

**Reimagining Tradition: Ratna Lingpa's "Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse"
Revelations (*klong gsal snying thig*)**

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Abstract

Within the Great Perfection tradition, the “Seminal Heart” (*snying thig*) teachings developed between the 11th and 14th centuries. In the 14th and 15th centuries, numerous figures contributed to the expansion of this tradition. This paper will mainly focus on Ratna Lingpa (1403-1478), one of the most influential scholars and Treasure revealers. Ratna Lingpa introduced a unique tradition known as the *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse* (*klong gsal snying thig*), which reimagined the *Seminal Heart of Ḍākinīs* (*mkha’gro snying thig*), one of the most important Seminal Heart revelations since the 14th century. I will use historical analysis and close textual examination, drawing on an interdisciplinary approach, in order to explore the ways in which Ratna Lingpa’s *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse* differs from other the *Seminal Heart of Ḍākinīs* traditions. Finally, this paper will explore the authorship of the earliest version of The *Tantra of Blazing Expanse Luminosity* (*klong gsal ‘bar ma rgyud*), an important source for the *Seminal Heart of Ḍākinīs* tradition, and conclude with future research directions.

Introduction

The Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*), the highest class of teachings according to the Nyingma (*rnying ma*) school of Tibetan Buddhism, traces its origins to 8th-century Indian scriptures and today continues to flourish predominantly through Tibetan transmissions and transformations. While its most creative years were in the ferment of the 11th through 14th centuries, the Great Perfection remains cherished by Tibetan adherents and now also Western practitioners of Buddhism. The most influential Great Perfection tradition in Tibet was incubated between the 11th and 14th centuries. It was known as the “*Seminal Heart*” (*snying thig*) and was originally intricately linked to the legendary eighth-century Indian Vimalamitra¹ In the 14th and 15th century, pivotal figures beginning with Pema Ledrel Tsal (*pad+ma Las 'brel rtsal*, 1291-1315) and Gyalsey Lekden (*rgyal sras legs ldan*, 1290-1366), and also involving Meban Rinchen Lingpa (*me ban rin chen gling*, 1289-1368), the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje (*karma pa rang byung rdo rje*, 1284-1339), Longchenpa (*klong chen pa*, 1308-1364), Rigdzin Gödem (*rig 'dzin rgod ldem*, 1337-1409), Sherab Mebar (*shes rab me 'bar*, in the 14th century), Dorje Lingpa, (*rdo rje gling pa*, 1346-1405), and Ratna Lingpa (*rat+na gling pa*, 1403- 1478) played crucial roles in revealing and extending a new tradition, namely *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs* (*mkha' 'gro snying thig*). This tradition is closely linked to the 8th-century tantric master, Padmasambhava, also known as Guru Rinpoche, from medieval India, a central figure connected with the revealed treasure (*gter ma*) tradition within the Nyingma school.

From these prominent figures, this paper will primarily focus on Ratna Lingpa, one of the most influential scholars and Treasure revealers (*gter ston*), one who discloses new canonical

¹ David Germano, “The Funerary Transformation of the Great Perfection (*Rdzogs chen*)” (in *JIATS*, 2005), 24.

scriptures through visionary means² in the history of the Nyingma. Ratna Lingpa played a crucial role in the formation of alternative canons for the Nyingma school. He was pivotal in compiling *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients* (*rnying ma rgyud 'bum*), the most significant canon of the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. In his recent article “Ratna Lingpa’s Renewal of the *Maṇi*-Pill Tradition in Fifteenth-Century Tibet,” James Gentry writes, “Ratna Lingpa was one of the most prolific prophesied Treasure revealers in the history of Tibet.”³ Ratna Lingpa produced twenty-five separate treasure-teaching revelations on diverse topics such as peaceful and wrathful Buddhas, Great Perfection, and Mahāmudrā. It is traditionally believed that his revelations of treasure teachings were so extensive that they embodied three lifetimes of work in a single lifetime of activity. For this reason, he also has two other treasure-linked names, namely Shikpo Lingpa (*zhig po gling pa*) and Drodul Lingpa (*'gro 'dul gling pa*).⁴ His role as a treasure revealer, an accomplished practitioner, and an influential historian of visionary traditions makes him a particularly fascinating figure. His written history of Buddhism delves into the complexity of the treasure tradition, offering valuable insights and theorizing about its defining characteristics. Furthermore, he is also a prolific scholar in his own right; he wrote various erudite compositions on topics in Buddhist philosophy, poetry, contemplation, ritual, art, and material culture.

One of Ratna Lingpa most central concerns was essentially reimagining and transforming the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs* into a new tradition, the *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse* (*klong gsal snying thig*) based upon his newly revealed version of the older cycle’s root scripture, *The Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* (*klong gsal 'bar ma rgyud*). *The Tantra of the*

² Janet Gyatso, “The Logic of Legitimation in the Tibetan Treasure Tradition” (*History of Religions* 33, no. 2, 1993), 99.

³ James Gentry, “Ratna Lingpa’s Renewal of the *Maṇi*-Pill Tradition in Fifteenth-Century Tibet” (2023), 96.

⁴ Bdud 'joms 'jigs bral ye shes rdo tje, *Bdud 'joms chos 'byung* (1 vol, Khreng tu'u: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1996), 398.

Blazing Expanse of Luminosity holds a significant place within the Nyingma's Great Perfection tradition as it is the single most important scriptural base of the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs*, and as such, came to be grouped with the earlier *Seventeen Tantras* (*rgyud bcu bdun*) to constitute an expanded group of eighteen. There are multiple revealed versions of this scripture, the earliest of which contains 113 chapters and has no specification of any agents involved with their concealment or revelation. Ratna Lingpa not only reveals his own revelation of this root scripture but also includes a comprehensive commentary that ranges beyond the new revelation to explicate the *Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* wider large. This becomes instrumental in the subsequent flourishing of the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs*, though Ratna Lingpa's revelations took a different form as *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse*, which includes many other texts—preliminary teachings, empowerment, rituals sadhanas, other rituals, guidance manuals, clarifications, commentaries, summaries, introductions, and songs.

As scholars have pointed out, despite the profound influence and considerable impact of Ratna Lingpa's works and teachings within the Nyingma school, as well as Tibetan Buddhism wider large, he has yet to receive close attention in our scholarly communities.⁵ This is perhaps in part due to the shadow cast by Longchenpa's eventual influence and significance, whose own extension of *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* in his *Seminal Quintessence of the Dākinīs* (*mkha' 'gro yang tig*) adopts a more philosophical and scholarly approach. In comparison, Ratna Lingpa leans towards ritual and meditation, perhaps owing to his background of being raised in a family of practitioners and his minimal exposure to the structured and scholarly monastic education received by Longchenpa. Ratna Lingpa also didn't engage with the sutras as much as

⁵ Gentry, 96.

Longchenpa; his most significant contributions were his treasure teachings, which brought him great fame.

One of the primary goals of this paper is to expand upon and delve into Ratna Lingpa's unique tradition of the *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse*, an understudied but influential tradition, in order to examine the significance and influence this work carries within the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī's* tradition and the Great Perfection tradition of the Nyingma school. A critical close reading and analysis of Ratna Lingpa's versions of *The Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* and his commentary, *The Great Secret Commentary on The Sun Illuminating the Expanse Tantra of The Golden Mirror of The Path, and Fruit* (*klong gsal nyi ma'i gsang rgyud kyi gsang 'grel chen mo lam 'bras gser gyi me long*) will add to our understanding of the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs* tradition and its history.

A secondary goal of this essay is to explore the question as to the identity of the author or revealer of the earliest version of the *Tantra of Blazing Expanse Luminosity*, not so much as to propose one, but rather to eliminate candidates. In the 14th century, figures such as Pema Ledrel Tsal (also named Tsultrim Dorje), Gyalse Lekden, Rinchen Lingpa, Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé, Sherap Mebar, Rikdzin Gödem, and Longchen Rabjam all played significant roles in the formation of the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs*, and thus are potential agents in the revelation/composition of the *Tantra of Blazing Expanse Luminosity*.

Methodology

To examine the history of these influential treasure revealers and figures involved in the first two centuries of the *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* and *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs* tradition, and in particular to focus on Longchenpa and Ratna Lingpa, I will draw upon an interdisciplinary approach. I weave together historical analysis of prior accounts with a close

textual examination of texts and scriptures as well as an exploration of important philosophical concepts. To better understand Ratna Lingpa, the figure whose work I predominantly focus on, I explore one of his main visionary treasure revelations, *The Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*, and his own commentary on this tantra via a close and comparative reading of key passages in several versions of *The Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*. I examine iterations of *The Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*, spanning two centuries of development and changes.

I then delve deeper into Ratna Lingpa's commentary on the *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* by focusing on a relevant chapter and examining how he comments on the tantra. I will also attempt to probe into an estimate why, after Longchenpa's compositions, Ratna Lingpa revealed his own version of *The Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse*, based on *The Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* and the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs*. In doing so, I hope to tease out what he adds and how and why his work influences and changes the practice and understanding of the Seminal Heart. Finally, I conclude with prospects and possible directions for further research.

An Overview of the History of Great Perfection

According to a contemporary perspective, the *Seminal Heart of Great Perfection*, which is also labeled the Unsurpassed Secret Cycles (*yang gsang bla med kyi skor*), is classified as the fourth division within the Instruction Series (*man ngag sde*) according to Shiri Singha's arrangement.⁶ This division belongs to the Pith Instruction Series (*man ngag sde*), considered the highest class

⁶ Nyoshul Khenpo Jamyang Dorje and Translated Richard Barron (Chogyin Nyima), *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gemas: Biographies of Masters of Awareness in the Dzogchen Lineage* (Padma Publishing, 2005), 40.

of Great Perfection teachings. Nonetheless, the origins of the Great Perfection teachings in Tibet remain contested amongst scholars.

Scholars offer differing perspectives on the Great Perfection, influenced by their individual research interests. Contemporary scholars, including but not limited to Germano (2005), Karmay (2007), Dalton (2015), Higgins (2013), Van Schaik (2011), and Khenpo Yeshe (2017) view Great Perfection as emerging with roots in Mahāyoga and Chan influences. Germano holds that the earliest revelation of the Great Perfection went through many stages of development after its introduction in Tibet in the latter half of the eighth century. The earliest form of literature that was retroactively termed the Mind Series (*sems sde*) is a collection of texts written during several centuries that were classified as the Mind Series to differentiate them from the later developments of Great Perfection. The earliest revelations are *The Eighteen Texts of the Mind Series (sems sde bco brgyad)*, and these early traditions culminate in a group of texts centered on *The All-Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*.⁷ The subdivisions of the Mind Series rubric are named after geographical regions, clans, or individual founders. Notably, Padmasambhava (eighth century) is not a prominent figure in the early Great Perfection traditions associated with these subdivisions. Instead, Śrīsimha (eighth century), Dga' rab rdo rje, (seventh century), and Vimalamitra (eighth-ninth century) are cited as the main Indian figures involved in the authorship, redaction, transmission, and translation of these traditions.⁸

Dalton cites portions of gnubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes's late 9th century writings, such as the *Armor Against Darkness (mun pa'i go cha)* and *the Lamp for the Eye in Contemplation (bsam gtan mig sgron)*, as more explicit examples of writing that treat Great Perfection as a distinct

⁷ Germano, *Funerary*, 11.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

vehicle.⁹ Moreover, according to Dalton, “In the earliest days, the Great Perfection was probably understood in all of these ways and still others, by various people in different contents. From its earliest days, the Great Perfection appears to have inspired many interpretations and practices.”¹⁰

The earliest Mind Series writing can perhaps be found in the six-line verse of the *Cuckoo of Intellect* (*rig pa'i khu byug*). A Dunhuang manuscript (IOL 647) was first identified in 1980 by Samten Karmay, who gave a more detailed explanation and analysis in his *The Great Perfection (rdzogs chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*¹¹ (2007). A translation, under the title *Cuckoo of Awareness*, also appears in *Van Schaik's Tibet: A History* (2011) as follows:

*The various appearances are non-dual by nature.
Without even the slightest bit of elaboration.
The way of things is free from conceptualization.
But manifests in different forms: it is all good.
Since everything is done, give up the malady of seeking and stay where you are without effort.*¹²

Contemporary scholars believe that from the 11th to the 14th century, the evolution of the *Seminal Heart of Great Perfection* in Tibet was intricately linked to Vimalamitra's tradition; for instance, Khenpo Yeshe says that “*Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra (bima snying thig)* is the most relevant lineage for present historical purpose, insofar as it represents the earliest of the historically attested Seminal Heart tradition”¹³ For example, Higgins gives an example of an early work called *The Eleven Topics (tshig don bcu gcig pa)* by mkhas pa nyi ma 'bum (1158-1213), which provides

⁹ Jacob Dalton, “The Gathering of Intentions in Early Tibetan Tantra” (The University of California, Berkeley: 2015), 40-43.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹¹ Samten Karmay, *The Great Perfection (rdzogs chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 2nd ed (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 42.

