

Even if Bu ston did not accept it,

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39 For this very problematic reference, see my "The Lives of Bu ston Rin chen grub and the Date and Sources of His *Chos 'byung*," *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no. 35, 2016: 287-291, and my forthcoming "Did Mar pa Lo tsā ba Chos kyi blo gros ever meet Nāropā? A Propos of Some Conflicting Chronologies," especially n. 13.

40 This is Thar pa gling Lo tsā ba Nyi ma rgyal mtshan (ca.1250–1320), *inter alia* the erstwhile abbot of Bodhgayā, *inter alia* the translator of the *Mahāsūtra-s* – see P. Skilling, tr., *The Mahāsūtras. Great Discourses of the Buddha*, 2 vols., Oxford: The Pali text Society, 1994, 1997 – and Bu ston's teacher of Sanskrit. See also my "Notes on Jñānamitra's Commentary on the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*," in *The Foundation for Yoga Practitioners. The Buddhist Yogācārabhūmi Treatise and Its Adaptation in India, East Asia and Tibet*, ed. U.T. Kragh, Cambridge: Department of South Asian Studies, 2013: 1409 ff. I am unable to identify the \**Guhyagarbhottaratantra*.

Master Padmasambhava's translation that he did by himself and,  
Thereafter, Paṅ chen Vimalamitra,  
Gnyags ston Jñānakumāra [Ye shes gzhon nu],  
Acted as translators and translated the text in Yer pa.

Up to the sovereign Ral pa can (r. ca. 806–838),  
Its explanation and transmission were widespread.  
In the meantime, it was translated by Bcom ldan ral gri.<sup>41</sup>  
Again, it was translated by one called Glo bo Lo tsā ba  
Dpal ldan byang chub.<sup>42</sup>

Later, it was translated by 'Bri gung Lo tsā ba  
Nor bu dpal ye shes (1313–1387)<sup>43</sup> and,  
Because some five translations had taken place for it,  
There was nooutcry [against it].

Much earlier in his work, Dpal 'dzin had preceded this statement by having written something quite similar<sup>44</sup>:

*rma ban rin chen mchog zhes byas //*  
*gsang ba snying po'i rgyud brtsams pas //*  
*rgyal pos gsan nas btsal ba'i tshe //*  
*lo grangs bcu gnyis gab ces grag<sup>a</sup> //*

41 It may not be quite accurate to say that Bcom ldan ral gri, that is, Dar ma rgyal mtshan, translated the entire tantra, but he did write a study of it; see the *Gsang ba snying po rgyan gyi me tog*, in *Collected Writings*, vol. 10, Lhasa: Khams sprul Bsod nams don grub, 2006: 155-192.

42 Glo bo Lo tsā ba Dpal ldan byang chub is an unknown quantity [to me] and his name does not appear in any of the traditional listings of translators nor in Khri Bsam gtan's excellent study, *Skad gnyis smra ba'i rin chen bang mdzod*, Lanzhou: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2005.

43 A brief biography of 'Bri gung Lo tsā ba, one of Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan's (1292–1361) key disciples, can be found in Rigs ldan Rgyal ba Jo nang Dpal bzang po's (1419–1493) collection of biographies of Dol po pa and his main disciples of 1465, the text of which was included in the *Dpal ldan dus kyi 'khor lo jo nang pa'i lugs kyi bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar*, ed. Bstan 'dzin phun tshogs, Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2004: 170-175. I have not seen their purported renditions of the tantra.

44 See his *Chos dang chos ma yin rnam par dbye ba'i bstan bcos*, tbrc.org, W1CZ885, 4a; see also the *Gsang sngags snga 'gyur la bod du rtsod pa snga phyir byung ba rnam kyi lan du brjod pa nges pa don gyi 'brug sgra*, 274 [= ed. Padma tshul khriims, 15]. This verse is also cited, with *grag*, in Gser mdog Paṅ chen's *Le'u gsum pa rig 'dzin sdom pa'i skabs kyi 'bel gtam rnam par nges pa*, 146.

a Chengdu, ed.: *grags*, "It is known that...."

Because one called Rma Ban[de] Rin chen mchog,  
Had written the *Guhyagarbhatantra*,  
It is alleged that, when the king, upon hearing this, looked for it,  
It was hidden for twelve years.<sup>45</sup>

Reacting to it, Sog bzlog pa had written something very similar as the passage that I just cited.<sup>46</sup> But he adds for good measure that passages of the *Guhyagarbhatantra* are cited in the Indic commentary on the *Sarvabuddhasamāyogatantra* by Rgya byin sdong po [\*Indranāla] of Uddiyana (8<sup>th</sup> c.), the Indic study of the *Guyasamājottaratantra* by Viśvamitra (8<sup>th</sup> c.), and the *Bka' gdams Pha chos*, one of the two major sections of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam*. Already 'Gos Lo tsā ba II had argued that even such an authority as Bu ston had included the first two in his Tanjur and, I hasten to add, he had done so without any reservations about their canonicity.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, he writes that Buddhaguhya's [or: Buddhagupta's] eighth century *Lam rnam par bkod pa* was written on the basis of this tantra and that such earlier scholars as Chos kyi sryan mnga'[read: snga] ba – his identity is unclear to me – and Bu ston considered the so-called *Spar khab* commentary by Sgeg pa'i rdo rje [\*Vilaśavajra] and the one by Nyi 'od seng ge [\*Sūryaprabhasiṃha] to be witnesses (*dpang du mdzad*) of its authenticity. Both authors appear to have worked in the eighth century. I do not know what Sog bzlog pa may have meant by the latter expression, but Lha bla ma/Pho brang Zhi ba 'od had already questioned the canonicity of this so-called *Spar khab*.<sup>48</sup>

In his comments on the history of the controversy surrounding the famous *Guhyagarbhatantra* and its ultimate vindication as an authentically Indic work in his 1680 record of teachings received, Dalai Lama V first refers to the well known account that Śākyaśrībhadrā had obtained a Sanskrit manuscript of this work from while he was staying in Bsam yas and that it subsequently fell into the hands of Snar thang pa Bcom ldan ral gri via the

45 Something like these lines is also found in the *'Byams yig* that is attributed to 'Gos Lo tsā ba I; see the *Sngags log sun 'byin gyi skor*, Thimphu: Kunsang Topgyel and Mani Dorji, 1979: 20-21.

46 *Gsang sngags snga 'gyur la bod du rtsod pa snga phyir byung ba rnam kyī lan du brjod pa nges pa don gyi 'brug sgra*, 275 [= ed. Padma tshul khriṃs, 15-16].

47 See, respectively, the *Deb gter sngon po/The Blue Annals*, repr. L. Chandra, New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1976: 92 [= *The Blue Annals*, tr. G.N. Roerich, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979: 103], and the *Bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag yid bzhin nor bu dbang gi rgyal po'i phreng ba*, in *Collected Works*, Part 26, ed. L. Chandra, New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1971: 454, 468.

48 Karmay, "An Open Letter by Pho brang Zhi ba 'od," in *The Arrow and the Spindle. Studies in History, Myths, Rituals and Beliefs in Tibet*, Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point, 2009: 32.

offices of a certain Rta ston Gzi brjid.<sup>49</sup> In 1204, Śākyaśrībhadrā had been invited to Central Tibet by Khro phu Lo tsā ba Byams pa'i dpal (1174–1237) and the latter's autobiography contains a lengthy account of their travels throughout the area from that time to 1214, when his guest left for Kashmir. Be this as it may, the Karma pa line of re-embodiments had long-standing connections with the Old School, as indicated by Dpa' bo II and as is patently clear from the oeuvre of Karma pa II Karma pakshi (1204–1283) and Karma pa III Rang byung rdo rje (1284–1339) and especially by the Karma pa himself.

Writing quite a while after the "publication" of this open letter, Sog bzlog pa's testimony may be judged to carry little weight in view of the fact that the Karma pa had already fully and unambiguously disassociated himself from it. A great deal of knowledge in the Tibetan area was local and it is thus throughout possible that he was confused about the authorship of the letter and that, in addition, he was not altogether or directly unfamiliar with the Karma pa's own response.

