Vision of Samantabhadra -The Dzokchen Anthology of Rindzin Gödem

Katarina Sylvia Turpeinen Helsinki, Finland

M.A. University of Helsinki (2003)

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Introduction

Rindzin Gödem (*rig 'dzin rgod kyi ldem 'phru can*, 1337-1408) is a very influential figure in the history of the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. He is renowned to have revealed a huge body of literature referred to as a treasure (*gter*) in 1366 on the Mountain That Resembles a Heap of Poisonous Snakes (*dug sprul spung 'dra*) in Jang (*byang*), an area on the west side of Central Tibet. Gödem's revelation started the Northern Treasures (*byang gter*) tradition, which became one of the six major traditions of the Nyingma order, and flourished into a large monastic institution known as Dorjé Drak near the capital of Lhasa.

Gödem was also a seminal figure in the history of the Great Perfection (Dzokchen, rdzogs chen), which is an indigenous Tibetan tantric tradition. Arguably, the most prominent part of Gödem's revelation is his five-volumed anthology of Dzokchen writings: The Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra (kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa zang thal) (volumes I-IV) and The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity (ka dag rang byung rang shar) (volume V), which are the focus of this dissertation. Gödem's Dzokchen anthology is one of the most influential collections of fourteenth century Dzokchen literature, comparable to the works of Longchenpa, a luminary philosopher of the Seminal Heart strand of the Dzokchen tradition. However, while Longchenpa's literary masterpieces have been the subject of several studies, we have no published translations or research on Gödem's Dzokchen anthology 1 - ashortcoming that the present dissertation aims to begin to address. In fact, while Longchenpa eventually emerged as a more popular figure in the modern period, in the centuries after these two literary geniuses flourished, Rindzin Gödem was more influential. The transmission of Gödem's Dzokchen anthology spread beyond the Northern Treasures tradition to important Nyingma monasteries, such as Kahtok, and was received and practiced by famous figures even outside the Nyingma tradition, most notably the Fifth Dalai Lama.

Thus, my work proceeds from the pressing need to explore the contents of Gödem's Dzokchen anthology. What is the character and structure of this work? What practices and topics does it contain? What is it in Gödem's anthology that made it influential and appealing to the Dzokchen audience, even to a ruler of Central Tibet, the Fifth Dalai Lama? Why was it more widespread among the post-Renaissance (post 14th century) Dzokchen audience than Longchenpa's brilliant compositions? What audience exactly was the anthology targeted to? And what decides whether a literary work becomes influential or not?

The reasons for the influence of Gödem's anthology are complex, drawing both from socio-political factors and the character of the anthology. Rindzin Gödem started a tradition, which rendered his anthology much more accessible than Longchenpa's works. The simple, beautiful style of the anthology and the manifold resources that it offers indicate that the community envisioned therein is not an erudite, monastic

¹ The only existing work on Gödem's anthology is Peter Schwieger's excellent cataloque *Tibetische* Handschriften und Blockdrucke, Teil 9, Die Werksammlungen Kun-tu bzan-po'i dgons-pa zang-thal, Ka-dag ran-byun ran-sar und mKha'- 'gro gsan-ba ye-ses-kyi rgyud, which, in addition to text titles, also provides German translations of topical outlines, narrative discourses (gleng gzhi) and colophons of many texts, and even presents summaries of some of the texts.

society, but a heterogeneous community of yogis, hermits and various kinds of committed practitioners and faithful lay people. Due to the secrecy of the transmission and the shared tantric commitments (Skt. *samaya*, Tib. *dam tshig*), this community was, however, conceptually unified as belonging in the same mandala, thus inducing a strong sense of togetherness and belonging to a lineage, which in turn contributes to the continuity and unity of the tradition and its influence.

At the time of Rindzin Gödem and until the founding of the Dorjé Drak monastery in 1632, the tradition thrived in family and clan based nomadic encampments frequented by itinerant yogis, and only in the seventeenth century, the teachings and practices of Gödem's anthology became incorporated into an institutional, monastic setting. However, Gödem's anthology is very appreciative of normative tantra, and his corpus in general is comprised largely of tantric rituals, which rendered them appealing for eventual monastic application. Shared rituals are crucial for community building, and are the basis of all Tibetan monasteries. Unlike Gödem, Longchenpa did not focus on ritual, and this is undoubtedly one reason as to why Gödem's corpus was more influential among the ritually oriented Nyingma audience of post-Renaissance Tibet.

Gödem's Dzokchen writings are presented in the form of an anthology that contains a variety of texts and genres attributed to different authors, so that Rindzin Gödem is credited merely for their discovery. For example, we have empowerment manuals, meditation instructions, commentaries, rituals, philosophical treatises, oral transmissions and narratives attributed to imperial period figures, such as Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra, and Buddha-voiced tantras and liberation through wearing texts that are said to be of divine origin. The practices range from tantric preliminaries to deity yoga, completion stage subtle body yogas, cutting (*gcod*) and Dzokchen contemplations, and the narratives, but all these elements are nevertheless unified into a single whole with a distinctive character and vision.

This type of incorporation of an astonishing variety of genres, practices, topics and authors into a single anthology is not common in Indo-Tibetan Buddhist literature. In India, we do not have precedents of this kind of anthologies, neither in Buddhist nor Hindu literature. The only anthologies we have in Indian literature are anthologies of poetry, but these are of very different character, because they are bound together merely by virtue of their poetic merit as judged by the compiler, not due to belonging to or constituting a single tradition. In the Indian manuscript tradition, we also have bound collections of manuscripts with commentarial texts that weave the separate texts together. However, the commentarial texts have a clear exegetical take on their particular body of literature, thus rendering this type of anthology different from Gödem's work that contains a variety of authoritative voices. Somewhat similarly, Abhinavagupta's Tantraloka presents itself as a commentary to a single tantra, even though it resembles anthologies in its encyclopedic character. The Indian Buddhist and Hindu literary works that are closest to Gödem's anthology are tantras, and especially cycles of tantric literature, because they can contain a variety of authors, genres and topics, including rituals, philosophy, mantras, bodily postures and lineage narratives. However, tantras themselves do not contain the historical groundedness that Gödem's anthology has, because they claim to be scriptures spoken with a singular divine voice, while Gödem's anthology contains narratives of historical figures and attributes texts to them.

As for Tibetan literature, it seems that this kind of anthologies are only found in the treasure tradition. The collected works of famous authors are somewhat similar in their presentation of many genres and topics, but they are written with a single voice by a single author, thus having a rather different agenda and outlook. Thus, this type of presentation that contains many layers of genres and voices – divine, mythical, semi-historical and historical – is a distinctive feature of the treasure literature. Some of the prominent examples of this kind of anthologies include the early treasure revelations of Nyangrel Nyima Özer and Guru Chöwang, as well as the fourteenth century anthology *Condensing the Realization of the Guru* revealed by Sangye Lingpa and the massive *Seminal Heart in Four Parts*, which contains revelations from the eleventh to fourteenth centuries by several people, such as Tsultrim Dorjé, as well as compositions of Longchenpa, who compiled the collection in the fourteenth century.

So, why did the Nyingma treasure authors write anthologies? Why were they drawn to this form of literary presentation? What were they trying to create? What is it that was brought into existence by doing this? Were there particular strategies being pursued? How did it influence the tradition? As Anne Ferry notes, generally compilers of anthologies aim to fashion the collection of individual texts into something of a different kind.² Some of the reasons for the Nyingma production of anthologies undoubtedly pertain to transmissional purposes. Combining all the necessary and auxiliary texts for the practice and study of a particular revealed Dzokchen (or Mahāyoga) system into a single package, makes it easier to transmit, as well as preserves the transmission as relatively unchanged for future generations. Moreover, the venue of a single anthology accommodates both Buddha-voiced tantras and texts grounded in the historical time by human authors, thus conveniently managing the divide between scripture and commentary. For this very reason, anthologies help to negotiate and authorize Tibetan voices. Like in many newly converted societies, in Renaissance Tibet, indigenous compositions were not considered to be canonical, but a standard for scriptural authenticity was the Indian Buddhist origin. Thus, treasure anthologies disguise the Tibetan voices as divine or Indian agents, as well as present the Tibetan voices in a continuum of a single transmission together with the Buddha-voiced speakers and the legendary Indian masters of the imperial period. Gödem's anthology contains a graphic example of this approach in its continuum of transmitting authority from Samantabhadra to Padmasambhava and Rindzin Gödem.

Many of the Tibetan revealed anthologies center on the Great Perfection philosophy and practices, and the format of an anthology is indeed well suited for the character of the Great Perfection, which started off largely as a metaperspective to Buddhist thought and practice. The early Great Perfection critiqued sharply the complexity and the sexual and violent practices of Indian Buddhist tantra, going even as far as denying the idea of practice altogether as contrivance upon the natural state. However, as all deconstructive projects, the early Great Perfection could only thrive upon the host that it criticized, and even though various practices eventually found their way into the tradition (and indeed, it became a tradition), the Great Perfection, at least to some extent, retained its character as metaperspective that frequently discussed and related to other Buddhist traditions and practices, defining itself as

² Ferry, *Tradition and the Individual Poem*, 2 and 31.

superior to the preceding traditions. Since the format of the anthology accommodates many heterogeneous topics, practices and approaches, it presents a fertile landscape for the Dzokchen metaperspective to integrate different tantric and sūtric practices and topics under the umbrella of the Dzokchen philosophical view.

Since the Nyingma treasure anthologies include texts on both contemplative practices and philosophy, they also make a statement that these two should go together. Commonly in Indian and Tibetan Buddhist literature, philosophical treatises are separate from rituals or meditation manuals – separate in terms of being different texts, studied or practiced at different times and in different contexts, perhaps even by different people. However, in Gödem's anthology, philosophy and contemplation are intertwined to the extent that it is impossible to separate them even in the parameters of individual texts. This is a characteristic Nyingma orientation that speaks for the importance of practice and its intimate relationship to philosophical thought.

One aim of my research is to give preliminary remarks as to how Gödem's anthology is situated in the terrain of the Great Perfection tradition. After several centuries of creative transformations, in the fourteenth century, the Great Perfection was in the process of being consolidated into the form that we have it today. Rindzin Gödem's anthology played an important role in this process, which is why we are compelled to ask as to how it participates in the tradition. What was its relationship to the Dzokchen tradition (and Buddhist thought) in general, and Longchenpa's works in particular? What contributions did it make? These questions shall be returned to throughout my work as the chapters attempt to contextualize the topics discussed. Overall, I argue that Gödem's anthology demonstrates notable faithfulness to the simultaneously presenting Dzokchen tradition. while interesting creative contributions.

Another major argument of my work is that Gödem's Dzokchen anthology is an artfully integrated literary and thematic whole. With the approach of metaperspective, the anthology discusses a multitude of topics and practices, skillfully integrating them into the framework of the Great Perfection, via unifying themes, elements and views. I shall return to this principle of integration throughout my discussion.

Chapter One contextualizes Gödem's Dzokchen anthology in the revelatory tradition, life of the revealer and his revelatory corpus. To understand Gödem's revealed anthology, we have to know how it is situated within the parameters of the treasure tradition, and especially Gödem's own narrative of revealing the treasure. The anthology's character as revealed literature profoundly impacts the way it was and is received in the tradition. Thus, the first chapter briefly discusses the history of the treasure tradition and the life of Rindzin Gödem, who was a charismatic unconventional lay tantric yogi. The focus is, however, mainly on the narrative of how Gödem discovered his massive treasure on the Mountain That Resembles a Heap of Poisonous Snakes. Since Gödem's anthology forms the Dzokchen part of this huge treasure, I shall also contextualize the anthology in the terrain of Gödem's entire revelatory corpus, which is highly ritual in character, for it is comprised mainly of large Mahāyoga ritual cycles, centered around such deities as Avalokiteśvara, Vajrakīla and the Eight Herukas, as well as various forms of Padmasambhava.

In Chapter Two, we shall delve into the contents of Gödem's Dzokchen anthology *The Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra* and *The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity*. My approach here is to examine the anthology as a whole. How does it function as a literary whole? How is it integrated? Does it have a structure? What are its internal dynamics? How are this type of large anthologies of Tibetan treasure literature organized? Gödem's anthology contains a wide variety of tantric and Dzokchen literature, such as empowerments, deity yoga rituals (*sādhana*), offering rituals, narratives, yogic manuals of completion stage practices, pith instruction texts on death and bardo, oral transmissions on Dzokchen practice and philosophy, tantras, dialogues between a master and disciple, and instructions on tantric preliminaries, cutting (*gcod*) practices and making liberation through wearing (*btags grol*) amulets. After reading and translating the anthology, when I first started to examine it as a whole, the sheer multitude of literature (127 texts), genres, authors, speakers, practices and topics was simply bewildering, and it took me a long time of pondering and tossing around ideas to finally understand as to how it is integrated.

There was, in fact, a major moment of insight or revelation, after which the contents were revealed in new light and began to make more sense. That was the moment when I realized what the title of the anthology is referring to and how it functions in the context of the compilation. The Tibetan title is Kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa zang thal, which I have translated as The Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra. Dgongs pa, however, is an interesting word and difficult to translate. Even though it usually refers to Samantabhadra's wisdom or realization in the anthology, in some places, it clearly refers to Samantabhadra's intention, plan or vision. Thus, eventually I realized that in a very subtle way, the anthology is putting forth a grand vision of Samantabhadra, which is his compassionate plan to benefit the world. One reason as to why it took a long time for the pieces of the puzzle to click together (even though the key is right there in the title) is that the vision of Samantabhadra is explained only in The Root Tantra of Unimpeded Realization, although its meaning envelopes the entire anthology. In short, the vision of Samantabhadra enabled me to see how all the texts, agents and topics of the anthology work together: the texts appear as part of Samantabhadra's intention to benefit the world, the divine agents are integrated into Samantabhadra's mandala, and history of Buddhism is reconfigured as involving the activity of Samantabhadra's emanations.

Gödem's Dzokchen anthology contains a variety of voices appearing as authors, speakers and concealers of the texts, and these are analyzed in the Chapter Two. We have divine Buddha-voiced speakers, most importantly Samantabhadra, and a multitude of human teachers and authors, such as the legendary Indian figures Garab Dorjé, Śrī Simha, Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra, Tibetan devotees Yéshé Tsogyel, king Thrisong Deutsen and many others, as well as Rindzin Gödem himself as the prophesied revealer. One important point I wish to make with my analysis is that all these agents and the way they function in the anthology illuminate some of the distinctive features of this rather unique type of literature, the Tibetan treasure anthologies.

This multitude of voices emerging from the different texts, as well as all the other varied and multivalent aspects of the anthology, are nevertheless unified into an integrated literary whole. As mentioned above, the most important conceptual tool of integration is the vision of Samantabhadra, but the Chapter Two also discusses many

other unifying elements, such as path structure, organizational makeup, philosophical ideas and thematic strands running across the anthology. The forces of variety and the cohesion of integrative elements create interesting, lively dynamics in Gödem's Dzokchen anthology.

The next three chapters discuss narrative (Chapter Three), ritual (Chapter Four) and contemplation and philosophy (Chapter Five). These three areas emerge from the second chapter as topical units that require closer examination in terms of their content and distinctive contributions to the Seminal Heart strand of the Dzokchen tradition.

Chapter Three analyzes the narratives of the anthology asking such questions as, how do the narratives relate to the rest of the anthology? What do they contribute? How do they participate in the tradition? The narratives are found across the anthology in all the volumes and in many different types of texts. I have classified them in six categories: cosmogonic narratives, transmission stories, transformation narratives, prophecies, wrathful narratives and metaphorical stories. I argue that the narratives are the main instrument that integrates the anthology into a literary whole, as well as accomplishing the goals of unifying communities, inspiring readers and legitimating the tradition. The narratives weave the context of divine origins, legendary transmission and prophetic gestalt, in which all the practices and topics are situated, and which extends all the way from the timeless purity of Samantabhadra to the degenerate time of Rindzin Gödem's Tibet.

The cosmogonic narratives relate Samantabhadra's enlightenment in the first moments of creation. Together with transmission narratives (Samantabhadra is the source of the transmission) and the distinctive narrative theme of the vision of Samantabhadra, they narrativize the primordial Buddha into the dimension of space and time, thus bringing the timeless awareness of the *dharmakāya* into our world and into the continuum of divine and mundane figures. Besides Samantabhadra, there are two other figures that stand out in the narrative scheme of the anthology: Padmasambhava and Rindzin Gödem. Through skillful narrative means, the identities of these figures are overlapped, and thus the authority of Samantabhadra and Padmasambhava is invested in Rindzin Gödem, who is at the center of the prophecies.

The anthology reflects and participates in the Padmasambhava triumphalism of the Renaissance Dzokchen tradition. How is this achieved in the anthology? How does it continue the tradition and to what extent does it create or transform the tradition? Clearly, Padmasambhava's role in the anthology is much more central than his peers Vimalamitra and Vairocana. He is the most important human agent, authoring, teaching and concealing more texts than others, and the prominent Dzokchen transmission of direct transcendence (*thod rgal*) is associated with him, as it is the main topic of the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava cycle.

Padmasambhava is also at the center of the transmission stories and transformation narratives. The latter group of texts contains fascinating stories structured as dialogues between a master and disciple, relating the disciple's journey to enlightenment via the visionary experiences of direct transcendence. Padmasambhava appears as a disciple in a dialogue between him and Śrī Simha, and as a master in conversation with Yéshé Tsogyel. These intriguing narratives are Gödem's anthology's distinctive contribution, and they illustrate many of the dynamics present in the anthology: the integration of narrative, philosophy and contemplation, innovative re-creation of the imperial past, and the goal of inspiring the envisioned audience of yogis, practitioners and devotees.

Chapter Four discusses the rituals in Rindzin Gödem's anthology, and urges us to ask as to why we have so many rituals in a Dzokchen anthology. What does it tell us about the tradition and its revealer? What is the relationship of ritual to Dzokchen practice and philosophy? How are the rituals altered by virtue of their inclusion in a Dzokchen collection? The rituals contained in Gödem's anthology are deity yoga sādhanas, normative tantric empowerments and Dzokchen empowerments. The inclusion of these rituals brings us back to the character of the Great Perfection as a metaperspective, which is why the tradition is prone to relating and assimilating practices from other vehicles. The fourteenth century Dzokchen anthologies generally have this tendency to incorporate tantric rituals, for example The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs contains many deity yoga rituals and tantric empowerments. However, Gödem's anthology has a larger portion of ritual texts than this earlier collection, echoing the ritual appreciation of the revealer, as well as a growing trend to integrate tantric elements into Dzokchen anthologies. The rituals in Gödem's anthology are influenced by the Dzokchen framework of the collection in various ways, such as belonging to the Great Perfection path structure or reflecting the Dzokchen view.

Chapter Five discusses contemplation and philosophy, thus taking a stance that these two are intertwined in the context of the anthology. The discussion is centered on the various cycles of contemplative practices, such as the Five Nails of Preliminary Practices, the Six Seals of completion stage subtle body yogas, the three oral transmission cycles of Vairocana, Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra that discuss the Dzokchen practices breakthrough (*khregs chod*) and direct transcendence among other topics, the Marvelous Secret cycle on cutting (*gcod*) practices, alchemical practices of essence extraction (*bcud len*) and Liberation Through Wearing instructions on making and wearing liberatory amulets. This long list alone makes one wonder: why so many practices? How are they related? How are they intertwined with philosophy? What is the relationship between the effortful tantric practices, such as the subtle body yogas, and the Dzokchen contemplations emphasizing naturalness and spontaneity?

The multitude of practices again reflects the role of the Great Perfection as metaperspective, and this is evident in the inclusion of practices from normative tantra, such as deity yoga, subtle body yogas and tantric preliminaries, as well as Mahāyāna Buddhist meditations and ethical foundation. The Seminal Heart authors were creating a tradition, a self-contained vehicle, yet retaining the metaperspectival character of Dzokchen. Due to the inclusive tendencies, the Dzokchen anthologies were prone to integration, and this principle runs deep in Gödem's anthology. Some of the most prominent examples are integration of subtle body wind technology with direct transcendence (reflecting integration of tantra and Dzokchen), and integrating analytical reflection in the practice of breakthrough (reflecting integration of philosophy and contemplation).

Chapter Six proceeds from and is inspired by several questions: Why was Gödem's anthology more influential than the works of Longchenpa? What factors play a role in

the influence of a literary work? How is Gödem's Dzokchen anthology related to Longchenpa's Great Perfection works? This chapter examines literary relationship of Longchenpa and Rindzin Gödem, and their influence in terms of their institutional, incarnational, visionary, literary and contemplative legacies, arguing for Gödem's greater influence in the centuries after they flourished, due to such elements as his successful institutional power base, ritual inclinations and accessible style.

Methodology

Robert Alter views the Bible as an integrated literary anthology with a "surprising degree of artful coherence,"³ and similarly Gödem's compilation exhibits considerable literary dexterity in the way it intertwines the disparate genres, topics and practices into a literary, as well as thematically integrated, whole. This integration is clear throughout the anthology: the narratives weave the larger context of transmission history, where all the practices, deities and masters have their place, and the Dzokchen view is present in the tantric rituals and practices contextualizing them as part of the anthology.

Daniel Boyarin studies sexuality in Talmudic literature, and he critiques the traditional positivistic historiographical method, in which "the biographical narratives of the Rabbis were considered to be legendary elaborations of 'true' stories, that is, stories that contained a kernel of biographical-historical truth, which could be discovered by careful literary archeology."⁴ Boyarin recognizes that "literature and art are one practice among many by which a culture organizes its production of meaning and values and structures itself."⁵ Thus, he approaches the texts with the method of "cultural poetics, a practice that respects the literariness of literary texts (as texts that are marked by rhetorical complexity and for which that surface formal feature is significant for their interpretation), while attempting at the same time to understand how they function within a larger socio-cultural system of practices."⁶

La Capra analyzes the great philosophical texts in the Western tradition, and inquires as to "why these texts are often objects of excessively reductive interpretation" arising from "the dominance of a documentary conception of historical understanding."⁷ In the documentary approach, "the dimensions of the document that make it a text of a certain sort with its own historicity and its relations to sociopolitical processes (for example, relations of power) are filtered out," and it is "used purely and simply as a quarry for facts in the reconstruction of the past."⁸ Instead, La Capra calls for a nuanced understanding of the text vis-à-vis its various contexts pertaining to the

³ Alter, *The World of Biblical Literature*, 4.

⁴ Boyarin, Carnal Israel, 10.

⁵ Boyarin, *Carnal Israel*, 12.

⁶ Boyarin, Carnal Israel, 14.

⁷ La Capra, *Rethinking Intellectual History*, 25.

⁸ La Capra, *Rethinking Intellectual History*, 31.

authorial intention, the life and corpus of the author, as well as the relevant literary traditions and modes of discourse.

While my approach is more influenced by Boyarin, I am also inspired by La Capra's idea of nuanced understanding of a text that arises from a dialogical relationship between the reading that treats the text as a historical document and a more deconstructive reading that is attentive of the many voices and contexts in the text. However, I am not applying either of these authors' methods in a strict sense, but drawing inspiration from them in my approach to examine the texts of the anthology as literature appreciating the multivalence of their aspects. For example, the mythical and miraculous aspects of the texts can often be the parts that transmit the most significant implications to the audience, and if we wish to understand how this literature was received, understood and interpreted in its context, we have to pay attention to these aspects. In fact, they open up a plethora of intriguing questions that take us back to understanding the history of the tradition.

How were the cultural and religious heroes viewed in the tradition? What constituted the necessary requirements for someone to be a treasure revealer? What inspired religious sentiment and faith in the audience? What is the view of the text on spiritual practice and attainment, realized in the path of a visionary tantric yogi? What is the view on the nature of (visionary) perception and reality? What are the internal dynamics of a large anthology of religious texts? And how does an anthology of religious texts participate in the tradition? Appreciating the texts in their fullness, as a complex, dynamic matrix of mythical, historical, cultural and social aspects, begets deeper understanding on Tibetan religious culture and history, which offers an arena of studying the interplay of mythical and historical, shamanic and clerical, visionary and empirical.

Inspired by Boyarin's method of cultural poetics, I am approaching the texts of the anthology as literary creations paying attention to how the various aspects in the format of the texts affect their character, such as their presentation as revealed literature, spoken by a divine agent, concealment in a cave, presentation as prophecy, presentation as a dialogue between legendary Indian or Tibetan figures and so forth. I shall also aim to understand how the practices described in the texts function in the larger context of the Dzokchen and tantric tradition, examining their position in the tradition of practices, their roots in the earlier developments and their creative elements and contributions to the development of the anthology to past and future, the main focus is, however, in the time of the anthology's revelation, ascertaining the distinctive contributions that the anthology made at that time.

Note on the abbreviations

Due to personal distaste for abbreviations, I have refrained from using abbreviations in the main body of the text. The footnotes, in general, do not employ abbreviations, apart from one exception: GZ. This is an abbreviation for the Adzom Drukpa edition of *The Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra* and *The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity*. The letters are derived from the Tibetan title of *The Unimpeded*

Realization, Dgongs pa zang thal, which is pronounced *Gongpa Zangthel.* The Appendix One uses several abbreviations, which are listed there separately.

Chapter One: Life and Corpus of Rindzin Gödem

Before delving into the world of Rindzin Gödem's Dzokchen anthology, I would like to discuss the author of the work and his literary production as a whole. Who was Rindzin Gödem, the tantric yogi credited for the revelation of *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity* and founding of the Northern Treasures tradition? What was his background and what is the narrative of his treasure expedition? What does Rindzin Gödem's entire corpus contain? By examining the life and works of this important religious protagonist of the 14th century Nyingma tradition, I hope to shed light on the way Gödem's Dzokchen anthology is rooted in the fascinating narratives of its discovery and the persona of the revealer, and situated in the terrain of his corpus that contains a vast body of Mahāyoga literature.

Life

Rindzin Gödem (1337-1408) is famed for revealing a vast treasure of tantric literature in 1366 at the Mountain That Resembles a Heap of Poisonous Snakes, in the district of Jang ("north", *byang*), thus originating a significant Nyingma tradition known as the Northern Treasures (*byang gter*). His treasure became a cutting-edge revelation of the 14th century, and the Dzokchen portion of the treasure, *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity*, rendered Gödem as a towering figure, comparable to Longchenpa, in the Great Perfection tradition of the late Tibetan Renaissance. This chapter discusses the life of Rindzin Gödem focusing especially on the narrative of his treasure revelation, due to its importance in the selfunderstanding of the tradition and in the way his treasures are viewed and approached.

Much is known about the life of Rindzin Gödem (rig 'dzin rgod kyi ldem 'phru can, aka Ngödrup Gyeltsen) due to his biography, *The Ray of Sunlight (nyi ma'i 'od zer)*, written by one of his immediate disciples, Nyima Zangpo.⁹ In addition, we have *The History of Revealing the Treasure* written by Rindzin Gödem himself. Influenced by the "anti-documentary" method of such theorists as Daniel Boyarin and Dominick La Capra, my approach to Rindzin Gödem's biography and revelation account is not to strip off the mythical aspects in order to get to the historical facts, but to examine them as literature, crucial in the self-understanding of the Northern Treasures tradition. I shall introduce some of the fascinating descriptions of Rindzin Gödem's life narrated in his biography and revelation account, with the appreciation of the

⁹ An abridged translation of this work is found in Jurgen Herweg's MA thesis, *The Hagiography of Rig 'dzin rgod kyi ldem phru can And Three Historic Questions Emerging from It.* Jay Valentine also discusses Gödem's life in his dissertation, *The Lords of the Northern Treasures Tradition*, which is an invaluable resource for understanding the history of the tradition and its key figures.

entire range of meanings and associations that they contain. The tradition celebrates the mythical aspects in the lives of the legendary figures, which is why it is essential to discuss the importance and function of these fabulous narratives. I shall also examine the life of Gödem in relation to the modes of discourse pertaining to the biographical literature and conventions of the treasure tradition.

Rindzin Gödem was born as Ngödrup Gyeltsen in the valley of Namolung, district of Thoyor Nakpo near Mt. Trazang, in a family of Nyingma tantric practitioners with ancient royal associations. His father, Lopön Sidü Dülpel was from the Degyin Hor clan, the roots of which extend to the imperial period, when a forefather of the clan came to Tibet as a part of the retinue of the maternal uncle of the Princess Kyimchang Ongco, and was nominated as a minister of religious offerings. The Degyin Hor clan transmitted the tantric ritual practices of Vajrakīla, Magical Web of Illusion (*sgyu 'phrul*) and Mamo, as well as the brahmin tradition of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen bram ze'i lugs*), and Lopön Sidü Dülpel was a renown master of these rituals and practices.

In the revelatory tradition, the coming of a treasure revealer has to be prophesied, and accordingly, *The Ray of Sunlight* cites several sources that contain prophecies of the appearance of a great treasure master. The prophecies mention such details of Gödem's life as his birth will occur in the fire ox year accompanied with miraculous signs, he will have moles at the bases of his ears and at the crown, his character will be fierce, brave and realized, and he will lead wandering life style, have his hair tied on a top knot and wear the garb of a tantric yogi. The prophecies also relate that hair tufts resembling vulture feathers will grow from his head, and that he will reveal a treasure at the Glorious Copper Colored Mountain (*zang zang lha brag*).¹⁰

The prophecies cited in *The Ray of Sunlight* come from several sources. Unfortunately, the majority of the sources (six texts) are unidentified,¹¹ and two texts are from the treasures of Rindzin Gödem,¹² thus not predating his revelation. However, three prophecy texts cited in *The Ray of Sunlight* are found in *The Northern Treasures Biographies and Prophecies*.¹³ Two of the texts do not provide any information on the author, revealer or the time of composition in the colophons, but *The Seminal Certificate on the Key Points* is of interest here, because the colophon states that Ritröpa Zangpo revealed it, transcribed it from the yellow scrolls

¹⁰ Herweg, *The Hagiography of Rig 'dzin rgod kyi ldem 'phru can*, 55-63.

¹¹ The names of these texts are: 'khor ba rgyun bcod, snying byang bdun pa, rnam thar lung bstan, stag so gangs ri snying byang, 'bras gshong gi gab pa snying gi lde mig and kha byang gter gyi bang mdzod.

¹² The List Certificate of the Six Oral Transmissions (snyan brgyud drug gi tho byang) is from The Unimpeded Realization, and The Seal of Entrustment of the Tantra of the Intrinsic Clarity of Reality (chos nyid rang gsal rgyud kyi gtad rgya) comes from from the cycle on Avalokiteśvara, The Liberator of All Beings ('gro ba kun grol).

¹³ Byang gter lugs kyi rnam thar dang ma 'ongs lung bstan. The three texts are: The Three Lamps (sgron ma rnam gsum), The Seven Topics of the Pith Instructions on the Key Points of the Seminal Heart (snying tig gnad kyi man ngag don bdun) and The Seminal Certificate on the Key Points (snying byang gnad kyi them bu).

and offered it to Rindzin Gödem.¹⁴ Ritröpa Zangpo is elemental in Gödem's treasure revelation narrative, because he unearthed a treasures that contained a key to the treasure cave that Gödem was destined to discover, as well as scrolls containing prophecies and instructions concerning the treasure revelation. The implicit suggestion contained in the colophon is that *The Seminal Certificate on the Key Points* is one of the texts that Ritröpa Zangpo presented to Gödem.

Assessing the claims of the prophecies is not part of my agenda, but what I find particularly interesting here is the extensive presence of prophetic verification that accompanies the narrative of *The Ray of Sunlight*. As the stages of Rindzin Gödem's life are related in the work, most of them are accompanied by prophetic endorsements that present the details of Gödem's life in an entirely different light of predestined unfolding of events. As Janet Gyatso points out, these type of prophecies, especially a prophecy about the revelation of the treasure, are elemental in legitimizing a treasure revealer. He or she has to be prophesied in order to be authentic.

What is curious about the prophetic continuum of *The Ray of Sunlight* is that nowhere in the work does it state that Rindzin Gödem is an incarnation of Padmasambhava's close disciple, Nanam Dorjé Düjom – an assertion that is very important later on in the tradition. Jay Valentine argues that this reflects the relative unimportance of this identification early on in the tradition. However, in *The Unimpeded Realization* Gödem is said to be Nanam Dorjé Düjom's rebirth, but despite this association, Nanam Dorjé Düjom has a very slight role in the anthology: he is only mentioned in passing a couple of times. Thus, it seems that although the identification of these figures was made early on, it was not a central aspect in the process of legitimizing Gödem as an authentic revealer.

It is interesting that instead of Nanam Dorjé Düjom, in *The Ray of Sunlight* Gödem is identified with Samantabhadra, who is said to emanate as the *dharmakāya* ("reality body", Tib. chos sku) Amitābha to the Buddhas, sambhogakāya ("enjoyment body", Tib. longs sku) Avalokiteśvara to the bodhisattvas, nirmāņakāya ("emanation body", Tib. sprul sku) Padmasambhava to the yogic practitioners of the imperial period, and as Rindzin Gödem to the people of the degenerate time, i.e. the 14th century. This identification of Gödem with Samantabhadra and Padmasambhava is undoubtedly based on the narratives of The Unimpeded Realization, because the idea of Samantabhadra's emanations and his connection to Padmasambhava and Gödem play an important role in the narrative scheme of The Unimpeded Realization. As a student of Rindzin Gödem, undoubtedly Nyima Zangpo was familiar with these narratives in Gödem's Dzokchen anthology, and appropriated them in his composition of his master's biography. As we may expect from a devoted disciple, Nyima Zangpo also makes this identification of Gödem with Samantabhadra and Padmasambhava more explicit than in *The Unimpeded Realization*, where the identity of these figures is not stated quite so bluntly, but suggested more subtly by ascertaining Padmasambhava as a second order emanation of Samantabhadra in the transmission narratives, and then pointing to the identity of Padmasambhava and Gödem for example in the wrathful

¹⁴ Seminal Certificate on the Key Points (snying byang gnad kyi them bu) in The Northern Treasure Biographies and Prophecies, 319.

narratives. I shall discuss the dynamics of these figures in *The Unimpeded Realization* more in detail in the third chapter on narratives.

Rindzin Gödem received the majority of his religious training from his family. His father Sidü Dulpal conferred him the empowerment of the Dzokchen brahmin tradition in his early childhood. Unfortunately, Sidü Dülpel passed away when Rindzin Gödem was still a young boy, so his early education and transmission of the family rituals was left to his mother Sönam Khyeudren, brother Lekpawa, uncles and a respected teacher Pelchen Bumpa from the Sé clan. In addition to the family transmission, Gödem also studied and practiced the treasures of Guru Chöwang (1212-1270) under Nangden Gyelpo, and received further instruction on the Great Perfection from Draklungpa Khétsün Rinchenpel.

Treasure revelation

Background

The Tibetan treasure (*gter ma*) tradition entails discovery of texts and sacred artifacts that are said to have been buried in the imperial period (8-9th century) by prominent Indian masters, such as Vimalamitra, Vairocana and Padmasambhava, and that are subsequently found by treasure revealers (*gter ston*) from the tenth century onward during the later dissemination of Buddhism from India to Tibet. The treasure tradition is contrasted with the lineages of transmitted precepts (*bka' ma*), which are teachings said to originate from an enlightened source and passed down from a master to a disciple.

In the imperial period, Tibet was at the height of her political might controlling much of Central Asia, Mongolia and Nepal and parts of China. At this time, Buddhism was introduced to Tibet through the efforts of several religious kings. The king Thrisong Deutsen is of particular interest in the context of the treasure tradition, because he is said to have invited a miracle-working Indian tantric yogi, Padmasambhava, to Tibet to help build the first monastery of Tibet, Samyé. Padmasambhava becomes very central in the later treasure tradition from the 12th century onward, and he comes to be credited for the establishment of Buddhism to Tibet, and for concealing most of the treasures that are revealed until today.

Buddhism took root in Tibet in this time period of religious kings, but the fortunes waned with the assassination of Trisong Deutsen's successor Ralpacen. The country was plunged into political fragmentation, and the monasteries could not sustain themselves without the lavish royal patronage. Buddhism survived, however, in the lineages of householder tantric yogis, as well as in Eastern Tibet, which was less effected by the collapse of the imperium based in Central Tibet.

The second dissemination of Buddhism began on the tenth century, and this period is marked by extensive translation of Indian Buddhist tantric scriptures. Numerous Tibetans made the difficult journey to India to study with Indian Buddhist masters, and many Indian Sanskrit scholars and yogic masters also travelled to Tibet. The importation of Buddhism from India sparked an unprecedented cultural and religious efflorescence in Tibet that sustained a multitude of different teachings, texts and groups of practitioners. As people were travelling back and forth across the Himalayan mountain range, texts were translated, or sometimes composed on the way, and many creative variations of ideas and practices were produced, such as the Pacifying (*zhi byed*) and Cutting (*gcod*) practices propounded by Padampa Sangye, Path and Result (*lam 'bras*) of the Sakya school, The Great Seal of the Kagyupas and the Great Perfection of the Nyingma and Bön traditions.

In the literary flourishing of the early Tibetan Renaissance, the standard of authenticity came to be the Indian origin of the scriptures and teachings. The oldest Tibetan Buddhist school, the Nyingma (*rnying ma*) or Ancient tradition, was established in the imperial period, and was based on the transmission of Indian Buddhist scriptures that were prevalent in the $8-9^{th}$ centuries. However, tantric Buddhism in India had evolved considerably since that time. As new texts and Buddhist teachings started pouring into Tibet, the groups and lineages that translated and propagated them distinguished themselves from the older transmission by referring to themselves as Sarma (*gsar ma*) or Modern schools. Since the Sarma schools had new translations of the cutting-edge Indian tantric scriptures, the Nyingma tradition was in danger of becoming old-fashioned, and even outdated. The treasure movement provided a solution for the tradition to regenerate and reinvigorate itself, while complying with the demand of the Indian origin: the treasures were concealed by Indic figures.

Thus, at this time period the Nyingma (and Bön) tradition produced a large amount of their literary pearls through the veils of the treasure revelation, and in the process creatively recreated the Tibetan past, situating Tibet in the spiritual map of Asia as a sacred land, the taming ground of Avalokitessara, graced by the miraculous activities of Padmasambhava, who subjugated the demons and spirits of Tibet by binding them under oath as protectors of Buddhism. Some of the most prominent treasures propounding the legendary narratives are The Hundred Thousand Jewels of the Word (ma ni bka' 'bum), The Five Chronicles (bka' thang lde lnga) and The Chronicle of Padmasambhava (padma thang vig). In general, these texts were accepted as legitimate treasures also by the Sarma schools, perhaps because they addressed all Tibetans with the narratives of the imperial glory. Many other treasures, however, were criticized as inauthentic by several proponents of the Sarma schools, reflecting the larger schism and competition between the scholarly oriented Sarma translators and the lay tantric yogis of the Nyingma revelatory tradition. Throughout its history, the movement also had powerful Sarma supporters, such as the Fifth Dalai Lama, who is himself credited for revelation of treasures.

Besides the pressure for Indian origins, the treasure movement has its roots in the material remains of the Tibetan imperium and the cult of royal tombs. The mighty kings of the past were buried in tombs together with royal artifacts, material treasures, food and the king's ministers, who were bound to live inside the tomb as guardians partaking on the wealth and food supplied by regular offerings. These living tomb guardians and the ominous nature of the site are echoed in the treasure tradition's conception of the guardians deities of the treasures and the dangers involved in the process of revelation. In the imperial period, valuable items were also buried because of political unrest or oppression. As Davidson notes, the kings of the empire favored sūtric Buddhism and forbade the translation of tantras, which were often translated in

secrecy and then hidden in temples. After the collapse of the empire some of these scriptures of the royal period were occasionally found, thus fueling the notion of concealed treasures from the royal period.¹⁵

Finding hidden scriptures is also an old concept in Buddhism – a notable precedent being Nāgārjuna's discovery of the Perfection of Wisdom literature in the realm of the serpent spirits ($n\bar{a}ga$) – but only in Tibet this phenomenon became a widespread form of literary composition. While some of the earlier treasures were genuinely discovered scriptures, in general, the revealed literature does not resemble the more archaic literature of the imperial period, but displays the characteristics of the literary production of the time of revelation. From the modern perspective appreciative of individuality and innovation, the treasure literature, especially the Great Perfection scriptures, contain some of the most creative and fascinating assimilations of Buddhist thought and practice, which is why the "Tibetanness" or the indigenous origin of these scriptures has been celebrated by some modern Tibetan scholars, notably Samten Karmay.

Gödem's treasure expedition

By the fourteenth century when Rindzin Gödem revealed his treasure, Padmasambhava had become the central figure of the treasure movement. This is reflected in Gödem's treasure, for he features as the main composer and concealer of texts in *The Unimpeded Realization*. The narrative of Gödem's treasure revelation also reflects many other typical characteristics of the treasure tradition at this time period, such as prophetic endorsements, visionary guidance, treasure guardians and ominous signs.

As mentioned above, the story begins with Ritröpa Zangpo Drakpa, who was a Mahāmudra practitioner from the Kagyu school, and who extracted treasures from Mt. Trazang and the temple of Drompa Gyang, guided by an emanation of Padmasambhava. Ritröpa Zangpo's treasures contained a key to the treasure that Gödem was destined to discover in the Mountain That Resembles a Heap of Poisonous Snakes (dug sprul spungs dra), as well as prophetic guidelines on how to identify the destined revealer and scrolls of instructions for Gödem. Ritröpa Zangpo gave the scrolls and the key to his three companions, instructing them to stay near the mountain in Drak valley, and if they were to meet a yogi carrying a statue and rosary in his hands and speaking lovingly about the kings of Gungthang in the beginning of their conversation, they should present him with the key. The kings of Mangyul Gungthang were descendants of the royal blood line of the ancient kings of the Tibetan empire, and thus have a particular connection to the treasure tradition. Upon arriving at Drak valley, Ritröpa Zangpo's messengers met Rindzin Gödem, who was coming from Namolung carrying a statue of Vajrakīla in his right hand and a rosary on the left, and greeted them by lamenting about the death of the king of Gungthang, Tashi De. Thus, they identified him, and gave him the scrolls and key to the treasure.

¹⁵ Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, 210-224.

The deceased ruler of Gungthang Tashi De was identified in the prophecies as the destined protector of the treasure (gter tshab), that is, he was meant to provide the treasure substitute, which is a considerable amount of wealth placed at the site of revelation after extracting the treasure to appease the guardian deities. As the destined time of revelation (June 14th, 1366) was drawing near, Gödem travelled to the Sakya monastery to see the prince Phuntsok De, the son of Tashi De. The prince was residing in Sakya at the time, and Gödem wanted to convince him to be the treasure protector in place of his father. However, the prince was of different outlook than his father, and only gave Gödem one *zho* of gold¹⁶ to finance the treasure expedition. The Fifth Dalai Lama blames the intrigues at Sakya for the king's lack of engagement,¹⁷ and Gödem's biography also mentions that the king was swayed by the intellectuals at Sakya:¹⁸ apparently the scholastically oriented Sakyapas did not appreciate the treasure quest of the tantric yogi of the Nyingma tradition, and convinced the king not to spend any money on such a dubious expedition. The change in king's mind that resulted in him at least offering one *zho* of gold¹⁹ was brought about by the wrathful Vajrakīla rites that Gödem performed.²⁰ However, after Gödem's succesful treasure revelation, the king became Gödem's disciple and patron.²¹

Rindzin Gödem was accompanied in his treasure expedition by his uncle Lama Dopawa (aka Sangye Tenpa) and disciple Rindzin Gönpo. When the three arrived at the Mountain That Resembles a Heap of Poisonous Snakes, they saw three rainbow colored lights. They searched the treasure cave for two days, and upon finding it saw another rainbow in the sky.²² As Gödem stayed alone in the cave praying, the cave shook as the sign of the arrival of the treasure guardian. At that night after midnight, Gödem placed a key to a rock that was marked by a crossed vajra, and a door to a smaller cave opened. In the cave was a square blue stone, on top of which was lying a pale green snake with pale yellow stomach coiled in the shape of a hexagonal gem. The snake had three jewel-like protuberances at its heart, and it covered the treasure casket within its coils. The casket contained the treasure texts that Gödem was destined to reveal, including *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity*.²³

The treasure also enclosed specific texts and ritual emblems that were meant for the kings of Gungthang, such as deity yoga $s\bar{a}dhanas$, instructions on how to govern beneficially, wrathful mantras and ritual daggers (*phur ba*) for protection, and Samantabhadra practices for accomplishing the benefit of beings in this life and

¹⁶ According to Sardar, one *zho* of gold is about the weight of the king (*The Buddha's Secret Gardens*, 75), but modern dictionaries, such as Rangjung Yéshé, state that one *zho* is only about five grams.

¹⁷ Herweg, *The Hagiography of Rig 'dzin rgod kyi ldem 'phru can*, 168.

¹⁸ Sardar, The Buddha's Secret Gardens, 72-73.

¹⁹ According to Sardar, one *zho* is about the weight of the king (*The Buddha's Secret Gardens*, 75).

²⁰ Sardar, The Buddha's Secret Gardens, 74-5.

²¹ Herweg, *The Hagiography of Rig 'dzin rgod kyi ldem 'phru can*, 169.

²² The History of Revealing the Treasure, in Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. I:2-3.

²³ The History of Revealing the Treasure in Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. I:4-5, and Herweg, The Hagiography of Rig 'dzin rgod kyi ldem 'phru can, 94-97.

enlightenment in the next.²⁴ I shall return to the content of the treasure in the section on Gödem's corpus. The cave also housed treasures that Gödem was not destined to reveal, such as soul turquoise of the king Trisong Deutsen and other gems, which were placed there as offerings to the treasure guardians, so Gödem left them intact. After extracting the treasure, Gödem offered the treasure substitute comprised of *ficus religiosa*, jewels and seeds, and fitted the door back to the cave. As they travelled back to Mt. Trazang, tent-shaped rainbows appeared repeatedly for their entire journey, and that evening the place was filled with terrifying wrathful manifestations, such as fierce sounds and earthquakes. According to Gödem, these were signs that the hords of demons would be vanquished quickly.²⁵

Rindzin Gödem's treasure revelation is particularly connected to the glory of the imperial period, because the treasure connects ideologically and spiritually the kings of Gungthang to the ancient kings of the Tibetan empire. The kings of Gungthang are already the descendants of the imperial kings and thus connected by blood, but they need the assistance of the saint-revealer to reconnect spiritually to their ancient past via the treasure texts originating from that period and hidden specifically for the kings of Gungthang. Thus, the treasure narrative places Rindzin Gödem to a unique position of lighting and preserving the virtuous royal heritage during the dark period of the fourteenth century Tibet.

Gödem is also famed for discovering the entry certificates (*kha byang*) and "keys" (*lde mig*) for seven hidden lands, or paradisiacal places that are abundant with resources and ideal for spiritual practice. It is said that Gödem visited all these seven hidden lands, but opened only some of them for others, and some had to wait for later visionaries for their opening.²⁶ The most famous of the hidden lands opened by Gödem is the Valley of Rice (*'bras mo gshongs*) located in Sikkim. The search for the Valley of Rice is described as an arduous journey in the wild that lasted for many years and was guided by prophecies and revelations in visions and dreams. Gödem's search for hidden lands is discussed in detail by Sardar-Afkhami in *The Buddha's Secret Gardens: End-Times and Hidden-Lands in Tibetan Imagination*, so I will not elaborate on it here.²⁷

Corpus

Rindzin Gödem's Dzokchen anthology is situated in the terrain of his entire revelatory corpus, which is comprised mainly of different cycles of Mahāyoga ritual systems. Gödem's extant corpus is vast, containing at least nine major cycles of literature: eight ritual cycles and the Dzokchen anthology. All the ritual cycles contain a wide variety of literature, such as the root tantras, short and long versions of the *sādhana* or ritual manual, commentarial literature, empowerments, associated rituals

²⁴ Herweg, *The Hagiography of Rig 'dzin rgod kyi ldem 'phru can*, 74-76.

²⁵ Herweg, *The Hagiography of Rig 'dzin rgod kyi ldem 'phru can*, 100.

²⁶ Sardar, *The Buddha's Secret Gardens*, 91-92.

²⁷ Sardar, The Buddha's Secret Gardens, 66-93.

and many other types of texts. I shall first outline the ritual cycles, and then discuss the content of some them in more detail.

The basis of the Northern Treasures tradition's practice is formed by three cycles known as the Three Roots of the Northern Treasures:

Outer cycle centered on Avalokiteśvara in his peaceful form called *The Great Compassionate One, The Liberator of All Beings (thugs rje chen po 'gro ba kun grol)* Inner cycle centered on Padmasambhava in his peaceful form called *The Masters of Awareness that Embody the Lineage (rig 'dzin gdung sgrub,* 472 pp.)

(3) Secret cycle centered on Padmasambhava in his wrathful guru form called *The Heart Practice of the Wrathful Creativity (thugs sgrub drag po rtsal*, 4 volumes, 2254 pp.)

The three roots in Tibetan Buddhism refer to the master (*guru, bla ma*), tutelary deity (*deva, yi dam*) and the feminine wisdom beings or $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}s$ (*mkha' gro ma*). The Northern Treasures tradition has somewhat unusual presentation of the three roots, since the outer root of the guru is actually a deity practice of Avalokiteśvara, the inner root of the deity is a practice of a peaceful guru form of Padmasambhava, and the secret root of the $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}$ is a practice of the wrathful guru Padmasambhava. Consequently, there is no major ritual cycle centered on a female deity or $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}$ in the Northern Treasures tradition, and on the $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}$ day, which is 25th day of the Tibetan month, the ritual of the wrathful guru is performed in the Northern Treasures monasteries.

The other major ritual cycles in Gödem's corpus are all centered on various wrathful deities:

(4) Three cycles centered on the deity Vajrakīla or Phurba called *The Combined* Sādhanas of Vajrakīla (phur ba dril sgrub, 633 pp.), *The Vajrakīla of the Northern Treasures* (byang gter phur ba, 2 volumes, 1220 pp.) and another version of *The* Vajrakīla of the Northern Treasures (416 pp.)²⁸

(5) Cycle centered on the Eight Herukas or "Word Deities" (*bka' brgyad*) of the Nyingma tradition called *The Eight Wrathful*, *Self-Emergent*, *Self-Arisen Herukas* (*bka' brgyad drag po rang byung rang shar*, 695 pp.)

(6) Hayagrīva cycle called Hayagrīva, the Subjugator of Drekpa Spirits (rta mgrin dregs pa dbang bsdud)

(7) Cycle of Mahādeva (lha chen skor)

Besides these wrathful practice systems and their associated literature, we have a cycle of texts on conduct and renewing vows that contains rituals centered on the Buddha Vairocana:

(8) The Powerful Bodhisattva Conduct (byang chubs sems dpa'i spyod dbang)

The main application of this cycle is the ritual practices for mending vows (*gso sbyong*) for both monastic and lay practitioners performed on the holy days of the monthly Tibetan calendar.

 $^{^{28}}$ As Boord notes, there is considerable overlap between the texts of these cycles, so that many texts are found in all three cycles (Boord, *The Cult of the Deity Vajrakīla*, 227-237).

Apart from these ritual cycles, we also have a collection of prophecies from Rindzin Gödem's treasure augmented by prophecies from other sources called *The Lamp That Illuminates the Prophecies of the Future (ma 'ongs lung bstan gsal ba'i sgron me)*.

These eight ritual cycles listed above, as well as Gödem's Dzokchen anthology, are actively transmitted and practiced in the Northern Treasures tradition as it has come down to us today. The rituals are carried out both monthly on particular holy days and annually in ritual festivals (*grub chen*) that go on for about 10-18 days, during which the *sādhana* is performed daily. The details of the ritual calendar of the Dorjé Drak monastery are outlined by Boord,²⁹ so I will not elaborate on them here.

Some of these ritual cycles are also practiced extensively in the three-year retreat of the Dorjé Drak monastery in exile in Shimla. In this retreat, the participants first complete the preliminary practices (*sngon 'gro*) located in Gödem's Dzokchen anthology, and then go on to practice the Three Roots of the Northern Treasures: Avalokiteśvara (one month), Peaceful Guru (5-6 months) and Wrathful Guru (one month). The last portion of the retreat is devoted to the Vajrakīla or Phurba ritual, and the length of the practice depends on the participant and whether he wishes to also engage in other optional ritual practices.

Vajrakīla is the most important ritual in the Northern Treasures tradition today, and it is performed more than any other ritual in the Dorjé Drak monastery in exile in Shimla. Every second month on the 29th day of the Tibetan lunar calendar the monks perform the Vajrakīla ritual, and on the eighth month of the Tibetan calendar, there is an annual Vajrakīla ritual festival (*phur ba grub chen*), which features the daily performance of the ritual for twelve days in a row, as well as Vajrakīla fire ritual (*sbying sreg*) and monastic dance (*cham*). Vajrakīla is also practiced upon demand whenever there are obstacles that need to be dispelled, such as health problems of the lineage holder Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche. Additional Vajrakīla ritual festivals are also performed on special occasions, such as pilgrimage, or for specific reasons, such as dispelling obstacles or prolonging the life span of the lineage holder.³⁰

Apart from these ritual cycles that are actively practiced and transmitted, there are several cycles of texts on other topics that are not practiced in the tradition today, but which are outlined in the presentations of Gödem's treasure texts found in the treasure narratives.³¹ Due to the importance of the traditional presentation of Gödem's treasure in the self-understanding of the Northern Treasures tradition, it deserves to be summarized as a whole. The reader will notice the familiar names of the cycles listed above, as well as new titles of cycles, which are given also in Tibetan.

²⁹ Boord, Cult of the Deity Vajrakīla, 31-33.

³⁰ For example, when Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche visited Tashiding in Sikkim in 2011, he carried out a five-day Phurba ritual festival in his residence. In 2010, a special one-month Phurba ritual festival was organized in Ladakh at a satellite monastery of Dorjé Drak for the long life of Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche. The ritual was attended by three of the most prominent Northern Treasures masters Namkhai Nyingpo, Gonjang Rinpoche and Lhatsen Rinpoche.

³¹ Unfortunately, I have been unable to get a copy of the Collected Works of the Northern Treasures Tradition, so I have been unable to ascertain whether these additional cycles are still extant.

The treasure narratives describe Gödem's revelation as being contained in a casket of five compartments. The central compartment made of maroon leather is said to have contained Gödem's Dzokchen anthology *The Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra*, the peaceful guru cycle *The Masters of Awareness that Embody the Lineage* and Atiyoga texts from the Vajrakīla cycle, as well as several ritual daggers (*kīla, phur ba*) activated by Padmasambhava and lockets of hair from the heads of Padmasambhava, Yéshé Tsogyel, Thrisong Deutsen and Nanam Dorjé Düjom. These sacred items emphasize the superiority of the central compartment, which is the repository of the highest Dzokchen teachings of Gödem's revelation, and the presence of the Atiyoga Vajrakīla texts again highlights the importance of this cycle.

The eastern compartment made of conch shell seems to also be of more philosophical nature, because it is said to have contained the fifth volume of Gödem's Dzokchen anthology *The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity*, as well as two additional cycles *Putting an End to Cause and Effect (rgyu 'bras la ldog pa)* and *Teaching on the Realization Equal to Sky (dgongs pa nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'i chos)*

The southern compartment made of gold is markedly ritual in character, containing *The Heart Practice of the Wrathful Creativity*, *The Eight Wrathful*, *Self-Emergent*, *Self-Arisen Herukas* and practices of Vajrakīla in his form as the Great Supreme Kīla (*mahottarakīla*) with nine faces and eighteen hands, as well as *The Teaching on the Fourfold Practice of Deity Invocation (snyen sgrub rnam pa bzhi'i chos)*.

The western compartment made of red copper is described as containing the four above mentioned ritual cycles: the external cycle of *The Liberator of All Beings*, *Hayagrīva*, *the Subjugator of Drekpa Spirits*, *The Mahādeva Cycle*, and *The Powerful Bodhisattva Conduct*. In addition, there are three cycles: *Distinguished Interdependent Connection (rten 'brel khyad par can)*, *Teaching Akin to the Trunk of the Sandal Tree (tsan dan gyi sdong bu lta bu'i chos)* and *Magnetizing Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa ('khor 'das dbang sdud)*.

The northern compartment made of black iron is said to have contained the most violent of all the wrathful ritual texts, which is why some of these texts were not transcribed and disseminated. Many Vajrakīla teachings are said to be from this compartment, as well as several treatises on preparing ritual medicine (*sman gyi tshad byas pa*), further commentaries and instructions on making thread crosses (*mdos*), and *The Teaching for Pulverizing Enemies and Obstacles* (*dgra bgegs thal bar rlog pa'i chos*), which is said to be as pernicious as the stem of a poisonous plant.³²

The important position of Vajrakīla in the Northern Treasures is again evident, as these teachings are found in as many as three compartments. Vajrakīla practices contain both the highest Atiyoga texts and the most wrathful lower rites of magic, which is another reason why these texts are ascribed across Gödem's treasure in the supreme central compartment and wrathful northern compartment.

After this general overview of Gödem's treasure, I shall elaborate on the contents of the cycles of the Three Roots, that is, the Avalokiteśvara cycle *The Liberator of All*

³² Boord, Cult of the Deity Vajrakila, 25-26.

Beings, peaceful guru cycle *The Masters of Awareness that Embody the Lineage*, and the wrathful guru cycle *Wrathful Creativity* (i.e. the Three Roots). The outer root of the Northern Treasures, *The Liberator of All Beings*, is centered around Avalokiteśvara in his peaceful white form with four arms. The *sādhana* also features the eight great bodhisattvas, arhats, dharma protectors and the Goddess Prajñāpāramitā, who symbolizes the speech of all the Buddhas and scriptures.

The inner root, the peaceful guru sādhana The Masters of Awareness that Embody the Lineage, has an interesting, complex mandala with Padmasambhava as the main deity in peaceful royal attire. The rest of the figures are located on the lotus flower at his crown. In the middle is Samantabhadra in union with Samantabhadrī, surrounded by Vajradhara and the five Buddhas with consorts. On the outer rim of these figures are Garab Dorjé and the three great bodhisattvas, surrounded by king Dza, Indrabhūti, Śrī Simha and Vimalamitra. On the outermost rim are the eight masters of awareness (Skt. vidyādhara, Tib. rig 'dzin),³³ who are important Indic figures: Hūmkāra, Mañjuśrimitra, Nagārjuna, Prabhahāsti, Dhanasamskrta, Vajradharma, Guhyacandra and Śāntigarbha. Thus, we see how the *mandala* of this peaceful guru practice has an important integrative function of bringing together various divine and mundane agents that are important in the sūtric, tantric and Dzokchen transmissions. The mantra recitation of this sādhana is also notable, because it aligns the inner cycle closer to the secret practice of the wrathful guru. The mantra recitation contains three levels. The first two levels focus on the peaceful form of the guru Padmasambhava, and the third level features a wrathful form, Guru Thödrengtsel, with a wrathful guru mantra.

The secret guru practice, *The Wrathful Creativity*, moves away from the complex visualization of the inner guru practice, and contains just the majestic dark blue wrathful deity form of Padmasambhava, standing on demons, holding a vajra and bell, wearing the eight charnel ground ornaments and surrounded by flames. The mantra recitation is also more simple, containing just the recitation of the seed syllable Hūm, although it involves various elaborate visualizations, such as the Hūms filling one's body and cleansing it, radiating out and filling the world, and transforming into $d\bar{a}kin\bar{s}$, out of whose mouths emanate countless Hūm syllables.

All these cycles contain an astonishing variety of texts, but the some of the same topics and types of texts are found in all the three cycles. These same types of texts include several root tantras of the cycle and their associated *sādhanas*, funerary rituals including a ritual to guide the consciousness of the deceased, a *sādhana* for ritual festivals, fire ritual, several empowerments, lineage prayers and a guru yoga of the cycle. All the cycles, as extant today, also contain many additional texts composed by later incarnations of Rindzin Gödem, especially Pema Thrinlé, as well as other seminal figures of the tradition.

Besides the shared repertoire of genres and topics, each cycle has several special texts characteristic to the cycle. *The Liberator of All Beings* has a marked funerary focus with many death rituals, a ritual to guide the dead and burn a corpse, ritual to empty

 $^{^{33}}$ Master of awareness refers to a realized individual, who has supranormal abilities, and in the Dzokchen context, the term has a particular connotation of having recognized the pristine awareness (*rig pa*).

the hell realms (*na rak dong sprugs*) and a text on consciousness transference ('*pho ba*). The cycle also emphasizes longevity and good rebirth, containing longevity *sādhanas*, instructions to make precious pills (*ril bu*), rituals to benefit beings, a text on dedicating food, and an additional text composed by Pema Thrinlé on how to attain an esteemed rebirth in seven successive lives.³⁴ The focus on good rebirth is evident in the most important application of the cycle today, which is the annual fasting ritual (*gnyung gnas*) taking place on the first eighteen days of the fourth month of the Tibetan calendar in the Dorjé Drak monastery in exile in Shimla. The ritual contains daily prayers, devotional and purificatory practices, Avalokiteśvara *sādhana* from *The Liberator of All Beings* as well as other *sādhanas*, such as the peaceful and wrathful guru of the inner and secret root.

All the adult monks of the monastery participate in the fasting ritual, together with numerous lay people from the surrounding Tibetan community. The ritual, although challenging, is particularly appealing to the lay Tibetan population, because it is believed to free oneself from the misfortune of being born in the lower realms. The concept of fasting in the ritual entails strict abstinence from food, drink and talking (excluding mantra recitation and liturgy) on every second day of the ritual and every evening. Every second day the participants are served tea, a simple breakfast and elaborate lunch, after which they take a vow to fast for the rest of the day and the next day. The vow is taken by the symbolic action of squeezing and shaping a piece of dough with one's hand. The ritual culminates on the 18th day in the practices to restore and renew one's vows and commitments from the cycle of *The Powerful Bodhisattva Conduct*.

The specific texts in *The Masters of Awareness that Embody the Lineage* include texts on completion stage practices, mantra recitation and the four ritual activities (pacifying, increasing, magnetizing and wrathful, *zhi rgya dbang drag*).³⁵ Most notably, the cycle contains two consecration rituals of temples, stūpas and the like. These are the consecration rituals that are invariably employed in the Northern Treasures tradition today when a new temple, stūpa or the like needs to be consecrated, as well as in the reconsecration of old temples, such as the annual reconsecration ceremony performed in Drakthok, the ancient Northern Treasures monastery in the village of Sakti, Ladakh.

The cycle of *The Wrathful Creativity* is the largest cycle in Gödem's ritual corpus (4 volumes, 2254 pp.), and presents a wealth of fascinating topics specific to the cycle. For example, we have a ritual to hide treasures, group offering ritual (*ganacakra, tshogs*), dharma protector practices, texts on making mandalas, instructions on consciousness transference, a Dzokchen oriented text on how to attain a rainbow body ('*ja' lus*), a text on using precious pills (*ril bu*) to get higher knowledge, and several texts on Hūm (the root mantra of the wrathful guru), such as a text on the specific melody of awareness that rides on Hūm. In addition, we have curious topics, such as the wand of invisibility (*sgrib shing*), and numerous applications of practical nature, such as rituals to make and stop rain, protection rituals against frost and hail, texts on healing and averting obstacles, rituals of protection against theft and loosing riches,

³⁴ Sna 'gyur byang gter chos skor khag gi thob yig skal ldan mgu ba'i me long, 20-25.

³⁵ Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub kyi chos skor, 2-6.

and a text on swift-footedness (*rkang mgyogs*), which is a tantric technique to travel vast distances swiftly by foot. The wrathful character of the cycle is evident in the numerous rituals and practices of fierce nature, such as five fire rituals, including a wrathful fire ritual, rituals to subjugate Gongpo spirits, a thread cross ritual (*mdos*), ransom ritual (*glud*) and malign torma ritual (*zor*) and instructions on conquering plagues and epidemics.

The Wrathful Creativity also contains internal cycles of other deities and their $s\bar{a}dhanas$, such as the cleansing practices of Vajra Vidārana, rituals to acquire wealth centered around Jambala and Yakṣa Aparajita, long life practices of the Goddess Iron Tree (*lcags sdong ma*), $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}$ practices of Vajravarāhī and her black wrathful manifestation Tröma Nagmo (*khros ma nag mo*), as well as a cycle of various Garuda practices including several $s\bar{a}dhanas$, narrative texts and meditation manuals.³⁶

As we can see, the variety of topics and practices in the wrathful guru cycle is impressive, and presents in itself an important topic of further research. The cycles of Vajrakīla and the Eight Herukas are also lengthy cycles with considerable literary variety, although not comparable to *The Wrathful Creativity*. *The Eight Wrathful, Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Herukas* is the source of many important protector practices performed in the Northern Treasures tradition today, and contains also rituals of other deities, such as Garuda, Lion-Faced Dākinī, Vajrayakṣa and Ekajāti. The *sādhana* of the Eight Herukas features one of the most complex visualizations in the Northern Treasures, comparable only to the *sādhana* of the peaceful and wrathful deities in *The Unimpeded Realization*. The Vajrakīla cycles and practices, albeit central in the tradition, are not elaborated on here, since they can be studied in great detail in the works of Martin Boord.

This brief overview of Rindzin Gödem's corpus serves to illustrate how his Dzokchen anthology is situated in the literary terrain of his large Mahāyoga corpus. Clearly, ritual was important to the visionary founder of the tradition, and in particular, we can see a deep appreciation of wrathful rituals that dominate five of his ritual cycles. Faithfulness to the ancient rituals of the Nyingma tradition is also evident in Gödem's corpus: the Eight Herukas are a particular set of deities worshipped by the Nyingmapas, and Vajrakīla is also a popular deity among the Nyingma, famed to be introduced by Padmasambhava. The presence of Padmasambhava himself in Gödem's corpus is also notable, as he is at the center of the Three Roots of the tradition, in the peaceful and wrathful guru *sādhanas*. These tendencies of appreciating rituals, wrathful inclinations and Padmasambhava centrism appear also in Gödem's Dzokchen anthology, as we shall see in the following chapters.

Editions of The Unimpeded Realization *and* Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity

Before exploring the contents of Rindzin Gödem's Dzokchen anthology, I would like to discuss the two blockprint editions of the anthology that we have extant today. One edition is carved from the Adzom Chögar blocks through the efforts of Adzom

³⁶ Thugs sgrub drag po rtsal gyi chos skor, I:4-31.

Drukpa Rinpoche (1842-1924) and the other is from the Nechung blocks through the efforts of the Nechung oracle Chöje Shakya Yarphel (19th century). The Adzom edition (abbreviated in the foot notes as GZ) is more comprehensive, containing also the fifth volume *The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity*, while the Nechung edition contains only the four volumes of *The Unimpeded Realization*. My study is heavily based on the Adzom edition, which is used in the Dorjé Drak tradition today, but the Nechung edition contains some notable variant readings, so I shall briefly discuss the differences of the two editions. The texts of the two editions are listed in appendices one and two, including indications of which texts are and are not found in the other edition.

It should be noted that the presence of these two different editions emphasizes the fact that the anthology has gone through changes in the history of its transmission, and we do not actually know the exact form it was originally compiled in. Both these editions are relatively late (19th century) containing centuries of transmission before their compilation. Neither of them gives any information on the sources of the texts or the logic of their structuring. The Adzom edition contains no metacolophon whatsoever, only tables of content in each volume. The order of texts in the tables of content does not present any variation to the order in the edition itself. The Nechung edition has a metacolophon by Śākya Yarphel, but it only contains prayers, table of content (presenting the texts in the same order as in the edition itself), a mention to Rindzin Gödem as the revealer, and a reference to Śākya Yarphel as the compiler.

The earliest information we have on the form the anthology is the Fifth Dalai Lama's *Received Teachings (gsan yig)*, in which he lists all the texts of the anthology that he received from the III incarnation of Rindzin Gödem, Rindzin Ngakgi Wangpo. *The Received Teachings* will be discussed in the Chapter Two, but for now, suffice it to say that the list of texts outlined by the Fifth Dalai Lama does contain all the important cycles and key texts, thus indicating that the general character of the anthology did not change in a substantial way from the time of the Great Fifth until the present.

The Adzom edition of Gödem's anthology contains 127 texts, totaling 2945 pages, while the Nechung edition has 116 texts taking up 2161 pages. The difference is partly explained by the absence of the fifth volume (15 texts, 418 pages) in the Nechung edition, but nevertheless the Adzom edition is considerably longer (366 pages, relatively speaking). Both editions contain a number of texts not found in the other edition: Adzom has 29 and Nechung 28 extra texts (excluding the tables of content). In addition, thirteen of the fifteen texts in the fifth volume of the Adzom edition are not present in the Nechung edition (in other words, the Nechung edition contains two texts from the fifth volume of the Adzom edition).

A portion of these texts missing from one edition are not revealed treasure texts, but authored by later figures: the Adzom edition has seven texts of this type, six of which were written by Adzom Drukpa Rinpoche himself, while Nechung contains nine texts authored by later figures. All the texts authored by Adzom Drukpa are ritual manuals on conferring empowerments or practicing *sādhana* texts, and I shall discuss these in the chapter two.

The authored texts in the Nechung edition (that are missing in the Adzom edition) are a varied group. We have two texts written by Rindzin Gödem himself: *The History of Revealing the Treasure* is Gödem's revelation account of how he discovered the treasure in Zangzang Lhadrak, and *The Signs in Dreams in Eight Chapters* relates Gödem's prophetic dreams and other events after revealing the treasure.³⁷ In addition, we have four other texts on the history of the tradition after Gödem's revelation authored by Jamyang Sönam Gyeltsen Pel, a Dzokchen yogi Trayekadu (in the mountain hermitage of Zemo Dechen on the western side of Kaḥtog vajra seat), an unnamed author that seems to be a disciple of Rindzin Gödem and an entirely anonymous text.³⁸ Apart from history texts, the Nechung edition contains two texts on conferring empowerments written by Rindzin Jikmed Pawo in the monastery Orgyen Samten Ling, and Ratné Mingcen, who notes that he wrote down instructions received from the Great Rindzin, i.e. Rindzin Gödem.³⁹ Finally, we have *The Island of Liberation*, which is a famous practice commentary (*khrid*) on *The Unimpeded Realization* written by Zurchen Chöying Rangdröl (1604-1669).

The presence of different authored texts in these editions is hardly surprising, but both editions also contain a considerable number of treasure texts missing from the other edition: Adzom has 22 revealed texts not found in Nechung (in addition to the fifth volume), and for Nechung this number is 19. What are these treasure texts that only appear in one edition? How do they alter the character of the edition? Perhaps the most conspicuous difference is that the cycle of Marvelous Secret on cutting (*gcod*) practices (6 texts, 93 pages) is altogether missing from the Nechung edition. The Adzom edition also has four additional tantras, three extra texts in the cycle of Liberation Through Wearing, three more Dzokchen empowerments and three additional texts in the cycle of the peaceful and wrathful deities.

Both cycles have altogether different protector texts, although they are centered on the same protectors, most notably Ekajāti, who is known as the general protectress of the Dzokchen treasures, and in particular, the protectress of *The Unimpeded Realization*. The Adzom edition has only one protector ritual featuring all the protectors of the anthology (13 pages),⁴⁰ while the Nechung edition has an entire collection of protector texts (7 texts, 47 pages), including a tantra, *sādhana* and offering ritual of Ekajāti, rituals to wrathful protectors and even a thread cross (*mdos*) ritual.⁴¹

³⁷ gter bton pa'i lo rgyus (Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. I:1-7) and mnal lam brda'i le'u brgyad ma (Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. I:9-19)

³⁸ brgyud pa'i lo rgyus nor bu'i 'phreng ba (Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. I:47-76), kun tu bzang po dgongs pa zang thal gyi lo rgyus rin po che'i phreng ba (Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. I:309-372), rtsod zlog dang po ri bo bkra bzang du gsungs pa (Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. I:21-37) and rtsod zlog chung ba (Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. I:39-46)

³⁹ kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal gyi dbang bshad rin chen phra tshom (Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. I:373-386) and kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal las bka' rgya gsum pa: gsang ba'i yig chung zhes bya ba dbang gi man ngag (Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. I:543-563)

⁴⁰ The Phase of Enlightened Activities of Offerings to the Precept Protectors for the Pervading Wisdom of the Great Perfection (rdzogs chen dgongs pa zang thal gyi bka'i srung mchod pa'i phrin las kyi rim pa) (GZ IV:591-604, GZ refers to the Adzom edition of The Unimpeded Realization and The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity)

⁴¹ rang byung rang shar gyi bka' srung e ka dza ti'i rgyud (Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. IV:429-437, from Drag po rang byung rang shar chen po cycle), bka' srung khros ma'i phrin las

However, two of these texts state explicitly that they are lifted from Gödem's Mahāyoga cycle of Eight Herukas (*bka' brgyad drag po rang byung rang shar*), which has a prominent collection of protectors rituals, and it seems likely that all or most of these texts are from the Eight Herukas cycle.

The most notable additional texts in the Nechung edition are two rituals centered around $d\bar{a}kin\bar{s}$ and three texts on liberation through seeing that feature a one page text with the six syllables of Samantabhadra ('a, a, sa, sha, ma, ha) drawn beautifully in large size on the pecha page (IV:301), and two texts that present commentaries on the liberation through seeing the six syllables. The Nechung edition also contains two texts on the guruyoga liturgy of the particular guruyoga of direct transcendence that is practiced in the Dorjé Drak tradition until today,⁴² as well as an important text on the preliminary practices of the six oral transmissions.⁴³

However, we should also note that despite these differences, most of the core cycles and texts are identical in both editions. Both contain the same normative tantric empowerments and the key Dzokchen empowerments (although Adzom adds three Dzokchen empowerments), as well as the *sādhanas* of the five Buddhas, *dākinīs* and the peaceful and wrathful deities (although Nechung adds two *dākinī sādhanas* and Adzom supportive texts to the cycle of peaceful and wrathful deities). Both editions also have the cycle of the Six Seals of Vajravarāhī on the completion stage subtle body yogic techniques (although Adzom adds one short text). Notably, the important oral transmission cycles attributed to Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Vairocana are identical, and both editions also contain the cycle of the Liberation Through Wearing (although Adzom adds three texts).

After this brief introduction to the two editions of Gödem's Dzokchen anthology, it is time to move on to an overview of the anthology, examining its general features, structure and organization. The basis for this exploration is the Adzom Chögar edition, but some references will also be made to the Nechung version of the anthology.

⁽Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. IV:439-447), dgongs pa zang thal gyi bka' srung e ka dza ti'i mchod thabs (Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. IV:449-453), Bka' srung khros ma'i bskang bshags (Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. IV:455-463), bka' srung gi las tshogs (Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. IV:465-467), bka' srung e ka dza ti'i sgrub thabs (Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. IV:469-476, from bka' brgyad drag po rang byung rang shar), and bka' srung khros ma'i mdos (Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. IV:477-487)

⁴² rdzogs pa chen po dgongs pa zang thal gyi bla ma'i rnal 'byor dang: bla ma brgyud pa'i kha skang gsol 'debs (Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. II:41-48) and rdzogs pa chen po dgongs pa zang thal gyi brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs le tshan (Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. II:49-60)

⁴³ snyan brgyud drug gi sngon 'gro: he he: rdzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa zang thal du bstan pa las snyan rgyud zab mo sde drug gi sngon 'gro snyigs ma dangs ma'i man ngag drug: spyod pa legs pa'i sgron ma drug: sgrub thabs drug dang bcas pa (Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. II:427-446)

Chapter Two: Contents, Structure, Interrelations, Themes

The Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) anthology of Rindzin Gödem *The Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra (kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa zang thal)* and *The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Primordial Purity (ka dag rang byung rang shar)* contains a wealth of different kinds of literature: narratives, empowerments, tantras, *sādhanas*, oral transmissions (*snyan brgyud*), pith instructions (*man ngag*, i.e. oral instructions on contemplative practices), philosophical treatises and so forth. These disparate elements, nevertheless, form a harmonious whole unified by their participation in the distinctive Dzokchen context and by the numerous thematic threads running through the compilation. In this chapter, I shall discuss the anthology as a literary creation presenting an overview of the contents from different angles and analyzing how the anthology is integrated by the various overarching themes and unifying strands.

First, I shall present a synopsis of the contents introducing the different cycles and categories of texts, and then examine the structure and content of the five volumes one by one. In the third section of this chapter, I shall discuss elements that integrate the anthology into a literary whole. Alter argues that the primary element that pulls the disparate texts of the Bible together is literary, especially intertextuality and allusion to other texts and previous literature. Similar literary elements of integration are present in The Unimpeded Realization and The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Primordial Purity, but in addition, the anthology has strong thematic unity evident in the way the various tantric and Dzokchen practices are subsumed in the framework and view of the Great Perfection. The anthology also employs the same divine and mundane agents that appear in the different texts and assume new meanings in their relationship to the primordial Buddha Samantabhadra and in their position in the transmission lineages. In the narratives, the origin of the teachings is Samantabhadra's initial realization in the beginning of time, and notably, many of the Buddhas are depicted as emanations of Samantabhadra, as a part of his vision to help the world. Thus, the entire anthology emerges as the vision of Samantabhadra. In the light of these narratives about Samantabhadra, all the practices, philosophical topics and genres appear as parts of the vision of the primordial Buddha taught to enlighten the karmically suitable recipients.

Similarly to Anne Monius's presentation on the way two Tamil Buddhist texts envision a religious community, *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Emergent*, *Self-Arisen Primordial Purity* also picture a community of readers, who are hermits, yogis and serious practitioners, bound by the shared empowerments, commitments and the goal of emulating Samantabhadra's realization. The theme of Samantabhadra's vision even encompasses all readers who come across the anthology as a part of the community destined to encounter the teachings and attain enlightenment in this or subsequent lives. In this way, we see that the numerous integrating elements and especially the vision of Samantabhadra shape the anthology into a unique whole that, despite the scattered appearance at first sight, has a unified nature of distinctive character.

Synopsis of the contents

Before discussing the structure of the volumes, I will briefly introduce the contents of the anthology. *The Unimpeded Realization* is comprised of four volumes and *The Self-Arisen Self-Emergent Primordial Purity* is traditionally regarded as the fifth volume of the anthology. The five volumes form a thematic unity, as well as mostly being attributed to the revelatory agency of Rindzin Gödem, such that it seems reasonable to understand *The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Primordial Purity* as the fifth volume of a single anthology. The number of texts in the five volumes is 127, totaling 2945 folio sides. I have classified the anthology into fourteen constituent groups of texts based upon shared form or content. However, it should be noted that the fourteen categories are overlapping, because the texts are internally diverse. For example, there are narrative passages in texts presenting practice instructions or philosophical discussion, and vice versa. Thus, I have classified the texts based on their main content or topic.

(1) Narratives (7 texts, 110 pages) relate the transmission of the various teachings of the anthology from the primordial Buddha Samantabhadra to such deities as Vajrasattva, then to the first human recipient, Garab Dorjé, and then successively to various Indian and Tibetan figures. They also often include prophecies of Rindzin Gödem. (2) The anthology contains one doxographical text (nine pages) that classifies and ranks internal divisions of the Great Perfection. (3) Empowerment texts detail the standard four empowerments of tantric Buddhism as well as numerous distinctive Great Perfection empowerments (18 texts, 479 pages). (4) The preliminary texts (five texts, 74 pages) contain *The Five Nails*, which is the root text for the preliminary practices of the Northern Treasures tradition, and texts commenting on the preliminaries and giving various calming (Skt. *śamathā*, Tib. *gzhi gnas*) techniques, specific guruyogas and extraordinary preliminary practices for breakthrough (*khregs chod*) and direct transcendence (*thod rgal*).⁴⁴ There are also several sections in other texts that provide commentarial explanations on the preliminaries.

(5) Ritual texts feature contemplative rituals (Skt. *sādhana*, Tib. *sgrub thabs*) of the five Buddhas, the hundred peaceful and wrathful deities, and feminine wisdom beings or $d\bar{a}kin\bar{s}$, as well as longevity *sādhanas* and offering rituals to the deities and protectors (12 texts, 225 pages). (6) The Six Seals of Vajravarāhī, a formally titled group of texts found together in the anthology, teach especially the yoga of channels and winds (*rtsa rlung*), but present also other teachings and practices related to disciplining the body, such as instructions on conduct, eating and posture, organizing sessions temporally and alchemy (*bcud len*) (eight texts in the core cycle and three additional texts on the subtle body and alchemy, 264 pages).

(7) The Oral Transmissions of Vairocana texts focus especially on philosophical topics employed in the breakthrough practice, but contain also long narrative and doxographical sections (four texts, 138 pages). (8) The Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava cycle centers on the practice of direct transcendence (six texts, 75 pages). There are also four more texts focusing on direct transcendence (82 pages). (9) The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra is a very long philosophical treatise (218 pages) that encapsulates the Great Perfection philosophical topics and practices, providing a structured overview. The text is modeled after eleven "vajra topics" appearing in the Seminal Heart (*snying thig*) tradition and found for example in

⁴⁴ GZ V:3-39, V:189-200, II:325-352

Longchenpa's *Treasury of Words and Meanings*. In addition, there are two preliminary texts in the Oral Transmissions series taking up 49 pages.

(10) In the category of tantras, we have twenty Buddha-voiced tantras, which tend to present many philosophical topics and practices in concise summaries (528 pages). There are also six tantras (97 pages) contained in other categories, such as two narrative tantras and one tantra belonging to the Six Seals cycle. Thus, the anthology has 26 tantras altogether, totaling 625 pages. (11) Liberation through wearing texts contain several tantras intended to be worn as amulets, as well as pith instructions and directions on how to make the amulets (ten texts, 84 pages). (12) The Marvelous Secret is a cycle on cutting (gcod), containing its own empowerment, transmission lineage and pith instructions (six texts, 93 pages). (13) Death and the intermediate states (bar do) feature significantly in many texts, such as the tantras, but there are also four texts focusing exclusively on this topic (34 pages). (14) Finally, five texts (171 pages) are structured as dialogues between Śrī Simha and Padmasambhava, Padmasambhava and Namkhai Nyingpo, and Padmasambhava and Yéshé Tsogyel. The most prominent ones of these dialogue texts relate a disciple's progress on the path via the visionary experiences of direct transcendence, and some discuss such topics as the nature of mind and dreams.

Summary of the volumes

The five volumes of The Unimpeded Realization and The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Primordial Purity are not divided randomly, but each volume exhibits a certain degree of structural and thematic coherence. It is thus useful to consider their contents one by one. The summary of the volumes will give a glimpse to the experience of reading the anthology from beginning till the end, providing a sense of the structure, as well as giving an easy reference on locating the cycles and types of literature, and elucidating their position in the anthology. In analyzing anthologies of poetry, Anne Ferry writes that selection and arrangement are the broadest signals of the anthologist's role and presence in the anthology.⁴⁵ Similarly, in the literary creation that Gödem's anthology, the organization of the contents is significant, although the situation is considerably more complex than with the anthologies that Ferry studied, because Gödem's anthology is likely to have been restructured several times since the 14th century, by figures such as Adzom Drukpa Rinpoche, the compiler of the Adzom Chögar edition analyzed here. The reorganization and restructuring of the anthology's texts is indicated by the varying order of the texts in the two editions of the anthology that we have today. The Nechung edition contains some important differences in the order of the texts compared to the Adzom Chögar edition. The most important variations are noted below. Even though the structuring of the anthology is fluid, the structural analysis of the Adzom Chögar edition will nevertheless help us to appreciate the distinctive character of the volumes and the nature of the anthology.

The first volume serves as an introduction, containing narratives, empowerments and normative tantric practices, while the second volume goes into the heart of the Dzokchen topics and contemplative practices. The third volume is dominated by

⁴⁵ Ferry, 2001, 39.

Buddha-voiced texts, and the fourth volume presents scholastic philosophy together with essence extraction and cutting practices. The compilation culminates with the dialogue texts of the fifth volume, which are distinctive to the anthology and perhaps its brightest jewels.

Volume I. Narratives, preparation and body practices

The first volume is the most orderly of all the five since its 27 texts belong precisely to four categories: (i) narratives and classification of teachings (1-97), (ii) the four empowerments (99-325), (iii) *sādhanas* and offering rituals (327-453), and (iv) subtle body texts and the cycle of the Six Seals of Vajravarāhī (455-654), which contains completion stage subtle body yogas and other body related practices. The narratives form an introduction to the tradition and aim to legitimate the transmission. The four empowerments are the standard Mahāyoga empowerments to all the deities present in the anthology: Samantabhadra, Samantabhadrī, the five Buddhas, Vajravarāhī, Hayagrīva, *dākinīs* and the peaceful and wrathful deities. They authorize the deity yoga and completion stage practices discussed in the first volume, while further Great Perfection empowerments necessary for engaging with the subsequent Dzokchen practices are deferred to volume two. The Nechung edition takes a different stance here, placing all the empowerments in the first volume. The *sādhanas* are considered preliminaries, for their stated purpose is to purify the "vessel" or student. They are augmented by offering rituals, both featuring the same deities as the empowerments.

The final section on the completion stage begins with descriptions of the internal subtle physiology of the channels (Skt. *nādī*, Tib. *rtsa*), winds (Skt. *prāņa*, Tib. *rlung*) and wheels (Skt. cakra, Tib. 'khor lo), which form an introduction and basis to the completion stage yogas presented in the Six Seals of Vajravarāhī. The cycle of the Six Seals fulfills multiple functions. It contains pith instruction texts that organize all the practices and sādhanas presented in the anthology into strenuous practice schedules, and it gives pith instructions on how to practice, live, eradicate laziness, reduce sleep and tame the body. The actual six seals are brief introductions on six topics: bodily posture, completion stage yoga, view, meditation, conduct and pith instructions. Up to the second seal, the completion stage yoga, the first volume discusses hardly any Great Perfection topics, but the Six Seals elegantly bridge the anthology from normative tantra to the Great Perfection, for the remaining seals discuss the view, meditation, conduct and pith instructions in the style of the Great Perfection. After this discussion of rigorous efforts, the texts shift to a very different language of natural flow and ease, which underlines the late 14th century synthesis of the Seminal Heart, in which strenuous practices are a preliminary foundation for the path of the Great Perfection.

Volume II. Death, visions and pristine awareness

The second volume (28 texts) does not follow the path structure as faithfully as the first one, but still exhibits an internal logic. It begins with (i) ten texts on the distinctive Great Perfection empowerments (3-189), which form the basis of authorization for the subsequent practices. Then, one might expect texts representing the Mind Series, but instead the volume delves straight into the Pith Instruction Series with its visionary and funerary concerns evident in (ii) the cycle of the peaceful and

wrathful deities (five texts, 197-299). This includes the famous *sādhana*, *The Spontaneously Present Peaceful and Wrathful Deities*, which contains the complete Seminal Heart pantheon of the hundred peaceful and wrathful deities, said to manifest also in the bardo of reality (Skt. *dharmatā*, Tib. *chos nyid*). Its funerary character is evident especially in the aspect that it can be performed upon somebody's death together with the ritual to pull a bardo being from being born in the six realms, which is a part of the cycle.

After this ritual excursion, (iii) a philosophical basis is prepared for the practice of direct transcendence by a commentary to the awareness's display empowerment attributed to Padmasambhava (301-323), followed by (iv) the practical basis presented by three texts that contain guruyogas and preliminary practices of direct transcendence (325-392). (v) The four texts of the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava discuss mainly the actual practice of direct transcendence (393-459). Curiously, this is followed by (vi) the four texts of the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana, which focus on the nature of the mind, pristine awareness (rig pa) and other philosophical and contemplative topics employed in the breakthrough practice originating from the Mind Series (461-602). The organization of the texts on breakthrough after the cycle on direct transcendence is somewhat odd, and indeed, the Nechung edition organizes them differently, beginning with the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana, followed by the Oral Transmissions of Vimalamitra and lastly the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava. Finally, the second volume closes with (vii) two tantras on differentiating mind (sems) from awareness (rig pa) (603-650). The first tantra contains two metaphorical stories including sections that decode them involving explanations that combine the pristine and visionary interpretative frameworks into a harmonious whole.