¹² Sam Van Schaik, *Van Schaik Tibet A History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 66.

¹³ Khenpo Yeshe, “The Origins of the Rdzogs chen Eleven Words and Meanings: Comparing nyi ma 'bum, klong chen pa, and Rig 'dzin Rgod ldem” (master's thesis, Berkeley University, 2017), 8.

a summary of the fundamental principles of *snying thig* doctrine and practice. It is based on the *Seventeen Tantras*, with quotes from the oral teachings of Vimalamitra incorporated into the text.¹⁴ Thus, there were two prominent traditions of the Seminal Heart during this time period, the *Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra* and the Padmasambhava tradition known as *The Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī*. We will focus on the Padmasambhava tradition.

Introducing the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī*

The *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī* is a fourteenth-century Treasure revelation with origins associated with Padmasambhava in the eighth century. This Treasure was revealed by Pema Ledrel Tsal of the myang clan, who, at the age of twenty-three, discovered the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī* from a cave at Tarmo Drak (phrag mo brag) in the Dangs Valley of Dwags po. His ordained name was Tsultrim Dorje (tshul khriṃs rdo rje).¹⁵ According to the *History of Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī* (*mkha' 'gro snying thig gi lo rgyus*), Tsultrim Dorje,¹⁶ when he was at the age of sixteen, received prophecies of his Treasure teaching and subsequently received the Treasure guide and key. In the Water Ox Year, on the twenty-seventh day of the last month of autumn, he offered a Ganachakra feast and tormā (gtor ma) to the Guru, Yidam, Ḍākinīs, and guardian Treasure lords, and supplicated them. He then revealed the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī* from Danglung Trakmo Rock (dang lung phrag mo brag); he later transmitted the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī* to his foremost disciple, Gyalsey Lekden, who in turn passed it on to the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje.¹⁷

¹⁴ David Higgins, *The Philosophical Foundations of Classical Great Perfection in Tibet* (the University of Lausanne, 2013), 18.

¹⁵ Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol.6, *mkha' 'gro snying thig gi lo rgyus rin po che'i phreng ba*, 207.

¹⁶ In *Mkha' 'gro snying thig gi lo rgyus* Rinchen Tsuldor was another name for Tsultrim Dorje.

¹⁷ Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol.5, *mkha' 'gro snying thig gi lo rgyus*, 8.

For thirteen years, Gyalsey Lekden kept it secret from spreading the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī's* teaching; however, at the age of sixty-one, a pivotal moment unfolded in the ninth monkey year of the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje's life while residing at Lhundrup Teng monastery in Kongpo.¹⁸ During that time, three messengers were sent to invite Gyalsey Lekden, who was happy to meet them. Subsequently, the profound teaching encapsulated in the yellow scrolls, the visions, the transmissions, and the permissions were all entrusted to the Rangjung Dorje, who gave them to the great master Darma Dorje.¹⁹ It was also from Gyalsey Lekden that Longchenpa received all the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* teaching.²⁰ Longchenpa compiled this famous set of Great Perfection scriptures with the older Vimlamaitra materials in order to condense the two primary lineages of Great Perfection practice in Tibet, that of Guru Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra. By combining those older scriptures with his own insightful commentarial extensions, Longchenpa compiled these teachings into what would become the renowned set of Great Perfection scriptures known as the *Four-Fold Seminal Heart (snying thig ya bzhi)*,²¹

The earliest historical account of the *Seminal Heart of Great Perfection of The Extensive History of the Seminal Heart, The Great Perfection (rdzogs pa chen po snying thig gi lo rgyus chen mo)* authored by Zhang Ston.²² This historical account contains no reference to the *Tatra of Blazing Expanse Luminosity*, the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs* teachings, or the revered figure of Padmasambhava. Historical accounts suggest that perhaps the *Tantra of Blazing Expanse*

¹⁸ The story in the *mkha' 'gro snying thig gi lo rgyus* says Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje met Gyalsey Lekden in 1345 at the age of 61, even though historical records show he died in 1339. This shows how historical accounts can be complex and emphasizes the need to check different sources for accuracy.

¹⁹ Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol.5, *mkha' 'gro snying thig gi lo rgyus*, 48.

²⁰ Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol.6, *mkha' 'gro snying thig gi lo rgyus rin po che'i phreng ba*, 210.

²¹ Kurtis, Kapstein, Tuttle, *The Sources of Tibetan Traditions* (2012) 416.

²² Karmay Samten, In the *Great Perfection (rdzogs chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 2nd ed (2007) 211, he claims that was written by Zhang ston bkra shis rdo je (1097-1167)

Luminosity appeared only in the early 14th century and quickly became one of the most essential texts of the period. Before this period, the Seminal Heart of Great Perfection teachings in Tibet were linked to Vimalamitra instead. Although there is no clear evidence for who the first author of *The Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* is, the evidence suggests that this text existed in the 14th century, but not earlier.

Contemporary scholars such as Germano hold that the Great Perfection represented a significant Tibetan reinterpretation of Buddhist tantra within the Tibetan tradition, which is evident throughout the enormous collection of canonical and commentary texts. Among these, the "Seminal Heart" (*snying thig*) emerged as the most significant, contributing to a rich embroidery of philosophical and literary masterpieces.²³ Germano and Gyatso further highlight that *The Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī* emerged in the 14th century through the scriptural revelation of Pema Ledrel Tsal (padma las 'brel rtsal, 1291-1315/17²⁴), who produced the collection in 1313, during his early twenties.²⁵ In addition, *The Seminal Heart* tradition was simply not associated with Padmasambhava until that point. According to Longchenpa, Tsultrim Dorje²⁶ revealed the profound teachings of *The Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī* in the Year of the Ox and passed away not long after.²⁷ However, undoubtedly drawing from earlier works, the narrative structure of the collection attributed its authorship to Padmasambhava in eighth-century Tibet. It is purported that Padmasambhava's Tibetan consort, Yeshe Tsogyel, concealed it as a Treasure.²⁸

²³ David Germano, "Architecture and Absence in the Secret Tantric History of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*)," 205.

²⁴ Germano and Gyatso, "Possession of the Ḍākinīs," 244.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 245.

²⁶ Tsultrim Dorje is referenced by various names across different sources, such as Rinchen Dorje of Pagong, another name for Tsultrim Dorje in the *gter 'byung rin po che'i lo rgyus*.

²⁷ Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol. 6, *gter 'byung rin po che'i lo rgyus*, 381.3.

²⁸ Germano and Gyatso, *Possession*, 244.

The *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī* developed throughout the hagiographies of two female figures and prophecies of other female supporters and lineage holders.²⁹ Its title points to the importance of female figures, with “Ḍākinī” being an Indian term translated into Tibetan as Khandro (*mkha’ ’gro ma*), literally “one who goes in space.” The term refers to a woman-like spirit who can either be an unequalled Buddha or a ruthless demoness.³⁰ The *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī* differs from its all-male-based predecessor, The *Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra*, in its historical narratives and in details of doctrine and practice.³¹ The *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī* of the Treasure significantly emphasized meditative practice, particularly underlining the tantric practice of sexual yoga and its integration with the Seminal Heart.³²

In the narrative history of the Great Perfection in Tibet, it is said that Vimalamitra spread the *Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra*, Vairocana taught the Mental Class (*sems phyogs*), and Padmasambhava secretly taught his own *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī* spirituality to Yeshe Tshogyel, and otherwise kept it as secret teachings.³³ Because of this, it was claimed that Padmasambhava’s teachings would manifest when the earlier teachings were becoming corrupted and attenuating, such that fresh dissemination would greatly benefit beings.³⁴

Consequently, the Seminal Heart tradition increased in popularity in the 14th century due to its association with Padmasambhava. Many great masters and Treasure a Revelers who engaged with the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs* tradition emerged in the 14th century. Seminal Heart literature flourished during this period. Along with Longchenpa, Rindzin Gödem (1337-1408),

²⁹ Kali Nyima Cape, “Women and Sexuality in Dzogchen A Study of The Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī,” 21.

³⁰ Germano and Gyatso, *Possession*, 243.

³¹ Cape, 21.

³² Germano and Gyatso, *Possession*, 243.

³³ Dil mgo mkhyen brtse rab gsal zla ba, *snying thig ya bzhi’i rnam bshad*, In dil mgo mkhyen brtse’i gsung ’bum, 194.

³⁴ Ye-śes-rdo-rje and translator Dorje, 554.

was another influential figure in Seminal Heart tradition. According to Katarina Turpeinen, the principal aspect of Rindzin Gödem's revelation lies in his compilation of a five-volume anthology of Great Perfection writings: The *Unimpeded Realization of Samantabhadra* (volumes 1-4) and The *Self-Emergent Self-Arisen Primordial Purity* (volume 5). Rindzin Gödem's Great Perfection anthology is one of the most influential collections of fourteenth-century Great Perfection literature.³⁵ Moreover, Rindzin Gödem, having bestowed complete empowerment and transmission of the Great Perfection teachings upon Yungtön Dorjepal (1284-1365, g.yung ston rdo rje dpal), emphasized the profound and essential guidance provided by the latter.³⁶

During this era, Meban Rinchen Lingpa (1289-1368) emerged as a pivotal figure in the transmission and development of the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* cycle, promoting meaningful connections with well-regarded figures like Pema Ledrel Tsal and Rigzin Gödem. Contemporary scholars, notably Arguillère, strongly suggest that Meban Rinchen Lingpa was the primary teacher of Rigzin Gödem in the Great Perfection teachings.³⁷ Arguillère highlights that despite Longchenpa's contemporary prominence as the most renowned Nyingma figure of the fourteenth century, Rinchen Lingpa, now largely forgotten, was once regarded as significantly more legitimate, especially concerning the *Seminal Heart of Dākinī*. This likely made him a very fitting candidate to be Rigzin Gödem's Great Perfection master, likely appointed sometime between the late 1340s and the mid-1360s.³⁸

³⁵ Katarina Turpeinen, "Vision of Samantabhadra -The Dzogchen Anthology of Rindzin Gödem" (A Dissertation at University of Virginia, 2015), 1.

³⁶ Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol. 6, *g.yung gi lo rgyus*, 159.

³⁷ Stephane Arguillère, "A King of Dharma Forgotten on the Jewel Island: Was Me ban chos rgyal Rin chen gling pa Rin 'dzin rgod ldem's Rdzogs chen Master," 106.

³⁸ Arguillère, 106.