Earlier, I remarked on Sog bzlog pa's antiquarian bent of mind, and this comes again fully into view when we find him citing from a hitherto unknown treatise that we now know was written by Rin chen bzang po, which he titles *Rgyud sde spyi rnam[s]*.<sup>50</sup> Although the passages Sog bzlog pa cites from it are, as we will presently see, far from unproblematic, we now know that Rin chen bzang po's work was a general survey of the ritual and doctrinal aspects of the tantric literature that belonged to the *Gsar ma*, New School, and in all likelihood the very first attempt of a member of the New School *avant la lettre* at creating some sort of a conceptual structure in the very large number of disparate texts that belong to this genre. Rin chen bzang po's treatise of necessity dealt with the literature involved and the interrelationships that were perceived to exist among what seem to be *prima facie* distinct and disconnected texts and textual cycles. We do not have any idea how wide Rin chen bzang po cast his net with his survey and, in fact, particular texts are not at issue in the quoted passages. These have also nothing to do with the coinage and use of principles along which the translated literature might be organized or their textual histories. Rather, Sog bzlog pa placed it in the context of his response to the anonymous author's remarks on the term *tantra* and its different senses of continuity (*rgyun chags*, *\*prabandha*), linkage (*'brel ba*, *\*sambandha*), and without incompleteness (*ma tshang med pa*, *\*avikala*) while stipulating that there are conditions where these three become meaningless (*don med*).<sup>51</sup> Sog bzlog pa does not shed any light on why the anonymous author had questioned these aspects of the term *tantra/rgyud* and, unfortunately, the Karma pa's own response that followed shortly after he had written this letter is silent about

49 Dalai Lama V, *Zab pa dang rgya che ba'i dam pa'i chos kyi thob yig gangā'i chu rgyun*, 300-302.

50 SOG1, 45-46 [= SOG2,40; SOG3, 105-106].

51 SOG1, 43-44 [= SOG2, 38-39; SOG3, 105-106].

it as well.<sup>52</sup> Rather, it has to do with the grammatical derivation and the definition of the word *tantra* (*rgyud*), here used not in the sense of a literary work, but rather in the sense of the stream [of consciousness]; Sog bzlog pa's text begins as follows:

*lo chen rin chen bzang po'i rgyud sde spyi rnam[s] las /*

*ci'i phyir 'di la rgyud ces bya zhe na / rgyud la legs sbyar gyi sgra las / tantra zhes  
bya te / ta'i sgra las / ni ran tantra zhes 'brel zhing breng chags pas na rgyud te / de  
yang gzhi sems can gyi dus / lam rnal 'byor gyi dus / 'bras bu sangs rgyas kyi dus  
gsum gyi sems rgyud 'brel bas na rgyud do //*

The *Rgyud sde spyi rnam* of Grand-Translator Rin chen bzang po states:

Why is it called *rgyud*? *rgyud* is called *tantra* in the Sanskrit language;<sup>53</sup> from the word *ta*, *ni ran*, inasmuch as the term *tantra* links and is continuous (*breng chags pa*),<sup>54</sup> it is *rgyud*; further, inasmuch as it links the stream of consciousness (*sems rgyud*, *\*cittasantāna*) of the triad of [1] the foundation of spiritual practice, the occasion of being a sentient being, [2] the path towards liberation, the occasion of meditative practice, and [3] the result, the occasion of enlightenment, it is *rgyud*.

The manuscript of Rin chen bzang po's work reads this passage somewhat differently under the rubric of the "etymology" (*nges tshig*, *\*nirukta*) of *rgyud*<sup>55</sup>:

*ci'i phyir 'di la rgyud ces bya zhe na / rgyud la legs sbyar gyi sgra las / tantra / zhes  
bya ste / ta'i sgra las / ni ran ta tantra zhes / 'brel zhing rgyun chags pas na rgyud de /...*

52 The location of this and the next passage in Sog bzlog pa's work should have a parallel in MI1 [= MI2], but...it does not.

53 The word *tantra* derives from  $\sqrt{tan}$  meaning continuity, unbroken succession, and *tra*, which has the sense of protecting. For other explanations, see Rong zom Chos kyi bzang po (late 11<sup>th</sup> c.), *Rgyud spyi dngos po gsal bar byed pa'i yi ge*, in *Gsung thor bu, Collected Works*, vol. 2, ed. Bkra shis et al., Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1999: 87-88, and Bu ston suggests a different derivation in his *Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam par gzhag pa rgyud sde rin po che'i mdzes rgyan*, in *Collected Works*, Part 15, repr. L Chandra, New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1969: 98, where he cites the *Dka' 'grel ye shes ldan*, that is, Saraha's (?9<sup>th</sup> c.) commentary on the *\*Buddhakapālatantra* for which, see BSTAN, vol.13: 1167; *tantra* derives from *cetana* [read: *cetanā*] – *sems* - and *traya* - *skyob pa*!

54 The word *breng* is identified as an archaism (*brda rnying*) for *rgyun* in Rnam rgyal tshe ring, *Bod yig brda rnying tshig mdzod*, Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2001: 362.

55 This rubric is contained in RGYUD, 19-20.

Why is it called *rgyud*? *rgyud* is called *tantra* in the Sanskrit language, that is, from the word *ta, ni ran ta* "tantra." Inasmuch as it links and is continuous, it is *tantra*...

Parenthetically, this is not exactly the explanation of *tantra* that is given in the late eighth century *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*, which defines it merely as continuity (*prabandha*).<sup>56</sup> And Sog bzlog pa continues the quotation by citing two lines of verse from, ostensibly, a/the \**Māyājālatantra*— it is not found therein! -, which provides three undetermined signifiers (*don gsum*) for the word "linkage":

*de la sgyu 'phrul dra ba las /*

*rgyud ces bya ba 'brel ba'i don //*  
*don ni rnam pa gsum yin te //*

*zhes so //*

*ces pa dang /*

In that connection, it is said in a/the \**Māyājālatantra*:

The term *tantra* has the sense of linkage;  
The sense is threefold, that is,

and...

The quotation of the tantra stops in mid-verse, as is indicated by the final quotative *zhes so //*, without specifying what these three signifiers are. The *ces pa* and the conjunction *dang* that follow it are Sog bzlog pa's signal that this portion of the quotation from Rin chen bzang po's text has come to an end. He then continues with the second quote indicated by "further, the very same work states" (*yang de nyid las /...ces pa*):

*yang na sems rgyud gsum 'brel zhing breng chags pa de yang ma tshang med par  
phun sum tshogs pa'i tshul gyis bde blag tu sgrub par nus pa'i brjod bya dang brjod  
[read: rjod] byed du 'brel ba la bya te / dpal dam tshig gsum bkod pa'i rgyud las /*

<sup>56</sup> Mie Ishikawa, *A Critical Edition of the Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa. An Old and Basic Commentary on the Mahāvīyūtpatti*, in *Studia Tibetica* No.18, *Materials for Tibetan-Mongolian Dictionaries*, vol. 2, Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1990: 97, no. 294.

'brel dang ma tshang med pa dang //  
phun sum tshogs bas rgyud ces bya //<sup>57</sup>

zheso / ces pa dang / yang / sa la kṣa tantra zhes rang gi mtshan nyid 'dzin pas rgyud  
de / zhes gsungs pa rnam...

Or, one should take *tantra* as linking the signified with the signifier,<sup>58</sup> which, without being incomplete, is easily able to establish in an outstanding fashion the linkage and continuity of the three streams of consciousness<sup>59</sup> as well. It is stated in the \*Śrītrayasamayatantra:

Due to linkage, without being incomplete, and  
Outstandingness,<sup>60</sup> it is called *tantra*;

And, further, the expression \**svalakṣatantra* [means] it is tantra inasmuch as its own characteristic is apprehended.<sup>61</sup>

Again, the manuscript of Rin chen bzang po's work is different and has the quotation and its intent reversed, and adds further pertinent details:

57 These lines do not occur in the translation of the text of the tantra, *Śrītrīmasayavyūharājatantra*, that is now available in BKA', vol. 87: 543-742.

58 The bivalency of the term *tantra* in the sense of the signified and signifier, is also used by Slob dpon Bsod nams rtse mo (1142–1192), the second patriarch of the Sa skya pa school, in his *Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam par gzhag pa* [Sde dge print], in *Sa skya bka' 'bum*, vol. 2, no. 1, ed. Bsod nams rgya mtsho, Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1968: 29/3 [Ga, 58a] [= *The Yogini's Eye. Comprehensive Introduction to Buddhist Tantra*, tr. Ngor Thartse Khenpo Sonam Gyatso and W. Verrill, *Classics of the Early Sakya*, vol. 1, Xlibris Corporation, 2012: 425]. We encounter it as well in Ratna gling pa's citation of the/a Sgyu 'phrul, for which see his 1458–1466 *Chos 'byung bstan pa'i sgron ma rtsod zlog seng ge'i nga ro* [= *The Nyingma Apology of Rin-chen-dpal-bzang-po*], Tashijong: The Sungrab Nyamso Gyunphel Parkhang, 1972: 82: sgyu 'phrul las: rgyud kyi dbye ba gnyis yin te //brjod bya don gyi rgyud dang ni //rjod byed tshig gi rgyudgnyisso //. I have not been able to verify this quotation in the canon. For "signified" and "signifier" as reflecting *brjod bya* and *rjod byed*, see J.C. Gold, *The Dharma's Gatekeepers: Sakya Paṇḍita on Buddhist Scholarship in Tibet*, Albany: State University Press of New York, 2008: 48 ff.

59 I have not found an explanation of the expression *sems rgyud gsum*. At my peril but with some sort of precedent in Rin chen bzang po's work, I venture to explain it as referring to the state of mind at the outset of one's spiritual practice (*gzhi*), in the progressive course of one's spiritual practice (*lam*), and the state of mind that takes place as its result (*bras bu*).

60 For the various notions of "outstanding", see Klong chen Dri med 'od zer's (1309–1364) *Theg mchog rin po che'i mdzod* [Sde dge blockprint], in *Mdzod bdun*, vol. Kha [2], 158-160.