Volume III. Buddha-voices and liberatory amulets

The third volume (36 texts) opens with (i) an introductory text in which Padmasambhava beseeches Śrī Simha about various basic but profound philosophical topics, such as what is the dividing line between samsara and nirvana (3-19). (ii) The introductory function is also fulfilled by a tantra relating transmission narratives of cosmic dimension beginning with creation and involving transmission in pure lands, various heavens, planetary realms and among semi-divine beings of our world, such as nāgas and yakṣas (21-34). (iii) A pith instruction attributed to Padmasambhava deriving from the previous tantra continues the philosophical discussion but shifts the focus more toward practice, such as breakthrough (35-47). This is followed by (iv) two tantras that discuss the philosophical topics present in many of the tantras: cosmogony, Samantabhadra's primordial enlightenment, the origin of confusion and cyclic existence (Skt. samsāra, Tib. 'khor ba), the nature of mind, the universal ground (kun gzhi), death and bardo, breakthrough and direct transcendence (49-126). The latter tantra, Rosary of Jewels, also contains unusual poetic descriptions of the subtle body and direct transcendence. (v) Two pith instruction texts attributed to Padmasambhava also focus on direct transcendence and the importance of secrecy (127-140), and in the same vein we have (vi) a comprehensive synoptic pith instruction text on both the preliminaries and actual practice of direct transcendence (141 - 162).
(vii) Another narrative tantra reiterates the transmission lineages focusing especially on the three masters of awareness (*rig 'dzin*), i.e. Padmasambhava, Vairocana and Vimalamitra (163-183). Then, we have (viii) the cycle of the Liberation Through Wearing (ten texts) containing narratives of its divine origin, an empowerment, pith instructions and tantras to be worn as amulets that enlighten one upon wearing (185-281). The remaining part contains (ix) nine tantras (283-496), (x) Garab Dorjé's composition on the signs of successful practice that is also said to liberate upon wearing (497-518), (xi) one more explanatory tantra (519-531), (xii) four texts on death and bardo (533-554), (xiii) a text on the twenty-one introductions (555-564), and (xiv) one more text on death and bardo (565-598). The text on the twenty-one introductions to one's luminous divine nature through symbols. Embedding the twenty-one introductions in between the texts on death and bardo emphasizes one of its functions, which is to facilitate the recognition of one's luminous nature at death.

Thus, we see that the third volume is dominated by the Buddha-voiced teachings of the fourteen tantras and the ten texts in the cycle of the Liberation Through Wearing, giving the volume a phenomenological character of encountering Buddhas and blessings radiating from a divine source, charming the amulets. Direct transcendence figures as a major topic, again emphasizing the visionary encounters with Buddhas in contemplation. The volume culminates with the literature on death and bardos, which also features encounters with Buddhas upon dying. The structure of the volume is not particularly orderly, with the same type of texts scattered in different places, even though the Liberation Through Wearing forms a uniform cycle. However, the variation makes it more interesting to read, which may be a part of the reason why it is structured in this way. The different tantras largely discuss the same philosophical and contemplative topics, making it refreshing to read different texts in between.

Volume IV. Philosophy, alchemy and charnel grounds

The fourth volume contains only 16 texts since one explanatory tantra and The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra are each very lengthy (100 and 218 pages respectively). The volume begins with (i) a tantra belonging to the Oral Transmissions cycle focused on the way the peaceful and wrathful deities abide in the body and manifest in the bardo (3-26). It acts as an introduction, as it were, to the next text that discusses (ii) direct transcendence with its quest to perceive the indwelling wisdom manifesting as these deities through the numerous visionary practices given in the text (27-58). (iii) The Preliminary Practices of the Six Oral Transmissions teaches the alchemical practices of essence extraction and other topics related to purity and healing (59-80). (iv) The Tantra of Becoming a Buddha by merely Seeing, Hearing, Wearing, or Praying to this Great Tantra is a long explanatory tantra that discusses in detail all the topics presented in the previous tantras in the third volume and connects them to liberation through wearing, stressing the radically gnostic notion of becoming automatically enlightened upon contact with this tantra (81-181). (v) The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra, continues the explanatory tendency, but now in a scholastic treatise complete with numerous citations and a few refutations of opposing views (183-401).

Then, the focus shifts to (vi) subtle physiology and its manipulation to attain longevity. This group contains a text on the subtle body (403-420), a brief longevity sādhana authored by Vimalamitra (421-422) and the essence extraction text by Yéshé Tsogyel that contains many completion stage $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}$ practices (423-484). As in the Six Seals of Vajravarāhī, the subtle body text again provides a basis for understanding the manipulation of subtle physiology employed in the long life sādhana and especially in the alchemical practices, which, in Tsogyel's text, are combined with the yoga of channels and winds. Then, we have (vii) The Foundation of the Three Oral Transmission Series, which is the text featuring the Buddha Śākyamuni teaching the śrāvaka and bodhisattva vows to the king Indrabhūti (485-513). (viii) The cycle on cutting (gcod) called the Marvelous Secret (five texts) is thematically somewhat connected to the concern for longevity and the topic of death and bardo that opens the fourth volume, since it teaches practices performed in charnel grounds that aim to liberate the practitioner from fear, especially the fear of death (515-589, 605-625). Lastly, there are (ix) offering rituals to the protectors of The Unimpeded Realization, which provide closure to The Unimpeded Realization similar to the protector practices generally performed in the end of *sādhanas* in Tibetan Buddhism (591-604).

Although the fourth volume does have some degree of structural coherence, its lack of organization is evident in such aspects as the scattered placement of the two texts discussing essence extraction and the four texts belonging to the Oral Transmission cycle. One may also wonder as to why all the Oral Transmission texts are not placed in the second volume. The fourth volume also contains an interesting tension between philosophical explanatory literature and practice manuals. The highly practical texts on direct transcendence (ii) and essence extraction (iii) are embedded in between the philosophical discussion on the bardos (i) and the long explanatory tantra (iv) followed by *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* (v). After the latter, which is the most scholastic work in the anthology, the fourth volume leaps to the highly practical concerns present in the longevity *sādhana* and in the alchemical manual with many completion stage $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}$ practices (vi). Then, we have the text featuring Śākyamuni (vii) again presenting philosophical discussion on the lower vehicles, contrasted to the numerous intense practices to go beyond fear (viii).

Volume V. Primordial purity and transformative dialogues

The fifth volume (15 texts), *The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Primordial Purity*, begins with (i) *The Five Nails*, the preliminary practices of the Northern Treasures tradition, and the adjoined lineage prayer for the guru yoga practiced before the calming (Skt. *samathā*, Tib. *zhi gnas*) and breakthrough practices collectively known as primordial purity (*ka dag*) in the Northern Treasures tradition (3-39). Then, we have (ii) a specific empowerment for the primordial purity (*ka dag*) practices taught in this volume (41-103). After these introductory sections, the fifth volume presents (iii) two tantras that augment the topical range of the previous tantras with a discussion on the ability to constantly bear adverse circumstances (105-149). In the first tantra, Vajrasattva beseeches Samantabhadra, and in the second one, we are one step lower in the divine hierarchy with Vajrapāni questioning Vajrasattva. This provides an introduction to the (iv) dialogues between mundane figures (five texts, 151-187, 261-401) in which the transmission progresses from India to Tibet: the first text is a

dialogue between Śrī Simha and Padmasambhava, and then we have Padmasambhava and Yéshé Tsogyel, and Padmasambhava and Namkhai Nyingpo. In between dialogues, we have (v) a pith instruction text and two testaments of Padmasambhava, which give instructions on calming meditation, recognizing awareness (*rig pa*), view and conduct (189-260). (vi) The volume closes with a text on the five bardos (403-418).

The fifth volume is a fascinating creation. It is the shortest of all the volumes, only 418 pages, while other volumes are about 600 pages, but it discusses most of the topics contained in the four volumes in a concise way. It contains tantras that summarize the philosophical topics, such as cosmogony, original enlightenment and straying, nature of samsara, nature of mind, dharmakāya and so forth. It defines Great Perfection in relation to other vehicles, and contains an empowerment, prophecies of Gödem, bardo teachings, healing, breakthrough, direct transcendence and even instructions on cutting (gcod). The fifth volume does not have any sādhanas or completion stage yogas, although it does present a rigorous schedule that includes both. Liberation through wearing is also missing, and the narratives are very different from the four volumes, containing stories of Padmasambhava's life in India, and the transformational narratives of Padmasambhava's and Yéshé Tsogyel's journeys to enlightenment via profound visionary experiences told in the dialogue texts. These texts are the jewels of the fifth volume illustrating the doctrine and practice of direct transcendence by describing the unfoldment of the experiences, embedded in a deeply human context of guru-disciple dialogue, in which the guru is not merely lecturing, but there is genuine interaction, even occasional resistance by the disciple.

Another important element contained only in the fifth volume is the root text of the preliminary practices (*sngon 'gro*). Elegantly, the volume begins with these preliminaries and culminates with the dialogue texts with the final conclusion of the bardo text. In between, the fifth volume contains the calming (*samathā*) practices and the various philosophical reflections contemplated in the breakthrough practice. The calming and breakthrough are known in the Northern Treasures tradition as *ka dag* (primordial purity) stemming from the name of the volume *Ka dag rang byung rang shar*, and referring to the aim to recognize the primordial purity of one's awareness.

Integrative elements

Having introduced the organization of the contents, I shall now analyze the various elements that provide the anthology its coherence. At first sight, the abundance of details and the sheer amount of texts, topics and practices makes it difficult to understand the underlying unifying strands, which upon analysis are nevertheless clearly discernible. According to Alter, the Bible is integrated primarily through the literary aspects of intertextual play and allusion, the latter pointing to the way that many of the texts refer to and are modeled after previous literature or other texts of the Bible.⁴⁶ Ferry instead, focuses on the way that various anthologies of poetry exhibit the literary hand of the compiling anthologist.⁴⁷ I am influenced by both of

⁴⁶ Alter, 1992: 50-51.

⁴⁷ Ferry, 2001:2, 5, 31.

these approaches in so far as they approach anthologies as literary wholes and examine the integrating elements, and their insights will be applied in some of the oncoming sections. However, here I will examine the ways of integration particular to *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Primordial Purity*, that is, the divine and mundane agents, whose presence extents across the disparate texts and topic, the way the contemplative components participate in the overarching Dzokchen agenda, and the thematic threads that provide unity via ideas, content and form.

Agents

Robert Alter writes that Bible exhibits delight in the manifold exercise of literary craftsmanship,48 which bears interesting relevance in our context, for in The Unimpeded Realization and The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Primordial Purity, this delight is taken beyond literary integration into the skillful weaving of the entire anthology as the vision of Samantabhadra, the telos manifesting in the history of Buddhism and in the concealment and revelation of the treasure, and incorporating all the philosophical topics and contemplative practices as parts of this vision. In this section, I shall first introduce the main divine agents of the anthology focusing especially on their synchronic relationships crystallized as the mandala of Samantabhadra. Then, I shall discuss the vision of Samantabhadra, which involves the diachronic aspects of divine agency embodied in Samantabhadra's manifestations in history. The section on the literary figures and oral teachers introduces the numerous human figures that the texts of the anthology are attributed to, as well as the divine and human agents that appear as speakers and teachers in the anthology. Then, I shall discuss the agents involved in the treasure revelation, especially the various concealers of the treasure texts.

The maṇḍala of Samantabhadra

The iconography of the anthology features many divine figures that operate as thematic threads of continuity. Naturally, the most central figure is Samantabhadra: the anthology is, in a way, his *mandala*. In general, Samantabhadra has a special relationship with the Dzokchen tradition. He is the first Buddha that recognized the self-display (*rang snang*) and attained enlightenment in the first instants of the spontaneously occurring creation of the universe (*gzhi snang*), and he is the figure of uncontrived naturalism and primordial wisdom standing against the principles of dry scholasticism and complicated ritualism.

In *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Primordial Purity* (as in the Dzokchen tradition in general), Samantabhadra is the source of the transmission related in many of the narratives⁴⁹ and in all the transmission lineages. He is also the source of the enlightened dimension of *dharmakāya*, which is actualized from the source potential of the ground upon his primordial recognition

⁴⁸ Alter, 1992: 53.

⁴⁹ For example GZ I:6-7, I:234, III:23-24 and III:164-168.

reiterated in the numerous sections on cosmogony.⁵⁰ He then emanates the enjoyment bodies (Skt. *sambhogakāya*, Tib. *longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku*) of all the other deities as his retinue inseparable from himself, as described in the cosmogonic passages and numerous narrative scenarios in the tantras.⁵¹ Several texts also state that Samantabhadra emanates as Vajradhara or Vajrasattva, who go to teach in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods or peak of Mt. Meru, or feature as speakers in particular texts.

The mandala of Samantabhadra is mentioned explicitly in *The Root Tantra of the Unimpeded Realization* as including Samantabhadra and Samantabhadrī, the five Buddhas, bodhisattvas and gate keepers, all with their female counterparts (yum) and surrounded by inconceivably many mandalas of the deities of the five Buddha families. Samantabhadra yab yum is also at the center of the mandala of the peaceful and wrathful deities described in the sādhana of *The Spontaneously Present Peaceful* and Wrathful Deities and its associated literature, as well as in the texts that describe the location of these deities in the human body. For example *The Tantra of the Quintessential Realization of the Pith Instructions taught by Vajrasattva* describes Samantabhadra and Samantabhadrī at the center of the peaceful mandala in the palace of exalted mind (*tsitta*) at the heart *cakra* (center of wisdom energies in the subtle body, Tib. 'khor lo).⁵² However, the same text does not include Samantabhadra as a part of the peaceful and wrathful deities manifesting in the bardo of dharmatā.⁵³

Samantabhadra and other deities - the five Buddhas, peaceful and wrathful deities, and Vajravarāhī - are also connected in the lineage prayers and as recipients of offerings in the offering rituals. In addition to Samantabhadra, who embodies the Great Perfection, Vajravarāhī stands out as an important deity associated with the completion stage subtle body yogas in particular, which agrees with her being an emanation of Samantabhadrī, who introduced the mother tantras to the world, as stated above. The roles of Samantabhadra and Vajravarāhī are also evident in the context of the empowerments and *sādhanas*. The elaborate vase empowerment contains specific empowerments of Samantabhadra and the Buddhas of the five families,⁵⁴ while Vajravarāhī and her consort Hayagrīva are prominent in the subsequent secret and wisdom empowerments,⁵⁵ which authorize the completion stage practices taught in the Six Seals of Vajravarāhī. Samantabhadra is the main deity in all the five Great Perfection empowerments that have deities,⁵⁶ and one of these five empowerments also feature the peaceful and wrathful deities, containing

⁵³ GZ IV:19-21.

 $^{^{50}}$ For example GZ III:23 (see also the section on divine creation below).

⁵¹ GZ V:112, III:240 and III:426.

⁵² GZ IV:7-8.

⁵⁴ The Elaborate Vase Empowerment (GZ I:139-145).

⁵⁵ The Non-Elaborate Secret Empowerment and The Exceedingly Non-Elaborate Insight Wisdom Empowerment (GZ I:157-173).

⁵⁶ The Profound Empowerment to Awareness's Creativity (GZ II:3-31), The Precious Empowerment of the Enlightened Mind: The Heart Mantras of the Oral Transmission (II:41-60), The Empowerment of the Great Perfection View of Definitive Meaning (II:61-64), The Empowerment of Awareness's Intrinsic Clarity (II:65-68) and The Awareness Empowerment Encapsulating the Quintessential Elixir (V:79-103).

the transmission of their heart mantras. Similarly, Samantabhadra is at the center of the *maṇḍala* in the *sādhanas* of the five Buddhas and the peaceful and wrathful deities, while Vajravarāhī is the main deity in the *dākinī sādhanas*.⁵⁷

In this way, we can see how the presence of the five Buddhas, peaceful and wrathful deities and especially Samantabhadra connects the empowerments, *sādhanas* and offering rituals to the narratives of the transmission and philosophically oriented literature, such as the tantras and texts on liberation through wearing, which feature Samantabhadra as the speaker or the source of the blessing power of the liberatory amulets.

The five Buddhas and the peaceful and wrathful deities further connect the rituals and sādhanas to the texts that discuss the Great Perfection contemplative practice in the context of this life and the bardo of dharmatā. The five Buddhas in the anthology are Vairocana, Vajrasattva, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi. They are usually presented as united with their consorts Akāśadhātvīśvarī, Locanā, Māmakī, Pāndaravāsinī and Samaya Tārā. These peaceful Buddha couples are also a part of the 42 peaceful deities, while their wrathful manifestations⁵⁸ belong to the assembly of the 58 wrathful deities. The five Buddha couples and the peaceful and wrathful deities appear in the practices of direct transcendence. In The Second Root Pith Instruction on the Precious Oral Transmission on the Authentic Meaning, one is introduced to the luminous sambhogakāya dimension by gazing at the reflection of the five Buddhas in a mirror.⁵⁹ The same text also urges one to recognize the five lights of the Buddhas manifesting in the bardo, and upon recognizing one awakens in the bardo as the five Buddhas themselves.⁶⁰ In the visions of direct transcendence, first the upper bodies of the five Buddhas manifest in the bindus,⁶¹ and eventually each bindu contains the mandala of the five Buddhas.⁶² In The Twenty One Introductions of the Great Perfection, one is introduced to the peaceful and wrathful deities by looking at their images through a crystal. This introduction comes to fruition at the time of the second vision of direct transcendence, the increasing experience, when one sees the visions of the peaceful and wrathful deities.⁶³ However, even though the offering rituals, lineage prayers and sādhanas in the anthology feature the same deities as direct transcendence and bardo philosophy, the approach to these deities is fundamentally different. In the former, the deities are constructed through deliberate visualization, while the latter does not involve mental fabrication, but one just gazes the deities

⁵⁷ GZ I:346-375. *Dākinī sādhanas* are contemplative rituals centered around female wisdom deities, or "sky-goers" (*dākinī*, *mkha 'gro ma*).

⁵⁸ Buddhaheruka, Vajraheruka, Ratnaheruka, Padmaheruka and Karmaheruka, and their consorts Buddha Krodhīśvarī, Vajra Krodhīśvarī, Ratna Krodhīśvarī, Padma Krodhīśvarī and Karma Krodhīśvarī.

⁵⁹ GZ II:402.

⁶⁰ GZ II:416-417.

 $^{^{61}}$ Bindus (Skt.) are circular spheres of energy, light or fluid that contain inherent potential for manifestation, Tib. *thig le*.

⁶² The Tantra of Becoming a Buddha by merely Seeing, Hearing, Wearing, or Praying to this Great Tantra (GZ IV:161).

⁶³ GZ III:558.

through a crystal or reflected in a mirror, or they form naturally in the bindus when one lets one's gaze rest there for prolonged periods.

Vajrasattva has an important role in the Great Perfection in general, and this applies also to the anthology. He is one of the five Buddhas, occupying the place of Aksobhya, and he is the main deity in two guruyogas related to the practice of direct transcendence. Vajrasattva's centrality seems to be due to his association to purity. He is the resplendent white Buddha accredited for the power to purify obscurations and negativities, which is in line with the primordial purity of the Great Perfection and the symbolism of the introductions employing crystals, mirrors and reflections of white light. In addition to Vajrasattva's important role as a speaker of many tantras and other texts, he is very central in the narratives of the anthology. In The Tantra Which Teaches the Realization of the Buddha in Its Own Right, he is portrayed as an emanation of Samantabhadra, "the radiance of his intrinsic awareness," 64 who Samantabhadra sends to teach the six classes of sentient beings. In the transmission accounts, he introduces the teachings to the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods and human realm. The Great Synoptic Exposition of the History that Generates Faith explains his involvement in even more radical terms: he emanates as many of the central Buddhist figures, such as the six sages, Garab Dorjé, Vajrapāni, Mañjuśri and Avalokiteśvara, and teaches the transcendent virtues (pāramitā), secret mantra and Marvelous Secret (apparently refers to the gcod teachings of the anthology) in many locations, such as various heavens, earth, the charnel ground Great Secret Play and the Grdhakūta mountain.65 Thus, the activity of Vajrasattva is similar to that of Samantabhadra, and a part of Samantabhadra's vision, which I will discuss below.

The most important aspect of Vajrasattva in The Unimpeded Realization and The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Primordial Purity is his symbolic significance as embodying primordial purity, as well as the dynamic, compassionate aspect of enlightenment. In The Awareness Empowerment Encapsulating the Quintessential Elixir, the crystal employed in the empowerment is said to have emanated from the enlightened mind of Vajrasattva, and it represents primordial purity and unimpeded wisdom. 66 Vajrasattva's symbolism also occurs in the phrases "mirror of Vajrasattva" (rdo rje sems dpa'i me long), which refers to a crystal, and "the secret path of Vajrasattva" (rdor sems gsang lam), which is the manifestation of the rainbow-colored luminosity from one's heart especially at death presenting a passage to Akanistha upon recognition. I shall return to these in the section on symbolic and aesthetic representation. As for Vajrasattva's compassionate role, we have "the lasso of Vajrasattva's heart" (rdo rje sems dpa'i thugs kyi zhags pa),⁶⁷ or Vajrasattva's "rope of continuous compassion" (thugs rje rgyun gyi thag pa), which shines at the time of death like a rope of five-colored lights or staircase presenting a possibility of enlightenment upon recognition.⁶⁸ There are also many isolated references that employ the symbolism of Vajrasattva, for example the unimpeded realization of

⁶⁴ GZ III:165.

⁶⁵ GZ I:6-10.

⁶⁶ GZ V:69.

⁶⁷ *The Three Spikes of the Key Points Guide Text composed by Vimalamitra* (GZ II:342).

⁶⁸ The Explanatory Tantra of the Introduction to the Buddhas (GZ III: 529).

Samantabhadra is equated with "the treasury of Vajrasattva's mind that overflows with the elixir of the five supreme emanations,"⁶⁹ and the lucid, pristine self-arisen wisdom free from all fabrications and not tainted by any causes and conditions whatsoever is called "the Vajrasattva of pure cause."⁷⁰ Thus, in the *maṇdala* of Samantabhadra, Vajrasattva seems to be the second most important deity, sometimes even assuming the role of Samantabhadra and performing the same actions, such as manifesting a crystal from the heart and emanating other deities, even the Buddha Vajradhara and Śākyamuni.

The mandala of Samantabhadra is guarded by many protector deities, who are mundane Tibetan deities that Padmasambhava bound by oath to protect Buddhism. Fifty-four texts of the anthology mention a protector or protectors to whom the text was entrusted, usually by Padmasambhava, but sometimes by the three masters of awareness (Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Vairocana), to guard the integrity and secrecy of the transmission. The texts that are entrusted to protectors are mainly Great Perfection texts, such as oral transmissions, tantras, dialogue texts, Liberation Through Wearing texts and Dzokchen empowerments. Most of the protectors are female, and the main protector is Ekajāti, who is entrusted with 14 texts. Other important protectors are the Three Mamos of the Charnel Ground (12 texts), Twelve Tenmas (10 texts), Rdo rje khro gdong ma (7 texts) and Rag dong ma (4 texts). A narrative text, The Tantra which Teaches the Realization of the Buddha in its own Right, also relates that the three masters of awareness appointed a supramundane deity, Khros ma nag mo, who is a form of black Vajravarāhī, as the protector of the Realization Transmission of Victors, the Three Mamos of the Charnel Ground as the protectors of the Symbolic Transmission of the Masters of Awareness, and the Twelve Tenmas as the protectors of the Oral Transmission of Ordinary Individuals. Moreover, The Phase of Enlightened Activities of Offerings to the Precept Protectors of the Unimpeded Realization of the Great Perfection is an offering ritual that propitiates many of the protectors of the anthology, such as Ekajāti, Twelve Tenmas, Thanglha, Vajrasādhu and the Three Mamos of the Charnel Ground.

The vision of Samantabhadra

The anthology elaborates on the activity of Samantabhadra by extending it beyond the synchronic relationships of the *mandala* of divine figures and incorporating philosophy, practices and especially narratives to construct a powerful vision of transcendental origins, divine involvement, predestined revelation and overarching commitment to simplicity and spontaneity, all as a part of the vision of Samantabhadra. Below I shall examine how the anthology construes the vision of Samantabhadra as a distinctive temporal narrative that depicts many of the divine figures of the anthology as emanations of Samantabhadra sent to alter the course of history for the better. The vision of Samantabhadra also includes the teachings of the anthology that are presented as a rare and precious Great Perfection system aligned with Samantabhadra and his presence, transmitted in secrecy with prophetic

⁶⁹ The First Oral Transmission of Vairocana (GZ II:465).

⁷⁰ The Root Tantra of the Unimpeded Realization (GZ III:473)

endorsements, and the *telos* of the vision culminating in Tibet in the revelation of Gödem.

The Root Tantra of the Unimpeded Realization devotes a chapter on discussing the unimpeded vision or realization (*dgongs pa zang thal*) of Samantabhadra, the title of the first four volumes of the anthology. *Dgongs pa zang thal* is very difficult to render into English. In the absence of a better term, I have generally translated *dgongs pa* as realization, because in the overall context of the anthology, 'realization' or 'wisdom' captures the meaning better than the common translation as 'intention.' *Zang thal* means unobstructed, unimpeded or translucent, and in the anthology also has the sense of being free from the impediments that obstruct one's realization, that is, seeing through the illusion and deception of samsara and perceiving the ultimate nature of reality in direct perception.⁷¹

However, in this chapter on the unimpeded realization (dgongs pa zang thal) of Samantabhadra in The Root Tantra of the Unimpeded Realization, dgongs pa also has the sense of intention or vision, because the activity of the five Buddhas and the emanation bodies (Skt. nirmāņakāya, Tib. sprul sku) is depicted as a part of Samantabhadra's vision to help the world. The unimpeded realization or vision of Samantabhadra is said to abide as the identity of the five wisdoms, which are identified with the five Buddhas, but in more creative terms than in the standard presentations: Vairocana yab yum and their retinue are the external efflorescence of the pristine emptiness within, while Vajrasattva is the external radiation of the unimpeded (zang thal) lucidity from within that emptiness, Ratnasambhava stands for the external embodiment of equanimity without bias, Amitābha for freedom from attachment and Amoghasiddhi for natural and spontaneous accomplishment without effort.⁷²

Samantabhadra's vision also includes his emanation as Vajradhara, who goes to the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods, and due to the great merit of the gods, he teaches them the effortless vehicle of the Great Perfection. Myriads of emanation bodies also come out of the five Buddhas in order to tame beings. One of these is Śākyamuni, who comes to our world, Jambudvīpa ("Rose Apple Continent," *dzam bu'i gling*), to teach cause and effect and how to be born in the higher realms. Another one of these emanations, Vajrapāņi, goes to Lanka to the land of the ten-headed demon to teach the wrathful dharma, and a fiercesome youth goes to teach emptiness in the land of *yakşas*. Later on, the secret mantra also spreads and flourishes in Jambudvīpa, because of the merit of an unnamed king, apparently Indrabhūti. Garab Dorjé is presented as a second order emanation of Samantabhadra, because he emanates from the heart of Vajrasattva on the Amolika rock in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods and introduces the effortless vehicle to our world.⁷³

⁷¹ GZ IV:90.

⁷² GZ III:464.

 $^{^{73}}$ GZ III:465-467. A similar story pertaining to Śākyamuni is told in *The Precious Lamp of the Three Roots*, in which Samantabhadra emanates as the Buddha Śākyamuni, and sends him to teach the interpretative meaning (*drang don*) of the teachings to our world. (GZ IV:489)

Thus, we see how Samantabhadra's vision is presented as encompassing the stages of development of Buddhism including its first introduction by Śākyamuni, the rise of Vajrayāna and the spread of the final vehicle of the Great Perfection. The vision of Samantabhadra also includes the dissemination of the teachings in other realms, such as the land of *yakşas*, and even incorporates the Hindu mythology of *Rāmāyāna* with the reference to the ten-headed demon in Lanka; apparently the wrathful methods taught by Vajrapāni are for his subjugation. It is also notable that unlike in the Sūtrayāna teachings that stress the birth as a god as undesirable due to the lack of motivation for spiritual growth, in *The Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra*, the merit of the gods in The Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods is said to be great, which is why the Amolika rock in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods is mentioned repeatedly as the first place where the Great Perfection was taught outside Akanistha.

Similarly to Samantabhadra's activity, *The Narrative Discourse of the Religious History for the Marvelous Secret* states that Prajñāpāramitā is the external emanation of Samantabhadrī,⁷⁴ thus envisioning the most distinctive canonical literature on emptiness as the work of Samantabhadrī, the female emptiness aspect of the primordial couple. The same text also accredits Samantabhadrī for the spread of the Yoginī Tantras, for it relates that she emanated as the Great Mother Vajravarāhī, and taught the mother tantras of the secret mantra.⁷⁵

In addition to *The Root Tantra of the Unimpeded Realization* that spells out the vision of the primordial Buddha, the entire anthology emerges as the unimpeded vision (*dgongs pa zang thal*) of Samantabhadra taught to enlighten the karmically mature recipients. In *The Root Tantra of the Unimpeded Realization*, the teachings of the anthology are also explicitly referred to as the unimpeded vision or realization of Samantabhadra.⁷⁶ The anthology as an enlightening plan of Samantabhadra is comprised of the different genres, topics and practices, and woven together by the narratives that relate Samantabhadra's realization as the origin of the teachings, his diachronic involvement in the spread of the teachings to the human and other realms, and the subsequent transmission of the teachings to India and Tibet.

The narratives also construct a powerful image of uniqueness and preciousness of the teachings. The Oral Transmissions of Vairocana discuss the position of the Great Perfection as the pinnacle of all the vehicles, and stress the rarity of the teachings of the anthology, particularly the oral transmissions. Many texts describe transmission scenes in the dynastic period, and relate how the teachings were concealed as treasures because suitable recipients could not be found at that time. Numerous passages for example in the Six Seals of Vajravarāhī depict the time of Rindzin Gödem as a degenerate era, the final 500 year period of the Buddhist teachings before the disappearance of the genuine dharma. The prophecies of Gödem picture him as the predestined revealer, zealous yogi, who will accomplish the practices of *The Unimpeded Realization* and struggle to uphold the authentic lamp of dharma in the face of criticism and hostility prevalent in the dark time. There are also many other prophecies, for example Garab Dorjé gives a prophecy to Śrī Simha about the three

⁷⁴ GZ IV:569

⁷⁵ GZ IV:569

⁷⁶ GZ III:467

masters of awareness, who will become his future disciples, and Śrī Simha gives prophecies to Vairocana and Padmasambhava about their dharma activities in Tibet.

In this way, the vision of Samantabhadra is depicted as unfolding in time via the predestined transmission of the precious rare teachings contained in the anthology. The treasure revelation of the anthology by Rindzin Gödem is portraved as a particularly auspicious karmic fortune, because it contains all the strands of the Great Perfection transmitted separately to the three masters of awareness by Srī Simha, and it even includes the Letterless Oral Transmission, i.e. the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava, which are said to be so rare, profound and secret that they should only be transmitted as a single transmission from a guru to one disciple, and only be written down in compelling circumstances. Thus, the prophetic telos of Samantabhadra's vision culminates in the revelation of Gödem, because it is the cathartic end of the prophetic journey that brings the teachings to light from centuries of oblivion, and it contains the complete visionary teachings of the anthology transmitted by the three masters of awareness, accessible to a wider audience for the first time. Emphasizing the rarity and preciousness of the teachings is a part of the narrative theme of Samantabhadra's vision that enhances the appeal of the anthology as the unique teaching of the unimpeded vision.

The vision of Samantabhadra also comes to include the reader or the practitioner of the tradition in the special position of having encountered the rare and secret teachings. As Monius points out, literature and community exist in a "mutually constitutive relationship." The Tamil Buddhist texts Vīracoliyam and Manimekalai enable a reader to envision himself as a part of a larger collective, a religious community that is bound together by shared commitments, goals and moral sensibilities. *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity* have an even stronger sense of community, because the texts are meant only for those who have the empowerments transmitted by a master of the tradition, and this community of initiates is bound by numerous general tantric commitments (Skt. samaya, Tib. dam tshig) and commitments specific to the anthology.

Thus, the community of readers depicted in the anthology is that of aspiring yogis, and they are included in the vision of Samantabhadra through their karmically destined connection with the teachings. This is elucidated in *The Supporting Notes on the Liberation Through Wearing*, which states that one has to have accumulated merit for several eons to encounter the liberating teachings.⁷⁷ In *The Tantra of Becoming a Buddha by merely Seeing, Hearing, Wearing, or Praying to this Great Tantra (an explanatory tantra)*, Samantabhadra relates that his unimpeded realization (*dgongs pa zang thal*) is the supreme teaching in the world, and by encountering it, one is bound to attain enlightenment either in this or subsequent lives depending on one's acumen and practice, ⁷⁸ thus enveloping the reader in the prophetic framework of the anthology. The inclusion of the reader in the grand unfoldment of karmic and gnostic forces entailing predestined revelation and prophetic vision is a tremendous inspirational force for an aspiring yogi, and thus the vision of Samantabhadra also

⁷⁷ GZ III:256

⁷⁸ GZ IV:88

becomes a method to shatter the binding image of ordinariness and to give a greater sense of purpose and a sense of belonging to a scheme of divine forces at work in history and time.

Connecting the anthology's divine figures and teachings synchronically and diachronically under Samantabhadra is related to the overall agenda of the anthology, which is the weave the various tantric and preliminary practices in the overarching Great Perfection system. Below in the section on Doxographies and contemplative components I shall discuss the way the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna practices are presented through the lens of the Great Perfection and integrated into the Dzokchen framework - an approach, which is a part of the vision of the anthology embodied in Samantabhadra. Other Buddhist traditions do not give such a central place to Samantabhadra, but he is a Dzokchen figure, which is why he is particularly suited to represent the vision of the anthology. According to Anne Ferry, compilers of anthologies seek to fashion them into something of a different kind,⁷⁹ and clearly the vision of Samantabhadra turns the anthology into a distinctive creation that is more than just a compilation of the particular subject matters. It is the main tool of integration that unifies the disparate genres, cycles, practices and topics into a characteristic Seminal Heart system with its own powerful inspiring message.

Literary figures and oral teachers

The Unimpeded Realization and The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Primordial Purity belong to the category of revealed or treasure (gter) literature, which is why most of the texts are attributed to various legendary Indian gurus and Tibetan dynastic period figures, or are Buddha-voiced texts without an author. Thus, we have the presence of multiple hands and voices, which nevertheless leaves open the question of the actual origin and authorship of the texts. The majority of the texts that have a speaker are oral texts, while the written speaker texts predominantly overlap with the texts that state an author. The interconnected nature of the anthology is evident in the way the narratives contextualize the authors and speakers in the mythical history of the transmission originating from Samantabhadra in the highest pure land Akanistha, and then passing on to the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods by Vajrasattva and Vajradhara; these three deities being the most common speakers in the tantras and other Buddha-voiced texts. The authors are the major figures associated with the Great Perfection transmission, such as Garab Dorjé, Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, Vairocana and Yéshé Tsogyel, and the numerous narratives involving these figures depict transmission scenes in India and Tibet. First, I shall analyze the authors of the texts, and then discuss the different divine and human speakers. Both sections begin with general observations for less dedicated readers, and then present detailed examination of the author and speaker texts.

⁷⁹ Ferry, 2001: 2, 31.

Authors

The Great Perfection anthologies prior to The Unimpeded Realization and The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Primordial Purity are in general attributed to either Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra or Vairocana, but the distinctive feature of Rindzin Gödem's anthology is to connect these three masters of awareness by presenting oral transmissions originating from each of them. The anthology also contains texts that feature them together as authors or teachers and narratives that depict their meetings in the retreat cave of Chimphu in Samye, where they transmitted teachings and compiled texts together. However, the anthology strongly reflects the triumphalism of Padmasambhava characteristic to the time period: almost half of the treasure texts are attributed to him, while Vairocana and Vimalamitra are said to have compiled only a few texts. Vairocana is associated with the Mind Series and Padmasambhava with the Pith Instruction Series, which is evident both in the transmission narratives and in the contents of the texts attributed to them. Since the Pith Instruction Series is ranked higher and more exclusive than the Mind Series, Padmasambhava's association with it emphasizes his importance in the anthology and in the Great Perfection tradition at this time period, as well as reverberates Padmasambhava's historical rise to predominance in the Seminal Heart tradition of the Pith Instruction Series.

In addition to the three masters of awareness, the anthology contains the literary input of Garab Dorjé, Mañjuśrimitra and Yéshé Tsogyel, but only as composers of a few texts. It is notable though that Garab Dorjé is the composer of the core text of *The Spontaneously Present Peaceful and Wrathful Deities*, which is an important *sādhana* in the Northern Treasures tradition until today, and that the *sādhana* was expanded by the three masters of awareness, emphasizing their role in the assimilation of the tradition. Yéshé Tsogyel, who the tradition regards as the main female disciple and consort of Padmasambhava, although credited the authorship of only three texts, is the attributed composer of a literary masterpiece and one of the most significant texts in the anthology, *The Ten Steps of the Profound Key Points*, which relates her journey to enlightenment, highlighting her role as an example that all future yogis and yoginīs should emulate. The text also embodies the actualization of the vision of Samantabhadra in the life of an individual on the Tibetan soil, and depicts the visionary path as accessible also to women.

The anthology contains 127 texts, which include 115 texts that are considered to be treasure texts revealed by Rindzin Gödem, five tables of content and seven texts composed by later figures. Six of these are authored by an eclectic 19th century figure Adzom Drukpa Rinpoche, and one explanatory manual to the *sādhana* of the peaceful and wrathful deities is anonymous, but does not present itself as a revealed text, because of the absence of the treasure signs (*gter tsheg*) in the end of sentences. Adzom Drukpa's compositions contain clarifications and practical instructions especially for lamas on how to confer empowerments and practice the *sādhanas*. They include four manuals for conferring empowerments based on the empowerment rituals in the treasure scriptures,⁸⁰ a manual for practicing the *sādhanas* of the five

⁸⁰ The Presentation of the Four Ripening Empowerments in a Waterfall Easy to Recite (GZ I:183-325), An arrangement of these special empowerments for liturgy (GZ II:91-189), The Ornament of Appearances: A Reading Ritual for Disclosing the Hidden Blessings and Empowerment Ritual of the Marvelous Secret (GZ IV:605-625) and An Easy to Engage Arrangement of the Awareness

families based in the treasure scriptures⁸¹ and a short supplement to the $s\bar{a}dhana$ of the peaceful and wrathful deities.⁸²

Besides these texts composed by Adzom Drukpa, 48 of the 115 treasure scriptures contain an attribution of authorship. Padmasambhava's role is predominant: 26 texts are attributed to him, containing multiple topics and genres, such as several $s\bar{a}dhanas$,⁸³ an awareness empowerment (*rig pa'i dbang*),⁸⁴ Padmasambhava's last testament,⁸⁵ two texts from the Marvelous Secret cycle,⁸⁶ the seven texts from the cycle of the Six Seals,⁸⁷ a narrative text,⁸⁸ a dialogue with Śrī Simha,⁸⁹ and, of course, the three core texts of his defining textual cycle, the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava,⁹⁰ augmented by associated literature such as pith instruction texts deriving from the Precious Guru (*guru rin po che*).⁹¹ Eleven of the texts attributed to Padmasambhava do not have a speaker or teacher, but they present themselves as teachings springing from the author's realization. In the Marvelous Secret and in a

Empowerment Encapsulating the Quintessential Elixir of the Self-Emergent and Self-Arisen Great Perfection (GZ V:41-77).

⁸¹ The Enlightened Activities of the Five Families and Dakinā arranged in notes for ease of recitation (GZ I:377-395)

⁸² A Supplement on the Peaceful and Wrathful (GZ II:197-199)

⁸³ The External Sādhanas of the Five Families: The Purification of the Vessel and Elixir Right Where They Stand (GZ I:331-375), The Garland of Offerings in the Sādhana of the Dākinī of the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (GZ I:413-453)

⁸⁴ The Awareness Empowerment Encapsulating the Quintessential Elixir (GZ V:79-103)

⁸⁵ The Three Lamps: The Last Testament Composed by Oddiyana Padmasambhava (GZ V:201-244)

⁸⁶ Supressing Problems in the Marvellous Secret (GZ IV:541-560), The Ritual of the Profound Empowerment for the Marvelous Secret (GZ V:573-589)

⁸⁷ I have included seven texts from the cycle of the Six Seals here, because the cycle presents itself as teachings that Padmasambhava wrote down after receiving them from Vajravarāhī, and these seven texts mention him either as an author or a concealer. Two texts state Padmasambhava as an author: *The Precious Ornament Commentary: A Commentary on the Ritual Stages of Accomplishing the Yoga* (GZ 1:579-597) and *Pith Instructions on the Key Points of the Channels and Winds in the Six Profound Seals of Vajravarahī* (GZ 1:599-622). Five texts mention Padmasabhava as a concealer: Secret Pith Instructions on the Ritual Stages of the Dākinī (GZ 1:489-521), Pith Instructions on the Six Seals of the *Temporal Calculations of the Dākinī* (GZ 1:523-547), *The Foremost of the Six Profound Seals: The Tantra of the Enlightened Activities of the Vajravarāhī's Joy* (GZ 1:549-577), *A Guide Text on the Profound Seals of Vajravarāhī* (GZ 1:623-645) and *Removing Hindrances Relating to the Bindus* (GZ 1:647-654).

⁸⁸ The Great Synoptic Exposition of the History that Generates Faith (GZ I:3-25)

⁸⁹ The Ten Steps of the Profound Oral Instruction on the Quintessential Key Points (GZ III:3-19)

⁹⁰ The First Root of the Exceedingly Profound Pith Instructions Entitled The Letterless Oral Transmission which Teaches the Direct Perception of Primordial Wisdom from the Great Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (GZ II:423-436), The Ultimate Letterless within all Oral Transmissions (GZ II:437-448), and The Precious Letterless Oral Transmission – The Realization of the Enlightened Mind, the Pith Instruction on the Secret Meaning (GZ II:449-459).

⁹¹ The Illuminating Lamp: A Pith Instruction Deriving from The Tantra on the Self-emergent and Self-Arisen (GZ III:35-47), The First and Second Pith Instructions which Teach the Process of Freedom for the Triad of Superior, Average and Inferior Individuals as a Specially Exalted Oral Transmission (GZ III:127-138), The Third Pith Instruction of Padmasambhava: The Inappropriateness of Disseminating [this] to Those Who Are Not an Appropriate Vessel (GZ III:139-140)

pith instruction text focusing on secrecy, Padmasambhava himself is the speaker, and the Six Seals are the teachings that Padmasambhava received from Vajravarāhī in the charnel ground of Sosaling. Śrī Simha is the teacher in two dialogues with Padmasambhava: one is doctrinally oriented and the other describes Padmasambhava's path to enlightenment. Notably, *The First Command of Padmasambhava: The Tantra of the Quintessential Realization*,⁹² which is a pith instruction text on direct transcendence, originates directly from Garab Dorjé, who appeared to Padmasambhava on an island on the Dhanakosha lake.

The anthology also contains a lengthy text on the elaborate vase empowerment⁹³ that is attributed to all the three masters of awareness (Skt. vidvādhara, Tib. rig 'dzin): Padmasambhava, Vairocana and Vimalamitra. In addition, the three masters of awareness are said to have expanded the core text of the sādhana of the peaceful and wrathful deities⁹⁴ written by Garab Dorjé. Apart from Vairocana's participation in the above-mentioned textual efforts, his attributed authorship is limited to the four texts of the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana,⁹⁵ taking up 138 pages in total and featuring Śrī Simha as the speaker transmitting the teachings to Vairocana. Vimalamitra is the stated composer of six texts: two Great Perfection empowerments,⁹⁶ a longevity sādhana,⁹⁷ a text on the guru yoga and preliminaries of direct transcendence,⁹⁸ a bardo text,99 and the monumental philosophical treatise, The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra.¹⁰⁰ Thus, we see that the textual involvement of Vimalamitra is extensive, especially considering that The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra is 218 pages long, augmented by 50 pages of his other compositions. The texts attributed to Padmasambhava are mainly short, 10-25 pages, but the total number of pages is nevertheless 406, reiterating his preeminent role in the Seminal Heart (snying thig) tradition in the 14th century. It should also be noted that even though The Great Oral Transmission is attributed to Vimalamitra, it is a group of teachings that all the three masters of awareness are said to have transmitted together to the king Thrisong Deutsen in the retreat cave of Chimphu in Samye.

Besides the *sādhana* of the peaceful and wrathful deities mentioned above, Garab Dorjé is presented as the author of three texts: an important Great Perfection empowerment to awareness's creativity,¹⁰¹ an offering ritual¹⁰² and a text on the signs

⁹⁷ GZ IV:421-422

⁹⁸ The Three Spikes of the Key Points: A Guide Text composed by Vimalamitra (GZ II:335-352)

⁹⁹ The Lamp of the Clear Light of Bardo (GZ III:549-554)

100 GZ IV:183-401

⁹² GZ III:283-304

⁹³ The Elaborate Vase Empowerment GZ I:105-156

⁹⁴ The Enlightened Activities of the Spontaneously Present Peaceful and Wrathful Deities of the Direct Perception of Dharmatā in the Great Perfection (GZ II:201-244)

⁹⁵ GZ II:461-484, II:485-536, II:537-578 and II:579-602

⁹⁶ A ritual for the Great Perfection Empowerment composed by Vimalamitra (GZ II:33-40), and The Precious Empowerment of the Enlightened Mind: The Heart Mantras of the Oral Transmission (II:41-60)

¹⁰¹ The Profound Empowerment to Awareness's Creativity (GZ II:3-31)

of successful practice.¹⁰³ Mañjuśrimitra is the author of two texts discussing the subtle body,¹⁰⁴ and he transmits the teachings to Śrī Simha. No texts are attributed to Śrī Simha; he is not portrayed as a literary figure, but is the grand teacher of the three masters of awareness and the speaker in seven texts teaching both Vairocana and Padmasambhava. The narrative texts also describe him as the ubiquitous holder and master of all the Great Perfection teachings, which he then transmitted to his four heart sons, one section to each disciple: "He entrusted the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Cycle to Orgyen Padmasambhava, and the Secret Cycle to the Victor Jñānasūtra (Ye shes mdo), the Inner Cycle to the *paṇḍita* Vimalamitra, and the External Cycle to the translator Vairocana."¹⁰⁵ This division is evident in the anthology, for the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana teach the breakthrough contemplation based on the Mind Series (*sems sde*), which is equated with the External Cycle, while Padmasambhava is strongly associated with the Pith Instruction Series (*man ngag sde*), or the Unsurpassed Cycle, and its distinctive practice direct transcendence.

Yéshé Tsogyel is stated as the author of two texts: The Ten Steps of the Profound Key Points, which is a fascinating text that presents her journey to enlightenment via the experiences of direct transcendence embedded in a series of dialogues between her and Padmasambhava, ¹⁰⁶ and *The Garland of Ambrosia of Special Essence* Extraction¹⁰⁷ - a text that gives many alchemical (bcud len) recipes, each potion consumed in a completion stage practice of a particular $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}$, containing instructions on the yoga of channels and winds. The latter text does not have a teacher or a transmission lineage, thus leaving it vague as to what extent the practices and recipes are created by her or received from her teachers. The colophon states that she composed this for the benefit of future disciples who are attached to food and clothes, and concealed it in Zangzang Lhadrak, the cave where Gödem found the treasure. In contrast to her possibly more original role in The Garland of Ambrosia of Special Essence Extraction, Yéshé Tsogyel, Ācārya Yéshé Yang and Tenma Tsemang are said to have written down the narrative of the transmission of the awareness's display empowerment (rig pa'i rtsal dbang),¹⁰⁸ which is the defining empowerment of the Great Perfection, and is said to be Padmasambhava's heart treasure originating from the primordial Buddha.

¹⁰² Presenting Offerings to the Five Victor Families (GZ I:397-406)

¹⁰³ Notes on the Measures of the Great Perfection (GZ III:497-518)

¹⁰⁴ The Great Perfection Wheels of the Body Which are the Locus of the Channels (GZ II:455-481) and The Lamp on the Key Points of the Channels and Winds of the Great Perfection (GZ IV:403-420)

¹⁰⁵ The First Oral Transmission of Vairocana (GZ II:473). Rgyal ba ye shes mdo is not mentioned anywhere else in the anthology

¹⁰⁶ The Ten Steps of the Profound Key Points (GZ V:321-401)

¹⁰⁷ GZ IV:423-484

¹⁰⁸ The Prophetic Certificate of the Profound Dharma Which Teaches the Effortless Vehicle - A Cycle of the Guidance to the Scriptures (GZ I:37-51)

Speakers

The numerous treasure texts that contain the voice of a speaker give the anthology a distinctive sense of directness, as if peeking the transmission scenes and conversations between the Buddhas and gurus. For Augustine, voice is more important than the written word, because it is closer to mind and God. Even though the voices of the anthology appear in written texts, Augustine's view has relevance in this context, because the voices give a sense of first hand experience and proximity to the divine figures, and being the voices of Buddhas and gurus, they carry particular authority. The Buddhas are the speakers especially in the tantras and the Liberation Through Wearing texts, while the voices of the gurus appear in many different texts, such as the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana, dialogue texts, Marvelous Secret and so forth. The numerous oral transmissions and their valorization as particularly profound and rare teachings also emphasize the importance of voice and direct oral encounters.

The treasure texts of the anthology contain 63 texts that have a speaker or teacher. Commonly, these texts begin with a narrative scenario that states the teacher, interlocutor, place and sometimes also time. Thirty-two of these texts contain divine narrative scenarios that occur in pure lands or heavens and the most common speaker in these texts is Samantabhadra, who is the speaker in 17 texts, including the texts in which he speaks as the Buddha Unchanging Light or Mass of Light. Seventeen texts present teaching scenes involving Indic figures in India and Orgyen, and 19 texts contain transmission situations in Tibet dominated by the voice of Padmasambhava. Some of these texts present multiple speakers or teachers (which is why the numbers don't add up), usually a divine and a human one, for example *The Secret Pith Instructions on the Ritual Stages of the Dākinī* has a narrative scenario of the king Thrisong Deutsen asking Padmasambhava for teachings,¹⁰⁹ and in the fourth chapter we have Vajravarāhī as the teacher of the actual seals contained in the text.¹¹⁰

The majority of the speaker texts are oral (48 texts) in the sense that they are direct speech of a Buddha or an enlightened guru or dialogues between Buddhas, or a guru and a disciple. Fifteen texts have almost no direct speech and are classified as mainly written, even though they state a teacher or they may contain some oral sections or a short narrative scenario introducing the speaker. Several of the texts classified as oral have also written sections making the division somewhat elusive. Nevertheless, we can make a few observations. The number of speaker texts (63) in general and oral texts (48) in particular is very high, pointing to the oral character of the anthology filled with scenes of teaching situations and voices of Buddhas and gurus. Curiously, even *The Commentary on the Empowerment to Awareness's Creativity*,¹¹¹ which, being a commentary, one may reasonably expect to be of the written type, is an oral dialogue, in which Padmasambhava is beseeched by the king Thrisong Deutsen and Yéshé Tsogyel. All the 32 texts that contain narrative scenarios in pure lands or heavens are oral, although one tantra is augmented with pith instructions written by

¹⁰⁹ GZ I:490-503

¹¹⁰ GZ I:504-506

¹¹¹ GZ II:301-323

Padmasambhava.¹¹² In addition, 13 of the oral texts feature Padmasambhava as a speaker, which highlights his role as the main teacher of the dynastic period disciples, and especially his oral role: many of these texts are structured similarly to the tantras containing a narrative scenario and an interlocutor beseeching the Precious Guru, whose voice carries the authority of a Buddha. Padmasambhava is present, not only through his extensive textual contribution, but also through his direct speech, while Vairocana and Vimalamitra are distanced to the background as authors, lacking almost entirely a direct teaching voice.

I should also mention the considerable overlap between the speaker texts and the texts that contain an attribution of authorship: 18 texts have both an author and a speaker. As we might expect, most of these texts (13) are the speaker texts of the written type, and there are only three written texts (out of 15) without an author featuring Garab Dorjé and Padmasambhava as the speakers. Vice versa, most of the 48 oral texts do not have an author. ¹¹³ Thus, as we may assume, the speaker texts are usually oral and the authored texts are predominantly written. This division is also indicative of the revelatory nature of the oral speaker texts. In the Genre, Authorship and Transmission in Visionary Buddhism: The Literary Traditions of Thang-stong Rgyal-po, Janet Gyatso points out that in Thangtong Gyelpo's tradition, the more anonymous a text is, the more revelatory it is. Similarly, in the anthology, the oral speaker texts, such as tantras and Liberation Through Wearing texts are depicted in the narratives as having come down from Samantabhadra, Vajradhara or other Buddhas. For example *The First, Middle and Third Last Testaments of the Buddha* relates it own origin:

The Victor Samantabhadra transformed into a mass of light without his body being visible, and came to the exalted place of Akanistha. Vajrasattva was in anguish [due to the suffering of sentient beings] and lamented sorrowfully, so Samantabhadra made his right arm appear from within the light, and placed these self-arisen letters in a crystal casket. It fell in the hands of Vajrasattva, and cleared away his anguish.¹¹⁴

As for the detailed analysis of the speaker texts, Samantabhadra is the speaker in 11 texts (including the above mentioned text), five of which are tantras,¹¹⁵ and their main topics are direct transcendence, bardo and the reality body (Skt. *dharmakāya*, Tib. *chos sku*). Six texts featuring Samantabhadra as the speaker belong to the Liberation Through Wearing cycle¹¹⁶ emphasizing the blessing power that the texts have as coming directly from the primordial Buddha. In one of these texts, Samantabhadra is

¹¹² The First Command of Padmasambhava: The Tantra of the Quintessential Realization (GZ III:283-304)

¹¹³ There are only five oral texts that have an author: *The Ten Steps of the Profound Oral Instruction* on the Quintessential Key Points (GZ III:3-19), *The Ten Steps of the Profound Key Points* (V:321-401), *Suppressing Problems in the Marvelous Secret* (IV:541-560) and *The Third Pith Instruction of* Padmasambhava: *The Inappropriateness of Disseminating [this] to Those Who Are Not an* Appropriate Vessel (III:139-140) and *The First Command of Padmasambhava: The Tantra of the* Quintessential Realization (III:283-304)

¹¹⁴ GZ III:196

¹¹⁵ GZ III:83-126, III:425-453, III:283-304, III:409-423 and V:105-130

¹¹⁶ GZ III:185-201, III:203-210, III:223-237, III:239-254, III:275-278 and III:279-281

teaching with his female counterpart (*yum*), Samantabhadrī.¹¹⁷ The location of Samantabhadra's transmission is usually the *dharmakāya* pure land The Highest (Skt. *akaniṣtha*, Tib. 'og min) and in one text The Blissful Land (Skt. *tuṣita*, Tib. *bde ba can*), and the interlocutors are Vajradhara, Vajrasattva or Vajrapāṇi (referred to as the Lord of Secrets). Whether the audience is the peaceful and wrathful deities or five Buddhas, they are explained as not separate from Samantabhadra - a point well illustrated by the non-personified retinues appearing occasionally, such as the wisdom of self-display¹¹⁸ or the self-arisen retinues of his own awareness.¹¹⁹

The anthology also contains five texts, in which the speaker is the Buddha Unchanging Light ('od mi gyur). In one of these texts, he is explicitly said to be the same as Samantabhadra,¹²⁰ but curiously, in another text, he is identified with Amitābha,¹²¹ while three texts lack explicit identification.¹²² Four of these five texts are tantras, including a narrative tantra that relates the entire transmission from Samantabhadra to Rindzin Gödem,¹²³ and one text, The Lamp of Unimpeded Wisdom from the Realization of Samantabhadra, is a tantra-like composition even though it lacks the name tantra. The interlocutors, main topics and locations are similar to above, except that the texts also contain philosophical reflections employed in the breakthrough practice. There is also one more tantra spoken by the Buddha Mass of Light ('od kyi phung po), who is repeatedly identified with Amitābha (Infinite Light). This tantra resolves the multiple identities of the primordial Buddha by explaining that all these different names, Samantabhadra, Unchanging Light, Mass of Light and Amitābha, refer to the same Buddha.¹²⁴ The text focuses again to direct transcendence and bardo, and is taught to Vajrapāni in the pure land of Vajradhara. In the teachings given by Unchanging Light and Mass of Light, we see an emerging pattern: when Vajrapāni is the interlocutor, bardo figures as a major topic.

Vajradhara is the speaker in seven texts, four of which bring the narrative scenario down from the pure land of Akanistha to a high heaven in the desire realm, The Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods. The teachings take place on the Amolika rock, where Vajradhara arrives from Akanistha usually sent by Samantabhadra to benefit

¹¹⁷ The Testament on the Key Points of Time: Six Tantras of Liberation Through Wearing (also titled The Seven Versed Tantra on the Essence of Liberation Through Wearing) (GZ III:239-254)

¹¹⁸ The Profound Letters on the Signs (also titled The Tantra Teaching the Signs of Primordial Wisdom) (GZ III:426)

¹¹⁹ The Testament on the Key Points of Time: Six Tantras of Liberation Through Wearing (also titled The Seven Versed Tantra on the Essence of Liberation Through Wearing) (GZ III:240)

¹²⁰ The Tantra of Becoming a Buddha by Merely Seeing, Hearing, Wearing, or Praying to This Great Tantra (an Explanatory Tantra) (GZ IV:81-181)

¹²¹ The Explanatory Tantra of the Introduction to the Buddhas from the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (GZ III:519-531)

¹²² A Pith Instruction of the Great Perfection: The Tantra Which Teaches the Realization of the Buddha in Its Own Right (GZ III:163-186), The Tantra of the Self-Arisen Realization of the Buddha Vajrasattva [from] the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (III:477-496) and The Lamp of Unimpeded Wisdom [from] the Realization of Samantabhadra (IV:27-58)

¹²³ A Pith Instruction of the Great Perfection: The Tantra which Teaches the Realization of the Buddha in Its Own Right (GZ III:163-183)

¹²⁴ The Tantra of the Great Intrinsic Buddha (GZ III:318)

beings. Even though the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods is in the desire realm, on top of Mt. Meru, the audience consists of inconceivably many deities of the Vajra family, bodhisattvas and *dākinīs*. In one text, Vajradhara also teaches in Akanistha, and in one Liberation Through Wearing text, he is said to be Samantabhadra's emanation, and teaches in Tusita. Four of the seven texts are tantras, 125 the interlocutor is Vajrapāni and the topic is Great Perfection meditation, but especially death and bardo, emphasizing again Vairapāni's connection to the bardo teachings. As an elegant detail, in a text on empowerments (dbang), Vajradhara is beseeched by the dākinī Great Powerful Lady (dbang mo che).¹²⁶ In addition, we have two texts from the Liberation Through Wearing cycle.¹²⁷ In one of them, Garab Dorjé receives a cycle of the Liberation Through Wearing from Vajradhara, although it is a short passage that does not involve dialogue, but Vajradhara just gives him the cycle with a few words of entrustment.¹²⁸ Receiving teachings directly from Vajradhara emphasizes the mythical aura of Garab Dorjé, who is first human figure in the Great Perfection lineages. In the transmission narratives, Garab Dorjé receives the Great Perfection teachings from Vajrasattva, but the anthology does not contain any texts on their dialogues.

Vajrasattva is the speaker in eight texts, taking place mainly in unidentified pure lands or fabulous palaces, and once in the pure land Densely Arrayed (Skt. *ghanavyūha*, Tib. *stug po bkod pa*) and in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods. One of these eight texts contains pith instructions on death and bardo,¹²⁹ and seven are tantras,¹³⁰ spoken to a large retinue of the Vajra family or to many Thus Gone Ones (Skt. *tathāgata*, Tib. *de bzhin gshegs pa*) from the five families. Mañjuśri and Avalokiteśvara appear as interlocutors in one text each, but Vajrapāṇi dominates the scene; he is the questioner in six texts. Bardo is again an important topic in these tantras, although there are many other topics too, such as metaphorical stories and introductions (*ngo sprod*). The introductions are brief initiations to one's buddha nature that employ analogical symbols to point to a profound meaning, such as the specter of rainbow light reflected from a crystal pointing to the rainbow light of the five kinds of wisdom.

The remaining narrative scenarios are located on earth, first in Orgyen, the charnel ground of Sosaling, where Vajravarāhī teaches Padmasambhava in four texts belonging to the Six Seals cycle.¹³¹ In one Six Seals text, we also have the voice of

¹²⁵ The Tantra of the Self-Arisen Primordial Wisdom of the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (GZ III:337-353), The Root Tantra of Indwelling Primordial Wisdom (III:355-371), The Profound Letters on the Signs (III:425-453) and The Tantra on the Self-Display of the Bardo from the Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra (III:565-598)

¹²⁶ The Divisions of the Five Profound Empowerments (GZ I:99-103)

¹²⁷ The First, Middle and Third Testaments of the Buddha (GZ III:185-201) and The Pith Instruction of the Glorious Samantabhadra: The way the Liberation Through Wearing Emerged (III:203-210)

¹²⁸ The Pith Instruction of the Glorious Samantabhadra: The Way the Liberation Through Wearing Emerged (GZ III:207)

¹²⁹ The Oral Instructions of the Pith Instructions on the Five Rounds of the Great Perfection Seminal Heart (GZ III:541-548)

¹³⁰ GZ II:603-631, II:633-650, III:49-81, III:373-391, III:393-408, IV:3-26 and V:131-149

¹³¹ GZ I:489-521, I:549-577, I:599-622, I:647-654

Vajrapāņi in several citations to an unspecified audience.¹³² In terms of my classification on oral and written texts above, the Six Seals texts are mainly written, even though they contain oral sections, such as Padmasambhava receiving the seals from Vajravarāhī, or the voice of Vajravarāhī in the actual seals, which are short command-like instructions on practice.

Śrī Simha teaches Padmasambhava and Vairocana in seven texts, the former in the charnel ground of Sosaling, and latter in the Nine-Story Palace of the Buddhas in India. It is illustrative of Padmasambhava's oral role that all the texts in which Vairocana is taught¹³³ are mainly written presenting only short oral passages of Śrī Simha transmitting the teachings, while two of the three texts in which Padmasambhava is taught are oral dialogues between Śrī Simha and Padmasambhava.¹³⁴

The Foundation of the Three Oral Transmission Series¹³⁵ is an interesting oral text that connects the Buddha Śākyamuni to the Great Perfection narratives as an emanation of Samantabhadra sent to teach the interpretative meaning of Buddhist scriptures to our world. Śākyamuni is beseeched by the king Indrabhūti, and he takes off his monk's robe, dresses up as Vajradhara and teaches Indrabhūti the śrāvaka and bodhisattva paths.

Garab Dorjé appears as a teacher in the anthology only in five brief occasions, in two written and three oral texts. The latter are tantras and have Samantabhadra or Unchanging Light as the main speaker, and Garab Dorjé merely has a small role in the transmission. The slight presence of this grand Great Perfection figure is surprising. To a certain extent, we may view it as indicative of his mythical, elusive character, but practically it seems that even his presence is overshadowed by that of Padmasambhava. In two texts, Garab Dorjé is the teacher in the background without a teaching voice: *The Guide Text on the Direct Perception of Dharmatā*¹³⁶ mentions him as the teacher of the text in the beginning, and *The First Command of Padmasambhava*¹³⁷ states that he appeared to Padmasambhava on the Dhanakosha lake and gave him the tantra contained in the text. The other three instances do not picture him as the teacher of the entire text, but present short citations embedded in the transmission narratives: he gives a prophecy to Śrī Simha about the three masters of awareness,¹³⁸ and he entrusts the Great Perfection teachings to brahmin Dechog Nyingpo.¹³⁹ The longest passage of dialogue (three pages) involving Garab Dorjé is

¹³⁵ GZ IV:485-513

¹³² Pith instructions on the Six Seals of the Temporal Calculations of the Dakinī (GZ I:523-547

¹³³ The First (GZ II:461-484), Middle (II:485-536) and Later (II:577-578) Oral Transmission of Vairocana and The Profound Mind Tantra of Vairocana (II:579-602)

¹³⁴ The Ten Steps of the Profound Oral Instruction on the Quintessential Key Points (GZ III:3-19) and The Intrinsically Radiant Self-Awareness Introduction (V:151-161)

¹³⁶ GZ II:353-392 ¹³⁷ GZ III:283-304

¹³⁸ A Pith Instruction of the Great Perfection: The Tantra which Teaches the Realization of the Buddha in Its Own Right (GZ III:163-183)

¹³⁹ The Great Synoptic Exposition of the History that Generates Faith (GZ I:3-25)

in *The First Oral Transmission of Vairocana*, where we have a vivid description of the meeting of Garab Dorjé and Mañjuśrimitra. Garab Dorjé tries to introduce Great Perfection teachings in India and faces much resistance from the side of the leading scholars (*paṇdita*) of conventional Buddhism. Eventually, the most prominent scholar, Mañjuśrimitra, engages in a formal debate with Garab Dorjé. After Garab Dorjé defeats him, Mañjuśrimitra tries to cut his tongue because he realizes that he had slandered a Buddha prior to the debate, but Garab Dorjé grabs the knife, throws it away and tells him to embrace his Great Perfection teaching instead.¹⁴⁰

Lastly, Padmasambhava is the speaker in even more texts as Samantabhadra in all his forms, that is, 19 texts, 13 of which are oral¹⁴¹ and six mainly written.¹⁴² The location, if mentioned, is the retreat cave of Chimphu in Samye, except one bardo teaching is given to the king Thrisong Deutsen in the Three-Storied Central Temple of Samye. The main recipient is Yéshé Tsogyel (eight texts), and other interlocutors are Thrisong Deutsen (four texts), prince Mutri Cepo (two texts) and Namkhai Nyingpo (one text). Nanam Dorjé Düjom also appears in the narrative scenario of one history text beseeching Padmasambhava together with Yéshé Tsogyel and Mutri Cepo. The role of Nanam Dorjé Düjom is surprisingly small considering that Rindzin Gödem is regarded as his reincarnation. In two of these 19 texts, The First Oral Transmission of Vairocana and The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra, Padmasambhava is the speaker together with Vairocana and Vimalamitra transmitting the teachings to the king Thrisong Deutsen. Vairocana does not appear as a teacher alone, but Vimalamitra is the speaker in one text on the preliminaries of direct transcendence, The Three Spikes of the Key Points,¹⁴³ composed by himself. The oral texts spoken by Padmasambhava contain a wide variety of genres and topics: dialogues, Great Perfection meditation, pith instructions on cutting (gcod), dreams, bardo, prophecy, liberation through wearing and so forth. The written texts include the philosophically and scholastically oriented Oral Transmissions of Vairocana and Vimalamitra, a narrative text and the root text of the preliminary practices.

¹⁴⁰ GZ II:466-468

¹⁴¹ The Religious History of the Threefold Teachings of Secret Mantra (GZ I:53-75), The Inscription about Him Who Has the Right Karma (I:91-97), The Commentary on the Empowerment to Awareness's Creativity (II:301-323), The Third Pith Instruction of Padmasambhava: The Inappropriateness of Disseminating [this] to Those Who Are Not an Appropriate Vessel (III:139-140), The Exceedingly Profound Liberation Through Wearing of the Nine Key Points of Awareness (III:267-268), The Key to the Marvelous Secret (IV:515-531), Suppressing Problems in the Marvelous Secret (IV:541-560), Notes on the Key points of the Dialogue: From the Eastern White Conch Treasury (V:163-175), The Stages of the Guidance on the Key points of the Path: An Encapsulation of the Quintessential Elixir, the Lamp Which Clears away the Darkness of Ignorance (V:189-200), The Precious Nail Last Testament (V:245-260), The Treasury of Precious Gems Eradicating Obstructions (the Dialogues of Tsogyel) (V:261-320), The Ten Steps of the Profound Key Points (V:321-401) and The Introduction to the Five Intermediate States - The Supplementary Oral Transmission of the Five Bardos of the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassable Great Perfection: Even Though the Words Manifest as Various, the Meaning is One (V:403-418)

¹⁴² The Key to the Precious Prophecy Which is the List Certificate of the Six Oral Transmissions (GZ I:77-90), The Elaborate Vase Empowerment (I:105-156), The Secret Pith Instructions on the Ritual Stages of the Dākinī (I:489-521), The First Oral Transmission of Vairocana (II:461-484), The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra (IV:183-401) and The Five Nails: The Precious Preliminary Practices' Key Points (V:3-31)

¹⁴³ GZ II:335-352

The revelatory agency

Amidst the variety of voices, authors, genres and topics, the anthology is unified in its presentation and reception as revelation. Almost all the texts in the anthology are considered to be revealed treasures, or ancient texts from the imperial period found in Tibet much later in the fourteenth century by Rindzin Gödem in the cave of Copper Colored Divine Rock (*zang zang lha brag*) on the mountain Resembling a Heap of Poisonous Snakes (*dug sprul spungs 'dra*). The fascinating phenomenon of treasure revelation has its roots in the burial and discovery of royal artifacts, and was adopted as a mechanism to introduce innovative religious literature especially by the Nyingma and Bön traditions as early as the 9th century.

In The Logic of Legitimation in the Tibetan Treasure Tradition, Gyatso writes about the Tibetan methods to legitimate treasure texts as the word of a Buddha. She discusses three types of narratives that appear in treasure cycles for the purpose of engendering confidence in the authenticity of the revelation: (1) origin account, which relates how the treasure was taught by a Buddha, such as Vajradhara to a human master, such as Padmasambhava, who concealed it; (2) revelation account, which is the revealer's description of how and where he found the treasure; and (3) certificate (*byang bu*), which is usually a prophecy predicting the revelation.

The anthology has numerous origin accounts in the narrative texts and short narrative sections found in many texts. It also contains a "list certificate" (*cho byang*) and many other prophecies of the revelation by Rindzin Gödem. The Nechung edition also includes a revelation account, which is a short text written by Rindzin Gödem relating the way he revealed the treasure, while Adzom Drukpa's edition does not contain any texts that state Rindzin Gödem as the author. Narratives of the revelation are also found in the biographies of Rindzin Gödem, such as the one written by his disciple Nyima Zangpo.¹⁴⁴ The majority of the treasure texts contain a treasure revealer's colophon that states the location of the revelation and Gödem as the revealed character of the anthology is also evident in the numerous concealer's colophons stating the concealer, location and often the protector that the text was entrusted to. Some texts also relate the concealment of various versions of the anthology in different places, such as Mön, Paro, Samye and so forth.

In the context of the anthology, the treasure revelation appears as a part of the vision of Samantabhadra, because the teachings concealed are referred to as the vision, intention or realization (*dgongs pa*) of Samantabhadra, and the central figure responsible for composing and hiding treasures, Padmasambhava, is depicted as a second order emanation of Samantabhadra: first Samantabhadra emanates three syllables, which transform into Vairocana, Amitābha and Vajrasattva, who then emanate three syllables from their hearts giving rise to Padmasambhava. The treasure revelation presents the vision of Samantabhadra appearing from centuries of concealment at the predestined time, rendering the recipients of Gödem's time and

¹⁴⁴ Sprul sku rig 'dzin rgod ldem 'phru can gyi rnam thar gsal byed nyi ma'i 'od zer by Nyi ma bzang po. Bhutan: Lama Ngodrup and Sherab Drimey. 1985.

successive generations as of particular historical significance, with the sense of authority, mystery and destiny that becomes a powerful inspirational force for the followers.

I shall briefly list the references to the revealer and concealers in the texts. The 115 treasure texts of the anthology contain 88 texts that state explicitly Gödem as the revealer of the text, and four of the 88 texts also mention that Gödem transcribed the text from yellow scrolls written in a symbolic language known as the $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}$ language. Five texts mention that they were concealed as treasures by Padmasambhava, Yéshé Tsogyel and so forth in Tibetan imperial times without mentioning the revealer, and 22 texts lack any mention of a concealer or a revealer. However, 19 of these 22 texts belong to larger groups of texts within the anthology, such as the Liberation Through Wearing, Six Seals of Vajravarāhī, or Marvelous Secret, the cycle on cutting (gcod). These cycles have other texts that indicate a concealer and/or Gödem as the revealer, thus rendering it less suspicious that some of the texts in the cycle do not state their provenance clearly.¹⁴⁵ In this way, *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Arisen Self-Emergent Primordial Purity* present themselves almost uniformly as revealed literature that was composed and hidden in Tibet in the close of the Tibetan empire in the eighth to ninth centuries

Forty-two texts of the anthology state a concealer of the text. Padmasambhava is the main figure involved in the concealment of 28 texts occasionally aided by Vimalamitra and Vairocana. Twelve of these texts were also composed by Padmasambhava, while two are by Mañjuśrimitra, and there are texts from most cycles and groups, such as the Six Seals, Liberation Through Wearing, Marvelous Secret, tantras and the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava. Yéshé Tsogyel is mentioned as the concealer of eight texts that include the alchemical text composed by her and four texts in which she is the questioner. The king Thrisong Deutsen is attributed the concealment of two texts: a bardo text taught to him and *The Middle Oral Transmission of Vairocana*. The prince Mutri Cepo concealed three texts, two of which belong to the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana cycle and were taught to the king Thrisong Deutsen. Finally, Namkhai Nyingpo concealed the dialogue in which he is the interlocutor. Thus, we see that the concealment of the treasures is centered around Padmasambhava, and his disciples are attributed the concealment of especially those texts that were taught to them.

Doxographies and contemplative components

In this section, I shall examine how the contemplative components of the anthology relate to various doxographical categories, as well as the way the relationship of contemplative components and doxographies are weaving the anthology together as an integrated whole. *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen*

¹⁴⁵ There is only one text that casts doubt on its revealed nature among these texts that the tradition deems as Gödem's revelations: Advice on the Five Rounds - A Pith Instruction of the Seminal Heart of the Great Perfection (rdzogs pa chen po snying tig gi man ngag khug pa lnga'i gdams ngag). The editor's colophon in the very end of the text states: "This is not written with the six inched letters of the treasure, but is written with small and fine letters as if written with a thorn." (gter gyi yi ge mkhyid gang pa las mi gda'o/ yi ge phra la chung ba tsher mas bris pa 'dra ba gcig gda'o//)

Primordial Purity are an Atiyoga anthology, but unlike some Atiyoga anthologies, such as early Great Perfection compilations, Gödem's anthology reflects the syncretic aspect of the Seminal Heart (*snying thig*) and contains an unusual variety of topics and practices belonging mainly to Atiyoga, but also other categories. These other doxographical categories, such as Mahāyoga and Anuyoga, are not used to structure or label the texts, but there is nevertheless a plethora of various practices drawn from these categories.

The topics and practices from other doxographical categories are realigned with the Great Perfection by virtue of their inclusion in this Atiyoga anthology, and their reinterpretation through the Great Perfection view. For example, the anthology contains sādhanas that are at the center of the Mahāyoga vehicle, but in the anthology they have a different character as preliminaries of the central Atiyoga practices. Moreover, the sādhanas of the anthology are also quite short and much less complex than normative tantric sādhanas. The reinterpretation of practices through the lens of the Great Perfection is also evident in the way the Śrāvaka and Bodhisattva vehicles are presented, and some of the cutting (gcod) practices of the Marvelous Secret are given a distinctive Great Perfection framing centered on letting-go of conceptuality. This realigning of tantric and sutric practices with the Great Perfection is a part of the Dzokchen agenda of the anthology expressed in the vision of Samantabhadra, and it is an important technique of integrating the multitude of practices into distinctive harmonious whole. This Dzokchen agenda also entails the aim to give a comprehensive path, complete with preliminaries and sadhanas and sufficient as such, which is why these practices are incorporated into the scheme of the Great Perfection.

In Tibetan Buddhism, the doxographical categories are used to organize practice and thought of different type and they function as hierarchical maps that are ranked in terms of soteriological value. For example Kangyur, Tengyur and many collected works (*gsung 'bum*), presentations on the stages of the path (*lam rim*), levels of teachings (*bstan rim*) and philosophical tenets (*grub mtha*) are organized doxographically. *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Primordial Purity* are not structured in terms of doxography, even though they contain contemplative components a kin to several doxographical categories and belonging to an integrated path structure.

In the Nyingma tradition, the Buddhist path is classified into nine doxographical categories or vehicles: the Hearers ($\dot{sravaka}$), Bodhisattvas, Solitary Realizers (*pratyekabuddha*), Bodily Action Yoga (*kriyāyoga*), Performance Rites Yoga (*caryāyoga*), Yoga, Great Yoga (Mahāyoga), Further Yoga (Anuyoga) and Transcendent Yoga (Atiyoga). In the tradition, these nine vehicles are thought to reflect the historical development of Buddhism to a certain extent, culminating in the Great Perfection of the Atiyoga vehicle, and in terms of path, they also present the stages of the path for an individual practitioner to follow, although this is in a loose sense, because the vehicles of *kriyā*, *caryā* and *yoga* are hardly practiced by the Tibetans, and the solitary realization is more a theoretical possibility than an existing vehicle. However, the vehicles of the Śrāvakas, Bodhisattvas and Mahā-, Anu- and

Atiyoga play an important role in the Nyingma path, and also feature in *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Emergent*, *Self-Arisen Primordial Purity*.¹⁴⁶

Śrāvaka and Bodhisattva vehicles

The Śrāvaka and Bodhisattva vehicles are presented in the anthology through the lens of tantric Buddhism, and as a part of the vision of Samantabhadra, which reflects the synthetic impetus of the anthology to create an integrated literary whole. The anthology contains only one text that discusses the Śrāvaka Vehicle: *The Precious Lamp of the Three Roots: The Foundation of the Three Oral Transmission Series*.¹⁴⁷ The text relates how Samantabhadra, in order to teach the interpretative vehicle, emanates as the Buddha Śākyamuni, who then acts as the speaker in the text. It contains a chapter on the Śrāvaka vows, which begins with Śākyamuni's prophecy about rise of the secret mantra, spread of the dharma to the borderlands (apparently Tibet) and the degeneration of the teachings due to the negative character of the people in those regions. To avoid being like them, it explains the importance of moral cultivation in terms of the syllables of the six realms that are placed in the human body and move to improper locations due to negative actions, thus causing rebirth in the lower realms. The only Vinaya rules discussed in the chapter are the restrictions that apply to eating meat.¹⁴⁸

It is interesting that even the Śrāvaka vows in the anthology are presented with a tantric spin of syllables in the subtle body and contextualized as a part of the vision of Samantabhadra, containing prophetic endorsements on the rise of tantra and spread of the dharma that give a sense of predestined order and *telos* to the vision of the primordial Buddha. There is no listing of rules or an attempt to give a comprehensive presentation, but the Śrāvaka vows are employed as a rubric on the importance of moral cultivation, and the opportunity is also utilized to highlight the restrictions that apply to eating meat and promote abstinence from carnivorous habits, which is a recurring topic in the anthology.

The same text also contains a chapter on the Bodhisattva vows. It begins with a discussion on the transcendent virtues ($p\bar{a}ramit\bar{a}$), but then elaborates on meditation from the Anuyoga point of view of the subtle winds and yogic movements called the wheel of deception ('*khrul 'khor*) employed to control the winds.¹⁴⁹ Thus, we see again that by presenting techniques to manipulate the winds in the chapter on the bodhisattva vow, the author appropriates the concept of the bodhisattva vow creatively from the point of view of Anuyoga practices. The way the Śrāvaka and Bodhisattva vehicles are presented in this text points to the skillfully crafted character of the anthology: these vehicles are made to participate in the grand literary scheme of the anthology by presenting them as a part of Samantabhadra's plan for the world, by

¹⁴⁶ For a clear explanation of the nine vehicles, see Garson, *Penetrating the Secret Essence Tantra*, 2004.

¹⁴⁷ GZ IV:485-513

¹⁴⁸ GZ IV:491-497

¹⁴⁹ GZ IV:498-505.

propounding the general importance of moral cultivation with reasoning employing prophecy, and by giving the practices a distinctive tantric character by connecting them to subtle body practices. The inclination of the author is also evident in the emphasis on the restrictions on meat eating, while most of the Vinaya rules are not discussed. The Six Seals of Vajravarāhī also contain abundant criticism on eating meat, stating that meat and alcohol are causes of lethargy, dullness and ignorance, and that even in the context of rituals, one should have them only "as much as medicine,"¹⁵⁰ which is a radical view in the Tibetan context of excessive consumption of meat.

In addition, compassion and *bodhicitta*, or the motivation to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all beings, also appear in *The Five Nails* and other texts on the preliminary practices, which are comprised of taking refuge in the Three Jewels, cultivating bodhicitta, an offering practice to the Three Jewels called the *mandala* offering, purification practices centered around Vajrasattva, contemplation of impermanence, and the devotional unification practice with one's spiritual teacher known as guruyoga.¹⁵¹ The practices of refuge and bodhicitta are in principle standard bodhisattva practices, but in *The Five Nails*, as in the Tibetan Dzokchen and tantric context in general, they have a tantric character due to the accompanying elaborate visualization of many Vajrayāna deities, Buddhas and gurus.

Similarly, the practice of *maṇdala* offering is a tantrisized version of a bodhisattva's generosity training, while the Vajrasattva practice reflects the concern for purity central in the *kriyā*- and *caryā* literature, but is here an entirely internalized purification practice employing visualization. In these preliminary practices, the deities are generated mainly in front of oneself in the manner of the *kriyā* and *caryā* tantras, although the Vajrasattva practice contains also internal bodily visualization and all the practices conclude with the deity dissolving into oneself. Even though the preliminary practices are difficult to classify in terms of the rubric of the nine vehicles, in the anthology they are performed before engaging with the Great Perfection practices.¹⁵² In accordance with the way these practices came to be structured in Tibetan Buddhism, we should also place them before the deity yoga *sādhanas* and the subtle body practices of the Six Seals, but this is not stated in the anthology, leaving it an open question whether the path structure was still more fluid at this period or the inclusion of preliminaries before the *sādhanas* was taken for granted.

The transmission narratives of *The Unimpeded Realization* also share an important aspect with the Śrāvaka and Bodhisattva vehicles, namely, the generation of faith. The literature on the Bodhisattva practices discusses various kinds of faith and their significance, and the stated purpose of the narratives is to generate faith in the authenticity of the teachings,¹⁵³ which is a crucial element for a person to have the motivation to practice. However, their purpose extend beyond generating faith, for the

¹⁵⁰ GZ I:518.

¹⁵¹ GZ V:3-31.

¹⁵² The Stages of the Guidance on the Key points of the Path: An Encapsulation of the Quintessential Elixir, the Lamp which Clears away the Darkness of Ignorance (GZ V:192-195).

¹⁵³ The Great Synoptic Exposition of the History That Generates Faith (GZ I:3).

most important aspect of the narratives is the way they are consciously employed to construct the vision of Samantabhadra and the way they integrate the texts and practices as a part of this vision.

Vajrayāna

Even though the anthology does not classify practices in terms of Mahāyoga and Anuyoga, the generation stage deity yoga practices that are central in Mahāyoga (and *yoga*) tantras are taught in the *sādhanas*,¹⁵⁴ and the elaborate vase empowerment¹⁵⁵ is the authorization for those practices. The completion stage subtle body practices that are central in Anuyoga are the main topic in the cycle of the Six Seals of Vajravarāhī,¹⁵⁶ its associated subtle body texts¹⁵⁷ and in the secret and wisdom empowerments.¹⁵⁸

The Divisions of the Five Profound Empowerments connects the vase empowerment to the $s\bar{a}dhanas$ of the five families, and the secret empowerment (also called the nonelaborate empowerment) to the yoga of channels and winds (*rtsa rlung*), which is a method to dissolve the winds or energies of the subtle body into the axis of one's spiritual being known as the central channel (Skt. *avadhūti*, Tib. *dbu ma*) by employing a specific breathing technique called the vase breathing. Upon the wisdom empowerment (or the exceedingly non-elaborate empowerment), the student should meditate on the meaning of bliss and emptiness. The discussion of the vase, secret and wisdom empowerments in this text is a standard tantric presentation, but the next two empowerments, that is, the fourth empowerment and the empowerment to awareness's creativity, are associated with empty dharmatā and self-arising wisdom, or breakthrough and direct transcendence.¹⁵⁹ This approach to map all the tantric empowerments under the umbrella of the Great Perfection is typical to the anthology and indicative of its agenda to integrate tantric practices into the Dzokchen dominated whole.

In *The Unimpeded Realization*, the deity yoga practices are presented as an important foundation that "purifies the vessel,"¹⁶⁰ but apart from the *sādhanas* and daily practice schedules¹⁶¹ they are hardly mentioned in the anthology. However, the theory of subtle physiology and the yoga of the channels and winds are recurring topics across the anthology, pointing to the integrated character of the compilation. First I shall point out some examples of how the wind technology appears in various contexts in

¹⁵⁴ GZ I:331-375, I:377-395, II:201-244, II:245-251, II:269-299, II:325-334, IV:421-422.

¹⁵⁵ GZ I:105-156.

¹⁵⁶ GZ I:483-654.

¹⁵⁷ GZ I:455-481, IV:403-420.

¹⁵⁸ GZ I:157-173.

¹⁵⁹ GZ I:102.

¹⁶⁰ The External Sādhanas of the Five Families: The Purification of the Vessel and Elixir Right Where They Stand (GZ I:331).

¹⁶¹ For practice schedules, see GZ I:483-488, I:579-597, V:216 and V:219.

the anthology, and then discuss the most interesting case of how the technique to unite the winds in applied in the context of direct transcendence.

Many phenomena are explained in relation to the movement of the winds, for example strenuous physical activities are discouraged because they disturb the winds,¹⁶² a full stomach causes the winds not to be at ease,¹⁶³ and the calm abiding of the mind amounts to seizing the winds.¹⁶⁴ The characteristic Anuyoga practice of the yoga of channels and winds and its culmination in the generation of inner heat (*gtum mo*) are referred to repeatedly in many contexts, such as the concentration practice involving gazing at an object,¹⁶⁵ and the preliminary practice of breakthrough called the yoga of eliminating attachment to clothes.¹⁶⁶ The logic here is that the by-product of these yogas is the generation of bodily heat, which eliminates the need for clothes. In the alchemical practices of essence extraction, the yoga of channels and winds enhances the vitalizing effect of alchemical ambrosias and serves as a technique in its own right to sustain oneself without regular food.¹⁶⁷

It is of particular interest that the texts on the Great Perfection practice of direct transcendence contain many references to the yoga of channels and winds.¹⁶⁸ The status of this practice is not discussed explicitly, but from the numerous references it emerges as an important preliminary technique to master, because the stillness of the mind resulting from seizing the winds provides the non-conceptual space for the visions of direct transcendence to unfold.¹⁶⁹ The breakthrough practice also works for this same end. While most of the references to the yoga of channels and winds approach it as a preliminary to direct transcendence, in *The Secret Lamp* it is suggested that one can even attain the same realization through the yoga of channels and moon:

If you can't be guided by the light of the sun and the moon, pull the winds upward, and thus you will accomplish your wishes in that way.¹⁷⁰

The application of the Anuyoga terminology of controlling and uniting the winds in the context of direct transcendence is a conspicuous element that speaks for the artful impetus to integrate the practices, and places considerable significance on these

¹⁶² The Preliminary Practices of the Six Oral Transmissions (GZ IV:62).

¹⁶³ The Preliminary Practices of the Six Oral Transmissions (GZ IV:68).

¹⁶⁴ The Lamp of Unimpeded Wisdom [from] the Realization of Samantabhadra (GZ IV:34).