According to the narrative record of Nyoshul Khenpo (1931-1999), Pema Ledrel Tsal meditated for seven months at Koro Drak, where he received blessings and transmitted teachings to Lekpa Gyaltzen. He then practiced for three months at Chotendrak (*mchod rten brag*) with Lekpa Gyaltzen. Rinchen Lingpa sought teachings, leading to Lekpa Gyaltzen's transmission of the entire oral tradition to him. After his retreat, Pema Ledrel Tsal journeyed to lower Nyal with Rinchen Lingpa and Lekpa Gyaltzen. Eventually, Pema Ledrel Tsel gave Rinchen Lingpa a key to a treasure concealed within a black boulder at Choling Monastery (*chos gluing dragons*).³⁹

Meanwhile, in this narrative, when Longchenpa, at the age of thirty-two, was teaching the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs*' teaching to eight men and women at Remo Chan of Samye Chimpu (*bsam yas mchims phu rin mo can*). At the same time, Longchenpa received a prophecy from Vajravarahi, who descended in the form of a wisdom Yogini and prophesied to Longchenpa that if he would meditate exclusively alone on the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs*, he would attain a body of light, but now he needed to instead benefit beings extensively. Longchenpa received many other mysterious prophecies, such as that the *Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra* tradition would remain for one hundred years, and the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs* tradition would last for five hundred years. The benefit of beings through these Seminal Hearts would begin from now on.⁴⁰ In accordance with this prophecy, the teachings of the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs* were significantly flourishing in the 14th century onward.

Introducing Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity

The *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* holds critical importance within the Great Perfection tradition, beginning with its extensive citation in the revealed cycle of the *Seminal Heart*

³⁹ Nyoshul Khenpo *A Marvelous Garland*, 72-73.

⁴⁰ *Gu ru bkra shis, gu bkra'i chos 'byung*. Par gzhi dang po.1 Vol. 217.

of the *Ḍākinīs*, which is when it first appears in the historical record. This tantra serves as the cornerstone for the cycle, thereby tracing its origins back to either the late thirteenth or early fourteen century and evolving from then on. Within the Seminal Heart teachings, it stands as a primary scriptural source, along with the earliest of these tantras, the *Seventeen Tantras*, which themselves date back to the 11th century. By the 14th century, The *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs* tradition emerged and immediately flourished, with the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* gaining prominence alongside it. Longchenpa, slightly later in the 14th century, extensively utilized this tantra as well in his *The Seminal Quintessence of the Ḍākinīs* cycle an explicit extension of The *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs*. Notably, his lengthy *A Cloud from the Ocean of the Profound* offers invaluable insights into the contemplative practices and philosophical perspectives within the tantra. In the 15th century, Ratna Lingpa further engaged with this tantra, revealing his own version of the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*, around which he showed a new system called the *klong gsal snying thig*. Germano also attests to two traditions; there are two prevailing strands of the Ultra Pith: a fifteen-text “Brahmin Tradition” connected to Vimalamitra was initially an eleventh to twelfth-century ongoing of the Seminal Heart and a nine-text Padmasambhava-based tradition linked to Nyang ral nyi ma ‘od zer (1124-1136) and his lineages from the twelfth century onwards.⁴¹

The Seminal Heart of Great Perfection tradition is further featured in the widely known as *Four-Fold Seminal Heart*, in which Longchenpa compiled his famous set of Great Perfection scriptures to compile the two primary lineages of Great Perfection practice in Tibet, that of Guru Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra. He compiled the *Four-fold Seminal Heart* by combining older scriptures with his own commentarial extensions. The Seminal Heart teachings comprise four

⁴¹ Germano, *Architecture*, 24.

cycles: the External Cycle (*phyi skor*), the Internal Cycle (*nang skor*), the Secret Cycle (*gsang skor*), and the Unsurpassed Secret Cycle (*bla na med pa 'i gsang skor*), this specific teaching is part of the Unsurpassed Secret Cycle.

The comprehensive teachings of the Nyingma school are described as belonging to two categories: Oral transmission (*bka' ma*) and Treasure teachings (*gter ma*). Within this framework, the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* belongs to the Treasure tradition. The Treasure Revelation tradition, which claimed to rediscover Nyingma's teachings hidden by Guru Padmasambhava and other enlightened figures of the past, incorporated new teachings and practices into the Great Perfection tradition while maintaining continuity with its foundational principles. According to Gyatso, the first discovery of a Buddhist Treasure text was found in the 11th century.⁴² *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs* teaching increased from its fourteen centuries origins through the 15th century to gradually became widespread. Around this time, the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* also developed and became the most important single source for the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* tradition.

The historical narratives distinguished between two categories of esoteric instructional classes within the Great Perfection tradition: Father Tantras correlated to the *Seventeenth Tantras*, and Mother Tantras including the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*.⁴³ This tantra has had a significant evolution, resulting in various lineages and editions reflecting the changing times. The *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*'s reasoning delves into the origins of logical analysis and its significance in spiritual realization. Multiple restatements of the *Tantra of the*

⁴² Gyatso, Janet. "The Logic of Legitimation in the Tibetan Treasure Tradition" (History of Religions 33, no. 2, 1993), 99.

⁴³ Ratna gling pa, 2014a, Vol. 16, *dam chos klong gsal snying thig gi lo rgyus gter slob dpal ldan bas mdzad pa bzhus so*, 20.

Blazing Expanse of Luminosity emerged over time, profoundly shaping the development of Great Perfection teachings and, particularly, the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī* tradition.

Origin of Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity

The *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* is probably the most important root scripture within the influential *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs* tradition, serving as a foundation for the cycle in general. Despite its importance, scholarly studies are limited on this topic due to a lack of historical evidence and uncertainty surrounding its authorship and creation date.

In Tibet during the 14th and 15th centuries, the development of the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* posed a historical puzzle, marked by the initial challenge of authorship's chronological ambiguity stemming from the tradition's visionary practice of concealing and revelation texts and then further made complex by further revelations of scriptures by the same title. The overarching *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* is drawn from the revealed scripture dated to the 14th century, known as the *Eighteenth Tantra* of The Seminal Heart teaching, which was the primary new scriptural source of *The Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī*.

The development of various scriptures under the title of *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* was recognized as involving Treasure revealer Sherab Mebar, Dorje Lingpa. Ratna Lingpa and Pema Lingpa (pad+ma gling pa, 1450-1521) were involved with the revelation of these scriptures. They also composed many commentaries, guidance, and rituals following their own revelations. However, when it comes to the origin of the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*, it is essential to start with what traditional historians believe and then recognize the interpretations of modern scholars to address the issue of its origin.

Traditionally, as described in *Precious Garland's History of the Seminal Ḍākinīs* (*mkha' 'gro snying thig gi lo rgyus rin po chi phreng ba*), it is believed that in Tidro Cave, many Ḍākinīs

requested the profound pith instructions of the *Seminal Heart of Dākinī* for Buddhahood, which they believed would purify material corporeality in this life. At that time, Dākinī Tsogyal offered ganacakra (tshogs mchod) and made prostrations and circumambulations. Because of that request, Padmasambhava opened the mandala of the peaceful and wrathful deities in the great assembly hall there. To the thousands of Dākinīs led by Tsogyal, he administered empowerments and gave instructions. He taught the *Seventeen Tantras*, the Eighteenth, *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*, and many writings of their Pith Instructions. Then, he divided and distilled the condensed pith instructions of the extensive tantras. Then Padmasambhava distilled the condensed profound Kusulu (ku su lu) combined in cycles. Tsogyal committed each one to write and made the indexes.⁴⁴

Another important historical source is authored by Yungtön Dorje Pal (g.yu ng ston rdo rje dpal (1294-1365)), namely History Written by Rgyal ba gyug (*lo rgyus rgyal ba gyung gi mdzad pa*). Within this text, Yungtön Dorje Pal mentions the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*. Yungtön was born around twenty years before Longchenpa. In the following discussion, we will delve deeper into the history of this profound Tantra, tracing its development for two centuries.

Review of the various forms of *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries

The 14th century in Tibet was when the teachings of the Great Perfection, in general, and the teachings of the *Seminal Heart of Dākinī*'s teaching were widespread. Also, in this century, there was explosive growth in the number of Treasure revealers during the most prolific period for treasure revelation in the history of Tibetan Buddhism. For instance, there were Orgyen Lingpa (O rgyan gling pa, b.1323), Sangye Lingpa (sangs rgyas gling pa, 1340-1396), and Rigdzin Gödem

⁴⁴ Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol. 6, *mkha' 'gro snying thig gi lo rgyus rin po che 'i phreng ba*, 203.

(rig 'dzin rgod ldem, 1337-1409)⁴⁵ while Pema Ledrel Tsal (pad+ma Las 'brel rtsal, 1291-1315), Gyalsey Lekden, 1290-1366, rgyal sras legs ldan), Meban Rinchen Lingpa, 1289-1368, me ban rin chen gling), Sherab Mebar (shes rab me 'bar, in the 14th century) and Dorje Lingpa, (rdo rje gling pa, 1346-1405) contributed significantly to the distributions and flourishing of the *Seminal Heart of Dākinī* and *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*.

From the 14th century onwards, for approximately two hundred years, multiple versions of the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* emerged and spread. Through these, the *Seminal Heart of Dākinī* tradition's development and transformations were influenced by individual Treasure revealers' unique perspectives and intentions. Treasure revealers diligently produced and preserved various rituals, empowerments, manuals, sadhanas, prayers, and histories related to these teachings, ensuring their continuity and accessibility for future followers.

After Longchenpa, Ratna Lingpa had a considerable influence on the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* tradition and the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*. Now, let us turn to the development and significance of the *Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*, beginning with its original version in 113 chapters in the early 14th century.

Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity: 113 Chapters Version

Among the multiple versions of the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*,⁴⁶ I believe the earliest and the most extensive edition consists of a 113-chapter version of the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*.⁴⁷ It has 290 folio sides, but this text does not specify any agents

⁴⁵ Gentry, 109.

⁴⁶ Throughout this writing, the tantra is referred to as the *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity: 113 Chapters Version* for clarity and ease of understanding. However, its actual title is *The Secret Tantra of the Sun, Blazing Expanse Luminosity of The Heart-Blood of All the Dākinīs* (*mkha' 'gro thams cad kyi snying khrag klong gsal 'bar ma nyi ma'i gsang rgyud*).

⁴⁷ Elaine Lai, a doctoral student at Stanford University, translated the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity: 113-chapter version* into English.

in the colophon, whether concealers or revealers of it as treasure. Because of that, the question of who revealed or wrote these treasured texts raises important historical questions. We must determine the identity of the real author of this tantra.

Its colophon presents it as taught by Buddha Samantabhadrī to her retinues, including Vajravārāhī, Vajra, Ratna, Padma, Karma, Dharma, and Samaya (types of *dākinīs*), whom all then rejoice. Most treasure scripture generally uses a unique punctuation (*gter shad*) which indicates the text in question is a revealed treasure. It is thus notable that this tantra lacks the treasure sign, in addition to lacking any colophon discussing its possible history as a treasure text. Its colophon says the following:

*“This was the one-hundred and thirteenth chapter on the signs and measures of complete enlightenment from The Secret Tantra of the Sun of the Blazing Expanse of Samantabhadrī. At that time, the moment the chief of all the retinue, Vajravārāhī, and others, including Vajra, Ratna, Padma, Karma, Dharma, and Samaya [Dākinīs], rejoice. The entire assembly rejoiced, and they offered praise to the teacher, Samantabhadrī. This completes the Seminal Heart of the Heart Blood of All Dākinīs, the Heart-Blood of All Vehicles. Samaya Gya Gya Gya, May I wish to meet this teaching to a fortunate son eventually. Samaya Tha. So Phag Shi Kha Tam. Mantra protectors, Planets, and Vajra Lekpa. May the black butchers obey my command.”*⁴⁸

This colophon does not indicate it, but I will briefly examine who may have been responsible for the *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* in its 113-chapter version, whether as a Treasure’s teachings or its author. In this regard, exploring the writings of Longchenpa, Yungtön Dorjé Pal, and Chatral Zopa is critical. The main reason is that all three were contemporary figures at the time and had met and made connections with influential people related to the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* and the *Tanta of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*.