61 I am not at all sure what this actually means!

*de ltar yang sgyu 'phrul dra ba las /*

*rgyud ces bya ba 'brel pa'i don //*  
*de ni rnam pa gsum yin te //*

*zhes so // de yang gzhi sems can gyi dus / lam rnal 'byor pa'i dus / 'bras bu sangs  
rgyas kyi sems rgyud 'brel bas na rgyud do //*

It then continues with:

*yang bi ta tantra zhes pa gnyen po ye shes rgyas pa'i rgyud / de'ang mtshan nyid pa  
ltar / 'dod chags kyi gnyen po mi sdug pa bsgom pa lta bu ma yin te / 'dir ni 'dod  
chags kyi rang bzhin bde ba la /zhe sdang gi rang bzhin gsal ba ste / gti mug gi rang  
bzhin mi rtog par shes pas / 'dod chags kyi gnyen por 'dod chags nyid bsgoms pas  
mchog tu gyur pa ste /*

*ji ltar me yis tshig pa la //*  
*me nyid kyis ni gdung bar bya //*<sup>62</sup>

*zhes pa lta bu'o // de rgyas par yin yang / rnam snang rgyud dra las /*

*rgyu dang lam dang 'bras bu rnams //*  
*rgyun chags rgyas pas rgyud ces bya //*<sup>63</sup>

*zhes so // yang sol kṣatantra / zhes pa / rang gi mtshan nyid 'dzin pas rgyud de /...*

The problem with these citations in the *Rgyud sde spyi rnam* is, as far as I can see – which may not be far enough! –, that none are traceable in the translations of these texts as we now have them in the Kanjur-canon of the New School, that is, they are not found in Rin chen bzang po's very own translation of the Vairocana-centered \**Māyājālatantra* or in Kṛṣṇa Paṇḍita's and Nag tsho Lo tsā ba's circa 1050s–1060s translation of the \**Śrītrayasamayatantra*.<sup>64</sup> Thus we *prima facie* have to consider the following possibilities. First, if Sog bzlog pa is correct in attributing

62 This is [almost] a quotation of *Hevajratana*, II: ii, 49a-b, which reads in BKA', vol. 80: 39: *ji ltar 'tshed pas tshig pa yang // me yis kyang ni gdung bar bya //*.

63 I have been unable to recover the actual source of quotation.

64 See, respectively, BKA', vol. 17, nos. 465 [#466] and 500 [#502].

the *Rgyud sde spyi rnam* to Rin chen bzang po, then it is not wholly unthinkable that the latter had based himself on translations of those Sanskrit manuscripts that included these lines of verse. These translations are now lost. Later, so another possible scenario might run, Rin chen bzang po as well as the team of Kṛṣṇa Paṇḍita and Nag tsho Lo tsā ba used manuscripts of these tantras that did not contain these lines. Admittedly, it is not clear to me where these lines may have been placed in the narratives of these texts, for they do not anywhere discuss the notion behind the term *tantra*. In view of the fact that Tibetan editor-readers are often wont to insert passages in or excise them from manuscripts they were working with, often without any warning signs to their later readers, another though perhaps less likely possibility is that the titles of these texts that are indexed to these citations may have been tampered with. A search of the texts of the *Kanjur Dpe sdur ma* [tbc.org] reveals that the lines:

*rgyud ces bya ba 'brel ba'i don //*  
*don ni rnam pa gsum yin te //*

virtually occur in piecemeal fashion in the \**Srīguhyasarvacchindatantra*, albeit with very different significations,<sup>65</sup> and that the lines:

*'brel dang ma tshang med pa dang //*  
*phun sum tshogs bas rgyud ces bya //*

occur with the only insignificant variant reading of *phyir* for *bas* at the beginning of the seventeenth chapter of the *Ye shes rngam pa glog gi 'khor lo*, which is an Old School tantra.<sup>66</sup> More can and probably should be said about these textual problems, but suffice it for now to mention that Dge rtse Paṇḍita 'Gyur med tshe dbang mchog grub (1761–1829) cites the very same last two lines in his 1797 catalog of the *Collected Old School Tantras* where, however, he writes that these were taken from what he calls the *Rdo rje rtse mo* [\**Vajraśekhara*],<sup>67</sup> but I have not been able to retrieve these from any works that have *vajreśekhara* in their titles. Regardless of whether he copied these from another source, which is very, very likely, it thus remains to be determined whence they originated.

<sup>65</sup> BKA', vol. 79: 556-557.

<sup>66</sup> BKA', vol. 101: 867.

<sup>67</sup> See his *Bde bar gshegs pa'i bstan pa rin po che'i snying po rig pa 'dzin pa'i sde snod rdo rje theg pa las snga 'gyur rgyud sde rin po che'i rtogs pa brjod pa lha'i rnga bo che lta bu'i gtam*, in *Collected Works*, vol. Ja [7], Chengdu: Bod yig dpe rnying myur skyob, 2001: 108. For Dge rtse Paṇḍita, see now the study of T. Makidono, *Dge-rtse Mahāpaṇḍita Great Middle Way of Other-Emptiness*, Bibliotheca Tibetica at Indica 2, Tokyo: Sankibo Busshorin, 2016.

Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158), the first patriarch of the Sa skya pa school, does not explain the meaning of *rgyud* in his above mentioned booklet, but his son the Slob dpon Bsod nams rtse mo does and his comments warrant a brief discussion.<sup>68</sup> In all, the Slob dpon cites three different texts for short definitions of *tantra*. The first two are the *Guhyasamājottaratantra* and the *\*Vajraśekhahatantra*, which, he writes, but have it that *tantra* equals continuity, *rgyud ni rgyun chags zhes bya ste //*, and the third is what he calls the *\*Māyājālatantra* with the to all intents and purposes identical formula *rgyud ni rgyun zhes bya ba ste //*. The Tibetan translation for *prabandha* is this time *rgyun* and not *rgyun chags*, which of course is fine and makes no difference. But, again, Rin chen bzang po's translation of the *\*Māyājālatantra* does not contain anything like the one line cited by Bsod nams rtse mo. We thus have to consider the possibility that Rin chen bzang po's *and* Bsod nams rtse mo's quotations are to be located in another work than the one translated by the former. For this we may have to turn to the Old School corpus of the so-called eight *\*Māyājālatantra*-s. The octet's textual history, not to mention the contents of the corpus itself, is indeed a very complicated affair and, for this obvious reason, I will not enter into a discussion of it. This notwithstanding, a few words are in order. According to Nyang ral's *Zangs gling ma* treasure-text biography of Padmasambhava, the cycle of the so-called "eight-fold *Illusion* (*sgyu ma, māyā*) texts," consisted of the following<sup>69</sup>:

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Guhyagarbhatantra</i> <sup>70</sup> | 5. <i>Sgyu 'phrul le'u brgyad pa</i> |
| 2. <i>Sgyu 'phrul bzhi bcu pa</i>         | 6. <i>Lha mo sgyu 'phrul</i>         |

68 For what follows, see his *Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam par gzhag pa* [Sde dge print], 29/3-4 [Ga, 58a-b][= *The Yogini's Eye. Comprehensive Introduction to Buddhist Tantra*, tr. Ngor Thartse Khenpo Sonam Gyatso and W. Verrill, 426 ff.].

69 *Slob dpon padma'i rnam thar zangs gling ma*, ed. Thub bstan nyi ma, Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1989: 62 [= E. Pema Kunzang, tr., *The Lotus-Born. The Life Story of Padmasambhava*, ed. M.B. Schmidt, Boston: Shambhala, 1993: 80-81]. This work must now be used together with L. Doney, *The Zangs gling ma: The First Padmasambhava Biography. Two Exemplars of the Earliest Attested Recension*, Andiaast: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, 2015, where the relevant passages are found on 141 [40b-41a] and 238-239 [34a-b]. Interestingly, Zhi ba 'od dismissed the authenticity of a [or the?] *Māyājālatantra* corpus, for which see Karmay, "An Open Letter by Pho brang Zhi ba 'od," 31-32.

70 The *Guhyagarbhatantra* is at times called the *\*Māyājālatantra* in that it is part of the much larger *\*Māyājāla* corpus; see D. Martin, "Illusion Web - Locating the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* in Buddhist Intellectual History," in *Silver on Lapis. Tibetan Literary Culture and History*, ed. Ch.I. Beckwith, Bloomington: The Tibet Society, 1987: 181, citing Zur 'tsho Dkon mchog tshul khriims, *Zur lugs gsang snying yig cha'i skor*, Dalhousie, 1980, vol. 1: 15, and vol. 3: 251. For the various recensions of this work and the criticism it received from a number of New School intellectuals, see Dorji Wangchuk, "An Eleventh-Century Defence of the Authenticity of the *Guhyagarbhatantra*," in *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism*, ed. H. Eimer and D. Germano, Leiden: Brill, 2002: 265-291. See now also Shen Weirong 沈卫荣 and Yang jie 杨杰, "《秘密藏续》与旧译无上密法于西藏的传播 "Miaomi zangxu" yu jiuji wushang mifa yu xizangde chuanbo [*Guhyagarbhatantra* and the Dissemination of the *Gsang sngags rnying po* (sic)]," in *Tibetan Genealogies. Studies in Memoriam of Guge Tsering Gyalpo (1961-2015)*, ed. G. Hazod and Shen Weirong, 451-509.