¹⁶⁵ Suppressing Problems in the Marvelous Secret (GZ IV:543).

¹⁶⁶ The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra (GZ IV:300).

¹⁶⁷ The Garland of Ambrosia of Special Essence Extraction (GZ IV:423-484), and The Preliminary Practices of the Six Oral Transmissions (IV:66).

¹⁶⁸ The Three Spikes of the Key Points Guide Text (GZ II:342-343 and 348), The Secret Lamp: A Text on the Key points of the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (III:148, 153-4 and 158-9), The Twenty One Introductions of the Great Perfection (III:561) and The Preliminary Practices of the Six Oral Transmissions (IV:68).

¹⁶⁹ The Secret Lamp (GZ III:158)

¹⁷⁰ GZ III:161

completion stage practices of the Six Seals. The suggestion that one might be able to attain the same realization through manipulating the winds as through direct transcendence goes beyond mere integration of these practices, presenting a radical view in the context of the Seminal Heart, in which the Atiyoga practices are clearly ranked superior. This type of synthesizing approach may be indicative of Rindzin Gödem's strong background in tantric practice, especially the cycle of Vajrakīla, which was passed down in his family.¹⁷¹ Gödem's notable interest in Vajrayāna in general is also evident in his overall treasure corpus (not just the anthology), which consists predominantly of Mahāyoga literature.

Atiyoga

It is not easy to discern how the numerous Atiyoga contemplative components are structured, because apart from the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana and Padmasambhava, the texts do not declare their doxographical status, and the contemplations are usually not presented in the order they are practiced on the path (and even this order of practicing contains variations in the practice commentaries). The unordered placement of the practices in the anthology may be partly due to the method of the tantric authors to present practices in a purposefully confused way in order to protect their secrecy.¹⁷² However, The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra discusses the Great Perfection philosophical topics, and presents a path structure that contains many of the practices, but the text is modeled after the eleven Seminal Heart topics appearing Khépa Nyibum's Eleven Topics of the Great Perfection and in Longchenpa's Treasury of Words and Meanings, and thus contains practices not discussed anywhere else in the anthology, leaving out several essential contemplations. Surprisingly, it seems that the Atiyoga path structure of the anthology is better discerned by relying on later practice commentaries (khrid) on the anthology, such as The Island of Liberation by Zur chen Chos dbyings rang 'grol (1604-1669), Wheel of Light by Kah thog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu (1698-1755) and Fulfilling the Hopes of the Fortunate Ones by Tshul 'khrims bzang po (1917-1959). All these commentaries contain some variation in the way they choose practices from the anthology and structure them, but present nevertheless very similar path structures and seem to reflect the topics and practices of the anthology more faithfully than The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra. I shall briefly discuss the way the practices and texts of the anthology participate in the Atiyoga path structure relying on the texts of the anthology, especially the doxographical text The Key to the Wisdom Mind - The Prophetic Certificate of the Precious Oral Transmission, and the commentaries, particularly The Island of Liberation, which is the practice commentary used in Dorjé Drak, the main monastery of the Northern Treasures.

The Atiyoga is internally divided to Mind Series, Space Series and Pith Instruction Series. In *The Key to the Wisdom Mind*, the Mind Series is equated with the External Cycle, Space Series with the Internal Cycle, and the Pith Instruction Series with the Unsurpassed Cycle, also known as the Seminal Heart (*snying thig*).¹⁷³ Most of the

 $^{^{171}}$ See Martin Boord's works on Vajrakīla in the Northern Treasures tradition.

¹⁷² See Campbell, Vajra Hermeneutics, 2009.

¹⁷³ GZ I:28

empowerments in the anthology - the fourth empowerment in the first volume (conferred after the secret and knowledge empowerments),¹⁷⁴ the seven the Great Perfection empowerments in the second volume¹⁷⁵ and the awareness empowerment in the fifth volume¹⁷⁶ - are Atiyoga empowerments. The fourth empowerment is connected to the formless meditation of breakthrough, and is thus akin to Mind Series, while the rest of the empowerments are associated especially with the Seminal Heart and the Pith Instruction Series, containing such elements as analogical introductions (*ngo sprod*), practices involving the five lights and instructions that empower one to recognize in the bardo. Some aspect of the empowerments are also similar to the Mind Series, such as the descriptions of the Great Perfection view and instructions to recognize awareness.

The Mind Series and its characteristic practice, breakthrough,¹⁷⁷ is taught especially in the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana, but in the anthology it has a distinctive character, because the practice entails philosophical reflections on the nature of mind, analysis of the origin, dwelling and destination of the mind, distinguishing mind from awareness (*rig pa*), and distinguishing the universal ground from the *dharmakāya*. These philosophical reflections are not explicitly presented as practices in the cycle, but the commentarial literature approaches them as practices. The Tantra of Becoming a Buddha by merely Seeing, Hearing, Wearing, or Praying to this Great Tantra (an Explanatory Tantra) also structures these reflective contemplations before the practice of direct transcendence, thus indicating that they are a part of the breakthrough practice, even though the tantra does not label them as breakthrough.¹⁷⁸ However, not labeling the breakthrough practices is common in the anthology: the word breakthrough is hardly mentioned, except in The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra, which presents the practices differently from the rest of the anthology, because it is modeled after the eleven topics found in Longchenpa's Treasury of Words and Meanings.

The Oral Transmissions of Vairocana also reflect the motif of the Mind Series to situate the Great Perfection in relation to other vehicles as their culmination.¹⁷⁹ *The First Oral Transmission of Vairocana* contains long sections that analyze the sūtric and tantric vehicles and tenet systems, that is, the Śrāvaka vehicle, Mind Only (*cittamātra*), Middle Way (*madhyamaka*), Mahāyoga and Anuyoga. These vehicles and tenet systems are examined in terms of the time taken to attain enlightenment via their practices and the increasing degree of power to send forth emanations attained upon enlightenment. The Great Perfection is placed as the pinnacle of the vehicles, based on the possibility of instant enlightenment and the particularly sublime power

¹⁷⁴ GZ I:175-181

¹⁷⁵ GZ II:3-89

¹⁷⁶ GZ V:79-103

¹⁷⁷ The anthology also contains a more standard presentation of the breakthrough in *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* IV:325-336

¹⁷⁸ GZ IV:116-123.

¹⁷⁹ For the discussion of this motif in the Mind Series, see Germano, Architecture and Absence in the Secret Tantric History of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*), 242.

to send forth countless emanations, although Mahāyoga and Anuyoga are also accredited for the countless emanative power.¹⁸⁰

Surprisingly to a text that is said to represent the Mind Series, *The Later Oral Transmission of Vairocana* contains lengthy descriptions of the bardos in the style of the Seminal Heart, mentioning also the deities manifesting in the bardo of dharmatā,¹⁸¹ thus pointing to the conflation of these divisions at this time period when the Seminal Heart had become prevalent. In addition to distinguishing mind from awareness and the ground from *dharmakāya*, the anthology contains abundant philosophical reflections on the nature of the ground, origination of confusion and awakening, ways to attain enlightenment, and so forth, as well as the analogical introductions employed especially in the Seminal Heart. These philosophical reflections are further indications of the notable extent that the Mind Series is presented through the lens of the Seminal Heart, pointing toward the skillfully woven integrated character of the anthology.

The aim to differentiate mind and awareness for the purpose of recognizing the intrinsic awareness is a recurring topic that appears also in two pith instruction texts,¹⁸² a commentary on the empowerment to awareness's creativity¹⁸³ and in four tantras¹⁸⁴, one of which approaches the topic through metaphorical stories.¹⁸⁵ In terms of the path structure, these breakthrough contemplations are preceded by a series of special preliminary practices called seizing the mind (*sems 'dzin*) found in the fifth volume, in *The Stages of the Guidance on the Key points of the Path: An Encapsulation of the Quintessential Elixir, the Lamp which Clears away the Darkness of Ignorance*. Seizing the mind is a type of calm abiding (*samathā*) practice, but has here a tantric character, because it features focusing on visualized vajras, Hūm syllables and *bindus* (circular concentrations of subtle energy, Tib. *thig le*) in the subtle body.¹⁸⁶ It is notable that these preliminaries and the actual practice of breakthrough with its reflective contemplations have the same kind of relationship between one-pointed and analytical meditations as the practices of calm abiding and superior seeing (*vipaśyanā*).

It is difficult to understand how the Space Series features in the anthology. Even though *The First Oral Transmission of Vairocana* states that Śrī Simha gave the Internal cycle, which is equated with Space Series, to Vimalamitra, *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* is not a Space Series text, but a Seminal Heart presentation of the eleven topics.¹⁸⁷ However, the anthology has some texts that

¹⁸⁰ GZ II:474-481

¹⁸¹ GZ II:548-552

¹⁸² GZ III:42 and III:132

¹⁸³ GZ II:313-323

¹⁸⁴ GZ II:633-650, III:523-530 and IV:109-111, 131

¹⁸⁵ GZ II:603-631

¹⁸⁶ GZ V:195-196

¹⁸⁷ The eleven topics are the ground, arising of samsara, Buddha nature, the location of the wisdom in the human body, the pathways of wisdom, the gateways of wisdom or the lamps, the objective

describe the bardos in the fashion of the Space Series and contain only the description of basic radiant lights in the bardo of dharmatā without describing the deities,¹⁸⁸ or present the framework of the five bardos that views the entire existence as different bardo states, again lacking the description of the deities, as well as the bardo of dharmatā altogether.¹⁸⁹

The Pith Instruction Series and the Seminal Heart are the predominant category in the anthology featuring in the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava¹⁹⁰ and other texts that discuss direct transcendence.¹⁹¹ Moreover, The Three Spikes of the Key Points describes a special *thod rgal* guruyoga and a preliminary practice to direct transcendence called the intrinsic radiance of the five kinds of wisdom, which aims to familiarize the practitioner with the five radiant lights, five Buddhas and their distinctive types of wisdom.¹⁹² The Guide Text on the Direct Perception of Dharmatā outlines further preliminaries of direct transcendence, such as separating a gap (ru shan) between samsāra and nirvāņa, and mental training involving emission and gathering of Hūm syllables. In the practices of separating a gap between samsāra and nirvāna, one acts out the various bodily, verbal and mental behaviors of the six classes of beings and deities in pure lands for the purpose of realizing the insubstantiality of bodily, verbal and mental existence, thus preventing rebirth in samsāra.¹⁹³ The analogical introductions presented in The Twenty-One Introductions of the Great Perfection and in other texts are practiced in the early stages of direct transcendence practice.¹⁹⁴ I will return to the introductions below in the section on symbolic and aesthetic representation. Furthermore, many of the tantras discuss the direct transcendence postures, gazes and visions,¹⁹⁵ and the dialogue texts present examples of the visions and breakthrough experiences.¹⁹⁶

In addition to the texts that discuss direct transcendence, most of the literature on death and bardos reflects the distinctive funerary concerns of the Seminal Heart, although most of these texts do not describe detailed *mandalas* of the peaceful and wrathful deities in the context of the bardo, but merely refer to the deities.¹⁹⁷ The Liberation Through Wearing cycle¹⁹⁸ also belongs to the Seminal Heart, and seems to

¹⁹⁰ GZ II:423-459

¹⁹¹ GZ II:335-352, III:141-162, III:185-201, III:353-392, III: 497-518, III:555-564, IV:27-58 and IV:182-401 (*thögel* section 336-349)

¹⁹² GZ II:335-352

¹⁹³ GZ II:360-367

¹⁹⁴ GZ II:400-402, II:438-441, II:538-543, III:555-564 and IV:44-50

¹⁹⁵ GZ III:83-126, III:283-304, III:337-353, III:519-531 and IV:81-181 (*thod rgal* sections 122-130 and 156-162)

¹⁹⁸ GZ III:185-281

sphere of wisdom or the expanse, the practice to realize wisdom, signs of success in the practice, bardo and liberation (GZ IV:183-401).

 $^{^{188}}$ GZ III:46 and III:350

¹⁸⁹ GZ V:403-418

¹⁹⁶ GZ V:151-161 and V:321-401

¹⁹⁷ GZ II:414-419, III:595-597, IV:17-21, IV:353 and IV:361-373

be targeted especially to the practitioners of direct transcendence, for some of the texts teach direct transcendence together with the instructions on making the amulets.

The Fifth Dalai Lama's structuring of the anthology

The Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682) received the transmission of The Unimpeded Realization and The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity from Rindzin Ngakgi Wangpo, the third incarnation of Rindzin Gödem. In his Received Teachings (gsan yig), the Fifth Dalai Lama goes into great detail about the texts of the anthology that he received. The inclusion of the anthology's texts in the Dalai Lama's Received Teachings is of interest to us, because it indicates the form of the anthology in the seventeenth century. The texts that are not mentioned by him are either later additions, or were too insignificant to mention, or escaped my (or his) attention. It is notable that out of the 127 texts of the anthology, 92 are specifically described by the Dalai Lama, including all the important texts and cycles. In addition, we have six texts authored by Adzom Drukpa and five tables of content, so the number of actual treasure texts not mentioned by the Dalai Lama is 24. The high number of texts mentioned by the Dalai Lama, as well as his inclusion of all the core texts, denotes that the character of the anthology has remained largely unchanged since the seventeeth century. The list of texts mentioned and not mentioned by the Dalai Lama are indicated in the appendix three, so here I shall merely make some general comments, as well as discuss the Dalai Lama's typology of structuring the texts.

In the first volume, the Dalai Lama describes twenty texts, including all the empowerments, narrative texts and the core texts of the cycle of Six Seals. There are five texts that are not mentioned by him, and three of them contain no colophons nor mention Gödem as the revealer. These five contain two short and relatively unimportant texts, *The Divisions of the Five Profound Empowerments* (5 pages) and *Supplications to the Lineage* (2 pages), as well as two supplementary texts in the cycle of the Six Seals. In addition, Dalai Lama does not refer to the long ritual text that contains nine *sādhanas*, *The External Actualization of the Five Families: The Purification of the Vessel and Elixir Right Where They Stand*. Four of these *sādhanas* are found in *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs*, and none of them state Gödem as a revealer. Thus, this text, along with the other four texts not listed in *Received Teachings* may all be later additions.

As for the second volume, the Fifth Dalai Lama mentions twenty texts: all the Great Perfection empowerments, the *sādhana* of the peaceful and wrathful deities, all the oral transmissions of Padmasambhava and Vairocana, as well as the tantras. What is left out is six texts, four of which lack colophons and thus do not mention Gödem as the revealer. Similarly to the first volume, three of these texts are brief and not that significant, containing verses of auspiciousness (4 pages), an invocation of the protectors (6 pages) and a text that gives two short guruyoga practices (9 pages), neither of which are practiced in the tradition today. Two texts are auxiliary works for the *sādhana* of the peaceful and wrathful deities, one containing pith instructions for the *sādhana* and the other is a supplementary death ritual, *Pulling up from the Sites of the Six Life Forms of Cyclic Existence*. Notably, all these texts are also missing in the Nechung edition of *The Unimpeded Realization*. Lastly, *The Received* Teachings does

not include one important text on direct transcendence, A Guide Text on the Direct Perception of Dharmatā (39 pages), which structures the preliminaries and actual practices, contains a short transmission narrative and states Padmasambhava as the concealer and Gödem as the revealer. While the other texts are likely to be later supplements and are relatively unimportant, the absence of the Guide Text on the Direct Perception of Dharmatā in the Received Teachings is conspicuous.

The third volume contains 27 texts listed in *The Received Teachings*, and nine texts that are missing. The missing texts include three tantras, three texts in the cycle of the Liberation Through Wearing (these are missing a colophon), one text on the moment of death and two pith instruction texts. While these texts discuss important topics, the third volume contains many other texts that discuss the same topics and are mentioned by the Fifth Dalai Lama, such as seven texts on the Liberation Through Wearing, three texts on death and bardos, and eleven tantras, including the pivotal tantra that spells out the vision of Samantabhadra. Notably, two of the tantras and two of the Liberation Through Wearing texts that are not mentioned by the Fifth Dalai Lama are also missing in the Nechung edition.

The fourth volume has twelve texts described in *The Received Teachings*, and three texts that do not appear there. The Fifth Dalai Lama mentions The Great Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra, The Garland of Ambrosia, which is the important alchemical text composed by Yéshé Tsogyel, the offering ritual to the protectors, and all the texts in the cycle of the Marvelous Secret, including a practice liturgy, The Song of the Majestic Pose of the Vīras, a Play of Great Delight (dpa' bo'i 'gying glu rol pa chen po'i zlos gar), composed by the Yolmo tulku during the time of the Phagmo Drupa rule.¹⁹⁹ This text and its associated lineage prayer, guru yoga and other texts do not appear in the anthology, so here we have a group of texts that are described in The Received Teachings, but are missing in The Unimpeded Realization. The three texts of the anthology that are not mentioned by the Fifth Dalai Lama are a brief long life practice centered around Vimalamitra, and notably, The Precious Lamp of the Three Roots, which is a unique text outlining sravaka and bodhisattva vows, and an important text on direct transcendence, The Lamp of Unimpeded Wisdom from the Realization of Samantabhadra (kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa ye shes zang thal gyi sgron ma). While the long life practice lacks colophon, the two other texts state Gödem as the destined revealer. However, the latter text, The Lamp of Unimpeded Wisdom, may be the text that the Fifth Dalai Lama calls The Tantra Lamp that Teaches Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra (kun tu bzang po dgongs pa zang thal du bstan pa'i rgyud kyi sgron ma).²⁰⁰ The fifth volume features thirteen texts discussed by the Great Fifth, and only one text that is missing, that is, a dialogue between Padmasambhava and Namkhé Nyingpo, focusing on the nature of the mind. The text states Gödem as the revealer, and it is an interesting work especially due to its dialogical format, but topically, it does not present anything new.

Thus, we see that while 24 texts of the anthology are not discussed in *The Received Teachings*, only three of these texts are of any actual significance in the context of the anthology: A *Guide Text on the Direct Perception of Dharmatā*, *The Precious Lamp*

¹⁹⁹ The Dalai Lama, *The Received Teachings*, III:245.

²⁰⁰ The Dalai Lama, *The Received Teachings*, III:244.

of the Three Roots and The Lamp of Unimpeded Wisdom from the Realization of Samantabhadra, and the latter may actually be listed by the Dalai Lama as The Tantra Lamp that Teaches Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra. It is also of note that the Great Fifth mentions that there are inconsistencies in the way the texts of the anthology are recorded in the lists of received teachings before him, such as the lists of Ngakchang Chögyel Sönam and Lekden Je (second incarnation of Gödem),²⁰¹ thus indicating that the boundaries of what texts were included were constantly changing before and after the time of the Great Fifth. However, overall it is notable that the Great Fifth mentions so many of the anthology's texts, including all the core texts and cycles, which means that even though the boundaries were fluid, at least from the seventeenth century up until the nineteenth century edition of Adzom Drukpa, the changes were relatively minor.

Now, I would like to turn to the Fifth Dalai Lama's classification and ranking of the anthology's texts. The broadest category he uses is the Thirty-Six Profound Teachings, which includes:

Eighteen Ordinary Branches (yan lag thun mong bco brgyad):

- Six Lamps of Good Conduct (spyod pa legs pa'i sgron ma drug)
- Six Pith Instructions that Clear Sediment (snyigs ma dangs pa'i man ngag drug)
- Six *Sādhanas* that are Necessary at the Time (dus la dgos pa'i sgrub thabs drug)

Eighteen Root Teachings (rtsa ba'i chos sde bco brgyad):

- Six Profound Seals of Vajravarāhī (rdo rje phag mo'i zab rgya drug)
- Six Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava (padma 'byung gnas snyan brgyud drug)
- Six Great Spheres of Vajrasattva (rdo rje sems dpa'i glong chen drug)²⁰²

The Eighteen Ordinary Branches are all included in one text that is missing in the Adzom Chögar edition of the anthology, but contained in the Nechung edition.²⁰³ The Fifth Dalai Lama does not elaborate on the Eighteen Ordinary Branches, but the Eighteen Root Teachings are listed in detail as part of another classification structured around the intellectual acumen of practitioners. Here, we have two major categories: preliminaries (*sngon 'gro*) and actual practice (*dngos gzhi*). The preliminaries contain various narrative texts about the history of the tradition, some of which are included in *The Unimpeded Realization*, such as *The Great Synoptic Exposition of the History that Generates Faith*, and some are outside the anthology, such as *The Treasure History of Mt. Trazang* (bkra bzang gter byung) and *The History of Revealing the Treasure (gter ston pa'i lo rgyus)* by Rindzin Gödem, although the latter appears in the Nechung edition of the anthology. The preliminaries also contain two texts from the anthology: *The Three Lamps - The Last Testament Composed by Oddiyana Padmasambhava* (V:201-244), which gives practical instructions on conduct and meditation written particularly for Rindzin Gödem, and *The Preliminary Practices of*

²⁰¹ The Dalai Lama, *The Received Teachings*, III:228.

²⁰² The Dalai Lama, *The Received Teachings*, III:232-233.

²⁰³ snyan brgyud drug gi sngon 'gro: he he: rdzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa zang thal du bstan pa las snyan rgyud zab mo sde drug gi sngon 'gro snyigs ma dangs ma'i man ngag drug: spyod pa legs pa'i sgron ma drug: sgrub thabs drug dang bcas pa (Unimpeded Realization, Nechung ed. II:427-446)
the Six Oral Transmissions (IV:59-80), which presents practices of essence extraction, protection from defilement (grib), and other instructions on conduct.

The actual practice contains four categories. The texts belonging in each category are listed in detail in the appendix two, so here I will just provide an outline:

1. Scrolls That Are Not to be Shown to Others (gzhan la mi ston pa rtsa ba'i shog dril)

2. The Six Spheres of Vajrasattva's Enlightened Mind (rdo rje sems dpa'i thugs kyi klong drug)

- Root Tantras
- Supplementary Tantras
- Liberation Through Wearing Cycle

3. The Six Oral Transmissions of the Vajra Master (rdo rje slob dpon gyi snyan brgyud drug)

- Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava
- Oral Transmissions of Vimalamitra
- Oral Transmissions of Vairocana

4. The Six Profound Seals of Vajravarāhī (rdo rje phag mo'i zab rgya drug)²⁰⁴

The Received Teachings regards the first category as the most restricted one, stating that the two tantras contained in it should only be taught to those fortunate ones who can endure the thirteen hardships. The text does not detail what the thirteen hardships are. The carefully limited dissemination of these two texts is curious, because one of the tantras, *The Tantra of Becoming a Buddha by Merely Seeing, Hearing, Wearing, or Praying to this Great Tantra* (IV:81-181), contains the famous *Prayer of Samantabhadra* (kun bzang smon lam), which is the most openly distributed part of the anthology. In fact, it is the only part of the anthology that is circulated without any restrictions, as the text itself states that it should be spread widely for its liberating effect. In general, the two texts in this category do not contain any topics not discussed elsewhere in the anthology, but present the same kind of beautiful, poetic Dzokchen explanations as the other tantras of the anthology on such topics as the ground, creation, *dharmakāya*, liberation, Great Perfection practice, bardo and liberation through wearing.

The Six Spheres of Vajrasattva's Enlightened Mind is meant for practitioners of superior acumen, and it contains ten tantras and the Liberation Through Wearing cycle. It is interesting that the easy liberation through wearing the amulets is actually intended especially for practitioners of superior acumen. This emphasizes the underlying tension in the cycle: the texts are said to enlighten everyone who comes into contact with them, even animals, yet it is the sharpest individuals that can really benefit from them.

The Six Oral Transmissions of the Vajra Master contain the oral transmission of the three masters of awareness, and it is meant for the practitioners of intermediate

²⁰⁴ The Dalai Lama, *The Received Teachings*, III:239-246.

acumen. The Oral Transmissions of Vairocana and Vimalamitra contain only four and eleven texts respectively, but the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava is made to be a very broad category, containing 22 texts from *The Unimpeded Realization* and the entire fifth volume, *The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity*. I shall discuss the texts that the Fifth Dalai Lama includes in this category in the Chapter Five, in the section on the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava, so here it suffice to say that the texts range across different topics and genres, containing empowerments, rituals, commentaries, Dzokchen meditation instructions and tantras, including *The Root Tantra of Unimpeded Realization* (III: 455-475) that spells out the vision of Samantabhadra.

Finally, The Six Profound Seals of Vajravarāhī is said to be for the practitioners of inferior acumen. It contains the cycle of the Six Seals, two texts on the subtle body and an offering ritual to $d\bar{a}kin\bar{s}s$, altogether nine texts. Rather appropriately, the cycle focusing on effortful practices is intended for practitioners of inferior intellectual and spiritual abilities. In general, the degree of effort and complexity decreases as we move higher up in the categories. The two highest categories contain almost exclusively tantras, which are characterized by simplicity. The philosophical views and practices are expressed with minimal words, placed in the mouth of Samantabhadra and other Buddhas. The Liberation Through Wearing texts are also tantras, or similar to tantras in being Buddha-voiced, and the easy liberation advocated by the categories of the Fifth Dalai Lama, the easy liberation presupposes a certain superior receptivity to produce results.

Thematic strands

Besides the structural organizing elements, the disparate genres, topics and practices of the anthology are integrated by many unifying themes and ideas, intertwined together to form a literary whole, presented as the vision or enlightening plan of Samantabhadra to compassionately engage with the world, which is the ruling theme of the anthology. All the deities and gurus of the anthology are also connected to Samantabhadra through the transmission lineages or via being his emanations. The theme of naturalness and spontaneity characteristic to the Great Perfection is part of the vision of Samantabhadra, presenting an overarching set of commitment to simplicity, evident in most of the anthology, such as in the simple meditation of letting-be, or letting conceptuality dissolve without blocking it, and in the practices of breakthrough and direct transcendence. The valorization of naturalness also functions as a critique against complex practices, and reflects to the model of spontaneous creation of divine realms from the pristine natural purity employed across the anthology in such areas as cosmology, contemplation and death.

The model of divine creation entails wisdom as primary explanatory model over karma, although the dialectics between wisdom and karma are a complex process, so this theme is discussed in detail. Wisdom and karma also play out in the tension between the instant and gradual paths evident in the question on the relevance of moral and meditative cultivation. The prevalence of wisdom is again evident in the theme of awareness as intrinsic in the nature of reality. In the Seminal Heart, the deep ontological structure of the universe is conceived as a union of emptiness and awareness, which is one aspect defining the position of the Great Perfection as the peak of all the Buddhist vehicles. Lastly, the anthology abounds in symbolic and aesthetic representation functioning both as a tool of inspiration and method of sparking realizations.

Letting-be

The arising of Vajrayāna entailed a shift toward complex ritual practices involving intricate visualizations and elaborate recitations. In late Indian tantra, we have discernible natural elements, expressed for example in the term co-emergent $(sahaj\bar{a})$,²⁰⁵ but the efflorescence of naturalism was to occur only in Tibet in the Mind Series literature. The valorization of simplicity and naturalness remained as a significant element also in later Dzokchen literature, and it is a central thematic strand in the anthology expressed in such terms as natural or nature (*rang bzhin*), spontaneity (*lhun grub*), letting-be (*bzhag/ cog bzhag*), uncontrived (*ma bcod*) and free from elaborations (*spros med*). In the Mind Series literature arising in the latter half of the eight century, this rhetoric of natural simplicity functioned as a critique to complex rituals and forceful contemplation.²⁰⁶ Remnants of this discourse are visible *The Middle Oral Transmission of Vairocana*, which contains statements to discard practices and to simply recognize the nature of the mind as the means to attain enlightenment.

Naturalness and letting-be are associated with non-conceptuality, but especially in the sense of letting conceptuality evaporate naturally by not following the thoughts that arise, instead of trying to block the thoughts, which is said to be the approach of the lower vehicles.²⁰⁷ The most simple form of letting-be meditation, which entails just sitting in the seven point posture of Vairocana, letting go of conceptual patterns and resting the mind, is reiterated in 40 texts, as a technique in its own right or a basis of other contemplative practices and philosophical reflections. Letting-be is also associated with recognition, because the natural letting-go of conceptuality creates the quiet space for recognizing the pristine awareness (*rig pa*). Regardless of the Dzokchen framing of this practice with the rhetoric of naturalness, letting-go and the goal to recognize awareness, the actual practice of this letting-be meditation is strikingly similar to many forms of Buddhist non-analytical emptiness meditation, ranging from the early Hīnayāna practices of mindfulness to the practices of calm abiding (*samathā*) and the Chan practice of just sitting (*zazen*).

The numerous restrictions, language of control and strenuous practices of the $s\bar{a}dhanas$ and the Six Seals of Vajravarāhī in the first volume stand out as the counterpoints to the principles of naturalness, spontaneity and letting-be prevalent in most of the anthology. Notably, the simple letting-be meditation is missing almost

²⁰⁵ Davidson traces the history of the term in Reframing sahajā: Genre, representation, ritual and lineage in *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 30: 45–83, 2002.

²⁰⁶ Germano, Architecture and Absence in the Secret Tantric History of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*), 230.

²⁰⁷ GZ V:139

completely from the first volume, which focuses on the generation stage and completion stage practices involving effort. It only appears briefly in the fourth empowerment²⁰⁸ and in *The Foremost of the Six Profound Seals: The Tantra of the Enlightened Activities of the Vajravarāhī's Joy*,²⁰⁹ which bridges the completion stage and Dzokchen sections of the anthology.

The theme of naturalness and letting-be is also articulated through various kinds of rhetorical representation, such as poetic depictions, metaphors and symbols. For example, the empowerments contain sections that initiate the aspirant into different types of letting-be meditations involving sending the mind to the sky in the four cardinal directions,²¹⁰ poetic descriptions of the naturally present awareness with advice to recognize it,²¹¹ and gazing at a crystal while the master decodes its metaphorical significance.²¹² Crystal is the most common symbol of the pristine awareness, *dharmakāya*, spontaneous origination and freedom from conceptuality. *The Later Oral Transmission of Vairocana* relates its origin:

At that time, a jewelled rock crystal blazing with five lights issued forth from the heart of the glorious Samantabhadra. It fell into the hands of the glorious Vajrasattva, and made the wisdom of the enjoyment body clear. Then, it fell into the hands of the king of the gods, Indra. The luminosity clarified the conceptuality of the gods. ... You, the fortunate son! This jeweled rock crystal did not arise from a cause, but it is self-arisen. Similarly, *dharmakāya* is self-arisen.²¹³

In this passage, we can see how the crystal symbolizes the empty open expanse of the *dharmakāya* and spontaneous origination, and it is ascribed with a natural power to clear conceptuality away.

These principles of naturalness and spontaneity are also pronounced in the way the visions of deities spontaneously flow into the field of vision in the practice of direct transcendence outlined in the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava, tantras, dialogue texts and other *thod rgal* texts, although the practice of direct transcendence is also considered to have an element of effort: the visions unfold only after persistent gazing, and the process takes time, measured in months or years. Spontaneous accomplishment figures particularly prominently in the cycle on the Liberation Through Wearing, because one can attain enlightenment just by wearing the amulets containing the liberatory tantras or mantras. In the Liberation Through Wearing, the spontaneity also becomes associated with blessings and Samantabhadra, because it is the blessing power of the sacred letters originating from the primordial Buddha that gives the amulets their spontaneously liberating quality.

²¹⁰ GZ I:178

²⁰⁸ GZ I:178

²⁰⁹ GZ I:571

²¹¹ For example GZ II:16-19 and II:65

²¹² GZ II:23

 $^{^{213}\,\}rm{GZ}\,II{:}539{-}540$

Divine creation

Another important aspect of the Great Perfection view that forms a unifying theme across the different genres, texts and stages of practice is divine creation. It echoes the image of Mahāyāna's cosmological Buddhas that have worlds flowing from the pores of their skin, and the creation of the divine mandala world in Vajrayana. In the cosmogonic creation narratives of the anthology, the pure realms of the enlightened deities (and the impure realms of samsāra) manifest out of the universal ground (kun gzhi) after the initial stirring by the wind of wisdom (ye shes rlung). The model discernible here is the manifestation of the visionary dimension with its spectrum of mandala deities from the formless, colorless primordial purity where the possibility of wisdom and its creative play is contained as a mere source potential, actualized when an emerging awareness, Samantabhadra, recognizes the visions of lights and sounds as his own internal display. The cosmogonic creation is described numerous times in the texts of the anthologies, such as the tantras²¹⁴, Padmasambhava's pith instruction text²¹⁵ and the Middle Oral Transmission of Vairocana.²¹⁶ It is also referred to in several texts on liberation through wearing,²¹⁷ an empowerment text²¹⁸ and a text on direct transcendence.219

The same model of divine manifestation out of a formless non-conceptual state is present in the process of death and post-death states, when the deities appear in the bardo of dharmatā after the dawning of the clear light of death. This is explained repeatedly in the literature on death with the instruction to recognize them as an internal projections of self-display, thus mimicking Samantabhadra's initial recognition and resulting in enlightenment in the bardo.²²⁰ The contemplative practices also mimic the divine creation in different ways. In direct transcendence, the visions of the deities manifest spontaneously conceived as flowing outside from the gnostic network of subtle bodily channels. The basis for this divine manifestation is quieting the mind, the unadulterated presence of awareness, which is the fertile ground of the natural divine manifestation - the model of the visionary dimension dawning from the formless state.²²¹

In addition to the spontaneous divine manifestation occurring in direct transcendence, we have a programmed divine creation in deity yoga. The ordinary appearances are dissolved into emptiness, out of which one fabricates through visualization the

²²⁰ For example GZ II:414-419, III:595-597, IV:17-21, IV:353 and IV:361-373

 $^{^{214}}$ For example GZ III:85-88 and V:111-112

²¹⁵ GZ III:40

²¹⁶ GZ II:495-497

²¹⁷ For example GZ III:223-224 and III:275

²¹⁸ GZ II:21

²¹⁹ GZ II:368

²²¹ See for example the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava (GZ II:423-459) or *The Secret Lamp: A Text on the Key points of the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection* (GZ III:141-162)

mandala of the particular deities, such as the five Buddhas²²², Vajravarāhī and $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}s$ of the five families²²³ or the peaceful and wrathful deities²²⁴ - the three main *sādhanas* in the anthology. Similarly, in the Six Seals of Vajravarāhī one aims to transform one's body into a divine wisdom body by manipulating the subtle bodily energies, or winds (*prāņa*, *rlung*) and the fluid circular concentrations of energy, or *bindus* (*thig le*). It is notable, that the model of divine creation thematically unifies the generation and completion stage yogas with the Great Perfection contemplation and philosophy, thus emphasizing the tantric character of the Great Perfection and its indebtedness to normative tantra.

The model of divine creation is present in nearly all types of literature of the anthology: $s\bar{a}dhanas$, empowerment texts, death literature, texts on direct transcendence, all the oral transmissions, tantras and dialogue texts. Even the narrative texts reiterate this model in the transmission lineages ensuing from the timeless, formless realization of the *dharmakāya* Samantabhadra, who emanates into the world of divine form as Vajradhara, or transmits the teachings to a retinue of Buddhas.²²⁵ Divine creation is also employed in the practice of cutting: when one is practicing *gcod* in a charnel ground and fear arises upon seeing demons or spirits, one way to eradicate it is to meditate on all the surroundings as the divine palace and the demons as one's *yidam* deity and his or her retinue.²²⁶

Wisdom and karma

Divine creation entails another major theme, which is the prevalence of wisdom and its generative matrix over the karmic model, although the relationship between wisdom and karma in the anthology is a complex one. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, karma is a universal principle, a mechanical law of cause and effect that functions to order any and every occurrence in the universe down to the minutest detail. In the Mahāyāna cosmogony, a universe manifests out of emptiness because of the karma of previous universes, and enlightenment is attained upon the purification of karma and accumulation of the two collections of merit and wisdom. In the Great Perfection tradition in general, as well as in the anthology, the prevalence of the mechanical karmic law is shaken by the operative functions of wisdom evident in creation, contemplation, death, embryology and subtle physiology.

In the cosmogonic creation, it is the wind of wisdom that stirs the first movement to manifestation in the universal ground, and Samantabhadra's awakening upon recognition spurs the divine manifestation, giving the process a distinctive character of a play of wisdom. At death, the visions of wisdom manifest naturally to everyone regardless of karma, although karma affects one's capacity to perceive them in their extent and profundity. In contemplation, as well as in death, the recognition of both

²²² GZ I:331-342

²²³ GZ I:346-375

²²⁴ GZ II:201-244

²²⁵ For example GZ I:6-7, III:165-168 and III:205-207

²²⁶ GZ V:275-277

divine and ordinary manifestations as self-display is said to result in instant awakening regardless of one's karma, without the need to purify karma and accumulate merit.²²⁷ In *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra*, the teachings are said to be profound because the accomplishment does not depend on karma,²²⁸ just as Samantabhadra attained enlightenment without accumulating any merit and sentient beings went astray without accumulating any vice, depending merely on recognition and the lack of it. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, wisdom is also important in the attainment of enlightenment, but the approach is different, because wisdom is something that needs to be accumulated, while the anthology teaches the possibility of instant awakening or instant actualization of a Buddha's wisdom upon recognition.

This radical overriding of the karmic model is particularly evident in the cycle of the Liberation Through Wearing, because the gnostic energy of blessings saturating the amulet causes one to become enlightened automatically upon wearing it. The Tantra of Becoming a Buddha by Merely Seeing, Hearing, Wearing, or Praying to this Great Tantra states this in strong terms: one cannot help but to get enlightened (sangs mi rgya ba'i dbang med).²²⁹ This may seem extreme and one can justly wonder as to how wearing an amulet can enlighten a person. However, the situation is not quite that simple, because the teachings on the liberation through wearing are given in the framework of the entire anthology and occasionally contain instructions on the practices of direct transcendence, so we have to understand these radical claims in their context; the amulets are made and worn especially by practitioners, who are on the path and do not rely merely on the amulets to attain enlightenment. Moreover, the standard Buddhist reasoning explaining the efficacy of swift practices is also employed here, for it is stated that one has to have accumulated merit for a thousand eons (kalpa) to encounter the teachings of the Liberation Through Wearing²³⁰ - a notion that emphasizes the complex web of gnostic and karmic interrelations and acknowledges the value of the sūtric path as a foundation of the Great Perfection. Some of the texts also note that enlightenment may happen only in subsequent lives,²³¹ leaving the door open for interpretation.

Viewing good karma as the basis of wisdom is a common idea in Mahāyāna Buddhism, and similarly in the anthology, karma is associated particularly with the lower vehicles, ethical behavior and preliminary practices, which aim to accumulate merit and purify obscurations. The ritual activity of the *sādhanas* is also said to be for the purpose of purifying the vessel (the practitioner) and the container (the world), that is, the grasping at the world and its inhabitants as ordinary, instead of seeing them as deities in a pure land. Thus, the *sādhanas* are also intended to purify the habitual tendencies and karmic patterns of ordinariness. Even the subtle body practices of the Six Seals function to purify karma, although in a deeper level of subtle physiology of manipulating the winds (*rlung*). All these practices also exhibit ideas associated with karma, such as complexity, deliberate activity, fabricating and structures. Especially

²²⁷ GZ II:418, II:501

²²⁸ GZ IV:324

²²⁹ GZ IV:154

²³⁰ GZ III:256

²³¹ GZ III:214-215

the preliminary practices of *The Five Nails* and the *sādhanas* contain highly structured practices with elaborate visualizations and liturgies.

Wisdom becomes the dominant principle in the Great Perfection practices and texts, such as the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana and Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava, Great Perfection empowerments, tantras and Liberation Through Wearing texts. In the breakthrough practice, the recognition of wisdom awareness short-circuits karmic maturation enabling instant enlightenment, and in direct transcendence the visions of wisdom flow out overriding the karmic perception. These practices also embody elements associated with wisdom, such as naturalness, letting-be, spontaneity, playfulness, freedom from conceptuality and blessings, the latter being associated especially with the liberation through wearing amulets. In The Middle Oral Transmission of Vairocana, the direct realization of wisdom through recognition is employed to criticize and even dismiss the practices involving purification of karma, but in general these approaches are reconciled in the anthology with the karmic practices as the basis of the wisdom contemplations. In The Root Tantra of the Unimpeded Realization, the wisdom practices are referred to as the unimpeded realization (or vision, dgongs pa) of Samantabhadra, and notably, they are taught only to those who have the appropriate karmic disposition. If the disposition is lacking, they should be taught the causal vehicle:

Those who have coarse afflictions and are heading downward in samsāra don't have the fortune to be taught the unimpeded realization of Samantabhadra. Straighten them with the teaching on the cause and result.

However, Samantabhadra's compassionate involvement with the world nevertheless highlights the prevalence of wisdom and the gnostic forces at work in the universe, although in co-operation with the karmic law enforcement.

In Longchenpa's Treasury of Words and Meanings, the dialectic of wisdom and karma becomes a dualistic ordering mechanism present throughout the work, although we should note that it is not ontological dualism, because karma and its derivative appearances, functions and networks are ultimately illusory, while wisdom and its play are the primary manifestation of the ultimate reality, echoing the apparent, but not ontological dualism of Nāgārjuna's two truths,²³² although the deconstructive way Nāgārjuna presents the ultimate is very different from the positive Dzokchen descriptions emphasizing awareness. In the cosmogonic creation in The Treasury of Words and Meanings, two kinds of trajectories manifest from the single ground: the possibility of transcendent wisdom and the downward spiral of karmic production that eventually solidifies into the experience of the six realms. The two paths of transcendent wisdom and continued wandering in cyclic existence are also present now for sentient beings in samsara, resulting in two kinds of possibilities of perception: the pure vision of appearances as the mandala deities in divine surroundings and the ordinary vision of corporeal beings in a material world. The post-death intermediate process is divided into wisdom and karmic bardos, i.e. the bardo of dharmatā (chos nyid bar do) with its visions of the deities and the bardo of becoming (srid pa bar do) involving karmic visions. Longchenpa also presents the

²³² See for example Garfield, 1995.

subtle body and the development of embryo in a womb in dualistic terms of wisdom channels, bindus and winds, as opposed to the parallel karmic network in the body.

The Unimpeded Realization and The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Primordial Purity reflect this dualism as an underlying principle, but it is not a structuring element to the same extent as in The Treasury of Words and Meanings. In the anthology's texts on cosmogonic creation, we have the manifestation of wisdom and karmic trajectories similarly to Longchenpa, but the texts on subtle body and embryology are a more heterogeneous group, for example The First and Second Pith Instructions which Teach the Process of Freedom for the Triad of Superior, Average and Inferior Individuals as a Specially Exalted Oral Transmission contains a conventional presentation of embryology without any mention of the wisdom elements,²³³ although most of the texts discuss the subtle body in terms of wisdom and karmic network, outlining lamp (or nirvanic) channels and elemental (or samsaric) channels, ultimate and conventional bindus, and vibrantly clear constituent (dwangs ma) and sediment (snyigs ma). The External Sādhanas of the Five Families that discuss the channels and cakras of the subtle body in detail, do not employ the framework of wisdom and karmic elements, and many of the texts in the Six Seals cycle also do not speak about the practices on the basis of wisdom and karmic networks. However, it is notable how these generation and completion stage practices get reinterpreted by virtue of them being situated a Dzokchen anthology, for example The Commentary on the Empowerment to Awareness Creativity states that by training in the channels and winds, the karmic winds are suppressed and the wisdom channels and winds and the vibrantly clear constituent become expanded. Similarly, Pith Instructions on the Key points of the Channels and Winds in the Six Profound Seals of Vajravarāhī, also contains a few brief references to the winds of wisdom and karma that place the practice in the Great Perfection context, and the text also indicates that the stillness of the winds renders them into wisdom winds:

When the winds abide, conceptuality is liberated. Then, it is called the wind of wisdom.

In the light of these statements, all the subtle body practices of the anthology are contextualized as aiming for the realization of the wisdom network in the body, even though it is not explicitly stated in many of the texts.

The anthology's texts on death and bardos present a wide variety of approaches on the topic, and some texts are even dominated by heterodox explanations on the bardos that are distinctive to the anthology and more central in the given text than the classic presentation by Longchenpa involving the wisdom and karmic visions of the bardo. In addition to the four texts that focus on death and bardo exclusively, the anthology contains 22 texts that discuss the bardo, such as 11 tantras, three texts from the Oral Transmissions cycles, two empowerment texts, one dialogue text and one Liberation Through Wearing text. *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra*, which is generally modeled after Longchenpa's *Treasury*, follows carefully Longchenpa's discussion on the bardos, outlining the same subsections, but giving an abbreviated version of the content. In addition, seven texts of the anthology discuss the post-death bardos

²³³ GZ III:137

similarly to the classic presentation involving the bardo of dharmatā and bardo of becoming, although there is much internal variation in these texts, for example *The Tantra of the Quintessential Realization of the Pith Instructions taught by Vajrasattva (The Oral Transmission Cycle)* describes the deities in detail, while many of the texts just refer to visions of deities.

However, most of the texts do not discuss bardo in terms of the wisdom and karmic division to the bardos of dharmatā and becoming, but focus only on one of these aspects of the bardo or present an altogether different view. For example, The First, Middle and Third Testaments of the Buddha discusses how the practice of direct transcendence enables one to see the visions of wisdom in the bardo and attain enlightenment. ²³⁴ The Tantra of the Self-Arisen Primordial Wisdom of the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection describes only the visions of lights, sounds and rays, three texts discuss only the bardo of becoming, and The Introduction to the Five Intermediate States presents a discussion on the five bardos: the bardo of natural abiding (this life), bardo of meditative absorption (Skt. samādhi, Tib. ting nge dzin, bardo of dreaming, bardo of birth and death, and bardo of becoming. The bardo of dharmatā is altogether missing from this Space Series style presentation, although there is a mention of the arising of dharmatā after dying in the context of the bardo of birth and death, but this seems to refer to the clear light of death.²³⁵ The Tantra of the Intrinsic Clarity of Awareness's Primordial Wisdom discusses only the bardo of dharmatā in its short bardo section, but contains the dualism of the wisdom and karmic lights common in Tibetan bardo literature. The text relates that if one is afraid of the bright lights of dharmata, they become the dim lights of the six realms.²³⁶

Some of the most distinctive aspects of the bardo presentations in the anthology are contained in the four texts that focus on death and bardo exclusively. For example, The Pith Instruction Advice on the Five Rounds mixes the wisdom and karmic elements of the bardo under the rubric of the five rounds of breathing (*khug pa lnga*), which are the dying person's last four rounds of exhalation and inhalation, and fifth one is a long exhalation. During these five rounds the five elements and five sensory faculties dissolve one by one, but surprisingly, it is said that a practitioner who obtained the pith instructions on the five rounds will perceive the five lights of wisdom during these five rounds, and if he recognizes the lights as his own radiance, he will become enlightened as one of the five Buddhas without having to go to the bardo. For example, when the wind element and auditory consciousness dissolve, one perceives the green light of accomplishing wisdom, and if one recognizes it, one attains enlightenment as the Buddha Amoghasiddhi.²³⁷ Connecting the manifestation of the wisdom lights of the bardo of dharmatā to the dissolution of the elements and sensory consciousnesses that are factors of karmic existence in samsara is an interesting way to mix karmic and wisdom aspects of the dying process. It underlines the inherent divinity of the karmic aspects: the elements in their purified form are the five female Buddhas and sensory consciousnesses the five Bodhisattvas. The instruction on the five rounds of breathing also reflects the fluid way the bardo

²³⁴ GZ III:194-196

²³⁵ GZ V:411

²³⁶ GZ III:402

²³⁷ GZ III:534-535, III:541-543

teachings were understood among yogic practitioners and the freedom of expression exercised by a non-scholastically oriented author like Gödem, not bound by the aim to compose a strictly orthodox philosophical treatise like Longchenpa's *Treasury of Words and Meanings*.

The prevalence of wisdom and its potential to neutralize karma is present also in the process of death and bardos. *The Tantra on the Self-Display of the Bardo from the Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra* states:

If the power of wisdom is strong at the moment of death, all the earlier afflictions and conceptuality are cleared away by wisdom in a moment. Whatever afflictions and latent tendencies you have accumulated during many years and eons, the wisdom of the bardo purifies and clears them away in a moment.²³⁸

However, bardo is a volatile state, and the karmic tendencies of attachment may also override the manifestation of wisdom, if one is attached to it:

If you are attached to the power of the profound realization and view and do not obtain firmness in this, bad latent tendencies are activated at that point, and you will fall into the places of samsara. If you are attached to the power of wisdom at the moment of death, all the latent tendencies of meditating for a long time will become exhausted at that very point. If you don't identify wisdom at the moment of death, you will wander in samsara for a long time. Therefore, take this into your experience quickly! If you identify dreams, you will identify the bardo. Familiarize yourself with it right now! If you don't familiarize, it will be very difficult at the moment of death. ²³⁹

The tension between the possibility of wisdom neutralizing karma and the habitual karmic tendencies dragging down the emerging but unstable realization of wisdom is evident from these citations. However, the tension is somewhat reconciled in the view that sound familiarization with the pristine awareness and luminous visions via the breakthrough and direct transcendence practices is necessary for the deceased person to be able to identify wisdom, or recognize the bardo visions as self-display, without reacting with fear or attachment. It is interesting that despite radical possibilities of negating karma that wisdom presents, the karmic elements of familiarization and wholesome habitual tendencies are nevertheless presented as an important basis of wisdom.

Morality - tension between the instant and gradual paths

The same tension between wisdom and karma plays a central role in the theme of morality, or a moral stance on the importance of ethical and meditative cultivation. The anthology reflects a perceived need to explain the meaning of the radical

²³⁸ GZ III:571

²³⁹ GZ III:588-589

statements that can be misunderstood, such as "in the Great Perfection, there is nothing to meditate on,"²⁴⁰ or "there is no virtue or vice in karma,"²⁴¹ or "In what is as it is there's no contrivance. Though you live practicing the four evil matters, They are just like clouds in the sky."²⁴² The latter citation is what Rudra's teacher tells him in the famous subjugation of Rudra myth, in which Rudra misunderstands the above statement and becomes an evil-doer.

The way the anthology approaches these statements and the issue of morality in general is to give numerous accounts on the importance of conscientious conduct, such as:

If an individual who is practicing this profound pith instruction of mine despises the cause and result of karma and does not abandon even the slightest misdeeds, he regards appearances as empty and is on a wrong path. If he does not practice even the slightest virtues, he has slipped into a dark view and meditation, and is on a wrong path.²⁴³

In *The Precious Nail Last Testament*, the possibility of misunderstanding is addressed directly:

There will be some people who say that the non-meditation means that you engage in the five poisons without realizing the authentic meaning. Those sentient beings will surely go to hell. ... (1) The view that has nothing to view is the expanse of the great empty mind itself. (2) The meditation that has nothing to meditate on is the self-display devoid of grasping. (3) The conduct that has nothing to conduct oneself with is the uncontrived spontaneity. (4) The result devoid of abandoning and obtaining is the *dharmakāya*, the unique bindu. These four sentences are the heart words of me, Padmasambhava, so there is no meaning of Atiyoga to be found that contradicts these.²⁴⁴

Here we see non-meditation and the illusion of vice and virtue explained in context: when one has realized the authentic meaning, that is, has recognized the nature of mind and phenomena as self-display and is continuously present in this realization of intrinsic awareness, meditation and conduct occur spontaneously and one is not bound by the imaginary self attempting to do goal-oriented actions. There is no need to fabricate with meditation practices, because one is in a continuous state of natural meditation; this point is repeated many times with statements such as, for a person who has realized awareness, it is enough to maintain just that. However, without this realization, all the cultivation practices are of vital relevance.

²⁴⁰ GZ V:248

²⁴¹ GZ IV:324

²⁴² Kapstein, 1992:67.

²⁴³ GZ IV: 549

²⁴⁴ GZ V:248

Moreover, the anthology takes a step even further than propounding practices provisionally up to the point of realization, because the fifth volume has a long passage explaining that one should continue to observe virtuous conduct and propitiate the chosen deity no matter how high one's realization is.²⁴⁵ This passage gives a sense of duty or a harmonious way of engaging with phenomena that one never abandons, even if one's internal realization of the practice changes.

Nevertheless, there remains evident tension between the gradual method of cultivation and the statements about discarding practice. Especially the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana contain many references to instant enlightenment upon recognition that are said to render the practices aimed at purifying karma unnecessary.²⁴⁶ It seems that this tension reflects the historical stages of development of the Great Perfection; the Mind Series rhetoric of "no practice" is incorporated as a heuristic device to reconfigure the practice. In other words, to tell a practitioner "no practice" or a bodhisattva "no ethics" is a method designed to loosen the tight grip of the ego getting fixated on what one is doing and taking pride in it. At the right moment, it could be tantamount to flipping one to the side of the practice just happening, instead of one doing it, thus contributing to realization, which appears to be part of the logic behind these seemingly contradictory statements propounding practices and then negating them. The entire form and content of the anthology, the numerous sādhanas, practices, demanding schedules and instructions on morality that it presents, are in itself also a statement on how to understand the statements of non-meditation and non-practice in context, and how they were understood at the time of Rindzin Gödem.

Awareness as intrinsic in the nature of reality

The anthology reflects the Seminal Heart view on the nature of reality: it is empty but lucidly aware. Many forms of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism employ emptiness as the central concept describing the ultimate reality, but the anthology privileges the word awareness over emptiness, as the way to express the deep ontological reality of the universe. Unlike in the Madhyamaka, Prajñāpāramitā and Tripiṭaka literature, in the Seminal Heart it is not sufficient to deconstruct entities or phenomena as lacking self or realize emptiness, but one has to recognize the lucidly aware and uncontrivedly perceiving nature of reality, known as awareness or the pristine awareness (Skt. *vidyā*, Tib. *rig pa*).

The anthology stresses this point repeatedly, especially in the prevalent quest to recognize awareness, and to distinguish the superficial movements of the mind (*sems*) from the deep recesses of awareness,²⁴⁷ as well as in the numerous passages that carefully differentiate the universal ground (Skt. *ālaya*, Tib. *kun gzhi*) and the *dharmakāya* (*chos sku*, reality body).²⁴⁸ Both the ground and *dharmakāya* are said to

²⁴⁵ GZ V:249-250

²⁴⁶ GZ II:502, II:596. See also The Oral Transmission on the Authentic Meaning (GZ II:418)

²⁴⁷ For differentiating mind and awareness, see for example GZ II:313-317, II:491-494, II:589-593 and III:523-530

²⁴⁸ For differentiating the ground and *dharmakāya*, see for example GZ II:488-489 and II:587-589

be empty and non-conceptual, but the ground is mere emptiness, non-conceptual indeterminate blankness where the possibility of transcendence (and suffering) is just a source potential, while *dharmakāya* is emptiness pervaded by awareness, the actualization of the transcendent potential in its fullest wisdom awareness. Stressing the aware character of emptiness contains an implicit criticism of the deconstructive views, and in several occasions the polemical ramifications are expressed openly:

Although you realize just emptiness, you are not enlightened.²⁴⁹

In this way, he will focus on the view of emptiness, and wisdom will be scattered in the expanse. 250

The realization of mere emptiness is equated with realizing just the universal ground and mistaking that for the *dharmak* $\bar{a}ya$:

The dharma teachings of the common vehicles assert that the *dharmakāya* is empty, lacks self and is devoid of all elaborations. They make a mistake and go astray to the unfabricated ground.²⁵¹

This view on distinguishing the ground from *dharmakāya* is a vital point, because it also explains the superiority of the Great Perfection in relation to other vehicles.

The positive view of aware emptiness is amplified is the repeated personification of emptiness and dharmatā (*chos nyid*, reality) as Samantabhadrī, and clarity and pure awareness (*rig pa*) as Samantabhadra, and sometimes their union is said to be the *dharmakāya*.²⁵² By personifying emptiness and awareness as Samantabhadrī and Samantabhadra, the anthology is literally marrying the two concepts in the union of the primordial couple, who are the main divine teachers and the creative source of the transmission - and indeed, aware emptiness is a positive creative matrix of manifestation. This view is implicit in the model of divine creation: only aware emptiness can be the fertile creative source of divine manifestation, not sterile deconstructed emptiness. We can also see this in the importance of the concept of creativity (*rtsal*), or the playful creative aspect of *dharmakāya* that spurs manifestation, as well as in the prevalent emphasis on wisdom and its five aspects embodied in the five Buddhas.

The word awareness is used in the texts of the anthology much more frequently than the word emptiness across all the different cycles and genres, excepting in the texts on the four empowerments, which refer to emptiness 29 times but to awareness only nine times. However, the view on the unity of emptiness and awareness is nevertheless expressed, for in the elaborate vase empowerment it is stated that the hand emblems

²⁴⁹ GZ II:491

²⁵⁰ GZ II:503

²⁵¹ GZ II:503-504

²⁵² For example GZ II:396, III:319 and IV:6

wheel and bell symbolize the non-duality of emptiness and awareness.²⁵³ The suchness empowerment utterly free from elaborations (the fourth empowerment) also contains an interesting passage that uses emptiness and awareness together in a way that Mahāyāna texts usually employ emptiness alone:

Contemplate happiness and sorrow, joy and lack of joy, and all sufferings. However, they arise, they arise from the mind. Whatever happiness and suffering arises, it arises from the mind. Just the very clarity is empty. The essence is awareness and emptiness.²⁵⁴

The *sādhanas* contain more or less the same amount of references to emptiness and awareness, but in the cycle of the Six Seals of Vajravarāhī the word emptiness is used 25 times and awareness 56 times. The frequent presentation of the nature of reality in terms of awareness is yet another indication of how these completion stage practices are contextualized and interpreted with the Great Perfection view. *Pith Instructions on the Key points of the Channels and Winds in the Six Profound Seals of Vajravarāhī* states:

Refresh your visualization of the cakras and channels, control the key points of the body and abandon laziness. Expel the poisons [from the channels], make the number of breaths smaller and their duration longer. The conceptual thinking of the mind dissipates. Overcoming the poisons of afflictions, the miserable destinies are emptied. At that time the self-arisen awareness shines. Five wisdoms shine in that, so the afflictions are cleared away and wisdom expands. This is called a Buddha. Control the body, hold the winds, and release the mental conceptuality! Relying on mindfulness, the awareness dawns. By reaching the natural state of awareness, wisdom dawns upon the awareness itself.²⁵⁵

In this passage we see how the tantric language of controlling (*gcun*) the body, its key points and the winds is augmented with the Dzokchen expressions of releasing (*slod*) the conceptual mind, instead of focusing and controlling the mind or abandoning thinking. The result of the subtle body practice is also referred to in Dzokchen terms of reaching the natural state (*rang so*) of awareness (*rig pa*). This kind of language hermeneutically envelopes the subtle body practices of the Six Seals into the Great Perfection context by subtly redefining their goals, as well as interpreting the practices themselves from the angle of the Dzokchen view - an approach that again points to the nature of the anthology as a skillfully woven integrated whole.

In the Great Perfection empowerments, emptiness is mentioned only 29 times, while the texts contain as many as 188 references to awareness. 71 of these references occur in *The Profound Empowerment to Awareness's Creativity (rig pa rtsal gyi dbang zab mo)*, which is the defining empowerment in the Great Perfection tradition aiming to spark the recognition of the pristine awareness in the recipient, for example by describing the awareness via the triad of essence, nature and compassion: the essence

²⁵³ GZ I:148

²⁵⁴ GZ I:180

²⁵⁵ GZ I:603-604

of awareness is empty and primordially pure, its nature is to arise as luminous selfdisplays, and its compassion is unobstructed and without partiality.²⁵⁶

Generally, the texts that focus on direct transcendence use the word awareness even more than the texts that discuss breakthrough and other topics, for example The Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava contain 43 references to emptiness and 162 to awareness, while the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana mention emptiness 64 times and awareness 94 times. In the fifth volume, *The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Primordial Purity*, the words emptiness and awareness are used at least 151 and 194 times respectively. In the tradition, self-emergent (*rang byung*) is understood as emptiness, while self-arisen (*rang shar*) refers to awareness, thus rendering the title of the fifth volume yet another indication of the synthesizing view on emptiness and awareness.

Symbolic and aesthetic representation

The Unimpeded Realization and The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Primordial Purity contain much symbolic and aesthetic representation indicative of the distinctive character of the anthology. Paul Ricoeur discusses the two dimensions that a symbol brings together: linguistic and non-linguistic. The non-linguistic dimension of a symbol is the deeper meaning that it points to. In the psychoanalytic viewpoint, symbols are rooted in non-linguistic repressed energies that precede thinking, while in the History of Religions, as Eliade notes, symbols point beyond themselves to transcendent aspects of the sacred.²⁵⁷ The common element in both approaches is that symbols are rooted in life, enabling logos to touch bios. Ricoeur's view to symbols presents a liberating possibility in hermeneutics: symbols are in touch with reality, and thus enable us to get out of the prison of language, allowing reality to manifest.

As the Seminal Heart literature in general, *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Primordial Purity* contain many texts that discuss introductions $(ngo \ sprod)$, in which a symbol or an analogy (dpe) is used to introduce a spiritual dimension (don),²⁵⁸ for example when one looks at the sun through a cotton cloth, one sees circular shapes (Skt. *bindu*, Tib. *thig le*) of five colored lights. This is an introduction to the *bindus* and other luminous phenomena perceived in the bardo of dharmatā.²⁵⁹ The most common symbol used in the introductions is a crystal and the spectrum of five lights that it reflects when touched by a ray of sun light. A crystal itself symbolizes the *dharmakāya* and the rainbow lights represent the lights of the five kinds of wisdom. Their reflection out of the crystal symbolizes the way the luminous realms of the deities arise from the crystal clear primordial purity of the *dharmakāya*. As in Ricoeur's view, the introductions employ symbols for the purpose of breaking free from the prison of conceptuality. A crystal, or *bindus* of sun light

²⁵⁶ GZ II:16

²⁵⁷ Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory: 53-54.

²⁵⁸ GZ II:400-402, II:438-441, II:538-543, III:555-564 and IV:44-50

²⁵⁹ GZ IV:48-49

seen through a cotton cloth, present the possibility of disclosing the spiritual dimension they symbolize.

According to Ricoeur, symbols cannot be made up intentionally, because they are rooted in bios. One can manipulate, interpret or erase them, but they cannot be made up.²⁶⁰ This idea of natural unfabricated relationship that exists between a transcendent meaning and its analogical expression depicts universe as having ontological structure, in which the deeper recesses are related to and can be accessed through their symbolic manifestations. This applies to a crystal and bindus, which are not intentionally made: the perception of bindus when looking at the sun through a cloth is natural phenomenon and crystal is repeatedly said to be self-arisen. *The Later Oral Transmission of Vairocana* also refers to the analogical relationship between a crystal and *dharmakāya* in a way that suggests a deeper ontological connection and the possibility of disclosing the reality of *dharmakāya* through the symbol of a crystal:

If this kind of jewelled rock crystal did not exist as an analogy, emptiness would become nihilist, and one would not find the essence of the $dharmak\bar{a}ya$.²⁶¹

While symbols, for Ricoeur, cannot be made up, metaphors can: they express intentionally crafted relationships. Metaphors are sentences that give rise to two interpretations, literal and figural, and new meanings arise from the oscillation between the two, causing us to see light or similarity in the midst of difference.²⁶² Even though metaphors are made, they can also touch the realm of bios that a symbol does, if there is a dialectical relationship between the literal and figural aspects.

Metaphors and metaphorical stories are common in the Seminal Heart literature, as well as in Mahāyāna Buddhism in general. The anthology continues these tendencies in several texts, such as in two dialogues between Padmasambhava and Yéshé Tsogyel: *Notes on the Key points of the Dialogue* contains Padmasambhava's decoding of the metaphorical meaning of Yéshé Tsogyel's dream,²⁶³ and *The Ten Steps of the Profound Key Points* unravels the metaphors of Yéshé Tsogyel's visionary journey to India, Mt. Meru and Akaniṣtha.²⁶⁴ Moreover, *The Great Perfection Tantra on Differentiating Mind and Awareness* contains two fictional metaphorical stories, every detail of which is ascribed metaphorical significance carefully decoded by the tantra.²⁶⁵ A similar story is also contained in an empowerment, namely *The Great Perfection Empowerment of the Crown Ablution of the Victors' Skillful Means*, which relates the famous story of a king who got lost, forgot who he was and ended up as a beggar; a metaphor of the human oblivion of

²⁶⁰ Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory.

²⁶¹ GZ II:540

²⁶² Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, 49-51

²⁶³ GZ V:163-175

²⁶⁴ GZ V:343-354

²⁶⁵ GZ II:603-631

one's true nature. Eventually, the king recognizes who he is, representing the recognition of one's own pristine awareness (rig pa).²⁶⁶

In light of Ricoeur's theory, we can see how new nuances of meaning emerge through the dialectics of the story and its metaphorical decoding. The story is not just a story anymore, but obtains a parallel dimension of profound meaning that changes the way we view the story. The doctrine of human oblivion and the possibility of recognition also gains new meanings through the dialectical relationship with the story, and becomes more vividly understood. As Martha Nussbaum points out, there is something about the medium of fiction and narratives that enable it to deliver truths about human existence and the nature of reality in ways that scholastic or scientific literature never can.²⁶⁷ Linking the philosophical ideas of the anthology into a narrative through metaphorical association brings them to life and closer to our experience, and allows them to touch our hearts. All the narratives of the anthology have this aspect, and in particular, the metaphorical stories create a world that binds the linguistic forces and the philosophical ideas into a narrative that contains the power, which is similar to symbols and inserted by the individual symbolic elements, to manifest reality and to spark realizations of the ideas embodied in the narrative.

Thus, the function of the symbols and metaphors is both to inspire and to disclose reality, the two being intimately intertwined. A symbol is a beautiful representation, a form of expression endowed with definite elegance. The way symbolic representation is employed in the anthology is a form of art: an inspirational technique to uplift the spirit with beauty, with indirect alluring depictions and aesthetic ornaments that appeal to mind's analogical ways of conceiving. In being art, it also contains the possibility of being more than art: the aesthetic aspects of symbols and metaphors enhance their analogical power to manifest reality. The inspiration and sensitivity created by the narrative, aesthetic and symbolic elements are a receptive ground for realizations to arise.

In addition to the symbolism of introductions, metaphorical stories, dreams and visions, the anthology contains numerous symbolic expressions that are employed frequently, such as the mirror of Vajrasattva (*rdo rje sems dpa'i me long*) referring to a crystal,²⁶⁸ and the secret path (*gsang lam*) or narrow path (*gseb lam*) of Vajrasattva which is the manifestation of the five lights after death and the possibility of traversing to Akanistha via this path.²⁶⁹ Occasionally we have also such phrases as the secret precious sphere (*gsang ba rin po che'i sbubs*), which is said to be awareness's intrinsic abode possibly referring to dharmatā or the palace of the exalted mind (*tsitta*) at the heart center.²⁷⁰ A similar meaning is associated with the concept of the casket (*gwa'u*), for the luminous casket of *tsitta* is said to be the abode of the peaceful and wrathful deities, and the realization of Samantabhadra is called the union

²⁶⁶ GZ II:74-82

²⁶⁷ Nussbaum, Love's Knowledge.

²⁶⁸ For example GZ III:311, III:415, III:530, IV:115 and IV:123

²⁶⁹ For example GZ II:542, III:397, III:471-472, III:485 and IV:134

²⁷⁰ GZ II:405 and III:420

in the casket²⁷¹. The same word, casket (gwa'u) is also used about the liberation through wearing amulets emphasizing the blessing power of these amulets as shrines of divine presence.

Aesthetic and symbolic representation is also evident in the prevalent imagery of spectacular displays of light, such as Vajradhara emanating rainbow colored rays of light from his eyes while in meditative trance (Skt. *samādhi*, Tib. *ting nge 'dzin*), the image of an arm of a deity or guru appearing from the middle of light and giving sacred items or the liberation through wearing tantras, and the beautiful descriptions of the resplendent vibrating visions of direct transcendence in the dialogue texts. Chris Hatchell points out that in the Kālacakra and the Great Perfection, light is a metaphor that unites emptiness and appearance, for example in the empty form of a luminous goddess appearing in the sky.²⁷²

Hatchell also argues convincingly that unlike general Buddhist uses of light that tend toward the metaphorical, in these visionary traditions of the late tantric period the metaphorical approach to light is only secondary to actually engaging with light.²⁷³ This is evident also in the practice of direct transcendence described in the anthology, because the linked chains (lu gu rgyud) are the pristine awareness, and as the visions evolve, they become the deities, and the luminous dark-blue background of the visions in the expanse of the sky is emptiness seen in direct perception, and it becomes the pure land. In Ricoeurian terms, light presents an interesting case of a metaphor, in which the symbolic connection to the profound meaning takes the metaphor over, so that the literal and figural aspects become ontologically inseparable, emphasizing further the empty, yet clear nature of the visions. In the symbolism of light, the image does not only point to the realm of the sacred, but it becomes that. However, the profound reality that the light of the visions equals and represents is not automatically manifest, but needs to be experientially realized, taking us back to the symbol as a door, which is here the *idea* of the visions, that points to their actualized reality as luminous appearance, emptiness and awareness.

The extensive use of the format of tantra as a teaching venue also enhances the aesthetic effect; a genre is a statement in itself. Tantra is also the genre that employs the symbolic elements the most, containing all the above-mentioned examples: introductions, metaphorical stories and expressions and abundant imagery of light. The phrases 'mirror of Vajrasattva' and 'the secret path of Vajrasattva' appear mainly in the tantras. Other groups of texts that contain the above mentioned symbolic elements are the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava and other texts on direct transcendence, dialogue texts, empowerments, the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana and the cycle of the Liberation Through Wearing. Even though the symbolic and aesthetic representation is present in much of the anthology, it is prevalent especially in the Great Perfection texts, and flourishes particularly in the more poetically oriented Dzokchen literature, such as the tantras. It is the least present in the scholastically oriented *Great Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra*, but even this text contains many symbols and metaphors.

²⁷¹ GZ III:89

²⁷² Hatchell, 2009, 207.

²⁷³ Hatchell, 2009, 218.

Among the tantras, *The Rosary of Jewels* stands out as an exceptionally poetic creation. It describes the visions of direct transcendence:

The goddess of magical emanation mounts the subtle aerial wind, and is born in the holy place of untainted bliss as a daughter of a sage. She is surrounded by thousands of solar light rays, with no difference between day and night. A white lioness is chained in the middle of Mt. Meru with iron chains. If you recognize these subtle bodies in the sky of your own display, the white lioness is chained with the iron chains. The wisdom awareness is like a lightning in the sky, and it abides in the undrawn mandala as divine bodies devoid of physical life. The movement devoid of breath happens, free from the delusion of cognitive objects.²⁷⁴

In this passage, the visions of direct transcendence are described in the form of a brief metaphorical narrative of a goddess being born as a daughter of a sage. In Ricoeurian terms, all the analogical associations of this passage are metaphors, because they are made up. The story puzzles us, and urges us to enter into a dialectical relationship with the literal and figural aspects, giving us new insights on the reality of the visions. I would like to offer some suggestions as to how to interpret the passage.

The subject is goddess of magical emanation (rdzu 'phrul), which evokes the character of these visions as marvelous projections or magical self-display. She mounts the subtle aerial wind (skyi ser rlung), suggesting that although the basis of these visions is in the subtle network of the channels and winds (*rlung*) in the body, the visions are perceived outside the body in the realm of external wind (skyi ser), and like the wind can be present in many locations, the visions can be seen from different points of perception, not just where one's physical body is located. Her rebirth as a daughter of sage refers to the deeply transformative and awakening nature of the visions. The thousands of solar light rays that surround her with no difference between day and night point to the luminous effulgence of the visions outshining even the darkness of the night. In the narrative literature, we have references of the visions being so brilliant that night seems like day. The white lioness chained in the middle of Mt. Meru with iron chains evokes the imagery of bindus connected into the linked chains. The text even decodes the metaphorical meaning of this sentence by explaining that it refers to the recognition of the visions as self-display, thus giving a hint how to understand the entire passage. The chaining of the white lioness also evokes the idea of nailing the deeper meaning of the glorious visions by realizing their nature as self-display, as well as the image of a heroic bodhisattva taming the lion of his or her own mind.

It is not difficult to see why the luminous displays of the visions of direct transcendence can spark such enigmatic ways to express them, but the anthology also contains creative configurations of basic concepts, such as the five poisons. *The Rosary of Jewels* describes the five poisons as five-colored liquids that flow in the body through various veins, and need to be felt and their "cities" destroyed in order to

²⁷⁴ GZ III:121-122

perceive the divine bodies and realize the five wisdoms.²⁷⁵ Placing the five poisons in the body as colored liquids running through various veins is a unique metaphor akin to the psychosomatic view on a human being. *The Precious Nail Last Testament [of Padmasambhava]* also presents both standard Mahāyāna Buddhist metaphors on death and impermanence and original illustrative depictions of the five poisons:

The guru said: These human beings are not mindful of death. This human life is like hay on a cliff or a bird on a roof. The strike of the Lord of Death is like an avalanche on a steep mountain or a hurricane. Afflicting emotions are like fire flaring up on grass. The way life decreases is like the shadows of the sun about to set.

When the black viper of hatred has arisen in all sentient beings of the three realms, it binds them. When the red ox horn of desire has arisen inside them, it grinds them. When the black darkness of ignorance has arisen inside them, it obscures them. When the rocky mountain of pride has arisen in them, the narrow path is constricted. When the dog of jealousy has arisen in them, it deludes them.²⁷⁶

From this passage we can see how the anthology employs the common Buddhist metaphors on the unpredictability of death, shortness of human life and so forth side by side with distinctive discussion on the five poisons. Comparing the five poisons to various negatively associated images and animals gives new depth to our understanding of them: the black viper of hatred is an image that speaks for itself, and the red ox horn of desire that grinds sentient beings gives a vivid idea of the way lust can gnaw and consume a person.

Conclusion

After this detailed review of *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Primordial Purity*, I would like to offer some concluding remarks on contextualizing the anthology. What implicit statements is the anthology making in terms of the religious and cultural context? How is it participating in the religious dialogs of the time? As Monius points out, religious literature provides "a sophisticated arena for articulation, defense and contestation of religious identities, ideals and values."²⁷⁷ Gödem's anthology reflects this in multiple levels, although we may want to add that religious identities, ideals and values are also tied to social, political and cultural factors. By subordinating Vairocana and Vimalamitra to the dominant position of Padmasambhava, the anthology furthers the consolidation of the Tibetan narrative of the ubiquitous activity of Padmasambhava. Integrating the transmissions coming from the three authors also increases the prestige of the anthology as a comprehensive presentation of the Great Perfection tradition.

²⁷⁵ GZ III:122

²⁷⁶ GZ V:250-251

²⁷⁷ Monius, 2001: 156

The aim for a comprehensive presentation is evident also in the incorporation of the Three Series of the Great Perfection: the Mind, Space and Pith Instruction Series, taught in the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana, Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava respectively. However, all these series are presented through the lens of the Seminal Heart: the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana contain analogical introductions and descriptions of the bardo of dharmatā, while the Space Series is a curious case - even though it is stated that Śrī Simha transmitted the Space Series to Vimalamitra, *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* is a Seminal Heart text modeled directly after the eleven vajra topics in Longchenpa's *Treasury of Words and Meanings*. This is indicative of the orientation of the anthology: it combines the various strands of the treasure tradition and reflects the impetus to present an authoritative synthesis, but it does not follow through with rigorous philosophical and doxographical discipline needed in such a systematizing effort due to its more narrative, poetic and inspirational inclination and focus on contemplative practices.

However, the anthology does not aim merely to synthesize the strands of the Great Perfection, but rather, the history of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, the teachings of the anthology and the community of readers are woven into the grand narrative of Samantabhadra's compassionate plan, or unimpeded vision (*dgongs pa zang thal*), to awaken sentient beings. The vision of Samantabhadra is the main overarching theme that functions to unify the disparate genres, cycles, topics and practices into an integrated literary whole. All the divine agents are presented as the *mandala* of Samantabhadra, and the narratives depict the Buddha Śākyamuni, Vajradhara, Vajrasattva and many other figures as emanations of Samantabhadra himself also has a strong presence throughout the anthology, for he is the most frequent divine speaker appearing especially in the tantras and the cycle of the Liberation Through Wearing, and the Dzokchen teachings of the anthology are also explicitly described as the unimpeded vision or realization of Samantabhadra, springing from the compassion of Samantabhadra to awaken sentient beings.

It is common in the Great Perfection to view the history of the tradition as involving secret transmissions in India to Garab Dorjé, Mañjuśrimitra and Śrī Simha, equally exclusive transmission in Tibet to the king Thrisong Deutsen, Yéshé Tsogyel and other imperial period figures, centuries of oblivion due to the concealment as treasures, and later efflorescence upon the revelation of a particular treasure. Such reconfiguration of the history of Buddhism has many precedents, such as the way Vajrayāna Buddhism reinterpreted Śākyamuni's enlightenment as involving the requirement of tantric empowerments in a pure land as a precondition of complete awakening. However, the way the history of Buddhism is viewed through the lens of Samantabhadra's involvement as a primordial Buddha gives the anthology a distinctive inspirational, prophetic and teleological character that even encompasses the community of all readers as having a karmically destined connection to the teachings. This is a powerful statement for the force of primordial wisdom active in the world and a vision of active goodness, embodied in Samantabhadra ("All-Good") steering the world for the better. The exact innovativeness of this idea remains to be ascertained, but certainly the manner and extent of it within the anthology is distinctive.

By discussing diverse contemplative practices, such as the preliminaries, deity yoga and subtle body practices, the anthology also takes a stance that all of these practices are necessary. The disparate practices are unified through their placement in a single path structure, at the pinnacle of which is the Great Perfection. This positioning is accomplished through various reasonings, such as presenting the nature of reality as emptiness and awareness, which contrasts the goal of the common vehicles as the realization of mere emptiness to the Great Perfection realization of empty wisdom awareness. The gradual Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna path is also superseded by the Dzokchen possibility of instant enlightenment via recognizing the pristine awareness. However, the numerous practices are integrated with the view of instant enlightenment, because most beings are mature to have the awakening Dzokchen recognition at the peak of the vehicles only after all the necessary stages of preparatory practices. In other words, one can only let-be after intense efforts of moral and meditative cultivation and after learning to still and control the winds with the methods of seizing the mind (sems 'dzin) and the yoga of channels and winds (rtsa rlung). However, the synthesization of the gradual and instant paths is not without tensions and internal heterogeneity, for some texts advocate the discarding of all practices in favor of mere recognition, while others present virtuous activity, such as propitiating one's yidam deity, as a natural expression of realization not to be abandoned even after awakening.

Even though the Great Perfection emerges as the effortless vehicle stacked on top of all the vehicles of effort, the Dzokchen view trickles down to all the vehicles below saturating them with a different spin of wisdom and spontaneity, and integrating them philosophically to the Great Perfection. This is particularly evident in the cutting (gcod) practices that frame the entire practice in their aim to eradicate conceptuality, the best method featuring just letting conceptuality be in its own place. The path structure and the prevalence of the model of divine creation turns the otherwise normative tantric practices of deity yoga and subtle body yogas into preliminaries, in which one practices with effort to create a manifestation of indwelling divinity that in the end flows naturally into one's visual field in the practice of direct transcendence. However, these normative tantric practices are framed in the context of the Great Perfection, for the *sādhanas* propound the Dzokchen view of the unity of emptiness and awareness, and the subtle body practices of the Six Seals are revisioned with the goal of recognizing awareness.

By incorporating Śrāvaka and Bodhisattva practices, *sādhanas* and subtle body yogas into a path with the Great Perfection on top and reinterpreting them in accordance with the Dzokchen view, the anthology aims to subordinate Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna in the Great Perfection context, while also reinterpreting the former from the latter's perspective. The hierarchical ranking of vehicles of theory and practice was common in Tibetan Buddhism, but this anthology reflects a particularly strong inclination to integrate normative tantra in the context of the Great Perfection. Even though the majority of Gödem's overall treasure corpus is Mahāyoga cycles, the deity yoga technologies intrinsic to them are also found in this anthology, which is the Great Perfection part of his revelation. The anthology also speaks for a deep appreciation of the tantric completion stage practices: the technique to dissolve and control the winds is employed repeatedly even in the context of direct transcendence. This project to incorporate and reinterpret Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna practices in the context of the Great Perfection is a part of technique of the anthology to weave the various practices into a harmonious whole ranged over and integrated by the Dzokchen view and the vision of Samantabhadra.

The thematic elements that unify the anthology are also themselves deeply interconnected, for example the unity of emptiness and awareness is ingrained in divine creation, which can only occur from fertile emptiness, the inseparable union of emptiness and lucid awareness that has the dynamic nature of wisdom with its inherent possibility for creative manifestation (*rtsal*). The model of natural divine manifestation of deities and pure lands out of the pristine formless dimension is a central unifying theme, which occurs in the creation of the universe, process of death and bardos, and direct transcendence contemplation. In deity yoga, we also have a programmed divine creation of oneself as the deity and his or her *mandala*.

The natural divine creation is characteristic of the Seminal Heart, and is closely related to the tradition's emphasis on wisdom and its playful creative matrix. Even though karmic laws are largely acknowledged and meditative cultivation and purification of karma remain as a basis for realizing wisdom, the rule of karma is shaken is several important ways: the primary role of wisdom in creation, the possibility of enlightenment without having to purify karma in this life and in the bardo of dharmatā, and the liberatory amulets that enlighten automatically. While these aspects are common to the Seminal Heart tradition, the anthology also contains a distinctive element that highlights the prevalence of wisdom: the vision of Samantabhadra. The primordial Buddha is an agent of wisdom actively involved in the history of the universe sending emanations to teach in various realms. However, the complex web of the wisdom and karmic aspects is evident in that the unimpeded realization of Samantabhadra, i.e. the Dzokchen teachings of the anthology, were disseminated in our world only when the time was karmically ripe, and those who encounter the teachings are said to have accumulated merit for eons.

The symbolic, metaphorical and aesthetic representation is particularly suited to the anthology with its ideas of wisdom awareness and its manifestations in divine creation, because the nature of a symbol as referring to a reality beyond itself, which is in some form contained in itself, is analogical to the inherently divine nature of reality beyond the ordinary perception but contained within us. It is also suited to the inspirational character of the anthology framed in the fabulous narratives of divine origins and the prophetic telos of the transmission. The symbolic representation is also indicative of Gödem's participation in the Seminal Heart and its conventions, because aesthetic expression and symbolic elements are widely employed and valued by the tradition.

Gödem's Anthology and the History of the Great Perfection: Introductory Remarks to Chapters Three to Five

The 14th century Tibet was a place a vibrant literary production in the Nyingma tradition and beyond. Longchenpa produced his brilliant works on the Seminal Heart (*snying thig*) tradition, and only a few decades later, Rindzin Gödem revealed his Dzokchen anthology along with a huge corpus of ritual literature. These two diverse

figures – one highly educated and sophisticated monk and the other unconventional married tantric yogi – are arguably the greatest literary heroes of the 14th century Nyingma tradition, and their relationship is the topic of the last chapter of this dissertation. However, before we can compare the Great Perfection works of these two outstanding masters, we have to discern the distinctive contributions of Rindzin Gödem's Dzokchen anthology. Where is Gödem's anthology situated in the history of the Great Perfection? What does its intellectual content owe to the preceding Seminal Heart tradition? What innovative elements and aspects does it introduce? In the next three chapters, I shall systematically analyze the contents and varied cycles of literature in Gödem's anthology to attempting to ascertain its distinctive elements and contributions.

The Unimpeded Realization and The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity are a product of the intellectual consolidation and grand literary productions of the 14th century, but also are embedded in the six-century history of the Great Perfection in Tibet. It will thus be helpful to briefly review the development of the Great Perfection tradition in Tibet prior to the 14th century in order to contextualize its significance. First, we should note that the Great Perfection tradition prior to this pivotal century itself ascribed most of its literary production to the eighth and ninth century Indian figures, presented as emerging in contemporary Tibet through the intriguing visionary mechanism of treasure revelation, or scriptures attributed to divine voices (or both). The great 14th century philosopher Longchenpa is unusual in presenting himself as a Tibetan author creating extensive literary compositions about the Great Perfection divested of such visionary claims of provenance. Thus, the traditional historiography dates most of Tibetan language literature on the Great Perfection to the royal period, and leaves us with a flattened view its development in Tibet, denying the centuries of creative developments and the Tibetan innovative contributions to one of the most fascinating Buddhist traditions to evolve in Asia. As pointed out by Kapstein and others, one of the reasons for this curious turn of events was the view of the Renaissance Tibet that regarded Indian origins as a necessary standard for authenticity. Due to the flattened view of the traditional historiography and the sparsity of historical source material compared to for example European traditions of this time period, dating Dzokchen literature and writing the history of the tradition present considerable challenges. The most lucid and comprehensive contributions to date in this respect come from David Germano, much of whose work, unfortunately, remains unpublished.²⁷⁸

The Great Perfection has its roots in the Indian Buddhist ideas of innate naturalness $(sahaj\bar{a})$ and spontaneity of the awakened state, as well as the concept of perfecting the completion phase (rdzogs rim) of tantric practice. However, only in Tibet the idea of natural great perfection reached its efflorescence and became a distinct vehicle with its own philosophical ideas, practices, narratives and cosmologies. This Atiyoga Great Perfection vehicle was not static, but went through many stages of development after its introduction in Tibet in the latter half of the eighth century. The earliest stratum of literature that was retroactively termed the Mind Series (*sems sde*) is a heterodox collection of texts written during several centuries. The earliest revelations are *The Eighteen Texts of the Mind Series* (*sems sde bco brgyad*), and the writings

²⁷⁸ Other prominent scholars working on these topics include Jacob Dalton, José Cabezon and Anne Carolyn Klein.

culminate on a group of texts centered on *The All-Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*.²⁷⁹ The literature of the Mind Series is highly critical of the sexual and violent practices of the Yoginī tantras, as well as the Buddhist idea of gradual cultivation in general, and instead propounds the immediate experience of primordial wisdom, or Buddha nature, via simply letting go of obscuring conceptual structures and without the need for intellectual learning or complicated rituals and practices. The main figures appearing as authors, redactors and teachers are Garab Dorjé, Śrī Simha and Vimalamitra, while Padmasambhava is almost completely absent in these early texts.²⁸⁰

The pristine orientation of the Mind Series is followed by the increasing return of the elements of tantric philosophy and practice, although they were transformed into more simple and creative forms through the deconstructive filter of the Mind Series. In The Funerary Transformation of the Great Perfection, David Germano analyzes the development of the Dzokchen traditions along the perspective of the presence of death-related, or funerary, elements. While the funerary elements are entirely absent in the Mind Series, the subsequent Space Series (*klong sde*) is marked by the adoption of Indian Buddhist bardo doctrine, although the post-death bardo is still described as a unitary process, containing only the appearance of lights and sounds. It is only the Pith Instruction Series (*man ngag sde*) that introduces multiple post-death bardos, including the bardo of *dharmatā* (reality, *chos nyid*) and the appearance of full-blown *maṇḍalas* of the peaceful and wrathful deities therein.

The Pith Instruction Series contains a wide variety of literature appearing from the late tenth century onward. These texts are characterized by an abundance of funerary elements, such as horrific charnel-ground imagery, evolved bardo doctrine and death rituals and practices. As opposed to the anti-practice rhetoric of the Mind Series, the Pith Instruction Series accommodates many practices, although the character of the practices is less complex than in the normative Buddhist tantra of the time, and embraces the principles of naturalness, simplicity and spontaneity. In general, the Pith Instruction Series is presented as containing two sets of subcategories: the Four Cycles and the Three Piths.²⁸¹ These two are hierarchically ranked within themselves, but not in relation to each other, which points to distinct origins and developments.