⁴⁸ ཀུན་ཏུ་བཟང་མོ་སྐོང་གསལ་འབར་མ་ཉི་མའི་གསང་རྒྱུད་ལས། མངོན་པར་སངས་རྒྱལ་པའི་རྟལ་ཚད་བཞུན་པའི་ལེའུ་ལྷོ་བརྒྱ་དང་བཅུ་གསུམ་པའོ། །དེའི་ཚེ། དེའི་དུས། འཁོར་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་གཙོ་མོ། རྗེ་རྗེ་ལག་མོ་དང་། རྗེ་རྗེ་དང་། རིན་ཆེན་དང་། བརྗེ་དང་། ཀམ་དང་། ཚོས་དང་། དམ་ཚོགས་ལ་སོགས་པའི་འཁོར་ཐམས་ཅད་ཡི་རངས་ཏེ། རྗེན་པ་ཀུན་ཏུ་བཟང་མོ་ལ་མངོན་པར་བསྟོན་དོ། །མངོན་སུམ་དུ་སྐོང་ཐེག་མཁའ་འགྲོ་མ་ཀུན་གྱི་སྐོང་ཁྲག་ཐེག་པ་ཀུན་གྱི་སྐོང་ཁྲག་རྗེགས་སོ། །ས་མ་ཡ། རྒྱ་རྒྱ་རྒྱ། བམ་ཞིག་སྐལ་ལྷན་བུ་དང་འཕྲད་པར་ཤོག །ས་མ་ཡ་ལ། སོ་ལག་ཤེལ་ཐམ། ཐུགས་སྤང་གཟའ་དང་རྗེ་རྗེ་ལེགས་པ། ཤན་པ་ནག་པོས་བཀའི་བུ་རྒྱུས་ཤིག

It makes sense to start with Tsultrim Dorje, Gyalse Lekden, and Richen Lingpa as possible treasure revealers of the *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*. However, upon reviewing historical texts about the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* by Longchenapa, Yongton Dorje Pal, and Chatrel Zopa, there appears to be a lack of evidence indicating that Tsultrim Dorje, Gyalse Lekden, and Richen Lingpa disclosed the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*. This absence suggests they may not have been revealers of the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*. According to Longchenpa's *Great History of Treasure (gter byung chen po)*, within the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* cycles, Longchenpa categorizes two different Treasure teachings. Firstly, The *Kusali Cycles (ku su lai skor)* were concealed at the valley of Dakpo, the Tramo Rock (dwags po dang lung khra mo brag). Secondly, the *Pandita Cycles, Tantras*, and esoteric instructions were concealed at Lion Rock in the lower Bumthang (bum thang smad kyi brag seng+ge).⁴⁹

Furthermore, Longchenpa's work in the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī's List (mkha' 'gro snying thig gi kha byang)* underlines all the teachings of the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* tradition that were revealed by Tsultrim Dorje.⁵⁰ However, Longchenpa does not mention the Treasure revelation of the *Tantra of the Expanse of Luminosity* and its relationship with Tsultrim Dorje. Additionally, a comprehensive work by Youngton Dorje Pal, who shared a deep familiarity with Tsultrim Dorje and who was one of the foremost disciples of Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje, mentions extensively Tsultrim Dorje's *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinī*, but is silent regarding the

⁴⁹ Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol. 6, *gter 'byung rin po che'o lo rgyus*, 378.

⁵⁰ In the 14th century, Longchenpa listed in his *mkha' 'gro snying thig gi kha byang* the entire Treasure of the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī's* teachings revealed by Tsultrim Dorje, which were here as follows:
 བཏགས་པོལ་སྐོར་ལ་མ་བྱ་ཉི་ཤུ་གསུམ་དབང་གི་སྐོར་ལ་མ་བྱ་ཉི་ཤུ་གསུམ་མིང་གྱི་སྐོར་ལ་མ་བྱ་རྩ་མ་པ་ལྟུང་བྱ་ཆོས་སྐོར་ལ་མ་བྱ་བཞེ་ལོ།
 བར་དོ་མ་གཉིས་བྱ་གསུམ་དག་གིས་རྗོགས་ཐམས་ཅད་མདོར་དྲིལ་བྱུག་རྩ་ལྡེ་ཡིས་མཁའ་འགྲོ་སྤོང་ཐེག་གདམས་པ་ལུས་འགྲུབ་དེ་ཡི་བཀའ་སྲུང་ལོག་སྐྱབ་ནག་མོ་ལོ།
 ཆ་རྒྱུན་བྱུག་གི་དེ་ཉིད་ལྷག་ཆད་མེད་ལྟེ་སྐལ་ལྷན་དང་འཕམ་ལྷག་མེད་འགྲུབ་པར་ཤོག་ལྟེ་རྒྱ་རྒྱུ། ལྷལ་སྐུ་རོང་བན་གྱིས་གདན་དྲངས་པོལོ། Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol. 5, *mkha' 'gro snying thig gi kha byang*, 6.

Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity.⁵¹ In the narrative history account, *The Life and Prophecies of Pema Ledrel Tsal*, (*pad+ma las 'brel rtsal gyi skyes rabs dang lung bstan*), it's the colophon says,

*“In front of the valley of rock of Danglung, Tulku Nyangben Tsultrim Lodrö, in particular, revealed the Seminal Heart of the Dākinī cycle, and he invited and passed it to the Shōban Lekden. Seeing him as his heart son, I will never forget his great kindness. The Dharma Lord, the Bodhisattva Lekden, bestowed it upon me, Chatral Gönrin. This was copied from the light yellow-blue parchment in Yeshe Tsogyal's handwriting.”*⁵²

As mentioned above, Chatral Gönrin, also named Chatral Zopa, played a core role as the lineage holder of a few different lineage traditions of the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* and was the author of the precious *Garland of the History of the Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* (*mkha' 'gro snying thig gi lo rgyus rin po che'i phreng ba*).⁵³ He was also a principal disciple of Longchenpa, and when he was the age of twenty-five, he became one of the foremost disciples of Longchenpa. He received many empowerments and instructions, including those for the Seminal Heart teachings, *Seventeen Tantras*, and the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī's*, as well as others.⁵⁴ In particular, Chatral Zopa encountered Gyalsey Lekden, a significant figure within the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* tradition. While Chatral Zopa was practicing in Tsari (*tsa ri*) for one or two years, he also traveled from Tsari to the lower valley of Drosa Monastery (*gro sa dgon pa*), where Gyalsey Lekden was staying. He requested the empowerments and instructions for the unsurpassable *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* from Gyalsey Lekden three times.⁵⁵ Another critical point was that he also met and received the empowerments and instructions for the *Seminal Heart*

⁵¹ Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol. 6, *lo rgyus rgyal ba g'yang gis mdzad pa*, 145-152.

⁵² དང་ལུང་ལྗང་ལྗང་གི་འདུན་ནས། ལྷུ་སྐྱེ་ཉལ་བན་ཚུལ་སྒོ་ཡིས། ལྷུང་པར་མཁའ་འཕྱོ་སྒྲིང་ཉིག་སྒོར། གདན་དངས་ཤོ་བན་ལེགས་ལྡན་ལ། །ལྷགས་ཀྱི་སྐུ་སྲུ་གཟིགས་ནས་གནང་། །སྐྱེན་ཆེ་འོ་བརྗེད་པ་མེད། །ཚོས་རྗེ་བྱང་སེམས་ལེགས་ལྡན་པས། །བྱ་བལ་དགོན་རེན་བདག་ལ་གནང་། །ཡི་ཤེས་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཕྱག་བྲིས་ཤོག་སེར་རྩོ་སྐུ་ལས་བལྟས་སོ། །དགེའོ། །
Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol. 6, *padma las 'brel rtsal gyi skyes rabs dang lung bstan*, 134.

⁵³ Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol. 6, *mkha' 'gro snying thig gi lo rgyus rin po che'i phreng ba*, 205-214.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 213.

of the *Dākinī*, the Great Perfection, Mahamudra, and the cycle of the Guru as the *Wish-Fulfilling Jewel*, the *Peaceful* and *Wrathful Guru*, Amitayus from the Treasure revealer Rinchen Lingpa, who was closely connected with developing the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs*'s tradition in that period.⁵⁶

Chatral Zopa's *History of the Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* shows that he deeply understood the lives and teachings of three eminent masters: Gyalsey Lekden, Treasure revealer Rinchen Lingpa, and Longchenpa. If Gyalsey Lekden and Rinchen Lingpa revealed the *Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*, one would expect that it would have been mentioned in his history writings.

Furthermore, Tsultrim Dorje revealed the *Empowerment and Guidance of the Illuminating Jewel Lamp (dbang khrid nor bu sgron gsal)*, a text drawing from the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* teachings.⁵⁷ Numerous quotes within this text derive from the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*. However, it seems that Longchenpa didn't reveal the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* since Tsultrim Dorje revealed the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī*'s teaching when Longchenpa was only six, and when he was around seven years old, Tsultrim Dorje passed away. Thus, I am uncertain about the authorship of the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* text.

The *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* came to be classified as an eighteenth member of the famed set of *Seventeen Tantras* that Longchenpa so frequently quotes in his writings. These tantras are considered the most sacred texts in the Nyingma Great Perfection tradition. However, the list of tantras as seventeen-fold or eighteen-fold is variable. In his *Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle (theg mchog mdzod)*,⁵⁸ Longchenpa enumerates eighteen members to a list

⁵⁶ Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol. 5, *dbang khrid nor bu sgron gsal*, 112.

⁵⁷ Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol. 6, *mkha' 'gro snying thig gi lo rgyus rin po che'i phreng ba*, 211.

⁵⁸ Longchenpa, *Theg mchog mdzod*, a 'dzoms par ma, pod e, rim khang lnga pa, 18.

of the *Seventeen Tantras* by adding the *Tantra of the Wrathful Mother, Protectress of Mantras* (*sngags srung kharo ma nag mo' rgyud*), but not the *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*. However, in Longchenpa's writing of the *History of the Precious Treasures* (*gter 'byung rin po che'o lo rgyus bzhugs so*), he specifies the eighteenth Tantra as the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*.⁵⁹

In addition, according to *kha' 'gro snying thig gi kha byang*, the *Eighteen Tantras*, including the *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*, are included in a list that was concealed as treasure scripture at the fortress in Bumthang (*bum thang seng+ge rdzong*).⁶⁰

Perhaps the most important of the *Seventeen Tantras* is the *Reverberation of Sound Tantra* (*sgra thal 'gyur*). It itself lists out the *Seventeen Tantras*, and the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* is omitted.⁶¹ However, by the 20th century, in his famous work on religious history, *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems: Biographies of Masters of Awareness in the Dzogchen Lineage*, Nyoshul Khenpo (1932-1999) describes Padmasambhava's tradition of Dzogchen teachings as including the *Seventeen Tantras*, and add as the *Eighteenth Tantra* of the famed list of *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*.⁶²

In the 14th century, The *Tantra of Blazing Luminosity of the Expanse* first emerged in the form of citations in both the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* and the *Innermost Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs* (*mkha' 'gro yang thig*) scriptures. While quoting, it states, for example, “from *Luminosity of Expanse* (*klong gsal las*),” which does not mention anything like The *Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*, raising questions about whether *Klong gsal* and the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse*

⁵⁹ Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol. 6, *mkha' 'gro snying thig gi lo rgyus rin po che'i phreng ba*, 340.

⁶⁰ Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol. 5, *kha' 'gro snying thig gi kha byang*, 4.21.

⁶¹ Longchenpa, *theg mchog mdzod*, 1916.

⁶² Nyoshul Khenpo, *A Marvelous Garland*, 151.

of *Luminosity* are different or identical. However, the connection between *The Tantra of the Blazing Expanse Luminosity* and Longchenpa's commentary *Cloud of the Ocean of Profound Meaning Found in Quintessence Dākinīs (zab don rgya mtsho'i sprin)*⁶³ is essential because Longchenpa's primarily cites from this Tantra. An example is at the beginning of this commentary when he quotes from the *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* as follows, "The Teacher, the Great Compassionate One, taught many vehicles for training, but they are all contained in the most secret Great Perfection" (from Chapter 18).⁶⁴ In fact, ninety percent of *Luminosity of Expanse's* quotes match with the 113-chapter version, but ten percent differ, suggesting a potential alternative version or development over time.⁶⁵ Therefore, future investigations in this field should highlight exploring the correlation between Longchenpa's commentary and the *Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*. This study underlines the importance of delving into this relationship for a more comprehensive understanding.