3. *Sgyu 'phrul bla ma*

4. *Sgyu 'phrul le lag*

7. *Sgyu 'phrul brgyad cu pa*

8. *'Jam dpal sgyu 'phrul*

The *Zangs gling ma* attributes the first translation of these to the joint efforts of Padmasambhava and Cog ro Klu'i rgyal mtshan. It also has something to say about the provenance of this corpus and the other texts mentioned in this part of the narrative, for it ends with the statement that, "not leaving in India" (*rgya gar na ma lus par*), Padmasambhava had miraculously taken these and a host of other manuscripts from Nālandā monastery in what is now Bihar State to Tibet, after which they were deposited in the "treasury" (*dkor mdzod*) of Bsam yas monastery. The stipulation made by the adverbial phrase "not leaving them in India" could and probably ought to be construed as a response to the possible charge, perhaps first made by 'Gos Lo tsā ba I, that no Sanskrit originals could be found in the subcontinent for many of the Old School's tantras.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, 'Gos Lo tsā ba I is reputed to have questioned some seventy-two Indian scholars whether such and such a work was familiar to them during his sojourn in the subcontinent. When he received a negative reply, he felt that this was sufficient proof that these were not authentically Buddhist scriptures.<sup>72</sup> We do not encounter anything of the sort in the available text of his *'byam yig*-open letter, but Gser mdog Paṅ chen does quote Rngog Lho brag pa to this effect. Styling the latter as belonging to the lineage of Mgos = ['Gos Lo tsā ba I], he writes<sup>73</sup>:

*mgos kyi brgyud 'dzin du gyur pa'i rngog lho brag pas /*

*bla chen 'brog mi zab chos 'ga' zhig / mgos dang dus mtshungs pa'i paṅḍi ta  
bdun cu sa gnyis la dris pas / rgya gar na med do zhes zer ro //*

*zhes pa'i phyogs chos bsgrub snang bas / rje mgos kyang / bla chen dang / gā ya dhā  
ra'i slob mar mtshungs kyang / rang la ma byung ba'i chos der byung ba la zur za bar*

71 'Gos Khug pa Lhas btsas, *Sngags logs sun 'byin, Sngags log sun 'byin gyi skor*, Thimphu: Kunsang Topgyel and Mani Dorji, 1997: 20. This phrase is absent in the text A mes zhabs Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams cites in his *Jo gdan bla ma mang thos bshes gnyen pas dris lan yid kyi mun sel*, 33.

72 *The Blue Annals*, tr. G.N. Roerich, 360.

73 *Le'u gsum pa rig 'dzin sdom pa'i skabs kyi 'bel gnam rnam par nges pa*, 144-145. Gser mdog Paṅ chen writes that Rngog had composed a study of the rise and development of Buddhist tantra, titled *Gsang sngags kyi byung tshul rnam par bshad pa'i gnam chen mo*. Unfortunately, this work has not [yet] been sighted. The *Sngags log sun 'byin [shes rab ral gri]* that is attributed to Chag Lo tsā ba Chos rje dpal (1197–1264) refers to the *Gze mar mgo* of Lho brag, and I wonder if this Lho brag may be the same as Rngog Lho brag pa; see the *Sngags log sun 'byin gyi skor*, 17. For the *Sngags log sun 'byin [shes rab ral gri]*, see K. Raudsepp, "The Dating and Authorship Problems in the Sngags log sun 'byin Attributed to Chag Lo tsā ba Chos rje dpal," in *Contemporary Visions in Tibetan Studies. The First International Seminar of Young Tibetologists, London, September 2007*, ed. B. Dotson et al., Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2009: 281-297.

*ni cang mi mdzad dam / snyam du dogs pa'o //*

The premise of the statement by Rngog Lho brag pa who is an exponent of Mgos' tradition appears to be established, namely, that:

Since seventy-two Paṇḍitas contemporary with Mgos were asked about some of the profound religious texts/practices of Bla chen 'Brog mi, they allegedly (*zer*) replied that these were absent in the subcontinent.

Thus, while Lord Mgos, too, was a contemporary of the Bla chen and a disciple of Gayādhara, I doubt that he never criticized the religious texts/practices that had not appeared to himself but that had appeared to that one, the Bla chen.

We must bear in mind that there is a tradition holds that relations between 'Brog mi Lo tsā ba and 'Gos Lo tsā ba I were rather strained.<sup>74</sup> On the other hand, Gser mdog Paṇ chen does question the integrity of Rngog Lho brag pa's remark. And he writes a little further down that while it is the case for what Lho brag pa had to say about the translations of texts, it does not necessarily hold for the profound transmissions that were transmitted by word of mouth (*snyan brgyud kyi gdams ngag zab mo*) or for instructions (*man ngag*).<sup>75</sup> He provides as examples the six teachings of Nāropā and Nīguma as evidence for what would go counter Rngog's claim. And he ends by saying that: "Hence, where did the great translator Mgos criticize 'Brog mi's profound teachings? Rngog was careless."

In what may have been his chronicle, in which the *Zangs gling ma* is cited extensively as an authority, including the above passage,<sup>76</sup> Nyang ral or the author observes that Rma Rin chen mchog had invited Vimalamitra to help him revise the earlier translations, whereafter the two men primarily focused their energies on going through and editing the translations of this

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74 See, for example, C.R. Stearns, tr., *Luminous Lives. The Story of the Early Masters of the Lam 'bras Tradition in Tibet*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001: 53-55, 92-97.

75 *Le'u gsum pa rig 'dzin sdom pa'i skabs kyi 'bel gtam rnam par nges pa*, 145-146: *rgyud dang sde snod kyi gzhung lo paṇ gyis bsgyur bar khas len pa de dag / 'phags yul gyi paṇḍi ta mang po de dag la ma grags na dri ma can du* [146] *'grub pa yin gyi / snyan brgyud kyi gdams ngag zab mo rnams ni gtan tshigs de tsam gyis der mi 'grub cing / lo chen gyis kyang rgyud dang bstan bcos kyi dbang du mdzad nas gtan tshigs de ltar bkod pa yin gyi / man ngag gi dbang du mdzad pa ni ma yin no // mi 'grub pa'i shes byed kyi dpe ni / nā ro dang / nī gu'i chos drug bzhin / des na lo chen mgos kyis ni 'brog mi'i zab chos la zur za ba ga la yod rngog gis ni rang dgar byas pa'o //*. There are of course some problems with this remark that cannot be discussed here.

76 *Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud*, 308.

cycle.<sup>77</sup> This effort apparently also included the *Rnam snang sgyu 'phrul dra ba*, which, since it concerns Vairocana [= *Rnam snang mdzad*], must of course be none other than Rin chen bzang po's \**Māyājālatantra*! It therefore appears that, once again, Rin chen bzang po's rendition had a precedent, let alone the fact that we now do not have eight but nine \**Māyājāla* texts!

One of the implications of such a revision, if it did take place, is that they would then have been translated in accordance with Vimalamitra's interpretation of this textual corpus. Though not mentioned by Nyang ral, Vimalamitra is on occasion credited with being the author of splitting the original \**Māyājālatantra* of a hundred thousand chapters into this eight-fold corpus. Thus, we seem to have competing traditions for its formation, the mystery of which need not detain us here, but suffice it to say that any of these eight [or sometimes even nine] texts might be generically called a \**Māyājālatantra*. It is fairly certain that one or the other library of Sa skya monastery had manuscripts of at least four of the octet. Judging that these "appear to be authentic" (*yang dag pa 'dra /*) Old School tantras, Rje btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan records the *Guhyagarbhatantra*, the *Sgyu 'phrul brgyad cu pa*, the *Sgyu 'phrul bla ma*, and the *Lha mo sgyu 'phrul* in his catalog of tantric literature, which he probably composed around the year 1200.<sup>78</sup>

In fact, all of these other sources single out the following famous, if cryptic, passage from the *Guhyasamājottaratantra*<sup>79</sup>:

*prabandhaṃ tantramākhyātaṃ tat prabandhaṃ tridhā bhavet /*  
*ādhāraḥ prakṛtiś caiva asaṃhāryaprabhedataḥ //* [34]

*prakṛtiścākṛterheturasaṃhāryaphalaṃ tathā /*  
*ādhārastadupāyaś ca tribhistantrārthasaṃgrahaḥ //* [35]

The *Guhyasamājottaratantra* is often rightly or wrongly the eighteenth chapter of the *Guhyasamājatantra* proper, but this is something that still needs to be looked into in some detail. These two quatrains in the *circa* 1000 Tibetan translation of the former by, ostensibly, Śraddhākaravarman and Rin chen bzang po read<sup>80</sup>:

77 *Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud*, 422.

78 See his *Kye'i rdo rje'i rgyud 'bum gyi dkar chag*, in *Sa skya bka' 'bum*, vol. 3, no. 25, ed. Bsod nams rgya mtsho, Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1968: 275/4/1 [Ja, 205a].