The Four Cycles are the External Cycle (*phyi skor*), Internal Cycle (*nang skor*), Secret Cycle (*gsang skor*) and the Unsurpassed Secret Cycle (*bla na med pa'i gsang skor*). Death-related elements are clearly present already in the External Cycle, and the subsequent cycles contain an increasing amount of funerary elements, culminating in the Unsurpassed Secret Cycle, or the Seminal Heart (*snying thig*), with its overarching concern for death, embodied in fully evolved theory of the bardo of dharmatā, rituals for guiding the dead, exorcism, dealing with zombies, examining the omens of approaching death, rituals for averting premature death and so forth. Another

²⁷⁹ Germano, Funerary Transformation of the Great Perfection (*Rdzogs chen*) in JIATS 01/2005, 11.

²⁸⁰ Germano, Funerary Transformation of the Great Perfection (*Rdzogs chen*) in JIATS 01/2005, 11.

²⁸¹ Note that *The Unimpeded Realization* presents a different view on the Four Cycles. They are not subdivisions of the Pith Instruction Series, but they are directly equated with the Three Series: External Cycle with Mind Series, Internal Cycle with Space Series, and the Secret and Unsurpassed Secret Cycle, which are collapsed as one, with the Pith Instruction Series.

characteristic element of the Seminal Heart is visionary manifestation, and the visions of the deities in the bardo of dharmatā are directly parallel to the effulgence of visions in the cosmogonic creation and the tradition's distinctive contemplative practice, direct transcendence. These ideas that blossomed in the Seminal Heart were gradually worked out in the earlier cycles in a period of two centuries from the latter half of the tenth century until the first half of the twelfth century. The earliest texts of the Seminal Heart are *The Seventeen Tantras (rgyud bcu bdun)* redacted by Zhangtön Trashi Dorjé in the twelfth century, most likely from a broader body of literature. Zhangtön Trashi Dorjé's redaction of tantras and commentaries and consolidation of lineages established the Unsurpassed Secret Cycle as a distinct tradition, differentiating it from the literature of competing traditions, such as the Secret Cycle.²⁸²

The literature of the Three Piths developed and circulated more or less at the same time as the Four Cycles. It is unclear what the Transcendent Pith (A ti) refers to in this context, possibly to the Four Cycles or the Seminal Heart. The Crown Pith (spyi ti) is a tightly organized twelfth century collection of seventeen texts, and it seems that the core texts were revealed by Nyangrel Nyima Özer (1124/36-1204). Surprisingly, the funerary concerns of the Four Cycles are almost entirely absent in the Crown Pith, and instead, it propounds the pristine form of the Great Perfection akin to the Mind Series, but now linking the transmission to Padmasambhava. The texts contain almost no techniques or practices, but present philosophical poetry focusing on primordial purity (ka dag). According to David Germano, the Crown Pith represents Nyangrel Nyima Özer's conservative aim to retain the Great Perfection in its pristine form, keeping out the influence of normative tantra with its visionary and funerary elements. Nyangrel was a steady advocate of Mahāyoga tantric practice, but he was not in favor of the new funerary transformation of the Great Perfection, instead wanting to keep the domains of tantra and Dzokchen separate. However, Tibetans were fond of the Mahāyoga practices, which rendered them receptive to the funerary forms of the Great Perfection. As a result, Nyangrel's approach did not spread much beyond his immediate circle of disciples, and the Crown Pith quickly became a closed canon, superceded by the Ultra Pith (vang ti), which is a heterodox collection that accommodated the popular orientation to practice and ritual, and similarly to the Four Cycles, contains varying types of funerary elements in its different strands.²⁸³

Thus, in the twelfth century the funerary and visionary strands of the Great Perfection were emerging as the most vital and appealing forms of the tradition. Especially the literature of the Seminal Heart continued to grow and flourish. The next layer of literature revealed in the twelfth century soon after the *The Seventeen Tantras*, is *The Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra (bi ma snying thig)*, which augments the Buddha-voiced tantras with commentarial literature connected to Vimalamitra, who is said to have concealed them. These collections are followed by more than a century of literary silence until the revelation of *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs (mkha' 'gro snying thig*) by Tsultrim Dorjé (1291-1317) in the beginning of the 14th century.

²⁸² Germano, Funerary Transformation of the Great Perfection (*Rdzogs chen*) in JIATS 01/2005, 14-18.

²⁸³ Germano, Funerary Transformation of the Great Perfection (*Rdzogs chen*) in JIATS 01/2005, 22-24.

At this point, Padmasambhava had become the prominent historical and visionary figure for the Nyingma tradition – a development fueled by Nyangrel Nyima Özer in his treasures. There are also indications that in some circles Padmasambhava was important before Nyangrel's revelation, because, as Cantwell and Meyer point out in a recent article, as early as in the Dun-huang sources that probably date to the late 10th century, Padmasambhava is mythologized, even apotheosized, incorporated into ritual and ranked above his peers.²⁸⁴ However, as for the major Seminal Heart collections, the twelfth century works The Seventeen Tantras and The Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra do not reflect this type of focus on Padmasambhava, but only in the 14th century Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs, Padmasambhava is established at the center of the treasure tradition, and credited for the concealment of the texts as well as many of their composition. The next layer in the evolution of the Seminal Heart, shortly afterwards, is Longchenpa's works, especially The Seven Treasuries (mdzod bdun), The Trilogy of Quientessences (yang ti gsum) and The Trilogy of Resting at *Ease (ngal gso skor gsum)*, which were composed in the mid 14th century, and codify and systematize the tradition.²⁸⁵

In general, the 14th century saw the blooming of Nyingma treasures and the literature of the Seminal Heart, which had now become the dominant Dzokchen tradition. In 1364, two years before Rindzin Gödem's anthology, Sangye Lingpa revealed his Dzokchen treasure, *Condensing the Realization of the Guru (bla ma dgongs 'dus)*. Dorjé Lingpa's (1346-1405) treasures were probably revealed a decade or two later, and Karma Lingpa's famous revelation *The Natural Liberation as the Realization of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities (zhi khro dgongs pa rang grol)* also coincides with the same century. In addition to these Seminal Heart works, we have the immensely popular narrative revelations of Orgyen Lingpa, *The Five Chronicles (bka' thang sde lnga)*, including *The Chronicle of Padmasambhava* (revealed in 1352), which related Padmasambhava cult. Apart from all these treasure anthologies, various collections of Nyingma tantras (*rnying rgyud*) were circulating at this time period before they were collected together in the 15th century in the first edition of *The Hundred Thousand Tantras of the Ancient Ones (rnying ma rgyud 'bum*) by Ratna Lingpa (1403-1479).

Thus, the literary landscape of Rindzin Gödem was rich and stimulating. The Seminal Heart tradition had become established, and yet the creative ferment of the Renaissance period was still moistening the ground of literary production. In general in Tibet, this was a time of systematization: many authors of the time, such as Longchenpa, and five decades later, Tsongkhapa, were looking back, assessing and synthesizing the received knowledge. Institutions were forming, commentaries, histories and philosophical works were written, and texts were collected into canons, for example, the Red Annals were composed in 1346-1363, and the Zhalu Tengyur was compiled in 1335.

These tendencies towards synthesis, while retaining the creative spark, are also evident in the efforts of Gödem's anthology to bring together the various

²⁸⁴ Cantwell and Meyer, 2013, 22. Representations of Padmasambhava in Early Post-Imperial Tibet in *Tibet After Empire*.

²⁸⁵ Germano, Prophetic Histories of Buddhas, Dākinīs and Saints in Tibet, forthcoming, 45.

transmissions into a literary whole characterized by innovative rubrics and features. In the next three chapters, I shall analyze the content and contributions of Gödem's anthology in the domains of narrative, ritual, and contemplation and philosophy, while reflecting on the dynamics of integration and innovation. How does the anthology incorporate the Three Series? How does it reflect the Padmasambhava triumphalism? How do the pristine and funerary orientations feature in the anthology?

The diverse narratives discussed in the Chapter Three are the main clue that integrates the anthology into a literary whole, but how do the narratives accomplish this? Moreover, how do they articulate the self-understanding of the tradition? Many of the narratives conform to standard Seminal Heart accounts of cosmology and traditional history, but does the anthology offer any new types of narratives? Debatably, the most unique narratives of the anthology are the stories of personal transformation embedded in a dialogical format, so what exactly is their distinctive contribution in the context of Dzokchen narratives? What other characteristic elements do we find in the narratives?

The rituals of the anthology (Chapter Four) are perhaps the most conservative part of the work, containing notable textual borrowing from *The Seminal Heart of the* $D\bar{a}kin\bar{r}s$, but also original Dzokchen empowerments and $s\bar{a}dhanas$. How do the rituals balance the influences from this earlier collection and the creative elements? What does it tell us about the funerary and visionary developments of the Great Perfection? We are also pressed to ask as to how we should understand the substantial presence of rituals in a Great Perfection anthology, and how do these Mahāyoga type of practices relate to the general Dzokchen agenda of the compilation?

The Chapter Five on contemplative practices and philosophical ideas delves into the various cycles and transmissions of the anthology, asking questions, such as what is the relationship of contemplation and philosophy in the anthology. How do the multiple different practices work together, and how do they reflect the pristine and funerary strands, the gradual and instant paths, and the effortful and effortless approaches? Throughout these chapters, we shall observe the ways of Gödem's skillful integration of the domains of narrative, ritual, contemplation and philosophy.

Chapter Three: Narratives

Narratives play a central role within Gödem's anthology in integrating the overall work into a cohesive literary whole. In the context of the narratives, all of the anthology's disparate topics, genres and texts are positioned within a tightly interlocking series of narratives that frame a larger cosmological and historical vision. The narratives comprise eleven percent of the anthology, and can be divided into six categories. (1) Cosmogonic narratives relate the origin of the universe and its two trajectories of cyclic existence and transcendence. (2) Transmission narratives present the lineage of the teachings originating from the primordial recognition of Samantabhadra to Rindzin Gödem himself. (3) Wrathful narratives depict Padmasambhava's activities of taming demons in India. (4) Narratives of their meditative and visionary experiences. (5) Prophecies discuss Gödem and his

time, and (6) metaphorical narratives present symbolic stories and decode their meaning.

These narratives are invaluable for their articulation of the self-identity and selfunderstanding of the Seminal Heart and Northern Treasures traditions. Daniel Boyarin criticizes the positivistic historiographical method that looks at religious biographies like archeological sites removing the mythical aspects by "careful literary archeology" in order to get to the empirical historical facts.²⁸⁶ Dominick La Capra refers to these types of approaches as documentary, arguing that they are reductionist and ignore the aspects of texts that make them into particular kinds of literature with their own "historicity and relations to sociopolitical processes."²⁸⁷ Influenced by these authors and their anti-documentary way of studying religious and philosophical texts, I am examining the narratives in Rindzin Gödem's anthology, not as historical documents, but as literature, reflecting on their relationship to the philosophical and ritual systems, their sense of the structure and constituents of the world around them, and their addressing of a Tibetan reader at this point. In particular, I shall focus on the internal logic of narratives and their purpose and role in the anthology, as well as discerning Gödem's distinctive narrative contribution.

In *After Virtue*, Alasdair MacIntyre argues that in traditional societies one's identity was defined by community, and narratives played a key role in shaping the community and its conceptions.²⁸⁸ Indeed, the role of Buddhist narratives in the recreation of Tibetan identity in the Renaissance period has been pointed out by many scholars. At this period, the Tibetan conception of the royal period was gradually reshaped by several history writers and treasure revealers, some of the most prominent works being those of Nyangrel Nyima Özer and Orgyen Lingpa. Rindzin Gödem's anthology represents an important stage of this process in its consolidation of the rise to dominance of Padmasambhava and his cult. Especially the transmission narratives reflect the central themes in the reconstruction of the Tibetan memory of the past, such as the ubiquitous role of Padmasambhava in the imperial period as the main teacher, composer and concealer of treasures.

Thus, the rise of Padmasambhava to the dominant figure of the treasure tradition occurs via the narrative literature about the imperial period. The narrative framework that creates the mythos of Padmasambhava's ubiquitous role contains many elements: Padmasambhava is presented as the main teacher of the imperial period and the person who composes and conceals most of the treasures and makes most of the prophecies concerning who will reveal them and where. All these elements are also present in *The Unimpeded Realization*. Moreover, it is Padmasambhava's disciples that incarnate in order to reveal the treasures, and a prominent one among them is Rindzin Gödem, who is an incarnation of Nanam Dorjé Düjom, one of the five closest disciples of Padmasambhava. Thus, we see that the narratives present continuity from the imperial period to the present, i.e. Gödem's time, accomplished via Nanam Dorjé Düjom incarnating as Gödem and through the prophecies about Gödem and his time made by Padmasambhava.

²⁸⁶ Boyarin, 1993, 10.

²⁸⁷ La Capra, 1994, 14, 31.

²⁸⁸ MacIntyre, 1981, 33-34. 121, 129.

The persona of Padmasambhava is particularly suited to be the focus of the treasure movement, because of his tantric power, close imperial connection and mastery over the spirit world. He subdued the demonic forces opposing the dissemination of Buddhism and represents the culmination of miraculous power and allure of Indian Buddhist Tantra. He is the perfect person to be placed at the center of the treasure movement. The dark interiors of the treasure caves echo the shady chambers of the imperial tombs and the treasures buried there. Padmasambhava's binding of the Tibetan local gods and demons under oath to protect Buddhism is reflected in the entrustment of the treasure teachings to a particular protector, who guards the treasure from false revealers and other violators. Padmasambhava's prophetic vision of the future is echoed in the prophetic dreams and visions that guide the revealers to find the treasure. All of this amounts to a persuasive narrative that has continuously revived the presence of the Precious Guru in the Tibetan imagination via the process of revelation of new cutting edge treasures pulsating with blessings and moist with the fresh breath of the $d\bar{a}kin\bar{r}s$.

Besides the ubiquitous role of Padmasambhava and the treasure cult, the narrative literature in Gödem's anthology also reflects other common aspects of Dzokchen narratives, such as the cosmogonic creation and the origin of the teachings in Samantabhadra's realization, the dissemination of the Great Perfection to our world by Garab Dorjé, and the transmission in India via such figures as Śrī Simha.

Gödem's narrative contributions lie particularly in the way he integrates the various aspects of historically distinct Dzokchen narratives, as well as Indian Buddhist history. He combines transmissions attributed to Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Vairocana, and weaves together many of the narratives, Buddhist history and bodhisattvic ideals into the vision of Samantabhadra. This is the characteristic narrative of the anthology and the main tool of narrative integration, because it presents all the divine agents as the *mandala* of Samantabhadra and the transmission of the teachings as the activity of Samantabhadra and Samantabhadrī through their emanations. The Dzokchen practices and philosophical views are also described as the unimpeded vision of Samantabhadra, and the overarching totality of the theme is embodied in the title of the anthology.

The vision of Samantabhadra is particularly relevant in the context of shaping a community and one's identity, because it encompasses also the readers as having a karmic connection to the anthology: had the reader not accumulated virtue for a long time, he would not have encountered these teachings. The importance of Samantabhadra and his vision is connected to the other two poles of gravity among the agents of the anthology: Padmasambhava and Rindzin Gödem. Padmasambhava is presented as the key person in the dissemination of the Dzokchen teachings in Tibet, and Gödem is the destined revealer, the end point of the prophetic journey who embodies the path and its accomplishment for those living in the dark times.

These two competing narrative structures - the generic, metaphysical vision of Samantabhadra with its cosmogonic origins, and the specific narratives of Padmasambhava's and Rindzin Gödem's activities claimed to be historical events create an interesting tension to the anthology. Samantabhadra's vision is associated with peaceful, luminous, wisdom aspects and vast dissemination of teachings in different realms, while Padmasambhava and Gödem represent wrathful, karmic activities and very limited dissemination including concealing the teachings as treasures to be found in the degenerate dark time.

The vision of Samantabhadra is explained in The Supplementary Cycles: The Teaching on the Essence and Expanse which are the Root of the Lamps of the Unimpeded Realization (also entitled The Root Tantra of the Unimpeded Realization). It does not take up many narrative pages, but rather is a thematic rubric for weaving together the divine and mundane agents, and narrative, philosophical and contemplative elements. In fact, only eleven pages are devoted to its narrative explication, while much longer portion - 171 pages - is devoted to Padmasambhava's activities in India and in the imperial period Tibet, as well as to prophecies of Gödem and his disciples. The brevity of Samantabhadra's narrative and the extent of the stories about Padmasambhava are due to the former being a metaphysical and psychological narrative that is not tied to social aspects of life, while Padmasambhava is a lay person engaged in social relations and practices with many agents, such as his students, consorts, king and the spirit world. His character as a lay tantric involved in consort practices and revelatory transmission is also strongly contrasted with the monastic life, celibacy and ordinary human transmission of the monasteries.

The anthology contains 35 texts that either focus exclusively on narrative or have narrative sections embedded in a wide variety of topics, such as philosophical discussion, completion stage practices and preliminaries of direct transcendence. In total, all the narratives of the anthology take up as many as 331 pages. The distribution of pages across the types of narratives is rather uneven: the cosmogonic narratives take up only 14 pages (discussing only creation and Samantabhadra), the transmission narratives cover 108 pages (going from Samantabhadra to Rindzin Gödem, including pure lands, India, and imperial Tibet), wrathful narratives take up 7 pages, transformational narratives told in the dialogue texts 92 pages, prophecies 66 pages and metaphorical stories 44 pages.

The bulk of the transmission narratives is located in the beginning of the first volume followed by the most important text on prophecies. The cosmogonic narratives are found especially in the tantras, liberation through wearing texts and oral transmissions. The two short wrathful narratives are both in *The Three Lamps: The Last Testament Composed by Oddiyana Padmasambhava*. The transformation narratives are in the fifth volume, and the metaphorical narratives are mainly in the second volume in a tantra and Dzokchen empowerment text. Across the six categories run various narrative themes that I shall analyze, such as the vision of Samantabhadra, the unique sense of time and destiny and special position of Rindzin Gödem in the heightened temporal and historical framework, as well as generation of faith or inspiration to practice.

Cosmogonic narratives

The cosmogonic narratives not only construct a positive, gnostic vision of how the universe came into being ($gzhi \ snang^{289}$), but also create a foundation for the transmission by relating how it originated in Samantabhadra's primordial recognition and by establishing Samantabhadra's recognition as a fundamental teaching to be emulated and realized. The Seminal Heart literature has a profound interest in narrating the cosmogonic beginnings, and this theme is also important in Gödem's anthology, reflected in the high number of cosmogonic accounts, that is, eighteen texts speak about the creation of the universe, although most of these narratives are short, and the number of pages that cosmogonic descriptions could be that the topic is well described in the Seminal Heart literature prior to Gödem.

The roots of Seminal Heart's detailed cosmogenesis are in the world-creating aspects of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism. In Mahāyāna, we have a proliferation of Buddhas, whose enlightenment entails an inherent creative power to manifest worlds or pure lands, and the Mahāyāna practice of recollecting the Buddha (*buddha-anusmrti*) includes encounters with cosmic Buddhas that have myriads of worlds in their bodies. The theory of the three bodies of a Buddha is grounded in the creative act of the form bodies manifesting from the generative matrix of the reality body (*dharmakāya*). As David Germano points out, the idea of Buddha nature (*tathāgatagarbha*), pregnant with the possibility of awakening, is a direct source for Seminal Heart's idea of the universal ground as the origin of all manifestation.²⁹⁰ In Vajrayāna Buddhism, these ideas are applied in ritual and contemplative contexts, in which the meditator creates a pure world of *mandala* deities in their divine palaces.

While we can discern elements of world-creation in earlier forms of Buddhism, it is distinctively the Seminal Heart tradition that applies these ideas in the beginning of the universe, and composes elaborate cosmogonic narratives. The Seminal Heart also connects the Buddha Samantabhadra with the cosmogonic narratives, although this is only one small step away from his elevation into the position of primordial Buddha in The Secret Nucleus Tantra (guhyagarbhatantra), which is the most important Mahāyoga tantra in the Nyingma tradition. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, Samantabhadra is the leading Bodhisattva of the Buddha family, as well as one of the eight bodhisattvas. In The Gandavyūha Sūtra, which was later incorporated into The Buddha-Avatamsaka Sūtra, the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra is presented as a vast cosmic being, whose body pores contain myriads of Buddha fields each filled with countless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.²⁹¹ David Germano notes that The Avatamsaka Sūtra also contains the concept of Glacial Ocean Buddha, (Mahāvairocana, who commonly presides over the Buddha family) emitting infinite light and multitudes of Buddhas from his immense body. These cosmic images and blurring identities of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra and Buddha Vairocana, who both belong to the Buddha family, are echoed in Buddha Samantabhadra's later cosmogenic acts in the Seminal Heart. In Hail Vajra and Secret Assembly Tantras, we already have references to

²⁸⁹ *Gzhi snang* means literally the ground (*gzhi*) lighting-up or manifesting (*snang*).

²⁹⁰ Germano, Prophetic Histories of Buddhas, Dākinīs and Saints in Tibet, 91-92.

²⁹¹ Strong, Experience of Buddhism, 157-158.

Samantabhadra as a Buddha, although in *The Secret Assembly* this is one of the many epithets of the main deity, most commonly referred to as Mahāvajradhara.²⁹²

The cosmogonic narratives of Gödem's anthology relate how the wind of wisdom stirred the first movement in the universal ground (*kun gzhi*), thus tearing open the seal of the Youthful Body in the Vase (*gzhon nu bum pa'i sku*), which is the pure potentiality of awakening. Thus, the first manifestations of form arose together with the first awareness. This awareness of Samantabhadra did not react to these manifestations of apparent objects with desire or aversion, but recognized them as nothing external to himself, as his own self-display (*rang snang*), and attained enlightenment in the first moments of creation. Then, he manifested the five Buddhas, peaceful and wrathful deities and other pure phenomena. Other emerging awarenesses viewed the manifestations as something external to themselves, which sparked the downward spiral of ignorance, negative emotions and karma that eventually solidified as the six realms.

In addition to these standard Dzokchen descriptions of creation, we have one cosmogonic narrative, *The Pith Instruction of the Glorious Samantabhadra: The Way the Liberation Through Wearing Emerges*, which describes the manifestation of the Liberation Through Wearing tantras in the beginning of creation. First Samantabhadra emanates the peaceful and wrathful deities, and from their enlightened bodies, there arises speech that resounds by itself in the form of the syllables Om, Ah and Hūm. Other letters arise from the three syllables, and then the 21 tantras of Liberation Through Wearing manifest from Vajradhara's enlightened mind. Hundred and one pith instructions emerge from them, and 84000 approaches to dharma are differentiated from the letters of self-arisen speech. Various Buddhas teach large numbers of beings, and Vajradhara transmits the Liberation Through Wearing tantras to Garab Dorjé.²⁹³

This cosmogonic narrative places the Liberation Through Wearing tantras in a unique position in Samantabhadra's vision to benefit beings. The scriptures are manifested by Samantabhadra's emanation as Vajradhara in the first stages of creation, when letters are produced from the subtle essence of speech. Their origin is thus intimately connected to Samantabhadra and the enlightened matrix of the universe infused by the presence of the primordial Buddha. Samantabhadra's compassionate vision for the world is evident, because soon after the creation of these dharma teachings, the Liberation Through Wearing Tantras and the pith instructions of the Great Perfection, which are collectively referred to as "the self-arisen letters that arose from the expanse of Samantabhadra's enlightened mind", are transmitted to Garab Dorjé, who is destined to bring them to our world. Thus, this cosmogonic narrative in particular, grounds Samantabhadra's vision to enlighten sentient beings in the formation of the awakened structures of the universe due to the arising of these teachings at the early stages of creation, which in turn explains the tremendous blessing power attributed to the Liberation Through Wearing amulets and the instantly enlightening capacity of the pith instructions of the Great Perfection.

²⁹² David Germano's, *Prophetic Histories of Buddhas, Dākinīs and Saints in Tibet*, contains a detailed discussion of Samantabhadra's appearances in Buddhist literature as a Bodhisattva and a Buddha (93-95).

²⁹³ GZ III:205-208.

Another cosmogonic text, *The Precious Liberation upon Seeing: The Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection*, which is somewhat atypical in the context of Gödem's anthology, emphasizes the role of sound in creation. It is written as Samantabhadra's first person account of his enlightenment, which gives it an interesting, personal character:

First, in the wide expanse of the mother universal ground, samsāra and nirvāna were equal. When the ground differentiated from that, sounds, light and rays resounded and emanated by themselves. Thus, I, the primordial Buddha Samantabhadra, recognized the intrinsic creativity (*rtsal*) of the ground, the awareness's own display, and reached my own place. Without being afraid of the sounds, lights and rays, my awareness abided in its own clarity. At that point, my internal character of being aware was alert without proliferation, lucid without obstructions and open without dullness. External appearances made roaring and thundering sounds, and phenomenal appearances were shaking, dark, vibrating and trembling. I embraced the essence of sound, so the self-arisen radiant sound dominated my hearing. When 'a a sha sa ma ha resounded, it arose and abided as the reflection of the six syllables. I heard the sounds without obstructions. Even though I heard the radiance of the sound, my mind did not move due to the sound.²⁹⁴

The reader is reminded of the display of sounds, lights and rays in the bardo of dharmat \bar{a} – the parallelism being undoubtedly intentional. The text continues with Samantabhadra instructing one to practice the six sounds '*a a sha sa ma ha*, that have the power to clear the mind. One should also relate to them without fear or attachment in the same way as Samantabhadra heard the sounds in the primordial moments of creation.

Thus, Samantabhadra's various appearances and engagement in the cosmogonic narratives in general, and in this narrative in particular, highlight arguably the most important aspect of these stories: the narrativization of the primordial Buddha. Samantabhadra is the *dharmakāya*, the reality body devoid of form and space. Narrativizing him normalizes him into our world of time and space, and introduces a continuity of a Buddha, a pervasive quality of enlightened activity that ranges through the spectrum of existence and the realms of the three bodies. When the *dharmakāya* is made into a part of the narrative structure, the narratives are fully divinized, and the Buddha's enlightenment is incorporated into our world, in all aspects of life and religious history.

This cosmogonic narrative of primordial sounds also illustrates the vision of Samantabhadra by employing Samantabhadra's vivid first person narrative and by turning the first moments of manifestation and Samantabhadra's recognition into a practice to be emulated in this life, and by obvious extension, in the bardo. Thus, the distinctive contribution of the cosmogonic narratives in Gödem's anthology is not so much their individual content, but the way they relate to the anthology as a whole, as the vision of Samantabhadra: in other words, the way they utilize the first moments of creation to illustrate Samantabhadra's compassionate intention to urge sentient beings

²⁹⁴ GZ III:275-276.

to follow in his footsteps to realization either by directly emulating his recognition or by following the tantras and pith instructions that sprang from his fundamental involvement with the formation of the cosmic matrix.

The cosmogonic narratives mark the beginning of the narrative structure, while the transmission narratives fill in the middle, and prophecies mark the end. The positive, luminous vision of the cosmogonic narratives also appears in stark contrast with the darkness of the degenerate time of Rindzin Gödem described in the prophecies. However, the gnostic vision of light and compassion is primary, ingrained in the structure and formation of the universe, as well as the narrative structure of the anthology, while the karmic darkness of the contemporary times is adventitious, and can be transcended via the Dzokchen teachings of the anthology, the vision of Samantabhadra.

It is curious that the vision of Samantabhadra, although ontologically primary, is given less space in the anthology, while the epiphenomenal darkness of the degenerate times and other terrestrial events are elaborated on much more extensively just in the prophecies. If the descriptions of Gödem and his time are adventitious and less important, why are they much more detailed? The adventitious existence of the contemporary times is the reality people are living in. We are not Buddhas, and are not in touch with Samantabhadra's realm of experience. The narratives of the imperial period and especially those of the time of Gödem are closer to people temporally, geographically, socially and psychologically. Thus, the stories of the treasure movement, shrouded in the mystery of prophetic vision, concealment and revelation, and happening now in the present time of Gödem, can touch and inspire people much more than the exalted purity of Samantabhadra in Akanistha, which, although not ontologically far away, is still distant from people in terms of what they experience in the world.

Transmission narratives

The transmission narratives refer to brief concatenated biographies of the figures in the transmission lineage and other lineage related narratives. In general, they continue where the cosmogonic narratives end: the world has been created, and Samantabhadra begins to transmit his realization. The presentation of Samantabhadra as the first teacher places *dharmakāya* in the space of agency. The *dharmakāya* is not ineffable, but he is acting as a discrete agent, operating both with and without language, and triggering the events of the transmission. Furthermore, the transmission narratives of *The Unimpeded Realization* do not leave Samantabhadra in the beginning, but he is active also in the later stages of the transmission via his emanations, which are a part of his compassionate vision for the world. This incorporation of the *dharmakāya* Samantabhadra in the continuity of the transmission is distinctive to Gödem.

The transmission narratives cover the history of the teachings from their origins with Samantabhadra himself to the time of Rindzin Gödem, except that the history by Adzom Drukpa adds Gödem's son Namgyel Gönpo and disciple Kunpang Dönyö
Gyaltsen, his disciple Thangtong Gyelpo and a few other important figures,²⁹⁵ and the guruyoga lineage prayer in the Marvelous Secret has six more names after Rindzin Gödem.²⁹⁶ However, even though these transmission narratives contain many biographical elements, the uniqueness of individual life with all its rich detail is not the main element, but rather it is subsumed to the continuity of the lineage, which is why I have labeled them transmission narratives.

The transmission narratives aim to demonstrate two aspects that are of utmost importance in Vajrayāna Buddhism: (1) the authenticity of the teachings' origin and (2) the purity of their transmission in an unbroken lineage. This reflects the gurucentrism of the tradition: the realizations and practices engendering them are only valuable if they are obtained from a guru, who possesses an unbroken lineage leading to an enlightened source of the teachings. Tantric cycles of literature commonly include descriptions of the lineage and narratives of the transmission. In addition, we can find schematic transmissional accounts in prayers and guruyoga ritual texts, which specify the recitation of all the lineage masters before engaging in the particular practices. The stated reason is that such a practice enables one to receive the blessings of the masters, and to induce a sense of belonging to a larger context of genuine, sacred transmission.

As in the Nyingma tradition in general, these transmissions are conceived as a threefold process. (1) The Realization Transmission of the Victors (*rgyal ba dgongs brgyud*) takes place in the divine realms of the pure lands and heavens. The intermediary transmission is (2) the Symbolic Transmission of the Masters of Awareness (*rig 'dzin brda brgyud*), which involves legendary enlightened figures active in India and Oddiyana. The final phase of the transmission is from the south of the Himalayas northwards into Tibet and this is termed (3) the Oral Transmission of Ordinary Individuals (*gang zag snyan brgyud*).

The Unimpeded Realization anthology begins with a narrative text entitled The Great Synoptic Exposition of the History That Generates Faith referring to the important function of the transmission narratives to induce and strengthen one's faith by relating the origin of the teachings in the realization of Samantabhadra, and their fabulous transmission via the various legendary divine and human figures. Even though the transmission narratives contain some innovative details, in general they repeat the standard patterns and elements of Nyingma lineage transmission. However, all the transmission narratives gain a new dimension of meaning due to the distinctive interpretative framework of the anthology: the unimpeded vision of Samantabhadra, because the transmission becomes a part of Samantabhadra's intention to benefit the world.

Another important function of the transmission narratives is to synthesize the competing Dzokchen transmissions attributed to Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Vairocana. The Symbolic Transmission of the Masters of Awareness relates how these three figures studied under Śrī Simha in India receiving different parts of the Great Perfection transmission, and the Oral Transmission of Ordinary Individuals

²⁹⁵ GZ I:246-247.

²⁹⁶ GZ IV:539.

describes their meetings in Samye, where they transmitted the teachings to the Tibetan recipients. The Symbolic Transmission of the Masters of Awareness also makes a sustained argument about the centrality of the Great Perfection through the story of Mañjuśrimitra's conversion by Garab Dorjé. I shall return to this shortly.

The transmission narratives of the Realization Transmission of the Victors (24 pages) take place in the pure realms and heavens where Samantabhadra, Vajradhara or Vajrasattva teach various divine and semidivine recipients, such as the five Buddhas, bodhisattvas, $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}$ Lékyi Wangmo, Indra and other gods. None of the figures involved in this transmission are historical, but they are purely celestial. The initial stages of the transmission in pure lands occur sometimes without words, as mind-to-mind transmission,²⁹⁷ which is why it is called the Realization (*dgongs*) Transmission of the Victors, but when Vajradhara and Vajrasattva go to teach in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods or other heavens, they communicate via language and concepts.

From the celestial realms the transmission passes on to the terrestrial plane, to such places as India, Oddiyana and Kashmir, and becomes the Symbolic Transmission of the Masters of Awareness (37 pages). This phase begins when Vajrasattva teaches Garab Dorjé and continues until the dissemination of the teachings in Tibet. Even though the transmission is termed symbolic, it is communicated mainly through language, and we have only a few instances of symbolic transmission, for example when Vajrasattva sparks realizations in Garab Dorjé with bird language. Another interesting example of symbolic transmission is when Padmasambhava requests Śrī Simha for teachings, and he tells Padmasambhava to go look for a red ox statue with a crystal inside. On the road, Padmasambhava meets a $d\bar{a}kin\bar{t}$, she points a finger at her heart, covers her right eye, looks into the sky with the left eye, and a statue appears. Padmasambhava understands that this is a symbolic transmission, and it sparks the realization that the Buddha already abides within one's heart (crystal) covered by ignorance and obstructive emotions (red ox statue).²⁹⁸

The symbolic aspects of this transmission are connected to the symbolism of rituals and contemplative practices. For example, the symbol of crystal employed in the story above is an important emblem employed in the empowerment rituals and analogical introductions. Thus, the narratives of the Symbolic Transmission of the Masters of Awareness present a model of how to conceive a ritual initiation, whether it be a Dzokchen empowerment or an analogical introduction. The symbolic encounter is to spark a realization of the luminous *sambhogakāya* dimension of reality exemplified in the rainbow light of a crystal, and dwelling in the human body in the heart and brain *cakras* as *mandalas* of the peaceful and wrathful deities.

While the Symbolic Transmission of the Masters of Awareness operates in the level of the *sambhogakāya*, the Oral Transmission of Ordinary Individuals is in the realm of the *nirmānakāya* and focused on treasure practices. However, these levels and transmissions are deeply connected, the *sambhogakāya* and symbolic transmission forming a source for the *nirmānakāya* and ordinary transmission. The concealment and revelation of treasures is also, in a sense, analogical to the way a symbol conceals

²⁹⁷ GZ III:521.

²⁹⁸ GZ I:15.

a deeper meaning that can be revealed in right circumstances, which is why the $sambhogak\bar{a}ya$ dimension of the symbolic transmission authenticates the concealment and revelation of the treasures.

It is notable that these Dzokchen ritual activities of empowerments and analogical introductions are of very different character compared to the rituals of normative tantra. While the Mahāyoga tantric rituals are highly scripted and multiple emblems of power are employed in complex ritual spectacles, the Dzokchen introductions, as well as the narratives of the symbolic transmission that they are rooted in, are simple, spontaneous and contain a life encounter that presents a possibility to connect with the realm of reality inherent in the symbolism. Even the Dzokchen empowerments, although scripted, are much more simple than normative tantric empowerments and employ the symbol of crystal similarly to analogical introductions. I shall return to this below in the section on the Great Perfection empowerments.

The Oral Transmissions of Vairocana elaborate on the transmission in India, containing the fascinating story of Mañjuśrimitra's conversion by Garab Dorjé. This narrative seems to be distinctive to Gödem: at least *The Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra* belonging to *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts* contains a different version of the meeting of Garab Dorjé and Mañjuśrimitra, that is, Mañjuśrimitra has a vision of Mañjuśri, who tells him to go to the charnel ground Sitavahana (*Cool Grove*) if he wishes to attain enlightenment in one life. Mañjuśrimitra does as instructed and studies there with Garab Dorjé for 75 years.²⁹⁹ Instead, in *The Unimpeded Realization*, Mañjuśrimitra is the leader of 500 Indian Buddhist *paṇditas*, or learned scholars, who all resent Garab Dorjé, a new master that arrived at their domain, because they view his Dzokchen teaching as heretical. Mañjuśrimitra agrees to debate with him, and the scene culminates in the graphic detail of Mañjuśrimitra attempting to cut his tongue off after he looses to Garab Dorjé, because he realizes that he had slandered a Buddha. However, Garab Dorjé grabs the knife and tells him to embrace his Great Perfection teaching instead.³⁰⁰

While Garab Dorjé is not a historical, but a quintessential Dzokchen figure, Mañjuśrimitra has some historicity to him, and especially here, he is associated with scholastic Buddhist learning. The narrative of Mañjuśrimitra's conversion makes him subordinate to Garab Dorjé, stressing the supremacy of Garab Dorjé and the Great Perfection over other forms of Buddhism and, in particular, scholastic erudition. The location of this story in the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana is no coincidence, because a major agenda of this cycle is to establish the superiority of the Great Perfection over other forms of Buddhism. Moreover, it seems that the appearance of this narrative in Gödem's anthology reflects the growing sectarianism of the late Renaissance period and the increasing competition between scholarly oriented monks and visionary treasure revealers. Gödem himself had an unfortunate encounter with this rivalry in 1365 or 1366, when the intellectuals in the Sakya monastery diminished the desire of the king of Gungthang, Phuntsok De, to patronize the treasure expedition of Gödem,³⁰¹ who, as opposed to the scholastic monastics, was a yogin engaged in

²⁹⁹ The Seminal Heart in Four Parts, V:529-30.

³⁰⁰ GZ II:466-468.

³⁰¹ Hetweg, *The Hagiography of Rig 'dzin Rgod kyi ldem 'phru can*, 1994, 168.

Dzokchen and other tantric practices of the Ancient persuasion, and living outside institutional establishments as a wandering yogin, much like the contrast between Garab Dorjé and the 500 *panditas*.

Garab Dorjé also teaches Śrī Simha, and prophecies that he will have three heart sons, referring to Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Vairocana. Padmasambhava's greatness is again enhanced in the transmission, because even though he is first and foremost a disciple of Śrī Simha, he also receives teachings directly from Garab Dorjé, as well as Vajravarāhī.

The Symbolic Transmission of the Masters of Awareness becomes the Oral Transmission of Ordinary Individuals, when these three figures transmit the teachings in Tibet (36 pages) to the king Thrisong Deutsen and Yéshé Tsogyel. Other Tibetan figures that sometimes appear as recipients are the prince Mutri Cépo, Nanam Dorjé Düjom, Namkhé Nyingpo, Ācarya Yéshé Yang, Tenma Tsemang, Nyak Jñānakumara, Yudra Nyingpo and Mipham Gön. The Oral Transmission of Ordinary Individuals is centered around treasures (*gter ma*), including receiving the teachings that are hidden as treasure, writing the treasures down and hiding them, as well as prophecies of their subsequent revelation and the people of Gödem's time who will practice them.

The Prophetic Certificate of the Profound Dharma Which Teaches the Effortless Vehicle relates some interesting details about the transmission in Tibet. The treasures are said to have been written down with various precious materials, such as the gold letters of gods, copper letters of demons, letters of molten lapis lazuli of bodhisattvas and conch letters of *yakṣas*. In addition, the text describes elaborate offerings of jewels, silk and other wealth that Thrisong Deutsen and Yéshé Tsogyel made to Padmasambhava. It is also notable that many of the texts state that besides the Copper Colored Divine Rock, treasures were hidden in many places, such as the Lion Rock in Bumthang and the Wrathful Lady Rock in Daklung.³⁰² All these details echo the glory of the imperial period, and associate the treasure with images of riches and preciousness. Hiding the texts in many locations, contextualizes the anthology into a broader framework of concealing treasures: it is not merely a single treasure, but one among many treasures that was destined to be found at a particular time - an important element in generating faith in the revelation.

In addition to the chronological progression, the transmission also has another temporal aspect, which is a transition via three phases: the timeless phase of *dharmadhātu* (the sphere of reality, *chos dbyings*), the divine phase of long life spans and the ordinary phase of rapid mortality. The transmission originates in Samantabhadra's realization in timeless time, in which "the three times are neither generated nor destroyed,"³⁰³ and passes on to the divine time of the pure lands and the time of the heavenly realms characterized by incredibly long life spans and stretches of time. Many of the figures in the Symbolic Transmission of the Masters of Awareness also have very long life spans: Garab Dorjé is said to have worked for the

³⁰² GZ I:47-48, and other places I:20, I:58-59, I:576-7 and III:175.

³⁰³ GZ III:223

benefit of beings in Jambudvīpa for at least 4300 years,³⁰⁴ Śrī Simha is prophesied to live more than 3000 years,³⁰⁵ and Padmasambhava is also described to have roamed in India and Orgyen for unusually long time, because we are told that Vairocana met Śrī Simha a hundred years after Padmasambhava's encounter with the master. This illustrates the sense of time becoming decreasingly mythical as the transmission progresses on the terrestrial plane. In the end, the people belonging to the Oral Transmission of Ordinary Individuals in Tibet have only regular human life spans subject to rapid degeneration.

The sources of the transmission narratives are found across many genres and types of texts in the anthology. The traditional histories $(lo rgyus, chos byung)^{306}$ and a prophetic certificate (lung by ang) ³⁰⁷ present the entire transmission from Samantabhadra to Rindzin Gödem. Similarly, we have two narrative tantras³⁰⁸ discussing the transmission lineages, although they are more focused on the transmission in various heavens and planetary realms, and are of more cosmic proportions: the amounts of teachings transmitted range from a hundred thousand to more than a million, and the number of retinue members that get enlightened is usually at least several hundreds of thousands. The empowerment manual composed by Adzom Drukpa reiterates the main aspects of the traditional lineage narratives with some inconsistencies,³⁰⁹ and brief general transmission lineages are outlined in many texts and cycles, such as The Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava,³¹⁰ tantras³¹¹ and The Marvelous Secret.³¹² The Six Seals describe the transmission that Vajravarāhī gave to Padmasambhava,³¹³ and The Oral Transmissions of Vairocana relate the transmission of the teachings in India,³¹⁴ and present scenes of Śrī Simha giving teachings to Vairocana.³¹⁵

³¹¹ GZ III:422, III:452-453.

³⁰⁴ A Pith Instruction of the Great Perfection: The Tantra which Teaches the Realization of the Buddha in its own Right (GZ III:169).

³⁰⁵ GZ I:237.

³⁰⁶ The Great Synoptic Exposition of the History That Generates Faith (GZ I:3-25) and The Religious History of the Threefold Teachings of Secret Mantra (I:53-75).

³⁰⁷ The Prophetic Certificate of the Profound Dharma Which Teaches the Effortless Vehicle - the Cycle of the Guidance to the Scriptures (GZ I:37-51).

³⁰⁸ The Tantra of the Enlightened Activity of the Precious Unborn, Unfabricated, Self-emergent and Self-arisen One (GZ III:21-34) and A Pith Instruction of the Great Perfection: The Tantra which Teaches the Realization of the Buddha in its own Right (III:163-183)

³⁰⁹ For example, Adzom Drukpa writes that Śrī Simha received from Garab Dorjé the Mind Great Perfection (I:237), while in The Oral Transmissions of Vairocana, Śrī Simha is said to have received from Garab Dorjé all the different forms of the Great Perfection (II:472-473).

³¹⁰ GZ II:425.

³¹² GZ IV:569-571.

³¹³ GZ I:503, 504, 550.

³¹⁴ GZ II:465-470.

³¹⁵ GZ II:486-488, II:535, II:574-575, 580-586.

Transmission lineages

Transmission lineages come out of the transmission narratives, as well as exist independently at the end of numerous texts. Their prevalence points to the Tibetan concern of the legitimacy and authentic origin of the transmission. When examined closely, the transmission narratives in the treasure texts of the anthology contain five different models of transmission lineages, which I have termed (1) the transmission lineage of Vajrasattva's activity, which presents Vajrasattva teaching many recipients via his emanations, (2) the lineage of the empowerment to awareness's creativity, which is the transmission lineage of this particular central Dzokchen empowerment, (3) the extensive lineage, which is the most comprehensive lineage in the anthology, (4) the cosmic lineage, which relates the transmission in various divine and semi-divine realms, and (5) the lineage of the Marvelous Secret, which relates the transmission of this cycle on cutting (gcod).

All these lineages share the three-fold structure of the transmission of Victors, Masters of Awareness and Ordinary Individuals, but when analyzing the details, we can distinguish five separate models, which come out of the transmission narratives. It is not always entirely clear as to what is transmitted, but in general, all the teachings of the anthology are presented as coming down via one of these lineages. In addition to these five models, we have lineages in the end of specific texts of the anthology, but they are merely lists of names and do not present any substantial differences to these five transmission lineages. The general model discernible in the first three of these five lineages is the origin of the teachings in Samantabhadra, their transmission to a divine figure in the Vajra family, and then to Garab Dorjé and his peers in divine realms. In the terrestrial place the lineage always passes through Srī Simha, sometimes preceded by Mañjuśrimitra. Then, we have some or all of the three masters of awareness, followed by Tibetan recipients and upon revelation Rindzin Gödem. As for the two remaining lineages, we have a transmission lineage centered around the three bodhisattvas teaching in various heavenly realms, and the lineage of the Marvelous Secret that contains many unusual female figures and Indian siddhas.

Even though we have five transmission lineages, a steady authorial hand is evident in the narratives, because they hardly contain inconsistencies: the lineages diverge because various teachings were passed down via different figures. Some of the narratives also complete each other's transmission lineages, for example a narrative tantra, *A Pith Instruction of the Great Perfection: The Tantra which Teaches the Realization of the Buddha in its own Right* presents a detailed transmission lineage, and *The First Oral Transmission of Vairocana*, elaborated on the transmission in India and adds another recipient, Jñānasūtra, to the list of Śrī Simha's disciples.

Below is a chart of the first transmission lineage of Vajrasattva's activity in *The Great* Synoptic Exposition of the History That Generates Faith. This is a generic transmission narrative of *The Unimpeded Realization* that opens the anthology.



The transmission lineage of Vajrasattva's activity in *The Great Synoptic Exposition of the History That Generates Faith* (I:3-25)

In this transmission lineage, Vajrasattva teaches some of the disciples in different emanations. For example, he emanates as Vajradhara to teach Śāriputra, and he arises as Zhönnu Pawo Tobden in the charnel ground of Great Secret Delight (*gsang chen rol*) to teach Vajrapāṇi. He also imparts different teachings to the recipients: Śāriputra receives the six perfections and other teachings that dispel torment, Drima Mépa obtains the six perfections and the tantras of the Marvelous Secret, and Garab Dorjé is entrusted with the entire Unsurpassable Secret Cycle. Rindzin Gödem as the destined revealer is also mentioned in the text.

The Prophetic Certificate of the Profound Dharma Which Teaches the Effortless Vehicle - the Cycle of the Guidance to the Scriptures presents the transmission lineage of the awareness's creativity empowerment (*rig pa'i rtsal dbang*), which is the distinctive empowerment of the Dzokchen tradition. It is very similar to the transmission lineage above, except that it passes via Vajradhara and Vajrapāņi instead of Vajrasattva, and here we also have Vimalamitra as a student of Śrī Simha. Both Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava are said to disseminate the awareness's display empowerment in Tibet, although the figure below mistakenly indicates that it is Padmasambhava alone.



The transmission lineage of the empowerment to awareness's creativity in *The Prophetic Certificate of the Profound Dharma Which Teaches the Effortless Vehicle - the Cycle of the Guidance to the Scriptures* (1:37-51)

The most elaborate transmission lineage is given in A Pith Instruction of the Great Perfection: The Tantra which Teaches the Realization of the Buddha in its Own Right.



The extensive transmission lineage in *The Pith Instruction of the Great Perfection: The Tantra which Teaches the Realization of the Buddha in its Own Right* (III:163-183).

This illustration contains again a limitation, because not just Vajrasattva, but all the three representatives of the Vajra family with their vast retinues are said to go to the Amolika rock in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods to teach Garab Dorjé and others for 24 miraculously emanated years (sprul pa'i lo). The First Oral Transmission of Vairocana presents the lineage in India in same terms, but adds Gyelwa Yéshé Do as a student of Śrī Simha. While The Pith instruction of the Great Perfection states that the teachings Unchanging Light ('od mi 'gyur aka Samantabhadra) transmitted are 11500 seed syllables of the Reality Body and 3000 tantras, The First Oral Transmission of Vairocana describes that Garab Dorjé received all the teachings of the Great Perfection, and then divided them by giving the four different parts of the Word Great Perfection (bka' rdzogs pa chen po) to Mañjuśrimitra and to the three sons of a king, minister and brahmin, and the entire Pith Instruction Great Perfection (man ngag rdzogs pa chen po) to Mañjuśrimitra, who transmitted it to Śrī Simha. Thus, The First Oral Transmission of Vairocana differs here from The Pith Instruction of the Great Perfection, because Garab Dorjé does not teach Srī Simha directly, but the transmission passes through Mañjuśrimitra, as in the lineage of the awareness's display empowerment. Srī Simha then divides the Pith Instruction Great Perfection between his four heart sons, giving the Exceedingly

Secret Unsurpassable cycle to Padmasambhava, the Secret Cycle to Jñānasūtra (Yéshé Do), the Inner Cycle to Vimalamitra and the External Cycle to Vairocana.³¹⁶

In *The Pith Instruction of the Great Perfection*, Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Vairocana are presented as transmitting different teachings to different people, but the anthology also contains texts, in which they are teaching together in Samye, Chimphu. The narrative discourse in *The First Oral Transmission of Vairocana* begins as following:

When the master from Oddiyana, Padmasambhava, the Indian master Vimalamitra and the Tibetan master Vairocana were residing and meditating in Samye, in the Chimphu cave, seven emanated $d\bar{a}kin\bar{s}$ gave a revelation to the king Thrisong Deutsen: "A teaching that liberates merely by seeing and hearing ³¹⁷ is hidden in the enlightened mind of the three masters of awareness, so ask for it!"

The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra and The Elaborate Vase Empowerment also present themselves as teachings that the three masters transmitted together to Thrisong Deutsen in Samye. The stories of the meetings of these three figures reflect the integrative agenda of the anthology to unify the transmissions attributed to them.

Even though the narrative synthesis of the anthology stitches together these three transmissions, Vimalamitra and Vairocana are subordinated to the principal position of Padmasambhava. This is reflected in the narratives of their meetings in Samye: the teachings that they transmit together are the Oral Transmissions of Vimalamitra and Vairocana, while the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava are transmitted by Padmasambhava alone. Thus, Padmasambhava is portrayed as being proficient in the transmissions of the other two masters of awareness, but they do not feature as masters of the Letterless Oral Transmission of the Unsurpassed Cycle that Padmasambhava received from Śrī Simha.

In general, Padmasambhava also figures prominently in the narratives of the anthology: the wrathful narratives are about his work of subjugating demons in India, and the two lengthy transformational narratives both feature him either as a disciple or a master, giving a lot of details on his actions as a teacher and his ordeals on the path. Vairocana appears in brief transmission scenes of him and Śrī Simha in the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana that describe him as studying with Śrī Simha for forty years, and weeping in anguish when it was time to leave because he could not bear to separate from the master.³¹⁸ However, we have no narratives that give us any information on Vimalamitra's character or details of his life. The transmission narratives only mention him as a part of the lineage, stating that he received the Internal Cycle from Śrī Simha.

One of the narrative tantras titled *The Tantra of the Enlightened Activity of the Precious Unborn, Unfabricated, Self-emergent and Self-arisen One* presents a cosmic

³¹⁶ GZ II:469-473.

³¹⁷ Apparently, this special teaching refers to the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana.

³¹⁸ GZ II:487.

transmission lineage involving the teachings spreading to various heavenly, planetary and $n\bar{a}ga$ realms. First Samantabhadra emanates the 42 Buddhas and the three Bodhisattvas, and the latter proceed to disseminate the analogies to different worlds.



The cosmic transmission lineage in *The Tantra of the Enlightened Activity of the Precious Unborn, Unfabricated, Self-emergent and Self-arisen One* (III:21-34).

All these recipients along with hundreds of thousand of their retinue members are said to get enlightened. This idea of vast amount of beings attaining awakening is reminiscent to many of the Mahāyāna sūtras, in which countless Bodhisattvas and retinue members attain enlightenment upon the conclusion of the Buddha's sermon. It is a profoundly positive view of the realizable possibility of enlightenment, echoing more mythic, spiritual realms or times of the past. However, the glorious past is brought to the present via the connection of the unbroken lineage and the transmitted teachings. Thus, the reader can have the same keys to enlightenment as these figures of the past, which is one source of the inspirational force of these narratives.

In addition to the lineages presented in the narrative texts and tantras, we have several lineage prayers that are performed in connection with guru yoga and outline the transmission line of the masters. The lineage prayers in the guru yogas for breakthrough and direct transcendence do not present any significant variations to the transmission narratives, except that the guruyoga for breakthrough has seven names after Rindzin Gödem, added later on, and missing the treasure punctuation (*gter tsheg*). However, the guru yoga lineage prayer in the cycle of Marvelous Secret is very different from all the transmission lineages in the anthology. It contains the only lineage in the anthology that does not pass through Garab Dorjé:

Samantabhadra Yum Sipa Dedröl (yum srid pa bde grol) Vajravarāhī The king of the gods Lhamo Dzédenma (Iha mo mdzas Idan ma) Lhamo Drupdenma (Iha mo grub Idan ma) Lhabu Drakden Chökyong (Iha bu grags Idan chos skyong) Lhamo Yongdenma (Iha mo yong bde ma) Śīntam Gyelpo Guhvadevarāja Gyagar Chökyong Rāja (rgya gar chos skyong rāja) Khandro Pemachen (mkha' 'gro pad ma can) Chögyel Devaraja Khenpo Samphel Mitra (mkhan po bsam 'phel mitra) 108 yogis Mañjuśrimitra Jamphel Zangpo ('jam dpal bzang po) Birbapala Nagpopala Dombhipala Padmasambhava Five nirmāņakāyas in Tibet Gödem and his son Drenchok Dorjé Gyeltse (dren mchog rdo rje rgyal mtshan) Jampa Shényen (byams pa bshes gnyen) Sangyé Pelzang (sangs rgyas dpal bzang) Namkha Gyeltsen (nam mkha' rgyal mtshan) Ngari Jatang Nyönpa (mnga' ris bya btang smyon pa) Ratné tsenchen (ratna'i mtshan can) The root guru

It is interesting that in its early stages of transmission this lineage of the Marvelous Secret contains many female figures, such as Vajravarāhī, who is the central deity in the cutting practices of the cycle. The presence of goddesses as well as Indian *siddhas* in the lineage is appropriate for a practice performed in charnel grounds and traditionally associated with lay practitioners including women. Unfortunately, the anthology does not contain any narratives of the transmission beyond this skeleton of names.

Narrative themes in the transmission

The transmission narratives contain several themes, the most important one being the vision of Samantabhadra. The emanations of Samantabhadra unify the transmission and make it appear in new light: as a part of his compassionate vision to help the world. The peaceful luminous, gnostic aspects related to Samantabhadra are contrasted to the wrathful attributes of Padmasambhava and Rindzin Gödem and to the karmic darkness of the later times, especially the degenerate time of Gödem.

The vision of Samantabhadra is spelled out in *The Supplementary Cycles: The Teaching on the Essence and Expanse which are the Root of the Lamps of the Unimpeded Realization (also entitled The Root Tantra of the Unimpeded Realization)* (11 pages). The role of the primordial Buddha couple, Samantabhadra and Samantabhadrī, becomes prevalent in the transmission, because many of the figures in the transmission are presented as their emanations. Vajradhara, Vajrasattva, the five

Buddhas and Buddha Śākyamuni are said to be emanations of Samantabhadra, ³¹⁹ and Vajravarāhī and Prajñāpāramitā are emanations of Samantabhadrī.³²⁰ Garab Dorjé is presented as a second order emanation of Samantabhadra projected out of Vajrasattva's heart.³²¹ Furthermore, *The Tantra of the Enlightened Activity of the Precious Unborn, Unfabricated, Self-Emergent and Self-Arisen One* describes the three bodhisattvas Mañjuśri, Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi as Samantabhadra's emanations.³²² Mañjuśrimitra, Śrī Simha and Vimalamitra are again second order emanations that arise from the three syllables that fall on earth from the enlightened mind of these bodhisattvas. Padmasambhava has the most glorious origin of all: Samantabhadra emanates the sambhogakāyas Vairocana, Amitābha and Vajrasattva, and from their hearts arise the three syllables that descend on the delightful lake of Sindhu giving birth to Padmasambhava.³²³

Thus, we see how Samantabhadra is not just the source of the transmission in the distant past, but the transmission becomes fundamentally colored by his enlightened vision to benefit the world via his emanations, and his unimpeded vision is also the Great Perfection teachings transmitted in the lineage. This redefinition of transmission via Samantabhadra's overarching presence ties together the various aspects of the lineage transmission and the teachings transmitted into a distinctive narrative that is one of the characteristic contributions of Gödem's anthology.

The description of Padmasambhava's origin in *The Tantra of the Enlightened Activity* of the Precious Unborn, Unfabricated, Self-emergent and Self-arisen One also illustrates the importance of Padmasambhava in the anthology. All the greatest Buddhas of the anthology are involved in giving birth to him, and he is the second pole of gravity after Samantabhadra, because he is in a key role in disseminating the treasures in Tibet. He is the lightning rod that brings together the five sublimities of the Tibetan transmission: the perfect teachers, that is, himself, Vimalamitra and Vairocana; the perfect audience, which is the king and Tsogyel; the perfect teaching of Samantabhadra's Unimpeded Realization; the place of Samye; and legendary time of the imperial period. He is the person who teaches, authors and conceals most of the treasure texts, and dominates more than one third of the narratives. The third pole of gravity is Rindzin Gödem. His revelation is loaded with significance, accumulated by the weight of the prophecies and his position as the single point of convergence, who unearths, deciphers and transmits all the teachings coming from Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Vairocana.

The metaphysical nature of Samantabhadra shrouded in the luminous wisdom, cosmogonic origins and primordial realization is contrasted to the activities of Padmasambhava and Rindzin Gödem situated historically in the world. These two narrative structures form opposite poles in many levels: light *versus* darkness, gnostic *versus* karmic, peaceful *versus* wrathful, vast dissemination *versus* concealment as

³¹⁹ GZ III:465-466 and IV:489.

³²⁰ GZ IV:569

³²¹ GZ III:467.

³²² GZ III:24.

³²³ GZ III:26-28.

treasures, flourishing, emanating and overflowing *versus* degeneration, generic *versus* specific, divine *versus* terrestrial, and metaphysical *versus* historical. Samantabhadra's vision is an entirely peaceful and positive vision related to the prevalence of wisdom and its luminous manifestations and involving vast dissemination of the Dzokchen teachings in pure lands and the realms of gods, planets, *yakşas* and *nāgas*. Padmasambhava and Gödem instead, are involved in wrathful rites of subjugation, limited secret transmission and concealment of treasures on the terrestrial plane dominated by karma. Gödem is also associated with the darkness of the degenerate time of the final 500 years, when true Buddhism is about to disappear, which is in stark contrast with Samantabhadra's luminous displays of emanating sambhogakāya Buddhas, who spread the doctrine.

These opposite frameworks create interesting tensions to the anthology. Why do emanations of Samantabhadra disseminate the Dzokchen teachings of the anthology to hundreds of thousands of beings in planetary, *yakşa* and other realms, but Padmasambhava transmits them only to a handful of recipients in Tibet, and eventually conceals them as treasures? How do we reconcile the peaceful methods of Samantabhadra and the wrathful acts of subjugation and killing of Padmasambhava? How do we explain the wisdom orientation, inherent goodness and fundamental positivity of Samantabhadra's vision and the gloomy rhetoric of the dark degenerate time? In some sense, it seems that Samantabhadra and Padmasambhava live in different time and space, one divine and gnostic and the other terrestrial and karmic, but the reconciliation of these rubrics is not without tensions.

While Samantabhadra is connected to many of the divine and human agents through his emanations, Padmasambhava is also at the center of a web of relationships comprised of his teachers Śrī Simha, Garab Dorjé and Vajravarāhī, his consort Yéshé Tsogyel, peers Vimalamitra and Vairocana, students Nanam Dorjé Düjom and so forth, and his king Thrisong Deutsen. In addition, Padmasambhava has deep relationships to the world of spirits and demons that have a prevalent impact on Tibetan life. As we shall see in the next section, he is out on the field wrestling with the issues of violence, harm, and other messy troubles involving spirits and humans, while Samantabhadra remains pure and lofty in Akanistha.

However, even though these two narrative structures contain some tensions, in general they complete each other. Samantabhadra is a *dharmakāya* Buddha; naturally his activities are conceived in terms of wisdom and light. For a *dharmakāya* Buddha, he is very active and compassionately involved with the world. He could not do more than that, but Tibetan life is violent and solicited by a multitude of hostile forces and spirits, so we need a powerful wrathful master to subjugate, kill and bring order to these forces of chaos. This function is fulfilled by Padmasambhava, an icon of fierce tantric power. Thus these figures - one peaceful and metaphysical and the other wrathful and active in time and history - form narrative layers that flourish side by side creating interesting contrasts vis-á-vis to each other. These narrative layers are also deeply connected: Padmasambhava is after all a second order emanation of Samantabhadra, and they both share the same lineage transmission of the Dzokchen teachings, as well as the Buddhist principles and goals of wisdom and compassion, even if they embody them in different ways.

Another important narrative theme in the transmission stories is the heightened sense of time and destiny. This is evident in the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana, and the way they construct the Great Perfection as an exceptional, rare, highest teaching, triumphing over scholastic Buddhism in the figure of Garab Dorjé, because "compared to all the vehicles that had been taught, fortunes increased"³²⁴ and time was ripe for spontaneous liberation. We can also see this in the two rationales of hiding The Unimpeded Realization as a treasure in Tibet: firstly, suitable recipients are rare, and secondly, at that time Mahāyoga Tantra was established in Tibet, and had the superior Dzokchen been disseminated, Mahāyoga would have faded, because "if one sees a wish-fulfilling jewel, other jewels appear like earth and stones."³²⁵ The wish-fulfilling jewel of the Great Perfection had to be concealed, because the time was not ripe for its dissemination in Tibet apart from a few fortunate disciples. The special sense of time entails both the attitude that everything happens at the karmically right time and the emphasis on the fortune of encountering the rare teachings that appear only in the unique temporal and spatial locations. The Buddha Śākyamuni had to come first to ripen the inhabitants of this world before the vision of Samantabhadra could be disseminated, and the Tibetans had to practice Mahāyoga tantras before the treasure of *The Unimpeded Realization* could be revealed.

The heightened sense of the timely, destined fortune of encountering the rare teachings connects to another significant narrative theme: generating inspiration to practice. Enveloping the reader in the mystical sense of time ensuing from the totality of the transmission narratives with their transcendent origins and timely, rare dissemination, highlights the exceptional fortune of the reader to receive these teachings. The narrative passages in the cycle of the Liberation Through Wearing enhance this further by stating that the reader has to have accumulated virtue for eons to encounter the teachings of the anthology. This type of interpretative framework is aimed at fundamentally reconfiguring the identity of the reader and imbuing the practice with greater meaning.

Wrathful narratives

The theme of violence, and in particular the ritual activity of "liberating" or killing demonic beings, abounds in the Yoginī tantras and Mahāyoga literature of the Eight Word (*bka' brgyad*) deities. Narratives of Padmasambhava, the prominent one being Orgyen Lingpa's *Chronicles of Padmasambhava (padma bka' thang)*, also have many narratives of subjugation, such as the well-known myth of Rudra. However, in the Great Perfection literature, the theme of violence is relatively absent, and instead, the tradition is given the rhetoric of naturalness and letting be. Subjugating is more akin to Mahāyoga methods involving effortful manipulation of energies, wrathful deities and ritual control, while the Dzokchen approaches of letting be, recognizing and soliciting natural luminous efflorescence are not a supportive environment for forceful techniques.

³²⁴ GZ II:446.

³²⁵ The Prophetic Certificate of the Profound Dharma Which Teaches the Effortless Vehicle - the Cycle of the Guidance to the Scriptures (GZ I:46-47).

However, a text in Gödem's anthology, *The Three Lamps: The Last Testament Composed by Oddiyana Padmasambhava*, contains a narrative of Padmasambhava's wrathful activities of liberating demons in India. This unusual text in the context of the Great Perfection reflects Rindzin Gödem's strong Mahāyoga inclination, as well as aligns him with Padmasambhava. The text relates how Padmasambhava came across a poison lake filled with vicious demonic creatures eating each other. At dusk, when the demons gathered to hunt, he paralyzed them with fear with his nine-pronged iron vajra and seized them with iron hook like Dza syllables:

By uttering Hum twenty one times, he bound them with a noose. With twenty-one Bam syllables, he chained them with iron chains. With twenty-one Ho syllables, he made them crazy. Then, he abided in the samādhi of the great courage and fierceness of the powerful midnight. At dawn, he emanated from his glorious tongue many wrathful mantras like a blacksmith's molten fire. --- He emanated from his heart ten wrathful emanations together with their retinues like falling rain. The roar of the wrathful deities was like the roar of dragons. Light rays radiated from their splendid bodies like lightnings. Their vicious weapons fell like thunderbolts. He emanated also $d\bar{a}kin\bar{s}$ and mamo goddesses like gathering clouds. Then, he slayed them in one moment. At that time, all those sentient beings with evil conducts and negative emotions were transferred to higher realms, and their bodily aggregates vanished like flowers and rainbows. The conceptuality of their minds attached to virtue. Some engaged in the Great Vehicle. Some were appointed as protectors of the teachings.³²⁶

The same text contains also another narrative, in which Padmasambhava kills a demonic skeleton, who then incarnates in the hells and in many animal and human bodies. In the end, he encounters the treasure teachings of Padmasambhava in Tibet.

The content of these stories with their intense methods of subjugation and eventual spiritual benefit is common to the numerous narratives of Padmasambhava's wrathful activities. The interesting part about these narratives is how they are related to Rindzin Gödem in the anthology. *The Three Lamps: The Last Testament Composed by Oddiyana Padmasambhava* presents itself as a text composed especially for Rindzin Gödem, the karmically destined spiritual heir of Padmasambhava. It has three sections: the external lamp of the body, internal lamp of conduct and secret lamp of awareness. The external lamp presents the wrathful stories of Padmasambhava's activities. The internal lamp contains prophecies of Gödem and his degenerate time, including descriptions of Gödem's physical attributes and signs. It also gives detailed instructions how he should dress, eat, speak, behave and live. The secret lamp presents meditation instructions for Gödem.

The external lamp is said to pertain to the family line (*skye rgyud*), which emphasizes Gödem's role as the spiritual son of Padmasambhava. Why does the external lamp of the body or family line, which is written for Gödem, discuss the narratives of Padmasambhava's wrathful activities in India? This creates a strong identification between Padmasambhava and Rindzin Gödem and their wrathful attributes and activities. Gödem is repeatedly described as a vulture-feathered yogi of fierce, dark

³²⁶ GZ V:205-206

brown appearance, and as we know of his biography, he comes from a family of Vajrakīla practitioners. He is a perfect son of the wrathful, demon-taming father - an association created by these narratives contained in Padmasambhava's *Last Testament* to Rindzin Gödem.

In addition to wrathful narratives, Gödem's anthology contains some wrathful practices, which are rather atypical in a Dzokchen anthology of this time period. The cycle of the Marvelous Secret, presents cutting (*gcod*) practices that involve torching and killing demons, or burning wrathful substances in a fire, which drives the demons crazy and makes them faint. Even though the majority of the cutting practices are not wrathful, and in general they are framed in the Dzokchen context of eradicating conceptuality, the inclusion of these violent methods in the Marvelous Secret is indicative of the importance of wrathful practices for Gödem, further emphasizing his fierce inheritance from Padmasambhava and his special position as Padmasambhava's heart son.

The stories of subjugation and wrathful practices also reflect the trend of the Seminal Heart to reabsorb tantric practices and elements previously discarded in the Mind Series literature. As David Germano points out, the Pith Instruction Series is marked by the return of the wrathful environment of the Yoginī tantras as well as ritual and contemplative techniques, although many of the elements have been creatively transformed, for example in direct transcendence the array of peaceful and wrathful deities is not created through visualization, but forms spontaneously.³²⁷ All these elements are present in *The Unimpeded Realization*, which is characteristically a Seminal Heart work. However, it seems that Gödem's anthology with its narratives and practices of slaying and torching demons is a step further to the direction of integrating wrathful elements in the context of the Great Perfection.

Narratives of transformation

The dialogue texts of the fifth volume, The Self-Arisen Self-Emergent Primordial Purity, contain two fascinating narratives of Padmasambhava's and Yéshé Tsogyel's journeys to enlightenment under the guidance of their masters (92 pages). Texts organized as dialogues (zhus len) between a master and disciple are as old as Buddhist literature and appear commonly in both sūtric and tantric literature. However, while in most dialogue texts in Buddhist literature the interlocutor beseeches the master about doctrinal topics, these two dialogue texts in Gödem's anthology describe journeys of inner transformation in the manner of biographical literature, but embedded in dialogical encounters between a guru and disciple. The stories of how Padmasambhava got enlightened under the guidance of Śrī Simha and how Yéshé Tsogyel attained awakening via Padmasambhava's instructions focus especially on their meditation experiences of breakthrough and direct transcendence, and the stages of transcending previous experiences, one's attachment to those experiences and eventually all dualistic existence. Unlike the transmission narratives, that present merely bits and pieces of biographical information, these narratives contain actual life stories of how to travel on the Dzokchen path. However, they are not like regular

³²⁷ Germano, JIATS, 13.

biographies, because they are focused on meditative experiences, but in doing so, they bridge the narrative and doctrinal world, adding a vital element to Gödem's integrative synthesizing approach.

This format of presenting biographical stories centered on Dzokchen experiences and conversations about them seems to be Rindzin Gödem's distinctive creation, and it is certainly one of the major narrative contributions of the anthology. The narratives are fascinating to read, because they illustrate the Dzokchen teachings described in the anthology, and present, as it were, a window to dialogues pertaining to these experiences. Thus, they add a new element of inspiration to the more traditional ways of motivating and inducing faith in the practitioner presented in the cosmogonic narratives, transmission stories and prophecies. The transformative narratives are particularly inspiring as a part of the narrative and doctrinal whole of the anthology. Upon the narrative basis of mythical origins and fabulous transmission, the Dzokchen philosophy and practices are made to come to life in the descriptions of unfolding visionary experiences.

The narrative of Yéshé Tsogyel's experiences in *The Ten Steps of the Profound Key Points* is particularly interesting, because, in addition to her profound experiences, it presents her hardships, doubts, mistakes and even occasional resistance to the guru, thus allowing the practitioner to identify with her more easily. Her initial dialogue with Padmasambhava after the narrative discourse begins as following:

[Padmasambhava] said: "Tsogyel, by cultivating many difficult causes, you will not obtain the result, so remove the tie to the body, speech and mind. That is called viewing the meaning of the abiding reality. Think: "From where has the substance of my mind appeared initially?" Investigate as to where it abides in the middle. Look as to where it goes in the end. Don't come here until you find it."

[After seven days] the lady said: "I thought about the initial place of arising for seven days, but I don't know it. I looked for where it abides in the middle, but I didn't find it. I did not see where it goes in the end, and I'm suffering."

The great guru said: "Tsogyel, did you see the meaning of abiding reality?"

She said: "I did not see anything at all, and I'm suffering."

He said: "Tsogyel, the very not seeing anything at all is the meaning of abiding reality devoid of your utterances. It is like the sky...³²⁸

Yéshé Tsogyel struggles with the nature of mind for a long time, meditating in her cave and occasionally coming to Padmasambhava with new answers. After many months, she has initial experiences of the four visions, and her realization of emptiness grows strong. She can penetrate solid objects, and comes out through her cave wall, flies to Bodh Gaya, and meditates inside the Bodhi tree for two weeks. Then, the text depicts her visionary journeys to Mt. Meru and Akanistha and a meeting with the Buddha Akşobhya. Afterwards, she has further direct transcendence experiences of beautiful displays of luminous visions, and upon receiving pith instructions from Padmasambhava, she goes beyond grasping at these experiences, and her awareness becomes vast. At this point, when she is presented as a highly

³²⁸ GZ V:324-325

realized yoginī, the text contains a passage, in which she has a long debate with Padmasambhava. Since it is quite unusual for a disciple to resist and debate with a guru like Padmasambhava, I will cite an abbreviated passage of this discussion:

At that time, the master Padmasambhava said: "Lady of Kharchen, has your mind become high or low? Are you a sentient being or a Buddha?"

The lady of Kharchen said: "I am an authentically perfected Buddha. I have realized the four innate experiences and I am not separate from experiencing them primordially.---"

The master Padmasambhava said: "Your realization is like that, [but] you do not abide at the peak of realization, so the latent tendencies of earlier attachments have carried you into confusion. ---

Until you have cut off the latent tendencies of earlier attachments from the root, you don't have the power, and you are like a crazy person. The extent of your wisdom of knowledge (*mkhyen pa'i ye shes*) is still small."

The lady of Kharchen said: "Nirmāṇakāya guru! I have thirty-two superior seeings, so don't disparage the extent my wisdom of knowledge as small. The two obscurations have been exhausted, so don't claim that I have latent tendencies."

The master Padma said again: "Lady of Kharchen, you still haven't perfected the wisdom of knowledge, so don't claim that you have the wisdom of omniscience. When you still have latent tendencies of earlier attachments, don't disparage yourself by saying that you don't have them. ---"

The lady of Kharchen asked: "Since I realized the abiding reality in the actuality of objects of knowledge, how come I cannot have transcended samsāra yet?"

He said: "There is a nail of self-grasping in the great primordially empty ground that has not been taken out. --- There is an intricate knot of subject and object in the self-liberated character of mindfulness that has not been untied.---"

The lady of Kharchen knew that she had these faults, and she said: "*Nirmāņakāya* guru, I ask for an authentic pith instruction."³²⁹

Besides the inspiring narratives of transformation, these texts are also a source of pith instructions for different stages of Dzokchen meditation, illustrating how some of the narratives are intimately intertwined with the philosophical and contemplative teachings. This setting and format of imparting pith instructions is very effective, and gives the reader a vivid picture of the doctrines and practices of breakthrough and direct transcendence.

Prophecies

Prophecy has a long history in Buddhism stretching back to early Buddhism and the Buddha Dipamkara's prophecy of $\hat{S}\bar{a}kyamuni's$ enlightenment. It is commonly thought that enlightenment has to be prophesied by an awakened being in order to take place. We have numerous examples of this in Mahāyāna literature, such as the Buddha

³²⁹ GZ V:384-391

prophesying the enlightenment of Avalokiteśvara, and in Gödem's anthology, Śrī Simha prophecies the enlightenment of Vairocana after seven life times.³³⁰

Other prophecies that frequently appear in Buddhism are prophecies of one's disciples, which is another measure of one's success in practice. For example, in Nāropa's biography, Nāropa gives Marpa a prophecy of a prodigal student, who will be like the sun rising above Tibet, referring to Milarepa. In *The Unimpeded Realization*, Śrī Simha prophecies the number of heart sons that Vimalamitra, Padmasambhava and Vairocana will have in Tibet.³³¹

In addition, we also have many Buddhist prophecies of the degeneration of dharma. There are several sutras that give different time frames as to how fast the dharma will degenerate, reflecting the pan-Indian view on the decline of the world evident in such theories as the four $y\bar{u}gas$, or progressively degenerating eons of this universe. Presently, we are said to be in the worst $y\bar{u}ga$ called $kaliy\bar{u}ga$,³³² heading to destruction before the cycle begins again from the Eon of Truth (*satyayūga*). These pan-Indian prophetic views of degeneration were absorbed by the Tibetans and the treasure movement, and they are also echoed in the anthology's vision of the world.

In the Nyingma treasure tradition, prophecies have an important role in validating the revelation. The treasure revealer (*gter ston*) has to be prophesied in order to be authentic. As Janet Gyatso notes, treasure cycles contain a prophetic certificate (*byang bu*) that relates such details as the revealer's attributes, name, family and the course of the revelation. The certificate is written in future tense, purporting to be a prophecy given by an imperial period master, commonly Padmasambhava.³³³ Treasure revelations can also contain prophecies of future revelations studied and interpreted by prospective revealers, creating a spiral of prophetically oriented communal climate.

Gödem's anthology contains three kinds of prophecies. From the viewpoint of Gödem's time, these are prophecies of the past, present and future. The prophecies of the past (6 pages) include Śrī Simha's prophecy about the royal period in Tibet and the disciples that the three masters of awareness (Skt. *vidyādhara*, Tib. *rig 'dzin*) will have there. The main portion of these prophecies is a long prophecy given by Śrī Simha to Vairocana about the disappearance of dharma in India, its spread to Oddiyana and Tibet, and the dharma activities of Vairocana, as well as Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava, in Tibet.³³⁴ In addition, there are scattered prophecies, such as Samantabhadra prophesying the coming of a *nirmāṇakāya*, apparently Garab Dorjé.³³⁵

³³⁵ GZ III:167.

³³⁰ GZ II:582.

³³¹ GZ III:171.

 $^{^{332}}$ Kali means one side of a die, the loosing die or quarrel/strife. It has no association to the goddess Kalī.

³³³ Gyatso, Logic and Legitimation in the Tibetan Treasure Tradition, 127-128.

³³⁴ GZ II:584-586.

The bulk of the prophecies (44 pages) is about the present time, that is, about Rindzin Gödem, his disciples and the degenerate time of Gödem. The main source of the prophecies about Gödem is The Key to the Precious Prophecy: The List Certificate of the Six Oral Transmissions. In this text, Padmasambhava prophesies the birth of Nanam Dorjé Düjom as Rindzin Gödem, the life of Gödem, and his disciples. Gödem is the speech son of Padmasambhava, and he will be born under auspicious conditions. When he reaches the age of 25, he will obtain amazing signs and siddhis, and then he will discover the treasure in the northern direction in Zangzang. He will also have obstacles: people with bad karma will try to steal his teachings, slander and criticize him, and they are said to suffer in hells for endless life times. Gödem is referred to as the lamp of Tibet during the degenerate time and the representative of Padmasambhava. He is said to have seven karmically destined fortunate heart sons, and we are told their births dates, places and other details. At bad times, yogis are instructed to look for seven hidden lands.³³⁶ Seven other texts also devote a couple of pages to prophecies about Gödem, and the Six Seals of Vajravarāhī contain detailed prophecies of the degenerate time of the final five hundred years.

The Religious History of the Threefold Teachings of Secret Mantra outlines the phases of degeneration of the secret mantra, and from numerous references in different texts, it is clear that the recurring passages on the final five hundred year period of the secret mantra refer to the time of Rindzin Gödem. This is regarded as the last time of genuine dharma before its disappearance from the world.³³⁷ The Secret Pith Instructions on the Ritual Stages of the Dākinī describe the final time:

Padmasambhava said: "Listen, the faithful ones of Tibet! At the time of the last five hundred years, the world will be subdued by emanations of demons. As activity, warfare and turmoil will spread. As clothes, people will wear iron cloth. As food, people will eat heavy meat and blood. Hiding their own life, they will take the life of others. All dharma practitioners will be deceived by demons. Spiritual friends do disturbed delusory displays. The holy dharma of the Buddha will be sold as merchandise. False great meditators sustain lowly people. Yogis will deceive female disciples with foolish jokes. Tantric practitioners perform village rites for people. Monks exert themselves in trade and farm work. Those who have realization conduct themselves casually in negative emotions. Fully ordained monks believe in meat, blood and chang. As dharma practice, they wander around in nice villages. As spiritual friends, they repeatedly perform rituals for the nice villages. As for food and wealth, they are first in the line. As the height of sin, they act as leaders of armies. Those who act in accordance with the dharma are exceedingly rare. When this kind of bad time comes, the bodies of dharma practitioners appear as many as stars in the sky. People who practice the holy dharma properly won't appear more than the sun and the moon.

At that time, in the south east of Copper Colored Divine Rock, at the side of a mountain that is like pierced by the sun, there will appear a person born in the year of a pig, with great intelligence. His mind is not changed by the words of others, so he will practice the teachings of the secret mantra in accordance with the scriptures.

³³⁶ GZ I:78-83

³³⁷ GZ I:492, 500, 502, 504, V:202

In upper Nyang, in the south east of Trogé, in front of the king of the snow mountains that looks like a king surrounded by subjects, there will appear a person who has the way of the bodhisattvas, ethics and compassion. He will practice secret mantra properly. ---

Moreover, the karmically destined hidden yogis will hold onto solitary mountain retreats, and will therefore practice properly. This treasure and these profound instructions of mine will be revealed by the hidden yogi Rindzin Gödem, in the eastern side of the Mt. Trazang in Jang. He will practice the secret mantra properly, and work for the benefit of beings extensively in Lho, at the border of Tibet. He will ripen and liberate many beings."³³⁸

As discussed above, Tibetan treasure texts have numerous prophecies of degenerate times, and the topic of degeneration of spirituality is common Indian heritage. However, the anthology's elaborate discussions of Gödem's time as the final five hundred year period also reflect the turmoil of the numerous small wars that Jang, Gungthang and the surrounding areas suffered at this time period. In particular, the prophecies of how people will disparage and criticize Rindzin Gödem and his teachings speak for the difficulties Gödem went through in establishing his treasures in the climate of growing sectarianism in the end of the 14th century.

The especially interesting aspect in the discussion of the degenerate time in Gödem's anthology is the way the gloomy prophecies of the final five hundred years are strongly contrasted with the positivity of Samantabhadra's vision. It creates a puzzling situation for the reader: if genuine dharma will disappear after the final period, will Samantabhadra's vision die out? The anthology evokes powerful images of destiny and unique moments in time. The reader at the time of Gödem must have found himself in an extraordinary position of having encountered Samantabhadra's unimpeded vision in Gödem's treasure revealed after centuries of oblivion, only for the teachings to illuminate for a short period before final disappearance: a rare historical time indeed.

As is common in the discourses on degenerate times, the rarity of encountering the teachings and their short life span are turned into a heightened sense of urgency to practice them. The Six Seals of Vajravarāhī and other texts discussing the degenerate time invariably use the topic to exemplify what to avoid and to highlight the importance of bodhisattva ethics and diligent practice in solitary places. Thus, we see how one function of these narratives is to create a momentum of extraordinary motivation to practice. Another purpose that they fulfill is to establish Rindzin Gödem's special position as the predestined lamp of Tibet that will rekindle Samantabhadra's vision; hence the recurring references to him as the prophesied revealer in numerous texts and the detailed accounts of his physical appearance, birth marks, disciples and abilities.

³³⁸ GZ I:500-502.

Metaphorical narratives

Up to his point we have discussed narratives that present themselves as occurring in historical time, but now we shall examine a very different kind of narratives: metaphorical stories (44 pages) that are abstract, symbolic, removed from the historical world and taking place in literary time. These stories integrate doctrine, contemplation and narrative, containing abundant philosophical reflection. They are employed as contemplative exercises, and narrative is used to convey the lessons on the truths that the stories symbolize.

Many of the anthology's texts employ metaphors and analogical introductions, but there are three texts that focus exclusively on metaphorical narratives. *The Great Perfection Tantra of the Division of Mind and Awareness* relates two stories filled with many symbolic elements of our ignorance and disturbing emotions, overcoming them and encountering our awakened nature. *The Ultra-Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection Empowerment of the Crown Ablution of the Victors' Skillful* Means presents a narrative of a king, who got lost and forgot who he was, symbolizing our fundamental ignorance of the Buddha nature. *Notes on the Key points of the Dialogue from the Eastern White Conch Treasury* describes Yéshé Tsogyel's intense, violent dream, and Padmasambhava's decoding of its metaphorical significance.

As discussed in the previous chapter in the section on symbolic and aesthetic representation, the function of metaphorical narratives is to inspire, as well as to present venues to transcend the prison of conceptuality and to disclose reality. According to Ricoeur, this quality of symbols and metaphors is based on their rootedness in the realm of bios or reality. Symbols have this quality naturally, while metaphors, which are in a artificially crafted relationship to their figural meaning, can acquire it, if their literal meaning is in a dialectical relationship with the figural meaning that they point to. For example, one of the metaphorical narratives in *The Great Perfection Tantra of the Division of Mind and Awareness*, relates a story of two brothers:

Long ago, in a place called Spacious Land, there was a teacher called Blazing Light. He had two brothers, and because of bad company, they were put in prison on empty barren land. Then, five soldiers came, who destroyed the stone prison from the top, and threw them into an underground dungeon, and an old woman with cataracts closed the door.

Then, four members of their family chased [the soldiers] and caught them. The five soldiers were left without horses. When the two boys heard of what had happened, they killed the prison guard, and escaped to their fortress called Sunny. Common people gathered. [The boys] married twenty one queens.

They lived in their precious temple fortress. Then, five men, who were protecting the gate, put an armor on and protected the gate. Nobody could come to that place. The [boys] looked at four mirrors and recognized their own faces by themselves.

They saw a house with eight doors, and started laughing by themselves spontaneously. They laughed and were amazed by the laughter.³³⁹

³³⁹ GZ II:605-606.

The, text continues with Vajrasattva decoding the meaning of the story to Vajrapāņi:

The Lord of Secrets, listen! The Spacious Land is the universal ground. The teacher Blazing Light is the appearing of awareness's understanding. The two boys are awareness and ignorance. Putting them in prison in an empty barren land refers to ignorance clouding oneself, so awareness is put in prison on the indefinite ground. The five soldiers coming is the five afflicting poisons becoming coarse. Destroying the stone prison from the top refers to when sentient beings bound by ignorance destroy themselves by themselves. Throwing the two boys into the underground dungeon, and the old woman with cataracts closing the door refer to when one is clouded by ignorance, and awareness becomes dormant. One grasps at objects as having a self, and the door for wisdom to dawn in awareness is closed.

Then, the chasing by the four family members is the arising of the four insights and reversal of confusion. --- Escaping to the fortress called Sunny means that since awareness abides in the expanse, the empty *bindu* lamp shines. The common people gathering means that due to the awareness being like the king, it gathers the appearances of the five sense doors, i.e. the common people, and overpowers the appearances of the mind, so that wisdom will shine. Marrying the twenty one queens means that due to cultivating the twenty one introductions, one will be endowed with amazing faith.

--- Looking into the four mirrors and recognizing their own faces means that by taking the four visions of wisdom into one's experience, one will recognize one's own face and become enlightened without doubt.

Seeing the house with eight doors refers to finding the definitive meaning at the gateway of spontaneity, finding spontaneous recognition and awakening at the gateway of wisdom dawning, [etc.] --- Starting to laugh spontaneously by themselves is when the visions of wisdom, devoid of becoming clearer or more obscured, shine, and one gets enlightened.³⁴⁰

This narrative evokes the metaphor of the dungeon of samsāra appearing in many Buddhist texts. It also brings to mind the comparison of samsāra to a burning house in *The White Lotus of True Teachings (saddharmapundarīka)*, and indeed, metaphorical stories have a long history in Buddhism. In this text, awareness and ignorance are two brothers, who are put in prison together, which emphasizes that by imprisoning the awareness, the life ignorance is also doomed to the same prison. Thus, the dialectics of the literal meaning and figural meaning spark deeper understanding. Similarly, comparing the manifestation of the empty *bindu* lamp to the fortress named Sunny points to the safe ground that one attains upon perceiving the visions of bindus, because it is said that when the yogi has seen several *bindus* linking together, he will not be born in the lower realms again. The image is loaded with meaning also in another sense: it is the *bindus* that eventually become the fabulous palaces of the Buddhas as the visions evolve.