When we turn to the original the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī*, it is also mixed. For instance, in *The Six Tantra of Liberation Through Wearing (btags grol rgyud drug gi ti ka bugs so)*,⁶⁶ the excerpts extracted from the *Luminosity of Expanse's* quote do not align with those found in the 113-chapter edition. Further research needs to be done to ascertain the relevant percentages.

Treasure Revealer Sherab Menber and *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*

⁶³ Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol. 7, *zab don rgya mtsho'i sprin*, 191.

⁶⁴ ལྷོང་གསལ་ལས། ལྷོན་པ་བྱུགས་མེ་ཆེན་པོ་ཡིས། །འདུལ་བྱེད་ཐེག་པ་མང་གསུངས་ཀྱང་། །ཡང་གསང་རྫོགས་པ་ཆེན་པོར་འདུས། །
Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol. 7, *zab don rgya mtsho'i sprin*, 192.

⁶⁵ While conversing with Lai, Elaine, a Ph.D. student at Stanford University who was studying *Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*: 113-chapter version, noticed that Longchenpa referenced a quote in *Seminal Heart of the Dakīnī* within the *Innermost Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs* matching elements, citing a 113-chapter version where 90 percent of it is mechanized, contrasted with ten distinct quotes that do not match.

⁶⁶ Dri med 'od zer, 2009, vol.5, *btags grol rgyud drug gi ti ka bugs so*, 17.

The Treasure revealer, Sherab Menbar (fourteenth century⁶⁷), is considered one of the one hundred main Treasure Revealers of the Nyingma tradition.⁶⁸ He was born in the fifth calendrical cycle in the Kham region in the eastern region of Tibet.⁶⁹ Although his parents' names, learning, and contemplation are not evident in history, he revealed Treasure revelation, including the *Great Perfection of The Self-Liberating Cycle of Samsara and Nirvana* (*rdzogs pa chen po 'khor 'das rang 'grol*) and the cycle of the *Three Wrathful Ones of the Great Perfection* (*rdzogs chen drag po gsum dril*) from the Gyala in Kongpo (kong po rgya la'i rba gdong), as well as many profound instructions, including the *Planetary or Rahula (gza') Magical Displays of Goddess* (*lha mo'i cho 'phrul*), which he revealed from Taktsé Rock (stag rtse brag).⁷⁰ According to Sherab Menbar's biography, he revealed the treasure of *The Sun of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity of Samantabhadra* (*kun tu bzang po klong klong gsal 'bar ba nyi ma'i rgyud*), including the *Seventeen Tantras* (*rgyud bcu bdun*), its commentary, and *The Luminous Expanse in Eight Chapters* (*klong gsal le'u brgyad pa*), all discovered from the place of Bumthang Tang Rimochen (bum thang btang ri mo can).⁷¹ The *Seventeen Tantras* are not the famous versions but much shorter versions that manifest subsequently through Pema Lingpa's actions. The main question, for us, is how these two "klong gsal" revelations link to the tantras of that title which we now possess.

In Ratna Lingpa's *The Great Treasure Discovery* (*gter byung chen mo*), Ratna Lingpa highlights where Sherab Menbar revealed *The Seminal Heart of Vajrasattva* and other texts.⁷²

⁶⁷ According to Sherab Menbar's biography, in thirty-one chapters, it is recounted that Sherab Menbar encountered Ku ma rtsa, who was identified as Longchamp's primary teacher, suggesting that Sherab Menbar existed in the fourteenth century.

⁶⁸ Kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas, *gter ston brgya rtsa'i rnam thar bai DUr+Ya'i phreng ba* (stod lung mtshur phu'i par ma), 523.

⁶⁹ Gu ru bkra shis. *gu bkra 'i chos 'byung* (par gzhi dang po, Vol. 1), 505.

⁷⁰ Gu ru bkra shis, 506.

⁷¹ Sherab Menbar's Biography, in chapter 26.14.

⁷² Ratna gling pa, 2014a, Vol. 2, *gter 'byung chen mo*, 52.

When Ratna Lingpa talks about Sherab Menber, he recognizes him alongside Gyalsey Lekden, which tells us that Ratna Lingpa was aware of how Sherab Menber is central to the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs* tradition. Another narrative history is that Sherab Menbar traveled from Kham to Bumthang, passing through nine provinces of Tibet. While traveling, he revealed treasures of wealth from the Black Lake of the West (mtsho nag pa tra), but the auspicious connections were not right, so the treasures were lost again. Also, there was one time when the chief minister forced him to reveal a treasure that was not his treasure. Consequently, that chief died, and Sherab Menber himself passed away soon after.⁷³

Another narrative history regarding treasure revelation occurs when Guru Tashi mentions Sherap Menbar's relationship with treasure reveler Dorje Lingpa. The Sherap Mebar section of the history of treasure describes his short life span. It says that Sherap Menbar hid a yellow scroll as a treasure teaching, which Treasure revealer Pema Lingpa (1450-1521⁷⁴) later revealed.⁷⁵ Sherab Menber also evidently studied with Longchenpa's own principal Seminal Heart teacher, Kumaradza (1266-1343). He produced important treasure revelations entangled with other key figures during that time. He appears to have been a critical agent in reimagining the Seminal Heart tradition of the Great Perfection but remained a comparatively little-known figure compared to others involved in the 14th century.

Some of Sherab Menbar's biographical researchers in Bhutanese have said that Sherab Menber's the *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* was originally a ümé script⁷⁶ converted

⁷³ Dge 'dun rin chen, *dpal ldan 'brug pa'i gdul zhing lho phyogs nags ma'i ljongs kyi chos 'byung blo gsar rna ba'i rgyan*, (In *gsung 'bum dge 'dun rin chen*, Vol. 8), 148.

⁷⁴ Ariana Maki, "Pema Lingpa" in *The Treasury of Lives*.
<https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Pema-Lingpa/3000>

⁷⁵ Gu ru bkra shis, 505.

⁷⁶ Üme script is used in Tibetan handwriting, often for informal writing, but üchen script is the most formal writing.

into the üchen script. I hope that future research will clarify and look at those texts and further understand the influence of Sherab Menbar and his unique revelations of the *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*.

Treasure Revealer Dorje Lingpa and *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*

Treasure Revealer Dorje Lingpa (rdo rje gling pa, 1346-1405) was one of the key figures during the 14th century who produced a scripture under the rubric of the *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* and was a critical representative involved in reimagining the Seminal Heart tradition of the Great Perfection. Also, he was a prominent figure understood to be one of the five kingly treasure finders (*gter ston rgyal po lnga*) in the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. According to the historical description, Dorje Lingpa considered himself an incarnation of Vairocana,⁷⁷ an eighth-century Tibetan great translator who was strongly associated with early Great Perfection traditions and is said to have founded the *Seminal Heart of Vairocana* tradition. It is believed that Dorje Lingpa saw Padmasambhava's own face seven times in his visions when he was thirteen, and he revealed the first Treasure of *The Sadhana of the Three Roots* and another Treasure teaching from behind the statue of the Lady of Tradruk (khrag 'brug jo mo'i sku rgyab). When Dorje Lingpa was age of fifteen, he opened the way to the treasures of a place of Ökar Rock in the lower valley of Cing (bying mda'o dkar brag). His revelations included the *Vast Expanse of the View, a Father Tantra of the Great Perfection* (*rdzogs chen pha rgyud lta ba klong yangs*), and, in particular, the *Sun Which Illumines Expanse, a Mother Tantra* (*ma rgyud klong gsal nyi ma*).⁷⁸

Interestingly, in a later period, Dorje Lingpa presented two distinct versions of The *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*, which differed significantly from Ratna Lingpa: *From the*

⁷⁷ 'jigs bral ye shes rdo rje, *bdud 'joms chos 'byung*, 394.

⁷⁸ Jigs-bral-ye-śes-rdo-rje, Dorje, and Kapstein, *The Nyingma History*, 789.

Great Treasury of Key Points of the Secret Mantra: Unsurpassed Cycle of the Secret Intermediate State, Secret Tantra of the Sun: Blazing Luminous Matrix of the Secret Essence of the Dākinīs (*mkha' 'gro ma'i gsang thig klong gsal 'bar ma nyi ma'i gsang rgyud gsang sngags gnad mdzod chen mo las bar do gsang skor bla na med pa'i skor*), and another described directly below. Both versions can be found in *The Nyingma Karma Collection* (*bka' ma shin tu rgyas*),⁷⁹ from chapter 114 through chapter 142, totaling 28 chapters and clearly intended as an extension of the 113-chapters version (which also tells us that version dates back to the fourteenth century) The central theme of this text is the bardo, or intermediate state.

Dorje Lingpa's second version of tantra, entitled *The Ultimate View of All the Vehicles, is the Secret Sphere of the Dākinīs, the Blazing Wisdom of Samantabhadri, the Great Tantra of the Secret Empowerment of the Sun* (*theg pa'i mthar thug lta ba'i yang rtse mkha' 'gro gsang thig klong gsal kun tu bzang mo'i dgongs pa 'bar ma nyi ma'i gsang rgyud dbang bzhi bya rgyud chen mo*),⁸⁰ has twenty-four chapters and explores the four empowerments of Great Perfection traditions. The first version, after the colophon, says,

*“Emaho! I Dor Lin, [Dorje Lingpa], blessed by Padmasambhava of Oḍḍiyāna. I did not have difficulty with diligence in studying and enhancement in this life. However, I found my first guide to Treasure when I was thirteenth year old. Among them is this Mother Tantra of the dākinīs. I kept it strictly [secret] until the age of forty-two. I received blessings through practice, and the signs and measures made me confident and inspired.”*⁸¹

⁷⁹ Tshe ring rgya mtsho, ed. *mkha' 'gro ma'i gsang thig klong gsal 'bar ma nyi ma'i gsang rgyud gsang sngags gnad mdzod chen mo las bar do gsang skor bla na med pa'i skor*. In *sNga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa*, Par gzhi dang po., 111:299. [BDRC]

⁸⁰ Tshe ring rgya mtsho, ed. *mkha' 'gro ma'i gsang thig klong gsal 'bar ma nyi ma'i gsang rgyud gsang sngags gnad mdzod chen mo las bar do gsang skor bla na med pa'i skor*. In *sNga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa*, Par gzhi dang po., 111:299. [BDRC]

⁸¹ ཨོ་མ་རྟོ་ཨོ་རྒྱན་པ་རྣམས་བྱིན་རླབས་དྲོད་རྒྱུང་ནས། ཚོ་འདྲིར་སྤྱང་བསྐྱོད་དཀའ་བ་མ་སྤྱད་ཀྱང་། །བསུ་གསུམ་ལོ་ལ་ཁ་བྱང་དང་པོ་རྟེན། །དེ་ཡི་ནང་ནས་མཁའ་འགྲུའི་མ་རྒྱུད་འདི། །ཞེ་གཉིས་མ་སོང་བར་དུ་ཤེན་ཏུ་བཟུམས། །རང་ཉིད་ཉམས་རྒྱངས་བྱིན་རླབས་ཐོབ་པ་དང་། །རྟོགས་ཚད་བོད་པ་གཤིང་དང་ལྡན་པ་བྱུང་། །
mkha' 'gro ma'i gsang thig klong gsal 'bar ma nyi ma'i gsang rgyud gsang sngags gnad mdzod chen mo las bar do gsang skor bla na med pa'i skor. In *sga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa*, 485.