79 See Yukei Matsunaga, ed., *The Guhyasamājatantra, A New Critical Edition*, Osaka: Toho Suppan, Inc., 1978: 115.

80 BKA', vol. 81: 588. The colophon On p. 611, n. 606, we learn that only the Li thang edition contains the text that a certain Thang chen pa and Rgyal mtshan reng [= ?ring] mo had compared with the version that was contained in the so-called *Stag lung rgyud 'bum*, that is, a collection of manuscripts of tantras that were housed in or belonged to Stag lung monastery.

rgyud ni rgyun zhes bya bar grags //  
rgyun de rnam pa gsum 'gyur te //  
gzhi dang de bzhin rang bzhin dang //  
mi 'phrog[s] pa yis rab phye ba //

gzhi dang [var. rnam pa] rang bzhin rgyu yin te //  
de bzhin mi 'phrogs 'bras bu'o //  
gzhi ni thabs shes bya ba ste //  
gsum gyis rgyud kyi don bsdu pa'o //

This particular reading of the passage is identical to the text that we find, for example, in the possibly early nineteenth century Gting skyes manuscript of the *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum*, *Collected Tantras of the Old School*.<sup>81</sup> There the first translation of this work is attributed to Buddhaguhya [or: Buddhagupta] and 'Brog mi Lo tsā ba Dpal gyi ye shes, who were active around the year 800, after which, so we are told, it was edited much later by Śraddhākaravarman and Rin chen bzang po, argues either for their potential consanguinity, which is unlikely, or that the later translation was not a new translation of the text at all, but, to put it charitably, a revision, or, finally, that we have a problem with the colophon[s]. Whatever the case may be, their virtual identity does call to mind the findings of K.W. Eastman, who argued long ago that the readings of the Dunhuang manuscript of the *Guhyasamājatantraper se* and its early *circa* 800 translation ascribed to Vimalamitra and Ska ba Dpal brtsegs provide evidence that the so-called New School "translation" by Śraddhākaravarman and Rin chen bzang po is at best a slight revision of the former, though the names of these earlier translators are as absent from the New School's Kanjur colophons as they are from their catalogs.<sup>82</sup> This notwithstanding, Eastman's conclusion stands in singular opposition to that of Martin, who wrote that "[a] comparison of random parts of the text in the Nyingma version [= in the *Collected Tantras of the Old School*, vdK] and the Peking version [= Peking Kanjur, vdK]

81 See the *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum* [Gting skyes recension], vol. 17, Thimphu: Dingo Khenste Rimpoche, 1973–1975: 177. For the various recensions of the *Collected Tantras of the Old School*, see Thub bstan chos dar, *Rnying ma rgyud 'bum gyi dkar chag gsal ba'i me long*, Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2000: 4-16; a useful work is also M. Derbac, *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum: A Tibetan Buddhist Canon*, unpublished University of Alberta master's thesis, Edmonton, 2007. A very valuable summary of state-of-the-art research on the *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum* is R. Mayer, "The Rnying ma Tantras," in *Brill Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed. J. Silk et al., vol.1, Leiden: Brill, 2015: 390-397.

82 See his "The Dunhuang Tibetan Manuscript of the *Guhyasamājatantra* [in Japanese]," in *Nihon chibetto gakkai kaiho* 日本西藏学会会報 [*Report of the Japanese Association for Tibetan Studies*] 26, 1990: 5, as cited in A. Hermann-Pfandt, "The *Lhan dkar ma* as a Source for the History of Tantric Buddhism," in *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism*, ed. H. Eimer and D. Germano, Brill: Leiden, 2002: 141.

showed many variant readings in both wording and syntax."<sup>83</sup> The text in the Peking Kanjur is also attributed to Śraddhākaravarman and Rin chen bzang po, and Martin's point is well taken, for the same applies when we compare the Kanjur xylographs [and one manuscript] of the *Guhyasamājantra* with the text of the manuscript of the Gting skyes recension and the 1794–?1798 Sde dge xylograph of the *Collected Tantras of the Old School*, which, too, is ascribed to Buddhaguhya and 'Brog mi Lo tsā ba Dpal gyi ye shes.<sup>84</sup> I do not know which recension of the *Collected Tantras of the Old School* Eastman has used, but the mid-eighteenth century Mtshams brag manuscript from Bhutan does bear out his results and for good reason. It is after all a copy of the translation ascribed to Śraddhākaravarman and Rin chen bzang po, with a few revisions by Ravindra and Chag Lo tsā ba II.<sup>85</sup> What all this implies is, of course, that it is hazardous to draw conclusions on a narrow dossier of texts. Again, all of Tibetan Buddhism, including its manuscript treasures, is local with the consequence that almost nothing can be universalized. Martin and Eastman also drew attention to the Tibetan Dunhuang manuscript of the *Guhyasamājantra*, which cannot postdate the early eleventh century.<sup>86</sup>

We have so far no such tradition of the different translations of the *Guhyasamājottaratantra per se*. Zhwa dmar IV Chos grags ye shes (1453–1524) informs us in his 1517 biography of his master 'Gos Lo tsā ba II that, during the summer retreat of 1443, the latter had revised and corrected ('gyur bcos rnam par dag pa) the earlier translation[s] of the Candrakīrti II's (9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> c.) *Pradīpoddyotana* commentary on the *Guhyasamājantra* on the basis of his own study of the text and several Sanskrit manuscripts, one of the *Guhyasamājantra* and no

83 "Illusion Web - Locating the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* in Buddhist Intellectual History," 183-184; the quote is taken from p. 184.

84 BKA', 81, 442-583 (= SDE, vol. 57, no. 4863 [#211], 350/4-376/7, 376/7-381/3 [Tsha, 377b-479b, 470b-486a]). Note that SDE's table of contents failed to recognize that no. 4863 consists of two translations, the first is that of the *Guhyasamājantra* and the second is that of the *Guhyasamājottaratantra*. The first is signed by Nyi ma'i dbang po [\*Ravindra] and Chag Lo tsā ba II, who revised the earlier translation of Śraddhākaravarman and Rin chen bzang po; the second is signed by the latter duo. Dge rtse Paṇḍita, *Bde bar gshegs pa'i bstan pa rin po che'i snying po rig pa 'dzin pa'i sde snod rdo rje theg pa las snga 'gyur rgyud sde rin po che'i rtogs pa brjod pa lha'i rnga bo che lta bu'i gnam*, in *Collected Works*, vol. Nya [8], Chengdu: Bod yig dpe nying myur skyob, 2001: 321, mistakenly has 'Brog mi [Lo tsā ba] Shākya ye shes (11<sup>th</sup> c.) instead of 'Brog mi Dpal gyi ye shes. The same mistake is repeated in Thub bstan chos dar, *Rnying ma rgyud 'bum gyi dkar chag gsal ba'i me long*, 81-82; on pp. 41-51, Thub bstan chos dar outlines the sources used by Dge rtse Paṇḍita and his editorial methods.

85 *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum* [Mtshams brag recension], vol.18: 938.

86 See K.W. Eastman, "The Eighteen Tantras of the *Vajrasāekhara/Māyājāla*," in *Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan* 26, 1981: 95-96, which summarizes an earlier paper of his that I have not seen, and Martin, "Illusion Web - Locating the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* in Buddhist Intellectual History," 181-182.

less than three of the *Pradīpoddyotana* itself.<sup>87</sup> This revised translation of the *Pradīpoddyotana*, a commentary on the version of the *Guhyasamājatantra* in seventeen chapters, was never included in any of the xylographed Tanjurcanons. Later, 'Jigs med gling pa (1729–1798) remarks in his 1772 catalogue of a manuscript edition of the *Collected Tantras of the Old School* that 'Gos Lo tsā ba II had also revised-cum-edited the translation (*dag bcos mdzad pa*) of the *Guhyasamājottaratantra*.<sup>88</sup> If true, then this might very well imply that the said Sanskrit manuscript of the *Guhyasamājatantra* to which he had access was the one of the tantra's recension in eighteen chapters.

But we are not out of the woods and we will not be for some time after this essay sees the light of day. The translation of the \**Guhyasamājopadeśasamudrabindu*, Viśvamitra's commentary on the *Guhyasamājottaratantra*, which is a very early, if not the earliest available, study of the text, has preserved some very different readings indeed. The verses that were just under consideration are a case in point; his text has<sup>89</sup>:

*de la rgyud ni rnam gsum ste //*  
*gzhi dang rang bzhin dag dang ni //*  
*bye brag tu ni bsdu bar bya //*  
*gzhi dag dang ni thabs dag gis //*  
*rnam gsum rgyud kyi don du bsgrubs //*

*gzhi dag dang ni thabs dag gis //*  
*rnam gsum rgyud kyi don du sgrub //*  
*rang bzhin rang bzhin med pa'i rgyu //*  
*de bzhin 'bras bu bsdu ba med //*

87 See the *Dpal ldan bla ma dam pa mkhan chen thams cad mkhyen pa don gyi slad du mtshan nas smos te gzhon nu dpal gyi rnam par thar pa yon tan rin po che mchog tu rgyas pa'i ljon pa, dbu can* manuscript in seventy-four folios, 45b [= 'Gos lo gzhon nu dpal gyi rnam thar, ed. Ngag dbang nor bu, Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2004: 107-108]. 'Gos Lo tsā ba II also edited the translation of Buddhaguhya's commentary on the *Vairocanaābhisambodhitantra*. That he did so without recourse to a Sanskrit manuscript is evident in the very terminology Zhwa dmar IV employs for his narrative; he writes in the same passage indicated above: ...*skad gsar chad kyis gtan la ma phab pas tshig g.yong zhing go dka' ba la skad gsar chad kyis gtan la phab /*. See also A. Wayman and R. Tajima, *The Enlightenment of Vairocana*, Buddhist Tradition Series, vol.18, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992: 28-31, where Wayman was quite right in his surmise that 'Gos Lo tsā ba II did not have access to a Sanskrit manuscript of this work.