Comparing the practice of the twenty-one introductions to marrying twenty-one queens is also a metaphor that inspires dialectical reflection to go back and forth between the literal and figural meanings. The introductions are beautiful, elegant and royal, and upon engaging with them, pregnant with possibility. The practice of the

³⁴⁰ GZ II:606-609.

introductions induces faith, and that will enhance one's practice, leading to the birth of royal offspring, the divine visions. In this way, the narrative is filled with emerging layers of meaning, arising from reflecting on the metaphor and its implicit dialectical nature.

The metaphorical stories and analogies also function to saturate the images of life with metaphorical meaning. Two brothers are awareness and ignorance, a fortress is the empty bindu lamp, mirror refers to recognition, door to the eight gates of spontaneous arising and a reflection of rainbow light to the five wisdoms. After meditating on the story, seeing these objects in daily life engenders remainders of their metaphorical meaning. Thus, the metaphorical narratives mingle the narrative and doctrine is two ways: firstly, the stories contain narrative and doctrinal elements, and secondly, they infuse the narrative of life with new doctrinal meaning. Life itself becomes a metaphor of the awakened reality.

Conclusion

The wide variety of narratives contained in Gödem's anthology both integrate the various genres and topics of the anthology into a literary whole and are themselves integrated by several narrative themes. The narratives create a context of cosmic origins, mythical transmission and predestined revelation, and in this context, the philosophical teachings, contemplative practices and rituals gain a deeper, interrelated sense of being a part of a tradition. This sense of unification is particularly pronounced in Gödem's anthology especially due to its distinctive narrative rubric: the vision of Samantabhadra, which forms a unique, gnostic space, in which all the practices and doctrines are situated, and appear as parts of Samantabhadra's intention to benefit the world. The two other poles of gravity that function to integrate and organize the contents of the anthology are Padmasambhava and Rindzin Gödem.

The narratives themselves are also integrated by the vision of Samantabhadra. The cosmogonic narratives describe the origin of Samantabhadra's realization and the appearance of the Dzokchen teachings that are his vision. The transmission narratives are connected by Samantabhadra's extensive involvement in the transmission through his emanations, and the prophecies describe how the teachings, which are the vision, will be revealed in Tibet by Rindzin Gödem, who is a heart son and speech emanation of Padmasambhava, who in turn arose from syllables produced by emanations of Samantabhadra, that is, Vairocana, Amitābha and Vajrasattva. The narratives of transformation in the dialogue texts display how the vision of Samantabhadra, i.e. the visionary Dzokchen teachings, should be practiced and realized.

However, even though Samantabhadra's vision is the overarching narrative of the anthology, his presence gravitates toward the beginning of the narratives, dominating the cosmogonic narratives in particular. In most other narratives, Padmasambhava is in a key role: he stands out in all the narratives that discuss receiving teachings in India and disseminating them in Tibet, and especially the narratives of transformation go into detail concerning his life as a student and a teacher. Vairocana also has a substantial role in some of the transmission narratives that describe how he received

teachings from Śrī Simha, while Vimalamitra is not much more than a name in the lineage.

The figures of Samantabhadra and Padmasambhava present an interesting contrast between the peaceful luminous effulgence of Buddhas in divine realms and the wrathful acts of killing and taming performed on Indian and Tibetan soil. In the gnostic bliss of pure lands, Samantabhadra's wisdom and emanations overflow effortlessly and naturally, while Padmasambhava brings order to the mundane mess and chaos with forceful methods involving complicated relationships to the gods and demons that he subdues. However, these narrative frameworks complete each other and their dialectic brings richness to the anthology. Multiple aspects of human life and potential are accommodated and addressed, ranging from troublesome encounters with the spirit world to primordially pure realization. Through the continuum of these figures - Padmasambhava being a second order emanation of Samantabhadra - the transcendence of the *dharmakāya* is brought closer to Tibetans by a master that can be more easily related to in the messiness and violence of the terrestrial plane. Another social implication of this dialectic between Samantabhadra and Padmasambhava is a legitimation of the wrathful practices and life style of a lay tantric yogi. Since Padmasambhava embodies Samantabhadra, his wrathful actions and practices are sanctified by this connection to the primordial Buddha.

In terms of doxography, Samantabhadra is aligned closer to Atiyoga and Padmasambhava (as well as Rindzin Gödem) to Mahāyoga. Samantabhadra is the icon of naturalness, uncontrived spontaneity and other Atiyoga principles, while Padmasambhava and Gödem are masters of Mahāyoga rituals involving effort and coercion. The close connections and overlapping identities of these figures perform the role of bringing the doctrines of Atiyoga and Mahāyoga together. Thus, the narrativization of these doxographies is another way Gödem integrates them into the skillfully woven literary whole.

While Samantabhadra dominates the beginning and Padmasambhava the middle of the transmission, Rindzin Gödem is the third pole of gravity that towers over the end, bringing together in his revelation all the transmission lineages attributed to Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Vairocana. He is at the center of the prophecies, portrayed as the destined revealer, fierce yogi practicing with zeal on the face of criticism and illuminating the darkness of the degenerate time with the vision of Samantabhadra. The light of Samantabhadra's vision is contrasted with the darkness of the degenerate time, even though Gödem's revelation will shed light on the darkness for a while before the final five hundred year period finishes and true dharma sinks to oblivion.

Gödem's identity overlaps with that of Padmasambhava, because he is an incarnation of Nanam Dorjé Düjom and the spiritual heir of Padmasambhava as noted in the wrathful narratives. Thus, the agency of Rindzin Gödem is positioned in the psychological continuum from Samantabhadra to Padmasambhava and himself, temporal continuum from timelessness to the mythical life span of Padmasambhava and the present time of Gödem, and the spatial continuum from Akanistha to India and Tibet. Via the continuum of these figures, the power of Samantabhadra is invested in Gödem, the historical person close to the audience involved in the specific circumstances of Tibetan realities. Rindzin Gödem also emerges as the grand architect of the narrative structures of the anthology. His work of architecture has the vertical pillars of the lineages and Samantabhadra's emanations and the horizontal beams of contemporary peers, such as the Tibetan recipients of the royal period. The edifice of the anthology is constructed from the rituals, contemplative practices and philosophical teachings, and supported and nailed together by the narratives that integrate the disparate elements and weave a larger ideological vision necessary for the articulation of community and identity, as well as institution building.

The glorious origins, fabulous transmission, centuries of being hidden in a cave, prophetically guided revelation and brief flourishing of the teachings before their final disappearance creates a unique sense of historicity for the reader of Gödem's time, a narrative gestalt that has a special power to stir faith and inspiration. It urges the practitioner to seize the moment and fulfill the destiny of meeting the unimpeded vision. The theme of generating faith and inspiration is also vivid in the narratives of transformation that combine profound pith instructions, graphic biographical material and dialogical format. In many ways, these fascinating stories culminate the power of inspiration contained in Samantabhadra's vision and enhanced by the exceptional sense and time and destiny.

In Aristotle's view, narratives generate especially the emotions of pity and fear (unsurprisingly, since the kind of narratives he analyzed is tragedies), but quite the contrary, the narratives of The Unimpeded Realization aim to generate faith, and this project is a self-conscious one. Having strong faith, devotion and inspiration to practice is considered to be a virtue in Buddhism, and the narratives are designed to strengthen that sentiment. The openly declared goal of generating faith may seem artificial or even manipulative, but generating faith is a common practice in Buddhism performed for example by recalling the unsatisfactory nature of cyclic existence, the good qualities of the Three Jewels and their power to help oneself. Faith is recognized as something that can easily be too feeble, and thus in need of conscious cultivation. In the light of the goal of generating faith, we can better understand the careful creation of the vision of Samantabhadra, the transmission lineages coming from him, the fabulous narratives of celestial transmission, the magical power, awe and might saturating the figure of Padmasambhava. While Padmasambhava is altogether missing from the earlier Dzokchen narratives, in the fourteenth century, he became the focus of the transmission in Tibet, and the icon of a tantric master that continues to inspire the Tibetan imagination and faith.

It is particularly interesting that even though our narratives are very different from Greek tragedies, the generation of faith has similar cathartic effects as in classical tragedies. Redfield suggests that by catharsis Aristotle meant a combination of emotion and learning: "when the events reveal to us a pattern of causal relations which we had not seen before, then we are most shaken and enthralled."³⁴¹ Thus, we experience the emotion and learn at the same time. In our narratives, as the reader learns about the scenes of transmission, conversion of Garab Dorjé and experiences of Yéshé Tsogyel, the emotion that the texts aim to engender is not pity or shock, but a feeling of profundity and admiration. A combination of this emotion and learning

³⁴¹ Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the* Iliad, 67.

creates the cathartic experience of faith that, similarly to classical tragedies, has a definite element of relief, because the experience of strong faith relieves one from the hazardous torment of doubts and lack of conviction, and sets one's mind at ease.

All these aspects - the vision of Samantabhadra and the tantric power and mastery of Padmasambhava together with the catharsis of faith, inspiration and the concept of destiny crystallized in the position of Rindzin Gödem as the destined revealer - create a force that can shape communities and individuals. For the Nyingma audience, these narratives are not myths, but history, which, for some people, can be even more true and meaningful than the illusion of ordinary life. It is their very reception as real descriptions of what happened that is the source of their power to shape the identities of readers.

Thus, the narratives have many purposes and roles in the anthology: to amalgamate the disparate topics, to the place the reader in a special relationship with the cosmos, history, time and the transmission, thus shaping his identity and defining the community and its views. Some of the aspects in the narrative synthesis of Rindzin Gödem are distinctive to the anthology, such as the vision of Samantabhadra and the transformational narratives in the dialogue texts, while most of the narratives (cosmogony, transmission, prophecies and metaphorical stories) present descriptions that are relatively standard in the Seminal Heart tradition. However, the way the narrative synthesis is constructed as a whole and integrated with themes such as the vision of Samantabhadra is characteristic to Gödem's anthology.

Chapter Four: Ritual

Ritual is central to the Vajrayāna forms of Buddhism that were historically dominant in Tibet, and Gödem's anthology reflects this importance of ritual, to a notably high degree for a Dzokchen work. General examples of rituals in the Tibetan context include sādhanas or contemplative rituals of deity yoga, empowerment rituals (dbang), offering rituals (mchod pa, tshogs mchod), long life rituals (tshe sgrub), ransom rituals (glud), rituals to summon escaped life force (bla 'gug) or emptying the hells (na rak dong sprugs), healing rituals (zhabs rten) and death rituals. Many of these rituals stem from and include the sādhana practice of deity yoga, which illustrates the difficulty, if not impossibility, of separating the domains of ritual and contemplation in Tibetan Buddhism. Deity yoga can just as well be viewed as a contemplative practice, because it is a largely internal practice with goals of soteriological transformation that is frequently performed alone. However, it is also often found in a communal form that is customarily carried out as a group in a temple, and functions as a basis for many other ritual systems. For these reasons, I will discuss it in the context of my larger discussion of rituals, keeping in mind the elusive nature of the categories of ritual and contemplation.

We should also note that even though in many cases the line between contemplation and ritual is elusive, the Tibetans themselves do make the distinction, reflected in the terms *cho ga* or *cho ga lag len* (ritual) and *sgom* (meditation, familiarization). *Cho ga* is used for communal rituals that take place in the temple or other public spaces, while *sgom* usually refers to private practices. Ritual and meditation can also be distinguished in terms of external and internal: the dimension of external behavior is very important in rituals, while meditation is more about inner experiences. Rituals are also highly programmed and scripted, while meditation is likely to have more free-flowing aspects that take shape in accordance with the experiences that unfold.

All Tibetan Buddhist schools have a particular repertoire of rituals, which are centered around different deities, and practiced daily, periodically or upon demand. In the modern Northern Treasures (byang gter) tradition, rituals have a particularly central importance vis-á-vis other Nyingma traditions. In the Dorjé Drak monastery in exile, which is the main monastery of the tradition located in Shimla, north India, the monks begin their monastic education by learning all the rituals performed today in the Northern Treasures tradition, that is, eight lengthy ritual systems and many accompanying ritual sections. This takes a minimum of six years, and involves memorizing the liturgies, tones and visualizations of the rituals, learning to play the ritual instruments and practicing making the accompanying sand mandalas and ritual cakes (gtor ma). Only after this extensive ritual mastery, are the monks permitted to study in the monastic college (bshad grwa), where the focus is more literary and philosophical as they engage in scriptural studies. In contrast, in the Namdroling monastery of the Nyingma Glorious Domain (dpal yul) tradition now located in a large Southern India diaspora form, as well as its original form in Eastern Tibet, the monks can choose whether they want to study in the monastic college or focus on ritual learning.

The fact that the monks of the Dorjé Drak monastery must begin their monastic education with six years of ritual study is very distinctive in both the Tibetan and Nyingma context. If we examine Gödem's corpus to explain this, it seems that this is reflected in the abundance of ritual literature in Rindzin Gödem's revelation.

Before discussing the rituals in Gödem's corpus, a few remarks on Mahāyoga and Atiyoga are in place. These two vehicles are very different religious traditions with distinctive approaches to enlightenment. The distinctive practices of Mahāyoga are long and highly complex rituals: the amount of details visualized in the mandalas is staggering, some systems even building up to such a height of concentration and imaginative power that a proficient yogi is able to visualize the entire mandala with all its details the size of a sesame seed. This practice is characterized by rigorous effort and discipline. The focus is on meditative familiarization to the extent that it transforms the conception of being ordinary. Atiyoga instead, valorizes naturalness, spontaneity and effortlessness. Practice is not aimed at transforming like in Mahāyoga, but the already existing Buddha nature is to be revealed, via such simple practices as letting go of conceptual patterns and negativities, letting be in the natural state, or just recognizing the nature of appearances as one's own projections. The simplicity of Atiyoga approach is in stark contrast to the complex ritualism of Mahāyoga, and it is not easy to combine these two systems, or even understand the Atiyoga view of awakening via recognition, exemplified in Samantabhadra's original enlightenment. The tension between these two traditions is vividly illustrated in the myth of Rudra and his fatal misunderstanding of the Dzokchen view on our Buddha nature.

The early Dzokchen traditions, notably the Mind Series, strongly critiqued the complex practices of Mahāyoga, some texts even discarding all practice. However,

the shifting boundaries between Mahāyoga and Atiyoga are evident in the development of the Dzokchen tradition. In the course of time, tantric ritual practices were increasingly incorporated into Atiyoga, although the distinctive Atiyoga principles of naturalness and spontaneity were retained, and the tantric visualization was transformed into techniques emphasizing the natural flow of visions, such as in the practice of direct transcendence. Thus, we see also an increasing integration of $s\bar{a}dhana$ rituals in the Great Perfection, although these rituals have a different character compared to Mahāyoga rituals, such as being shorter, more simple and influenced by Atiyoga ideals and principles.

These dialectics and shifting boundaries of Mahāyoga and Atiyoga are evident in Gödem's corpus and in *The Unimpeded Realization*. As discussed in the first chapter, Gödem's larger corpus contains eight large Mahāyoga ritual cycles, which are the primary sources of the rituals practiced in Dorjé Drak (with some revisions and supplementary sections added by Péma Thrinlé, the fourth incarnation of Rindzin Gödem), such that those six years of initial ritual training are completely focused on Mahāyoga traditions. Much of Gödem's corpus belongs to one of these ritual cycles, although the cycles also contain numerous texts that are not rituals, but discuss for example philosophical topics. Indeed, at least in the contemporary exile curriculum of the tradition, Atiyoga practices are uncommon, since even in the later, optional three-year retreat, they don't figure as a part of the standard agenda.

Given this situation, the question of how Rindzin Gödem Atiyoga corpus addresses the question of rituals is central. In fact, his Dzokchen anthology is marked by an unusually extensive incorporation of ritual: it contains as many as 30 ritual texts, totaling 704 pages, which is twenty-four percent of the anthology. Compared to Atiyoga works prior to Gödem, this large portion of ritual in Gödem's Atiyoga anthology is surprising. Since Mahāyoga is so ritually oriented, why do we have an abundance of rituals in this Atiyoga anthology? The large portion of rituals in *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity* not only speaks for Gödem's ritual inclination, but also is indicative of a trajectory of increasing ritual focus in the Great Perfection from the eleventh century onwards. While the early Dzokchen literature most typically had little to no rituals, and was often marked by an anti-ritual orientation critiquing the complex ritualism of tantric Buddhism, ritual practices came to be slowly absorbed back into the tradition. By the 14th century, the Seminal Heart collections featured an increasing number of *sādhanas* and empowerment rituals.

The continuing rise in the importance of rituals is visible in the two towering Dzokchen anthologies compiled in the 14th century: *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts* contains 1124 pages of rituals out of 7300 pages (15 % of the collection), while *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity*, which are disseminated a couple of decades later, have substantially more ritual texts, that is, 24% of the anthology. However, *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts* contains revelations that were in circulation from the eleventh century onward, which is one reason explaining the lesser amount of ritual texts, because ritual did not feature as a part of the Dzokchen tradition early on. *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs* on the other hand, revealed in the beginning of the fourteenth century, contains 20% ritual texts. The emphasis on ritual continued to rise after the time of Longchenpa and Gödem, and the famed 18th century Dzokchen revelations of Jigme Lingpa are even more

ritually oriented than Gödem's anthology. However, this brief note of the increasing extent of ritual materials must be accompanied by a close analysis of the types of rituals, the way standard rituals are potentially modified, and the manner in which these rituals function within the overall system.

The rituals in The Unimpeded Realization and The Self Emergent Self Arisen Primordial Purity are comprised of three interlocking types focused on deities: empowerment rituals (479 pages), and sādhanas and offering rituals (225 pages). The empowerments have an initiatory function, and they are performed only once before one engages in the practice, while sādhanas and offering rituals are performed on regular basis, and they have soteriological and transactional goals. Even though it is thought that a highly receptive person can attain enlightenment when empowered to encounter a particular deity or a facet of awakening, in general the main function of empowerments is to authorize a particular practice. Sādhanas have a strong soteriological orientation through familiarization and habituation with the pure sambhogakāya dimension of the maņdala deities, and offering rituals that often accompany sādhanas aim to please and venerate the deities to induce their presence, blessings and attainments. Moreover, empowerments always involve a scripted setting and social dynamics of a master and at least one student, usually a number of students, while sādhanas and offering rituals can be practiced alone anywhere, although they are frequently performed in a group in a temple.

Empowerments, *sādhanas* and offering rituals feature the same deities: Samantabhadra, the five Buddhas, Vajravarāhī, Hayagrīva, dākinīs of the five families and the hundred peaceful and wrathful deities. The presence of these deities connects the rituals to the narratives, contemplative practices and philosophical texts of the anthology. We shall see below how the deities feature in the empowerments and sādhanas, so here I shall note briefly how they appear in other types of literature. The connecting function of Samantabhadra is the most obvious one: he is the most frequent divine speaker in the tantras, the source of the teachings in the cosmogonic and transmission narratives and his vision is the overarching theme of the anthology. The peaceful and wrathful deities also appear in the cosmogonic narratives: Samantabhadra emanates them in the early stages of creation. They are also integrated to the subtle physiology, for they abide in the human body in the heart and brain cakras with Samantabhadra in the center of the peaceful mandala in the tsitta palace at the heart. One also prays to the peaceful and wrathful deities in the guru yoga of direct transcendence, and their *mandalas* is what constitutes the full-blown visions of direct transcendence.

The five Buddha couples have deep philosophical associations not just in tantra but also in Mahāyāna Buddhism, because they embody the various facets of psychophysical continuum, such as the five wisdoms, five elements and five aggregates. In the anthology, they are meditated on in the preliminaries of direct transcendence, in a practice known as the intrinsic radiance of the five wisdoms. They are also a part of the peaceful *maṇdala*. Vajravarāhī and the $d\bar{a}kin\bar{s}$ appear in the various completion stage practices: Vajravarāhī is the at the center of the Six Seals, and various $d\bar{a}kin\bar{s}$ feature in the subtle body practices performed while ingesting the potions of essence extraction (*bcud len*).

When comparing the agents of the narratives and rituals, we see that there is some overlap, such as the centrality of Samantabhadra, but Padmasambhava, Rindzin Gödem and all human agents are missing from the rituals, excepting for Padmasambhava's brief appearance in the protector practices. Thus, the rituals contain a different narrative, which emphasizes divine agents and the unfoldment of the *sambhogakāya* dimension of deities. However, Padmasambhava is the single most important figure in Rindzin Gödem's Mahāyoga ritual cycles (not belonging to the anthology), because he is at the center of two fundamental *sādhanas*, i.e. two of the three roots of the Northern Treasures tradition: the peaceful guru *sādhana* called Rindzin Dungdrup and the wrathful *sādhana* of Guru Drakpo Tsel. Thus, his slight role in the rituals of the anthology is less of a surprise.

Besides agents, the rituals are also connected to the rest of the anthology by the Dzokchen view, which naturally is prevalent in the Great Perfection empowerments, as well as in the *sādhana* of the peaceful and wrathful deities, and which also appears a few times in the tantric empowerments in the notions of the unity of emptiness and awareness. The Dzokchen empowerments present a particularly interesting case of bridging ritual to other domains, because in addition to embodying the philosophical views of the Great Perfection, they also incorporate narrative and contemplation.

Empowerments

The empowerment rituals of the anthology contain tantric empowerments located as a distinct set in the first volume, as well as a unified set of special Great Perfection empowerments that open the second volume. As in all Vajrayāna traditions, receiving all the appropriate empowerments is an absolute prerequisite for practicing the rituals and contemplations contained in the anthology, or even reading the scriptures. Today the empowerments of *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity* are conferred in a two week long series of rituals combined with the reading transmission (*lung*), in which the master rapidly reads the five volumes of the anthology to the students. The reading transmission does not require that the students understand the meaning; the transmission occurs merely via hearing the sound, even though some educated monks and lamas follow the text in their personal copies as the master reads it.

The anthology contains two versions of all the empowerments: the treasure scripture of Rindzin Gödem and an empowerment manual composed by Adzom Drukpa Rinpoche. The treasure scriptures contain all the essential information, and Adzom Drukpa's contribution is mainly to insert instructions to the lama on how to confer the empowerment, as well as add introductory and concluding sections. A certain format to confer empowerments had developed by the time of Adzom Drukpa, and it seems that the more archaic versions of the treasure scriptures needed to be updated to conform the standards and to make them more easily conferrable. Thus, the titles of his manuals contain such phrases as "organized for the ease of recitation"³⁴² and "arranged for the ease of applying."³⁴³

³⁴² GZ I:183.

³⁴³ GZ V:41.

Tantric empowerments

The tantric empowerments refer to the four empowerments common in Mahāyoga, that is, vase, secret, insight wisdom and fourth empowerment, although they are given distinctive Dzokchen names in the anthology indicating the decreasing degree of elaboration. Apart from the presence of Samantabhadra and occasional references to the Dzokchen view, the structure and content of these empowerments is very similar to in the four empowerments of normative tantra.

While the Dzokchen empowerments in the second volume seem to be distinctive to Gödem at least for the most part, these four empowerments are directly adopted from *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs* belonging to *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts*.³⁴⁴ The rituals are identical word for word, excepting for a few details, such as the source of the citations occurring in the beginning of the secret, wisdom and word empowerments. Both collections present the same citations with a difference of a few words, but *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs* states that the citations are from *The Sun of Clear Space Tantra* (*klong gsal nyi ma'i rgyud*), while *The Unimpeded Realization* attributes them consistently to *The Great Expansive Wisdom Tantra* (*ye shes chen po rgyas pa'i rgyud*). *The Sun of Clear Space Tantra* is the source of many ideas in *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs*, and we may speculate that by attributing the citations to another tantra, Gödem wanted to distance his anthology from *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs*.

The four tantric empowerments have the common structure of Mahāyoga empowerments containing the preliminary section, actual empowerment and concluding activities. They also have the usual elements tantric empowerments, such as dispelling obstructing forces (*bgegs*), generation of oneself as the deity, descent of wisdom or inviting the deity to come to the visualized *mandala*, and the conferral of the empowerments. Since information on the general structure and details of tantric empowerment is readily available, I shall merely offer some general remarks on the main points of the four empowerments and their distinctive character.

The Elaborate Vase Empowerment in Gödem's anthology is an initiation to the generation stage deity yoga. It is notoriously elaborate, containing a long preliminary section (*sta gon*) that prepares and purifies the student via recitation of Vajrasattva mantra and prayers, such as The King of Aspiration Prayers, as well as the usual methods of tantric preliminary empowerments, that is, investigating signs and portents in dreams with *kuśa* grass and ascertaining the students' connection to a particular *mandala* deity by throwing the tooth stick (*so shing*). The actual empowerment (*dngos gzhi*) contains empowerments on the five Buddhas, Samantabhadra, the five female Buddhas, tantric commitments and the symbolic meaning of the Buddha couples and their hand emblems. These empowerments establish the basic tantric principles of one's inherent purity and divinity by identifying the various negative emotions (Skt. *kleśa*, Tib. *nyon mongs*), psycho-

³⁴⁴ The Seminal Heart in Four Parts, X:112-182

physical aggregates (Skt. *skandha*, Tib. *phung po*) and elements with the Buddha couples and five-fold wisdom.

The Non-Elaborate Secret Empowerment authorizes completion stage practices. It is centered around self-generation (*bdag bskyed*) as Vajravarāhī and contains an interesting section in which the body is visualized as the fabulous palace of the five elements, which is a microcosm of the universe. There are also pith instructions on how to transform one's body into a vajra body through the yoga of channels and winds - an example of the way the anthology integrates ritual with doctrinal teachings.

The Exceedingly Non-Elaborate Insight Wisdom Empowerment initiates the student to bliss and emptiness via sexual yoga performed with a consort. As is common in tantric Buddhist literature, the practice is presented only from a male perspective. In the empowerment, the lama presents the student with a consort. The student generates himself as Padmaheruka, and visualizes the consort as Vajravarāhī, complete with the centers of subtle energy (Skt. cakra, Tib. 'khor lo). Here, as in the Dzokchen tradition in general, the consort is called the Lady of Awareness (rig ma), because she symbolizes the recognition of pristine awareness (rig pa). The student unites with the consort maintaining his mind in bliss for prolonged periods, without discharging his semen, which is called *bodhicitta*, or the mind of enlightenment, highlighting the awakening potential of sexual yoga if applied with appropriate control and detachment. For that matter, the text instructs that if the yogi thinks that bodhicitta may flow out, he should seal it with emptiness and non-conceptuality. He should also not be attached to the experience of bliss and emptiness, but look at its essence. When the attachment dissipates, he realizes the simultaneously generated wisdom (*lhan cig* skyes pa'i ye shes).

This terse description of sexual yoga is the only one of its kind in Gödem's anthology, reflecting the relative unimportance of the practice in the Dzokchen context. It is a standard element in the tantric empowerments to the completion stage practices, so it is included in the four empowerments, but not elaborated further in the anthology.

In the insight wisdom empowerment in Rindzin Gödem's treasure text, it is explicitly stated that it is not only appropriate but also extremely fortunate to rely on an actual (not visualized) consort called action seal (Skt. *karmamudrā*, Tib. *las kyi phyag rgya*), although non-human (apparently deities, $d\bar{a}kin\bar{\imath}s$ or $yak\bar{\imath}as$) and visualized consorts are also an option. However, Adzom Drukpa's manual on how to confer the four empowerments takes a different stance. Generally, Adzom Drukpa's manual follows the treasure scriptures very closely, merely adding a few additional instructions, as well as initial and concluding sections, but here the manual omits the passage from the treasure text that praises the benefits of relying on an actual consort, and instead instructs one to use a visualized consort. The reason for this, according to Adzom Drukpa, is that the sexual practice is like a jewel at the crown of a snake.³⁴⁵ Thus, he acknowledges its value, but emphasizes the inherent dangers involved if one is not a master of the art.

³⁴⁵ GZ I:305-306.

Adzom Drukpa's omission of sexual yoga with the real consort (*karmamudrāyoga*) is the only instance when he has changed the meaning of the treasure texts in his ritual manuals. It illustrates the deodorization of Indian Buddhist tantra that occurred increasingly in Tibet after the heart of the Renaissance period. The time of Gödem, the 14th century, marks the borderline between the creative ferment of the Renaissance with its tolerance to the unconventional aspects of Indian tantra and a period of institutionalization, systematization and extensive deodorization, the latter tendency escalating through figures like Tsongkhapa, who strongly advocated abstaining from sexual yoga with his own example. The philosophization of tantra had, of course, already started with the early Great Perfection, and its critical approach to tantric sex, violence and ritualism. By the 18th century, which is the time of Adzom Drukpa, the domestication of the raw sexual and violent elements of the *yoginī* tantras had become stable, so it is not much of a surprise that he felt the need to alter the instructions on sexual yoga in the treasure scriptures.

The Utterly Non-Elaborate Suchness Empowerment (the fourth or word empowerment) initiates the student to formless meditation, such as breakthrough. Here the sexual union occurs only between visualized deities, but the *bodhicitta* from their union falls into the nectar (*amrta*) in a skull cup (*kapalā*), which is then offered to deities and lamas and distributed to the students as the samaya water, the symbolic bond of one's commitment to the circle or *mandala* of deities, gurus and fellow disciples. The main part of the empowerment has a pointing out instruction that is common in many word empowerments: the disciple is instructed to face the different cardinal directions, gaze at the sky and send the mind as far as possible to the four directions. The aim is to realize the empty sky-like nature of the mind. One is also exposed to pleasant and unpleasant smells, tastes, sights and sounds, and touched with smooth and rough materials. The goal is to realize the empty nature of all sensations, and by extension, the emptiness of all mental states of happiness and suffering. However, the overarching Dzokchen view is evident in that the emptiness of these mental states is identified with clarity and awareness. The text states:

The wonder of it! The sons of the noble family, contemplate happiness and bad things, joy and lack of joy, and all sufferings. However, they arise, they arise from the mind. Whatever happiness and suffering arises, it arises from the mind. Just their very clarity is empty. Their essence is awareness and emptiness.³⁴⁶

The Dzokchen view on the unity of emptiness and awareness appears also in the elaborate empowerment, for Vairocana's hand emblems, bell and wheel, symbolize the non-duality of emptiness and awareness.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁶ GZ I:180.

³⁴⁷ GZ I:148.

Great Perfection empowerments

The Great Perfection empowerments of Gödem's anthology (ten texts) present an interesting point of convergence between ritual, contemplation, doctrine and narrative. Being empowerments, they are in the form of empowerment rituals, and several of them contain preliminary sections, actual empowerment and concluding activities, as well as other elements of empowerment rituals, such as offerings to the deities, $d\bar{a}kin\bar{r}s$ and gurus, transmission of *samayas*, getting a secret name and so forth. Nevertheless, despite some formal similarities to tantric empowerments, these Dzokchen empowerments are strikingly different especially compared to the first three tantric empowerments. They are, however, similar to the fourth empowerment, and it seems that historically the Great Perfection empowerments are a creative elaboration of the ideas and approaches employed in the fourth empowerment.

Similarly to the fourth empowerment, the Dzokchen empowerments in Gödem's anthology contain almost no self-generation as a deity, and very little visualization in general. They frequently have contemplations embedded within the empowerment ritual and long sections of pointing out instructions that mingle contemplative practice with doctrine. *The Profound Empowerment to Awareness's Creativity* is a particularly interesting case illustrating the combination of ritual, contemplative, narrative and philosophical aspects. For example, the empowerment teaches breakthrough-style meditation of simply letting be, contextualizing it within the larger theme of the realization or vision (*dgongs pa*) of Samantabhadra, and adding the doctrine of the triune nature of reality: empty essence, luminous clear nature and pervading compassion:

Being firm and without laxity, one lets the awareness be in its own place (*rang shar*), in the pristine, lucid, one-pointed, naked state. Whatever dawns, arises within oneself. Whatever is, is the essence of that which is devoid of the subject and object of one's mind. Recognizing it, you are liberated from the limits of samsāra. Familiarize yourself with that for longer and longer periods, and you will arrive in the place devoid of activity and striving: the realization (*dgongs pa*) of Samantabhadra. If you examine the essence of awareness, it is empty and primordially pure. Its nature (*rang bzhin*) is to shine as various bindus of five lights. Its compassion is unobstructed, so it is without partiality.

The same empowerment also contains an interesting section, in which the vajra master confers an empowerment with a crystal, a symbol of the five wisdoms and the sambhogakāya dimension radiating out of the formless luminosity of the *dharmakāya*, like the rainbow colored reflections of light radiating from a crystal when touched by a ray of sun light. This section begins with a long narrative relating the origin and transmission of the crystal that confers the empowerment, thus embedding cosmogonic and transmission narratives within the empowerment ritual, as well as the philosophical idea of the symbolic meaning of a crystal as one's Buddha nature:

[The master] raises up to sun light a crystal that blazes with five lights, and says: "How wonderful! The sons of the noble family, listen! In the past before samsāra and nirvāņa were differentiated, there was that which is called the great expanse of the universal ground that cannot be determined to be
anything whatsoever. When samsāra and nirvāņa were differentiated, Samantabhadra recognized the self display, so he was liberated and realized the space of wisdom's self-display.

Not recognizing the self-display, sentient beings generated doubts, and that which is like a wish-fulfilling jewel inside was clouded by ignorance. Thus, all the sentient beings became obscured and wandered in samsāra. Since the great Victor Unchanging Light has the *mandala* of self-luminous wisdom at his heart, at that time he gave to Vajrasattva a blazing crystal that is an analogy of it. He said: "Vajrasattva, go to the peak of the realm of samsāra. Since all sentient beings have a jewel that clears away darkness, make its essence known! Show them this crystal that is an analogy of it."

Then, Vajrasattva went to the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods, on top of the Amolika rock. The luminosity cleared away the obscurations of the gods. He conferred an empowerment to the nirmāṇakāya Garab Dorjé as a regent. He went to Jambudvīpa, and showed the symbol with wisdom to master Mañjuśrimitra, who cleared away the conceptuality of the five hundred *paṇḍitas*.³⁴⁸

This combination of cosmogonic and transmission narratives in this empowerment is a Dzokchen version of the introductory sections on the history of the transmission occurring in the beginning of regular tantric empowerments before the initial *maṇdala* offering. After this description, *The Profound Empowerment to Awareness's Creativity* continues to describe the transmission in Tibet, and then the actual empowerment is conferred by touching the students' hearts with the crystal. Included are again doctrinal references to the peaceful Buddhas abiding in the palace of the exalted mind (*tsitta*) at the heart *cakra*, and a brief contemplative description of how they flow out into the external expanse of the sky in the visions of direct transcendence:

Then, [the master] places the crystal at the heart of the students, and says: "Hum, the fortunate ones, in the middle of your heart, in the very precious treasury of the secret *tsitta*, is the seed syllable of the enlightened mind of the Buddhas. By seeing it, ignorance is cleared away. In order to recognize it, the sons of the Victors should focus the two eyes in the sky, and thus, via the channel of secret compassion, they see the secret wisdom in the sky. You people, look at this without distractions! This crystal that blazes with five lights, is the sign of Samantabhadra's enlightened mind. By entrusting this to you who are karmically destined, receive the empowerment to wisdom's creativity!

Other Dzokchen empowerments also integrate ritual with philosophical reflection, contemplation and narrative, for example *The Precious Empowerment of the Enlightened Mind: The Heart Mantras of the Oral Transmission* instructs one to abide in non-conceptual meditation during the transmission of the mantras of the peaceful and wrathful deities. The text also continues to unravel the symbolic significance of a crystal, and gives a synopsis of the same transmission history of the crystal as above. *The Ritual for the Great Perfection Empowerment Composed by*

³⁴⁸ GZ II:21-22.

Vimalamitra has a long section on the emptiness of the five aggregates,³⁴⁹ and *The Empowerment of Awareness's Intrinsic Clarity* has specific empowerments on the Dzokchen view and meditation that describe the view to be one's own awareness as the *dharmakāya*, and the meditation is to focus one's awareness on the expanse, and let it rest there without partiality.³⁵⁰

Similarly to the omission of actual consort yoga in the insight wisdom empowerment, *The Profound Empowerment to Awareness's Creativity* offers also another intriguing example of the changes that happened in the tradition. In the section on the descent of wisdom, the treasure scripture of the empowerment states that the students should supplicate the deities and lineage gurus and visualize the descent of blessings in the form of various phenomena of light, such as *bindus*, as long as specific signs arise. The signs are that the bodies of the students will tremble, they will utter spontaneously various symbolic expressions, and an experience of intrinsic clarity devoid of grasping will arise in their minds. Adzom Drukpa's manual on conferring the Dzokchen empowerments lists these signs, but omits the requirement that the ritual measures should be continued as long as the signs arise, thus making it easier for a lama and students to carry out the empowerment ritual.

The Profound Empowerment to Awareness's Creativity also illustrates the relationship of Gödem's anthology to the Seminal Heart tradition, in particular to *The Seminal Heart of the* <u>Dākin</u>, because this empowerment in *The Unimpeded Realization* is an expanded version of the *Ripening Empowerment to Awareness's Creativity (smin byed rig pa'i rtsal dbang)*³⁵¹ in *The Seminal Heart of the* <u>Dākin</u>, These two empowerments - one revealed by Gödem and the other by Tsultrim Dorjé - have very similar outlines and many identical sections, such as the pointing out instructions on recognizing awareness.³⁵² The main difference is that *The Profound Empowerment to Awareness's Creativity* elaborates on the topics more, thus demonstrating Gödem's indebtedness to *The Seminal Heart of the* <u>Dākin</u>. For example, both empowerments contain the same citation about the qualifications of the master and student, but in *The Unimpeded Realization*, the meaning of the citation is explained in detail. Both texts also state that the students have to offer *mandalas* of gold, medicines and other precious substances, but *The Profound Empowerment to Awareness's Creativity* explains this more in depth and also contains an offering prayer.

The Empowerment of the Gnostic Crown Ablution is an interesting brief empowerment that combines contemplation with bardo doctrine. The empowerment contains a letting-be meditation aiming at the recognition of pristine awareness, as well as an initiation to the recognition of the luminous visions in the bardo. It is said that if one meditates repeatedly on the reality-as-it-is (*dharmatā*) in this life, one will not have fear in the bardo, rendering the recognition of the visions easier.

Adzom Drukpa elaborates quite a bit on *The Empowerment of the Gnostic Crown Ablution* in his empowerment manual on the Dzokchen empowerments. The version

³⁴⁹ GZ II:35.

³⁵⁰ GZ II:65.

³⁵¹ The Seminal Heart in Four Parts X:276-284.

³⁵² GZ II:18 and The Seminal Heart in Four Parts X:280.

of this empowerment in the treasure scriptures is very terse, and some of the section titles do not match the content, suggesting that it may be corrupted. Adzom Drukpa's rendition presents new titles relevant to the content, and adds introductory sections in prose that contextualize the brief evocative empowerment verses into the wider scheme of the bardo doctrine. For example, in the section that Adzom Drukpa titles the empowerment on becoming liberated in the bardo of the moment of death or in the bardo of dharmatā, he explains how the various levels of practitioners can get enlightened in the bardo via the secret path of Vajrasattva, which is the manifestation of the rainbow colored luminous visions presenting a passage to Akaniṣṭha, or by mingling the mother and child clear lights, or be reborn in a pure land through devotion and unbroken tantric commitments (Skt. *samaya*, Tib. *dam tshig*). This explanation on the various ways to attain awakening or good rebirth in the bardo contextualizes the recognition of dharmatā presented in the empowerment verses as the superior way to practice and get enlightened in the bardo.

The Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection Empowerment of the Crown Ablution of the Victors' Skillful Means is an unusual empowerment because it contains a long metaphorical narrative that relates how a king got lost, wandered off to a foreign land and forgot who he was, until in the end, he is reminded by his minister and recognizes his true nature. The narrative is symbolical of the human oblivion of the intrinsic Buddha nature and the teachings of the guru that enable one to recognize it. This empowerment also incorporates a cosmological narrative³⁵³ and pith instructions on the illusion like nature of reality, five wisdoms and post-death bardos. In modern empowerment ceremonies, this empowerment is not conferred together with the other empowerments of *The Unimpeded Realization*, and it is said in the text that it should be bestowed only to the student who will become "the regent" of the guru.³⁵⁴

The fifth volume *The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity* also contains its own specific empowerment *The Awareness Empowerment Encapsulating the Quintessential Elixir of the Self-Emergent and Self-Arisen Great Perfection*. This empowerment includes a fascinating section in which a sand *mandala* representing various Buddhist and non-Buddhist views is taken apart gradually. As the teacher removes the sections that symbolize the wrong views of nihilism and eternalism and the eight lower vehicles of effort, the student receives empowerments to transcend these ideas. When all the inferior views have been removed, the empowerment proceeds to an interesting breakthrough style introduction to the nature of the mind. The master shocks the disciples by speaking to them suddenly with a loud voice, demanding them to reveal their realization. When the students are alert and in a heightened state of receptivity, he imparts pith instructions on recognizing the pristine awareness:

Well, is your mind now astounded for a moment without any concepts at all, without operating through words or patterns of thinking "it is this", just lucid and clear? That is the view of breakthrough (*khregs chod*) to primordial purity that is encountered through recognizing the realization of Samantabhadra as it is, the self-arisen self-display of your own awareness...

³⁵³ GZ II:83.

³⁵⁴ GZ II:84.

Continue to be in the state that is not bound by the effort of deliberate attention, without fabricating, meditating or getting distracted.³⁵⁵

This section crystallizes the view and practice of breakthrough, which is the defining practice of the fifth volume. The idea of breaking to primordial purity ties together this empowerment and numerous philosophical texts and contemplative practices in the fifth volume, demonstrating the interconnectedness of the various genres. This idea is embodied in the title of the fifth volume, *The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity*, because the breakthrough practice and its preliminary stages of *samathā* meditation are referred to as primordial purity (*ka dag*) in the Northern Treasures tradition. It is also interesting that the citation above aligns the view of primordial purity with the pervasive theme of Samantabhadra's vision or realization.

Sādhanas

The Unimpeded Realization contains five sādhanas or sādhana-like texts and other associated texts that go together with them. Generally, the sādhanas in the Unimpeded Realization are of very different character compared to the numerous Mahāyoga sādhanas contained in Rindzin Gödem's massive corpus of revelations discussed in the first chapter. Gödem's Mahāyoga sādhanas are long, focus on deity yoga and their structure made of many segments is common to Tibetan deity yoga rituals, while the sādhanas in The Unimpeded Realization differ from this model in multiple ways: some are very short, containing not much more than the visualization, others are focused on the completion stage practices, and the sādhana of the peaceful and wrathful deities is permeated with Dzokchen elements and view.

The five Buddhas, Hayagrīva and *dākinīs*

The External Sādhanas of the Five Families: The Purification of the Vessel and Elixir Right Where They Stand is not a regular sādhana text, but contains many short sādhanas that often do not contain much more than a visualization and verses of invocation. Apparently, it is assumed that the yogi constructs the necessary elements of sādhana practice around these core elements. The text contains nine sections, five of which can be practiced as individual sādhanas, and the remaining sections give auxiliary information, such as the mantras recited in the sādhanas.

Four of the nine sections in this text are found as individual texts in *The Seminal* Heart of the Dākinīs: (1) The External Sādhana of the Five Families, (2) The Internal Sādhana of the Five Families, (3) The Secret Actualization of the Dākinī: The Treasure Vase of Siddhis, which is a sādhana to obtain siddhis ("attainment" of miraculous powers), and (4) Pinpointing the Key Points of the Time [Visualization and Mantra] of the Dākinīs, and the Topmost Key Point, the Soul Stone,³⁵⁶ which

³⁵⁵ GZ V:64.

³⁵⁶ The Seminal Heart in Four Parts X:106-112, 317-328, and GZ I:332-340, 365-375.

contains supporting instructions on various key points for a yogi who is not succeeding in getting the signs and benefits of the practice. Thus, this text seems to be a piecemeal of adopted materials combined to possibly Gödem's original contributions.

In *The External Sādhana of the Five Families*, which is the first section, one's surroundings are generated as the *maṇḍala* of the five Buddha couples and gatekeepers, while in the following *Internal Sādhana of the Five Families*, the process takes place in one's body: the yogi visualizes himself as Vairocana Samantabhadra and the other four Buddha couples are visualized in the *cakras*. After these brief *sādhanas* there are sections on how to visualize a *maṇḍala* in the empowerment to these *sādhanas*, and how to visualize the deities in the vase that is employed in the empowerment. The next section, *The Self-Generation of the Threefold Empowerment of the Body Maṇḍala of Hayagrīva*, describes a visualization of a Hayagrīva *sādhana* involving self-generation as Hayagrīva, who is embracing Vajravarāhī. The name indicates that this visualization can also be employed in an empowerment. Samantabhadrā and Samantabhadrī are visualized at the crown, and the 42 peaceful deities are imagined at the heart cakra and 58 wrathful deities in the conch chamber.

The remaining sections of the text contain $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}$ practices, beginning with a $s\bar{a}dhana$, *The Wish-Fulfilling Gem: the Manifest Realization of the* $D\bar{a}kin\bar{i}$, which is one of the most interesting parts of this $s\bar{a}dhana$ collection text, because it combines Dzokchen terms and ideas in the $s\bar{a}dhana$ practice, contains pith instructions mixed with short ritual sections, discusses remedying worldly problems, but framed in the Dzokchen context, and, notably, is not found in *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts*. It begins with a visualization of oneself as Vajravarāhī, and in the five cakras are the $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}s$ of the five families in union with their male counterparts, heroes (Skt. $v\bar{i}ra$, Tib. dpa' bo). There is also a varying number of $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}s$ pervade the subtle channels of the body.

The description of the visualization ends with comments that contextualize it within the Great Perfection. The $d\bar{a}kin\bar{\imath}s$ are said to be the vibrant energy (*dwangs ma*) of the four elements, the intrinsic creativity (*rang rtsal*) of wisdom since the beginningless time. Moreover, the Buddha $d\bar{a}kin\bar{\imath}$ at the heart cakra is Samantabhadrī, and she is said to be externally the element space, internally Samantabhadrī and secretly the wisdom of dharmadhātu.³⁵⁷ Thus, the presence of Samantabhadrī and the Dzokchen terminology of vibrant energy and intrinsic creativity frame the practice within the Great Perfection. Similarly, the preceding *sādhanas* also contain many Dzokchen elements, such as the visualization of oneself as Vairocana Samantabhadra in the internal *sādhana*, and the presence of the Samantabhadra *yab yum* and the peaceful and wrathful deities in the *cakras* in the self-generation as Hayagrīva.

This *dākinī* practice also contains interesting practical applications entitled "the Yoga of Karmic Options" (*las mtha'i rnal byor*). If one has specific problems or limitation pertaining to one of the five families, ranging from spiritual to worldly, there are practices to counteract this. For example, if one cannot generate realization, one has not magnetized Vajra Dākinīs. If one lacks provisions and wealth, the problem is with Ratna Dākinīs, and if one's body heat is insufficient and women are not attracted to

³⁵⁷ GZ I:350-351.

oneself, Padma $d\bar{a}kin\bar{s}$ need to be magnetized. To heal the situation, the text gives a short visualization and recitation of mantras, as well as further specific instructions. If the problem pertains to Vajra Dākinīs, one should enjoy the five nectars, get naked and act like a madman. Ratna Dākinīs related problems are remedied with offerings, and the difficulties of magnetizing Padma Dākinīs are healed by practicing asceticism, igniting the inner fire (*gtum mo*) and wandering in charnel grounds. It is interesting that the conduct of a madman is prescribed as a remedy for lack of realization. Thus, in this text, it is not viewed as an outcome of realization, but a method to get there.

The practices to remedy the worldly problems of poverty and lack of seductive power, are somewhat unusual in the context of the Great Perfection, and appear in strong contrast with the Dzokchen context of this practice and the Buddhist ideal of renunciation. Why does a yogi need wealth, or even more curiously, attention of women? It seems that the inclusion of such practices reflects again the integrative agenda of Rindzin Gödem. Mahāyoga cycles commonly include rituals for practical application of deity yoga, for example the Mahāyoga activity section in the Precious Treasury (*rin chen gter mdzod*) contains many practices that have worldly goals ranging from making rain and counteracting poison to the wealth practices centered around Jambala and Vaiśrāvana. Thus, the worldly goals in this *dākinī* practice are another sign of Gödem's Mahāyoga inclinations and his approach to incorporate normative tantra into the Great Perfection.

It is also notable that these practices oriented to worldly goals are contextualized in the framework of internal transformation, which makes the mundane ends appear in quite a different light. For example, when one has performed the visualization and mantric practice to magnetize Padma $d\bar{a}kin\bar{\imath}s$, practiced asceticism, inner fire and wandered in charnel grounds, one attains bodily warmth and women are magnetized, and in addition one also attains the soteriological goal of freedom from attachment. Practices pertaining to other $d\bar{a}kin\bar{\imath}s$ also emphasize freedom from desire and hatred, asceticism and restraint. The result of magnetizing the $d\bar{a}kin\bar{\imath}s$ amounts to realization, and one will know suffering as *dharmatā*, faults as *siddhis*, obstacles as joy and demons as deities.³⁵⁸

Peaceful and wrathful deities

The Enlightened Activities of the Spontaneously Present Peaceful and Wrathful Deities: Direct Perception of the Great Perfection of Dharmatā stands out as a complete sādhana with an elaborate visualization and structure common to Mahāyoga sādhanas, but with pervasive Dzokchen terminology and Samantabhadra as the central deity. This elegant ritual is the only sādhana in the anthology that is practiced in the Northern Treasures monasteries today, and it also contains an auxiliary death ritual performed in the event of someone's passing away.

The structure of this *sādhana* is descriptive of its contents, so it is worth outlining in its entirety. It is comprised of the following sections: going to refuge, generating

³⁵⁸ GZ I:357-358.

bodhicitta, offering a torma (ritual cake) to obstructing forces to dispel them and establishing a protection boundary, confession, detailed generation of the *mandalas* of the peaceful and wrathful deities, praising the deities, opening the doors to wisdom entailing evocative verses of the five kinds of wisdom, inviting the deities, requesting them to stay, homage and offerings to the deities, purifying the winds (*rlung*), offerings of delighting in *dharmatā*, secret offerings, mantra recitation, more praise, entrusting the enlightened activities to the six sages, wrathful deities and *mamo* goddesses, feast offering (Skt. *gaṇacakra*, Tib. *tshogs*), Vajra song and residual torma offerings to *dākinīs* and protectors.

The feast offering is elaborated on in a separate section that contains detailed instructions on the quality of the meat and barley beer (*chang*) that is offered. The requirements concerning the meat are strict: the animal cannot be killed by a human or a beast; it must have died naturally, but not due to a serious disease. Animals with undivided hoofs, such as horses and donkeys are not suitable. *Chang* should be of good quality and there should be lots of it. However, it seems that *chang* is approved only in the ritual context, because it is said that the yogi should not drink in a hurry or insistently, nor for entertainment or without blessing it. In addition to meat and beer, one offers an unspecified multitude of other food, drink and necessities. The *gaṇacakra* also contains fascinating instructions on enjoying the offerings: just before partaking in the blessed substances, the yogis and yoginis visualize colored lights radiating from the offerings and purifying the syllables that cause rebirth in the six realms of saṃsāra. One's aggregates and elements transform into the Buddha couples with dakinīs in the *cakras*, channels filled with *bindus* and peaceful and wrathful deities in the *tsitta* palace at the heart and conch chamber of the brain.

It is common in the Dzokchen tradition to describe the subtle body as containing the peaceful and wrathful deities at the heart and brain *cakra*. Thus, the above visualization of these deities in the *cakras* reflects the Dzokchen view on subtle physiology. This is not an isolated incident, but in general, the Dzokchen view also permeates this *sādhana*. In the very beginning, when one offers a torma to obstructing forces, these obstacle-causing demons and spirits are conceived as projections of ignorance and conceptuality. Note also the Dzokchen concept of the universal ground and the original absence of obstructions:

Hūm, originally samsāra and nirvāņa are non-dual. In the great wide expanse of the universal ground, Buddhas and sentient beings are non-dual, so where are the so called obstructions? ---Ignorance is the cause of samsāra, and thus the conceptuality of desire, hatred and the five poisons arises. From that conceptuality, arise the obstructing forces, the worldly gods, demons and ghosts of samsāra.³⁵⁹

Similarly, confession entails a Dzokchen style apology that one is still within cyclic existence due to the lack of recognition:

³⁵⁹ GZ II:202-203.

Hum, upon the universal ground devoid of elaborations, due to the bad karma of condensate ignorance, without recognizing my own face, I wander in samsāra. I confess in front of the wisdom deities.³⁶⁰

The Dzokchen orientation of this $s\bar{a}dhana$ is also evident in the presence of Samantabhadra at the center of the *maṇḍala* of the peaceful deities. Moreover, the offerings of delighting in *dharmatā* interpret the usual offerings of flowers, incense and so forth in Dzokchen terms:

The flower of awareness, the incense of moral discipline The butter lamp of wisdom, the perfume of *dharmatā* The food of great bliss and the sound of spontaneous arising. - these I offer to the peaceful and wrathful wisdom deities.³⁶¹

One could continue listing many more examples of the Dzokchen terminology and approach that pervade the *sādhana*, but I will limit myself to a short discussion of the Vajra song, which is a famous song that appears in many Great Perfection texts. This short song is written in an unknown language that is somewhat reminiscent to Sanskrit. According to Namkhai Norbu, it is the language of Oddiyana.³⁶² *The Enlightened Activities of the Spontaneously Present Peaceful and Wrathful Deities* relates the origin of the Vajra song: Garab Dorjé is said to have extracted it from the 640 000 tantras. It was first taught in Oddiyana and Kashmir, and the yogis there sang it greatly. The yogis of Tibet meditating in various caves are also said to have practiced it. The text does not explain anything about its meaning, but merely states the suitable times to sing it, such as when one is wandering on charnel grounds, conferring an empowerment, meditating on a deity or non-conceptuality or when having problems with one's meditation. There is also an accompanying Vajra dance.³⁶³

What is the focus on song and dance all about? The five precepts forbid singing and dancing for monks, but here the Vajra song and dance are greatly valued: it is said that they connect the practitioner to the Vajra family.³⁶⁴ How can we understand this? Why is song and dance encouraged here? The Vajra dance is not described in the anthology, so we do not know what it is like, but it may be akin to the monastic dance (*cham*) that aims to imitate the movements of the deities. The Vajra song is similar to a long mantra, but it has a melody, which renders it to an actual song. It seems to be both a natural expression of realization and a mantric technique to facilitate its arising. It contains the six syllables of Samantabhadra, '*a*, *a*, *sha*, *sa*, *ma*, *ha*, which arose in the very beginning of creation, as we are told in the cosmogonic narrative,

³⁶⁰ GZ II:204.

³⁶¹ GZ II:218.

³⁶² The Mirror (http://www.melong.com/en/teachings/49-the-song-of-the-vajra.html). In this article, Norbu discusses the symbolic meaning of the Vajra song.

³⁶³ GZ II:235-237.

³⁶⁴ GZ II:235.

The Precious Liberation upon Seeing: The Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection, quoted above. Samantabhadra hears these sounds after he has recognized the manifesting phenomena as his own display (rang snang). They are self-arisen, naturally occurring sounds of reality-as-it-is. Thus, we see again an interesting connection between the narrative literature and ritual methods. The narrative background contextualizes the six syllables and the Vajra song in the Dzokchen themes of spontaneity and naturalness. Even though the song is scripted and the yogi does not sing whatever comes to mind spontaneously, originally the six syllables, which are the core of the song, arose as the natural sound of reality, and thus provide a way for the realization of dharmatā to unfold.

The Enlightened Activities of the Spontaneously Present Peaceful and Wrathful Deities is the only sādhana in The Unimpeded Realization that is practiced in the Northern Treasures monasteries until today. In the Dorjé Drak monastery in exile located in Shimla, India, it is performed every 18th day of the Tibetan month. The ritual has some supplementary sections added by Pema Thrinlé, but generally it follows Gödem's treasure scripture quite closely, containing also the Vajra song. Besides the monthly performance, the ritual is carried out on demand if somebody in the community has passed away. In this occasion, it also includes an auxiliary ritual from The Unimpeded Realization called Pulling Up from the Sites of the Six Life Forms of Cyclic Existence, which is a ritual to prevent rebirth in samsāra. In this ritual, the consciousness of the deceased is summoned to a name card (*mshan byang*) that is thought to be essentially identical with the deceased person, and the ritual activities are performed to the name card. According to the Tibetan doctrines on death outlined also in the anthology, the deceased can hear and perceive the world of the living in the intermediate state (bar do) between death and rebirth, and is inclined to participate in the ritual due to his previous connection with the teachings and the master.

The ritual contains two major sections: methods to purify rebirth in the six realms and an empowerment to enlighten the deceased. In the first section, the master visualizes himself as each of the six sages of the six realms: Dharmarāja (the sage of the hells), Jvalamukha (*pretas*), Shravasimha (animals), Śākyasimha (humans), Vemacitra (*asuras*) and Indra (gods). He purifies the karma leading to a rebirth in a particular realm with mantras, water from the activity vase (*las bum*) and verses evoking realization. He pulls the consciousness of the deceased out of the hells and other realms with mantras and instructions, and pays off the karmic debts with a ransom *torma*. He also gives a short dharma teaching to the deceased, urging him to go to refuge and do prostrations.

Then, the master offers a *ganacakra* to the Buddhas, and confers the deceased an empowerment in order to awaken him in Buddhahood. Although the text sets the goal of the ritual as high as enlightenment, it is thought in the tradition that this goal may not be actualized, but the ritual will at least increase the karmic rank of the deceased resulting in a human rebirth. In a similar death ritual in *The Tantra of the Union of the Sun and the Moon* (one of the seventeen Dzokchen tantras), the goal is not to enlighten the deceased, but to ensure that he comes back as a human.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁵ For a translation of this tantra, see Orofino, 1990. Sacred Tibetan Teachings on Death and Liberation.

The empowerment in *Pulling Up from the Sites of the Six Life Forms of Cyclic Existence* begins with summoning the consciousness of the deceased again to the name card to ensure his presence, and then the card is placed in the middle of the *mandala*. The ritual entails multiple brief empowerments to various aspects of awakening, such as awareness, emptiness and wisdom, vibrant energy of the five elements, and all the deities in the peaceful and wrathful *mandalas*. The empowerment also contains explanations to the deceased aimed at making him understand what is happening to him in the bardo, as well as beautiful verses of pointing out instructions urging the deceased not to be afraid and recognize. Then, the realization is sealed with non-conceptuality and the name card is burned to symbolize the purification and liberation of the deceased.

We see again the presence of many Dzokchen elements in this death ritual, particularly in the empowerment section. The stage is set by a *gaṇacakra* that begins with generating joy of being in the bardo:

There is no better place than this. The pure self-display is your object of cognition. The pure display of light is your home. The youthful vase is your domain. The bindus and fine bindus are your ornaments. The five kinds of encircling rims are your clothing. The Buddha couples of the peaceful and wrathful deities are your protectors. The male and female bodhisattvas are your friends. All the Buddhas are your relatives. The unobstructed wisdom is your mind. The intrinsic sound of dharmatā is your speech.³⁶⁶

The empowerments to awareness and the vibrant energy (dwangs ma) of the elements, as well as the pointing out instructions, also give a Dzokchen character to the ritual. The deceased is instructed not to be afraid of the lights and sounds of dharmatā and to recognize the peaceful and wrathful deities as oneself, inseparable from the primordial time. The Dzokchen character of this ritual is not much of a surprise, because among all *sādhanas*, it is the death rituals that have the strongest connection to the Great Perfection, because the intricate details of the Tibetan doctrines on death and post-death states were gradually developed especially in the Dzokchen circles in the centuries preceding the revelation of Karma Lingpa's famous cycle *The Natural Liberation as the Realization of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities (zhi khro dgongs pa rang grol*), which contains *The Liberation Through Hearing in the Bardo (bar do thos grol*) known as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

Offering rituals

The anthology contains four offering rituals: offerings to the five families, $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}s$ and protectors of anthology, and a feast offering (*ganacakra*) to the five families. Apart from incorporating a short narrative in the protector ritual, these are standard rituals to present offerings to deities, and two of the rituals, *ganacakra* and offerings to $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}s$, are even adopted from *The Seminal Heart of the Dakinis*. *The Feast Offering to the*

³⁶⁶ GZ II:283.

Five Families³⁶⁷ is exactly the same in both anthologies, but The Garland of Offerings in the Sādhana of the Dākinī of the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection³⁶⁸ has some interesting differences. The ritual in The Unimpeded Realization is longer than the version in The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs: several sections are added in, such as confession and requesting for blessings, suggesting Gödem's role in elaborating on the earlier version in The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs.

Since the offering rituals are similar to this type of literature in general, I shall not elaborate on them further, excepting for saying a few words about the offerings to protectors, because, while the other deities in the offering rituals are the same as in the sādhanas, the protectors do not feature in the sādhanas and are the only class of deities that we have not discussed yet. The Phase of Enlightened Activities of Offerings to the Precept Protectors of the Unimpeded Realization of the Great Perfection outline offerings to Ekajāti, three mamos of the charnel ground, Remati, twelve Tenma goddesses, Vajrasādhu and Thanglha. The first recipient of offerings is Ekajāti, because she is the most important protectress in the anthology and the specific protectress of The Unimpeded Realization. In the iconography, she is depicted as a wrathful, dark purple goddess having only one breast and one eye. The three mamos of the charnel ground, Rokhama, Namdruma and Tsamuntri, are the specific protectresses of The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity. They are also wrathful goddesses depicted in lively postures of dancing in a charnel ground. Remati or Palden Lhamo, an important wrathful goddess riding on a horse, is also a protectress of The Unimpeded Realization. She and her huge retinue is offered meat and tormas of meat and blood. Thus, we see that the protectresses feature many wrathful attributes and charnel ground imagery.

Out of the other protectors, the section on Thanglha is of particular interest, because it contains a wrathful narrative that relates the occasion of Thanglha's subjugation. When Padmasambhava was on his way to Tibet, Thanglha tried to stop him in the borderlands with fog and a blizzard, but Padmasambhava's meditation on Vajrapāṇi tamed Thanglha, and he was bound by oath and offered his life force to Padmasambhava. Thanglha asked for particular offerings to be made to him to ensure that he will not cause problems. Padmasambhava agreed, played his crystal hand drum, and sang the ritual verses accompanying the offerings. While reciting these verses in the offering ritual, the yogi plays a hand drum and visualizes himself as Vajrapāṇi, mimicking Padmasambhava's original meditation. Correctly performed offerings ensure that Thanglha will remain on the side of the dharma and protect yogis.³⁶⁹

The incorporation of narrative in this offering ritual is another indication of Gödem's integrative approach, although it is rather common for offering rituals of protectors to relate the initial subjugation of the protector. Nevertheless, the narrative gives the ritual added depth, enhancing the general function of protector practices as re-

³⁶⁷ GZ I:407-411, The Seminal Heart in Four Parts X:221-225.

³⁶⁸ GZ I:413-453, The Seminal Heart in Four Parts X:225-261.

³⁶⁹ GZ IV:599-604.

enactment of Padmasambhava's activities of subjugating these local deities as protectors of Buddhism.

Conclusion

The Unimpeded Realization and The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity place considerable importance on rituals: even though the majority of Gödem's general corpus is comprised of ritual cycles centered around Mahāyoga sādhanas, his Dzokchen anthology contains as much as twenty-four percent of ritual literature. However, the sādhanas in The Unimpeded Realization are quite different from Gödem's Mahāyoga sādhanas: the sādhanas of the five Buddhas are very short and the visualization is quite simple, the dākinī sādhana focuses on completion stage type of visualizations, and the sādhana of the peaceful and wrathful deities is permeated with Dzokchen elements and view. The centrality of ritual in the anthology is also evident in the function of rituals as the basis of all other practices: one has to have received the empowerments to practice or study anything in the anthology, and sādhana practice is a necessary foundation for the completion stage and Dzokchen contemplations. The daily schedule of a yogi outlined in The Secret Pith Instructions on the Ritual Stages of the Dākinī contains numerous sādhanas, pointing to their significance for Dzokchen practitioners.

Many of the ritual texts are adopted from *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs*. It is interesting that especially the rituals that are similar to normative tantra - the four tantric empowerments, *sādhanas* of the five Buddhas and offering rituals to the five Buddhas and *dākinīs* - are from *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs*, while most of the Dzokchen oriented rituals - the majority of Dzokchen empowerments, the *sādhana* of the peaceful and wrathful deities, and the offering ritual to the protectors of *The Unimpeded Realization* - are not taken from that earlier collection and may be Gödem's contribution. It is also notable that *The Wish-Fulfilling Gem: The Manifest Realization of the Dākinī*, which outlines the fascinating yoga of karmic options with its mixture of mundane and transcendent goals, is the most creative *sādhana* among the rituals similar to normative tantra, and it is not borrowed from *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs*. Thus, it seems that Gödem valued his own approach concerning the more innovative and Dzokchen oriented rituals, but readily adopted available texts of the more standard rituals akin to normative tantra.

Besides their place in the path structure, the rituals are tightly integrated to the rest of the anthology via agents, Dzokchen view and incorporation of narrative and contemplation. The main agents of the rituals - Samantabhadra, five Buddhas, Vajravarāhī, the peaceful and wrathful deities and protectors - appear in narrative, philosophical and contemplative literature in different roles, for example, Samantabhadra is a speaker in many tantras, the five Buddhas are meditated on in the preliminaries of direct transcendence, Vajravarāhī teaches the cycle of the Six Seals to Padmasambhava, and many of the treasure texts are entrusted to various protectors.

As for philosophical integration, the rituals reflect the Dzokchen view in varying degrees. The Dzokchen empowerments and the *sādhana* of the peaceful and wrathful deities are filled with Dzokchen terminology and ideas, while the rituals closer to

normative tantra, that is, tantric empowerments and the *sādhanas* of the five Buddhas and *dākinīs*, contain only some references to the Great Perfection view. For example, the Dzokchen approach is evident in the *sādhana* of the peaceful and wrathful deities in the psychologization of the obstructing forces and their primordial absence in the expanse of the universal ground. The six offerings of flowers, incense, light, perfume, food and sound are also interpreted in such terms as awareness, wisdom and spontaneous arising.

The Dzokchen empowerments present a particularly interesting case of incorporating narrative, philosophy and contemplation in the framework of empowerment rituals. This integration of various elements makes them rich sources of Dzokchen ideas and practices, and is indeed appropriate, since their function is to initiate and introduce the practitioner to the world of the Great Perfection view and contemplation. For example, the Dzokchen empowerments contain bardo doctrine, a cosmogonic narrative of creation and Samantabhadra's original recognition, metaphorical story of a king who forgot who he was analogical to our oblivion of our true nature, and doxographical presentation of the various philosophical views represented by powdered colors organized into a mandala and gradually removed in the ritual until there is nothing but the Dzokchen view left. The most concrete example of the integrating function of the Dzokchen empowerments is the symbol of crystal, and the way it is used in The Empowerment to Awareness's Creativity. The empowerment contains a transmission **narrative** of the crystal that relates how it came down to us from Samantabhadra. It explains the philosophical meaning of the crystal as symbolizing the mandala of self-luminous wisdom at the heart of Samantabhadra and all beings. It also gives a contemplative instruction on how to focus one's eyes on the sky, so that the crystallized wisdom of the deities can flow out into one's field of perception. Finally, the crystal is used ritually to confer the empowerment by touching the disciples' hearts with it.

The rituals contain three types of goals. The empowerments have an initiatory goal of authorizing the practices. The *sādhanas* in general have a soteriological goal, but *The Wish-Fulfilling Gem: The Manifest Realization of the Dākinī* also contains surprising pragmatic goals, such as gaining wealth and magnetizing women, although the fulfillment of the pragmatic worldly goals go together with rigorous discipline and freeing oneself from attachment. The offering rituals have transactional goals of pleasing the supramundane deities and acquiring their blessings, and retaining harmonious relationships with the mundane protector deities.

Rituals also have an important social and communal role. MacIntyre argues that in traditional societies one's identity was defined by community, and the community was largely defined by narratives. As discussed above, in Tibetan society, narratives play a central role in shaping communities and identities, but in addition to narrative, rituals have a significant function in the formation of communal relationships. Here we can distinguish two layers of relationships: those within particular religious groups, such as monasteries or groups of tantric practitioners, and those between the religious groups and laity.

Within religious groups, rituals have a particularly strong unifying function, because commonly the practitioners have received the same empowerments from their teacher, and are bound by the shared vows of secrecy and tantric commitments that include rules of respectable behavior toward the fellow disciples called vajra siblings and unconditional veneration for the master. Thus, empowerments create a tightly bonded community conceived as a *maṇḍala* that includes all the recipients. Tibetan monasteries, hermitages and other religious groups also have a particular set of *sādhana* rituals that are performed together periodically, thus creating a ritual rhythm of congregating, affirming the shared goals and views, fulfilling and renewing commitments and strengthening communal ties. All of this creates closely integrated communities, and has a powerful influence on one's identity as belonging to an exclusive group that is bound by secrecy and has the same obligations and religious aspirations.

Rituals also play an important role in establishing the relationship between the group of religious specialists and laity, because a ritual can be performed for lay people upon request. Among the rituals of the anthology, the *sādhana* of the peaceful and wrathful deities is the only ritual that is performed today in the Dorjé Drak monastery in exile in Shimla every 18th day of the Tibetan month. This *sādhana* and its accompanying ritual to guide the consciousness of a dead person is also performed upon request when somebody has passed away. Many other rituals from Rindzin Gödem's Mahāyoga corpus are also performed upon request, and the most common function of these rituals is to increase well-being and long life (*zhabs rten*).

Some of the rituals that are performed in the Dorjé Drak monastery on regular basis also have a major social function, the most notable examples being the ritual festivals (*sgrub chen*) of Padmasambhava, Phurba and Yamāntaka and the fasting retreat (*nyung gnas*) of Avalokiteśvara. The Phurba ritual festival includes a fire offering ritual (*sbyin sreg*) and all these rituals feature monastic dance (*cham*), both of which turn the ritual into a spectacle that attracts a large crowd of local Tibetans. Some *cham* dances continue the entire day, and tea and food is served to all participants. None of the rituals attracting an extensive lay participation are from *The Unimpeded Realization*, but they are from Gödem's ritual corpus of revelations, and nevertheless illustrate the role of rituals as bringing the lay and monastic community together, and the way the monastery functions as a center of major social events in the community. In this way, the power of ritual to shape communities and identities extends beyond the group of religious practitioners to the surrounding society of the Tibetan lay people who share the same faith, have ritual needs and celebrate the most important holidays in the monastery.

Chapter Five: Contemplation and Philosophy

Even though the anthology contains a variety of genres and topics, its most important agenda is contemplation. Narratives, rituals and philosophy are both subservient and intimately linked to contemplation and its soteriological goal. Contemplation is also intertwined with philosophy to the degree that is impossible to separate them and to give a precise page count for both. Many texts contain alternating sections on philosophy and contemplation, and sometimes the philosophical reflection itself is applied as a contemplative practice, such as in the breakthrough practice. However, we can say that roughly about a third of the anthology discusses contemplation and about a quarter is focused on philosophy. Due to the difficulty of separating the domains of contemplation and philosophy, I shall discuss them in the same chapter, and instead of analyzing individual practices, such as breakthrough and direct transcendence, I shall map out the textual landscape of the anthology's cycles and the way they discuss the philosophical views and contemplative practices. This approach also has the benefit of giving us an idea of the literary context of the practices, thus better illustrating their distinctive character and their situatedness in the anthology. In any case, it would be impossible to extract some of the practices from the anthology and discuss them as such: for example the view and practice of breakthrough is present in much of the anthology, while the practice of breakthrough is discussed as a distinctive contemplation only in a few texts, and the word breakthrough (*khregs chod*) appears only in *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra*.

My discussion of contemplation and philosophy is heavily focused on contemplation, because it is the main topic in most of the cycles. The sections on the preliminary practices of *The Five Nails* and the completion stage yogas of The Six Seals are primarily about contemplation with only occasional references to philosophy. However, The Oral Transmissions of Vairocana are an interesting mixture of contemplation and philosophy, as well as narrative, so this section contains a discussion on the philosophical views and their innovative character. Philosophy features prominently also in the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava, because the cycle focuses on direct transcendence, which is closely connected to various philosophical ideas of the Seminal Heart. *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* is also a mixture of contemplation and philosophy only in a minor role.

The oral transmissions of the anthology are comprised of the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana centered around breakthrough, the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava that discuss direct transcendence, and the Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra, which is a scholastic treatise covering the eleven topics of Dzokchen philosophy and practice. The oral transmissions are the core of the anthology, because they contain the major texts of the Dzokchen transmission, which are the main contemplative practices of the anthology. Their format as oral transmissions (snyan brgyud), literally "aural transmissions," highlights their experiential character as contemplative instructions given directly to a student. All the other practices and cycles are in a preparatory or supplementary role compared to the Dzokchen practices of the oral transmissions. The Five Nails contain the common tantric preliminary practices that are necessary to complete before engaging in Dzokchen practice. The most important topic in the Six Seals is the completion stage yogas, which, although high practices on their own, form the foundation for Dzokchen contemplation. The cutting practice is an auxiliary technique that also has the function of testing and enhancing the realizations of other practices. In addition, the anthology also contains alchemical practices of essence extraction that enable the vogi to stay in solitary retreats for long periods without food. At least in the present diaspora, the Dzokchen practices and the preliminaries of The Five Nails are the only practices of the anthology that are taught and actively taken up in contemplation, while the practice of other contemplations, such as the subtle body yogas of the Six Seals and cutting practices of the Marvelous Secret, seems to have more or less died out as part of the transmission of The Unimpeded *Realization*. However, it is unclear as to whether this is primarily a function of the disruptions of going into exile, or have deeper historical roots.

The main teacher transmitting the Dzokchen meditations of the anthology is Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche, who is based in the Dorjé Drak monastery in exile in Shimla, northern India. A steady stream of monks, nuns, yogis and khenpos from different Nyingma monasteries in India, Nepal and Bhutan frequent Taklung Tsetrul's monastery in pursuit of the Dzokchen transmission contained in the anthology. Those whom Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche agrees to teach receive the transmission personally from Rinpoche in a process that takes up to several years involving alternating periods of intense one-to-one instruction and quiet retreats of practice. The transmission is always given on the basis of a practice commentary, most commonly *The Island of Liberation* by Zurchen Chöying Rangdröl (1604-1669). All the practices described in the commentary are found in the anthology itself, and the purpose of the commentary is to organize them into a structured manual.³⁷⁰

The transmission of the Dzokchen teachings of the anthology is highly sought-after, because it is regarded as particularly sacred and potent system of practice that is usually practiced after studying other Great Perfection systems such as *The Seminal Heart of the Great Sphere* revealed by Jigmé Lingpa.³⁷¹ Even though the essence of the practices is considered to be the same, *The Unimpeded Realization* is ranked high in the Great Perfection context, and one reason for this is clearly the way the texts on contemplation are written: they are concise, to the point, and dynamic. Reading many of the texts evokes the ambiance of receiving a direct oral transmission at the feet of a master, and the dialogical format of the tantras and dialogue texts enhances the effect. Another reason for the anthology's reputation of profundity may be the integration of philosophy and contemplation, and the use of philosophical reflections on the nature of the mind, ground and *dharmakāya* as contemplations themselves in the practice of breakthrough. This practice is absent in *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts*, and may be Rindzin Gödem's innovation.

The Five Nails: preliminary practices

It is generally thought in Vajrayāna Buddhism that before engaging in esoteric or tantric practices, one's mind needs to be trained and tamed with various exoteric contemplations of the Sūtra Vehicle. Familiarity with the Sūtrayāna and basic principles of Buddhism is also assumed of an aspirant intending to study and practice the teachings of the anthology. However, the anthology itself also contains preliminary practices (*sngon 'gro*) that would befall in the category of uncommon preliminaries in standard tantric Buddhist literature. The liturgy of these practices is contained in the root text *The Five Nails: The Precious Preliminary Practices' Key*

 $^{^{370}}$ For an outline of this process, see Chapter two, the section entitled Doxographies and contemplative components, subsection Atiyoga.

³⁷¹ This view was indicated by several people that I worked with, such as Khenpo Lha Tsering, the principal of the Nyingma Shedra in Gangtok, Sikkim, and Palden Dorjé, a Dzokchen practitioner and a doctor of Tibetan medicine in Tso Pema, Himachal Pradesh.

Points situated in the fifth volume of the anthology, The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity.

According to Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche, these practices are called the five nails, because they aim to nail one's mind to dharma from multiple angles. The five nails are (1) taking refuge in the Three Jewels while prostrating, and subsequently cultivating bodhicitta, (2) *mandala* offering to the Three Jewels, (3) Vajrasattva purification practice, (4) contemplation of impermanence, and (5) guru yoga, or devotional practice of unification with the Buddha nature of one's teacher. Each section involves specific visualizations, liturgies and mantras. The format and content are similar to uncommon preliminary practices in Nyingma and Kagyu traditions, so I will not go into the details of the practices, but merely make some general observations.

In the Tibetan Buddhist Nyingma and Kagyu schools, the preliminaries are traditionally practiced by reciting 100,000 times the relevant verses belonging to each category together with other accompanying liturgies, visualizations and practices, such as prostrating 100,000 times while accumulating the refuge verses. This practice of "accumulating 500,000" is centuries old, but may not have been prevalent at the time of Gödem, since it is not mentioned in the anthology. In *The Unimpeded Realization*, the amount of preliminary practice is usually not specified, or it is linked to the relative acumen of the aspirant, but in the passages that do specify a duration, typically they are suggested to be done for only a small number of days for each practice, such as five or seven days. It also seems that the particular set of preliminaries prevalent in Tibetan Buddhism for centuries, that is, refuge, bodhicitta, *mandala*, Vajrasattva and guru yoga, was only taking shape at the time of Gödem, and the anthology may be one of the earliest sources, where these practices are taught together as the preliminaries of tantric practice, but more research is needed to ascertain the matter.

Longchenpa's works that predate Gödem's revelation by about two decades do not contain this particular grouping of the preliminaries. In The Great Chariot, Longchenpa discusses the Buddhist path from the beginning to the end in great detail, and he does not mention these five practices as a unit, but only explains two of them, that is, refuge and bodhicitta. The exoteric topics of his presentation are: precious human life, impermanence, sufferings of samsāra, karma, master-disciple relationship, refuge, four immeasurables and bodhicitta. Then, he moves on to the generation and completion stage tantric practice and the Great Perfection. The Profound Quintessence (zab mo yang tig) belonging to The Seminal Heart in Four Parts also contains a text on preliminaries entitled Teaching on the Common Preliminary Practices, but the preliminaries in this text are somewhat different, and the descriptions are very terse, lacking the liturgy and the predescribed performative aspect of verses to be recited. The text begins with guru yoga, in connection of which one goes to refuge to the guru. Then one offers a mandala to the deities. As the title suggests, the rest of the practices are similar to the common preliminaries: one contemplates the rare freedoms and connections that one has in this human life, as well as impermanence, suffering of samsāra, causes and results of karma, faith, compassion and the dream-like nature of all phenomena. The text also contains a brief instruction on the channels, winds and bindus.³⁷² Thus, we see that shortly before

³⁷² The Seminal Heart in Four Parts, XII:191-197.

Gödem revealed his anthology, Longchenpa's *Profound Quintessence* presents a different view on the preliminaries, containing a mixture of common and uncommon preliminaries, as well as instruction on actual tantric practice of the subtle body. However, more research is needed to ascertain whether the five preliminaries appear as a unit before Gödem's time.

I have discussed above Alasdair MacIntyre's view that in traditional societies one's identity is defined by community, and such community is defined especially by narratives. In the section on ritual, we noted that rituals also exert considerable influence on the formation of communities and identities. However, this role is also fulfilled by contemplative practices to a certain extent. We may not have anticipated that, because contemplation, as I have defined it here, involves internal practices usually performed in solitude. However, many contemplative practices, especially the preliminaries discussed here, contain a strong relational dimension: even though the practice is private, they aim to redefine one's relationships to other beings and profoundly alter one's identity.

The first nail of refuge and bodhicitta re-situates one in the cosmos in terms of one's relationships to various agents, including both supramundane and mundane deities, as well as people. One visualizes in front of oneself a field of merit that contains one's root teacher, all the deities, bodhisattvas, arhats, protectors and scriptures. Behind and on both sides, one imagines all beings beginning with one's parents and other people close to oneself. Acutely aware of karma and its results, one prostrates and goes to refuge to the field of merit together with all beings, thus physically enacting the aim of humbling the ego, aware of the deep interconnectedness of all beings. The cultivation of bodhicitta aims to saturate the connectedness to all beings with the sentiment of love, care and altruism, enhanced by the realization of fundamental relatedness. *Mandala* offering is designed to accumulate merit and to develop generosity, which is only actualized in relationships to others, and developed in a relationship to the community of the field of merit, the recipient of the offered *mandala*.

The goal of the Vajrasattva practice is to purify negativities through reflection, confession and visualization of impurities leaving the body and getting cleansed with shining white nectar. The contemplations on death and impermanence generate a sense of urgency to practice. The Vajrasattva and impermanence practices have the least obvious communal dimension, but even in the Vajrasattva meditation, the negativities that one aims to purify commonly involve others, and in the end, one envisions an enlightened community by assuming the form of Vajrasattva and radiating light to all directions, thus purifying the cosmos and all its beings. The realization of impermanence is also an acute awareness of one's situatedness in the world and its transient quality.

The various guru yogas performed at different stages of practice³⁷³ contain a strong communal angle. They redefine one's being in the world by situating one in the lineage, which gives the aspirant a new context, heritage and identity. The guru yogas

³⁷³ The anthology contains two guru yogas: the so called guru yoga of primordial purity is practiced before calm abiding and breakthrough practices and it is outlined as part of *The Five Nails*. The guru yoga of direct transcendence is practiced before taking up the practice of direct transcendence.

also aim to refine and tune the mind to one's Buddha nature by using the emotional power of devotion that enables the barriers of ego to melt in the spirit of trust and love. This practice illustrates that MacIntyre's idea of identity being defined by community has deep resonance with Buddhism and its general goal of eradicating ordinary identity, or the illusion of self, and realizing the process-like nature and fluid boundaries of identity, which only exists in relationships to others, that is, the community and the world.

However, these practices also highlight the fact that one's identity in traditional Buddhist societies is not only defined by a surrounding community, but there are also highly private ways to effect and redefine one's identity, and if these ways involve a community, it is not one's immediate society, but a visualized community of Buddhas, deities and gurus, and a larger sense of all living beings. This larger vision of community stems from the Buddhist view and doctrine, and thus we see that world views and philosophies, as well as their associated contemplative practices, act as powerful forces that shape communities and identities in both traditional Buddhist societies and modern communities of Buddhist practitioners.

The Six Seals: disciplining the body and subtle winds

The cycle of the Six Seals of Vajravarāhī teaches a path of discipline and effort culminating in the control of the winds $(pr\bar{a}na)$ through the subtle body yogas of the completion stage (rdzogs rim). The core text of the cycle presents the six seals, while other texts give supplementary information on the seals and guidelines for yogic life style. The actual six seals contain (1) general instructions for bodily discipline and posture, (2) completion stage practices of training the winds (3) Dzokchen view, (4) breakthrough, (5) non-dual Dzokchen conduct and (6) dream yoga. The seal of training the winds is the longest and most detailed, while the following seals with Dzokchen topics are very brief, and their function is to contextualize the completion stage practices to the framework of the Great Perfection.

The rubric of the Six Seals bears some resemblance to other completion stage practices organized in groups of six, that is, the Six Yogas of Nāropa and the Yoga of Six Limbs in *The Guhyasamāja Tantra* and *The Kālacakra Tantra*. The Six Yogas of Nāropa are the inner fire (*gtum mo*), clear light, meditation on the illusory body of a deity, dream yoga, bardo yoga and consciousness transference to a pure land or into a recently dead body.³⁷⁴ The inner fire and dream yoga are essentially the same practices as in the Six Seals, and the clear light yoga is similar to the seal of breakthrough in that they both teach how to realize the formless empty nature of reality, even though the philosophical views that frame the practice are different. The major difference between the two systems is the presence of death related yogas in the Six Yogas of Nāropa, and the Dzokchen view and conduct in the Six Seals.

The Six Limbs in *The Guhyasamāja Tantra*, if differentiated in terms of stages, are the yogas of physical, verbal and mental isolation, illusory body, clear light and learner's union. The main practice of the physical isolation is the yoga of inner fire,

³⁷⁴ Mullin, Tsongkhapa's Six Yogas of Naropa.

and the verbal and mental isolations also contain various practices to make the winds enter and move in the central channel.³⁷⁵ Thus, these correspond to the seal of the wind in the Six Seals. As above, we can compare the clear light yoga to breakthrough. The learner's union is the final attainment of the completion stage, and does not present any new practices.

A conspicuous difference in these systems is the illusory body yoga that appears in the Six Limbs and Six Yogas, but is absent in the Six Seals. There is some internal variation in the presentation of the illusory body yoga. Both in Tsongkhapa's presentation of the Six Yogas of Nāropa and in the Six Limbs as described in The Illumination of the Texts of Tantra, the illusory body refers to the attainment of the deity's body as a result of the successful practice of the inner fire. Thus, ideally, it is not a separate practice but the outcome of the completed inner fire practice. However, in Shamarpa's commentary on the Six Yogas of Nāropa, the illusory body yoga contains distinct practices, such as meditating on the reflection of one's body in a mirror, behaving in crazy and unconventional ways in a marketplace to transcend the eight worldly concerns and meditating on the reflection of a deity image in a mirror.³⁷⁶ It is interesting that these illusory body practices with the mirror resemble some of the analogical introductions in *The Unimpeded Realization*. For example, *The* Three Nails of the Key Points contains a practice of meditating on the reflections of the five Buddhas in a mirror.³⁷⁷ Moreover, the unconventional conduct in a market place is somewhat similar to the non-dual conduct of the Six Seals in that both have the aspect of not avoiding unpleasant events and not caring about social conventions and reputation.

The inclusion of completion stage practices in Great Perfection anthologies was becoming common in the 14th century, and we also see several texts on this topic in The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs. This development is in striking contrast with the early Mind Series literature, which critiqued the normative tantric practices including the subtle body yogas. However, with the rise of Seminal Heart and its practiceoriented focus, not only do we have a proliferation of Dzokchen practices, but also the practices of normative tantra became a part of Great Perfection literature and were included in the practice programs of Dzokchen yogis. The growing importance of sādhanas reflects this tendency, and similarly, the completion stage practices are valued and utilized considerably more in Gödem's anthology than in Longchenpa's works. As I discussed in the first chapter in the section on Vajrayāna doxography, in The Treasury of Words and Meanings, Longchenpa outlines subtle body yogas briefly as one of the many preliminaries of Dzokchen practice, but in The Unimpeded Realization the technology of uniting the winds is considered a very important technique to master, to be applied in many contexts and stages of the path, including just before engaging in the practice of direct transcendence.

As I mentioned in the section on ritual, the practice of normative tantra is very important in the Northern Treasures tradition, as reflected in the extensive ritual education of Dorjé Drak monastery and focus on *sādhana* practice in the three-year

³⁷⁵ Cozort, Highest Yoga Tantra.

³⁷⁶ Shamarpa, *Mahāmudrā and Related Instructions*, 349-350.

³⁷⁷ GZ II:346.

retreat. Given this, it is surprising that the completion stage practice of the Six Seals has almost died out in the tradition: it is not transmitted in the exile Dorjé Drak or other Northern Treasures monasteries in India. I met a dedicated monk from the Gonjang monastery in Sikkim, who was well-versed in the completion stage practices of other traditions, such as *The Sky Teaching (nam chos)* of the Glorious Domain (*dpal yul*). He has unsuccessfully tried to find someone to teach him the subtle body yogas of his own Northern Treasures tradition. Even though the instructions in the cycle of the Six Seals are quite detailed, they are not sufficient to actually practice the yogas without oral instructions and guidance from an experienced practitioner. It is also considered improper to attempt to practice these yogas merely from textual sources. Later, however, I was told that there is one accomplished practitioner of the Six Seals in Nepal, but as he is a yogi of wandering nature, his whereabouts are unsure.