This passage provides some details of his version of *The Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* in the context of his life. According to Dorjé Lingpa's biography, among the numerous Treasures he revealed from Namchak Drak (Gnam lcags brag), the one that stands out is the *Mother Tantra, the Sun Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of the Dākinī's Secret Essence* (*ma rgyud mkha' 'gro gsang thig klong gsal 'bar ma nyi ma'i rgyud*), consisting of 162 chapters.⁸² This chapter totally diverges from the two previously mentioned versions of the tantras, hinting at the existence of additional versions unless it is a mistake for 142 chapters. Consequently, it becomes imperative for future studies to delve into Dorje Lingpa's transition and his interpretation of multiple *Tantras of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*. By doing so, one can uncover how he adds his unique traditions and influences on the evolution of the Great Perfection of the Seminal Heart tradition.

According to Karmay, Dorje Lingpa epitomizes an eclectic tradition and is pivotal in advancing Dzogchen's thought.⁸³ While Longchenpa focused on the scholarly restructuring of Dzogchen philosophy, Dorje Lingpa continued to innovate, presenting new materials that enriched the doctrine. His work *Lta ba klong yang*⁸⁴ is a prime example of these innovations.

Treasure Revealer Ratna Lingpa and *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*

Ratna Lingpa was born in the region of Lhodrak (lho brag), Southern Tibet, specifically in the village of Drushul (gru shul); he traveled across U (dbus) and Tsang (gtsang) to become widely acknowledged throughout Tibet as one of the leading Buddhist visionaries and teachers of his time.

Ratna Lingpa began his occupation as a treasure revealer in 1429 when, at twenty-seven old, he

⁸² Dorje Lingpa, *sngags 'chang ba rdo rje gling pas zab gter rnam dang 'jal ba'i gter byang rnam thar gter rabs rgya mtsho*, In *gter chen rdo rje gling pa'i zab chos phyogs bsdebs*, Vol. 11. 24-33. [BDRC]

⁸³ Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, 216-217.

⁸⁴ *Lta ba klong yang* is Dorje Lingpa's one of the four profound Treasures of the Great Perfection and is one of the two Father tantras that are called the "*Father Tantra of the View of the Vast Expanse* (*Lta ba klong yang*).

first received treasure “guides” (*kha byang*)⁸⁵ in dreams and visions. He kept it secret for three years until the tenth day of the year of the water rat year of 1432 when he was thirty years old; he discovered the profound Treasure in the chiff of Khyungchen (khyung chen brag);⁸⁶ Ratna Lingpa first received the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs* and other teachings from Yeshe Palzang as well as from Dawa Dagkpa, (zla ba grags pa) *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs* Including the *Seventeenth Tantras* ⁸⁷

One of the fascinating Ratna Lingpa’s works was overseeing the compiling of the famous knowns as *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients* (*rnying ma ‘i rgyud ‘bum*), the cornerstone of the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. This monumental effort directly responded to establishing the primary Tibetan Buddhist canon, which notably omitted Nyingma scriptures. Even Jigme Lingpa’s collected works, the most significant canon of the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, is known as *The Collected Tantras of the Ancient* in the 18th century. Jigme Lingpa’s catalogs are the most crucial source of the Tantric collections of Lhundrup Phodrang, which were built by Ratna Lingpa, the father and son, who were kind to the lineages of both the textual transmissions of the precious *Collections of the Ancient Translation School*, this became the root of both textual and transmissions for the later version of all the *Collection of the Ancient Translation*.⁸⁸

Ratna Lingpa is an extraordinary collection of twenty-five separate revelations on diverse topics such as peaceful and wrathful Buddhas, Great Perfection, and Mahāmudrā. These offer

⁸⁵ (*kha byang*), serves as a guide to uncovering the treasure teachings, directing seekers to where they can discover treasure teachings or any company seeking to find these teachings.

⁸⁶ Ratna gling pa, 2014a, vol. 1, *gu ru gter ston rat+na gling pa ‘i rnam thar tshigs su bcad pa rin po che ‘i phreng ba ‘od ‘bar ba*, 692.5.

⁸⁷Ibid., 695-698.

⁸⁸ ‘jigs med gling pa. *rnying ma rgyud ‘bum gyi bzhugs byang dkar chag*, par gzhi dang po. vol.1, 409.

invaluable guidance for practitioners seeking enlightenment. Among Ratna Lingpa's treasured teachings, perhaps the most remarkable revelation of treasure was the *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse* teaching, one of the principal teachings of Ratna Lingpa's lifetime.

Since Ratna Lingpa discovered the sacred teachings of the *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse* at the cave of Red Rock Grotto (brag dmar ri mo can), these teachings have composed his principal and fundamental practice. He also gave this teaching to their disciples, becoming one of his central teachings. According to Ratna Lingpa's autobiographical accounts, he believed that his practice, and especially that of the essence of the heart blood, is undoubtedly the *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse*. He divides this into three cycles: the heart, the heart-blood, and the quintessence of the life force.⁸⁹ According to Ratna Lingpa's *History of the Revelation of a Treasure* (*gter 'byung chen mo*), Ratna Lingpa divided the *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse* three cycles: ⁹⁰ First *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse cycle*, which is like the heart; the *Unwritten Cycle*, (*thim yig med pa'i skor*), which is like Heart's blood; and the *Innermost Seminal of Hidden Teaching Cycle* (*sbas chos yang tig gi skor*) which is like the essence of life force.⁹¹

During the Year of the Dragon, in the sacred place known as Monha Senge Dzong (lo mon kha ne ring sen ge dzong), Ratna Lingpa and his three disciples went on a pilgrimage to reveal Treasure. They saw many extraordinary signs in the various places they visited during that time. Ratna Lingpa sang the following spiritual song (*mgjur*).

“Through the kindness of Padmasambhava of Oḍḍiyāna, I discovered an amazing, profound and sublime Treasure, which anyone cannot engage in because it is as hard as diamonds, like jewels, earth, stones, rocks, mountains, and so forth. The profound instruction was the “Heart and Blood of the Dākīnī.” The supreme teaching of self-arisen wisdom, the crown ornament of all the teachings, the most secret, unsurpassable Great

⁸⁹ Ratna gling pa, 2014a, vol. 1, *gu ru gter ston rat+na gling pa'i rnam thar tshigs su bcad pa rin po che'i phreng ba 'od 'bar ba*, 705.5.

⁹⁰ Ratna gling pa, 2014a, vol. 2, *gter 'byung chen mo*, 128.3.

⁹¹ Ratna gling pa, 2014a, vol.1, *rnam par thar pa byin rlabs rgya mtsho'i sprin*, 98.3.

*Perfection, The Dharma that accomplishes Buddhahood in a single lifetime, is the great teaching of “Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse.” How amazing and marvelous. You have granted the most profound and excellent teachings on the two stages, Breakthrough (khregs chod) and Direct Crossing (thod rgal). Your wondrous kindness is inconceivable. May all beings realize the meaning of this and swiftly attain Buddhahood.”*⁹²

The following is from one of the “songs” (mgur), which are presented as spontaneous verses spoken by Ratna Lingpa and added to his biography in their chronology in Ratna Lingpa’s life author by Ratna Lingpa himself as part of a text written by Chtral Palgyi Senge Nyangpo.⁹³ Based on Ratna Lingpa's autobiography and his songs, he came to recognize that his teachings on the *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse* are the principal of all the teachings that will enable one to attain enlightenment in one lifetime.

In his biography, Ratna Lingpa intensely describes numerous occasions where he gives teachings from the *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse*, profoundly inspiring the lives of his disciples and leading to profound personal experiences. This highlights the societal impact of this precious text and its vital role in shaping Ratna Lingpa's entire life journey.⁹⁴

Finally, to explain the decisive meaning of the view of the Great Perfection, mainly to demonstrate the vital essence of this most secret unsurpassable approach, Ratna Lingpa composed the *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse*, the sacred teachings. There are questions about why Ratna Lingpa received many teachings about the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* but chose not to. Instead, he taught his version of *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse*.

⁹² ཨོ་རྒྱན་པ་རྣམས་སྐྱེ་དྲིན་གྱིས། འིན་ཚེན་ས་དོ་བླག་རི་མོགས། །སྤྲུལ་ལུགས་དོ་རྗེ་པ་ལམ་བཞིན། །ཀུན་གྱིས་མི་སྤོད་ཁྱུང་པར་གྱི། འདྲི་མཚར་ཐབ་གཏེར་ཁྱུང་འཕགས་རྟེན། །གདམས་ཐབ་མཁའ་འཕྲིའི་སྤྲུལ་བྱུང། །རང་བྱུང་ཡི་ཤེས་མཚོག་སྟོན་པ། །བསྟན་པ་ཀུན་གྱི་སྤྱི་ཕུང་ནི། །ཡང་གསང་བླ་མེད་རྗེས་པ་ཆེ། །ཚེ་གཅིག་སངས་རྒྱལ་འབྲུབ་པའི་ཚེས། །དམ་ཚོས་སྤོང་གསལ་སྤོང་ཉིག་བྱུང། །ཨོ་མ་དོ་མཚར་མེད་དུ་བྱུང། །འིམ་གཉིས་ཁྲགས་ཚོད་ཐོད་རྒྱལ་ཏེ། །ཐབ་ཁྱུང་ཕུལ་དུ་ཕྱིན་པ་བསྟུལ། །ཡ་མཚན་སྐྱེ་དྲིན་བསམ་མི་ཁྱབ། །འདི་དོན་ཀུན་གྱིས་ཉོགས་གྲོལ་ནས། །འཕྲོ་ཀུན་སངས་རྒྱལ་སྤྱིར་ཐོབ་ཤོག། Ratna gling pa, 2014a, vol.1, *rnam par thar pa byin rlabs rgya mtsho'i sprin*, 109.

⁹³ Ibid., 478.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

The discovery of a new version of *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*, Breach from Bhutan

According to the British Library, two parts of the *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* texts have been digitized as *klong gsal nyin ma 'bar ba'i rgyud*. This series contains miscellaneous titles from Gangtey Rinpoche's library, originally from the 14th to the 20th centuries.⁹⁵

One of the exciting points in the first part of the group text was the *History of the Tantra of Outer, Inner, and Secret of the Blazing Sun of the Expanse* (*klong gsal nyi ma 'bar ba'i rgyud kyi lo rgyus phyi nang gsang gsum*). Although this history has no colophon, it is unique in that it combines the outer, inner, and secret aspects of the *Tantra Blazing Sun of the Expanse*. Additionally, there exists a 113-chapter version of *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*, titled *theg pa kun gyi mthar thug_gsang sngags kyi gnad rgyud chen po zhes bya ba la: _kun tu bzang mo klong gsal 'bar ma nyi ma'i gsang rgyud chen po*,⁹⁶ it has 95 pages I compared it with 113- the chapter version of *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* in *bka' ma shin ru rgyas pa* edition and found that most 99 percent of the content is the same; however, further study is needed. Also, I noticed that the 113-chapter version of *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* contains no Treasure punctuation (*gter tshag*). In contrast, the manuscripts obtained from Bhutan contain a Treasure sign. Another important thing is that this collection contains the 18 chapters of the *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*,⁹⁷ which are identical to the 18 chapters of Ratna Lingpa's *The Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*⁹⁸ in the *Collected Works* of Ratna Lingpa, except for one page of the first part and a difference in the title. However,

⁹⁵ *klong gsal nyi ma 'bar ba'i rgyud*, <https://eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP039-1-4-19>

⁹⁶ Ibid., <https://eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP039-1-4-19>

⁹⁷ *klong gsal nyi ma 'bar ba'i rgyud*, <https://eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP039-1-4-19>

⁹⁸ Ratna gling pa, 2014a, vol. 16, *klong gsal 'bar ma nyi ma'i gsang rgyud_kun gyi thun mong ma yin pa gter ston rat+na'i snying bcud 'di kho*, 141.3.

at the end of this edition, the colophon says, “I, Yeshe Tsogyal, have written this down without omission or addition. May it meet with a fortunate child.”⁹⁹ After that, it is Dorlingpa (rdo gling pa'o). According to this colophon, the treasure was revealed by Dorje Lingpa. However, likely, this attribution was later mistakenly ascribed to another person. This Tantra evidently aligns with the Treasure teachings of Ranna Lingpa.