88 See his *De bzhin gshes pas legs par gsungs pa'i gsung rab rgya mtsho'i snying por gyur pa rig pa 'dzin pa'i sde snod dam /snga' gyur rin po che'i rgyud 'bum rtogs pa brjod pa 'dzam gling tha gru khyab pa'i rgyan* [A 'dzom print], in *Collected Works*, vol. Pa [13], Chengdu: A'dzom chos sgar, ?1999: 663-664.

89 BSTAN, vol.19: 953. This partly recapitulates the earlier passage in BSTAN, vol.19: 951. Viśvamitra's lengthy comment deserves close study.

I have not been able to verify the translator[s] of Viśvamitra's work, which has a great deal of significance for Indo-Tibetan intellectual history and unquestionably merits a detailed examination in its own right, especially in terms of the authorities it cites, for this gives us an insight, albeit no doubt if ever so skewed, into certain aspects of its author's literary and religious environment. Viśvamitra twice mentions unnamed sutras and he refers a number of times to tantric texts that he equally leaves unidentified. However, what is of considerable importance is that he does expressly refer to a host of other tantric sources by title. For our purposes, three of these stand out, the *Gdan bzhi* [*Catuṣpīṭha*], the *Guhyagarbhatantra*, and the Vairocana-centered *Māyājālatantra*.<sup>90</sup> Thus, these Indic sources must have existed in one form or another during the middle of the eighth century, at the latest, a point that is not without significance for the literary development of the tantric movement as a whole.

Viśvamitra was of course not alone in this, and it would be useful to do this kind of preliminary excavation in the exegeses of his contemporaries such as Vilāsavajra, Buddhaguhya, and the early eighth century Śākyamitra, to name but a few. What is more, His commentary indicates that there were a number of points of contention with the interpretation of the *Guhyasamājottaratantra*. While the sources available to me do not signal any problems with its provenance, I think that the integrity of Viśvamitra's work as a translation of a purely Indic text is probably not entirely beyond question. This is arguably borne out by the fact that it contains a references to "some Indian writings" (*rgya gar gyi yi ge la la*) and the "Indian language" (*rgya gar gyi sgra*), that is, Sanskrit.<sup>91</sup> Surely, this strikes one as strange and really makes no sense, unless, of course, Viśvamitra or the author of these two passages addressed an audience other than an Indian one or one that was not conversant with Sanskrit.

Now the text of the *Guhyasamājottaratantra* verses that the Slob dpon cites reads slightly differently<sup>92</sup>:

*rgyud ni rgyun zhes bya ba ste //*

90 BSTAN, vol.19: 906-907, 914-915, 955-956. The citation, on p. 914, from the *Catuṣpīṭhatantra* is *sgrogs pa drug gi mchod rten*, which I have not been able to locate in the eleventh century Tibetan translation of this tantra. P.-D. Śzantó, *Selected Chapters from the Catuṣpīṭhatantra (1/2): Introductory study with the annotated translation of selected chapters* (2012), 14-15, has argued that the gestation period of the *Catuṣpīṭhatantra* [as we now have it] took place from *circa* 850 to 1000, "(with preference for an earlier date)." Dated December 16, 2012, I accessed Śzantó's work on academia.edu. Viśvamitra's references to a \**Catuṣpīṭha* would suggest that the inception of this tantra's gestation period may have to be pushed back by one century, to *circa* 750.

91 BSTAN, vol.19: 1079, 1117.

92 *Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam par gzhag pa*, 29/4 [Ga, 58b] [=The Yogini's Eye. Comprehensive Introduction to Buddhist Tantra, tr. Ngor Thartse Khenpo Sonam Gyatso and W. Verrill, 426]. Glo bo Mkhan chen mentions that one of Rje btsun's disciples, Mi nyag Shes rab 'bar, alias Prajñājvālā, had written a commentary on Bsod nams rtse mo's work as well; see his *Rgyud sde spyi yi rnam par bzhag pa'i gsal byed nyi ma'i 'od zer*, in *Selected Writings*, vol. 4, Dehra Dun: Pal Evam Chodan Ngorgpa Centre, 1985: 26. This Tangut-Xixia scholar's work has not yet surfaced.

*rgyun de rnam pa gsum du 'gyur //*  
*gzhi dang de yi rang bzhin dang //*  
*mi 'phrogs pa yis rab phye ba'o //*

*rang bzhin rnam pa rgyu yin te //*  
*gzhi ni thabs zhes bya ba yin //*  
*de bzhin mi 'phrogs 'bras bu ste //*  
*gsum gyis rgyud kyi don bsdus pa'o //*

Is it a coincidence that this is exactly the same reading that we have in his younger brother Rje btsun's survey of the philosophical and practical contents of the Sa skya pa school's Path-and-Result system that is foremost based on the *Hevajatantra*?<sup>93</sup> Hardly! Since this book was also edited by his nephew Sa skya Paṇḍita, we cannot rule out the possibility that he had slightly revised these two quatrains of the tantra. After all, he was a redoubtable Sanskrit scholar, though, as far as I am aware, his biographies and historical sources are silent on this particular score. The Slob dpon's remarks are given additional force in Gtsang Byams pa's work.<sup>94</sup>

Of course, the variants of the *Guhyasmājottaratantra*'s quotations in the Slob dpon's and Rje btsun's writings are not altogether compelling in their departures from the text of the Kanjur. But this is not the reaction one gets with the quotation of the first of these two quatrains that we encounter in 'Dul 'dzin's reply to what he considered to have been the Karma pa's controversial letter; he quotes the verse as follows<sup>95</sup>:

*rgyud ces bya ba rab 'brel tshig //*  
*de la rab 'brel rnam gsum te //*  
*ngo bo gzhi dang thabs dang ni //*  
*thabs byung 'bras bu zhes bshad do //*

*Tantra* is a term for linkage (\**pratibandha*).

93 See his *Rgyud kyi mngon par rtogs pa rin po che'i ljon shing* [Sde dge print], in *Sa skya bka' 'bum*, vol. 3, no. 1, ed. Bsod nams rgya mtsho, Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1968: 2/1-2 [Cha, 3a-b]. The reading is also very close to Bu ston, *Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam gzhas bsdus pa rgyud sde rin po che'i gter sgo 'byed pa'i lde mig*, in *Collected Works*, Part 14, repr. L Chandra, New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1969: 947-948.

94 *Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam par bzhag pa rgyud ma lus par 'jug pa la rtsod pa spong ba*, 166-171. 'Ba' ra ba Rgal mtshan dpal bzang po's (1310-1391) remarks in his *Thar par 'jug pa'i gru bo zab don chos kyi gter mdzod las gsang sngags gsar ma'i rnam bshad kyi dka' 'grel*, in *A Tibetan Encyclopedia of Buddhist Scholasticism; The Collected Writings of 'Ba' ra ba Rgyal mtshan dpal bzang*, vol. 3, Dehradun: Ngawang Gyaltsen and Ngawang Lungtok, 1970: 547 f., might also be taken into account.

95 'DUL1, 92 [= 'DUL2, 132-133].

In that connection, linkage is three-fold;  
It is stated to consist of essence-foundation and,  
Method and what has arisen from the method, the result.

There is no question that the first two lines of this quatrain echo Rin chen bzang po's quotation from the \**Māyājālatantra*.

But...enough of this! The point of the above deliberations is to show the profound philological-historical and bibliographical problems that must be confronted once we begin to take a closer look at the multiplicity of our sources and delve below their surface. Even if these manifold issues are well nigh impossible to resolve at present, I would nonetheless argue that they need to be addressed as much as possible, almost *ad nauseam*, before we can venture to ask questions that have more to do with a philosophical or religious interpretation of the texts at hand. Further, and more to the point of this two-part exploration of but a few aspects of Rin chen bzang po's complex work, it is painfully obvious that so much more can and should be done with it. What is quite clear and worthy of further consideration is that, in this treatise, he neither mentions nor addresses the corpus of works that we associate with the Old (*rnying ma*) tantras. And this can hardly be insignificant.

## Appendix

### **Titles of Tantras Belonging to the Four Classes of Tantric Literature in Rin chen bzang po's *Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam bzhag***

At the end of his discussion of the four classes of tantric literature, Rin chen bzang po provides a remarkably complex listing of the titles of the relevant tantras in abbreviated form, in RGYUD, 66-72. One can but be amazed at the immense knowledge Rin chen bzang po must have possessed of the relevant literature. What now follows is this listing, warts and all. To be sure, these lists cry out for further analysis and discussion. The published text distinguishes between what appears to be Rin chen bzang po's work and the annotations found in the manuscript by using smaller type for the latter, and I have done the same in my translation.