The Six Seals texts are all located together in the end of the first volume as a unified group of eight texts, accompanied by two texts on the structure of the subtle body. Even though the subtle body yogas are standard completion stage practices, the cycle of Six Seals has a distinctive character, because the practices are framed in a comprehensive discussion on bodily discipline and ethical conduct, and the voice of Vajravarāhī comes through, as she is transmitting the cycle to Padmasambhava in the charnel ground of Sosaling. Vajravarāhī's voice and the form of the transmission as seals, with their association of royalty, importance and secrecy, gives the cycle a character and authority of direct oral transmission from a Buddha.

In addition to the narrative of Vajravarāhī teaching Padmasambhava, the cycle of Six Seals is embedded in a narrative framing of the king Thrisong Deutsen requesting for a teaching from Padmasambhava, who begins his discourse with a long prophetic teaching on the degenerate age of Rindzin Gödem, which is discussed in the chapter on Narrative. The morale of the teaching is that the ethical flaws and laziness of this decadent time exemplify the need for faultless morality and diligence. The instructions on ethical conduct involve the practice of *vinaya* and bodhisattva ethics and mainly vegetarian diet with meat consumption limited to a minimum. The texts contain repeated criticism of careless meat eating, some passages even going as far as instructing one to have meat only a little bit to taste in rituals.³⁷⁸ Rituals involving killing, euphemistically called "liberating," are also condemned.³⁷⁹

The level of diligence that the practitioner is instructed to follow is astonishing. One should always sit straight, give up leaning against things and lying down, sleep only about three hours at night, eat one meal at noon, and practice various rituals and contemplations the rest of the time, from before dawn till midnight. The sections on temporal calculations bring about a heightened awareness of temporality, impermanence and the limited number of moments one has left to practice, thus giving further motivation for diligence. They list various ways to calculate time and describe the length of the sessions, and how to organize a day into sessions of multiple practices. They also describe how the subtle winds (Skt. *prāṇa*, Tib. *rlung*) move in different parts of the body and cakras at certain times of the day, and which

³⁷⁸ GZ I:518.

³⁷⁹ GZ I:498.

are the optimal times for various practices based on the movement of the winds. The approach of discipline and control is also evident in the numerous vows and commitments that accompany tantric practice. In addition to the usual vows, when a yogi is practicing the generation and completion stage meditations, he is instructed to take periodical vows of silence, during which time the only form of speech allowed is the recitation of mantras. The vow should be released only if there is a life threatening situation or an opportunity to benefit many people by giving a teaching or an empowerment.

The actual seals are discussed in two texts. *The Secret Pith Instructions on the Ritual Stages of the* $D\bar{a}kin\bar{i}$ presents three seals that are short, command-like instructions. They have an archaic impression of a treasure text, because they are formally separated from the rest of the text with words in the Orgyen $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}$ language, such as the title of the text and the concluding phrase: "Actually keep the profound seal, my son!"³⁸⁰ These are translated into Tibetan in annotations. The instructions given in the seals are concise and authoritative, and they are presented as direct speech of Vajravarāhī. For example, the first seal states:

The external world and its beings are impermanent and like an illusion. You karmically destined heart son, accomplish the great purpose! Abandon the ten non-virtues and adopt the ten virtues! Cut the root of desire and hold onto the seven jewels of the noble ones $(\bar{a}rya)!^{381}$

The karmically destined heart son refers to Rindzin Gödem, and most of all, the seals are meant for him, which highlights his authority as the destined heir of the lineage. However, it is also prophesied in the Six Seals that Gödem will spread the teachings, which implies that anyone practicing the cycle is the audience of Vajravarāhī's seals.

The way the seals are presented in this text emphasizes the aspect of discipline and control. The seals are akin to orders given by an authoritative figure, and they have to be held, which makes them almost like vows. The format of the seal as such also creates an aura of secrecy and definitive statement, making it conclusive, final and sealed. The royal association of seals adds an element of importance and refined nobility. Thus, the exoteric basic teachings on Buddhist morality and conduct gain extraordinary weight and power to transform the audience due to the distinctive format of seals that the teachings are given.

While *The Secret Pith Instructions on the Ritual Stages of the Dākinī* gives only three short seals, focusing mainly on conduct, we have another text that contains much longer descriptions of all the six seals: *The Foremost of the Six Profound Seals: The Tantra of the Enlightened Activities of Vajravarāhī's Joy.* The seals are here named as 1) the vajra-like seal of the body, 2) the ocean-like seal of the winds, 3) the sky-like seal of the view, 4) the seal of meditation that is like the sun and the moon, 5) the seal of the conduct that is like meteoric iron, and 6) the jewel-like seal of pith instructions. While the first two seals are about bodily discipline in terms of posture and subtle body yoga, the remaining seals explain view, meditation and conduct from the

³⁸⁰ GZ I:505.

 $^{^{381}}$ GZ I:504. The seven jewels of the *āryas* are faith, discipline, generosity, learning, sense of shame, conscience, and insight.

viewpoint of Dzokchen. Thus, these actual six seals, which are the core of the cycle, elegantly bridge and integrate the path of effort of normative tantra to the naturalness and letting-be of the Great Perfection.

The ocean-like seal of the winds discusses the subtle body yogas of the channels and winds, and it is the longest of the seals by far (9 pages). Nevertheless, the instructions are terse, but the gaps are filled in by the other texts of the cycle, especially *The Pith Instructions on the Key Points of the Channels and Winds in the Six Profound Seals of Vajravarāhī* and *The Guide Text on the Profound Seals of Vajravarāhī*.

The instructions on the subtle body yogas are structured under distinctive rubrics featuring male, female and neuter (*ma ning*) winds. "Taming the male wind" teaches how to get the winds to enter in the central channel through visualization, concentration, and series of bodily postures and movements called *thrunkhor* (*khrul khor*, "wheel of magical illusion"). The visualization features self-generation as Vajravarāhī with empty interior and opening on top.³⁸² This section on holding the male wind is very short, but *The Pith Instructions on the Key Points of the Channels and Winds in the Six Profound Seals of Vajravarāhī* has detailed instructions on posture, breathing and other aspects of how to cause the winds to enter the central channel.³⁸³

The next section entitled "Training the female wind" teaches how to get the inner fire (*gtum mo*) to blaze from the Ram syllable, and how the bindus of nectar at the crown melt and flow down giving rise to the four joys. The instructions are concise, but much more detailed and complete than in the section on taming the male winds, and the text also gives some thrunkhor movements, as well as breathing instructions to clear away heat related bodily diseases, which may arise from incorrect meditation on the inner heat yoga.³⁸⁴ In addition, we have detailed pith instructions on these yogas in *The Guide Text on the Profound Seals of Vajravarāhī*.³⁸⁵

The core meditations of the subtle body yogas conclude with a section "Introducing the neuter wind," which outlines the subsequent experience of the union of the clear light, bliss and emptiness. The remaining part of the ocean-like seal of the winds teaches a meditation to dissolve the elements and winds at the time of death, and gives various practices involving visualization and *thrunkhor* to dispel eight diseases and problems related to the winds: laxity, agitation, heat and cold diseases, shaking, winds that are dispersed to incorrect locations or reversed to wrong direction, and a weak experience of bliss.³⁸⁶

These effortful practices to control the body and the winds are contextualized within the Dzokchen view taught in the sky-like seal of the view. One's own awareness is the

³⁸² The Foremost of the Six Profound Seals: The Tantra of the Enlightened Activities of Vajravarāhī's Joy (GZ I:561-562).

³⁸³ GZ I:615-617.

³⁸⁴ GZ I:562-565.

³⁸⁵ GZ I:623-645.

³⁸⁶ GZ I:565-569.

realization of the Buddhas, which is the union of emptiness and clarity. Emptiness refers to the lack of inherent existence of everything, but from the point of view of clarity, there is awareness, wisdom, Buddhas and pure lands. The method to realize this is taught in the seal of meditation that is like the sun and moon, and it entails a simple breakthrough meditation, in which one sits in the seven-point posture of Vairocana, and lets the ordinary cognition be in its own place devoid of fabrication and defilement. The seal of conduct that is like meteoric iron teaches the non-dual Dzokchen conduct free from welcoming the pleasant and rejecting the unpleasant appearances. The jewel-like seal of the pith instructions gives an interesting practice to gain rapid lucid dreams. One should abandon all activities, not sleep for three days, massage the body with ointment, and then fall asleep in the rishi posture in a solitary place. Thus, one will have a dream that one's body is cut in pieces, and due to the unlikely occurrence of such an event, one should realize that one is dreaming. Then, that realization is applied to the waking state to realize the dream-like, illusory nature of all appearances.³⁸⁷ This type of dream yoga practice that employs sleep deprivation is striking, but it is actually common in many traditions of dream yoga. For example, a commentary to The Six Yogas of Nāropa by Shamarpa Chökyi Wangchuk (1584-1630) describes a similar practice.³⁸⁸

Alchemy

The alchemical practices of essence extraction (bcud len) are closely connected to Tibetan medicine, and the earliest Tibetan source for evolved practice of alchemy is the renown medical text The Four Tantras (rgyud bzhi) that dates back to the 12th century or earlier. The text's two chapters on alchemy are very influenced by the Indian alchemical tradition, rasāyana, especially the famous work The Science of the Essence of the Eight Limbs (astāngahrdayasamhitā). The underlying view on human physiology and causes of disease is also directly adopted from this Indian source. A major difference is that while metals and toxic substances, such as mercury feature predominantly in Indian alchemy, The Four Tantras hardly employs metals as part of alchemical potions, and the text also contains much Tibetan influence, including recipes and consecrations of potions that are of Tibetan origin. The Four Tantras present alchemical recipes mainly for rejuvenating and nourishing purposes outlined in two chapters: one on slowing down aging and the other on maintaining good health. The Taoist concern for physical immortality is absent in The Four Tantras and the Tibetan longevity practices in general. The goal is to restore health or to attain long life, whether that is an end in itself, as in The Four Tantras, or the optimal health is for the purpose of securing obstacle free space and maximum time for spiritual practice.389

While *The Four Tantras* are concerned of rejuvenating, healing and nourishing the body for both worldly and spiritual ends, the alchemical texts in Gödem's anthology are exclusively geared toward contemplative ends, providing recipes that enable the

³⁸⁷ GZ I:569-575.

³⁸⁸ Mahāmudrā and Related Instructions – Core Teachings of the Kagyu Schools translated by Peter Alan Roberts, 2011.

³⁸⁹ Gerke, 'Treating the Aged' and 'Maintaining Health.' In JIABS 35.

yogi to stay in solitary retreats in remote mountain locations with almost no food, and giving instructions on how to remedy various imbalances of health so that one can practice proficiently. The alchemical practices are also closely connected to the completion stage yogas and bodily discipline. *The Garland of Ambrosia of Special Essence Extraction* (IV:423-484) is the only text in the anthology that is exclusively focused on alchemy, and all its recipes are to be consumed ritually in connection with the yoga of channels and winds. *The Preliminary Practices of the Six Oral Transmissions* devotes ten pages to the topic of alchemy (IV:59-68). The text contains instructions on eating, herbal remedies for various sicknesses, and instructions on how to prepare ambrosias and take them ritually. The section on alchemy culminates with instructions on the highest alchemical practice: extracting the essence of the winds through the yoga of channels and winds. Thus, the ultimate goal of alchemy in the anthology is soteriological.

The Garland of Ambrosia is an interesting text attributed to Yéshé Tsogyel. It presents twelve different completion stage $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}$ practices, each containing a ritual consumption of a particular alchemical substance, such as Chongshi stone (calcite), water, various types of earth, and herbs, such as neem, orchis latifolia, *spang rgyan* and *glang sna*. The text also contains numerous recipes to prepare precious pills (*ril bu*), barley beer (*chang*) and other types of ambrosia with the alchemical substance. The recipes are similar to *The Four* Tantras, but they are not commonly used in the Northern Treasures tradition; I did not meet any practitioners who had experience with the alchemical substances or recipes of the anthology. However, according to a Tibetan doctor of herbal medicine, Pelchen Dorjé, living in Tsho Pema, India, most of the ingredients are readily available in India and Tibet, and the ambrosias could easily be prepared according to the instructions. Some of the more rare ingredients, such as elephant bile (*ghivam*), can be substituted with traditional substitutes.

The $d\bar{a}kin\bar{s}$ employed in the practices are the $d\bar{a}kin\bar{s}$ of the four families associated with the four ritual activities: pacifying Vajra Dākinī practice with Chongshi-stone, increasing Ratna Dākinī practice with earth, magnetizing Padma Dākinī practice with *tshan* herb and the demon-subduing Karma Dākinī practice with sand. The other dākinī practices feature mainly animal headed dākinīs, such as the Lion-Headed Dākinī practice with water and the Garuda-Headed Dākinī practice with the *glang sna* herb. The structure of all the $d\bar{a}kin\bar{s}$ practices is identical, only the alchemical substances, functions and results of the practices vary. As an example, I shall describe the pacifying Vajra Dākinī practice with Chongshi stone.

In addition to freeing one from hunger and inducing the bliss of inner fire, the pacifying Vajra Dākinī practice with Chongshi stone is said to pacify sicknesses and Gdon-demons. The Chongshi stone is a commonly available mineral stone in Tibetan medicine. The text divides Chongshi (as well as other alchemical substances) into the categories of male, female, neuter, demon and divine nectar Chongshi. Their structure and usage are different. For example, the male Chongshi looks like it is made of small needles, and the neuter Chongshi is like spongy ice. The male Chongshi is good for women, and female Chongshi for men. The neuter Chongshi can be used by both, the demon variety is useless, and the divine nectar Chongshi is said to be the supreme substance for attaining miraculous abilities (Skt. *siddhi*, Tib. *dngos grub*).

The ritual consumption of Chongshi involves self-generation as the white Vajra Dākinī, Pacifier dancing on a moon seat and corpse. She is a form of Vajravarāhī, because she has a small pig head on her head. She is adorned with wrathful ornaments of skull and bone, and holds a curved knife and skull cup filled with blood. On her navel is a five-pronged crystal vajra, marked with white Hum. After inviting the wisdom being to descend, the Chongshi that is placed in front of oneself is visualized as being in a skull cup. Since the yogi has now transformed into Vajra Dākinī, s/he purifies the Chongshi into emptiness with the svabhāva mantra, picks it up with her left hand, and cleanses it from poisons and turns it into ambrosia with further mantras. S/he should visualize stirring it with the curved knife in her right hand, and then eat some of it. Upon consuming the ambrosia, fire blazes from the Hum at the navel, and consumes the yogi's body, which boils as ambrosia. Then, one does thrunkhor movements, placing the fists on the thighs and rotating the waist right and left. After reciting some more mantras, the ambrosia dissolves into one's body, and one's body and mind become blissful and free from hunger. The virtues of this practice are said to be inconceivable.390

In addition to this core instruction, the text contains many recipes of how to prepare Chongshi rilbus, barley beer and so forth, as well as Chongshi barley soup, if one has the need to eat actual food. The recipes apply many common herbs, such as myrobalan arura (haritaki), cardamom and pepper, and Tibetan herbs, such as ramoshag, bashaka and rurta. The preparations are used as remedies for various diseases, and they should all be consumed ritually by generating oneself as Vajra $D\bar{a}kin\bar{n}$. The text also gives instructions on how to heal sicknesses with mantric syllables, and instructs that during alchemical practices, one should avoid degeneration of tantric commitments (*samaya*), butchers, those who have wrong views, eating blood, fermented and bitter foods, garlic, strenuous activities, and worldly speech.³⁹¹

The intimate connection between alchemy and the completion stage yoga of channels and winds is evident in many aspects of The Garland of Ambrosia. The text begins with general instructions on the yoga of channels and winds, and all the ambrosias are consumed as a part of the subtle body yoga. The mantric healing practices and instructions on what to avoid are the same kind of advice as found in the texts on the yoga of channels and winds. Moreover, the last practice in The Garland of Ambrosia involves consuming only the internal ambrosia of the subtle body yoga without any external alchemical substance. This is said to be the supreme practice and focuses on the guru Thödrengtsel, a wrathful form of Padmasambhava. Thus, the alchemical practices in both The Garland of Ambrosia and The Preliminary Practices of the Six Oral Transmissions culminate in extracting the essence of winds and savoring the internal ambrosia of the white bindus from the crown cakra, without needing to rely on any external food as sustenance. The fact that the supreme practice of all these alchemical $d\bar{a}kin\bar{i}$ yogas is centered on Padmasambhava highlights his position as the anthology's dominant tantric master, prevailing over the dakinis. Even though Vimalamitra is traditionally associated with medical and alchemical texts, in the

³⁹⁰ GZ IV:427-428.

³⁹¹ GZ IV:428-432.

anthology, he features only as a composer of one brief longevity practice³⁹² that functions as a preliminary for *The Garland of Ambrosia*, and it is Padmasambhava, who is placed in the supreme position as the master of subtle body yogas and alchemy, receiving the Six Seals from Vajravarāhī and presiding as the main deity in the highest alchemical practice.

Oral Transmissions of Vairocana

We shall now turn to examining the core cycles of the anthology, the oral transmissions of the three masters of awareness (*rig 'dzin, vidyādhara*): Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Vairocana. The oral transmissions are teachings that these three masters are said to have received from Śrī Simha in India. Śrī Simha is presented as an eclectic Dzokchen figure, possessing the transmission of all the Great Perfection teachings transmitted in our world. He entrusted different parts of this transmission to the three masters of awareness, who then brought the teachings to Tibet, and unified the transmission again by passing it all to the king Thrisong Deutsen, Yéshé Tsogyel and other imperial period recipients, as well as concealing it as a treasure unearthed by Rindzin Gödem. Thus, these three oral transmissions originating from Śrī Simha bring together the three key masters of the imperial period, and contain the quintessential Dzokchen teachings of the anthology.

The main topic of The Oral Transmissions of Vairocana (four texts, II:461-602) is breakthrough (khregs chod) contemplation, but there are also many other agendas and subject matters in the cycle, such as death and bardo states, analogical introductions, narratives, doxography and polemical discussion that establishes the Great Perfection as the supreme vehicle. The Oral Transmissions of Vairocana are juxtaposed to the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava, which focus on direct transcendence (thod rgal) and the Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra, which is a scholastic treatise on the eleven Seminal Heart topics. The Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra are entirely Seminal Heart cycles, while the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana is said to belong to the Mind Series, the literature of the early Great Perfection. This division reflects the history of the tradition, because Vairocana was an important figure in the early Great Perfection, and Padmasambhava appears as a major figure only later on. However, classifying the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana as Mind Series is not an accurate representation of the early Great Perfection, because the cycle is colored by Seminal Heart approaches and elements. Nevertheless, it honors the early Great Perfection in that it does not contain a full-blown discussion of direct transcendence, which appears in the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra. Thus, the inclusion of the Mind Series in the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana is a gesture to unify the lineages of the Great Perfection in the scheme of the anthology.

Breakthrough is a characteristic meditation of the Dzokchen tradition, originating from the Mind Series. The negation of practice in the early Great Perfection resulted in the simplest method to enlightenment: recognition of one's pristine, already awakened, awareness (rig pa). This is the heart of breakthrough, and as the name

³⁹² GZ IV:421-422.

indicates, it is about breaking through confusion to the recognition of one's enlightened nature. Instead of outlining practices, the breakthrough literature of the Mind Series contains philosophical reflections on the nature of reality together with poetic descriptions and aphorisms. Sometimes the method of recognition is accompanied with instructions on the seated, cross-legged meditation posture, typically the seven-point posture of Vairocana. Other times, as David Germano notes, even the fixed, cross-legged posture is condemned as artificial fabrication upon the natural state.³⁹³ The question, however, remains as to what extent these negations of practice were meant to be taken literally, and to what extent they were a heuristic device to shock a committed practitioner to loosen his fixated grip toward formal practice. Certainly, the later tradition views breakthrough and direct transcendence as the peak of the nine vehicles, suitable for advanced practitioners prepared by years of rigorous practice. However, the boundaries were more fluid in the early Tibetan Renaissance period, and the Dzokchen practices were available for yogis without extensive background in sūtra and tantra.

The method of negation and deconstruction has a long history in Buddhism, originating with the Śākyamuni Buddha's negation of brahmanic rituals, caste system and Upaniṣadic doctrine of the self ($\bar{a}tman$). Nāgārjuna's Middle Way philosophy and the Perfection of Insight (prajnaparamita) literature are the most notorious examples of the philosophy of deconstruction within Buddhism. David Germano points out that this deconstructive approach thrives only upon a host that it criticizes, and it fulfills an important function of shaking and shattering established structures, thus making room for playfulness, transformation and generation of new ideas and practices.³⁹⁴

This development is evident in the Mind Series' negation of normative tantric practice, which created the space for the innovative developments in the subsequent Space Series and especially Pith Instruction Series, culminating in the Seminal Heart and its creative appropriation of tantric philosophy and practice. Thus, we have tantric meditation on creating divine *mandala* worlds reconfigured in the Seminal Heart practice of direct transcendence, the world-creating Mahāyāna Buddhas re-envisioned in the Seminal Heart cosmogony, and a new vision of fertile emptiness in the Dzokchen view on the universal ground. By the time of the 14th century, breakthrough had become paired with direct transcendence, the latter being ranked as superior. However, the breakthrough recognition of pristine awareness was thought to be necessary for the successful practice of the visionary techniques of direct transcendence. This view is clear also in Gödem's anthology, which frequently contains instructions on letting the mind be so that the pristine awareness can manifest before engaging in the practice of direct transcendence.

In the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana, the breakthrough practice is contextualized in multiple ways, such as narratives, philosophical reflections, polemical discussion and bardo teachings of the Seminal Heart style. There are also many other Seminal Heart elements in this cycle, such as teachings on Dzokchen subtle physiology. Similarly to the Six Seals, the cycle contains two narratives. The story begins in Samye, in the retreat cave of Chimphu, where the three masters of awareness, Padmasambhava,

³⁹³ Germano, Mysticism and Rhetoric in the Great Perfection, 69.

³⁹⁴ Germano, Mysticism and Rhetoric in the Great Perfection, 69-70.

Vairocana and Vimalamitra, are meditating. Encouraged by a vision of seven $d\bar{a}kin\bar{\imath}s$, the king Thrisong Deutsen asks the masters of awareness for a teaching that will enlighten a busy person, such as himself, without having to meditate. As a result, the three masters of awareness give him the teachings of the cycle. Embedded in this narrative are transmission stories of Vairocana receiving the teachings of the cycle from Śrī Simha in the Nine-Story Palace of the Buddhas in India. The teachings entrusted to Vairocana are said to pertain to the Mind Series and teach especially the view.

The narrative contextualization of Vairocana receiving the teachings from $\hat{S}r\bar{r}$ Simha is elemental in establishing the Indian origin of the cycle and the character of the teachings as oral transmission. Much of the cycle is presented as dialogues between Vairocana and $\hat{S}r\bar{r}$ Simha, which brings an authentic, alive feeling to the transmission.³⁹⁵ The narrative introduction of the king requesting for the teachings ties the cycle to Tibet, the familiar ground of the audience. It also sets the stage for the audience to anticipate rare, precious teachings that can bring about awakening without extended practices.

The next section contextualizes the Great Perfection as the superior vehicle in terms of narrative, doxography and philosophy. This polemical discussion is relevant for the breakthrough transmission, because breakthrough is regarded as a practice that can enlighten one instantly upon recognition, and because the awakening flash of sudden enlightenment is thought to be based on correct view and understanding. The narrative aspect of the argument for the Great Perfection's superiority is crystallized in the conversion of Mañjuśrimitra, who represents normative Buddhism, by Garab Dorjé, who is a Dzokchen figure. I have discussed the story in the chapter on narrative.

The doxographical discussion argues for the position of the Great Perfection as the peak of the nine vehicles on grounds of superior view, shorter time taken to attain enlightenment, and greater miraculous powers to send forth emanations. Much of the cycle is, in many ways, focused on outlining the Dzokchen view, and explaining its supremacy over other vehicles. One of the main points is that the Dzokchen view acknowledges awareness as intrinsic in the nature of reality, and thus one does not stray into the mistaken understanding that the indeterminate emptiness of the universal ground is the awakened *dharmakāya* nature of reality, but is urged to differentiate the ground from the *dharmakāya*. By regarding emptiness alone (not emptiness and awareness) as the ultimate reality, other vehicles mistake the experience of the empty ground to the realization of the *dharmakāya*.

As for the shorter time taken to attain enlightenment, the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana teach that liberation through the practice of Mind Only (*cittamātra*) takes 60 kalpas, and Middle Way (*madhyamaka*) three kalpas, while the Śrāvakayāna (Hearers' Vehicle) is just a way to be born in the higher realms. Yoga tantras can enlighten one in three life times, and Mahāyoga, Anuyoga and Mahāmudrā are paths that can enlighten one in this life, namely in seven, six or three months respectively. The Great Perfection instead, can enlighten a yogi instantly upon recognition. The respective powers gained upon enlightenment also vary greatly:

³⁹⁵ See more about the content of these narratives in the chapter on narrative.

If you get enlightened through the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha vehicle, it is called the Buddhahood of merely teaching, and you cannot send forth emanations. If you get enlightened through the Cittamātra and Madhyamaka vehicles, it is called the Buddhahood of increasing by one, which means that you can only send forth one emanation for each [kalpa]. If you get enlightened through the Kriyā, Upa and Yoga, it is called the Buddhahood of increasing the lineage, and you can send forth three emanations of body, speech and mind. If you get enlightened through Mahāyoga, Anuyoga or Mahāmudrā view of non-dual appearance and emptiness, it is called the identity of the five bodies, and you can send forth uninterrupted emanations of the enlightened body, speech, mind, qualities and activity.³⁹⁶

The text continues by explaining in detail the various emanations that a yogi, who became enlightened through the various divisions of the Great Perfection, can send forth. It is hard to see any difference between this and the result of Mahāyoga, Anuyoga and Mahāmudrā paths. This example is indicative of the general approach to other vehicles in *The Unimpeded Realization*: even though they are inferior, none of them are to be abandoned, and the higher vehicles are greatly valued.

The lower vehicles are also thought to be subsumed in the Great Perfection:

By looking at the essence of desire and letting be in that state, you will experience bliss. That becomes the Vinaya Pitaka. Ordinary desire is reversed. That is the training of ethics.

By looking at the essence of hatred and letting be in that state, you will experience clarity. That becomes the Sūtra Piţaka. Ordinary hatred is reversed. That is the training of samādhi.

By looking at the essence of ignorance and letting be in that state, you will experience non-conceptuality. That becomes the Abhidharma Piţaka. Ordinary ignorance is reversed. That is the training of insight. (V:284)

The Great Perfection is compared to the top of a mountain, while the lower vehicles are places on the slope of the mountain. Before reaching the top, one can only see a partial view, but from the top the view is unobstructedly clear, and the other vehicles and their realizations are perceived. Thus, we can see how the practice of breakthrough is contextualized in this doxographical and polemical discussion on the nature of the nine vehicles and their subordinate relationship to the Great Perfection.

Incorporating philosophical contemplation in breakthrough

The polemical mapping of the vehicles contained in *The First Oral Transmission of Vairocana* situates the Great Perfection at the peak of the Buddhist vehicles and views, and thus serves as an introduction to the detailed discourse on the Dzokchen view in the subsequent *Middle Oral Transmission of Vairocana*. The topics include analyzing the origin, dwelling and destination of the mind, distinguishing mind from wisdom (*ye shes*) or awareness (*rig pa*) (wisdom and awareness are synonymous in

³⁹⁶ GZ II:477.

this context), and differentiating the universal ground from the *dharmakāya*. While these are common philosophical topics in Dzokchen literature, the way they are explicitly applied *as* contemplative practices is distinctive. The aspirant contemplates these topics as part of the breakthrough practice, aiming to realize and experience the correct view through both the meditation of letting the mind be and analytical meditation of reflecting on these profound subjects.

It seems that Gödem's anthology is one of the earliest sources where all these philosophical topics are applied in this way as part of the breakthrough practice. Neither *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts* nor Longchenpa's *Seven Treasuries* present these philosophical discussions as conjoined contemplations to be practiced in connection with breakthrough contemplation, even though Longchenpa's *Treasury of Words and Meanings* does outline the origin, dwelling and destination of the mind as a practice. We should note that this connection of breakthrough and these three analytical reflections is not spelled out entirely explicitly in the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana, for the cycle does not clearly state that these philosophical reflections should be meditated on in breakthrough. However, I argue that the anthology contains sufficient indications to conclude that these reflections were intended to be employed as contemplative practices. This is also how they were understood in the later commentarial literature.

Firstly, these philosophical reflections occupy a central place in the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana, and the discussion is often akin to contemplative instructions, because the text gives direct advice, such as "identify pristine awareness devoid of the mind."³⁹⁷ The main indications that the philosophical reflections on the nature of the mind are meant to be applied as contemplative practices come from two texts that outline practice programs. A Guide Text on the Direct Perception of Dharmatā lists various preliminary practices for Dzokchen contemplation, such as Rushen and mental exercises involving the Hūm syllable. The last preliminary practice is called investigating the mind, and it contains the analysis of the origin, dwelling and destination of the mind. The subsequent actual practice of breakthrough involves looking at the mind with the mind, in order to clear away the movements of the illusion-like ordinary mind (sems) so that one can realize the unborn nature of the mind itself (sems nyid), i.e. pristine awareness. Thus, this text approaches the practice of the origin, dwelling and destination of the mind as a preliminary that is practiced just before breakthrough, and the subsequent breakthrough contains the practice akin to differentiating mind and awareness.

Moreover, *The Tantra of Becoming a Buddha by merely Seeing, Hearing, Wearing, or Praying to this Great Tantra* discusses the topic of distinguishing the mind from awareness in the chapter on Dzokchen practice just before explaining direct transcendence. This indicates that these reflections on the mind and awareness are part of the text's conception of the breakthrough practice.³⁹⁸ It is also interesting that upon differentiating mind from awareness, one practices direct transcendence, which is referred to as "the practice for perceiving awareness directly." It is said to be awareness that dawns from the heart onto the sky, bindus are the essence of

³⁹⁷ GZ I:500.

³⁹⁸ GZ II:117-118.

awareness, and the appearances of *mandala* deities are the visions of awareness. Thus, after the recognition of awareness in breakthrough, one learns to perceive the visionary dimension of awareness in direct transcendence.

In addition to the references in these two texts that point to the usage of these philosophical contemplations as breakthrough practices, later commentarial literature on The Unimpeded Realization includes some or all of these philosophical topics as part of the breakthrough practice. The Island of Liberation by Zurchen Chöying Rangdröl (1604-1669) describes the breakthrough practice as centered around the reflection on the origin, dwelling and destination of the mind, thus presenting this analytical meditation as elemental in breakthrough. The Fulfilling of the Hopes of the Fortunate Ones by Tulku Tsultrim Zangpo (20th century) includes all the philosophical topics in The Middle Oral Transmission of Vairocana as part of the breakthrough contemplation. The commentary presents two breakthrough practice programs, one of which contains the reflections on the origin, dwelling and destination of the mind, differentiating mind from awareness, and even the topic of distinguishing the universal ground from the *dharmakāya*. Both these programs are said to be based on the texts of The Unimpeded Realization. The inclusion of these reflections as part of breakthrough practice instructions in these commentaries is a clear indication that this is the way they were practiced at the time when these commentaries were composed. Traditionally, Dzokchen teachings are transmitted in the manner that follows a particular practice commentary (khrid) quite faithfully, which is why the commentaries reveal considerably about the way the practices were understood in particular contexts and time periods. Additional topics and sections may, however, be added by the master to the program of a commentary, so the transmission can always contain more than is described in the commentary.

Thus, we see that the later tradition explicitly regards these analytical reflections as belonging to breakthrough contemplation, and the latest commentary by Tsultrim Zangpo is the most detailed and includes the largest variety of philosophical topics in the breakthrough practice. One reason for the less detailed and less explicit presentation of the analytical side of breakthrough in the anthology itself may be the general style of the anthology, which is more archaic and poetic, lacking the clarity of commentarial literature. Another reason may be that this analytical approach to the breakthrough practice was only taking shape at this period: it seems that the anthology is one of the earliest sources, where these philosophical reflections are connected to breakthrough.

The chapter on the origin, dwelling and destination of the mind contains rigorous reflections on the questions: where does the mind initially arise from? Where does it abide in between? And where does it disappear in the end when one attains enlightenment? The question of the origin of the mind is pushed back all the way to the beginning of time. The text presents a detailed discussion on cosmogonic creation and the arising of ignorance in the first moments of manifestation due to the lack of recognition, and resulting in the downward spiral of increasingly coarse samsāric existence. Mind is said to arise from the universal ground due to this very ignorance and lack of recognition of one's true nature, which encompasses the self and other as one, and the other, the phenomena out there, is seen as display or projection of one's own self (*rang snang*). In the succession of innumerable life times in samsāra, the

mind is said to dwell in a body, and in the end, when one attains enlightenment, it dissolves into the body of essence.

This discussion is also utilized to establish the superiority of the Great Perfection over other vehicles, because the other vehicles assert that the mind does not arise from, abide or disappear anywhere. It is stated in *The Middle Oral Transmission of Vairocana*:

As for the dharma teaching of the common vehicles, they look for the origin of the mind, and by not finding it, it is introduced as unborn. Looking for the dwelling place and not finding it, it is introduced as the non-dual union. In the end, they look for the place it disappears to, and by not finding it, it is introduced as non-ceasing. The followers of the unimpeded Great Perfection are completely sure that all the activities of the mind are mistaken. They assert that first, the origin arose from the intermediate state of the universal ground, so identify the ground. In the middle, its dwelling place is in the six realms, and it is confused, but as soon as the holy lama teaches the pith instructions in this life, you should abandon the activities of the mind as you abandon poison and like a visitor turns back from a mistaken path. Identify the awareness devoid of the mind. In the end, the place of disappearance, called the body of essence, is the ground of both samsāra and nirvāna, so when the realization becomes actual, you will become enlightened.³⁹⁹

In this citation, the Great Perfection view is contrasted to a view similar to Mahāmudrā, such as in Dakpo Tashi Namgyel's work, which states:

You must experience the actual mode of this mind: a self-knowing emptiness that from the very first cannot be pinpointed as arising, dwelling, or ceasing. 400

The Dzokchen view on the mind as having a source, dwelling and a place of cessation is linked to the view that mind (*sems*) and awareness (*rig pa*) or wisdom (*ye shes*) are distinct and need to be differentiated. Some texts in *The Unimpeded Realization* speak about differentiating mind and awareness, and others about mind and wisdom, while the content of the discussions is almost identical, thus indicating that the terms are understood as synonyms in this context. *The Middle Oral Transmission of Vairocana* contains a chapter on distinguishing mind and wisdom, both of which are possibilities in the realm of human cognitive and conscious ability, perception and experience. Mind comprises the ordinary scattered thought processes and perceptions mediated by conceptuality and operating in terms of subject and object. Wisdom awareness refers to the quality of being aware itself, and to the raw direct perception before the mind steps in and labels it in conceptual categories.

The discussion on distinguishing mind from wisdom awareness is centered around examining their different abode, pathway, gateway, essence, creativity, activity and

³⁹⁹ GZ II:500.

⁴⁰⁰ Namgyal, *Clarifying the Natural State*, 37.

result. The abode of the mind is said to be in the lungs, its pathway is the respiratory passage and gateway is the nose and mouth. Awareness resides in the heart center, flows out via the luminous channel that connects the heart to the eyes, and comes out via the watery lamp of the eyes. It is interesting that the mind is related to the respiratory system and the breath, as the breathing is directly affected by mental states and vice versa. The creativity of the mind is also said to be connected to the five poisons, such as desire and hatred that conspicuously influence the breath. Naturally, wisdom awareness is connected to the subtle body and its luminous network of channels and cakras, as well as to the perception of the visionary dimension that manifests in the practice of direct transcendence. The manifestation of visionary dimension with the deities' bodies is also the creativity of awareness, as well as the manifestation of the fleshly emanation bodies, or *nirmāṇakāyas*.

The essence of the mind is said to be ignorance, while the essence of wisdom is the clear, non-conceptual, blissful, empty awareness. The activities of mind are all dualistically based actions involving a subject and object, self-grasping and mental poisons, while the activities of wisdom awareness are the feats of the emanation bodies. The results of the mind stem from the dysfunctional character of the mind, illustrated by the simile that the mind is like a crippled rider mounted on a wild, uncontrolled, blind horse, i.e. the breath or subtle winds (*rlung*). This leads to thickening veils of conceptuality, latent tendencies, karma and suffering in the cyclic existence. Wisdom awareness is not connected to breath or conceptuality, and is thus lucid, unimpeded, blissful and free from birth and death. The recognition of its self-display results in enlightenment.⁴⁰¹

The topic of differentiating mind and awareness is closely connected to distinguishing the universal ground from the *dharmakāya*, which is a subject that features prominently in *The Middle Oral Transmission of Vairocana*. Both topics involve discerning patterns and frameworks of unawareness (mind, universal ground) from those of awakened reality (awareness, *dharmakāya*), and the process of discerning involves increasing reflexive awareness. However, the discussion on mind and awareness operates more on the level of individual existence as it contains the analysis on their location and pathways in the body, while the distinction between the ground and *dharmakāya* is discussed in more impersonal terms, including narratives of creation, Samantabhadra's recognition and the origin of confusion. Another difference is that between the mind and universal ground. The mind, although akin to the ground, functions in the realm of delusion and samsāric existence, but the ground is the basis of both samsāra and nirvāṇa. It has neither ignorance nor wisdom, but is indeterminate. The *dharmakāya*, on the other hand, cannot be distinguished from awareness in any ontological sense.

The reflections on distinguishing the universal ground from the *dharmakāya* are also employed as a polemical tool to highlight the superiority of the Great Perfection over other vehicles. The common vehicles are said to mistake the ground for *dharmakāya* due to viewing ultimate reality as emptiness, instead of emptiness and awareness.⁴⁰² Both the ground and *dharmakāya* are empty, non-conceptual, all-pervading and free

⁴⁰¹ GZ II:492-494.

⁴⁰² GZ II:503-504.

from suffering, but the ground lacks the illuminating clarity and creativity of awareness present in the realization of *dharmakāya*. The ground is equated with the objective sphere (*yul*), while the *dharmakāya* is said to be inseparable from the expanse of reality (*chos dbyings*) and wisdom (*ye shes*). The text also contains a long discussion on the *dharmakāya*'s five wisdoms and creative manifestations in the visionary dimension of the enjoyment body.

Thus, we see how *The Middle Oral Transmission of Vairocana* presents sophisticated philosophical reflections in the context of the breakthrough practice. However, it remains unclear as to what extent these reflections serve as philosophical background, and how much they were actually applied as contemplations. In the later tradition they all came to be applied as contemplations, but whether this was the case at the time of Gödem, is not obvious in the anthology. Another issue also remains unclear: even if these philosophical reflections were applied as contemplations, what is the exact manner they were applied? The texts provide detailed descriptions, including polemical discussion, but it is unlikely that these type of scripted reflections were applied to contemplative practice as such, but the analytical contemplation of the practitioners was probably much more fluid and personal in the lived contexts of private reflection and dialogues between the master and student.

This type of fluidity is indicated by the dialogue texts of the anthology, such as the narrative of Yéshé Tsogyel's training under Padmasambhava. In this text, the abovementioned philosophical contemplations are merged under the rubric of investigating the origin, dwelling and destination of various phenomena, such as the mind, confused appearances and samsāra. The reflections on the origin, dwelling and destination of the mind involve discerning it from the deeper presence of awareness, but without the details of their different locations, pathways, functions and so forth. The dialogues on the origin, dwelling and destination of samsāra and its confused appearances touch upon the nature of the universal ground as the origin of bifurcation into the trajectories of confusion and awakened awareness. The text contains no polemical references, and in between the analytical reflections, Padmasambhava instructs Yéshé Tsogyel to practice non-conceptual letting-be meditation, that is to simply let the mind be, so that the pristine awareness can manifest. She is also instructed not to grasp at the creative visionary manifestations of awareness, as this would lead to proliferation of conceptuality, but to apply the watchman of mindfulness and let go of the brief experiences. Eventually, the realization of dharmatā will become actual.403

It is also interesting that *The Later Oral Transmission of Vairocana* contains a discussion on the presence of the *dharmakāya* in the body as five kinds of vibrant matter (*dwangs*) or luminous appearances in the *tsitta* palace of the heart, but then instructs the practitioner not to meditate on the *dharmakāya* in this manner, because "you will generate attachment to your body, fall in the extreme of permanence, and go astray into meditating on conceptual fantasies."⁴⁰⁴ Instead, the text gives a simple letting-be meditation:

⁴⁰³ GZ V:324-337.

⁴⁰⁴ GZ II:544.

Release both the body of confused appearances and the notion of an intellect that meditates, and let your cognition be in the state of *dharmakāya*'s profound clarity without grasping at all. The analogy is that of a jewelled crystal. The meaning is that your own body exists as the *dharmakāya*, so it is not the corporeal body. Meditate on it as empty and unimpeded. Meditate on it as the sphere of clarity of the *dharmakāya*.⁴⁰⁵

Thus, we can discern three ways that the analytical reflections are employed in the breakthrough practices. Some of the reflections, such as the origin, dwelling and destination of the mind are applied more or less as described in the philosophical passages of the anthology. Secondly, in the dialogues between Padmasambhava and Yéshé Tsogyel, the analytical reflections are applied in more fluid ways, assimilating the ideas creatively. The third way of employing the reflections is to create simple, uncontrived meditations on the basis of philosophical ideas, as we can see above in *The Later Oral Transmission of Vairocana*.

Influence of Seminal Heart in Vairocana's cycle

Fourteenth century marks the rise of the Seminal Heart as the dominant tradition in the Great Perfection, and this development influenced the way the Mind Series was viewed. The characteristic works representing the Mind Series in the anthology are the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana. They are said to originate from Śrī Simha, who entrusted the Mind Series transmission to Vairocana in the Nine Story Palace of the Buddhas in India. Even though this is a Mind Series cycle, there are abundant Seminal Heart elements in the collection. We should note that this way of presenting the Mind Series was not a firmly established convention, but a deliberate choice from the part of the author(s). At this time period, the perspectives on the Mind Series were not fixed, and even single authors wrote works on the Mind Series from distinct viewpoints.

The most notable example is Longchenpa, whose works contain several different presentations of the Mind Series practice. The section on Mind Series in *Resting the Mind (sems nyi ngal gso)* contains some practices influenced by the completion stage yogas and other tantric practices, but the bulk (74%) of the contemplative instructions does not contain any formal techniques apart from the lotus posture. These sections are evocative and exhortative in nature, containing poetry and analytical reflection. *Resting in Contemplation (bsam gtan ngal gso)* and its autocommentary *Completely Pure Charioteer (shing rta rnam dag)* also contain simple practices of the completion stage style, which act as preliminaries to formless Dzokchen contemplation. It seem that these works were written to Sarma audience to introduce them softly to the philosophical and contemplative terrain of the Great Perfection. They also reflect a polemical agenda to place completions stage practices in the role of preliminaries to Dzokchen contemplation.

⁴⁰⁵ GZ II:544.

⁴⁰⁶ Germano, Architecture and Absence, 251-259.
As contrast to these works from *The Trilogy of Resting at Ease*, in Longchenpa's *Trilogy of Spontaneous Liberation (rang grol skor gsum)*, the Mind Series is presented through the lens of the Seminal Heart, similarly to the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana. Longchenpa's presentation contains such Seminal Heart elements as references to dream yoga, a practice similar to Rushen exercises, bardo practices, and presentation of breakthrough with the terminology of the four visions of direct transcendence.⁴⁰⁷ Similarly, *The Later Oral Transmission of Vairocana* includes distinctively Seminal Heart topics, such as analogical introductions (*dpe'i ngo sprod*) and bardo doctrines and practices. There is also individual variation in the presence of the Seminal Heart elements in the texts of the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana. *The Later Oral Transmission of Vairocana*. *The Later Oral Transmission of Vairocana*.

The analogical introductions are distinctive Seminal Heart practices. They employ symbolic items that point to a profound meaning to be realized. Usually, they also involve descriptions of signs that indicate the presence of the profound meaning. The introductions can also be conceived as initiations to the profound meaning, even though they are very different from empowerments, and the tradition approaches them more like practices. In the commentarial literature, such as *The Island of Liberation*, introductions appear as preliminary practices of direct transcendence,⁴⁰⁸ and in the Northern Treasures tradition they are transmitted similarly to other practices: either the master introduces the student to the meaning or gives instructions to the student on how to introduce oneself to the meaning, after which the student practices them alone. In either case, the emphasis is on one's solitary practice of the introductions.

The analogical introductions are similar to the introduction to the mind (sems kyi ngo sprod), also known as guiding the mind (sems khrid). Both involve introductory instructions to a profound meaning by the master and solitary practice aimed at realizing and consolidating the meaning by the student. As David Germano points out, even though the introduction to the mind in the Mahāmudrā and Dzokchen traditions is often thought of as a spontaneous event, in which the master produces revelatory, even shocking, statements or actions that cut through the deception of the student, in actual teaching contexts these introductions were often rather scripted. They had, nevertheless, experiential character due to the approach of looking into one's own mind and the turn of events that was often surprising to the student, even though known by the master.⁴⁰⁹ The major difference between the analogical introductions and guiding the mind in The Unimpeded Realization and its commentarial literature is that guiding the mind is conceived as a broader process of progressing through several practices that also includes the philosophical reflections of breakthrough, while the analogical introductions do not have this type of analytical aspect.

One of the main analogical introductions in *The Later Oral Transmission of* Vairocana employ the analogy of a crystal that points to the meaning, the *dharmakāya*, which is said to abide at the heart. The luminosity of the *dharmakāya*

⁴⁰⁷ Germano, Architecture and Absence, 261-262.

⁴⁰⁸ The Island of Liberation, 33-35.

⁴⁰⁹ Germano, Mysticism and Rhetoric in the Great Perfection, 200.

travels from the heart to the eyes via the hollow crystal tube channel, and thus the sign of the *dharmakāya*'s presence at the heart is found in the eyes, which are the gateway or endpoint of the luminous heart-eye channel. This gateway is known as the farreaching lasso watery lamp (*rkyang zhag chu'i sgron ma*). The text does not elaborate as to what the signs are, but *The Island of Liberation* notes that by pressing the eyes from the sides one sees rays and circles of light, which indicates the presence of wisdom awareness and the luminous appearances of deities at the heart.⁴¹⁰ These elements of the Seminal Heart physiology are augmented with a concept from the bardo teachings: the secret path of Vajrasattva, which is a post-death passage to Akanistha upon recognizing the luminous appearances of the *dharmakāya*, and which is here equated with the hollow crystal tube channel. We should also note that this discussion is the philosophical background for the simple breakthrough meditation described above. Thus, this text contextualizes breakthrough in the framework of the Seminal Heart view.

The most notable Seminal Heart practices and doctrines in the text are those on death and bardo. *The Later Oral Transmission of Vairocana* contains thirteen pages on death and bardo states, 9,4% of the cycle. This is surprising, because it is the Seminal Heart that is marked by elaborate doctrines and practices on death, while these type of funerary concerns are absent in the early Mind Series literature. David Germano outlines the development of Dzokchen literature along the two trajectories of pristine and funerary, which highlights the absence of death related elements in the 10th century Mind Series. Gradually, there is an increasing amount of funerary doctrines and practices in the Great Perfection literature, and the descriptions of the processes of death and bardo become increasingly detailed. For example, the Space Series views the post death bardo as a unitary process, containing discussion on the manifestation of lights and sounds, while the Pith Instruction Series is marked by the internal divisions of the post-death bardos, full-blown descriptions of the peaceful and wrathful deities manifesting in the bardo of dharmatā, and proliferation of death rituals and practices.⁴¹¹

The presentation of the process of death and bardos in *The Later Oral Transmission* of Vairocana is influenced by the Seminal Heart. The text contains the rubric of the five bardos, two of which pertain to the post-mortem state, and refers to the manifestation of the peaceful and wrathful deities in the bardo. It also presents a teaching called Wandering in the Eight Cycles, which is an unusual structure to describe the death-related bardos that is distinctive to the anthology.

The explanations on how to become liberated in the five bardos are meant for superior practitioners. The five bardos are the bardo of natural abiding (this life), bardo of meditative absorption (*samādhi, ting nge 'dzin*), bardo of the moment of death, bardo of dharmatā and the bardo of becoming (*srid pa bar do*). The descriptions are terse and relatively standard. The bardo of this life presents analogical introductions. The section on the bardo of dharmatā does not contain descriptions of the deities (they

⁴¹⁰ *The Island of Liberation*, 34.

⁴¹¹ Germano, The Funerary Transformation of the Great perfection (*rdzogs chen*) JIATS 1(2005), 11-13.

appear later), but merely states that the recognition of *dharmakāya* in this bardo is based on the analogical introductions in the present life.

The descriptions of the five bardos are short and strongly oriented to practitioners. They present a mixture of pith instructions and bardo doctrine – another instance of mingling contemplation and philosophy in the cycle. Philosophy is, however, subservient to contemplation, because the information on the bardo doctrine and philosophy given in the text is the bare minimum needed to contextualize the practices and pith instructions.

The mixture of philosophy and contemplation is evident also in the distinctive bardo teaching of *The Later Oral Transmission of Vairocana* called Wandering in the Eight Cycles. It is meant for middling and inferior practitioners, and presents a different conceptual framework to organize the bardos of the moment of death and dharmatā. The eight cycles are:

- 1) The cycle of earth: occurs one day before dying when the body becomes heavy
- 2) The cycle of water: the external breath stops, one suffers from cold and there is a visual appearance of blue
- 3) The cycle of fire: one suffers from heat and there is a visual appearance of red
- 4) The cycle of air: one is blown helplessly by the wind of karma, and perceives green appearances
- 5) The cycle of appearances: one's cognition is blissful and there is an appearance like day break
- 6) The cycle of touching appearances: one becomes nervous, thinks that one is dead and suffers, and there is an appearance like dusk
- 7) The cycle of increasing appearances: one's cognition becomes clear and blissful, and there is an appearance like a rising sun
- 8) the cycle of luminous deities: ordinary people with bad karma perceive the Lord of Death and masses of weapons, while yogis perceive luminous appearances and deities

The explanations above apply to ordinary people who have obscurations and negative karma. It is said that a yogi will remain in a non-conceptual state up to the seventh cycle, during which s/he experiences non-conceptual bliss. In the eighth cycle, s/he perceives all appearances as unconstrained light, sees visions of the peaceful and wrathful deities and hears the intrinsic sound of dharmatā roaring like a thousand dragons.

Even though the eight cycles employ different concepts, they nevertheless present a very similar progression to the classical bardo doctrine, as found for example in Karma Lingpa's treasures. It is curious, however, that most of the elemental cycles occur after breathing stops and one is dead, and only the cycle of earth matches the classical presentation of the dissolution of the elements. It is also unusual that one is blown by the wind of karma in the cycle of air before the luminosity of death manifests, because this is regularly a feature associated to the bardo of becoming (*srid pa bar do*).

This section of bardo teachings also presents a mixture of philosophy and contemplation, but now the philosophical passages alternate with contemplative ones.

The philosophical description of the eight cycles is followed by instructions on how to meditate in these bardo states, especially in the cycle of luminous appearances. The yogi is instructed to cherish various attitudes, such as not becoming afraid of the sounds, lights and appearances of deities, and to place her attention to the meaning of profound clarity. This contemplative section is followed by another philosophical passage on "the paths of the six realms' confusion," i.e. the manifestation of the dim lights of saṃsāra, generally occurring in the bardo of becoming. After this we again have instructions on how to practice for this bardo. The instructions indicate that if the person has not understood the profound pith instructions and recognized the luminosity by this point, s/he probably will not, and this bardo will unfold in accordance with one's karma. Thus, the contemplative instructions focus on making merit in this life by practicing compassion, bodhicitta, offerings, guru yoga and deity yoga.

In conclusion, the character of the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana is versatile, containing narratives of transmission in India and Tibet, doxography, polemics, and philosophy fundamentally intertwined with contemplation. Even though the cycle is said to belong to the Mind Series, it is colored by the Seminal Heart, and its visionary and funerary elements. The main practice of the cycle, breakthrough, is contextualized in the Seminal Heart philosophical ideas, such as the presence of the luminous appearances of the *dharmakāya* at the heart and their effulgence to the exterior expanse via the hollow crystal tube channel that connects the heart to the eyes. Against the backdrop of this visionary philosophy, one practices breakthrough by meditating on the body as empty and letting cognition rest in *dharmakāya*'s profound clarity in order to avoid generating attachment. In addition to the non-conceptual breakthrough meditation, the cycle also contains detailed philosophical reflections on the nature of the mind, awareness, universal ground and *dharmakāya*, which, as we can discern from the context of the anthology, are to be applied as contemplative practices as part of the breakthrough training.

Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava

The Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava contains three texts that are explicitly entitled as Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava (II: 423-459), and an additional text called *The Oral Transmission on the Authentic Meaning*, which *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* classifies as belonging to the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava⁴¹² (all four texts are located in volume II, pp. 393-459). The Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava are also called the Letterless Oral Transmission, referring to their meaning being beyond words and concepts. This transmission is said to contain the most secret and carefully guarded teachings, which should only be disseminated to a select few students. The framing of the teachings as a highly secret and precious transmission acts as a force that inspires the students to practice, and indeed, the cycle is focused on the practice of direct transcendence (*thod rgal*), which is the distinctive visionary practice of the Seminal Heart tradition. In fact, the main source of the practice of direct transcendence in the anthology overall is the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava. The format of the teachings is that of procedural

⁴¹² GZ IV:185.

instructions as to how to engage in this contemplative practice, and the instructions are lucid, concise and practical. The style is marked by elegancy and clarity of expression, and is devoid of scriptural citations, polemical discussion and philosophical speculation.

We may ask as to why the anthology associates the transmission of these contemplations to Padmasambhava. One reason for this is clearly that direct transcendence is described as the highest form of contemplation in the anthology, so it is quite fitting to associate it with the dominant human guru of the anthology: Padmasambhava. The Lotus-Born Guru also embodies the accomplishment and power of esoteric Buddhism and is particularly closely aligned with practice, which renders him a suitable figure to uphold the transmission focused on practice. In comparison, Vimalamitra is a scholarly figure, so he is suited for presiding over the only scholarly treatise of the anthology, *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra*.

Even though direct transcendence is all about practice, I wish to make the point that this practice itself is highly philosophical, embodying various concepts of Dzokchen philosophy. A major element of the direct transcendence practice is the relationship of self and the world, and this relationship is of participatory nature. It is a process that involves profound interaction of the subject and object, redefining and questioning the boundaries of inside and outside, self and other, eventually transcending all such dualisms. This interaction is enabled by the inherently creative and dynamic nature of reality, and all these philosophical ideas undergird the contemplations. We shall return to this below, but first we will begin by providing background on direct transcendence, after which we will turn to a more detailed analysis of the cycle's contents.

Direct transcendence is an indigenous Tibetan practice that represents the culmination of changes in Dzokchen contemplation happening from the late tenth century to the early twelfth century. As mentioned above, it arises from the fertile ground cleared by the deconstructive project of the early Great Perfection tradition retroactively termed the Mind Series. The established structures of thought and practice were destabilized by the resolute negation of tantra by the authors of those early works, creating a playful space for the innovative appropriation of such esoteric philosophy and practice. The programmed divine creation of deity yoga was re-configured into a new practice that works with naturally occurring phenomena of light, and by patiently attending to these lights via various postures and gazes, one induces the spontaneous efflorescence of symmetric mandalas thought to be reflections of reality. In its focus on naturalness and spontaneity, this visionary practice is aligned with the uncontrived, orientation of the Mind Series, while simultaneously developing natural contemplative and visionary details in innovative directions, which are further conjoined with new cosmogonic narratives and funerary elements, thereby clearly distinguishing direct transcendence from the earlier developments.

The contemplative innovation of direct transcendence is directly parallel to creative developments in the postmortem theories of the bardo, as well as to the Seminal Heart cosmogonic narratives discussed above in the narrative section. All these processes entail a spontaneous manifestation of luminous visions out of the formless dimension of emptiness or clear light. The manifestation of the deities in the first moments of creation is said to be essentially the same subtle process of visionary manifestation as

in the bardo of dharmatā occurring at death; this spontaneous emanation of divine forms from empty awareness is then imitated in direct transcendence contemplation.

Even though direct transcendence is innovative and unique in the context of tantric practice, many of its elements are clearly inspired by philosophical and visionary ideas in Indian Buddhism. Like so much of tantric philosophy and practice, Dzokchen contemplation is resolutely based on the doctrine of the Buddha nature (*tathāgatagarbha*), with a particular focus on the strong version that understands this as entailing an already existing Buddhahood, as opposed to simply potential Buddhahood, or a seed of being a Buddha that needs to be cultivated through practice. Since we are already Buddhas, this reality can simply be recognized in the Dzokchen practice and in the bardo. The concept of the Buddha nature becomes almost tangible in the Seminal Heart physiology, because the Buddha within literally abides in the cakras as the peaceful and wrathful deities, and flows out in the practice of direct transcendence.

As discussed in the section on cosmogony, the model of visionary creativity in direct transcendence has its roots in the Yogācāra doctrine of the three bodies, particularly in the manifestation of the enjoyment bodies (*sambhogakāya*) out of the emptiness of the *dharmakāya*. The creation of pure lands by a Buddha is a similar act of manifesting pure forms of the visionary dimension. In addition, we have the Mahāyāna images of cosmological Buddhas with myriads of worlds pouring out of the pores of their skin.

The Yogācāra idea of the mind creating the realities, in which sentient beings live, is mirrored in the Dzokchen view on projections: the direct transcendence visions are projected from the heart cakra into the field of vision, and similarly, the karmic reality is a creation of the mind projected via the networks of deluded perception. It is of note that the anthology contains many statements that reflect the Yogācāra or Mind Only philosophy. For example, *The Suppressing Problems in the Marvelous Secret*, states:

All the external and internal phenomena of the world and its inhabitants of samsāra and nirvāņa are magical emanations of your mind.⁴¹³

The creative capacity of the mind to project is utilized as a resource already in the beginning stages of direct transcendence meditation, because the practice works with naturally occurring visual phenomena that arise from sensory deprivation and gazing at light sources. When the mind is deprived of visual forms, such as in complete darkness, or when staring at the uniform blueness of cloudless sky, it begins to create various forms naturally. This capacity of the mind, if developed, can produce astonishing results also in worldly contexts. Oliver Sacks relates the story of the man, Torey, who became blind at a mature age, but slowly trained himself to see with his mind's eye so well that he could walk on the roof of his house to fix it. When his bewildered neighbors inquired, he replied that he could see external objects, house, roof and so forth, although not with his eyes. Based on the information gathered by other senses, his brain creatively assimilated it through his efforts to visualize external

⁴¹³ GZ IV:548.

objects, and his mind produced a visual representation of the surroundings.⁴¹⁴ The element of deliberate visualization of external objects renders this analogy of Torey closer to the programmatic visualization project of deity yoga than the natural efflorescence of the visions in direct transcendence, but it nevertheless exemplifies the power of the mind to create visual realities, even in the absence of the visual faculty of the eyes.

The case of Torey also presents a further ontological analogy. Torey learned to perceive reality that he could not see after going blind, and similarly, a yogi practicing direct transcendence learns to perceive the subtle visionary dimension of reality that was concealed from him earlier. In deity yoga, the practitioner also aims to become aware of the visionary dimension, but the technique of accomplishing this is very different, involving effortful visual construction of the divine mandala, and lacking the participatory dimension of direct transcendence.

This analogy may also produce a question on the ontological status of the visions: are they subjective projections, or is the yogi seeing a hidden dimension of reality? If we consider the Yogācāra view of reality that is very much in the background of the Dzokchen idea of self-display (*rang snang*), this question is somewhat misplaced. Since the mind creates the realities that beings inhabit, both the ordinary perception of reality and visions of deities are projections, or self-displays, inseparable from the perceiver. The projections of ordinary and visionary perception are both part of the human perceptual capacity, but the visionary projections are concealed from ordinary perception. Thus, the visions of deities are both projections and a hidden dimension of perceptual possibility.

The technique of direct transcendence is deeply attentive to the Yogācāra view on perception as having a processual nature that involves interaction of many components, such as the sensory consciousnesses, mental consciousness, sensory organs and objects. In direct transcendence, we have the processual interaction of the watery lamp of the eyes, the objective sphere of the expanse (dbyings) and the bindus and other luminous visions flowing out from inside, while deity yoga involves much more one-sided coercive activity, as the already occurring divine manifestation is ritualized into fixed patterns. Thus, I would argue that direct transcendence as a method of accessing the visionary dimension is more aligned with the reality of perception than deity yoga, and thus more likely to engender insights to the nature and workings of perception as self-display. Philosophically, the natural manifestation of the visions in direct transcendence is a kin to various natural manifestations of divine forms, such as the appearance of the form bodies from the *dharmakāya*, which is a general Mahāyāna idea, as well as the distinctive Seminal Heart doctrines on the arising of the deities in the bardo and the visionary display of pure lands projected out of the ground in the first moments of creation. Thus, in addition to being aligned with the nature of perception, direct transcendence is also parallel to the processes of divine manifestation.

As we shall now turn to discussing the specific content of the cycle, I would like to note that all the core texts of the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava cover similar topics and details pertaining to direct transcendence, so due to constraints of space, I

⁴¹⁴ Sacks, A Neurologist's notebook - The Mind's Eye. In *New Yorker*, July, 2003, 52-53.

will discuss mainly the first and third oral transmission. The first Oral Transmission of Padmasambhava, *The First Root of the Exceedingly Profound Pith Instructions Entitled The Letterless Oral Transmission which Teaches the Direct Perception of Primordial Wisdom*, begins with very brief narrative frame that relates the transmission of the text from the cosmic Samantabhadra to the Tibetan visionary Rindzin Gödem with a number of Indian intermediaries. Samantabhadra arises as Vajradhara, goes to the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods and gives the transmission to Garab Dorjé, who brings it to earth and teaches Mañjuśrimitra. Then, the transmission passes to Śrī Simha and subsequently to Padmasambhava, who brings it to Tibet and teaches the king Thrisong Deutsen and Yéshé Tsogyel.

After the brief lineage, the text dives straight into presenting direct transcendence contemplation, giving instructions on how to gaze at the sky, sun and moon, and describing the circular spheres of light, or bindus, and other visions which manifest. Ordinary perception is compared to a house, where you only see partial light from the windows. Direct transcendence is like going on the roof and having unobstructed vision of light and outside surroundings. The instructions are terse and straight to the point, as we can see from the following passage:

Go to a place that is conducive to clear vibrant awareness, such as a high place or a clean field. Look toward east at a clear sky on a day that there are no clouds. Gaze penetratingly without moving your eyes observing the three key points of the body [unmoving body, eyes and channels]. Sometimes, look at the sun by squinting your eyes. In the night, close your eyes in the nonconceptual state, press your eyes with the thumb and index finger, and look. Occasionally, look at the moon. By doing these practices, unclear eyes become clear.

Look in this manner, and thus, when the nature and essence of the unborn expanse are clear, there arise unobstructed bindus, the awareness pervaded by compassion called the linked vajra chains, which are minute and like a hair from a horse's tail that has knots tied onto it. The bindus are like stars, like the eyes of a fish, and like the eye of a lasso. First there is just one bindu, then two are connected, then three, four, and five are connected. The awareness proceeds from the heart to the eyes in the form of bindus and fine bindus, and shines onto the sky in direct perception unimpededly.

Even though that is the actual wisdom of awareness, you are attached to the illusion-like body based on the ignorance of subject and object, and you apprehend it as material and in terms of external and internal. Since you are attached to it as a really existing thing, awareness cannot be clear even the slightest bit.⁴¹⁵

In the practice of direct transcendence, contemplation is intimately linked to Dzokchen philosophy. Every aspect of the practice reflects the Seminal Heart philosophical view on the visionary nature of reality, namely that there is an everpresent possibility of perceiving reality-as-it-is, which is residing at and springing from the heart center, but which is concealed from ordinary perception due to ignorance and attachment that render the manifestation of appearances as flowing exclusively via the karmic channels and networks of perception. Thus, the Dzokchen philosophical view on the nature of perception and the relationship of the self and the

⁴¹⁵ GZ II:426-427.

world is integral in the direct transcendence contemplation. The project of direct transcendence is essentially that of radical reconfiguration of one's being in the world. The contemplation places the self in an active participatory relationship with phenomena, in which one's patient attention to the visual appearances triggers fundamental transformation in those appearances as the bindus begin to link and grow. This, in turn, causes profound changes in the perceiving subject, such as the realization of the insubstantial nature of phenomena, fundamental interconnectedness, fluidity of boundaries and dualistic opposites, and the attainment of various supramundane abilities. As this process of interaction of the self and the world continues to unfold, eventually the yogi transcends all boundaries, even that of the self and other.

The philosophical concept of creativity (*rtsal*) is closely related to this form of contemplation. Creativity is the power driving the visionary manifestations – or manifestation in general – inherent in empty awareness. When the functions of creativity become distorted due to the downward spiral of karmic delusion, one perceives the ordinary illusory reality and takes it to be real. As a sign of hidden wisdom, one can, however, see bindus and linked chains, if one gazes at light sources or an empty sky. When the power of creativity is perfected, one perceives the linked chains of bindus as the *maṇḍalas*' deities.⁴¹⁶ The concept of creativity is an essential basis of the direct transcendence contemplation: the visions manifest due to the intrinsic creativity of emptiness – creative for the very reason that it is saturated with awareness (*rig pa*), which is another important element of Dzokchen philosophy.

The triad of empty essence (*ngo bo stong pa*), clear nature (*rang bzhin gsal ba*) and all-pervading compassion (*thugs rje kun khyab*) is also intimately intertwined with the ideas of manifestation and direct transcendence contemplation. Similarly to creativity, these three aspects are described as inherent in the nature of reality:

The expanse and awareness devoid of both coming together and separating is called the *dharmakāya*. It abides within the precious *tsitta* as the three bodies: the *dharmakāya* of the primordially pure essence, the sambhogakāya of luminous nature, and the *nirmānakāya* that pervades everywhere through compassion.⁴¹⁷

The essence is empty, so there is nothing to grasp at, but it is nevertheless an essence, a fertile ground of manifestation. The luminous clear nature is the reflection of the visionary dimension of sambhogakāya, the initial manifestation of creativity into the world of form. Compassion is "the door of origination," the force that spurs the efflorescence of creativity into every more specific forms and thus the activity of the emanation bodies. This aspect of manifestation as driven by compassion is the philosophical foundation of the narrative theme of Samantabhadra's vision, i.e. Samantabhadra's compassionate activity to help the world with his emanations.

The third Oral Transmission of Padmasambhava, *The Precious Letterless Oral Transmission: The Pith Instruction on the Secret Meaning, the Realization of the Enlightened Mind* contains the most detailed descriptions of the direct transcendence

⁴¹⁶ GZ II:432.

⁴¹⁷ GZ II:431.

visions. The yogi who is practicing, or taking into her experience (*nyams su len*), these visions should roam free in solitary mountain places, gazing at mountaintops like a deer. As s/he is gazing at the sky or light sources, s/he sees bindus that move up and down and sideways escaping focal vision. By patiently attending to these naturally occurring circular lights, one's eyes become steadier, and the bindus begin to connect. The text instructs the yogi to apply an upward gaze, which enables the dark blue *naro* shaped vision to arise. This is termed as the visionary manifestation of the Pure Expanse Lamp, the luminous manifestation of the objective sphere, or expanse (*dbyings*), based at the space between the eyebrows. After this visionary manifestation, the bindus dawn at the scale of small polished metal mirrors used in Tibetan ritual (*melong*). At this point the yogi is said to obtain mastery over the winds, and her body becomes youthful and attractive, and s/he does not desire to engage in any worldly activities, but has supreme inspiration to progress in the visionary practice.

Upon continued practice, the luminous manifestations grow larger and arise in various shapes, such as nets, lotuses and yak hair felts. As the yogi progresses in the visionary practice, s/he gains further signs of success. First, wrinkles disappear from her body, and s/he feels no hunger or thirst. Then, as the bindus transform into groups of five, the mind of the yogi becomes joyful and free from confusion, and s/he gains clairvoyant abilities of knowing previously unknown phenomena. When the light pervades the vision of the yogi, and s/he sees Buddhas of the five families inside the bindus, s/he cannot be harmed or obstructed by the five elements: fire does not burn her, s/he cannot sink in water or be carried away by the wind, s/he can pass through earth without obstructions, and can fly in space.⁴¹⁸ The first Oral Transmission of Padmasambhava also states that at this point one should train continuously, and eventually "all phenomenal appearances (snang srid) are purified into sounds, lights and bindus, which is the sign that wisdom has come into direct perception."419 Whatever one looks at, it slowly transforms into the mandalas of the five Buddha families. If one looks at one's hands and body, they become liberated like the colors of a rainbow and one attains the rainbow body.

Thus, we see that the progression of visions goes hand in hand with obtaining various miraculous powers, resulting eventually in the attainment of the rainbow body. The increase in the visionary capacity has direct ontological consequences, which points to the power of this capacity to reveal reality. Even though the visions are described as projections from the heart via the eyes into the field of vision, at the same time, the text describes this process as the purification of phenomenal appearances into sounds, lights and bindus, and the increased ability in seeing them is tantamount to increasing liberation from the forces and bondages of cyclic existence, thus pointing to the visions representing a concealed dimension of reality that is pure and nirvānic.

David Levin's phenomenology describes the process of the opening of vision as returning to prepersonal levels of perception that amounts to primordial clearing and lighting of Being (*dasein*). Levin's view presents some interesting resemblances to

⁴¹⁸ GZ II:453-457.

⁴¹⁹ GZ II:434.

the character of the direct transcendence visions as springing from more subtle levels of being that are hidden from ordinary perception:

Returning to the anonymous, prepersonal vision of our bodily felt awareness, we retrieve an experience of vision that could change us profoundly. Prepersonal vision is more panoramic, global, physiognomic, more affected by our situational moodedness, more immediately in contact with the field as a whole. It is *more diffuse* presence, more immediately attuned by, and to, the primordial 'clearing' and 'lighting' of being. When we retrieve this vision, making it explicit, bringing it to light, the consensually legitimated vision of the social ego is radically called into question⁴²⁰

This passage also highlights the power of transformation that these visions have. The consensually conditioned perception of the social ego is radically altered and gives way to a holistic vision of more diffuse presence. Levin's idea of diffuse presence also points our attention to the pervasive presence of awareness in the direct transcendence visions. In the end, the awareness *becomes* the Buddhas ontologically in content and perceptually in modality, such that perception and awareness become integrated and wide-ranging.

Levin's view on the opening of vision also calls our attention to the blissful ecstatic character of the visions:

It reminds us that existence is ecstatic, that to be a human being (*Dasein*) is to stand out into the openness of Being, and that we are, in an ontological sense, centers of visionary ecstasy, and not egological subjects.⁴²¹

As Levin thus suggests that our true nature is that of ecstatic visionary perception as the ordinary process of world-projection becomes self-aware, and thus more fluid and blissful. Similarly, in direct transcendence the yogi is discovering the bliss of the Buddha nature present as the hidden dimension of the deities. *The Three Nails of the Key Points* refers to the blissful, ecstatic character of the visions:

The visions of wisdom and enlightened bodies arise to you. Having become self-liberated, there is no doubt that you will obtain and abide in the experience of the blissful *dharmakāya* within the secret precious sphere.⁴²²

In addition to procedural instructions for direct transcendence, the four texts of the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava present analogical "introductions" as ritual initiations, as well as detailing postmortem bardo philosophy and practices. The sections on the introductions and bardo practices are considerably longer and more detailed than in the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana, containing multiple introductions with a crystal, mirror and images of the five Buddhas. Since I have already discussed introductions in the "Influence of Seminal Heart in Vairocana's

⁴²⁰ Levin, Opening of Vision, 204.

⁴²¹ Levin, Opening of Vision, 213.

⁴²² GZ II:349.

cycle" section above and in the "Symbolic and aesthetic representation" in the chapter two, I will not elaborate on them here.

The teachings on death and bardo include meditation on impermanence in order to generate distaste for saṃsāra, as well as relatively standard descriptions of the dissolution of elements at death and the four phases of the bardo of dharmatā. (1) Awareness entering into the eyes refers to the awareness leaving the heart and arriving at the gateway of the eyes. (2) Eyes entering into the clear light is the manifestation of the empty clear luminosity, five lights of wisdom and *maṇḍalas* of the deities. This is the time when one can awaken by recognizing the lights as one's own self-display. (3) Clear light entering into awareness refers to the dissolution of the visions, upon which one transcends suffering. (4) Awareness entering into wisdom is said to be the arrival to the secret precious sphere, where "you will abide in the wisdom beyond the enlightened bodies, insight beyond the mind, intrinsic radiance beyond the elements, self-display beyond words, and Buddhahood beyond phenomena."⁴²³

The first phase is often counted as belonging to the bardo of the moment of death, but here it is included in the phases of dharmatā. The phases relate a process of increasingly subtle states of awareness unfolding naturally as part of the transition from one life to another. The most subtle and profound states of awareness manifest spontaneously due to the collapse of ordinary structures of perception and elemental energies. The four phases present a similar progression to the four visions of direct transcendence, although the bardo visions do not feature such detailed gradual buildup of the visions from various geometrical and other shapes. The secret precious sphere appears also in the context of direct transcendence as an expression for the final attainment.

The Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava are augmented in the anthology by additional texts on direct transcendence and its associated topics and practices. Here, we should at least mention The Guide Text on the Direct Perception of Dharmatā (II: 353-392) and The Lamp of Unimpeded Wisdom from the Realization of Samantabhadra (IV: 27-58). The first text describes preliminary practices of direct transcendence known as the Rushen exercises, which aim to separate the domains of samsāra and nirvāņa in the practitioner's mind stream and prevent further rebirth in samsāra. The practice involves imitating the behavior of the six classes of beings in comparison to that of deities. The text also discusses other preliminaries, such as standing in the posture of upright vajra while visualizing oneself as a flaming vajra, as well as various exercises that involve reciting the Hum syllable, and filling or piercing the world with Hums in order to realize the insubstantiality of objective appearances. This realization is crucial for the practice of direct transcendence, because one should not grasp at the visions as objectively existing appearances, but should understand their nature as projections, and apply that understanding to all the appearances of samsāra and nirvāna.

The Lamp of Unimpeded Wisdom is an interesting combination of completion stage and Dzokchen meditation. The begins with an explanation on various channels relating them analogically to the eight approaches to dharma, four continents and six

⁴²³ GZ II:419.

realms. It relates how wisdom and ignorance abide in the body, and how to cut off sleep, the root of ignorance, with subtle body yogas, while using alchemical preparations of essence extraction. It discusses death, giving two practices of consciousness transference (*pho' ba*) and describing the bardo of dharmatā. Then, it introduces reality in contemplation in dependence on the sun and other sun-related analogies, as well as giving an introduction to the luminous rainbow visions with a crystal, and looking through a cloth.

It is of note that The Received Teachings (gsan vig) of the Fifth Dalai Lama includes many other texts in the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava. While The Received Teachings lists only the four texts discussed above in the Oral Transmission of Vairocana, the text presents the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava as a broad category containing various texts, many of which do not topically relate to the core cycle called the Letterless Oral Transmission. For example, the Fifth Dalai Lama includes seven ritual texts: Presenting Offerings for the Five Victor Families (rgyal ba rigs lnga'i mchod 'bul) (I:397-406), the sādhana of the Peaceful and Wrathful deities (zhi khro lhun grub kyi phrin las) (II:201-244), Offering Ritual to the Protectors (bka'i srung mchod pa'i phrin las) (IV:591-604), and four texts on the four empowerments (I:105-181). The sādhana and the empowerment rituals are connected to Padmasambhava, due to being composed or concealed by him, but the offering rituals are not. The Fifth Dalai Lama does not give a rationale for classifying these texts as Padmasambhava's Oral Transmission. He also includes the cycle of The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity, which apparently refers to the entire fifth volume.

The Fifth Dalai Lama's list also contains texts that discuss direct transcendence, introductions and other topics similar to the core cycle. The texts are A Commentary to the Empowerment to Awareness's Creativity (rig pa rtsal gyi dbang gi 'grel pa) (II:301-323), The Tantra of the Quintessential Wisdom (snying gi dgongs pa'i rgyud) (IV:3-26), and The Twenty One Introductions of the Great Perfection (rdzogs pa chen po'i ngo sprod nyi shu rtsa gcig) (III:555-564). In addition, he mentions one tantra that relates a narrative of the transmission, The Tantra of the Enlightened Activity of the Precious Unborn, Unfabricated, Self-emergent and Self-arisen One (skye med ma bcos rang byung rang shar ba rin po che phrin las kyi rgyud) (III:21-34), and a text that lists various cycles and transmissions of the anthology, The Key to the Wisdom Mind (ye shes thugs kyi lde mig) (I:27-36). Notably, he also includes a much later text, The Island of Liberation, which is a prominent practice commentary on the anthology's Dzokchen contemplation composed by Zurchen Chöying Rangdröl (1604-1669).

Moreover, *The Received Teachings* relates that the Oral Transmission of Padmasambhava contain three texts that are called the Ordinary Pith Instructions of the Three Masters (*slob dpon gsum ga'i thun mong gi man ngag*). The texts are *The Profound Letters on the Signs (rtags kyi yi ge zab mo)* (III:425-453), *Notes on the Measures of the Great Perfection (rdzogs pa chen po'i tshad kyi yi ge*) (III:497-518) and *The Secret Lamp (gsang ba'i sgron me)* (III:141-162). The first two texts give various supportive instructions on Dzokchen practice and discuss the signs of accomplishment. *The Secret Lamp* is a synoptic but comprehensive pith instruction text on direct transcendence, containing both preliminaries and the actual practice. It is not particularly clearly structured, and it is hard to understand the practice based on

just this text, but in the context of the anthology, and especially after consulting a commentary such as *The Island of Liberation*, the practices that the pith instructions refer to become clear.

Lastly, The Received Teachings lists The Teaching on the Essence and Expanse which are the Root of the Lamps of the Unimpeded Realization: Also Entitled The Root Tantra of the Unimpeded Realization (dgongs pa zang thal gyi sgron ma'i rtsa ba ngo bo dang dbyings bstan pa) (dgongs pa zang thal rtsa ba'i rgyud kyang zer) (III:455-475) as belonging to the Letterless Oral Transmission. This is of note, because this is the tantra that delineates the vision of Samantabhadra, including his mandala and emanations that intervene in the course of history. Including this important text in the secret core cycle of the Letterless Oral Transmission not only enhances the authority of the text, but also underlines the hidden but efficacious dimension of Samantabhadra's involvement with the world.

In conclusion, the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava and their associated texts teach the core contemplation of the Seminal Heart, direct transcendence, as well as other related Seminal Heart topics, such as analogical introductions, death and bardo. The content of the teachings is typical to the Seminal Heart, and in the cycle they are contextualized as the most secret and precious transmission that was given to Padmasambhava, the supreme treasure master in the 14th century Seminal Heart. The alternate title of the cycle, the Letterless Oral Transmission, refers to the meaning of the teachings as beyond the intellect, highlights the aspect of secrecy, and instills inspiration in the practitioners. The cycle in general is written as pith instructions to practitioners, and the style is clear, vivid and down to the point.

The direct transcendence contemplation, introductions and bardo practices are deeply rooted in the Seminal Heart philosophical ideas, such as creativity, awareness, selfdisplay and the triad of essence, nature and compassion as intrinsic in the nature of reality. While all meditation has a philosophical dimension to it, direct transcendence is a particularly philosophical contemplation, although not in an analytical sense, but the practice embodies the Seminal Heart world view. Spontaneity is reflected in the natural efflorescence of the visions. The bindus are responsive to the patient steady gaze due to the inherent creativity of reality. The visions can flow out, because the Buddhas already abide in the cakras. The world and the self are in a dynamic interactive relationship, saturated by awareness and creativity, and the process is aimed at an experiential realization of philosophy.

Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra

The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra (IV:183-401) contains only one text that explicitly declares itself as Vimalamitra's oral transmission. The full title of the text is Intrinsically Clear Primordial Wisdom - A Commentary on the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection of The Great Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra Transmitted to the King (Also Entitled The Great Exegesis of the Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra). It is the longest text of the anthology, 218 pages, which is twice as long as the combined length of the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana and Padmasambhava. The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra is a philosophical treatise

that explains the eleven Seminal Heart topics: the universal ground, arising of samsāra or creation, Buddha nature, location of wisdom in the human body, pathways of wisdom, gateways of wisdom or lamps, objective sphere, method of practice, signs of accomplishment, bardo and liberation. The text is filled with citations from *The Seventeen Tantras (rgyud bcu bdun)* and *The Hundred Thousand Tantras of the Ancient Ones (rnying ma rgyud 'bum)*, and contains many refutations of opposing views. The style of the work is scholastic and somewhat different from the rest of the anthology, and indeed, the text is based on earlier works on the eleven topics by Khépa Nyibum and Longchenpa.

In general, Vimalamitra is famous for being a highly learned scholastic figure or *paṇdita*, while Padmasambhava's figure is that of a powerful master of tantric practice. The earlier fourteenth century collection, *The Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra*, is also very scholarly and analytical in character, containing lengthy commentaries on tantras. Thus, it is of no surprise that *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* presents this type of scholarly treatise. I shall begin by describing the content of the eleven topics in *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra*, and then discuss the relationship of the text to the earlier works by Longchenpa and Khépa Nyibum.

The first topic of the **universal ground** discusses the nature of the ground as primordially pure, free from subject and object, and conceptuality and elaborations. It is devoid of both ignorance and wisdom: there is neither mentation of sentient beings, nor awareness of a Buddha, although these exist as possibilities. Conflicting views on the ground are also refuted, such as the ground as multiple or capable of changing into anything. The inherent possibility of wisdom is emphasized in this section, because there is a long discussion on the triad of essence, nature and compassion.

The section on the **arising of saṃsāra** relates how the confusion of cyclic existence first arose in the beginning of creation. Ignorance arose from the ground due to the lack of recognizing the self-appearing phenomena as one's own display (*rang snang*), and grasping at the manifestations as something other and separate from oneself. This self-grasping is the fundamental ignorance, akin to the co-emergent ignorance, which results in the thickening of the veils of unawareness, and in the arising of the rampantly reifying ignorance and the twelve links of dependent origination. Thus, one dives in the downward spiral of saṃsāra's confusion, the mind becomes increasingly afflicted resulting in the karmic manifestation of the six realms and the suffering of saṃsāra.

The third topic, **Buddha nature**, highlights the continuing presence of wisdom amidst the confusion of sentient beings. In a similar vein, the fourth topic, the **location of wisdom**, describes the presence of wisdom awareness in the human body especially in the precious *tsitta* palace at the heart. The essence abides as the deities, nature as the luminous bindus and compassion as the wisdom lamps. The fifth topic, **pathways**, discusses the network of subtle channels in the human body and the conventional, ultimate and natural bindus that move in the channels. The conventional bindus perform the activities related to the causes, conditions and actions of the four conventional elements and the karmic manifestations. The ultimate bindus are responsible for expanding wisdom and other activities of wisdom in the body, such as generating the lamps. The natural bindus are active at the time of meditative equipoise and visionary perception.

The sixth section on the **gateways** of wisdom describes the four lamps. The Far-Ranging Watery Lamp is the actual eyes, the end point of the luminous channel that connects the heart and eyes. This channel is very slender and its end part has conic shape with big openings (i.e. the eyes). The Empty Bindu Lamp is the perception of bindus, and the Pure Expanse Lamp is the vision of blue patch in the shape of the letter *naro*. The Self-Arisen Insight Lamp is the creative energy of insight, which manifests as the linked chains of bindus, and become the visions of deities in direct transcendence. The seventh topic is the **objective sphere** (*yul*) or expanse (*dbyings*). The external expanse is the empty sky, where the visions manifest, and the internal expanse is the Pure Expanse Lamp, which begins as the *naro* shaped vision of blue.

Most of the topics up to this point relate to the visions of wisdom perceived in the practice of direct transcendence, giving the conceptual background to understand the practice. The ground is the primordial origin of wisdom's self-display. The first visions in the beginning of creation arise from the ground, and the visions of direct transcendence mimic this primordial play. The confusion of samsāra is the alternative karmic path of unawareness that stands in contrast to the visionary manifestations of wisdom awareness. Buddha nature explains how wisdom is still present as a possibility in sentient beings, and the location of wisdom specifies this presence as the luminous deities in the tsitta palace. The pathways describe the physiological basis of channels and bindus, most importantly the slender luminous crystal channel, that enable the visions to travel from the heart to the eyes. The lamps, in particular, are a way to frame the visions of direct transcendence within the human body and perceptual capacity. The Watery Lamp is the organ of perceiving the visions, while all the other lamps are the manifestation of the visions themselves. The objective sphere is the space where the visions manifest. The eighth topic then presents the actual practice of direct transcendence and other Dzokchen practices, and the ninth describes the signs of successful practice. The tenth topic explains the bardo, where the visions manifest naturally, and one has the chance to recognize, if one did not complete the practice in this life. The eleventh topic describes liberation, the final result of the practice.

These eleven topics appear also in other works in the Great Perfection tradition. Longchenpa's *Treasury of Words and Meanings* is structured around the eleven topics, and in addition we also have a much earlier presentation on the subject, that is, *The Eleven Topics of the Great Perfection (rdzogs pa chen po tshig don bcu gcig pa)* by Khépa Nyibum (1158-1213). According to Malcolm Smith, both *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* and The *Treasury of Words and Meanings* are refurbished versions of the much earlier work by Nyibum.⁴²⁴ Unfortunately, I have been unable to get a copy of *The Eleven Topics* to compare it with the 14th century works, so I will have to limit myself to the discussion of *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* in relationship to *The Treasury of Words and Meanings*. *The Eleven Topics* covers 196 pages, which is a very similar length to the 218 pages of *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra*, while *The Treasury* is considerably longer: 780 pages.

Comparing *The Treasury of Words and Meanings* with *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra*, one cannot help but notice that they are strikingly similar. Not only do

⁴²⁴ Smith, 2012. http://www.atikosha.org/2012/09/a-preliminary-note-on-vimalamitras.html

they present the same eleven topics, but also the content of the discussion largely follows the same outline. Most of the time The Treasury simply presents a more detailed treatment of the same topics. A major difference is that The Oral Transmission has a distinctive narrative framing that relates an occasion when the king Thrisong Deutsen requested for teachings in Samye from the three masters, Padmasambhava, Vairocana and Vimalamitra. The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra is said to be the teachings that the three masters gave him at that time. The text also cites Vimalamitra numerous times, and contains a discussion on the various narrative discourses of the five sublimities (phun sum tshogs pa lnga), but does not give a lineage. However, The First Oral Transmission of Vairocana relates that Vimalamitra studied with Śrī Simha in India, and was entrusted the Internal cycle, which is equated with Space Series. This is a somewhat confusing statement, because the only oral transmission associated with Vimalamitra is this Seminal Heart text of the eleven topics, and generally the texts of the anthology authored by Vimalamitra are of the style of the Seminal Heart.⁴²⁵ Thus we cannot but conclude that the association of Space Series with Vimalamitra again demonstrates the agenda of the anthology to synthesize the various Great Perfection figures, transmissions and stages of development, while in reality the anthology is firmly steeped in the Seminal Heart doctrine and practice. However, unlike in the case of the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana, where the Seminal Heart approach is kept in reins as a tribute to the Mind Series, The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra is a full-blown Seminal Heart text.