The colophon of Ratna Lingpa’s *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* work also describes Ratna Lingpa’s prophecy from Padmasambhava and how he revealed his Treasure.¹⁰⁰ In particular, there is a need to thoroughly investigate more research and study more to find out what is between the pattern of the multiple editions and versions of this text.

In other British libraries, versions are digitized, such as *klong gsal gsang ba snying bcud sogs*,¹⁰¹ which have more than 300 pages. Most supplementary texts related to the *Tantra Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*, which the Treasure revelers Pedma Lingpa discovered, are empowerment, rituals, and other strictures. According to a historical account, Padma Lingpa’s many Treasures, including the *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*, belong to the Sherab Menbar. Likewise, the Treasure teachings associated with Padma Lingpa’s Treasure of *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* may be likely to have belonged to Sherab Member.

⁹⁹ ཡེ་ཤེས་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་བདག་ཉིད་གྱིས། ལྷག་ཚད་མེད་པར་ཡི་གེར་བསྟར། ལྷག་ལྡན་བུ་དང་ཕྱད་པར་ཤོག [དོ་སློང་པའོ།] དགེའོ་དགེའོ་དགེའོ།
klong gsal nyi ma 'bar ba 'i rgyud, Page, 21. <https://eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP039-1-4-19>

¹⁰⁰ Ratna gling pa, 2014a, vol. 16, *klong gsal 'bar ma nyi ma'i gsang rgyud_kun gyi thun mong ma yin pa gter ston rat+na'i snying bcud 'di kho*, 196-197.

¹⁰¹ *klong gsal gsang ba snying bcud*, British Library, EAP039/1/4/233, <https://eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP039-1-4-233>.

The *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* has multiple versions in different editions, as shown under the cart.

Author	Titles	Publisher	Edition	Chapter
No Author	<i>Mkha' 'gro thams cad kyi snying khrag klong gsal 'bar ma nyi ma'i gsang rgyud</i> ¹⁰²	Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang	(KM, BL) ¹⁰³	113
Dorje Lingpa, Rdo rje glingpa, 1346-1405)	<i>Mkha' 'gro ma'i gsang thig klong gsal 'bar ma nyi ma'i gsang rgyud gsang sngags gnad mdzod chen mo las bar do gsang skor bla na med pa'i skor</i>	Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang	Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang	28
Dorje Lingpa	<i>Theg pa'i mthar thug lta ba'i yang rtse mkha' 'gro gsang thig klong gsal kun tu bzang mo'i dgongs pa 'bar ma nyi ma'i gsang rgyud dbang bzhi bya rgyud chen mo</i>	Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang	Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang	24
Ratna Lingpa, Rat+nag ling pa, 1403-1479)	<i>Klong gsal 'bar ma nyi ma'i gsang rgyud bzhus so: kun gyi thun mong ma yin pa gter ston rat+na'i snying bcu 'di kho na'o:</i>	BDRC	(ZI, ZS, LB), and RL) ¹⁰⁴	24
Ratna Lingpa	<i>Klong gsal nyi ma'i rgyud kyi gsang 'grel chen mo lam 'bras gser gyi me long</i>	BDRC	(RI, ZL, LB, & KZ) ¹⁰⁵	6

¹⁰² The 113th version of *The Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* is included in all Nyingma Gyubum collections.

¹⁰³ In this context, (DG) refers to the (*sde dge*) edition of *rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum*, (PT) to the (*dpal brtsegs*) stands edition of *rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum*, and (KM) to the (*bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa*) collection, and (BL) refers to texts that have been digitalized in the British Library which come from Gangtgye Rinpoche's private Library from Bhutan.

¹⁰⁴ In this context, (ZL) refers to the collection of old texts from the monastery at Dzongsar Lama Lhakhang in dege, (ZS) indicates the secondary collection situated at Shechen Khangmar Sang Ngak.Tengye Ling monastery, and (LB) pertains to the preserved ancient texts curated by Lama Nyima Bum. All these ancient texts are written in Khampa-style handwriting, characteristic of the eastern part of Tibetan regions. (RL) stands for the collection work for Ratna Lingpa's *gsung 'bum*, 2014.

¹⁰⁵ KZ refers to the primary Nyingma texts kept at Drakgo Dzong in Kham (brang mgo rdzong). These texts encompass 15 volumes, with the commentary found within volume 13.

Indian Translator:Sprang po rat+na gling pa ngas TibetanTranslator:Gung thang mkhar nas bton pa yin	<i>Kun tu bzang mo klong gsal 'bar ma nyi ma'i rgyud</i>	THLC	(PT) ¹⁰⁶	24
Not specified. (Dg) Sprang po rat+na gling pa ngas(Pt)	<i>Kun tu bzang mo klong gsal 'bar ma nyi ma'i gsang rgyud</i>	THLC	(DG & PT)	24
No Author	<i>Kun tu bzang mo klong gsal 'bar ma nyi ma'i gsang rgyud</i>	THLC	(DG)	19
Indian, Translator Padmasambhava	<i>Klong gsal 'bar ma nyi ma'i gsang rgyud</i>	THLC	(DG &, PT)	19

Ratna Lingpa's Commentary on *The Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*

Introducing Ratna Lingpa's *Commentary of Sun Tantra in Golden Mirror*

While reading multiple versions of *The Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity's* scripture, when I saw the title of Ratna Lingpa's commentary, I felt a strong inspiration to read *The Great Commentary*, to understand better the root tantra, the *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*, and to bring awareness of Ratna Lingpa's contributions to the Great Perfection tradition. I wanted to explain not only Ratna Lingpa's prolific literary treasure but also its profound wisdom that benefits human beings. From Ratna Lingpa's Great Perfection revelations, he found twenty-five

¹⁰⁶ According to *The Tibetan & Himalayan Library Category (Edition)*

མཇུག་དང་མཚམས་བྲག་རྒྱུད་འབྲུམ་གཤིས་ཀྱི་ཚོས་ཚན་དཔེ་སྐུར་བྱས་པའི་དཀར་ཆག་འབྲུག་པ་མ་རྩུ་ཡི་གཤིས་རྒྱུད་ལྷན་དུ་བྱས་པའི་མཇུག་སྐུར་མཚན་བསྟོན་དང་དྲག་ཐག་གྱི་རྒྱུད་།

separate treasure teachings on diverse topics; notably, he established the *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse* based on the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī*.

Ratna Lingpa held this teaching to be one of the most important, and so he followed it throughout his life. Ratna Lingpa, drawing from the *Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* and the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī*, was revealed as the new the *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse* during the 15th century. While delving into Ratna Lingpa’s profound teaching of this tradition, I was fascinated by his insights, his inspiration for this innovative tradition, and the profound implications of the *Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*.

Before Ratna Lingpa, the great scholar Longchenpa had written numerous commentaries and explorations of the Seminal Heart teachings. Ratna Lingpa’s contributions marked a turning point in the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī*’s tradition by adding his version of the *Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* and many other associated texts. Among his many great teachings, one distinguished commentary was titled *The Great Secret Commentary on The Sun Illuminating the Expanse Tantra, of The Golden Mirror of The Path, and Fruit*¹⁰⁷ (*klong gsal nyi ma'i gsang rgyud kyi gsang 'grel chen mo lam 'bras gser gyi me long*). I will explore this commentary of *Sun Tantra in Golden Mirror* in depth. The purpose of Ratna Lingpa’s commentary was to help readers understand the profound and vast meaning of the *Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*. Moreover, understanding Ratna Lingpa's *Sun Tantra in Golden Mirror* can illuminate the intricate development and significance of the traditional *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī* literature during the 15th century. Ratna Lingpa’s great commentary provides a deeper insight into profound explanations of the ground, path, and fruit of the Great Perfection.

Background

¹⁰⁷ I'll reference the commentary’s long title in my writing titled “*Sun Tantra in Golden Mirror*.”

The Tibetan canonical revelation known as “treasures” (*gter ma*) dates from the tenth century onward.¹⁰⁸ A text is categorized as a treasure in many distinctive genres. There are various types of scriptural revelation teaching, including those that occur from imaginative experience (*dag snang*), those that are hidden in the mind of a person intended to reveal that treasure in future incarnations (*dgongs gter*) and earth treasure (*sa gter*), which is hidden in objects and places. In addition, the narratives of treasure origins, prophecies of the treasure’s future, and the accounts of the revelation’s occupation are presented in numerous ways. The account of the revelation and the prophecy of the revealer are an essential part of what renders the scripture unique, credible, and compelling. Treasure revelation narratives function as legitimizing forces. Therefore, the credibility of *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* as scriptural revelation rests in large part upon its origin narrative.¹⁰⁹

Similarly, *Sun Tantra in Golden Mirror* was said to have been a hidden treasure scripture which was, in fact, first composed by Garab Dorje (c. 665), based on the *Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*; it is said that he taught it orally to the great scholar Shri Singha. Shri Singha taught it to Padmasambhava in the letter. Padmasambhava wrote it down in the cave of the Glacier of Yari (*g.ya' ri gangs kyi brag phug*) and brought it to Tibet, where he taught and explained it to Tsogyal. After this, Tsogyal wrote it down on the yellow scroll at the White Rock of Tidro in the upper Sho (*gzho stod ti sgro'i brag dkar*), and she concealed it at the Lion Fortress Rock in Gungtang, Mön (*gzho stod ti sgro'i brag dkar*). The yellow scroll originally written by Padmasambhava at the Glacier of Yari was concealed in the Cave of Yangleshö in Nepal (*yang le*

¹⁰⁸ Gyatso, "Drawn from the Tibetan treasury: the Gter ma literature." *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre* (Studies in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism), ed. Jose Inacio Cabezon and Roger R. Jackson (Boulder: Snow Lion Publications, 1996): 147-169, 148.

¹⁰⁹ Cape, *Women and Sexuality*, 25.

shod kyi dpal phug). One yellow scroll was concealed at Sengé Na in Sengé Nezhong in Bumthang, Mön (bum thang seng+ge gnam rdzong gi seng ge'i sna).¹¹⁰

In the narrative account of this great commentary of *Sun Tantra in Golden Mirror*, many treasures were concealed across various locations, including Tibet, the land of Mön, and Nepal. Also, it mentions that all treasures will be found in the southern regions, but they will not appear in the northern regions.¹¹¹

*“I Padma [Padmasambhava] would have deceived future generations If something more profound than this Great Perfection were to appear at the end of time. My prophecy would not be successful if it contradicted the oral transmission and Treasure teaching. He will reveal twenty-five treasures, including Dharma treasure, the treasure of wealth, hidden lands, water of longevity, and seven rebirth pills. In particular, the Tantra of the Sun of the Blazing of Expanse and Commentaries combined are the heart of treasure. One was hidden in Bumthang Senge Nar ('bum thang seng+ge sna) without a commentary. Combined with tantra and commentaries, these treasures will undoubtedly and unmistakably occur for [a revealer] with these signs, such as Ratna, Buddha, the one with the three skulls, and also with the name of Ratna. That person will be wise, have a noble face, and have great devotion to the profound treasures and the Great Perfection. Most people who will receive Padma's [Padmasambhava] prophecy will come from the regions of Lhodrak. When those who have received the long life, the five dākinīs will be in the four directions, later again, even those five dākinīs may have discrepancies or mistakes, so examine them with reasoning. There is no need for any other composition arrangement, such as extra words, hidden letters, symbolic phenomena, and so on so forth I entrust this to you, fortunate Ratna. [Ratna Lingpa] Sa ma ya.”*¹¹²

It's fascinating to examine the diversity of four distinct editions of commentary of *Sun Tantra in Golden Mirror* today. Each edition represents a unique manner of handwriting the

¹¹⁰ Ratna gling pa, 2014a, vol. 16, *klong gsal nyi ma'i rgyud kyi gsang 'grel chen mo lam 'bras gser gyi me long zhes bya ba bzhugs so*, 284.5.