A. Action-tantras; RGYUD, 66-68:

Three ways in which these are restricted (*'ching lugs*):

- a. Generally and specifically restricted
- b. Restricted in terms of *sku*, *gsung* and *thugs*
- c. Restricted in terms of the way in which they originated [67]

- 1. Four general subject tantras
  - Legs sgrub pa* – primarily teaches worship, tormas, panegyric of worship
  - Gsang ba spyi rgyud*– primarily teaches mandalas
  - Bsam gtan phyi ma* – primarily teaches meditation
  - Dpung pa bzang po* – primarily teaches spiritual behavior

The specific subdivisions of *sku*, *gsung*, and *thugs*, will come below.

- 2. When they are restricted in terms of *sku*, *gsung*, and *thugs*:

<i>Sku</i>	Basic:	<i>Gtsug gtor chen mo</i>
	Explanatory:	<i>'Jam dpal rtsa rgyud</i> <i>Mngon par byang chub pa</i> <i>Gsang bdag rnam par grol ba</i> <i>Glu blangs 'jam dpal rdo rje phreng ba etc.</i> – the domain of 'Jam dpal, and further

*Dpung bzang*  
*Gtsug gtor gdugs dkar*  
*Rdo rje sa 'og si si ta ka*

<i>Gsung</i>	Basic:	<i>Padma brtsegs pa</i>
	Explanatory:	<i>Padma cod paṅ</i> <i>Don yod zhags pa</i> <i>Yid bzhin gyi nor bu</i> <i>Yid bzhin 'khor</i> <i>'Khor lo bsgyur ba</i> <i>Zhal bcu gcig pa</i> <i>Za ma tog bkod pa</i> <i>Rang byung ye shes</i> <i>Snying gyur cig pa</i> <i>Dam tshig gsum bkod</i> <i>Dngos grub bum pa, etc.</i>

<i>Thugs</i>	Basic:	<i>Rig pa mchog</i>
	Explanatory:	<i>Mi 'khrugs pa'i gzungs</i>
		<i>Phyag na rdo rje dbang bskur ba</i>
		<i>Me lce 'bar ba</i>
		<i>Rngam pa klog</i>
		<i>Drag po sum 'dus</i>
		<i>Gzungs ring rdor rje be con –</i>
		primarily teaches the pacification of the eight classes
		<i>'Byung po 'dul byed</i>
		<i>Rdo rje rnam 'joms gos sngon</i>
		<i>Sa 'og 'dul ba –</i>
		primarily teaches the pacification of the <i>nāga-s</i> and the lord of the earth ( <i>sa bdag</i> )
		<i>Gtum po rgyud gsum</i>
		<i>Mnyam pa med [68] pa</i>
		<i>Ral pa gyen brjes, etc.</i>
		<i>Mi g.yo ba'i rtog bdun pa</i>
		<i>Rgya mtsho 'khyil ba</i>
		<i>Bdud rtsi 'od</i>
		<i>Bdud rtsi rab 'khyil</i>
		<i>Stobs po che</i>
		<i>Khro bo spyi 'dus</i>
		<i>Bsam gtan phyi ma, etc.</i>
	 Sgrol ma	 <i>Sgrol ma mngon 'byung ba</i>
		<i>Dngos grub bum pa</i>
		<i>Gzungs gra lnga</i>
		<i>Tsun dra</i>
		<i>Lu gu rgyud</i>
		<i>'Od zer can</i>
		<i>Ri khrod ma</i>
		<i>Ku ru kulle'i rtog pa, etc.</i>

3. According to the ways in which they originated:

Sangs rgyas kyi <i>dbu las</i>	<i>Gdugs dkar can</i>
..... <i>jags las</i>	<i>Padma brtsegs</i>
..... <i>dpung pa las</i>	<i>Dpung pa bzang po</i>

..... <i>thugs las</i>	Rig pa mchog
- primarily ( <i>gtso 'khor = gtso bor</i> )	
teaches the supreme spiritual attainment	
..... <i>phyag las</i>	<i>Phyag na rdo rje dbang bskur ba</i>
- primarily teaches the empowerment[s]	
..... <i>lte ba las</i>	<i>Su ti ka ra</i>
- primarily teaches the common spiritual attainments	
..... <i>gsang ba la[s]</i>	<i>A mo ga pa sha</i>
..... <i>zhabs las</i>	<i>'Byung po 'dul byed byung ba</i>

It is said that there are others tantras that issued from these. In brief, among the sutras and the *Gzungs 'bum*, some are called *rtog pa* (*\*kalpa*) and some are called *gzungs* (*\*dhāraṇī*); there are very many of them.

B. Conduct-tantras; RGYUD, 68:

Basic:	<i>Rnal 'byor mngon par byung ba'i rgyud</i> – primarily teaches the generation of the Body ( <i>sku bskyed</i> )
Explanatory:	<i>Kun nas bkod pa</i> <i>Rgyan chen po</i> <i>Rnam par snang mdzad</i>

It is claimed that each of these tantras originate from the eight good-fortune signs (*bkra shis rtags brgyad*), that is, the eight [?pilgrimage] places (*gnas brgyad*), so there are eight tantras.<sup>96</sup>

*Glang po che rol pa bde ba'i myu gu*  
*Rol pa mchog*

Some claim: *The Rnam snang sgyu 'phrul dra ba* and the *Gsang ba spyi rgyud* are conduct-tantras, but some do not claim them as conduct tantras; [The sentence ends with: *ngo bor med par yang gnang ngo //*, which I do not understand].

C. Yoga-tantras; RGYUD, 69:

<sup>96</sup> I do not quite understand this statement.

Basic: *De kho na nyid*

*Khams gsum zil gnong gyi rgyud* – primarily teaches *gsung bskyed pa*  
*Rnam par snang mdzad chen po'i rgyud*– primarily teaches *thugs bskyed pa*

As for the *Rnam snang mngon byang rgyud*, there are five<sup>97</sup>:

When one becomes enlightened in the nature of reality and emptiness:

[1] *Stong nyid sgra sgrogs kyi rgyud*

When one becomes enlightened due to the lotus-moon seat:

[2] *Zla ba 'khyil ba'i rgyud*

When one becomes enlightened in the wording of the Speech (*gsung*):

[3] *Phyag rgya yongs su bsgyur ba'i rgyud*

When one becomes fully enlightened in the Body (*sku*):

[4] *Dpe byad yongs su dag pa'i rgyud*

Four sections (*dum bu bzhi*) and explanatory tantra:

*Rdo rje rtse mo*  
*Dpal mchog dang po*  
*Sangs rgyas gsang ba*  
*Dam tshig mngon par byang chub pa*  
*Rdo rje sems dpa'i rgyud gsum*  
*Ngan song sbyong ba'i rgyud rtog pa bdun cu:*

- [1] *'Jig rten pa rtog pa bcu*
- [2] *De las 'das pa'i rtog bcu*
- [3] *Gang zag dman pa la dgongs pa'i rtog pa bcu*
- [4] *Las thams cad la dgongs pa'i rtog pa bcu*
- [5] *Mchog sgrub pa'i rtog pa bcu*
- [6] *Sku gsung thugs mnyes pa'i rtog pa bcu*
- [7] *Dkyil 'khor la 'jug pa'i rtog pa bcu*

D. The supreme, the highest Yoga-tantras; RGYUD, 69-72:

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97 Although five are slated to be mentioned, only four are given!

[1] Means-Father (*thabspha*) tantra:

- the basic tantra is the *Guhyasamāja* in ninety-eight chapters

[2] Insight-Mother (*shes rab ma*) tantra

[3] Non-dual tantra

[1] Father tantras

Basic:

*Bum pa*

- explanatory:

*Rdo rje phreng ba* – seems to be ('*dra*)

*Lha mo bzhis zhus pa*

*Dgongs pa lung bstan* – seems to be ('*dra*)

*Ye shes rdo rje kun las btus pa*

Furthermore, the *Rdo rje mkha' 'gro*, [70] etc.

*'phags pa cha mthun pa'i rgyud la / gshin rje gshed dgra nag gdong  
drug pa la /*

*Dmar po 'jigs byed*

Their explanatory tantras:

*Rdo rje mkha' 'gro snyoms par 'jug pa gsang ba'i rgyud*

*Khro bo bcu'i rgyud*

*Sngags don gsal bar rdo rje rgyas 'debs*

*Rdo rje dri med pa*

*Dbang bskur kun nas bkod pa*

*Snying po 'byung ba mngon par byang chub pa*, etc.