A detailed comparison between The Treasury of Words and Meanings and The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but to get an idea of the extent of similarity, I shall briefly analyze the eighth topic on practice in both works. In general, this topic is presented in a very similar way, excepting for the section on breakthrough, which contains considerable variance. The chapters on practice in both works begin the same way, containing identical topics: the qualifications of the lama and student, conferral of empowerments, and a long section on the preliminary practices of Dzokchen meditation called the four yogas of continuous conduct, meditation, view and result. While both works present these same topics and the content of the discussion is similar, Longchenpa's version is considerably longer and more detailed, and contains additional subsections on related topics. For example, empowerments also feature tantric commitments. In some sections, the topical outlines are very detailed, yet identical in both works: for example, the yoga of continuous meditation is divided into the concentration of bodhisattvas, meditation of the secret mantra, seizing the mind of men and gods, and the realization of Sugatas. The concentration of bodhisattvas is further divided into cutting off attachment to food, clothes, dreams and karmic propensities.⁴²⁶

There are also numerous identical citations in both works, as well as identical passages that are not citations, such as a passage on examining the character of one's dreams to determine the relative difficulty of transforming the dream state,⁴²⁷ and the

 $^{^{425}}$ As for the texts authored by Vimalamitra, see the section on authors in Chapter Two.

⁴²⁶ Germano (transl.), *The Treasury of Words and Meanings*, 29-52, and GZ IV:296-324. The content of these practices is discussed in detail by Germano in Food, Clothes, Dreams and Karmic Propensities in *Religions of Tibet in Practice*, 293-312.

⁴²⁷ Germano (transl.), The Treasury of Words and Meanings, 35-36, and GZ IV:301-302.

analogies of hiding one's practice like a beggar or practicing in solitary mountains like a deer.⁴²⁸ In general, *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* is much easier to read, because it is very concise, and lacks Longchenpa's prolific style and drawn out explanations. The same ideas come across with a sense of clarity and less effort from the part of the reader. Longchenpa's virtue, however, is in his thorough explanations that provide clarity by careful elucidation of the topics.

After the strikingly similar presentation of the Dzokchen practice up to this point, the sections on breakthrough in these two works are considerably different with no identical wording. The breakthrough section in The Treasury is much longer, and contains no instructions for actual practices, but presents discussions on various kinds of freedom and the nature of reality from many different angles, while The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra does not present much beyond a simple letting-be meditation and a short discussion on how the realization progresses along the lines of realizing appearances to be mind, mind to be empty, and emptiness to be awareness. Introducing appearances as mind is yet another reference akin to the Mind Only (cittamātra) philosophy in The Unimpeded Realization. There are also same topics covered by both works, such as when appearances are realized to be dharmatā, there is no need to accept, reject or strive for anything, but in general, Longchenpa and Gödem took a different stance to present the practice of breakthrough in these works. It is also interesting that The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra does not contain any of the philosophical reflections that we have in the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana, and thus presents a different view on breakthrough from the rest of the anthology.

As opposed to breakthrough, the sections on direct transcendence in *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* and in *The Treasury* follow the same outline and contain the same practices, but *The Treasury* is again much more elaborate, while *The Oral Transmission* is very terse and does not give much more than a skeleton of practices. Both works present the same set of preliminaries of direct transcendence: meditations on the sounds of the four elements, Rushen exercises that involve acting out the behaviors of the six realms and aim to differentiate samsāra from nirvāņa, the practice of standing in the shape of a vajra, exercises involving emanating Hum syllables, and reflection on the origin, dwelling and destination of the mind. The actual practice of direct transcendence is also presented under the same headings in both works, but *The Treasury* is much longer, and contains additional subsections, such as explanations of the nature of visionary perception.⁴²⁹

It is interesting that this list of preliminaries of direct transcendence in *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* is different compared to other texts in *The Unimpeded Realization*. It contains the meditation on the sounds of the four elements, which is not found anywhere else in the anthology, and does not include the practice of the intrinsic radiance of the five wisdoms, which is an important preliminary of direct transcendence in the anthology and commentarial literature.

⁴²⁸ Germano (transl.), The Treasury of Words and Meanings, 24, and GZ IV: 287-288.

⁴²⁹ The text contains an interesting passage on the various Eyes that gaze at the visions. Germano (transl.), *Treasury of Words and Meanings*, 99-101.

Due to the brevity of the presentation in *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* and the notable divergence compared to other texts of the anthology, it is clear that the function of *The Oral Transmission* is to include the approach of the eleven topics in the synthesizing agenda of the anthology. What is important is to integrate the eleven topics and their distinctive way to present the practices. The explanations of the practices do not have to be detailed, because the practices that yogis should actually perform can be studied from the other texts of the anthology. Excepting for the meditation on the four elements, the texts of the anthology elaborate on all the other practices. The element meditation is also absent in the commentarial literature, and thus it seems that it was not central in the Northern Treasures tradition.

The Fifth Dalai Lama's Received Teachings classifies nine more texts of the anthology as belonging to the cycle of the Oral Transmissions of Vimalamitra. These texts do not contain any thematic or stylistic unity with the lengthy scholastic treatise, The Great Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra, but four of them are attributed to Vimalamitra. The Three Nails of the Key Points - A Guide Text Composed by Vimalamitra (II: 335-352) details a preliminary practice of direct transcendence called the intrinsic radiance of the five wisdoms, in which one meditates on images of the five lights and five Buddhas in rainbow halos. This is said to facilitate the manifestation and recognition of the five lights in direct transcendence and at death. Moreover, six texts of Great Perfection empowerments are said to belong to the Oral Transmissions of Vimalamitra. However, only The Ritual for the Great Perfection Empowerment (II: 33-40) and The Precious Empowerment of the Enlightened Mind (II:41-60) state Vimalamitra as the composer. In addition, we have two texts on death and bardo: Instructions on the Five Rounds of Breath - Pith Instructions of the Great Perfection Seminal Heart (rdzogs pa chen po snying tig gi man ngag khug pa lnga'i gdams ngag) (III: 541-548) and The Lamp of the Radiant Light of the Intermediate State (bar do 'od gsal sgron ma) (III: 549-554). It is notable that the Fifth Dalai Lama states that the former "is not a treasure text from Lhadrak, but the treasure revealer took it from the Seminal Heart with the intention to introduce people to the moment of death." The text itself does not claim to be a treasure: it lacks colophon, and merely states in the end that it is written with smaller letters than the treasure texts.

In conclusion, what is different about *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* compared to the rest of the anthology is its scholastic style and the few minor divergences in the practice of breakthrough and preliminaries of direct transcendence, as well as the general format of presenting the Seminal Heart tradition in terms of the eleven topics. While Longchenpa employs these eleven topics as a tool of thematic structuring in much of his Seminal Heart corpus, in Gödem's anthology they appear only in *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra*, and in general, Gödem does not use them as a way to structure the tradition. The eleven topics do not have fundamental importance for Gödem, like they do for Longchenpa, but their presence is due to the inclusive agenda. Gödem's anthology overall does not have the same degree of structure and organization as Longchenpa's works, which is not a surprise, as it is an anthology of many different type of texts. The main organizing principle is the topical grouping together of texts as cycles, such as the oral transmissions, Marvelous Secret and the Six Seals, and the overarching narrative theme of Samantabhadra's unimpeded vision.

Marvelous Secret: cutting practices

Rindzin Gödem's Dzokchen anthology contains a variety of different cutting (gcod) practices, ranging from unconventional wrathful practices to Dzokchen influenced techniques. Most of the cutting practices are located in the cycle of the Marvelous Secret (6 texts, 93 pages, IV:515-588, IV:605-625), and a few are also described in the fifth volume, in The Treasury of Precious Gems Eradicating Obstructions (V:272-279). Marvelous Secret is a self-contained cycle devoted to cutting practices, and as such, has its own empowerment ritual, lineage prayer and pith instructions on different types of cutting practices. Padmasambhava is mentioned as a composer in one text, and in two texts he appears as a teacher, questioned by the prince Mutri Cepo. The lineage prayer of the Marvelous Secret features a visualization of Vajravarāhī and one's root guru in union at the crown of one's head. The lineage is outlined in the section on transmission lineages. It is different from all the other lineages of the anthology. The transmission begins with Samantabhadra, Yum Srid pa bde grol (a form of Samantabhadrī) and Vajravarāhī, and appropriately for a charnel ground practice, the lineage contains many female figures, *dākinīs* and goddesses, as well as Indian siddhas. This is the only transmission in the anthology that does not pass through Garab Dorjé and Śrī Simha, but Padmasambhava receives the teaching from Dombhipala, and passes it onto five nirmāņakāyas in Tibet, the names of which are not specified. Then, it is hidden as treasure to be revealed by Rindzin Gödem.

Gödem's time features some of the earliest inclusions of cutting in Nyingma literature. As for Dzokchen anthologies, we have cutting in Gödem's work, while Sangye Lingpa's *Condensing the Realization of the Guru (bla ma dgongs 'dus)* contains fourteen texts on cutting.⁴³⁰ Sangye Lingpa's treasure was revealed in 1364, two years earlier than Gödem's anthology. It is interesting that *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts (snying thig ya bzhi)* compiled a few decades earlier than these two works and containing revelations from the 11^{th} - 14^{th} centuries, does not contain any texts on cutting. Both Sangye Lingpa's and Rindzin Gödem's Dzokchen anthologies contextualize cutting in the framework of the Dzokchen view. In addition to Great Perfection anthologies, Dorjé Lingpa's (1346-1405) treasure contains several texts on cutting, and in the tradition of transmitted precepts (*bka' ma'i gcod skor*).⁴³¹ Longchenpa's *Collected Works* also include a volume on cutting, and even though this cutting cycle is not in a Great Perfection anthology, it contains texts that discuss cutting practices with a distinctive Dzokchen approach.⁴³²

The cutting cycle in Gödem's anthology presents an interesting point of convergence for normative tantra and the Great Perfection, because the practices incorporate approaches from both traditions. The anthology contains seventeen cutting practices, which can be divided in three main categories: (1) self-sacrificial cutting (seven techniques), which involves offering one's body to demons and other harm-causing agents, (2) wrathful cutting (four techniques), in which one subjugates demons, and

⁴³⁰ Fabian Sanders, Gcod in the Nyingma (presentation in IATS 2013).

⁴³¹ Fabian Sanders, Gcod in the Nyingma (presentation in IATS 2013).

⁴³² The Collected Works of the Omniscient Longchen Rabjam: The Cycle of Cutting (kun mkhyen long chen rab 'byams gyi gsung 'bum/ gcod kyi skor), vol.26, p. 276.

(3) natural cutting (six techniques), which is a Dzokchen influenced approach of working with the conceptuality of fear. The core idea in all these cutting techniques is to transcend fear, and different methods are presented for this same end. The cutting techniques in the first two categories aim to transform one's fear via psychologically intense visualization practices, while the natural cutting practices focus on letting go of fear.

Some of the practices contain a mixture of techniques, for example a self-sacrificial cutting practice in *The Key to the Marvelous Secret* begins with wrathful cutting methods to destroy demons, and after that the yogi offers her body to the demons. *Suppressing Problems in the Marvelous Secret* contains a cutting practice, in which one mainly employs natural cutting, letting go of the conceptuality of fear and cutting off attachment to the body, but the practice also involves offering one's body to the demons. Combining these different approaches to cutting in a single practice highlights the common goal of the practices, which is to transcend fear.

The transgressive aspects of the Yoginī tantras are evident in the self-sacrificial cutting practice. Cutting is practiced at night while living in solitary terrifying places, such as charnel grounds, which are thought to be frequented by dangerous wild animals and numerous malicious and unpredictable spirits or demons featured in the Tibetan religion, such as *btsan*, *dre*, *gdon* and *rgyal po*. It is believed that progress in the practice of the secret mantra renders one sensitive to the presence of these demons, thus calling for practices that enable one to cope with the situation. In the anthology, the view on demons is broader and more psychologized, because demons are said to be anything that disturbs one: adverse circumstances, sicknesses and so forth. However, the cutting practices apply especially to situations when one sees demons, which are said to be ultimately unreal and like apparitions.

In a standard self-sacrificial cutting practice described in The Key to the Marvelous Secret, one stays in a charnel ground, smears one's body with ashes of a corpse, and visualizes one's mind as a small, black, wrathful Vajravarāhī, who comes out of one's crown and cuts one's body in pieces. It's then offered as food to demons, spirits and other harm causing agents. The wrathful cutting practices involve subduing demons without any self-sacrificial element, by such techniques as smearing oneself with wrathful ointment that contains various herbs, human fat and dung of different animals, as well driving the demons and spirits crazy by making a fire with the wood of a poisonous tree and burning wrathful substances, such as wolf dung, pig bone, cushion of a male leper and widow's underwear. We even have such violent methods as torching the demons with visualization of fire and wrathful mantras. For example, The Key to the Marvelous Secret describes a practice to subjugate female demons. One should visualize oneself as a dark red iron scorpion with nine heads and thorns all over the body, blazing with stinking fire. Then, one embraces the demoness and bounds her with an iron chain. The thorns pierce her, the fire burns her flesh and the stink drives her crazy, thus subjugating her.⁴³³ All of these subjugatory practices are presented under the category of "cutting," suggesting that the common element of all these practices is not self-sacrifice and self-dismemberment, but rather engaging demonic populations as a way of engaging and transcending your fear.

⁴³³ The Key to the Marvelous Secret (GZ IV:528-529).

However, side by side with these wrathful tantric practices of demon subjugation, the texts of the cycle, especially *Suppressing Problems in the Marvelous Secret*, are saturated with the Dzokchen view in relationship to fear. *Suppressing Problems* devotes several chapters to explaining that the fear of demons is a form of conceptuality that arises from the inability of the mind to be still and recognize its pristine nature. Thus, the simplest method to face demons is just to let conceptuality be, let it dissipate, and thus the root of confusion is cut off and demonic obstacles are pacified naturally. The Dzokchen view is evident also in the instructions not to do rituals and practices to avert demons, which are here equated with obstacles, diseases and enemies, but to view them as friends, and welcome them as purification of karma. Thus, we have quite distinct practices that again concern demons and fear, and are performed in solitary terrifying places, but are very different in style in their focus on quiet letting go rather than forceful subjugation and transformation.

So, how can we understand the presence of these Dzokchen approaches involving naturalness and letting be, alongside with the most wrathful tantric practices marked by violence and transgression? The tension between these approaches boils down to a question: if the fear of demons is rooted in one's own problem of conceptuality, why practice killing external demons? A historical reason to the presence of these transgressive elements is probably the growing popularity of these practices, as well as the strong family background that Rindzin Gödem had in normative tantra, especially in the wrathful rites of Vajrakīla. Philosophically, the anthology aims to resolve this by ranking the natural Dzokchen method as superior, such that if the yogi cannot simply let go of the conceptuality of fear by recognizing its nature or analyzing it, he is given the choice of the tantric arts of the charnel ground nature.⁴³⁴

One of the most interesting aspects of the cutting practices and their relationship to the anthology in general, is the way they function as practical means to test and enhance one's realization, while simultaneously integrating multiple approaches from normative tantra, Dzokchen and Mahāyāna. In this type of cutting instruction described in *The Treasury of Precious Gems Eradicating Obstructions (The Dialogues of Tsogyel)*, the yogi should dwell in a solitary terrifying place, and if fear arises, clearly one's realization of emptiness, non-dual wisdom, or whatever one was practicing, was not genuine and transformative enough, because why should one be afraid of empty, illusion-like demons and wild beasts, in the absence of a really existing self to be harmed? Thus, one needs to enhance the realization and go beyond fear, by applying one of the meditations offered in the text. The first three are examples of self-sacrificial cutting, while the last two fall in the category of natural cutting.

One can employ a practice from the Bodhisattva vehicle, and reflect that one is grasping at demons because of failing to recognize them as one's parents. Thinking, "how can I accomplish the authentic meaning if bodhicitta remains just words and intellectual understanding?" ⁴³⁵ the yogi should offer her body to the demons. Alternatively, if one has stable realization of emptiness, one can meditate on the demons as illusions, and if one appears, one should offer one's body to it and jump

⁴³⁴ GZ IV:542-559

⁴³⁵ GZ V:273.

onto its lap, in which case one is said to pass through it, thus effectively realizing its apparitional nature. The third method is for those who have a strong generation stage deity yoga practice: they should visualize the demon as one's tutelary deity (*yi dam*) in the divine palace. Offering one's body as a tantric feast offering (Skt. *gaṇacakra*, Tib. *tshogs*), one should embrace the demon, now understood as the yidam, and mingle with his or her enlightened mind.

As for the natural cutting techniques, one can employ the Anuyoga completion stage realization of non-duality and make the appearances and mind, self and other, ghosts and demons, non-dual. If a demon appears, one should greet it with joy as an opportunity to practice the non-dual view.⁴³⁶ Lastly, one can apply the Dzokchen approach of non-dual wisdom free from welcoming the pleasant and rejecting the terrifying appearances.

Thus, we see that the practice of cutting presents an interesting juncture of these different vehicles and practices that are all employed for the same purpose of going beyond fear. These cutting practices are designed to test and enhance one's realization, because if fear arises in a terrifying situation, one's realization - whether it be of emptiness, inherent divinity of everything, or non-duality - was merely intellectual, and in order to deal with the intensity of the situation, one has to cut through the conceptuality of fear to attain genuine realization. The presence of these different cutting techniques exemplifies the integrative agenda of the anthology, and how it explores singular practices or ideas as sources of variety, in other words, how the single practice can be varied through applying different Buddhist contemplative orientations, which in this case are the self-sacrifice of a Bodhisattva, self-sacrifice involving creative self-cultivation from mandala practices, forceful subjugation of demons in tantric rites, and the natural letting-go of the Great Perfection.

Liberation Through Wearing

Similarly to the Marvelous Secret, the cycle of the Liberation Through Wearing (*btags 'grol*) presents an interesting point of convergence of many ideas crystallized in the material form of the liberating amulets. However, while the Marvelous Secret brings together numerous contemplative practices, the Liberation Through Wearing conjoins various Great Perfection philosophical ideas, as well as cosmogonic narratives and the practice of direct transcendence, to create the naturally liberating agency of the amulets to be worn. This section will discuss the foundation and background of the amulets, contextualize the cycle in the Seminal Heart literature, and present interpretive argument of how the three elements – the Dzokchen ideas of spontaneous recognition of the already existing enlightened awareness, the efflorescence of visions in direct transcendence and the origin of the Liberation Through Wearing in the first moments of cosmogonic creation – place the cycle in a unique position in the compassionate vision of Samantabhadra.

The Liberation Through Wearing cycle contains ten texts, covering 96 pages (III:185-281). In addition, *The Tantra of Becoming a Buddha by Merely Seeing, Hearing*,

⁴³⁶ GZ V:271-278.

Wearing, or Praying to This Great Tantra devotes 23 pages on the topic (IV: 154-177), including the famous prayer of Samantabhadra (*kun bzang smon lam*) that also has a spontaneously liberating effect. Liberation through wearing embodies the Dzokchen possibility of easy liberation, as it involves detailing the preparation of sacred diagrams and amulets that one can wear, and the great transformative impact wearing such sacred diagrams can have upon a person. Human beings are already Buddhas, and all that is necessary to trigger the process of spontaneous liberation is the recognition of our awakened nature. The idea of our inherent Buddha nature that is readily accessible via methods as simple as recognition is reflected in the possibility of getting enlightened automatically just by wearing, seeing, reading or hearing the tantras and mantras that possess the liberating blessing power. However, the liberation through wearing, seeing and so forth is not instant, but the texts frequently present a disclaimer by stating that the liberation will only occur in the bardo or subsequent lives.⁴³⁷

In addition to the Dzokchen philosophical ideas of spontaneity and easy liberation, the amulets of liberation through wearing draw their power from the narratives of their divine origin in Samantabhadra's compassion and their primordial production in the beginning stages of cosmogonic creation. The easy liberation via the amulets is also connected to the social dimension of yogic communities. The yogis depended on the lay population for material support, and in return provided services in the form of periodic rituals, teachings, blessings, guidance, healing, death rites, divination and so forth. Easy liberation for laity is reflected especially in the possibility of being born in a pure land, retreats of consciousness transference ('*pho ba*) and the amulets of liberation through wearing. However, the amulets were not meant for open distribution, at least rhetorically, but the texts of the Liberation Through Wearing instruct that they should only be given to worthy vessels, or their power is ruined like the fruit of a rotten seed.⁴³⁸

The idea of the enlightening power of amulets springs from the importance of sacred objects in Tibetan Tantric Buddhism in general and in the Nyingma tradition in particular. The Tibetan religious culture is rich in the cult of sacred material, and the objects charged with special power range from statues, thankas and sand mandalas to ritual daggers (phurba), vajras and relics. The importance of relics in Buddhism dates back all the way to the relics of the Sakyamuni Buddha that were considered to contain the actual presence of the Buddha.⁴³⁹ Indeed, many of the sacred objects, such as relics, statues, stūpas and liberatory amulets are thought to have an awakened agency of their own, capable of transferring blessings or sparking realizations and visions in beings that come into contact with them. In the Nyingma tradition, the cult of sacred material assumes a new dimension of meaning with the treasure movement. The earth treasures are the ultimate jackpot of sacred material that bring to light ancient artifacts of wisdom from the royal period, regularly containing not just the yellow treasure scrolls, but also a collection of special items, such as statues, *phurbas*, relics, rosaries, crystals, caskets and amulets. The treasure scrolls, as well as sacred texts in general, are not special just because of the wisdom contained in their pages,

⁴³⁷ GZ III:214.

⁴³⁸ GZ III:235.

⁴³⁹ Germano, Prophetic Histories of Buddhas, Dākinīs and Saints in Tibet, 164.

but the scrolls or texts themselves, as objects, are thought to be saturated with blessing power. In the fourth century, at the time of the twenty-eighth king of Yarlung, Lha Totori, before Tibetan language was written and Tibetans learned to engage with the written content of the texts, the book known as the Awesome Secret was worshipped in the court as a sacred item thought to possess tremendous power.⁴⁴⁰ Ascribing enlightening power to the tantras and mantras contained in the liberatory amulets is only a small step away from the blessing power of certain magical books, or sacred scriptures in general.

The cycle of the Liberation Through Wearing begins with *The First, Middle and Third Testament of the Buddha*, which contains two testaments of Samantabhadra and one from his emanation Vajradhara. The titles of the testaments are very similar to a text that contains three testaments in *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs*.⁴⁴¹ The texts themselves, however, are not identical, although they discuss the same or similar topics. The versions in *The Unimpeded Realization* are longer, more detailed and contain explanations in prose, while the texts in *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs* are largely a collection of citations from the tantras. It seems that these texts in *Gödem's* anthology are expanded versions based on the more simple outlines in *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs*.

The way the texts have been refurbished illustrates both Gödem's indebtedness to the Seminal Heart tradition and his agenda to expand and contextualize the topic in the narrative framework of The Unimpeded Realization. The testaments in both The Unimpeded Realization and The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs contain explanations on direct transcendence, the three gazes and Rushen exercises, as well as the graphic image of the primordial Buddha turning into a mass of light, and his arm appearing from the middle of the light, giving the testaments of the liberation through wearing. The main addition in the testaments in *The Unimpeded Realization* is the narrative framing of Samantabhadra-Vajradhara teaching a multitude of bodhisattvas, *dākinīs* and so forth in Tusita, as well as further transmission narratives that relate how the teachings were disseminated in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods, brought to the human realm by Garab Dorjé, transmitted to Śrī Simha and Padmasambhava and concealed as treasures for Rindzin Gödem. It is also interesting that the teaching scenario in Tusita begins with Vajradhara emanating multicolored light rays, bindus, linked chains and other phenomena of light from his eyes, thus illustrating the accomplishment of direct transcendence. The bulk of these testaments discuss direct transcendence, and liberation through wearing is mentioned only when Samantabhadra instructs to write the tantras down with gold, lapis lazuli and the like, and to wear them on one's body in order to attain liberation.

The cycle of the Liberation Through Wearing in Gödem's anthology also has a text that contains six tantras of Liberation Through Wearing, borrowed directly from *The*

⁴⁴⁰ Kapstein, *The Tibetans*, 42.

⁴⁴¹ The title of the testaments in the two anthologies are: The First Testament that Transmits the Word of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, The Second Testament of the Buddhas: the Descent of the Self-Arisen Letters into the Teaching of the Buddhas, and The Third Testament of the Buddhas Explained in the Exalted Place of Tuşita (GZ III:185-201), and The First Testament of the Buddhas, The Second Testament of the Buddhas, and The Third Testament of the Buddhas, *The Second Testament of the Buddhas*, and The Third Testament of the Buddhas, *The Second Testament of the Buddhas*, and The Third Testament of the Buddhas, *The Second Testament of the Buddhas*, and The Third Testament of the Buddhas, *The Second Testament of the Buddhas*, and The Third Testament of the Buddhas, *The Second Testament of the Buddhas*, and The Third Testament of the Buddhas, *The Second Testament of the Buddhas*, and The Third Testament of the Buddhas, *The Second Testament of the Buddhas*, and The Third Testament of the Buddhas, *The Second Testament of the Buddhas*, and The Third Testament of the Buddhas, *The Second Testament of the Buddhas*, and The Third Testament of the Buddhas, *The Second Testament of the Buddhas*, and The Third Testament of the Buddhas, *The Second Testament of the Buddhas*, and The Third Testament of the Buddhas, *The Second Testament of the Buddhas*, and The Third Testament of the Buddhas, *The Second Testament of the Buddhas*, and The Third Testament of the Buddhas, *The Second Testament of the Buddhas*, and *The Testament of the Buddhas*, and *The Second Testament of the Buddhas*, and *The Testament of the Buddhas*, and *The Second Testament of the Buddhas*, and *The Testament of the Buddhas*, and *The Second Testament of the Buddhas*, and *The Second Testament of the Buddhas*, and *The Testament o*

Seminal Heart of the $D\bar{a}kin\bar{\imath}s$. The texts in both anthologies are identical with only a small variation in the name of the first tantra.⁴⁴² It seems that these six brief tantras are meant to be written down and worn as liberating amulets. The main topic of the tantras is the unique, empty, clear bindu (*thig le*), which is also sometimes called a mustard seed (*tila*). The yogi is instructed to meditate on the bindu, and it is said that everything is made of, arises from and is liberated into the empty bindu, and by knowing this bindu, one will know everything.

In addition to transmission narratives, direct transcendence and empty bindu, the texts of the Liberation Through Wearing in Gödem's anthology give detailed instructions on how to prepare the liberating amulets, what mantras to insert for particular goals, and how the liberating power of the sacred letters can enlighten everyone who comes into contact with them, even animals.⁴⁴³ Some of the texts themselves are also meant to be placed inside the amulets. Most of the mantras are related to the Eight Word Deities (*bka' brgyad*) and the five Buddhas, as well as their specific wisdoms and poisons that are purified. It is notable that the vajra song is also employed in the amulets, and its various parts are connected to the different attributes of Samantabhadra and Samantabhadrī.⁴⁴⁴ In addition, the cycle contains its own brief empowerment that focuses on the five Buddhas and features Samantabhadra as the speaker.⁴⁴⁵

Another major topic of the cycle is cosmogonic creation. I have discussed the cosmogonic narratives of the cycle in the section on narrative, so here it suffice to mention that *The Pith Instruction of the Glorious Samantabhadra: The Way the Liberation Through Wearing Emerges* describes the way sounds and letters are connected to the creation of the universe, and how the tantras and scriptures of the Liberation Through Wearing emerge in the first moments of creation.⁴⁴⁶ Besides this creation narrative, we also have a text that presents Samantabhadra's first person account of his primordial enlightenment upon hearing the various sounds of dharmatā.⁴⁴⁷

In the cycle of the Liberation Through Wearing, the practice of wearing the amulets is intimately connected to the Dzokchen philosophical ideas and narratives of divine

⁴⁴² The empty clear bindu without center or circumpherence: Liberation through wearing (*btags grol stong gsal thig le mtha' dbus med* GZ III:240-241, which is identical to *btags grol snying po'i rgyud* or *btags grol stong gsal tila mtha' dbus bral, The Seminal Heart in Four Parts* X:16-17), The tantra that liberates all through knowing one (*gcig shes kun grol gyi rgyud* GZ III:241-243, *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts* X:17-19), The tantra of one golden seed syllable of Yangti (*yang tig gser gyi 'bru gcig pa'i rgyud* GZ III:243-243, *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts* X:19-20), The tantra of the seed of the conduct of the single son of the Buddhas (*sangs rgyas sras gcig spyod pa sa bon gyi rgyud* GZ III:243-244, *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts* X:20), The tantra of self-emergent awareness (*rang byung rig pa'i rgyud* GZ III:244-245, *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts* X:20-21), and The tantra on the fully perfected great result (*'bras bu yongs rdzogs chen po'i rgyud* GZ III:245-248, *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts* X:21-22).

⁴⁴³ GZ III:215-216.

⁴⁴⁴ GZ III:226-233.

⁴⁴⁵ GZ III:279-281.

⁴⁴⁶ GZ III:203-210.

⁴⁴⁷ GZ III:275-278.

origin. The easy, spontaneous liberation through the amulets is situated in the Dzokchen view of naturalness, spontaneity and the pervasive presence of awakened awareness that simply needs to be recognized. The cycle also connects the practice of amulets to direct transcendence and its ideas of spontaneous visionary effulgence. The amulets draw their power from the spontaneous liberation of direct transcendence. Some of the amulets contain instructions of direct transcendence, thus harnessing the power of the practice. The amulets should also be made, worn and distributed by Dzokchen yogis practicing direct transcendence.

The cosmogonic narratives of the cycle connect the visionary manifestation of divine appearances to the primordial arising of enlightened speech in the form of mantric sounds and letters. Thus, the liberating power of the sacred letters in the amulets comes from their intrinsic relationship to the natural formation of the structures of the universe. The letters, mantras and amulets have an agency of their own, a spontaneously liberating dynamism or creativity (*rtsal*) that is rooted in the power of sacred sounds to produce manifestations in the first moments of the cosmogonic play.

The liberating amulets are also connected to the grand narrative theme of the anthology: the vision of Samantabhadra. The speaker in the texts is Samantabhadra or his emanation Vajradhara, and the primordial Buddha is also the source of the transmission lineage. Samantabhadra's recognition in the first moments of creation is what sparks the manifestation of awakened realities, such as the five Buddhas and divine sounds. In the first moments of creation, the compassion of the primordial Buddha is already displayed in the emergence of the tantras of Liberation Through Wearing that incarnate Samantabhadra's agency. Since the very beginning of cosmogony, the universe is made in such a way that Samantabhadra's compassion can enlighten beings automatically, if they just come into contact with its manifestations of liberating agency.

Samantabhadra's recognition of the divine cosmogonic manifestation as self-display is also the very process that is to be imitated by the yogi in the direct transcendence contemplation. The spontaneous efflorescence is the unifying thread in cosmogony, contemplation and Dzokchen philosophy, in its ideas of creativity and spontaneous unfoldment of liberation. The amulets harness this very idea, which is, of course, the vision of Samantabhadra since the first moments of creation.

Besides the cycle of the Liberation Through Wearing, *The Tantra of Becoming a Buddha by merely Seeing, Hearing, Wearing, or Praying to This Great Tantra* contains five chapters that discuss the topic of getting enlightened automatically (*sangs mi rgya ba'i dbang med*). The text gives three ways to get enlightened automatically: (1) practicing direct transcendence, (2) wearing liberatory amulets, and seeing or hearing the mantras contained in the amulets, and (3) praying, seeing or hearing the prayer of Samantabhadra. Thus, the text makes a further connection with direct transcendence and the liberatory amulets, illustrating how the power of the amulets is drawn from the spontaneous liberation of the visionary practice. The text gives instructions on how the amulets should be made, and the preparation involves ritual consecration with the self-generation as Samantabhadra. This emphasizes the social context of the practice, in which a Dzokchen yogi, who is proficient in the spontaneously liberating practice of direct transcendence, generates the blessings of his mastery into the liberating amulets and gives them to his devotees. Similarly, the

prayer of Samantabhadra gains its proper power from the realization of the yogi. The text states:

When a powerful yogi, who is without confusion and whose awareness is intrinsically clear, prays this powerful prayer, all the sentient beings who hear the prayer will get enlightened in three life times.⁴⁴⁸

The prayer of Samantabhadra is the most open method to distribute the liberatory power of the sacred letters. Unlike the amulets that should only be given to worthy recipients, the text encourages the yogi to generate himself as Samantabhadra and recite the prayer of Samantabhadra so that everyone can hear it during the auspicious days, such as the time of solar and lunar eclipses, earth quakes and equinox. This is said to have a liberatory effect on the entire three realms. Thus, we see how the practices of the liberation through wearing highlight the social position of the master as the source of the amulets and their power, strengthening the ties of the yogis and their devotees through the practice of making and giving out the amulets. The prayer of Samantabhadra, on the other hand, reaches beyond the relationships of masters and devotees to all the people present in the prayers, and ultimately to all sentient beings. In this way, it crystallizes the compassionate vision of Samantabhadra, and presents the only indication of liberatory eschatology in the anthology, in the vision of universal liberation of the three realms.

Conclusion

The main topic of Rindzin Gödem's anthology is contemplation, evident in the numerous cycles focusing on different types of contemplation, each containing a variety of practices. The anthology presents a comprehensive package of contemplative techniques for a Dzokchen yogi ranging from the uncommon preliminaries to the highest visionary practices. The Great Perfection philosophy is implicit in most of the practices, such as how the Dzokchen contemplations discussed in the oral transmissions are intimately intertwined with the philosophical ideas of the Great Perfection. The anthology's contemplative orientation is pronounced in comparison to *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts*, which contains a much larger portion of scholastically oriented texts due to Longchenpa's influence and the scholastic character of *The Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra*.

Gödem's anthology, as well as other Dzokchen anthologies of the Renaissance period, reflect the wealth of contemplative practices coming from different Buddhist traditions developed in India and Tibet. By the fourteenth century, Buddhism had almost two thousand years of history behind it, and numerous philosophical views and contemplative practices had arisen within the parameters of Lesser and Greater Vehicles and various esoteric traditions. While the pristine Great Perfection discarded this astonishing variety of contemplation with its anti-practice rhetoric, the Seminal Heart took the challenge of dealing with the complex field of Buddhist thought and practice by transforming and assimilating many ideas and techniques in the Dzokchen

⁴⁴⁸ GZ IV:177.

context. Thus, the Buddha nature inspires the approach of getting enlightened simply by recognizing the pristine awareness, Yogācāra view on the mind undergirds the idea of self-display, and the tantric theory of inherent divinity in its intricate programmatic mandalic manifestations is transformed to the natural mandalic efflorescence of direct transcendence, bardo visions and cosmogonic display. Gödem's anthology holds a special position in this scheme, as it takes the Dzokchen orientation further than most figures before him, applying it to almost any given practice, such as cutting. The anthology also assimilates and combines various Dzokchen and tantric ideas and practices, such as the subtle body yoga of channels and winds, which is applied just before engaging in the practice of direct transcendence.

The integrative agenda and the skillfully woven character of the anthology is clear in the way all the cycles and texts discussed in this chapter fulfill different contemplative, philosophical, practical and social functions. The preliminary practices of The Five Nails aim to re-define the identity of the aspiring yogi and re-situate him in relationship to the community of Buddhas, deities and sentient beings, as a humble devotee and compassionate charioteer of living beings. The Six Seals discipline the body and mind of the yogi by training him or her with a rigorous practice schedule involving only a couple of hours of sleep. The texts also give instructions on eating, conduct and organizing sessions temporally, aiming to inspire the yogi with the direct voice of Vajravarāhī. The bodily discipline culminates with the control of the winds through the subtle body yoga of channels and winds. The mastery of winds is regarded as essential in the anthology, and the technique is applied repeatedly as the basis of centering one's energies in the subsequent Dzokchen practices. The alchemical practices of essence extraction complete the goal of disciplining the body by presenting methods to prepare and use various ambrosias that enable the yogi to stay in solitary retreats with very little or almost no food, as well as to heal sicknesses. Alchemy is closely connected to the subtle body yogas, because all the alchemical substances and ambrosias are consumed ritually as part of the subtle body yogas centered on different *dākinīs*. Thus, the ultimate goal of alchemy is the soteriological end of inducing and relishing the nectar of one's white constituent at the crown.

The Oral Transmissions of Vairocana are focused on the practice of breakthrough and Dzokchen view. The recognition of pristine awareness in breakthrough is based on establishing a correct view, which includes understanding the superiority of the Great Perfection philosophy. Thus, the cycle contains abundant polemical discussion, establishing the Great Perfection as the supreme vehicle via philosophical arguments, as well as narratives and doxography. The cycle also contains the unusual application of philosophical reflections on the nature of mind, ground and *dharmakāya as* contemplative practices, emphasizing the analytical aspect in the practice of breakthrough, as well as the integrative, assimilating agenda of the anthology. The cycle also functions as a tribute to the Mind Series, because it focuses on the view and does not contain full descriptions of visionary practices. However, the presentation of the Mind Series is strongly colored by the Seminal Heart ideas and approaches, and the cycle contains Seminal Heart practices, such as analogical introductions and bardo yogas.

The Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra are full-blown Seminal Heart works. *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* contains abundant philosophical discussion on the eleven Seminal Heart topics, such as the ground, creation, Buddha

nature, subtle physiology, expanse of manifestation and Dzokchen practice. The Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava is described as the highest and most secret part of the anthology entitled as the Letterless Oral Transmission, pointing to the non-conceptual realization. The cycle discusses the practice of direct transcendence and its parallel processes of visionary manifestation, cosmogonic creation and especially the bardo of dharmatā. The practice of direct transcendence embodies many aspects and concepts of Dzokchen philosophy. The visions are one's own projections, or self-display (*rang snang*), springing from the fertile ground of emptiness laced with awareness (*rig stong*), or empty essence (*ngo bo stong pa*). The visions are spurred by the inherent playful creativity (*rtsal*) of pristine awareness, or the luminous clarity of its nature (*rang bzhin gsal ba*). The matrix of reality is also pervaded by compassion (*thugs rje kun khyab*), which motivates the manifestation of form bodies for the benefit of beings, and gives the philosophical underpinning for the compassionate vision of Samantabhadra.

The oral transmissions are the core of the anthology, not only because they discuss the Dzokchen practices, but also because they integrate the important masters, strands and topics of the Great Perfection. Vairocana was an important figure in the early Great Perfection, so he is incorporated into the anthology as the representative of the Mind Series. Vimalamitra is a more scholastic figure, and thus associated with the only philosophical treatise of the anthology, *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra*, which integrates the eleven Seminal Heart topics with *The Unimpeded Realization*, although nominally classified as Space Series. Padmasambhava is the most prominent master of the oral transmissions, associated with the highest Seminal Heart transmission focusing on direct transcendence. He is also dominant in the other cycles of contemplative practices, receiving teachings from Vajravarāhī in the Six Seals, and featuring as the main deity in the supreme alchemical practice.

The cutting practices of the Marvelous Secret also reflect the integrative agenda of the anthology, due to the very inclusion of these practices in a Dzokchen anthology, and because they are contextualized within the Great Perfection view. The aim of the cutting practices is to test and enhance one's realizations by going beyond fear while practicing in solitary terrifying places. The Dzokchen view is evident in the highest approach to transcend fear, which is simply to realize that it is a form of conceptuality and let go of it. If the natural way is too simple, the yogi is offered a range of tantric and sūtric approaches to eradicate fear. Thus, the cutting practices present an interesting point of convergence of the Great Perfection, normative tantra and Mahāyāna.

The cycle of the Liberation Through Wearing also contains an interesting integrative agenda, but occurring just within the anthology's Dzokchen ideas and practices. The extraordinary power of the naturally liberating amulets embodies the Great Perfection view on natural liberation that can be attained by simply recognizing the pristine awareness, as well as the natural efflorescence of visions in direct transcendence. The amulets frequently contain instructions of direct transcendence, thus harnessing the efficacy of this practice. The amulets also draw their power from their cosmogonic origin: the tantras and mantras of Liberation Through Wearing were produced in the first moments of creation when appearances arose from the subtle essences of sound, and the production of the these liberating letters is a part of Samantabhadra's vision for the world.

The main contributions in the contemplative practices and their associated philosophical ideas pertain to the new ways of combining various well-known elements of practice and thought. The completion stage yogic technique of dissolving the winds in the central channel is employed in the context of Dzokchen practices, particularly the direct transcendence. This distinctive approach reflects Rindzin Gödem's extensive background in normative tantra. The anthology also incorporates cutting in the context of the Great Perfection. The oldest cutting practices in Nyingma works date to Gödem's time period, and at this time, we also have another example of integrating cutting into a Dzokchen anthology, that is, Sangye Lingpa's *Condensing the Realization of the Guru*. Both these anthologies reinterpret the cutting practices in terms of the Dzokchen philosophical view of naturalness and letting go.

The principal contribution of the breakthrough practices of the anthology is to combine the non-conceptual practice of letting be to various analytical reflections on the central aspects of Dzokchen view, such as the nature of the mind, pristine awareness, universal ground and *dharmakāya*. While all these philosophical topics appear commonly in the Great Perfection literature, Gödem's anthology may be the earliest source where these reflections are employed as contemplative practices themselves in the context of breakthrough.

Chapter Six: Rindzin Gödem and Longchenpa

In the literary blooming of the 14th century Seminal Heart, two figures stand out as particularly influential in the tradition: Longchenpa (1308-1364) and Rindzin Gödem (1337-1408). While Longchenpa eventually emerged as much more famous in the modern era, Rindzin Gödem's anthology was more widely read and popular in the centuries after they flourished. What was the relationship of these two exceptional protagonists? Why was Gödem more influential? This chapter aims to further contextualize Gödem's contribution to the tradition by analyzing him in relation to the towering figure of Longchenpa.

In these days, Longchenpa is the single most known author of the pre-modern Nyingma tradition, and his impact to the Great Perfection tradition is unquestioned. Longchenpa's works are regarded in high esteem and studied widely in the Nyingma colleges (*bshad grwa*). His great influence is internalized in the tradition to the extent that many are unaware that Longchenpa's extensive popularity is a relatively recent development sparked by the revelations of Jikmé Lingpa (1730-1798) received in visionary encounters from Longchenpa and the subsequent academic turn of the Nyingma tradition inspired by figures like Mipham (1846-1912). However, in the 14th century, Nyingma Dzokchen audience was not particularly inclined to academic study, but generally focused on ritual and contemplative practice, and the time was not ripe for the sophisticated philosophical treatises of Longchenpa to reach wide circulation.

Rindzin Gödem and his works have not received notable attention among the modern Buddhist and scholarly audience because of the waning fortunes of the Northern Treasures tradition in the last centuries. However, in the centuries following Gödem's treasure revelation, his Dzokchen anthology spread and was studied and practiced among the Dzokchen practitioners in the Nyingma school and beyond. This is not to say that Rindzin Gödem was an unquestionably popular figure in his life time, for although him and his work were greatly venerated in the Nyingma school, he faced bitter criticism from other traditions, especially the Sakyapas, who looked critically upon the treasure movement and other ways of the Ancient Order, deeming them as unauthentic and old-fashioned.

Longchenpa and Rindzin Gödem have many things in common. They both flourished in the same time period, operated in the context of the Seminal Heart, were intimately connected to the revelatory tradition, had strong contemplative inclination, and composed or compiled transmissions centered to Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra. So, why are there such stark differences considering their legacies? The reasons for this are complex, stemming from their different background, education, personalities and activities, as well as the tides of the 14th century Tibet. I shall begin by examining their legacies in order to understand how much of their influence was intrinsic to them as people and literary figures, and how much was a result of contingent factors and fortunes of the time period. The influence of these figures will be discussed in the domains of institutional, incarnational, visionary and literary legacy.⁴⁴⁹ After studying the larger context of the legacies of Longchenpa and Rindzin Gödem, I shall focus on comparing their literary output in the area of the Great Perfection.

Institutional, incarnational and visionary influence

The institutional and incarnational influence of Longchenpa was minimal, because he did not establish monasteries or inspire a line of incarnations (*sprul sku*). He had distaste for institutions and lived his later life in exile in Bhutan, in the seclusion of his retreat center White Skull Snowy Mountain (*gang ri thod dkar*), where he wrote his masterpieces on the Seminal Heart. In addition to the legacy of the retreat center, he only found one temple in Bumthang. His disciples were also not particularly active in founding monasteries and temples. Although Longchenpa was a monk, he gave up his celibacy in Bhutan, and had a relationship with a nun resulting in a male offspring. The sources do not indicate whether this was a corruption of his vow, or a deliberate decision to moisten his visionary and revelatory capacities. The family line of his son continued in Bhutan for centuries. Since Longchenpa and his followers did not establish a monastic institution, there was no demand for a line of incarnations that generally preside over such institutions. We have, however, isolated incidents of several masters claiming to be Longchenpa's incarnations, most notably the Bhutanese treasure revealer Péma Lingpa (1450-1521).⁴⁵⁰

Rindzin Gödem, instead, had a remarkable influence in terms of an institutional power base, prominent transmission lineages via his family and disciples and a successful incarnation lineage. Gödem started the Northern Treasures tradition that initially thrived in a simple retreat center at Mt. Trazang in Jang (*byang*), the site of

⁴⁴⁹ The fourfold model of institutional, incarnational, visionary and literary legacy is suggested by Germano in Klong chen rab byams pa, in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 5194.

⁴⁵⁰ Germano, Klong chen rab byams pa. In *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 5191-5195.

Gödem's treasure revelation. In the end of the 16th century, Jangdak Trashi Topgyel (1550-1603), who was the lineage holder of the Northern Treasures and the father of the third incarnation of Gödem, Rindzin Ngakgi Wangpo, relocated the epicenter of the tradition in Central Tibet, on the northern bank of the Tsangpo river south from the capital of Lhasa. The center started off as a simple semi-nomadic encampment, Evam Chokgar, and in 1632, Rindzin Ngakgi Wangpo established the Dorjé Drak monastery on the same location.⁴⁵¹ Dorjé Drak became one of the six most influential Nyingma monasteries, thus increasing the institutional stability and enabling wide accessibility to the teachings of the Northern Treasures. As related in the first chapter, Gödem also founded several temples and opened hidden lands in Sikkim and southern Tibet.

Rindzin Gödem was a married tantric yogi, and thus the Northern Treasures tradition started off as a family enterprise closely connected to Rindzin Gödem's paternal clan Degyin, the Dowapa clan of his maternal uncle, and the Sé clan of his main childhood teacher. The importance of familial relations is reflected in the early transmission of the tradition, for Gödem passed his legacy to three main recipients: his wife Lama Péma, son Namgyel Gönpo and his disciple Dorjé Gönpo. Thus, we have three lineages coming from Gödem known as the secret consort (gsang yum) lineage, son lineage and disciple lineage. We do not know much about secret consort lineage, but apparently it continued for centuries, because the three lineages were united in the 17th century by Péma Trinlé. The son lineage suffered the early death of Namgyel Gönpo at the age of 25, but flourished under his cousin and Gödem's nephew, Dorjé Pel, and his disciple, Tsenden Jampa Shenyen, who were based at the retreat center of Glorious Mountain, which is a site south from Mt. Trazang associated with the treasure tradition of Zangpo Drakpa, who passed the key to the treasure to Gödem. The disciple lineage thrived under the patriarchy of Dorjé Gönpo and his nephew and disciple Tsenden Ngawang Drakpa. The son and disciple lineages were united in the 15th century by Sangye Pelzang, who was the disciple of both Tsenden patriarchs.⁴⁵²

Besides the disciple lineage, Gödem also had many other disciples, such as Kunpang Dönyö Gyeltsen, who passed the lineage to Thangtong Gyelpo. This famous saint and engineering genius is said to have lived for well over hundred years, and he built many iron bridges across rivers in Central Tibet, thus creating safe passages for local population and wandering yogis. The biography of Thangtong Gyelpo relates an occasion when he went to request for the Northern Treasures transmission from Kunpang Donyö Gyeltsen. The night before, Kunpang had a prophetic dream about Padmasambhava, who referred to himself as both the concealer of the treasures that Kunpang had, and a future disciple, who was going to protect disciples in Tibet for a long time and should be given the transmission. Because of this dream, when Thangtong Gyelpo arrived the next day, Kunpang regarded him as an emanation of Padmasambhava, received him with great respect, and transmitted him all the treasure teachings including *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity*.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵¹ Valentine, Lords of the Northern Treasures Tradition, 173.

⁴⁵² Valentine, a forthcoming article on the early history of the Northern Treasures.

⁴⁵³ Khenpo Chöying, Byang gter chos byung (forthcoming).

The narrative of Sangdak Dechen Lhundrup, who was another disciple of Kunpang Dönvö Gyeltsen, also deserves to be related, because it features the presence of Gödem's Dzokchen anthology. Sangdak Dechen Lhundrup is famed to have attained the rainbow body ('*ja lus*), which entails dissolution of the physical body into light upon enlightenment. The Religious History of Treasure Revealers states that when Sangdak Dechen Lhundrup was roaming in the isolated valleys of Dritsam ('bri mtshams) and Paro (spa gro) engaged in the visionary contemplation of direct transcendence, one day his disciple came to call him for a meal, but found only his torn monk's robe still sitting in the rishi posture. He looked inside and encountered nothing by twenty fingernails and a wisp of good scent. Dechen Lhundrup also left behind his personal copies of The Unimpeded Realization and The Self-Emergent, Self-Arisen Primordial Purity. The volumes of the anthology and Dechen Lhundrup's robe are said to have contained unusual healing powers, curing even the brother of a nomad thief, who stole them from a female disciple of the rainbow bodied master.⁴⁵⁴ Thus, we see that in addition to the son and disciple lineage, the tradition was transmitted via many individual lines and itinerant yogis, some of whom became outstanding visionary masters.

The continuity of the tradition is also embodied in Gödem's incarnation lineage, although it became a stable practice of recognizing *tulkus* (reincarnate masters) at young age only in the end of the 16^{th} century. As Jay Valentine points out, initially the transmission of the Northern Treasures flourished as a clan-based endeavor involving Gödem's family and close disciples. Lekden Düjom Dorjé (1512-1580⁴⁵⁵), who is regarded as the second incarnation Rindzin Gödem, was born more than a century after Gödem's death, and was recognized only at mature age. This speaks for the relative unimportance of the *tulku* tradition in the transmission of authority during the first two centuries of the tradition: the family oriented master-disciple model was sufficient. It is also interesting that some sources, such as Guru Trashi, include a figure before Lekden Dujom Dorjé, namely Jamyang Lama, who was born in the mid 14^{th} century.⁴⁵⁶

Unlike the ill fate that befell on some of the representatives of the Dalai Lamas' reincarnate line, Gödem's line of *tulkus*, known as the Dorjé Drak Rindzins, flourished under good auspices. His incarnations lived until mature age, emerging as prominent masters, each in their own right. Many of Gödem's incarnations revealed further treasures, such as Lekden Düjom Dorjé, as well as Jamyang Lama, thus ensuring the vitality of the revelatory tradition, for newly revealed treasures are considered to be moist with the fresh breath of the $d\bar{a}kin\bar{s}$, i.e. to possess particular blessing power, and thus held in great esteem. Besides Gödem's incarnations, there were other treasure revealers in the tradition, such as Lekden Düjom Dorjé's brother, the famous Ngari Penchen Pema Wangyel (1487-1542), who was also a great scholar. Unlike Rindzin Gödem and many other *ngakpa* figures of the early years of the

⁴⁵⁴ Khenpo Chöying, Byang gter chos 'byung (forthcoming). Chöying cites a passage from The Religious History of Treasure Revealers (gter ston chos 'byung) composed by Karma Migyur Wangki Gyelpo from Zablung.

⁴⁵⁵ Lekden Düjom Dorjé's death date is controversial. This date is suggested by Valentine, *Lords of the Northern Treasures Tradition*, 165.

⁴⁵⁶ Valentine, Lords of the Northern Treasure, 96.

Northern Treasures, Ngari Penchen was a shaven-headed monk, and required his followers to observe strict vows of conduct, thus contributing to the increasingly monastic orientation of the tradition. As the monastic focus grew, the *tulku* system became more established, and Rindzin Ngakgi Wangpo (1580-1639), the III Rindzin Gödem, was the first *tulku* to be recognized as a young boy.

Ngakgi Wangpo is also the first incarnation of Gödem, who did not discover any existing treasures, although he is given the title of an honorary revealer. The tradition was moving away from the time of roaming tantric yogis prone to visionary revelation, and becoming established as an influential major monastic institution preserving and transmitting the treasure teachings via prominent lines of incarnations that replaced the family and clan-based lineages. A notable step in this process is when Ngakgi Wangpo transferred the position of lineage holder to his disciple, Tendzin Norbu. Earlier, Ngakgi Wangpo's father, Trashi Topgyel had placed Ngakgi Wangpo's cousin in charge of the Northern Treasures tradition, because Ngakgi Wangpo was leading itinerant life style and was not going to assume leadership until his father passed away. Instead of following the pattern of familial succession, when Ngakgi Wangpo became the head, he ensured the fortunes of the emerging incarnational transmission of power by pointing Tenzin Norbu as his future successor. The master-disciple connections emerging through various lives were also at play here, because Tendzin Norbu's previous incarnation, Śākya Zangpo from Yolmo, was a teacher of Ngakgi Wangpo's previous incarnation, Lekden Düjom Dorjé, as well as his brother Pema Wangyel. Thus, the representatives of the important incarnation lines of Dorjé Drak Rindzins and Yolmo tulkus switched the roles of master and disciple several times and took turns in acting as the lineage holders of the Northern Treasures.457

In addition to Gödem's incarnation line and the Yolmo *tulkus*, the Northern Treasures tradition has had as many as eleven other lineages of reincarnate lamas, such as the Taklung and Chubzang *tulkus*. Some of these *tulkus*, as well as other religious figures of the tradition, founded monasteries and hermitages, and through time these affiliates of Dorjé Drak grew in numbers totaling at least thirty-three monasteries, nunneries and hermitages in Central Tibet alone, eight in Eastern Tibet and one in Ladakh at the time of the Chinese invasion.⁴⁵⁸

During the rule of the Dalai Lamas, Dorjé Drak enjoyed periods of close connection to Lhasa further consolidating the esteem of Gödem's legacy. For example, the Great Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682) was a patron to the Northern Treasures tradition and the Dorjé Drak monastery, and he received the Dzokchen transmission of *The Unimpeded Realization* from Rindzin Ngakgi Wangpo. During the fourth incarnation of Gödem, Péma Trinlé (1640-1718), we again have an interesting case of the roles of the master and student being reversed, as the Great Fifth became the teacher of Péma Trinlé, and ordained him as a monk.

Thus, we can see that while Longchenpa's institutional and incarnational influence was marginal, Gödem's heritage flourished into a huge monastic institution and a

⁴⁵⁷ Valentine, *Lords of the Northern Treasure*, 176-180.

⁴⁵⁸ Introduction to *Rdzogs pa chen po dgongs pa zang thal and Ka dag rang byung rang shar*, 2-5.

towering line of incarnations. This naturally had an effect to their literary influence. Rindzin Gödem's revelations and Dzokchen works were much more easily accessible and well-known due the prestigious monastery of Dorjé Drak and other religious power bases that were vital and blooming with their reincarnate lamas, khenpos, monks and tantric practitioners, as well as ongoing rituals, transmissions and empowerments. The sites of Rindzin Gödem's institutions are also located mainly in Central Tibet, rendering them much more viable places to visit than Longchenpa's retreat center in the distant Bhutan. Thus, merely from the institutional and incarnational view point, it is not surprising that the literary legacy of Gödem was more popular than that of Longchenpa for many centuries.

Before delving into the content of Gödem's and Longchenpa's Dzokchen works and their literary influence, I will briefly discuss the visionary influence of these two cultural giants. While Longchenpa did not have much incarnational influence, his visionary influence is considerable. Many Nyingma yogis and saints have had visions and dreams about Longchenpa, most notably Jikmé Lingpa, whose treasure revelation, *The Seminal Heart of the Great Sphere (klong chen snying thig)*, was inspired by a series of visionary encounters with Longchenpa. Jikmé Lingpa's treasure is one of the most widely studied and practiced Dzokchen revelations since his time, so in this way, Longchenpa's visionary influence has been considerable.

In contrast, Rindzin Gödem does not feature in any major visionary encounters. Undoubtedly some yogis had visions or dreams of him, but, as far as I am aware, these are not described in the literature that has come down to us. However, several prominent figures in the Northern Treasures tradition, such as Jamyang Lama, Lekden Dorjé and Ngari Panchen, revealed treasures, which is an enterprise that is frequently guided by visions and dreams, and was certainly inspired by Gödem's example. Similarly, Gödem's successful visionary quest for hidden lands sparked many others to embark on a similar visionary journey. For example, the influential Northern Treasures master, Śākya Zangpo (1475-1530) discovered a hidden land in Yolmo, Nepal, where he built a temple called Tsuti, and his prominent line of incarnations became established there.⁴⁵⁹ A later visionary yogi of the Northern Treasures, Garwang Dorié (1640-1695), also set out on a revelatory quest to find a treasure that was found and reconcealed by Rindzin Gödem in the hidden land of Kyimolung. After wandering in Kyimolung as a crazy yogi (*smyon pa*) practicing cutting (*gcod*) guided by dreams and visions of local deities who were entrusted as guardians of the treasure by Gödem, Garwang Dorjé eventually unearthed the treasure.⁴⁶⁰ Thus, we see that even though we lack accounts of direct visionary encounters of Rindzin Gödem, his example as a wandering yogi guided by visions in his revelatory activities, and his communion with the sacred territory of hidden lands, continued to inspire similar visionary journeys and discoveries.

⁴⁵⁹ Sardar, Buddha's Secret Gardens, 101.

⁴⁶⁰ Sardar, Buddha's Secret Gardens, 113-115.
Literary influence and contemplative legacy

The literary influence of both Longchenpa and Gödem has been outstanding. It is notable that Longchenpa's literary heritage never inspired an exegetical tradition commenting on his works. Germano outlines two reasons for this outcome: Longchenpa's philosophical expertise and nuance were unusual in the Nyingma tradition until the pre-modern times, and the emphasis on the treasure revelation (instead of self-declared authorship) directed the attention of the tradition to the imperial period authors. ⁴⁶¹ However, despite the lack of direct exegesis, Longchenpa's influence on the Great Perfection tradition has been prevalent. His systematization of the tradition created a foundation of intellectual mastery and clarity that contributed to the final maturation and crystallization of the Seminal Heart as the paradigmatic Dzokchen tradition. Thus, it has impacted most Seminal Heart literature since his time. The direct influence of Longchenpa can be seen in Rindzin Gödem's Dzokchen anthology and in the revelation of Jikmé Lingpa. Moreover, Longchenpa's exoteric writings inspired the massive corpus of Mipham (1846-1912), which forms the basis of the Nyingma academic curriculum today, and provided the literary foundation for the ecumenical (ris med) movement of Eastern Tibet.⁴⁶²

Unlike Longchenpa's corpus, Gödem's literary legacy inspired considerable commentarial literature. The most famous among the commentaries on Gödem's ritual Mahāyoga corpus are those of Péma Thrinlé, who supplemented all the major rituals in Gödem's treasure with additional introductory and concluding sections, and composed exegetical works commenting on the meaning. Gödem's Dzokchen anthology also inspired a number of practice commentaries (*nyams khrid*). I am currently aware of four such commentaries. *The Island of Liberation* by Zurchen Chöying Rangdröl (1604-1669) is the main commentary used in the Dorjé Drak monastery in exile today. The transmission of the anthology was well established in the Kaḥthog monastery, which is why we have two commentaries composed by Kaḥthog lamas: *Wheel of Light* by Kaḥthog Rindzin Tsewang Norbu (1698-1755) and *Elucidating the Practice* by Trashi Gyatso. In addition, there is a lucid commentary, *Fulfilling the Hopes of the Fortunate Ones* authored by Tsultrim Zangpo (1917-1959) from the Khordong monastery.

Undoubtedly Gödem's corpus influenced many treasures that were revealed after his time, but the exact manner and extent of influence is beyond the scope of this study. A few remarks can, however, be offered. It seems that several of Gödem's approaches were picked up by treasure revealers after him, such as his method of including cutting as part of Dzokchen anthologies and incorporating philosophical reflection in the practice of breakthrough.⁴⁶³ For example, Jikmé Lingpa's revelation explicitly combines philosophical reflections as part of breakthrough.

In addition to the institutional, incarnational, visionary and literary domains, Longchenpa and Rindzin Gödem could also be compared in terms of their

⁴⁶¹ Germano, Klong chen rab byams pa. In *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 5194.

⁴⁶² Germano, Klong chen rab byams pa. In *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 5194.

⁴⁶³ These topics are related in Chapter Five, in the sections on Marvelous Secret and Oral Transmissions of Vimalamitra.

contemplative and ritual legacies. Since Longchenpa did not compose much ritual literature, his ritual legacy is insignificant, while naturally Rindzin Gödem with his colossal ritual corpus has a very important ritual legacy. Gödem's rituals are also widely practiced in the Northern Treasures monasteries in India, Tibet and Nepal. Assessing Longchenpa's contemplative legacy is a difficult task, and would require further research. What can be said for now is that since most of Longchenpa's works are scholastic treatises, they are not transmitted and practiced as contemplative practices, excepting for The Seminal Heart in Four Parts, which is, however, only partly composed by Longchenpa. However, the empowerment of The Seminal Heart in Four Parts is difficult to come by, and it seems that it is not a widespread practice tradition. Longchenpa's major contemplative contribution is not in the domain of actual contemplative techniques that are transmitted and practiced, but in the intellectual understanding of the practices, because his works are excellent in presenting the context, structure and detailed intellectual analysis of the contemplative practices. Rindzin Gödem's contemplative legacy is again notable, and the transmission of The Unimpeded Realization and The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity along with other practices and rituals has been going on in numerous Northern Treasures and other Nyingma monasteries since Gödem's time until today. As mentioned above, some of the famous recipients outside the Northern Treasures tradition include the Fifth Dalai Lama and Thangtong Gyelpo. A detailed study of the history of the transmission is an important topic for future research that would shed light on the influence and later dynamics of the tradition.

Literary relationship of Gödem and Longchenpa

Before embarking on a more detailed comparison of the literary relationship of Rindzin Gödem and Longchenpa, a few remarks of the corpus of Longchenpa and Rindzin Gödem are in place. As discussed in the first chapter, Gödem's corpus as a whole is centered on Mahāyoga, and his Dzokchen revelation, *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Arisen Self-Emergent Primordial Purity*, form only a small part of it. Longchenpa's extant literary corpus, however, is predominantly about the Great Perfection, although some of his Dzokchen works contain extensive sections on exoteric Buddhist practices, or present a systematic survey of the Buddhist path from the beginning up to the Seminal Heart, thus demonstrating his extensive learning in Buddhist philosophy and sūtra-based practice. For example, *The Great Chariot (shing rta chen po)*, discusses the sūtric, as well as the tantric, foundation of the Buddhist path in great detail, and only gets to the Great Perfection toward the end of the work.

Longchenpa's Dzokchen writings are also much more extensive. While Gödem's Great Perfection anthology takes up 2945 pages, Longchenpa's *Seven Treasuries* (*mdzod bdun*) alone are 6880 pages, *The Trilogy of Quintessences (yang tig gsum)* is 3707 pages, *The Trilogy of Resting at Ease (ngal gso skor gsum)* 1921 pages and *The Trilogy of Natural Freedom (rang grol skor gsum)* 439 pages. Thus, we can see that while Longchenpa was most of all a prolific Dzokchen author, Rindzin Gödem was a tantric figure with extensive ritual inclination in his corpus. It is also notable that unlike any other figures of the Nyingma school at this time period, Longchenpa was in favor of self-declared authorship, while Gödem brought out his works through the

mysterious mechanism of treasure revelation: none of the texts in the Adzom Chögar edition of his Dzokchen anthology bear his name as the author.

Rindzin Gödem is heavily indebted to Longchenpa and the Seminal Heart tradition in general. The doctrinal landscape of Gödem's anthology is that of the Seminal Heart with its visionary practices, funerary concerns and elaborate cosmogony. Gödem also builds upon Longchenpa's systematization of the tradition, continuing in Longchenpa's footsteps, and systematizing the tradition in his own way, by synthesizing the various strands and transmissions of the Great Perfection, and integrating various tantric practices in the Dzokchen context. I shall first discuss Gödem's indebtedness to the tradition evident in his textual borrowing, and then analyze the synthesizing impetus evident in Gödem's anthology. The occasions when Gödem synthesizes and integrates various elements of normative tantra in the framework of Dzokchen are also the instances where we find interesting differences in the intellectual content of the Great Perfection works of Rindzin Gödem and Longchenpa.

Rindzin Gödem's literary commitment to the preceding tradition is tangible in *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra*. The text stands as a tribute to Longchenpa and the Seminal Heart, because it is directly modeled after Longchenpa's *Treasury of Words and Meanings* and possibly Khépa Nyibum's *Eleven Topics of the Great Perfection*. Since I have been unable to locate the copy of *The Eleven Topics*, the extent of similarity between these texts is unclear to me, but what is evident at this point is that *The Treasury of Words and Meanings* and *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* are strikingly similar, containing the same topical outline and many identical passages. *The Treasury* is more sophisticated and philosophical and elaborates on the topics considerably more, while *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* is more simple and down to the point.⁴⁶⁴

Gödem's indebtedness to the tradition is also obvious in the textual borrowing of the anthology. *The Unimpeded Realization* contains eleven texts that are directly adopted from *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs* revealed by Tsultrim Dorjé, and compiled into *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts* by Longchenpa. Ten of these texts are ritual texts (tantric empowerments, *sādhanas* and an offering ritual) and one contains six tantras of Liberation Through Wearing. The fact that especially ritual texts akin to normative tantra are borrowed from this earlier collection indicates Gödem's willingness to base the ritual foundation on the tradition, while the anthology's Dzokchen texts, which are ranked superior, seem to be his contributions.

We should note that while in the modern world this type of textual borrowing is plagiarism, in Tibet it was both acceptable and commonly practiced. Citations, passages and even entire texts were recycled through multiple works. This situation arose from the different view on individuality and authorship: ultimately it was the ideas and doctrines that mattered, not the illusory self that wrote them down. Thus, in the light of Tibetan customs, Gödem's textual borrowing is a rather natural phenomenon, which points to his faithfulness to the Seminal Heart tradition, in

⁴⁶⁴ See Chapter Five, The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra, for a more detailed analysis of these works.

addition to giving us invaluable clues to the content of his library and his sources of literary inspiration.

The systematizing and synthesizing incentive of Rindzin Gödem is particularly clear in the way he brings together the important Dzokchen figures and strands of transmission. While *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts* compiled and partly composed by Longchenpa combines the transmissions attributed to Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava, Gödem's anthology does the same, but adds the transmissions attributed to Vairocana, thus bringing together all the three major Dzokchen figures that the tradition views as the sources of transmission in the imperial period. Gödem's synthesizing approach is also clear in his effort to combine the Three Series, and in the way the Mind and Space Series are presented through the lens of the Seminal Heart of the Pith Instruction Series.⁴⁶⁵

The synthesizing impetus of Rindzin Gödem is also vivid in the way he integrates the wind technology of the completion stage practices in the Great Perfection context. The integration of wind technology is also an example of a notable difference in intellectual content between Longchenpa and Rindzin Gödem. As discussed in the Chapter Three, it is not uncommon to include completion stage practices in Dzokchen anthologies, but the way Gödem discusses them is distinctive, because he integrates them into the Dzokchen practices of the anthology, especially the practice of direct transcendence (thod rgal). Longchenpa never approaches the completion stage practices in this way, but keeps them separate from Dzokchen contemplation. For example, in The Treasury of Words and Meanings, Longchenpa discusses the completion stage yoga as one of the many preliminaries to the Dzokchen practice without attaching that much importance to it and without referring to it in the subsequent sections.⁴⁶⁶ Gödem's anthology instead, regards the yoga of channels and winds as a necessary technique to have mastered before engaging in the visionary practices of direct transcendence, and the technique is also applied in connection with direct transcendence. This is evident not only in the texts that discuss the path structure, but also the Dzokchen texts on direct transcendence themselves contain abundant advice on uniting or pulling the subtle winds just before practicing direct transcendence. Gödem's approach speaks for his ritual inclination and deep appreciation of Mahāyoga tantric practice, while Longchenpa is, in a way, more Dzokchen oriented, and views normative tantra clearly as inferior.

Another indication of Gödem's synthesizing and integrative approach is to combine the practice of cutting (*gcod*) in *The Unimpeded Realization*. Longchenpa does not combine cutting in his Great Perfection works, but he presents it separately, as his collected works contain a volume on cutting. However, some of the cutting practices presented in the texts have a Dzokchen approach on cutting.⁴⁶⁷ It is somewhat in doubt though whether Longchenpa actually is the author of these texts.⁴⁶⁸ In any case, in addition to Sangye Lingpa's treasure, Gödem's anthology presents one of the

⁴⁶⁵ I have discussed this topic in the Chapter Five, in the Oral Transmission of Vairocana.

⁴⁶⁶ Treasury of Words and Meanings, 326-327.

⁴⁶⁷ The Collected Works of the Omniscient Longchen Rabjam: The Cycle of Cutting (kun mkhyen long chen rab 'byams gyi gsung 'bum/ gcod kyi skor), vol.26, p. 276.

⁴⁶⁸ The Collected Works of the Omniscient Longchen Rabjam: The Cycle of Cutting, vol.26, p. 5.

earliest inclusions of cutting in a Great Perfection anthology. *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity* contain several cutting practices, some of which are very wrathful, involving torching the demons that appear.⁴⁶⁹ However, in general, cutting is presented from the point of view of Dzokchen, because the entire practice is framed in the discussion on eradicating conceptuality. The best method to eradicate conceptuality is not to apply antidotes or suppress it, but to just let it be, or let it dissolve of its own accord.⁴⁷⁰

Framing the cutting practices in the Dzokchen context of letting go of conceptuality is indicative of Gödem's general pattern of integrating and reinterpreting other practices and vehicles from the point of view of Dzokchen. Although the Great Perfection is the effortless vehicle at the pinnacle of all the vehicles of effort, the Dzokchen view trickles down to all the vehicles below, saturating them with a different spin of wisdom and spontaneity, and integrating them philosophically into the Great Perfection. Similarly to re-framing the practices of cutting, the deity yoga practices taught in the *sādhanas* teach the Dzokchen view of the unity of emptiness and awareness,⁴⁷¹ and the subtle body yogas of the Six Seals are re-envisioned with the Dzokchen goal of recognizing awareness (*rig pa*).⁴⁷²

The inclusion of the cutting practices in the anthology, as well as Gödem's appreciation and extensive application of the completion stage yogas, certainly contributed to Gödem's anthology's influence. Cutting practices were popular, and the completion stage yogas were widely practiced by Dzokchen yogis, who probably appreciated Gödem's integration of these techniques in the context of Dzokchen.

The third difference in intellectual content between the Dzokchen works of these two literary masters is Gödem's incorporation of philosophical reflection in the practice of breakthrough. While Longchenpa's works contain descriptions of these same philosophical topics – differentiating the mind and awareness, and distinguishing the ground from the *dharmakāya* – he discusses them in separate sections on the Dzokchen view, and does not present them as part of the breakthrough contemplation, like Gödem does.

Literary style

The literary style of Longchenpa's and Rindzin Gödem's Dzokchen works is fairly different. Longchenpa's writings are philosophical and sophisticated, while Gödem's style is more simple and easy to understand. Longchenpa's works contain numerous references to philosophical ideas and schools, and are replete with etymological explanations, extensive citations of Buddhist literature, refutations of opposing views, and thorough drawn-out analysis of the subject matter. Gödem's anthology presents the same topics in much less words. He does not favor scholastic style, and employs

⁴⁶⁹ GZ IV:528-530.

⁴⁷⁰ GZ IV:542-548.

⁴⁷¹ GZ I:339, 345, 359, 378-379.

⁴⁷² GZ I:603-604.

citations only to a limited extent. Refutations of opposing views appear only in *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra*. While Longchenpa is concerned with elucidating the topic down to the last detail, thus resulting often in tediously long explanations, Gödem is not that concerned with definitive clarity: his way is that of inspiration with elegant and poetic expressions. Usually Gödem's concise explanations are clear and down to the point, thus making it easy to understand the topic with much less effort than when reading for example Longchenpa's *Seven Treasuries*. Sometimes, however, Gödem's beautiful poetry leaves the reader wonderstruck, but wanting for more precise instructions. This may be one reason that the tradition encourages the aspirants to study Gödem's anthology only after acquainting oneself with other Dzokchen works. When one is familiar with the context, the occasional cryptic expressions are understood more easily.

The stylistic differences arise from multiple causes. Firstly, these Dzokchen authors expose their ideas via different genres. Longchenpa wrote mainly scholastic treatises, although *The Trilogy of Quintessences* contains diverse genres, and some of his works, such as *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, contain root verses of beautiful poetry, augmented by an autocommentary in prose. Gödem's Dzokchen anthology instead, is revealed literature, so it contains a multitude of genres: tantras, *sādhanas*, meditation manuals, dialogues, empowerment rituals, narratives and so forth.

Secondly, Longchenpa and Gödem did not write to the same audience. Longchenpa's nuanced and refined style is targeted to learned academic audience, while Gödem's inspirational style is written especially for practitioners, wondering yogis, lay tantric lamas (*sngags pa*), hermits and ordinary monks and nuns, who did not have academic background. Most of Nyingma religious audience was of this type of non-academic persuasion, which obviously contributed to the popularity of Gödem's anthology. Thirdly, the differences in style also arise from the distinctive character and background of these authors. Longchenpa was a monk with outstanding scholastic learning gained from his seven years of study of logic and epistemology in the preeminent college of Sangpu Neutok, while Gödem did not attend to any scholastic education systems, but was a married tantric yogi in pursuit of treasure revelation and hidden lands, and had a ritual-oriented family background as a son of a renowned Vajrakīla practitioner.

The distinctive style of Longchenpa and Gödem sparks different kind of understanding. Even though both authors discuss the same Seminal Heart topics, the form of their representation varies, thus giving rise to particular nuances in the way the meaning is understood. As Martha Nussbaum emphasizes, the form of the presentation matters. Style and content are organically related, so we have to account for them together. For example, when Rindzin Gödem presents teachings of direct transcendence in a text that is structured as a dialogue between Padmasambhava and Yéshé Tsogyel, and contains Tsogyel's personal visionary experiences of the practice, the impression on the reader is entirely different from the third person, scholastic, information-centered explanation of Longchenpa in *The Treasury of Words and Meanings*. As an example, I shall quote passages from both texts. The citations are extensive in order to give a proper sense of the way the topic is discussed, so I ask the reader to be patient. The reader should also bear in mind that even though these passages capture something essential about the differences between these authors, they both have a large Dzokchen corpus, which contains texts of various styles. For

example, Longchenpa also writes about direct transcendence in verses of elegant poetry, and Gödem's anthology contains more doctrinal explanations of direct transcendence, such as the passage cited in Chapter Five in the section on the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava. However, even the doctrinal explanations by Gödem are notably simpler than those of Longchenpa.

Longchenpa writes on the first two visions of direct transcendence:

1. The vision of the direct perception of reality (*chos nyid mngon sum kyi snang ba*)

The "reality" (*chos*) is the ultimate reality of awareness' essence, which is "itself" (*nyid*) the suchness without transmutation or change, devoid of contrivance or adulteration. "Directly perceived" (*mngon*) refers to its own radiance that is visible to your sensory faculties. "Three" (*sum*) is its external display to naked vision via the three key points - the gateway, objective sphere and winds. "Vision" (*snang ba*) indicates that this runs from the initial intensification of the expanse and awareness up to the appearance of three nuclei linking together. *The Tantra of Unimpeded Sound* explains it as following:

The vision of the direct perception of reality Emerges via the gateway of the sensory faculties, And is clear in the cloudless sky."

2. The vision of experience's intensification (nyams snang gong phel)

This topic includes a brief discussion of its essence, and an expansive explanation of its nature. As for the former, "experience" (*nyams*) includes the dyad of mental experiences and visionary experiences (*nyams snang*). Mental experiences include *the experiences of joy and bliss in your mind* as bliss, clarity and non-conceptuality increase and decrease, as well as *mental experiences similar to dying* which are unstable and changing experiences of light like fireflies, clouds, misty fog, smoke, mirage, star, moonlight and butter lamps. Here [in direct transcendence, we refer to] visionary experiences. *The Tantra of Unimpeded Sound* states:

[The visionary experiences] increase like the waxing moon,

With visions and experiences in conjunction with each other."

"Intensification" (*gong phel*) is [these experiences and visions] becoming ever greater in extent.

The expansive explanation of this second vision is begun with *The Tantra of Unimpeded Sound*:

"In the vision of experience's intensification

The colors of primordial wisdom are emitted externally,

Vertical pillars and horizontal beams of light,

Bindus, and the various enlightened bodies within them

Manifest in the objective sphere of coarse appearances"

Thus there are the visions of both primordial wisdom's colors and shapes, from which we will begin with the visions of its colors.

(1) The color of the mirror-like wisdom dawns like a white appearance due to the Vajra family's purity, and that itself is the white radiance of Vajra Aksobhya shining brightly. (2) After that, the deep blue color of the wisdom of reality's expanse shines forth due to the purity of the Buddha family, and Vairocana's blue-black radiance dawns. (3) The color of the wisdom of equality shines in a yellow banner due to the Ratna family's purity, while Ratnasambhava's intense yellow radiance dawns like molten gold. ---

Then, through the pure wisdom winds, (1) the mirroring wisdom shines in vertical lines of light, and in dependence upon that the intensification of experience arises. (2) The emergence of the wisdom of equality's horizontal beams of light means that you are approaching the exhaustion of confused appearances. (3) Then, the discerning wisdom dawns in patterns of tiles of light, and this is the time when conceptual proliferation ceases. (4) The dawning of the accomplishing wisdom in a tent-sized extent arises from the primordial wisdom's natural radiation that is clear in its particular aspects. (5) Then, the dawning of the wisdom of reality's expanse that lights up the entire region arises from the cessation of coarse conceptuality.

At this point, as you become free from the bonds of the manifest five poisons, they subside leaving a mere latency, and thus you go beyond the karmic operations of samsara. As for the phases in which these visions develop on the path, for those of superior diligence the interval between each phase is five days; for those of intermediate diligence it is seven days; and for those of lesser diligence twenty one days - the visions manifest in these respective temporal sequences as the previous manifestation ceases and the subsequent manifestation-phase takes its place. For a moment the visions remain in the space between these colors and the subsequently manifest shapes of primordial wisdom.

Those initial manifestation- phases having then subsided, the five primordial wisdoms again shine forth in the visions of their shapes. (1) The shape of mirror-like wisdom arises in a strainer-like form, which emerges from the colors' excellent intensification. From gaining experiential familiarization with this there shines forth a multi-eyed design, which derives from the preliminaries' optimization. (2) Then the wisdom of equality dawns as embroidered lace-work hanging straight down, arising from purifying the training of your internal winds (*rlung*). Its subsequent manifestation as embroidered lace-work looping back up derives from preliminaries' purification and eradication. (3) The subsequent dawning of discerning wisdom's flower bouquets emerges out of the gazes' non-wavering, while thousand petalled lotuses manifesting therein arises from your experiential mastery of the preliminaries.---

At this time, since the self of the five aggregates [physical form and so forth] is transcended, you transcend any doubts as to whether there is a self in this transitory world. Blessed by your purified vision of reality (*dharmatā*), you are approaching liberation from the five elements' bondage. These visions also take place in varying temporal phases in accordance with the practitioner's relative diligence: for the best, this succession of visions takes place in three day phases; for the intermediate in seven day periods; and for the lesser in fourteen day periods, as one vision comes into being, and one ceases.⁴⁷³

A text in Gödem's anthology, *The Ten Steps of the Profound Key Points* describes Yéshé Tsogyel's initial experience of the direct transcendence visions:

⁴⁷³ Longchenpa, *The Treasury of Words and Meanings*, 390-393. My translation owes considerably to David Germano's unpublished translation of *The Treasury*.

The great guru said: "Tsogyel, in order to reach the intrinsically abiding path, it is important not to be mistaken about the meditative path. In order to reach the state of being inseparable from Samantabhadra, you have to reach the fresh undistracted awareness. When you are establishing the uncontrived awareness in your experience, rely on solitariness and meditate until you have integrated it in your experience."

Tsogyel let her body, speech and mind be in the meaning of the abiding reality without fabrications in the cave in Samye, Chimphu, for seven months. The four visions arose, and she realized the primordial ground as devoid of any names. ---

She came out of the cave unimpededly through the rock. She passed through seven great mountains unimpededly, and went through eleven great rivers without obstructions. Then, in the middle of a shady forest on a large plain, there were five hundred elephants grazing. She thought: "Are they able to maintain uncontrived cognition?" She placed her palm on their heads, and let be in the equipoise. Thus, the elephants lay down at the same time. Their eyes were open and staring directly in front, [so she understood that they could maintain uncontrived cognition]. ---

Then, she went to west, and came to Bodh Gaya in India. She passed through all the temples of Bodh Gaya unimpededly, and went to the Bodhi tree. Thinking that it is also empty, she penetrated it unimpededly and arrived in the middle of it. An experience of clarity and emptiness arose nakedly, and she abided in the middle of the tree for seven days in that experience. She perceived the places of the three lower realms, and generated limitless compassion.

The white rock of the Vajra Seat was below her, so she tried to pass through it unimpededly, but was not able to do that. Thinking that this is also an appearance, and all appearances are empty, she tried to pass through it unimpededly again, but slid past it like sweeping a hand across silk curtains. The Vajra Seat is such that one can slide past it, but one cannot pass through it. Wondering as to why she could not pass through it at the present moment, she tied the rock [the Vajra Seat] with her belt. Carrying it in her hand, she flew to the sky. The entire Bodh Gaya was lifted into the sky, and all appearances were without nature. Five hundred young boys wearing white silk came down from the sky, and said: "Yogini with great yogic discipline, don't deprive the heart of the residents of the Rose Apple Continent." Saying this they held onto her hands.

Then, I released both my belt and the Vajra Seat at the same time, so the seat went back to its place. The leader of the five hundred young boys said: "Yoginī, come to my land." I went holding onto the arms of the young boys, and we arrived at the heaven of Joyous (dga' ldan). I passed through unimpededly all the palaces and castles in the heaven. Then, I went to the top of Mt. Meru, thought about looking at the formless realm, and went flying into the sky. It seemed that ten days passed, and I came to a place in the sky that was so full of five kinds of jewels that there was no room to pass.

I though I will pass through it, but slid on the side like sweeping a hand across silk curtains. I looked, and upon a sphere of five lights, there were Buddhas in equipoise on the verge of attaining enlightenment. They were uninterruptedly joyful amidst melodious sounds. Their eyes, which were like the light rays of the sun, were unbearable to look at. The white form of a Buddha that was above me and without ornaments said: "Yoginī, your yogic discipline is once again great. This is the dharmadhātu of Akanistha. You do not conceptualize empty appearances, but you should still generate diligence concerning concentration. After three instances of the *dharmakāya*, 25 years

of the nirmānakāya and 1800 human years from now, you will come to this place with a noble retinue of 600 000 beings." ---

Then, I came to the cave in Chimphu. I rested in the meaning of abiding reality for two months, so emptiness and appearance were inseparable. Appearances did not obscure emptiness, and emptiness did not cover appearances. Thinking that appearance and emptiness are inseparable, I looked up, and saw the dharmadhātu as empty and insubstantial unimpededly. I looked directly in front, and saw the realms of the world vividly and without obstructions. I looked down, and saw the places of the lower realms without obscurations unimpededly. There, the dyad of appearance and emptiness was inseparable. ---

I examined it in my awareness, and understood the substance of both samsara and nirvana as equally indeterminate. The essence is empty, but they dawn as various manifestations. The Buddhas had uninterrupted compassion and wisdom. The sentient beings had uninterrupted karma and suffering. The appearances of the nature and essence were clear. Realizing them, one is a Buddha. Not realizing them, samsara appears. ---

In this way, she rested in equipoise in the meaning of non-duality for one month. Then, she went to the presence of the guru Padmasambhava, and asked about the meaning of the four visions: "O, nirmāṇakāya, the son of the Victors! When I released my mind and let it be in the natural state, the four visions dawned in this way."

She explained the above visions in detail, so he said: "Tsogyel, listen! The confused appearances of sentient beings, the appearances of suffering and dualistic grasping, are called linked chains. When a yogi releases his mind and lets it be without grasping, he cuts off the root of confusion completely, so the manifestations of awareness in emptiness are unobstructedly clear. Compassion to the karmas of the six destinies is generated upon that. Upon that generation, he can issue forth emanations of compassion. The uninterrupted compassion thinks of the uninterrupted suffering of the six destinies. Tsogyel, your experience is called the first experience of meditative absorption (samādhi), and the initial realization of reality (dharmatā). If it arises in a dream, it is the experience of inferior yogis. If the vision arises insubstantially, it is the experience of middling yogis. If one can establish this kind of cognition the moment one recollects it, it is the experience of superior yogis. The five hundred elephants that arose in your first experience in eastern India mean that as soon as the abiding reality is introduced to you, your awareness will transmigrate to the thoroughly pure land. Your form aggregate will be tranquil like an abandoned stone. ---Passing through all the realms of the world unimpededly means that you are not blocking or fabricating appearances, so you can pass through the four elements without obstructions. Staying in Bodh Gaya means that without relying on the four elements below the Vaira Seat, you will abide in the uncompounded Vajra Seat. ---

In this way, an experience that arises without mental grasping is the way to generate the four experiences. Everything that the conceptual intellect of sentient beings does is a worldly impermanent illusion-like phenomenon. Everything that arises in the experience of uncontrived awareness is the indestructible vajra. The way it dawned for you is the experience of superior yogis. The time of dawning is the experience of middling yogis. You are a $d\bar{a}kin\bar{n}$ of the Vajra family, so connect both appearance and emptiness now in this moment!"

The lady of Kharchen drew the boulder of Samye with her right hand, and she pulled the empty sky with her left hand, and made three intricate knots, so the guru said: "Tsogyel, you encountered emptiness and appearance inseparably for the benefit of sentient beings; that is the generation of the first experience of dharmatā. So don't be separate from that experience!"

"You still have the four enemies of engaging in the aggregates. (1) If you think that you do not have to exert yourself in the night sessions and be watchful, and that there is no higher teaching than this, the enemy of fixating on the visions will come. You still have to make the six enhancements of the experience."

Gödem's presentation highlights Nussbaum's point that emotion is valuable. When the reader has an emotional response, such as when reading novels, the information contained in the text is remembered much better. The emotion creates a space of openness, a felt dimension, which causes the intellectual content to take root in a much deeper way. While Longchenpa's sophisticated writings mostly speak to one's reason, Gödem's inspirational style speaks to the emotion, generating feelings of admiration, marvel, faith and devotion, as well as identification with the struggles of Yéshé Tsogyel as an aspiring disciple, for the beginning part of the text describes Yéshé Tsogyel's hardships as she is contemplating the topics that Padmasambhava presents her, and not having much success initially. This type of approach that instills identification, inspiration and emotion, is a highly skillful technique to impress the content upon the reader.