[2] Insight-mother tantras:

From a classification of the *Rdo rje sems dpa' kun nas bkod pa'i rgyud*, the basis of all:

Basic: *Sku*

*Rgyud dges pa do rje*

*Gsung*

*Ma hā ma ya*

*Thugs*

*Bde mchog 'khor lo*

*Yon tan*

*Thig le chen po*

*'Phrin las*

*Rdo rje gdan bzhi*

Here, the basic tantra of the *Dges rdor sku tantra* is the five hundred thousand *śloka* one - it is in the hands of the *ḍākinī* - the tantra practiced in the human world, the *Brtag pa gnyis pa*

Explanatory-: *Mkha' 'gro rdo rje gur*

uncommon

Explanatory-: *Sam̐ bhu ṭa, etc.*

common

From that the need of sixteen types of tantra (*rgyud sde bcu drug*) is shown.

Furthermore: *Ye shes thig le*

*Ye shes rol pa*

*Dga' chen ston pa...*

Or (*yang nam*) the six tantras:

1. *Bde ba tsakra byin brlabs kyi rgyud*

2. *Dges rdor man ngag gi rgyud*

3. *Ma hā ma ya dam tshig gi rgyud*

4. *Rdo rje gdan bzhi gtsug gi rgyud*

5. *Sangs rgyas thod pa'i rgyud*

6. *Sgyu ma bde mchog gi rgyud*

When the *Bde mchog gi rgyud* is classified: The extensive basic tantra in one hundred thousand chapters; the intermediate one in one hundred thousand *śloka*s; the summary one in fifty-one chapters.

The neuter tantras (*ma ning gi rgyud*)<sup>98</sup>: The thirty-two basic tantras such as the *Dus kyi 'khor lo'i rgyud* and the *Dur khrod rgyan*, etc. and the countless ancillary tantras (*yan lag gi rgyud*). It is stated<sup>99</sup>:

98 This is a highly unusual category and requires further exploration.

99 I have not been able to identify the origin of this quotation. Rje btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan has the last two lines in his *Dpal he ru ka'i 'byung tshul*, in *Sa skya bka' 'bum*, vol. 3, no. 37, ed. Bsod nams rgya mtsho, Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1968: 300/2 [Ja, 256b].

The basic tantra is three-fold.  
The explanatory tantras are thirty-two [71]  
The ancillary tantras are countless.

Two basic tantras, the extensive *Rig pa rya mtsho* tantra. What is known as the *Rnam pa* are in the hands of the *dākinī*. Its subsequent text, the *Dpal mngon par mi snang ba'i tshig rkang 'bul ba*.<sup>100</sup> Its subsequent text, *Kha sbyor rgyud* and *Bla ma*; it is said<sup>101</sup>:

The explanatory tantras are claimed to be five-fold.

What derives from the *Nges brjod bla ma of Bde mchog* and the *Mkha' gro kun spyod* and ?

.....kun nas bkod pa  
De bzhin gshegs pa'i sku gzugs, etc.

The *gsung gi rgyud*:

Basic tantra: *Sgyu 'phrul chen mo* in three chapters  
Explanatory tantras: *Gsang ba chen mo*  
*Khu yug rol pa*  
*Grags pa bzang po*  
*Ye shes mchog*, etc.

The *thugs kyi rgyud*:

Basic tantra: *Dpal nam kha' dang mnyam pa* in one hundred thousand [*śloka*-s]...*Bde mchog*  
Its subsequent texts *Mngon par brjod pa*  
*Byin rlabs kyi rog pa* in one hundred thousand *śloka*-s  
Its subsequent texts: One in fifty-one chapters  
*Ming* in one hundred thousand [*śloka*-s]

---

100 I have the feeling we must read here *tshig rkang 'bum pa*, "one hundred thousand lines."

101 I have been unable to identify the origin of this quotation.

Explanatory tantras: *Dgongs pa rab 'byams pa ston pa mkha' 'go ...*  
*bde mchog ma Kun spyod chen mo*  
*Rdo rje slob dpon dang slob ma'i las ston pa He*  
*ru ka...bde mchog sngon 'byung*  
*Bskyed rim ston pa...bde mchog Nges brjod bla ma*  
*Rdzogs...bde mchog rim dang las tshogs 'ba' zhig*  
*ston pa Phag mo sngon 'byung*  
*Las tshogs lho na ston pa Las rgya mtsho*  
*Mngon gcod ston pa Dus 'byung ba*  
*Slob dpon gyi bya ba ston pa Sdom pa rgya mtsho*  
*'Phrin las bzhi ston pa Sngags kyi rgya mtsho*  
*Dbang bzhi ston pa Lta ba'i rgya mtsho*  
*Rlung gi las sdom pa las 'byung...bde mchog dang*  
*brgyad do ba*  
*Brtul zhugs ston pa Sangs rgyas thod pa*  
*Yon tan bcu gnyis dang sgo [72] bstun pa sbyangs*  
*pa rol pa gnas pa la sogs pa las gdams pa*  
 The twenty-four *A ra li*

The *yon tan gyi rgyud*:

Basic tantra: *Phyag rgya chen po ye shes thig le*  
*Sam̐ bhu ta bde rgyas thun mong gi rgyud*

Explanatory tantras: *Sangs rgyas mnyam sbyor*  
*Thig le kun 'byung*  
*Khro bo rol pa*  
*Dpal mchog bde ba*  
*Rab tu gsal ba, etc.*

The *'phrin las kyi rgyud*:

Basic tantra: *Gser gyi char ba*  
 Subsequent tantra: *Rgyan chen po*  
 Explanatory tantra: *De nyid rnam gsal*  
*'Jig rten mnyes pa*  
*Yid bzhin 'khor lo*  
*Don yod rgya mtsho*  
*Ye shes mkha' 'gro, etc.*

[3] Non-dual tantras:

*'Jam dpal and Dus 'khor*

As for *'Jam dpal*: *'Jam dpal rtsa ba'i rgyud*  
*'Jam dpal sgyu 'phrul dra ba*

Explanatory tantra: *Rdo rje phreng ba*  
*Rdo rje grub pa*  
*Don yod pa*  
*Gsang rgyud, etc.*

Some claim these to be conduct-tantras; some claim them to be ritual-tantras.

As for *Dus kyi 'khor lo*

Basic tantra: *Dam pa dang po*  
The summary derived from it in five chapters

Explanatory tantra: *Sangs rgyas 'byung ba*  
*Thod pa'i rgyud che chung*  
*Dum bu nye bar bzhag pa, etc.*

## Abbreviations:

- BKA' *Bka' 'gyur [dpe sdur ma]*, ed. Krung go'i bod rig pa zhib 'jug lte gnas kyi bka' bstan dpe sdur khang, 108 vols., Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2006–2009.
- BSTAN *Bstan 'gyur [dpe sdur ma]*, ed. Krung go'i bod rig pa zhib 'jug lte gnas kyi bka' bstan dpe sdur khang, 120 vols., Beijing Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 1994–2008.
- 'DUL1 'Dul 'dzin Mkhyen rab rgya mtsho, *Sangs rgyas bstan pa'i chos 'byung dri lan nor bu'i phreng ba*, Gangtok: Dzongsar Chhentse Labrang, 1981.
- 'DUL2 *Ibid.*, Thimphu, 1984.
- MI1 Karma pa VIII Mi bskyod rdo rje, *Gsang sngags snga 'gyur las 'phros pa'i brgal lan rtsod pa med pa'i ston pa dag bstan pa'i byung ba brjod pa drang po'i sa bon*, in *Bka' brgyud pa'i brgal lan dang dris lan phyogs bsgrigs*, comp. Dam chos zla ba,

- Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2009: 55-104.
- MI2 Ibid., *Collected Works*, vol. 3, ed. Karma Bde legs, Lhasa: 2004: 351-486.
- RGYUD Lo tsā ba Rin chen bzang po, *Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam par bzhag pa 'thad ldan lung gi rgyan gyis spras pa*, in *Sngon byon sa skya pa'i mkhas pa rnams kyi rgyud 'grel skor*, vol. 1, Kathmandu: Sa skya rgyal yongs gsung rab slob gnyer khang, 2007: 1-77/78.
- SDE *The Tibetan Tripitaka. Taipei Edition* [= Sde dge xylograph, vdK], ed. A.W. Barber, 72 vols., Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 1991.
- SOG1 Lha rje Blo gros bzang po/Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan, *Rgyal ba'i dbang po karma pa mi bskyod rdo rjes gsang sngags rnying ma ba rnams la dri ba'i chab shog gnang ba'i dris lan lung dang rigs pa'i 'brug sgra*, in *Two refutations of Attacks on the Nyingmapa School*, repr. Sonam T. Kazi, Gangtok, 1971: 1-173.
- SOG2 Ibid., *Rgyal ba'i dbang po karmā pa mi bskyod rdo rjes gsang sngags snying ma ba* [read: *rnying ma pa*] *rnams la dri ba'i chab shog gnang ba'i dris lan lung dang rig[s] pa'i 'brug sgra*, in *Collected Writings of Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan*, vol. II, New Delhi: Sanje Dorji, 1975: 1-143.
- SOG3 Ibid. "Rgyal ba'i dbang po karma mi bskyod rdo rjes gsang sngags rnying ma pa rnams la dri ba'i chab shog gnang ba'i dris lan lung dang rigs pa'i 'brug sgra," *Sngags mang zhib 'jug* 1, 2002: 93-117; Ibid., *Sngags mang zhib 'jug* 2, 2002: 123-145.

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