Another indication of Gödem's inspirational style is the way tantras are employed in the anthology as an important venue to express philosophical ideas. Naturally philosophy features as a topic in many texts, such as the Oral Transmissions of Vairocana, but many of the philosophical discussions and ideas are contained in the numerous tantras, which take up as many as 528 pages, 18 % of the anthology. In comparison, *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts* only contains 74 pages of tantras, which is 1% of the compilation, and obviously Longchenpa, being a self-declared author, did not compose any tantras. The tantras of Gödem's anthology discuss the philosophical topics in the context of Buddha-voiced narrative scenarios, such as Samantabhadra teaching Vajrasattva in the pure land of Akanistha. Framing the philosophical discussion in the format of tantra, as a dialogue between divine figures, endows the topic with a sense of authority and meaning, and makes it easier and more elevating to read for the Nyingma audience, most of whom were not inclined to read sophisticated scholastic literature.

Gödem's simple and inspiring style that involves tantras as a venue of philosophical expression undoubtedly contributed to the popularity of his anthology. The character of inspiration is also present in the distinctive narrative theme of the anthology: the vision of Samantabhadra. The grand project of Samantabhadra to help the world, including the way it incorporates the reader as the destined audience of the teachings, is a source of great inspiration and another element to the anthology's esteem.

Some of the essential differences between Longchenpa and Gödem are captured by Bakhtin's ideas of unitary language and heteroglossia. A literary work characterized by unitary language contains only one voice, while heteroglossia refers to a multitude of voices. Thus, from this viewpoint, Longchenpa's works that are narrated from his distant third person perspective are characterized by a much more unitary voice than Gödem's anthology, which contains pervasive heteroglossia. The different genres of

the anthology – rituals, meditation manuals, tantras, dialogues, narratives, prophecies, oral transmissions and so forth – contain different atmospheres and narrating voices, and a single text also has a multitude of voices belonging to different divine and mundane agents. The voice also changes when a style changes, ranging from poetic, playful or profound to serious, informative, preaching, inspiring, caring, polemic, ominous and so forth.

According to Bakhtin, novels always contain heteroglossia, even if told with the single voice of a narrator, thus rendering a true unitary voice almost an impossibility. This applies to Longchenpa as well, for his works also contain heteroglossia, as he speaks with the voice of a yogi, a scholar or a master, and employs various styles of prose and poetry. Some of Longchenpa's works also contain narratives with various figures, and even dialogue, such as the fascinating dialogue between Longchenpa and a female medium possessed by Vajravarāhī. However, compared to Rindzin Gödem's anthology, the level of heteroglossia is much lower, and Longchenpa's works contain a sense of unity held together by his literary voice. The heteroglossia in Gödem's anthology is ubiquitous, and brings a sense of privileging plurality. Many views of different nuances are allowed, some views even conflicting. Samantabhadra's profound cool voice is not the same as Vajravarāhī's wild dakint voice, or Yéshé Tsogyel's humble human voice.

The permeating heteroglossia in Gödem's anthology accommodates the intricacy, even messiness, of existence, and brings color and richness to the work. This kind of messiness and fluidity of human experience is also evident in citations above: Longchenpa's standard idealized description of the visions is quite different from the narrative of Yéshé Tsogyel's experience. While Gödem's anthology too contains idealized descriptions, which are, unsurprisingly, much simpler that Longchenpa's explanations,⁴⁷⁴ his work also contains this example of sprawling, fluid, individual variation occurring in Yéshé Tsogyel's direct transcendence experience.

Conclusion

Longchenpa and Rindzin Gödem are arguably the two greatest literary figures in the 14th century Seminal Heart tradition, which is why their relationship is of considerable interest. In the modern world, Longchenpa is the single most famous author in the Nyingma tradition, while Gödem has remained relatively unknown. However, Longchenpa's popularity is a recent phenomenon influenced by Jikmé Lingpa's revelation and the significant rise of scholasticism in the Nyingma school since the time of Mipham. In the centuries after Longchenpa and Rindzin Gödem flourished, Gödem's Dzokchen works reached much wider circulation. The reasons for this are complex, but could be described in terms of four aspects: institutional legacy and lineage, fortunes of the time period, literary style and intellectual content.

Longchenpa was a highly educated monk and a literary genius of unprecedented character in the Seminal Heart tradition, but since he had a strong distaste for

 $^{^{474}}$ See a cited passage in the Chapter Five, the section on the Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava.

institutions, he did not found one, which greatly decreased the possibility of continuing success. Rindzin Gödem instead established a tradition with an institutional power base that continued to spread and transmit his treasures. The tradition started of as a family and clan based enterprise at Mt. Trazang, and flourished into a prestigious monastery, Dorjé Drak with close connections to the rule of the Dalai Lamas, and housing Gödem's influential line of reincarnations. The success and prominent position in the religious map of Tibet significantly increased the accessibility of Gödem's treasures.

The fortunes of the time were also not favorable to Longchenpa's sophisticated masterpieces of Dzokchen literature, because they were not easily accessible to the post-renaissance Nyingma audience, who was not scholastically educated at large and was heavily oriented to ritual literature and practice. The Nyingma audience of the time was much more receptive to Gödem's simple and inspiring literary style and approach. Gödem's corpus at large is also predominantly focused on ritual, so his treasures provided an outstanding ritual supply capable of fulfilling all the ritual needs present in Tibetan religious communities and among individual practitioners. Gödem's prominence in the field of ritual certainly contributed to the popularity of his Dzokchen anthology. Longchenpa's corpus instead, while overlapping Gödem's works in the area of the Great Perfection, does not contain much ritual literature, but has a strong exoteric inclination to sūtra based Buddhist philosophy and practice, which, although important, was not the primary concern of the Nyingma audience at that time.

Longchenpa was an older contemporary of Rindzin Gödem – their life spans overlap for almost three decades – and indeed, we can observe Longchenpa's influence in Gödem's Dzokchen anthology. Gödem continues Longchenpa's systematizing efforts by synthesizing the Three Series and the transmissions attributed to the three major Dzokchen master of the imperial period: Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Vairocana. The anthology also contains eleven texts found in *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs* demonstrating Gödem's indebtedness to this earlier treasure collection compiled by Longchenpa. In addition, *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* in Gödem's anthology is substantially similar and partly identical to Longchenpa's *Treasury of Words and Meanings*.

While Gödem builds upon the intellectual foundation created by Longchenpa, the elements and manner of synthesis in his anthology are characteristic to him. Gödem's deep appreciation of normative Buddhist tantra is evident in his integration of the subtle body yogic technique of uniting the winds in the Dzokchen practice of direct transcendence. The incorporation of the wrathful practices of cutting in the Dzokchen context of the anthology reflects Gödem's family background in the wrathful rites of Vajrakīla. Gödem embraced the wrathful aspects of Buddhist tantra, and was also a wrathful master in terms of his character, which is described as wild and fierce. The appreciation and integration of these normative tantric Buddhist elements and techniques undoubtedly contributed to the influence of Gödem's anthology among the Nyingma practitioners steeped in tantric Mahāyoga traditions.

The personal style of Gödem is also evident in the narrative integration of the anthology via the unimpeded vision of Samantabhadra, or Samantabhadra's intention

to benefit sentient beings with his emanations and the teachings they introduced, most notably *The Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra*. This overarching narrative theme provides a new level of integration that encompasses also the reader as the destined recipient of Samantabhadra's vision/realization (*dgongs pa*), thus creating a strong sense of belonging and inspiration – a significant element in its appeal to the readership. The inspirational approach directed to practitioners is also evident in the anthology's large number of tantras, which are employed as a venue of presenting philosophical topics. These Buddha-voiced texts create a very different atmosphere of philosophical discussion compared to Longchenpa's tedious scholastic style. Furthermore, the anthology also contains distinctive inspirational approaches to discuss contemplative practices in the context of transformation narratives, which present for example Yéshé Tsogyel's journey to enlightenment via the practices of breakthrough and direct transcendence.

Thus, in addition to the prominence of the Northern Treasures tradition due to its stable institutions, transmission and incarnation lines, the content and style of Rindzin Gödem's anthology were also elemental in its success. The anthology contains all the important Seminal Heart topics and practices compiled in an artfully integrated whole that is much shorter than Longchenpa's Dzokchen writings, is written in simple, clear and beautiful language, and is filled with fascinating and inspiring narrative elements.

Concluding remarks

Rindzin Gödem's Dzokchen anthology, *The Unimpeded Realization* and *The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity*, is one of the landmarks of the Seminal Heart tradition. It was very important in the history of the Great Perfection tradition, and in the centuries after it was revealed, it was more influential than the works of Longchenpa. Part of the reason lies in Longchenpa's poor institutional legacy, while the Northern Treasures flourished into a prominent tradition, which secured the fame and accessibility of Gödem's anthology among the Dzokchen audience. Longchenpa's sophisticated scholastic style and distaste for ritual also rendered his work inaccessible or less appealing and relevant to the Dzokchen audience that did not have strong scholastic education and were invested in ritual and contemplative practice.

Gödem's anthology continues the Seminal Heart tendency to integrate and transform tantric practices and elements. After the rhetoric of naturalness and pristine orientation of the Mind Series, the Seminal Heart incorporated the rich world of tantric deity practices, but transformed them through the Dzokchen view of spontaneity and naturalness, giving rise to the direct transcendence contemplation and the parallel efflorescence of mandala deities in the bardo and cosmogonic creation. This development of integrating normative tantra and Dzokchen is continued in Gödem's work in several ways. The completion stage technique of uniting the subtle winds in the central channel is applied in the context of Dzokchen meditation, and the Dzokchen view is applied to almost every tantric practice of the anthology: rituals employ Great Perfection terminology, completion stage practices of the Six Seals are ultimately aimed at realizing awareness, and cutting (gcod) practices are

fundamentally colored by the inclusion of a distinctive Dzokchen style cutting, involving letting go of fear.

Gödem's anthology is also deeply indebted to the Seminal Heart tradition, especially Longchenpa and *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs*. Eleven texts of the anthology are directly adopted from *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs*, and *The Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra* is modeled just like Longchenpa's *Treasury of Words and Meanings*. Gödem also continues Longchenpa's systematizing and synthesizing agenda, by integrating the transmissions of the famous imperial period Dzokchen masters, Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Vairocana, as well as incorporating cutting in the context of the Great Perfection. The three masters are also associated with the Three Series of the Great Perfection, Mind Series (Vairocana), Space Series (Vimalamitra) and Pith Instructions Series (Padmasambhava), thus presenting the anthology as covering the entire history of the Dzokchen tradition, although the Mind and Space Series are viewed through the lens of the Seminal Heart of the Pith Instruction Series.

In general, the vast variety of the anthology's texts and topics form a carefully integrated literary whole, where the meaning of individual texts, topics and practices gets redefined by virtue of them being located in the context of this anthology. The main integrating element are the different types of narratives and the three main agents of the narratives: Samantabhadra, Padmasambhava and Rindzin Gödem. The most important narrative theme is the unimpeded vision of Samantabhadra (*kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa zang thal*), which is Samantabhadra's compassionate plan to help the world, embodied in the title of the anthology. The cosmogonic narratives introduce Samantabhadra and his compassionate vision as the tantras of the Liberation Through Wearing emerge in the first moments of creation for the benefit of beings. While Samantabhadra is in the beginning of the transmission, his vision also entails active involvement with the world via his emanations, such as Vajrasattva, the Buddha Śākyamuni and even Padmasambhava, who brings the teachings (or vision) of Samantabhadra to Tibet.

Padmasambhava is at the center of the transmission narratives, and he also features prominently in the biographical stories of transformation and the wrathful narratives, while Rindzin Gödem appears at the end of the narrative journey, in the prophecies. The symbolic polarity between Samantabhadra on one hand and Padmasambhava and Gödem on the other hand creates an interesting contrast in the anthology. Samantabhadra is associated with the metaphysical, gnostic purity and luminous, natural manifestations of the pure lands, while Padmasambhava and Gödem have complicated relationships with spirit and human agents involving ritual, effort and coercion. Yet they are part of the vision of Samantabhadra reaches the mythical land of dharma, India, and the present day world of the readers, Tibet.

The biographical narratives of transformation present a fascinating case of integrating narrative, philosophy and contemplation, because they describe experiences of Dzokchen meditation. The texts are structured as dialogues between a disciple and master, that is, Padmasambhava and Śrī Simha, as well as Yéshé Tsogyel and Padmasambhava. They relate a disciple's journey to enlightenment via the unfolding experiences of breakthrough and direct transcendence, and contain abundant philosophical discussion on the nature of reality. In this way, the transformation

narratives bring together and make alive all the anthology's teachings on Dzokchen philosophy and contemplation.

Besides integration through narratives and agents, the anthology is integrated philosophically via the pervasive application of the Great Perfection view and terminology, appearing even in *sādhanas*, subtle body yogas and cutting practices. In addition, we have notable examples of contemplative integration that also illustrate Rindzin Gödem's distinctive contributions. The completion stage technique of uniting and dissolving the subtle winds (prāna, rlung) in the central channel is treated with unusual appreciation for a Dzokchen work, because this technique is to be applied in many contexts, such as cutting, alchemical practices and, notably, just before engaging in the practice of direct transcendence. Moreover, cutting itself presents an interesting case of integrating the natural Dzokchen approach of non-dual conduct with wrathful tantric methods of subjugating demons and the Mahāyāna bodhisattva practice of viewing demons as one's parents and offering one's body as self-sacrifice. The cutting practices are also related to other contemplations via their function as a method to test and enhance one's realizations, because it is thought that if a yogi has genuine realization of emptiness, compassion, non-duality or one's identity as a deity, s/he does not experience fear in terrifying circumstances. Should fear arise, the yogi is given various Mahāyāna, tantric and Dzokchen techniques to transcend it.

In addition to Gödem's contributions in the areas of narratives, cutting and integration of subtle body yoga with such practices as direct transcendence, Gödem's anthology also contains a distinctive approach to breakthrough, that is, the practice contains several analytical meditations, such as differentiating the superficial movements of the mind from the deeper presence of pristine awareness and distinguishing the universal ground from the *dharmakāya*. While these topics are present in the Seminal Heart philosophy prior to the fourteenth century, Gödem's anthology may be the earliest source where they are employed as contemplative practices in breakthrough training.

The focus of this dissertation has been to analyze the internal dynamics and distinctive contributions of Gödem's anthology. However, much remains to be done concerning the relationship of the anthology to the preceding Dzokchen tradition. Here, I have mainly examined the anthology vis-à-vis *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts* and works of Longchenpa, while a more thorough analysis of the earlier literary sources, such as *The Seventeen Tantras* and *The Hundred Thousand Tantras of the Ancient Ones*, is beyond the scope of this work. Gödem cites these collections in his anthology, so we may ask as to how much exactly is he influenced by these collections? Is there direct textual borrowing? What other sources is Gödem drawing from?

Another important venue of future research is the transmission and influence of the anthology from Gödem's time to the present. I have offered some preliminary observations on this topic in the Chapter Six, but many important questions remain unanswered, such as how widespread exactly was the transmission and practice of Gödem's anthology. Which Nyingma monasteries transmitted it? What other commentaries on the anthology do we have? Which prominent figures practiced the Dzokchen teachings of the anthology? What happened to the transmission of the cycle of the Six Seals? How did the anthology influence the Dzokchen collections that were

revealed after it? Having elucidated the contents and contributions of Gödem's anthology, I hope to inspire further research on the later transmission of this important work.

The Seminal Heart visionaries are among the most creative and fascinating thinkers in the history of the Buddhist tradition, which is evident in Gödem's anthology's engaging view on the nature of reality and perception: compassion is inherent in the very matrix of reality, and there is an active, caring involvement of primordial divine awareness in the history of the world. This view is not only highly radical in the context of Buddhism, but also immensely positive and inspiring, especially since the audience is included in this vision of Samantabhadra, as predestined to encounter and be transformed by the vision. Thus, Gödem's anthology participates in the creation of the Seminal Heart tradition, not only by integrating transmissions, philosophical ideas and contemplative practices, but also by its beautiful vision for humanity.

<u>Appendix 1</u>

List of texts in The Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra and The Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity in the Adzom Chögar Edition

Reproduced from prints from the A 'dzom Chos sgar blocks carved at the beginning of the 20th century through the efforts of A 'dzom 'brug pa rin po che 'Gro 'dul dpa' bo rdo rje

Abbreviations used in this appendix:

The text is mentioned in the 5 th Dalai Lama's <i>Received Teachings</i>
(gsan yig). The number is the page number where the text is mentioned
in The Received Teachings.
The Fifth Dalai Lama classifies this as belonging to the Oral
Transmissions of Padmasambhava
The Fifth Dalai Lama classifies this as belonging to the Oral
Transmissions of Vimalamitra
The Fifth Dalai Lama classifies this as belonging to the Six
Seals of Vajravarāhī
The Fifth Dalai Lama classifies this as a root tantra
The Fifth Dalai Lama classifies this as a supplementary tantra
The texts marked by SY are found also in the Nechung edition of The
Unimpeded Realization compiled by Śākya Yarphel (the number and
letters, such as 10.tha, refer to the numbering of the Nechung Śākya
Yarphel texts in the Appendix 2)

Volume I:

(27 texts, 20 mentioned by DL, 5 not mentioned by DL, 2 by Adzom Drukpa)

1. Registry (them byang) (1-2)

2. ka: (DL, 238) The Great Synoptic Exposition of the Lineage History that Generates Faith (yid ches brgyud pa'i lo rgyus stong thun gyi spyi chings chen mo) (3-25)

3. kha: (DL, Padma, 245) The Key to the Wisdom Mind – The Prophetic Certificate of the Precious Oral Transmission (snyan brgyud rin po che'i lung byang ye shes thugs kyi lde mig (27-36, SY 10.tha)

4. ga: (DL, Padma, 239) The Prophetic Certificate of the Profound Dharma Which Teaches the Effortless Vehicle (rtsol med kyi theg pa ston pa zab mo chos kyi lung byang) (gzhung khrid skor) (37-51, SY 11.da)

5. nga: (DL, Padma 239) A Religious History of the Threefold Teachings of Secret Mantra (gsang sngags kyi bstan pa rnam gsum gyi chos 'byung) (53-75, SY 17.tsa)

6. ca: (DL, Padma, 239) The Key to the Precious Prophecy, Which is the List Certificate of the Six Oral Transmissions (snyan brgyud drug gi tho byang lung bstan rin po che'i lde'u mig) (77-90, SY 12.na)

7. cha: (DL, rgya drug, 250) The Inscription About Him Who Has the Right Karma (las can gyi them byang) (91-97, SY 16.ma)

8. ja: The Divisions of the Five Profound Empowerments (zab mo dbang lnga'i dbye ba) (99-103, SY 20.dza)

9. nya: (DL, 232) The Elaborate Vase Empowerment (spros bcas bum pa'i dbang) (105-156, SY 22.zha)

10. ta: (DL,232) The Non-Elaborate Secret Empowerment (spros med gsang ba'i dbang) (157-167, SY 23.za)

11. tha: (DL, 232) The Exceedingly Non-Elaborate Insight Wisdom Empowerment (shin tu spros med shes rab ye shes kyi dbang) (169-173, SY 24.'a)

12. da: (DL, 232) The Utterly Non-Elaborate Suchness Empowerment (rab tu spros med de kho na nyid kyi dbang) (175-181, SY 25.ya)

13. na: The Presentation of the Four Ripening Empowerments in a Waterfall Easy to Recite (smin byed dbang bzhi 'don bder chu 'babs su bkod pa (dbang chog) (183-325)
Composed by Adzom Drukpa

14. pa: Supplications to the Lineage (brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs) (327-329)

15. pha: The External Actualization of the Five Families: The Purification of the Vessel and Elixir Right Where They Stand (rigs lnga'i phyi sgrub snod bcud gnas dag) (331-375, SY 6.khi, 7.khu, 11.gu, 13.ge, 14.go, 15.ngi)

(15.1) The External Actualization of the Five Families (rigs lnga'i phyi sgrub) (332-338, SY 6.khi)

(15.2) The Internal Actualization of the Five Families: The Ocean of Accomplishments (rigs lnga'i nang sgrub dngos grub rgya mtsho) (338-340, SY 7.khu)

(15.3) The Actualization of the Mandala (da la'i bsgrub pa) (340-342)

(15.4) The Actualization of the Vase in the Empowerment Actualization (dbang sgrub bum sgrub) (342-343)

(15.5) The Self-Generation of the Threefold Empowerment of the Body Mandala of Hayagrīva (rta mgrin lus dkyil dbang rnam gsum gyi bdag bskyed) (343-346)

(15.6) The Wish-Fulfilling Gem: the Manifest Realization of the Dakinī (da ki'i mngon rtogs yid bzhin nor bu) (346-364, SY 11.gu)

(15.7) The Key to the Mantras of the Dākinī (dā ki'i sngags kyi lde mig) (364-365, SY 14.go)

(15.8) The Secret Actualization of the Dākinī: The Treasure Vase of Attainments (mkha' 'gro'i gsang sgrub dngos grub gter gyi bum pa (mkha' 'gro ma'i nor sgrub rin chen gter gyi bum pa) (365-371, SY 15.ngi)

(15.9) Pinpointing the Key Points of the Time [Visualization and Mantra] of the Dakinīs, and the Topmost Key Point, the Soul Stone (dā ki'i dus gnad gnad 'bebs shis spyi gnad bla rdo) (371-375, SY 13.ge)

16. ba: The Enlightened Activities of the Five Families and Dākinī Arranged in Notes for Ease of Recitation (rigs lnga dang mkha' 'gro'i phrin las rnams 'don bder zin bris su bsdebs pa) (377-395)

- Composed by Adzom Drukpa

17. ma: (DL, Padma, 242) Presenting Offerings for the Five Victor Families (rgyal ba rigs lnga'i mchod 'bul) (397-406, SY 8.khe)

18. tsa: (DL, Padma, 242) The Offerings of the Group of the Five Families (rigs lnga'i tshogs mchod) (407-411, SY 9.kho)

19. tsha: (DL, rgya drug, 247) The Rosary of Offerings of the Activity Ritual of the Dākinī of the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po'i mkha' 'gro'i las byang mchod phreng) (413-453, SY 18.ngo)

20. dza: (DL, rgya drug, 247) The Great Perfection Wheel of the Body Which is the Locus of the Channels (rdzogs pa chen po rtsa gnas lus kyi 'khor lo) (455-481, SY 25.che)

21. wa: (DL, 248) The First of the Six Profound Seals of the Vajravarāhī:: The Guide on the Yoga of the Four Sessions on the Vows of the Body, Speech and Mind (rdo rje phag mo'i zab rgya drug gi dang po lus ngag yid kyi dam bca' thun bzhi'i rnal 'byor gyi khrid (rtsa ba rin chen khang bu'i man ngag drug rim par yod) (483-488, SY 23.chi)

22. zha: (DL, rgya drug, 248) Secret Pith Instructions on the Ritual Stages of the Dākinī (mkha' 'gro'i las rim gsang ba'i man ngag) (489-521, SY 22.co)

23. za: (DL, 249) Pith Instructions on the Six Seals of the Temporal Calculations of the Dākinī (mkha' 'gro ma'i dus kyi rtsis rgya drug gi man ngag) (523-547, SY 20.cu)

24. 'a: (DL, 246) The First of the Six Profound Seals: The Tantra of the Enlightened Activities of Vajravarāhī's Joy (rdo rje phag mo'i dgyes pa phrin las kyi rgyud zab rgya drug gi dang po (zab rgya skor) (549-577, SY 19.ci)

25. ya: (DL, 248) Commentary on the Ritual Stages of the Yoga's Actualization: The Precious Ornament that is the Commentary of the Mother Vajravarāhī (rnal 'byor sgrub pa'i las rim gyi 'grel pa/ yum rdo rje phag 'grel ba rin po che'i rgyan) (579-597, SY 24.chu)

26. ra: (DL, 249) Pith Instructions on the Key Points of the Channels and Winds in the Six Profound Seals of Vajravarāhī (rdo rje phag mo'i zab rgya drug gi rtsa rlung gnad kyi man ngag (phag mo'i gsang ba'i zab rgya yang zer ro) (599-622, SY 21.ce)

27. la: A Guide Text on the Profound Seals of the Vajravarāhī (rdo rje phag mo'i zab rgya'i khrid yig) (623-645, SY 27.ji)

28. sha/sa/ha/a: Removing Hindrances Relating to the Nuclei (thig le'i gegs sel) (647-654)

Volume II:

(28 texts, 20 mentioned by DL, 6 not mentioned by DL, 2 by Adzom Drukpa)

1. Registry (them byang) (1-2)

2. ki: (DL, 232) The Profound Empowerment to Awareness's Dynamism (rig pa rtsal gyi dbang zab mo) (3-31, SY 27.la)

3. khi: (DL, Vimala, 232, 245) A Ritual for the Great Perfection Empowerment Composed by Vimalamitra (rdzogs pa chen po'i dbang gi cho ga slob dpon bi ma mi tras mdzad pa) (33-40, SY 21.wa)

4. gi: (DL, Vimala, 232, 245) The Precious Empowerment of the Enlightened Mind: The Nucleus of the Oral Transmission (snyan brgyud kyi snying po thugs kyi dbang rin po che) (41-60, SY 26.ra)

5. ngi: (DL, Vimala, 232, 245) The Empowerment of the Great Perfection View of Definitive Meaning (rdzogs pa chen po nges don lta ba'i dbang) (61-64, SY 29.sa)

6. ci: (DL, Vimala, 232, 245) The Empowerment of Awareness's Intrinsic Clarity (rig pa rang gsal gyi dbang) (65-68)

7. chi: (DL,Vimala, 232, 245) The Empowerment of the Gnostic Crown Ablution (ye shes spyi blugs kyi dbang) (69-71)

8. ji: (DL, Vimala, 232, 245) The Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection Empowerment of the Crown Ablution of the Victors' Skillful Means (yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po rgyal thabs spyi blug gi dbang) (73-89)

9. nyi: An Arrangment of These Special Empowerments for Liturgy (khyad par gyi dbang rnams bklags chog tu bkod pa) (91-189)
- Composed by Adzom Drukpa

10. ti: Auspiciousness (bkra shis) (191-195)

11. thi: A Supplement on the Peaceful and Wrathful (zhi khro'i lhan thabs) (197-199)

- Composed by Adzom Drukpa

12. di: (DL, Padma, 242) The Enlightened Activities of the Spontaneously Present Peaceful and Wrathful Deities of the Direct Perception of the Great Perfection of Reality (rdzogs pa chen po chos nyid mngon sum zhi khro lhun grub kyi phrin las (dang dzab bskul byang gcig)) (201-244, SY 10.gi)

13. ni: Arousing the Tutelary Deity (thugs dam bskul ba) (245-251)

14. pi: The Good Oral Instruction on the Supreme Practice of the Visualization Stages in the Approach and Actualization of the Infinite Peaceful and Wrathful deities (zhi khro rab 'byams kyi bsnyen sgrub kyi dmigs rim grub mchog zhal lung bzang po) (253-268)

15. phi: Pulling Up from the Sites of the Six Life Forms of Cyclic Existence (rigs drug 'khor ba gnas 'dren) (269-299)

16. bi: (DL, Padma, 243) The Commentary on the Empowerment to Awareness's Creativity (rig pa rtsal gyi dbang gi 'grel pa) (301-323, SY 28.sha)

17. mi: The Means for Actualizing the Guru (bla ma'i sgrub thabs) (325-334, SY 5.ko)

18. tsi: (DL, Vimala, 246) The Three Spikes of the Key Points – A Guide Text Composed by Vimalamitra (khrid yig gnad kyi gzer bu gsum pa bi ma la mi tras mdzad pa) (335-352, SY 2.tu, 3.te, 4.to)

19. tshi: A Guide Text on the Direct Perception of Dharmatā of the Unsurpassed Exceedingly Secret Great Perfection (rdzogs pa chen po yang gsang bla na med pa chos nyid mngon sum gyi khrid yig) (353-392, SY 5.thi)

- Chapters:
- 1. preliminaries
- 2. actual practice (dgnos gzhi)
- 3. the empowerments that ripen the unripened (ma smin pa smin par byed pa'i dbang)
- 4. the esoteric precept the liberates the ripened (smin pa grol bar byed pa'i man ngag)
- 5. the practice that optimizes the liberated (grol ba mthar phyin pa'i nyams len)
- 6. post-meditative practice

20. dzi: (DL, Padma, 244) The Second Root Pith Instruction on the Precious Oral Transmission on the Authentic Meaning (yang dag don gyi snyan brgyud rin po che rtsa ba'i man ngag gnyis pa) (393-422, SY 10.du)

- Chapters:
- 1. thog mar sangs rgyas gzhi'i gnas tshul
- 2. bar du gang zag gis lam du khyer tshul
- 3. tha ma mthar thug 'bras bu'i grub tshul

21. wi: (DL, Padma, 245) The Oral Transmission of Padma(sambhava): The First Root of the Exceedingly Profound Precepts Entitled The Letterless Oral Transmission which Teaches the Direct Perception of Primordial Wisdom from the Great Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs

pa chen po las ye shes mngon sum du bstan pa'i snyan brgyud yi ge med pa zhes bya ba shin tu zab pa'i man ngag gi rtsa ba dang po: padma'i snyan brgyud) (423-436, SY 7.the)

22. zhi: (DL, Padma, 245) The Oral Transmission of Padma(sambhava): The Ultimate Letterless within all Oral Transmissions (snyan brgyud thams cad kyi nang na yi ge med pa mthar thug pa: padma'i snyan brgyud) (437-448, SY 9.di)

- alternative title: Unfabricated instant of cognition/ Unfabricated instantanous cognition (ma bcod pa'i shes pa skad cig ma)

23. zi: (DL, Padma, 245) The Oral Transmission of Padmasambhava: The Precious Letterless Oral Transmission – Pith Instructions on the Secret Meaning, the Realization of the Enlightened Mind (gsang ba don gyi man ngag thugs kyi dgongs pa yi ge med pa'i snyan brgyud rin po che: padma'i snyan brgyud) (449-459, SY 8.tho)

24. 'i: (DL, 246) The First Oral Transmission of Vairocana on the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed (yang gsang bla na med pa bai ro tsa na'i snyan brgyud dang po) (461-484, SY 30.jo)

25. yi: (DL, 246) The Middle Oral Transmission of Vairocana on the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed (yang gsang bla na med pa bai ro tsa na'i snyan brgyud bar ma) (485-536, SY 31.nyo)

26. ri: (DL, 246) The Later Oral Transmission of Vairocana on the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed (yang gsang bla na med pa bai ro tsa na'i snyan brgyud phyi ma) (537-578, SY 32.nyu)

Chapters:

1. Analogies and meanings on the dharmakāya abiding in the heart

2. Differentiation of objects, enlightened bodies and gnosis

3. Becoming enlightened without bardo for those with supreme faculties

4. Liberation from the sufferings of bardo for those with medium and inferior faculties

5. Establishing all the dharmas of suchness

27. li: (DL, 246) The Profound Mind Tantra of Vairocana on the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed (yang gsang bla na med pa bai ro tsa na'i thugs rgyud zab mo) (579-602, SY 33.nye, 34.nyo)

28. shi: (DL, r, 240) The Great Perfection Tantra of the Division of Mind and Awareness (rdzogs pa chen po sems dang rig pa dbye ba'i rgyud) (603-631, SY 3.pe)

29. 'i: (DL, s, 240) The Great Perfection Supplementary Tantra on the Division of Mind and Awareness (rdzogs pa chen po sems dang rig pa dbye ba'i rgyud phyi ma) (633-650, SY 4.po)

Volume III:

(36 texts, 27 mentioned by DL, 9 not mentioned by DL)

1. Registry (them byang) (1-2)

2. ku: (DL, 227) The Ten Steps of the Profound Oral Instruction on the Quintessential Key Points (gnad tig zhal gdams zab mo'i them bcu) (3-19)

3. khu: (DL, Padma, 243) The Tantra of the Enlightened Activity of the Precious Unborn, Unfabricated, Self-emergent and Self-arisen One (skye med ma bcos rang byung rang shar ba rin po che phrin las kyi rgyud) (21-34, SY 14.pha)

4. gu: The Illuminating Lamp: A Pith Instruction Deriving from The Tantra of the Self-emergent and Self-Arisen (rang byung rang shar gyi rgyud las byung ba'i man ngag gsal sgron) (35-47)

5. ngu: (DL, s, 240) The Tantra which Eradicates Error: The First of all Tantras of the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection ("the first of all the tantras") (yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po rgyud thams cad kyi thog ma 'khrul pa rtsad gcod kyi rgyud (rgyud thams cad kyi thog ma) (49-81, SY 2.pu) Chapters:

- 1. Arising of samsara
- 2. Six classes of beings separate from six appearances of karma
- 3. Characteristics of [sentient beings'] mind

4. Grasping the face of initial, middling and last straying

5. Buddhas don't arise from the mind, but one becomes a buddha by apprehending the face of awareness from within the mind

- 6. Introduction
- 7. Seal of entrustment (gtad rgya)

6. cu: (DL, s, 241) The Tantra of the Rosary of Jewels (rin chen phreng ba'i rgyud) (83-126, SY 8.pho)

Chapters:

1. arising of samsara and nirvana

2. liberation from suffering,

3. Key Points of Samantabhadra's unimpeded realization and the ensuing rapid enlightenment

4. solving errors and obscurations through testing and examination by means of abiding [in meditation] (bzhag thabs kyis gol sgrib kyi gdar sha bcad pa'i le'u)

5. the meaning of wisdom abiding within

6. seal of entrustment

7. chu: (DL, Padma, 244) The First and Second Esoteric Precepts which Teach the process of freedom for the triad of superior, average and inferior individuals as a Specially Exalted Oral Transmission (khyad par du 'phags pa'i snyan rgyud gang zag rab 'bring tha gsum gyi grol tshul bstan pa'i man ngag dang po dang gnyis pa) (127-138, SY 6.thu)

8. ju: The Third Esoteric Precept of Padma(sambhava): The Inappropriateness of Disseminating (this) to Those Who Are Not an Appropriate Vessel (snod min la spel du mi rung ba padma'i man ngag gsum pa) (139-140, SY 13.pa)

9. nyu: (DL, slob dpon gsum ga'i thun mong gi man ngag, 245) The Secret Lamp: A Text on the Key points of the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po'i gnad yig gsang ba'i sgron ma) (141-162, SY 12.do)

10. tu: An Esoteric Precept of the Great Perfection: The Tantra which Teaches the Wisdom of the Buddha in its Own Right (rdzogs pa chen po'i man ngag: sangs rgyas kyi dgongs pa rang chas su bstan pa'i rgyud) (163-183, SY 28.ju)

11. thu: (DL, 241) The First, Middle and Third Last Testaments of the Buddha (sangs rgyas kyi 'das rjes dang po bar pa gsum pa rnams) (185-201, SY 13.mi)

12. du: (DL, probably, 242) The Esoteric Precept of the Glorious All Good: The Way the Liberation Through Wearing Emerges (dpal kun tu bzang po'i man ngag: btags grol byon tshul) (203-210, SY 9.bi)

13. nu: (DL,241) The Tantra of the Single Son of all the Buddhas (the Liberation Through Wearing cycle) (sangs rgyas thams cad kyi sras gcig pu'i rgyud) (btags grol skor) (211-222, SY 10.bu)

14. pu: (DL, 241) The Great Liberation Through Wearing (btags grol chen po) (223-237)

15. phu: (DL, 241-242) The Last Testment on the Key Points of Time: The Six Tantras of Liberation Through Wearing (it is also titled, "The Seven Versed Tantra of the Nucleus of Liberation Through Wearing" (btags grol rgyud drug dus gnad zhal chems (btags grol snying po'i rgyud tshig bdun pa yang zer) (239-254, SY 11.be) Contains seven tantras:

The empty radiant nucleus without center or circumference: Liberation through wearing (btags grol stong gsal thig le mtha' dbus med) 240.1-241.3

The tantra that liberates all through knowing one (gcig shes kun grol gyi rgyud) 241.4-243.2

The tantra of one golden syllable of Yangti (yang tig gser gyi 'bru gcig pa'i rgyud) 243.2-243.6

The tantra of the seed of conduct of the single son of the Buddhas (sangs rgyas sras gcig spyod pa sa bon gyi rgyud) 243.6-244.4

The tantra of self-arising awareness (rang byung rig pa'i rgyud) 244.4-245.3

The tantra of complete great perfection, the fruit ('bras bu yongs rdzogs chen po'i rgyud) 245.3-248.5

(no name) 248.6-254.3

16. bu: (DL, 242) Supporting Notes on the Liberation Through Wearing (Tantra) of the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection: Labels of Notes on the Key Points which Unravel the Key Points of the Secret (yang gsang bla na med pa'i rdzogs pa chen po'i btags grol rgyab yig gsang ba'i gnad bkrol gnad kyi yi ge'i them yig rnams) (255-265, SY 14.mu)

Contains five texts:

(no name) 256.1-258.4

Secret hidden letters (gsang ba'i gab yig) 258.4-261.1

Revealing the secret key points (gsang ba'i gnad bkrol) 261.1-261.6 Inscription of liberation through wearing (btags grol them yig) 261.1-263.4 Revealing the key points of the letters of key points (gnad kyi yi ge'i gnad bkrol) 263.4-265.1

17. mu: The Exceedingly Profound Liberation Through Wearing of the Nine Key Points of Awareness (rig pa gnad dgu'i btags grol shin tu zab pa) (267-268)

18. tsu: The Mode of Taking Liberation Through Wearing into One's Experience: That Which Is Called Omniscience and Compassion (btags grol nyams su len tshul kun mkhyen thugs rje zhes pa) (269-274)

19. tshu: The Precious Liberation Through Seeing: The Ultra Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection) (275-278, SY 15.me)

20. dzu: (DL, 232) The Empowerment of the Liberation Through Wearing (btags grol gyi dbang) (279-281, SY 30.ha)

- Alternative title: The empowerment on the precious perfection of all the Buddhas (sangs rgyas thams cad kyi rin chen rdzogs pa'i dbang)

21. wu: (DL, Padma, 244) The First Command of Padmasambhava: The Tantra of the Quintessential Wisdom (padma'i bka' yig dang po (snying gi dgongs pa'i rgyud)) (283-304, SY 21.tse)

22. zhu: The Tantra of the Great Intrinsic Buddha (sangs rgyas rang chas chen po'i rgyud) (305-335)

23. zu: (DL, s, 241) The Tantra of the Self-Arisen Primordial Wisdom of the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (this was taught combinging the following three tantras in the manner of mother and son: The Tantra of the Self-Abiding of the Six Spaces, the Tantra Teaching the Great Primordial Wisdom, and the Tantra of the Self-Arisen Primordial Wisdom (yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po ye shes rang shar gyi rgyud (klong drug gi rang gnas kyi rgyud dang ye shes chen po ston pa'i rgyud ye shes rang shar gyi rgyud 'di gsum ma bu'i tshul du bsdebs nas gsungs pa) (337-353)

Chapters:

- 1. The manner the authentically perfected Buddha abides
- 2. The teaching on the manner of liberation in bardo
- 3. The manner the great primordial wisdom dawns

24. 'u: (DL, r, 240) The Root Tantra of Indwelling Primordial Wisdom (from the) Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po ye shes rang la gnas pa'i rtsa ba'i rgyud) (355-371, SY 6.phu) Chapters:

- 1. The teaching on the reality as it is (gnas tshul)
- 2. The teaching on the virtues of awareness
- 3. The teaching on the signs of Bodies and emanations
- 4. The manner the Buddha abides in the body
- 5. The teaching on the manner in which samsara is reversed to primordial wisdom

6. The elaborate explanation on the manner in which samsara is reversed to primordial wisdom

7. The teaching on the way the essence is along with the seal of entrustment

25. yu: (DL, r, 240) The Supplementary Tantra of the Teaching of the Great Primordial Wisdom from Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po las ye shes chen po bstan pa'i rgyud phyi ma) (373-391, SY 7.phe)

26. ru: (DL, r, 240) The Tantra of the Intrinsic Radiance of Awareness's Primordial Wisdom from the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po rig pa ye shes rang gsal ba'i rgyud) (393-408, SY 5.phi) Chapters:

1. The teaching on the way awareness abides

2. The teaching on the secret path of Vajrasattva to individuals that recognize the awareness

3. Introduction to the self-manifesting Primordial Wisdom

27. lu: (DL, gzhan la mi ston, 239) The Root Tantra Which Teaches the Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra (kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa zang thal du bstan pa'i rtsa rgyud) (409-423, SY 15.ne)

Chapters:

- 1. The manner the seeds of dharmakaya abide in sentient beings
- 2. The teaching on the Body of unimpeded primordial wisdom and *dharmakāya*
- 3. Profecy on the unfabricated awareness as the essence (ngo bo) of the Buddha
- 4. The nature (rang bzhin) and view of dharmakaya
- 5. Virtues of dharmakaya
- 6. Esoteric precepts of getting enlightened
- 7. The time of sentient beings' liberation
- 8. The teaching on wisdom

28. shu: (DL, slob dpon gsum ga'i thun mong gi man ngag, 244) The Profound Letters on the Signs (also titled The Tantra Teaching the Signs of Primordial Wisdom (rtags kyi yi ge zab mo (ye shes kyi rtags bstan pa'i rgyud kyang zer)) (425-453, SY 13.ni)

29. su: (DL, Padma, 244) Supplementary cycles: The Teaching on the Essence and Expanse which are the Root of the Lamps of the Unimpeded Realization (also entitled The Root Tantra of the Unimpeded Realization) (kha skong skor: dgongs pa zang thal gyi sgron ma'i rtsa ba ngo bo dang dbyings bstan pa) (dgongs pa zang thal rtsa ba'i rgyud kyang zer) (455-475, SY 7.ja)

- This text is referred to as gnan gyi yi ge by the 5th Dalai Lama Chapters:

1. The mandala of the wisdom body of Samantabhadra

2. The measure (tshad) of Samantabhadra (sounds in dharmakaya: a, ha, ma, 'a, sha, sa)

3. The unimpeded realization of Samantabhadra

4. The chapter on [being] in bardo with merely this teaching of Samantabhadra's wisdom as unimpeded to the fortunate ones

5. The seal of entrustment on the precious esoteric precepts of the Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra

30. hu: (DL, r, 240) The Tantra of the Self-Arisen Wisdom of the Buddha Vajrasattva (from) the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (yang gsang bla na med pa'i rdzogs pa chen po sangs rgyas rdo rje sems dpa'i dgongs pa rang shar gyi rgyud) (477-496)

Chapters:

- 1. Establishing three times
- 2. The three signs of a Buddha
- 3. The secret path of Vajrasattva for the karmically suited ones
- 4. Bardo
- 5. Identifying prophecies
- 6. The seal of entrustment

31. u: (DL, slob dpon gsum ga'i thun mong gi man ngag, 244) Notes on the Measures of the Great Perfection (rdzogs pa chen po'i tshad kyi yi ge) (497-518, SY 14.nu)

32. 'ah: The Explanatory Tantra of the Introduction to the Buddhas (from Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po sangs rgyas ngo sprod kyi bshad rgyud (519-531)

33. ah: Pith Instructions on Five Rounds (man ngag khug pa lnga'i gdams pa) (533-540, SY 23.tshi)

34. shah: (DL, Vimala, 246) Instructions on the Five Rounds – Pith Instructions of the Great Perfection Seminal Heart (rdzogs pa chen po snying tig gi man ngag khug pa Inga'i gdams gnag) (541-548)

35. sah: (DL, Vimala, 246) The Lamp of the Clear Light of the Intermediate State (bar do 'od gsal sgron ma) (549-554, SY 25.tshe)

36. mah: (DL, Padma, 244) The Twenty-One Introductions of the Great Perfection (rdzogs pa chen po'i ngo sprod nyi shu rtsa gcig) (555-564, SY 24.tshu)

37. hah: (DL, r, 240) The Tantra of the Self-Presencing Intermediate Process of the Unimpeded Realization of All Good: this Tantra of the Self-Presencing Intermediate Process and The Quintessential Wisdom Esoteric Precepts on the Six Spaces are combined together in the manner of mother and son for purposes of contemplative practice (kun tu bzang po'i dgong pa zang thal gyi bar do rang snang gi rgyud) (bar do rang snang gi rgyud 'di klong drug gi man gnag snying dgongs gnyis ma bu'i tshul du bsdebs nas nyams su len no) (565-598, SY 22.tso)

Chapters:

1. Esoteric precept of the final time: attaining Buddhahood with the teaching at the moment of death

- 2. Ritual of liberation from samsara and the signs of births in the six destinies
- 3. Taking hold of a sentient being about to die with compassion in stages
- 4. Extensive explanation on the bardo of ordinary life
- 5. Ritual for pulling a bardo being from samsara

6. The yoga of directly perceiving dharmatā, and a profecy on getting enlightened in the bardo of dharmatā without entering the confused bardo

7. The seal of entrustment

Volume IV:

(16 texts, 12 mentioned by DL, 3 not mentioned by DL, 1 by Adzom)

1. Registry (them byang) (1-2)

2. ke: (DL, padma, 244) The Tantra of the Quintessential Wisdom of the Pith Instructions Taught by Vajrasattva (the Oral Transmission Cycle) (man ngag snying gi dgongs pa'i rgyud rdo rje sems dpas gsungs pa) (snyan brgyud skor) (3-26, SY 20.tsu)

Chapters:

1. Narrative discourse on the enlightened bodies and primordial wisdom devoid of coming together and falling apart

2. The manner the groups of peaceful deities abide in oneself

- 3. The manner the buddha deities abide
- 4. The manner the wrathful bodies dawn in bardo
- 5. The way the peaceful bodies dawn
- 6. The bardo of becoming
- 7. The manifestations of bardo

8. The manner of wandering in samsara if one does not recognize the self-manifestations

3. khe: (DL, 244 ?) The Lamp of Unimpeded Wisdom from the Realization of Samantabhadra (kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa ye shes zang thal gyi sgron ma) (27-58, SY 1.pi)

- probably mentioned by DL as kun tu bzang po dgongs pa zang thal du bstan pa'i rgyud kyi sgron ma

Chapters:

- 1. Waking up from unawareness/ examining unawareness (sad par byed)
- 2. Introduction to the three spontaneous Bodies relying on the sun
- 3. Introduction to the five wisdoms and the enlightened mind
- 4. Making the clear light dawn quickly
- 5. How a sentient being traverses quickly to the levels of a Buddha

4. ge: (DL, 236) The Preliminary Practices of the Six Oral Transmissions (The Third Composition of Padmasambhava from the Main Points of the Six Oral Transmissions) (snyan brgyud drug gi sngon 'gro) (snyan brgyud drug gi chings padmas rdzad pa gsum pa'o) (59-80, SY 8.nya)

Chapters:

- 1. Taking the elixir of the water of preliminary practices
- 2. Longevity *sādhana* of the nectar elixir of actual practice
- 3. Taking the essence of the wind and awareness (rlung rig bcud du blang)
- 4. Protecting [against] defilements by the Adamantine One
- 5. Protecting [against] the defilements of place
- 6. Protecting [against] the defilements of clothes

7. Abandoning perverse company, and the pure self-continuum that is the complete teaching on the six esoteric precepts of inducing sediment

8. Fabricating the faults of external and internal body

9. Fabricating the faults of the sound of speech

10. Reversing the deluded appearances of mental conceptuality

11. Enlightened activity of karma

5. nge: (DL, gzhan la mi ston, 239) The Tantra of Becoming a Buddha by Merely Seeing, Hearing, Wearing, or Praying to this Great Tantra (an explanatory tantra) (rgyud chen mthong ba dang thos pa dang btags pa dang smon lam btab pa tsam gyis sangs rgyas pa'i rgyud) (bshad rgyud) (rgyud kyi skor) (81-181, SY 16.no)

- alternative title: rgyal ba thams cad kyi dgongs pa ye shes rang chas rig pa 'od du 'bar ba bstan pa'i rgyud

Chapters:

1. Initial narrative discourse

2. Giving the teaching

3. The common ground (spyi gzhi) of both samsara and nirvana

4. The separation of samsara and nirvana

5. The fabulous mansion of self-manifest primordial wisdom of the dharma sphere of Akanistha

6. The three bodies devoid of coming together and falling apart

7. If the unaware sentient beings are taught the ground, path and fruit, they become Buddhas

8. The manner the dharmakaya of a Buddha abides in the bodies of unaware sentient beings

9. The precious wish-fulfilling jewel resides in the precious chest

10. The method of becoming a Buddha without the remainder of skandhas having been shown dharmatā directly

11. The manner in which an individual, who has encountered this dharma, will become a Buddha

12. Introduction for individuals with inferior intellects

13. Four enlightened bodies, five primordial wisdoms

14. The Key Points of bardo

15. Giving a teaching devoid of the empowerment of the unenlightened, through the three especially noble overflows of elixir of the enlightened mind of Samantabhadra

16. Teaching devoid of the empowerment of the unenlightened because one does special practice

17. Becoming a Buddha through seeing, hearing and touching self-arisen letters

18. Written liberation through wearing and the method of holding it

19. Teaching devoid of the empowerment of the unenlightened because one says a powerful prayer

20. Entrustment of the tantra

6. ce: (DL, Vimala, 245) The Great Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra Transmitted to the King: The Intrinsically Radiant Wisdom Commentary on the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (also entitled The Great Exegesis on the Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra) (bi ma mi tra'i snyan brgyud chen mo rgyal po la gdams pa yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po'i 'grel pa ye shes rang gsal) (bi ma la'i snyan brgyud 'grel tig chen mo yang zer) (183-401, SY 1.ti)

7. che: (DL, rgya drug, 247) The Lamp on the Key Points of the Channels and Winds of the Great Perfection (rdzogs pa chen po'i rtsa rlung gnad kyi sgron ma) (403-420, SY 26.cho)

8. je: The Profound Life-Guidance of Vimalamitra: The Guru's Oral Precepts Arranged in Notes (bi ma la'i tshe khrid zab mo bla ma'i zhal lung zin bris su bkod pa) (421-422)

9. nye: (DL, 237) The Garland of Ambrosia of a Special Extraction of Quintessence (bcud len khyad par can bdud rtsi'i phreng ba) (423-484, SY 9.ta)

10. te: The Precious Lamp of the Three Roots: the Foundation of the Three Oral Transmission Series of the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po'i snyan rgyud sde gsum gyi rtsa ba rtsa gsum rin chen sgron me) (485-513, SY 2.ku)

11 the: (DL, 254) The Key to the Marvelous Secret (gsang ba rmad du byung ba'i lde'u mig) (515-531)

12. de: (DL, 253) Prayers to the Yogic Lineage of the Gurus of the Marvelous Secret (gsang ba rmad du byung ba'i bla ma'i rnal 'byor brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs) (533-540)

13. ne: (DL, 254) Supressing Error in the Marvelous Secret (gsang ba rmad du byung ba'i log non) (541-560)

14. pe: (DL, 254) The Introductory Religious History for the Marvelous Secret (gsang ba rmad byung gi chos 'byung gleng gzhi) (561-572) Chapters:

a) Narrative discourse on the root, enhancing practice (bogs 'don) and the result

- b) Narrative discourse on the characteristics of this
- c) Narrative discourse on the condensed meaning
- d) The lineage of this dharma

15. phe: (DL, 254) The Ritual of the Profound Empowerment for the Marvelous Secret (gsang ba rmad du byung ba'i dbang zab mo'i cho ga) (573-589)

16. be: (DL, Padma, 243) The Phase of Enlightened Activities of Offerings to the Precept Protectors for the Pervading Wisdom of the Great Perfection (rdzogs chen dgongs pa zang thal gyi bka'i srung mchod pa'i phrin las kyi rim pa) (591-604) Contains six sections:

- 1. Offerings to bka' srung ma of dgongs pa zang thal
- 2. Offerings to bka' srung of rang byung rang shar
- 3. Offerings to bka' srung of zang thal, bal mo nag mo
- 4. Offerings to gter srung brtan ma bcu gnyis
- 5. Offerings to gter bdag ging chen
- 6. Offerings to gnyan chen thang lha

17. e: The Ornament of Appearances: A Reading Ritual for Disclosing the Hidden Blessings and Empowerment Ritual for the Marvelous Secret (gsang ba rmad byung gi byin rlabs dbang chog gab pa mngon phyungs bklag chog snang ba'i rgyan) (605-625) - Composed by Adzom Drukpa

Volume V:

(15 texts, 12 mentioned by DL, 2 not mentioned by DL, 1 by Adzom)

1. Registry (them byang) (1-2)

2. ko: (DL, 226) The Five Nails of the Precious Preliminary Practices' Key Points (sngon 'gro rin po che gnad kyi gzer lnga) (3-31)

3. kho: (DL, 226) Prayer (gsol 'debs) (33-39)

4. go: An Easy to Engage Arrangement of the Awareness Empowerment Encapsulating the Quintessential Elixir of the Self-Emergent and Self-Arisen Great Perfection (an empowerment ritual) (rdzogs pa chen po rang byung rang shar gyi snying po bcud bsdus rig pa'i dbang 'jug bder bkod pa (dbang chog)) (41-77) - Composed by Adzom Drukpa

5. ngo: (DL, 226) The Awareness Empowerment Encapsulating the Quintessential Elixir (the (actual) treasure document) (snying po bcud bsdus rig pa'i dbang (gter gzhung)) (79-103)

6. co: (DL, 226) The Root Tantra of the Self-Emergent and Self-Arisen (rang byung rang shar rtsa ba'i rgyud) (105-130)

7. cho: (DL, 226) The Tantra of the Adamantine Being of Universal Freedom (also entitled The Tantra of Vast Universal Freedom) (kun grol rdo rje sems dpa'i rgyud (kun grol yangs pa'i rgyud zer ba'ang 'dug)) (131-149)

8. jo: (DL, 227) The Intrinsically Radiant Self-Awareness Introduction (Dialogs with Padmasambhava) (ngo sprod rang rig rang gsal (padma'i zhus lan)) (151-161)

9. nyo: (DL, 227) Notes on the Key points of the Dialogs: From the White Treasure Conch of the East (?) (gnad kyi yi ge: shar dung mdzod dkar po nas byon pa) (163-175)

10. to: The Tantra Of the Definitive Presentation of the Three Bodies (The Dialogs of Namkhai Nyingpo) (sku gsum gtan la dbab pa'i rgyud (nam mkha'i snying po'i zhus lan)) (177-187)

11. tho: (DL, 226) The Stage of the Guidance on the Key Points of the Path: An Encapsulation of the Quintessential Elixir, the Lamp which Clears away Dimmed Awareness's Darkness (ma rig mun sel sgron me snying po bcud bsdus lam gyi gnad khrid kyi rim pa) (189-200)

12. do: (DL, 235) The Three Lamps: The Last Testament Composed by Oddiyana Padmasambhava (o rgyan padmas mdzad pa'i zhal chems sgron ma rnam gsum) (201-244, SY 15.ba)

13. no: (DL, 227) The Precious Spike Last Testament (zhal chems rin chen gzer bu) (245-260)

14. po: (DL, 228) The Treasury of Precious Gems Eradicating Obstructions (the dialogs of Tsogyel) (gegs sel nor bu rin po che'i mdzod (mtsho rgyal zhus lan)) (261-320)

15. pho: (DL, 227) The Ten Steps of the Key Points of the Profound (zab mo gnad kyi them bcu) (321-401)

16. bo: (DL, 226) Introduction to the Five Intermediate States (bar do lnga'i ngo sprod) (yang gsang bla na med pa'i rdzogs pa chen po bar do snga'i snyan brgyud phyi ma zhes tshig zung 'dra min 'ga' re snang na'ang don gcig go) (403-418, SY 26.tsho)

<u>Appendix 2</u>

List of texts in The Unimpeded Realization in the Nechung Edition

Reproduced from a tracing of a complete set of prints from the Gnas chung blocks carved through the efforts of Nechung oracle Chos rje Śākya Yar 'phel (19th century)

The text titles written in bold are texts not found in the Adzom Chögar edition. The number and letters (such as 29.su) after the page numbers indicate the numbering of the particular text in the Adzom Chögar edition in the appendix one.

Volume I:

1. ka: Gter bton pa'i lo rgyus (1-7)

- an account of revealing the treasure written by Rindzin Gödem

2. kha: Mnal lam brda'i le'u brgyad ma (9-19)

- about events and prophetic dreams after revealing the treasure written by Gödem

3. ga: Rtsod zlog dang po ri bo bkra bzang du gsungs pa (21-37)

- not a treasure text
- seems to be written by Gödem's disciple
- about the history of the tradition: the emanations of various famous figures

4. nga: Rtsod zlog chung ba (39-46)

- not a treasure text

5. ca: Brgyud pa'i lo rgyus nor bu'i 'phreng ba (47-76)

- not a treasure text

- written by 'Jam dbyang bsod nams rgyal mtshan dpal (75.6)

6. cha: Snyan brgyud drug gi thems byang dang khog dbub (77-83)

- a treasure text about the different cycles: a source for 5th Dalai Lama's descriptions

7. ja: Dgongs pa zang thal gyi sgron ma'i rtsa ba ngo bo dang dbyings bstan pa (85-105, 29.su)

8. nya: Snyan brgyud drug gi sngon 'gro dang snyan brgyud drug gi chings padmas rdzad pa gsum pa (107-125, 4.ge)

9. ta: Bcud len bdud rtsi'i phreng ba (127-177, 9.nye)

10. tha: Snyan brgyud rin po che'i lung byang ye shes thugs kyi lde mig gi ma lta bu (179-186, 3.kha)

11. da: Rtsol med kyi theg pa ston pa zab mo chos kyi lung byang (187-200, 4.ga)

12. na: Snyan brgyud drug gi tho byang lung bstan rin po che'i lde'u mig (201-219, 6.ca)

13. pa: Lung byang bka'i thems (221-223, 8.ju)

14. pha: Skye med ma bcos rang byung gi rtsa rgyud (225-235, 3.khu)

15. ba: Zhal chems sgron ma rnam gsum gter ston gyi rnal 'byor o rgyan gyis gsungs (237-277, 12.do)

16. ma: Tho byang las can lung ston nam las can thems byang (279-285, 7.cha)

17. tsa: Gsang sngags kyi bstan pa gsum gyi chos 'byung (287-308, 5.nga)

18. tsa: Kun tu bzang po dgongs pa zang thal gyi lo rgyus rin po che'i phreng ba (309-372)

- not a treasure text

- composed by the Dzokchen yogi Trayekadu in the mountain hermitage of Ze mo bde chen on the western side of Kathog vajra seat

19. tsha: Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal gyi dbang bshad rin chen phra tshom (373-386)

- not a treasure text

- composed by Ltang lha rib rig 'dzin 'jigs med dpa' bo in the monastery Nya mo ha'o Orgyan Bsam gtan gling

20. dza: Zab mo dbang gi dbye ba (387-390, 8.ja)

21. wa: Rdzogs pa chen po'i dbang gi cho ga (391-398, 3.khi)

22. zha: Spros bcas kyi dbang (399-440, 9.nya)

23. za: Spros med kyi dbang (441-452, 10.ta)

24. a': 'Dir shin tu spros med kyi dbang (453-458, 11.tha)

25. ya: 'Dir rab tu spros med kyi dbang (459-466, 12.da)

26. ra: Snying po thugs kyi dbang (467-482, 4.gi)

27. la: Rig pa rtsal gyi dbang zab mo (483-506, 2.ki)

28. sha: Rig pa rtsal gyi dbang gi 'grel pa (507-526, 16.bi)

29. sa: Rdzogs pa chen po nges don lta ba'i dbang (527-536, 5.ngi)

30. ha: Btags grol gyi dbang (537-542, 20.dzu)

31. A: Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal las bka' rgya gsum pa: gsang ba'i yig chung zhes bya ba dbang gi man ngag (543-563)

- "this is an oral instruction spoken by Lama Rindzin Chenpo, written down by me, Ratna'i ming can"

Volume II:

1. ki: Rdzogs chen dgongs pa zang thal gyi dbang dpe (1-13)

- treasure text on the empowerment of letters, dharanis and samadhi

- revealer not stated

2. ku: Yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po'i snyan rgyud sde gsum gyi rtsa ba rtsa gsum rin chen sgron me (15-39, 10.te)

3. ke: Rdzogs pa chen po dgongs pa zang thal gyi bla ma'i rnal 'byor dang: bla ma brgyud pa'i kha skang gsol 'debs (41-48)

- treasure text

- Thogel guruyoga (not found in GZ, but in Thar gling)

- The lineage: Rindzin Gödem, Namgyel Gonpo, Rdo rje'i mtshan can, Rdo rje mgon po, Mtshan ldan Byams pa bshes gnyen, Mtshan ldan ngag dbang grags pa, Sangs rgyas dpal bzang, Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, root guru

4. ke: Rdzogs pa chen po dgongs pa zang thal gyi brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs le tshan (49-60)

- treasure text

- Contains the same thogel guruyoga as above, just with some slight difference in the beginning framing, and different lineage: Rindzin Gödem, Namgyel Gonpo, Sonam Zangpo, Mkhas btsun chos kyi rgyal mtshan, Mkhas btsun chos kyi rin chen, Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, Shakya dpal bzang, 'Jam dbyangs chos kyi rgyal mtshan, Blo gros rgyal msthan, Byams pa bzang po, Shakya rgyal mtshan, 'Brug sgra bzang po, Bsod rnams bstan pa'i nyi ma, Nam mkha' jigs med, Zur chen chos dbyings rang grol, Pema 'phrin las, Kun bzang rgya mtsho, Pema mkhas grub, Spang stong Gsang bdag rdo rje, Bstan 'dzin ye shes lun grub, Padma kun bzang ye shes, Orgyan nor bu, Tshe dbang mchog grub, Gzhan phan rdo rje, Chos kyi blo gros, Thub bstan rgyal mtshan dpal bzang, Ratnabhadra, Gsang sngags bstan 'dzin, Rdo rje thog med, 'Gyur med blo ldan ngag dbang, Padma bshes gnyen, Mchog grub kun bzang ye shes, Yon tan nor bu, 'Gyur med tshe dbang mchog grub, Bsod rnams mchog ldan, Prajñāsara, root guru

5. ko: Bla ma'i sgrub thabs (61-66, 17.mi)

6. khi: Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal las: rgyal ba rigs lnga'i phyi sgrub snod bcud gnas dag (67-74, 15.pha:15.1)

7. khu: Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal las: bde gshegs rigs lnga'i nang sgrub dngos grub rgya mtsho (75-78, 15.pha:15.2)

8. khe: Rgyal ba rigs lnga'i mchod 'bul (79-90, 17.ma)

9. kho: Rigs lnga'i tshogs mchod (91-96, 18.tsa)

10. gi: Rdzogs pa chen po chos nyid mngon sum zhi khro lhun grub kyi phrin las (97-136, 12.di)

11. gu: Dā ki'i mngon rtogs yid bzhin nor bu (137-152, 15.pha:15.6)

13. ge: Dā ki'i dus gnad gnad 'bebs shis spyi gnad bla rdo (153-158, 15.pha:15.9)

14. go: Dā ki'i sngags kyi lde mig (159-162, 15.pha:15.7)

15. ngi: Mkha' 'gro'i gsang sgrub dngos grub rin chen gter gyi bum pa (163-170, 15.pha:15.8)

16. ngu: Mkha' 'gro'i las byang dngos grub char 'bebs (171-194)

- treasure text entrusted to Yéshé Tsogyel

- sādhana

17. nge: Daki'i tshogs mchod dgos 'dod kun 'byung (195-201)

- treasure text entrusted to Yéshé Tsogyel

- offering ritual

18. ngo: Yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po'i mkha' 'gro'i las byang mchod phreng (203-236, 19.tsha)

19. ci: Rdo rje phag mo'i dgyes pa phrin las kyi rgyud zab rgya drug gi ngo bo (237-262, 24.'a)

20. cu: Mkha' 'gro ma'i dus kyi rtsis rgya drug gi man ngag (263-282, 23.za)

21. ce: Rdo rje phag mo'i zab rgya drug gi rtsa rlung gnad kyi man ngag (phag mo'i gsang ba'i zab rgya yang zer ro (283-302, 26.ra)

22. co: Mkha' 'gro'i las rim (303-328, 22.zha)

23. chi: Rdo rje phag mo'i zab rgya drug gi dang po lus ngag yid kyi dam bca' thun bzhi'i rnal 'byor gyi khrid: rtsa ba rin chen khang bu'i man ngag drug rim par yod (329-334, 21.wa)

24. chu: Rnal 'byor sgrub pa'i las rim gyi 'grel pa (335-352, 25.ya)

25. che: Rtsa gnas lus kyi 'khor lo (353-374, 20.dza)

26. cho: rtsa rlung gnad kyi sgron ma (375-388, 7.che)

27. ji: Dgongs pa zang thal las: zab mo rgya drug gi dmigs rim (389-408, 27.la)

28. ju: Snyan brgyud kyi gtad rgya bstan pa mdzod dbus ma nas byon pa (409-426, 10.tu)

29. je: Snyan brgyud drug gi sngon 'gro: he he: rdzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa zang thal du bstan pa las snyan rgyud zab mo sde drug gi sngon 'gro snyigs ma dangs ma'i man ngag drug: spyod pa legs pa'i sgron ma drug: sgrub thabs drug dang bcas pa (427-446)

- treasure text revealed by Gödem

- preliminaries

30. jo: Yang gsang rdzogs pa chen po bai ro tsa na'i snyan brgyud dang po (447-466, 24.'i)

31. nyo: Bai ro tsa na'i snyan brgyud bar ma (467-512, 25.yi)

32. nyu: Bai ro tsa na'i snyan brgyud phyi ma (513-552, 26.ri)

33. nye: Bai ro tsa na'i thugs rgyud gnyis pa (553-562, 27.li)

34. nyo: Rdzogs pa chen po'i man ngag bai ro tsa na'i thugs rgyud zab mo (563-578, 27.li)

Volume III:
1. ti: kun tu bzang po dgongs pa zang thal las 'grel tig mdzad pa nyams len ye shes rang gsal rdo rje slob dpon gyi snyan brgyud gsungs pa (1-172, 6.ce)

2. tu: Bhi ma mi tras mdzad pa'i khrid yig dang po (173-180, 18.tsi)

3. te: Bhi ma mi tra'i khrid yig gnyis pa (181-188, 18.tsi)

4. to: Bhi ma mi tra'i khrid yig gsum pa (189-194, 18.tsi)

5. thi: Kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa zang thal gyi khrid gzhung chen mo'am chos nyid mngon sum gyi khrid (195-230, 19.tshi)

6. thu: Snyan brgyud gnad du dril ba shri singha'i man ngag padma la gdams pa'i man ngag le'u gsum pa (231-234, 7.chu)

7. the: Yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po las ye shes mngon sum du bstan pa'i snyan brgyud yi ge med pa zhes bya ba shin tu zab pa'i man ngag gi rtsa ba dang po (235-246, 21.wi)

8. tho: Yang dag don gyi man ngag thugs kyi dgongs pa yi ge med pa'i snyan brgyud kyi rtsa ba (247-254, 23.zi)

9. di: Yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po las yang dag don gyi snyan brgyud rin po che'i snying po yi ge med pa'i snyan brgyud gsang ba don gyi gnad tig gi man ngag gnyis pa (255-264, 22.zhi)

10. du: Yang dag don gyi snyan brgyud rin po che rtsa ba'i man ngag gnyis pa (265-292, 20.dzi)

11. de: Snyan rgyud gang zag rab 'bring tha gsum gyi grol tshul gyi man ngag gnyis pa (293-302, 7.chu)

12. do: Zang thal gyi gnad yig gsang ba'i sgron ma (303-322, 9.nyu)

13. ni: Ye shes kyi rtags bstan pa'i rgyud (323-344, 28.shu)

14. nu: Rdzogs pa chen po'i tshad yig (345-370, 31.u)

15. ne: Kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa zang thal du bstan pa'i rtsa rgyud (371-384, 27.lu)

16. no: Rdzogs pa chen po dgongs pa zang thal du bstan pa'i bshad rgyud chen mo (385-481, 5.nge)

Volume IV:

1. pi: Kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa zang thal gyi ye shes sgron ma'i bshad rgyud (1-33, 3.khe)

2. pu: Yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po dgongs pa zang thal las rgyud thams cad kyi thog ma 'khrul pa rtsad gcod kyi rgyud (35-63, 5.ngu)

3. pe: Sems dang rig pa dbye ba man ngag gi rgyud mdzod dbus ma nas byon pa (65-92, 28.shi)

4. po: Sems dang rig pa dbye ba'i bshad rgyud (93-108, 29.'i)

5. phi: Rig pa rang gsal gyi rgyud (109-124, 26.ru)

6. phu: Ye shes rang la gnas pa'i rtsa ba'i rgyud (125-140, 24.'u)

7. phe: Ye shes chen po bstan pa'i phyi ma rgyud (141-158, 25.yu)

8. pho: Rdzogs pa chen po zang thal las: rin chen phreng ba'i bshad rgyud (159-194, 6.cu)

9. bi: Rdogs pa chen po dgongs pa zang thal las dpal kun tu bzang po'i man ngag: btags grol byon tshul (195-202, 12.du)

10. bu: Sangs rgyas thams cad kyi sras gcig pa'i rgyud (203-214, 13.nu)

11. be: Rdzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po dgongs pa zang thal du bstan pa las: btags grol rgyud drug dang dus gnad zhal chems dang bcas pa (215-234, 15.phu)

12. bo: Bstan pa bu gcig pa'i rgyud (235-266)

- treasure text

13. mi: Yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po'i sangs rgyas kyi 'das rjes gsum zhes bya ba (267-283, 11.thu)

14. mu: Yang gsang bla na med pa'i rdzogs pa chen po'i btags grol rgyab yig gsang ba'i gnad bkrol gnad kyi yi ge'i them yig rnams (283-292, 16.bu)

15. me: Yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po mthong grol rin po che (293-296, 19.tshu)

16. mo: Mthong grol dpe ris dang man ngag (297-299)

- treasure text

- explanation of the six syllables of Samantabhadra in the next text

17. mo: **Mthong grol** (301)

- the six syllables of Samantabhadra drawn in large size and beautifully on one page

18. tsi: Yi ge drug gi don bstan pa dang rtsa gnad lus kyi 'khor lo'i dpe ris bcas (303-306)

- treasure text

- explanation of the six syllables of Samantabhadra in the previous text

19. tsi: Rtsa gnad 'khor lo (307, 27.la)

20. tsu: Man ngag snying gi dgongs pa'i rgyud rdo rje sems dpas gsungs pa (309-332, 2.ke)

21. tse: Orgyan padma'i bka' yig dang po (333-352, 21.wu)

22. tso: Kun tu bzang po'i dgong pa zang thal gyi: bar do rang snang gi rgyud (353-382, 37.hah)

23. tshi: Dgongs pa zang thal gyi man ngag khug pa lnga'i gdams pa (383-392, 33.ah)

24. tshu: Ngo sprod nyi shu rtsa gcig pa (393-402, 36.mah)

25. tshe: Bar do 'od gsal sgron ma (403-410, 35.sah)

26. tsho: Yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po bar do lnga'i snyan brgyud thams cad kyi phyi ma (411-427, 16.bo)

27. dzi: Rang byung rang shar gyi bka' srung e ka dza ti'i rgyud (429-437)

- treasure text from the central maroon compartment: protector text of the Drag po rang byung rang shar chen po

28. dzu: Bka' srung khros ma'i phrin las (439-447)

- treasure text, no revealer

29. dze: **Dgongs pa zang thal gyi bka' srung e ka dza ti'i mchod thabs** (449-453) - treasure text, protector text of GZ

30. dzo: **Bka' srung khros ma'i bskang bshags** (455-463) - treasure text

31. wi: **Bka' srung gi las tshogs** (465-467)

- treasure text

32. wu: Bka' srung e ka dza ti'i sgrub thabs (469-476)

- treasure text: extraordinary protector of the Bka' brgyad drag po rang byung rang shar

33. we: Bka' srung khros ma'i mdos (477-487)

- treasure text

34. wo: Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal gyi nyams khrid thar gling chos sku'i shing khams su bkrod pa'i nye lam spar rnying la chad pa slar kun bzang bzod pa nas gsar bskos (489-521)

- not a treasure text

- written by Zurchen Chöying Rangdröl

35. ka: Rdzogs pa chen po dgongs pa zang thal chos skor bzhugs byang rab dwangs nor bu'i me long (523-539)

- not a treasure text

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Appendix 3

The Fifth Dalai Lama's division of the texts on actual practice

1. Scrolls That Are Not to be Shown to Others (gzhan la mi ston pa rtsa ba'i shog dril)

The Received Teachings states that these two tantras should only be taught to those fortunate ones who can endure the thirteen hardships.

- The Tantra of Becoming a Buddha by merely Seeing, Hearing, Wearing, or Praying to this Great Tantra (an explanatory tantra) (rgyud chen mthong ba dang thos pa dang btags pa dang smon lam btab pa tsam gyis sangs rgyas pa'i rgyud) (bshad rgyud) (IV:81-181) Alternative title: The Tantra That Teaches the Intrinsically Creative Awareness, the Wisdom of Realization of All the Victor Teachers (ston pa rgyal ba thams cad kyi dgongs pa'i ye shes rang rtsal rig pa 'od du 'bar bar bstan pa'i rgyud)
- The Root Tantra Which Teaches the Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra (kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa zang thal du bstan pa'i rtsa rgyud) (III:409-423)

2. The Six Spheres of Vajrasattva's Enlightened Mind (rdo rje sems dpa'i thugs kyi klong drug)

These are said to be for the practitioners of superior acumen.

Root Tantras:

- The Great Perfection Tantra of the Division of Mind and Awareness (rdzogs pa chen po sems dang rig pa dbye ba'i rgyud) (II:603-631)
- The Tantra of the Intrinsic Radiance of Awareness's Primordial Wisdom from the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po rig pa ye shes rang gsal ba'i rgyud) (III:393-408)
- The Root Tantra of Indwelling Primordial Wisdom from the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po ye shes rang la gnas pa'i rtsa ba'i rgyud) (III:355-371)
- The Supplementary Tantra of the Teaching of the Great Primordial Wisdom from the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po las ye shes chen po bstan pa'i rgyud phyi ma) (III:373-391)
- The Tantra of the Self-Arisen Realization of the Buddha Vajrasattva from the Exceedingly Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (yang gsang bla na med pa'i rdzogs pa chen po sangs rgyas rdo rje sems dpa'i dgongs pa rang shar gyi rgyud) (III:477-496)
- The Tantra of the Self-Display of the Bardo from the Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra (kun tu bzang po'i dgong pa zang thal gyi bar do rang snang gi rgyud) (III:565-598)

Supplementary Tantras:

- The Tantra which Eradicates Error: The First of all Tantras of the Ultra-Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po rgyud thams cad kyi thog ma 'khrul pa rtsad gcod kyi rgyud (III:49-81)
- The Great Perfection Supplementary Tantra on the Division of Mind and Awareness (rdzogs pa chen po sems dang rig pa dbye ba'i rgyud phyi ma) (II:633-650)
- The Tantra of the Garland of Jewels (rin chen phreng ba'i rgyud) (III:83-126)
- The Tantra of the Self-Arisen Primordial Gnosis of the Ultra-Secret Unsurpassed Great Perfection (yang gsang bla na med pa rdzogs pa chen po ye shes rang shar gyi rgyud (III:337-353)

Liberation Through Wearing Cycle:

- The First, Middle and Third Last Testaments of the Buddha (sangs rgyas kyi 'das rjes dang po bar pa gsum pa rnams) (III:185-201)
- The Tantra of the Single Son of all the Buddhas (sangs rgyas thams cad kyi sras gcig pu'i rgyud) (III:211-222)
- The Great Liberation Through Wearing (btags grol chen po) (III:223-237)

3. The Six Oral Transmissions of the Vajra Master (rdo rje slob dpon gyi snyan brgyud drug)

These are said to be for the practitioners of intermediate acumen.

Oral Transmissions of Padmasambhava:

The Oral Transmission that Severs Conceptual Proliferation (spros pa mtha' gcod kyi snyan brgyud):

• The Cycle of the Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity (ka dag rang byung rang shar gyi skor) (Volume V)

The Oral Transmission That Introduces Dharmatā (chos nyid ngo sprod kyi snyan brgyud):

- Presenting Offerings for the Five Victor Families (rgyal ba rigs lnga'i mchod 'bul) (I:397-406)
- The Enlightened Activities of the Spontaneously Present Peaceful and Wrathful Deities of the Direct Perception of the Great Perfection of Reality (rdzogs pa chen po chos nyid mngon sum zhi khro lhun grub kyi phrin las) (II:201-244)
- The Phase of Enlightened Activities of Offerings to the Precept Protectors for the Pervading Wisdom of the Great Perfection (rdzogs chen dgongs pa zang thal gyi bka'i srung mchod pa'i phrin las kyi rim pa) (IV:591-604)
- The four texts on the four empowerments: The Elaborate Vase Empowerment (spros bcas bum pa'i dbang), The Non-Elaborate Secret Empowerment (spros med gsang ba'i dbang), The Exceedingly Non-Elaborate Insight Wisdom Empowerment (shin tu spros med shes rab ye shes kyi dbang) and The Utterly Non-Elaborate Suchness Empowerment (rab tu spros med de kho na nyid kyi dbang) (I:105-181)
- The Commentary on the Empowerment to Awareness's Creativity (rig pa rtsal gyi dbang gi 'grel pa) (II:301-323)
- The Tantra of the Enlightened Activity of the Precious Unborn, Unfabricated, Self-emergent and Self-arisen One (skye med ma bcos rang byung rang shar ba rin po che phrin las kyi rgyud) (III:21-34)
- *The Island of Liberation (thar gling)*, a commentary on *The Unimpeded Realization* by Zurchen Chöying Rangdröl
- *The Twenty One Introductions of the Great Perfection* (rdzogs pa chen po'i ngo sprod nyi shu rtsa gcig) (III:555-564)
- Supplementary cycles: The Teaching on the Essence and Expanse which are the Root of the Lamps of the Unimpeded Realization (also entitled The Root Tantra of the Unimpeded Realization) (kha skong skor: dgongs pa zang thal gyi sgron ma'i rtsa ba ngo bo dang dbyings bstan pa) (dgongs pa zang thal rtsa ba'i rgyud kyang zer) (III:455-475). The Dalai Lama refers to this text as The Great Pressing Letters That Teach the Shape and Essence of the Unimpeded Realization (dgongs pa zang thal gyi ngo bo dang dbyibs bstan pa gnan gyi yi ge chen mo).⁴⁷⁵
- The Tantra of the Quintessential Wisdom of the Pith Instructions Taught by Vajrasattva (the Oral Transmission Cycle) (man ngag snying gi dgongs pa'i rgyud rdo rje sems dpas gsungs pa) (snyan brgyud skor) (IV:3-26)

⁴⁷⁵ The Dalai Lama, *The Received Teachings*, III:244. The identity of these two texts is revealed by the the phrase "dgongs pa zang thal gyi ngo bo dang dbyings bstan pa" (teaches the essence and expanse of the unimpeded realization). Dbyings (expanse) is mispelled as dbyibs (shape) in *The Received Teachings*. Both texts also have five chapters.

The Ordinary Pith Instructions of the Three Masters (slob dpon gsum ga'i thun mong gi man ngag):

- The Secret Lamp (gsang ba'i sgron ma) (III:141-162)
- The Profound Letters on the Signs (rtags kyi yi ge zab mo) (III:425-453)
- Notes on the Measures of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs pa chen po'i tshad kyi yi ge*) (III:497-518)

The Letterless Oral Transmission (yi ge med pa'i snyan brgyud):

- The Tantra Lamp That Teaches the Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra (kun tu bzang po dgongs pa zang thal du bstan pa'i rgyud kyi sgron ma). This probably refers to The Lamp of Unimpeded Wisdom from the Realization of Samantabhadra (kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa ye shes zang thal gyi sgron ma) (IV:27-58)
- The Second Root Pith Instruction on the Precious Oral Transmission on the Authentic Meaning (yang dag don gyi snyan brgyud rin po che rtsa ba'i man ngag gnyis pa) (II:393-422)
- The Oral Transmission of Padmasambhava: The Letterless Oral Transmission which Teaches the Direct Perception of Wisdom (ye shes mngon sum du bstan pa'i snyan brgyud yi ge med pa) (padma'i snyan brgyud) (II:423-436)
- The Oral Transmission of Padmasambhava: The Ultimate Letterless within all Oral Transmissions (snyan brgyud thams cad kyi nang na yi ge med pa mthar thug pa: padma'i snyan brgyud) (II:437-448)
- The Oral Transmission of Padmasambhava: The Precious Letterless Oral Transmission –Pith Instructions on the Secret Meaning, the Realization of the Enlightened Mind (gsang ba don gyi man ngag thugs kyi dgongs pa yi ge med pa'i snyan brgyud rin po che: padma'i snyan brgyud) (II:449-459)
- The Key to the Wisdom Mind The Prophetic Certificate of the Precious Oral Transmission (snyan brgyud rin po che'i lung byang ye shes thugs kyi lde mig) (I:27-36)

Oral Transmissions of Vimalamitra:

- The Great Oral Transmission of Vimalamitra Transmitted to the King (bi ma mi tra'i snyan brgyud chen mo rgyal po la gdams (IV:183-401)
- Six Great Perfection empowerments (II:33-89)
- The Three Spikes of the Key Points Guide Text composed by Vimalamitra (khrid yig gnad kyi gzer bu gsum pa bi ma la mi tras mdzad pa) (II:335-352)
- Instructions on the Five Rounds Pith Instructions of the Great Perfection Seminal Heart (rdzogs pa chen po snying tig gi man ngag khug pa lnga'i gdams gnag) (III:541-548)
- *The Lamp of the Clear Light of the Intermediate State (bar do 'od gsal sgron ma)* (III:549-554)

Oral Transmissions of Vairocana:

The Oral Transmissions That Differentiate Mind and Awareness (sems dang rig pa dbye ba'i snyan brgyud):

- The First Oral Transmission of Vairocana (bai ro tsa na'i snyan brgyud dang po) (II:461-484)
- The Middle Oral Transmission of Vairocana (bai ro tsa na'i snyan brgyud bar ma) (II:485-536)
- The Later Oral Transmission of Vairocana (bai ro tsa na'i snyan brgyud phyi ma) (II:537-578)

The Oral Transmission on the Five Kinds of Letting-Be (bzhag thabs rnam pa lnga'i snyan brgyud):

• The Profound Mind Tantra of Vairocana (bai ro tsa na'i thugs rgyud zab mo) (II:579-602)

4. The Six Profound Seals of Vajravarāhī (rdo rje phag mo'i zab rgya drug)

These are said to be for the practitioners of inferior acumen.

- The Lamp on the Key Points of the Channels and Winds of the Great Perfection (rdzogs pa chen po'i rtsa rlung gnad kyi sgron ma) (IV:403-420)
- The Great Perfection Wheel of the Body Which is the Locus of the Channels (rdzogs pa chen po rtsa gnas lus kyi 'khor lo) (I:455-481)
- The Rosary of Offerings of the Activity Ritual of the Dākinī (mkha' 'gro'i las byang mchod phreng) (I:413-453)
- The First of the Six Profound Seals of the Vajravarāhī: The Guide on the Yoga of the Four Sessions on the Vows of Body, Speech and Mind (rdo rje phag mo'i zab rgya drug gi dang po lus ngag yid kyi dam bca' thun bzhi'i rnal 'byor gyi khrid (rtsa ba rin chen khang bu'i man ngag drug rim par yod) (I:483-488)
- Secret Pith Instructions on the Ritual Stages of the Dākinī (mkha' 'gro'i las rim gsang ba'i man ngag) (I:489-521)
- Pith Instructions on the Six Seals of the Temporal Calculations of the Dākinī (mkha' 'gro ma'i dus kyi rtsis rgya drug gi man ngag) (I:523-547)
- The First of the Six Profound Seals: The Tantra of the Enlightened Activities of Vajravarāhī's Joy (rdo rje phag mo'i dgyes pa phrin las kyi rgyud zab rgya drug gi dang po (zab rgya skor) (I:549-577)
- Commentary on the Ritual Stages of the Yoga's Actualization: The Precious Ornament that is the Commentary of the Mother Vajravarāhī (rnal 'byor sgrub pa'i las rim gyi 'grel pa/ yum rdo rje phag 'grel ba rin po che'i rgyan) (I:579-597)
- Pith Instructions on the Key Points of the Channels and Winds in the Six Profound Seals of Vajravarāhī (rdo rje phag mo'i zab rgya drug gi rtsa rlung gnad kyi man ngag) (I:599-622)⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷⁶ The Dalai Lama, *The Received Teachings*, III:239-246.

<u>Appendix 4</u>

Tibetan names: phonetics and translitteration

Chimphu	'chims phug
Daklung	dwags lung
Dorjé Drak	rdo rje brag
Dorjé Gönpo	rdo rje mgon po
Dorjé Pel	rdo rje dpal
Draklungpa Khétsün Rinchenpel	brag lung pa mkhas btsun rin chen dpal
Drima Mépa	dri ma med pa
Drompa Gyang	grom pa rgyang
Evam Chokgar	e vam loog sgar
Garwang Dorjé	gar dbang rdo rje
Guru Trashi	gu ru bkra shis
Gyelwa Yéshé Do	rgyal ba ye shes mdo
Jamyang Lama	'jam dbyangs bla ma
Jangdak Trashi Topgyel	by ang bdag bkra shis stobs rgyal
Jikmé Lingpa	'jigs med gling pa
Kahthog Rindzin Tsewang Norbu	kaḥ thog rig 'dzin tshe dbang nor bu
Kharchen	mkhar chen
Khepa Nyibum	mkhas pa nyi 'bum
Kunpang Dönyö Gyeltsen	kun spangs don yod rgyal mtshan
Kyimolung	skyi mo lung
Lekden Düjom Dorjé	legs Idan bdud 'joms rdo rje
Lekpawa	legs pa ba
Longchenpa	klong chen pa
Lopön Sidü Dülpel	slob dpon srid bdud 'dul dpal
Mangyul Gungthang	mang yul gung thang
Mipham Gön	mi pham mgon
Mutri Cépo	mu khri bcad po
Namgyel Gönpo	rnam rgyal mgon po
Namkhé Nyingpo	nam mkha'i snying po
Nanam Dorjé Düjom	sna nam rdo rje bdud 'joms
Nangdel Gyelpo	snang ldan rgyal po
Ngari Penchen Pema Wangyel	mnga' ris pan chen pad ma dbang rgyal
Pelchen Bumpa	dpal chen bum pa
Péma Lingpa	pad ma gling pa
Péma Trinlé	pad ma 'phrin las
Rindzin Ngakgi Wangpo	rig 'dzin ngag gi dbang po
Ritröpa Zangpo Drakpa	ri khrod pa bzang po grags pa
Śākya Zangpo	shākya bzang po
Sangdak Dechen Lhundrup	gsang bdag bde chen lhun grub
Sangpu Neutok	gsang phug
Sangye Pelzang	sangs rgyas dpal bzang
Zhönnu Pawo Tobden	gzhon nu dpa' bo stobs ldan
Tendzin Norbu	bstan 'dzin nor bu
Samye	bsam yas
Sönam Khyeudren	bsod nams khye'u 'dren

Tenma Tsemang	rtan ma tse mang
Thangtong Gyelpo	thang stong rgyal po
Thoyor Nakpo	tho yor nag po
Tri Phuntsok De	khri phun tshogs lde
Trogé	khro gad
Tsenden Jampa Shenyen	msthan ldan 'jam pa bshes gnyen
Tsenden Ngawang Drakpa	mtshan ldan ngag dbang grags pa
Tsultrim Dorjé	tshul 'khrims rdo rje
Tsultrim Zangpo	tshul 'khrims bzang po
Yéshé Tsogyel	ye shes mtsho rgyal
Yéshé Yang	ye shes dbyang
Yudra Nyingpo	g.yu sgra snying po
Zurchen Chöying Rangdröl	zur chen chos dbyings rang 'grol

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