¹¹¹ Ratna gling pa, 2014a, Vol. 16, *Klong gsal nyi ma'i rgyud kyi gsang 'grel chen mo lam 'bras gser gyi me long zhes bya ba bzhugs so*, 285.

¹¹² དུས་ཀྱི་ཐ་མར་ཚོགས་ཆེན་འདི་ལས་ཟབ་པ་བྱུང་ན་པར་བདག་གིས་ཕྱི་རབས་བསྐྱེས་སོང་བཀའ་གཏེར་རྣམས་དང་འགལ་བ་ནུང་དས་ལྷང་བསྐྱར་པ་ཆེར་མི་ཐེབས་ཆོས་གཏེར་ལོ་གཏེར་ལྷན་ལུས་ཆོ་རྒྱ་དང་། སྤྱི་བདུན་ལ་སོགས་གཏེར་ལ་ཉེ་ཤུ་ཙམ་འདོན་ཉུང་པར་སྐོང་གསལ་ཉེ་མའི་གསང་རྒྱུད་དང་། འགྲེལ་པ་གཉིས་སྟུང་བའི་ཐུགས་གཏེར་འདི་ཉིད་ཡིན་ཤིང་གཅིག་ནི་བྱམ་ཐང་སོལ་སྤྱི་ལྷན་ལྷན་འགྲེལ་པ་མེད་པར་སྤྱི་ལྷན་ལྷན་འགྲེལ་སྟུང་བའི་གཏེར་ལ་འདི་དེས་པར་མི་ཉོར་འདི་རྣམས་འབྲུང་། རྩེ་བྱུང་ཐོད་པ་གསུམ་མཚན་ཅན་དེ་ཆེན་མཚན་ཅན་ཡོང་དོ་ཤེས་རབ་དང་ལྷན་པུན་བཞིན་བཟང་། ཟབ་གཏེར་ཆོས་ཚོགས་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཆོས་ལ་མོས་པ་ཉུང་པར་ཆེ་བསྐྱེད་ལྷང་བསྐྱར་ཐོབ་པའི་གང་ཟག་པས་ཆེར་སྤོང་བཀའ་ལྷན་སྟུང་ཆོ་གསོལ་ཐོབ་པའི་ཕྱོགས་བཞིར་རྒྱ་གི་ལྷན་ལས་ནི་རྒྱ་གི་ལྷན་ལ་ཡང་། འདྲ་མེན་རེ་དང་ཉོར་བ་ལ་མ་ཟུང་འབྲུང་བས་དེ་གི་པས་བཏག་པར་བྱུང་། ཆོག་ལྷང་གལ་ཡིག་བཞུ་ཡི་ཆོས་ལ་སོགས་ཤིང་སྤོང་འབྲུགས་ཐེབ་གཞན་གང་མི་དགོས་སོང་། ལྷན་ལྷན་ལས་ཅན་རྩེ་བྱུང་ལ་གཏང་དོ་ས་མ་ཡ་རྒྱུ་ Ratna gling pa 2014a, vol. 16, *klong gsal nyi ma'i rgyud kyi gsang 'grel chen mo lam 'bras gser gyi me long zhes bya ba bzhugs so*, 286.2.

ancient text, offering invaluable insight into the performance and preservation of Tibetan Buddhist teaching. The first edition was meticulously preserved by Dzongsar Monastery in Derge, located in Kham. Lama Nyibum preserved the second edition. The third collection resides at Shechen Khangmar Sang Ngak Tengye Ling Monastery, while the fourth is included in the various editions of the collected works of Ratna Lingpa.¹¹³

As we delve into Ratna Lingpa's text, we perceive the profound impact of tantric teachings. They essentially reshape the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs* into a new tradition known as the *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse (klong gsal snying thig)*. Through a comprehensive study of this text, I aim to uncover the pivotal role played by Ratna Lingpa, who greatly influenced the flourishing of *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs* teachings from the fifteenth century onward.

[Relationship between Ratna Lingpa's *The Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* and his Commentary of *Sun Tantra in Golden Mirror*](#)

In the vast expanse of Tibetan Buddhist tradition, there are many different types of commentaries, such as commentaries on the general classics, including commentary on the meaning, commentary on the root text, word-by-word commentaries, and annotation commentary. This *Sun Tantra in Golden Mirror* commentary is a commentary on the meaning; it is not a linear word-by-word commentary on any particular text. However, when one analyzes the text, whether literally or in the manner of commentary, it is clearly not a dedicated commentary on Ratna Lingpa's *The Tantra of Blazing Expanse Luminosity* 19-chapter version but rather appears to be on general all of the versions of that scripture of *klong gsal* tantra. Most commentaries typically reference a specific root text, but Ratna Lingpa's commentary does not quote any passages from *The Blazing Expanse*

¹¹³ Ratna gling pa. *gter chos ratna gling pa*. 21 vol, gser rta gnubs zur dgon: snga 'gyur rnying ma dpal bla med gsang chen gnubs zur dgon, 2014. [BDRC bdr:MW3PD1003]. There exist six distinct versions of Ratna Lingpa's collected works.

of *Luminosity* at all, making the question of editions moots. At the end of chapter 7, while explaining the categories of the nuclei (*thig le*), Ratna Lingpa's commentary quotes a single verse from the Manjūshrī Namāsaragrahā (*'jam dpal mtshan brjod*¹¹⁴).¹¹⁵ Moreover, this commentary distinguishes itself through its ease and accessibility. It serves as a unique introduction to the text's meaning with minimal organization of philosophical and commentarial terminology.

While Ratna Lingpa's *The Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* and his *Sun Tantra in Golden Mirror* share similarities in concepts like the Prime Common All-Ground (*thog ma'i spy gzhi*), they appear somewhat disconnected in context. Understanding the development of the *Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* over time reveals significant changes in specific doctrines and practices.

The 18-chapter *Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, alongside Ratna Lingpa's version of the same tantra, indicates a consistent structure and format across its 18 chapters. Still, I suggest that forthcoming researchers thoroughly analyze, compare, and contrast both editions for a comprehensive understanding.

Overview of all the Chapters

This profound commentary on *Sun Tantra in Golden Mirror* explains four main principles that form the foundation of its discourse. First, it explores the details of both the external realm and the inner landscape of sentient beings. Second, how to be deluded in samsara and how to become liberated into nirvana. Third, the channels, winds, and essences are introduced thoroughly as the basis for understanding the subtle body. Finally, it presents the path and the result.

¹¹⁴ This *'jam dpal mtshan brjod*'s verse can find in the mkhan chen 'jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan, ed. "'Jam dpal mtshan brjod.'" In *bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (kaḥthog), 470.

¹¹⁵ Ratna gling pa, 2014a, vol. 16, *Klong gsal nyi ma'i rgyud kyi gsang 'grel chen mo lam 'bras gser gyi me long zhes bya ba bzhugs so*, 282.

Chapter Two Overview

The present chapter delves into the concept of Primordial Common Ground (*thog ma'i spyi gzhi*), analyzing it into four fundamental components: essence, verbal definition, classification, and illustrative examples. Since all phenomena of the world of appearances and possibilities, whether of Samsara or Nirvana, occur through it, it is called the All-Ground of the Primordial Nature. This Chapter, Primordial Common Ground, is divided into three categories. Such as the All-Ground of the Primordial Nature (*ye don gyi gzhi*), The All-Ground of the Primordial Nature of Accumulation of Various (*sna tshogs sogs pa'i gzhi*), and True Common Ground of Application (*sbyor ba don gyi kun gzhi*).

In particular, it emphasizes the All-Ground of Primordial Nature in three ways. The first introduces how the characteristic of All-Around of Primordial Nature abides; the second introduces the ground of all as having great clarity and purity from stains. The third is the introduction to the way the dynamic energy of that All-Ground of the Primordial Nature is perfected.¹¹⁶

Analysis of Chapter Two

In general, the main topics of this commentary are how the two, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, involve delusion and liberation, respectively, and how one can be separated from this duality of delusion and liberation. It also presents how the body and its support are formed with the presentation of the body's channels, winds, and nuclei, which are present in six chapters. I will focus on the second chapter¹¹⁷ of the commentary to explore Ratna Lingpa's influence on the *Seminal Heart of the*

¹¹⁶ Ratna gling pa, 2014a, vol. 16, *klong gsal nyi ma'i rgyud kyi gsang 'grel chen mo lam 'bras gser gyi me long zhes bya ba bzhugs so*, 200-210.

¹¹⁷ The commentary starts with Chapter Two, not Chapter One. I'm also starting with Chapter Two to keep things clear and avoid confusion in this writing.

Dākinī in the fifteenth century. Analyzing Ratna Lingpa’s interpretation of these pivotal concepts compared with the treatment in other texts will illuminate Ratna Lingpa’s distinctive insights and perspective. This exploration will underscore the primary presentation’s intent and distinguish it from other elucidations.

The first chapter two is interesting because it presents the concept of Primordial Common Ground (*thog ma'i spyi gzhi*),¹¹⁸ dissecting it into four integral components: essence, verbal definition, classification, and illustrative examples. The main fundamental argument of this chapter revolves around how to introduce the concept of Primordial Common Ground through three key techniques: first, by introducing the way the characteristic of the ground of the primordial nature abides; second, by introducing the extraordinary purity of clarity unsullied by stains; and third, by introducing the perfection of the dynamic energy of that ground.

In this commentary, the characteristics of All-Ground of the Primordial Nature are shown through two essential aspects. The first: “The essence of the All-Ground of the Primordial Nature is as follows: From the appearance of the essence, the essence body arises, which is called the single sphere of the dharmakāya.”¹¹⁹ According to the commentary, because natural phenomena have no unbroken partiality, awareness doesn’t fall into extremes. The appearance of the essence is empty, its nature is lucid, the enlightened mind is vast, and compassion pervades space. Within that state, the appearance of the essence of the body is unchanging, like a sky, without changing color. This fresh, uncontrived appearance is the appearance of the naturally contrived nature. The essence emerges as the natural body. In addition, the essence of awareness is present as the five

¹¹⁸ This Chapter, Primordial Common Ground, is subdivided into three categories: The All-Ground of the Primordial Nature (*ye don gyi gzhi*), The All-Ground of the Primordial Nature of Accumulation of Various (*sna tshogs sogs pa'i gzhi*), and True Common Ground of Application (*sbyor ba don gyi kun gzhi*).

¹¹⁹ གཞིའི་རྩོམ་གྱི་རྩམས་ལུགས་ལྷན་ཁྲིམས་ཀྱི་སྐུ་ཤར་ཏེ་ཚོས་ཀྱི་སྐུ་ཐེག་ལེ་ཉག་གཅིག་ཞེས་བྱའོ། Ratna gling pa, 2014a, vol. 16, *klong gsal nyi ma'i rgyud kyi gsang 'grel chen mo lam 'bras gser gyi me long zhes bya ba bzhus so*:201.4.

kāyas, its essence as the five wisdoms, and its radiance as the five lights. Notably, in this commentary, they introduce All-Ground's five kayas, which are classified in a way that is similar to the Seminal Heart of Great Perfection tradition.

The second introduces the primordial, ultimate All-Ground of the Primordial Nature of all as vast, with great clarity and purity untainted by stains. Since the qualities of the All-Ground of the Primordial Nature are subsumed within direct awareness, they are free from concepts of matter, flesh, blood, and so on. Since their nature is empty, they are free from concepts of things. Since they are naturally occurring, they are free from all causes, conditions, creation, and destruction. Third, the introduction to the way the ground's dynamic energy is perfected is that within the ground's dynamic energy, the three of wind, awareness, and space, the all-accomplishing timeless awareness, and green light abide as one.

This commentary clarifies the characteristics of the ground, determining them through four distinctive attributes. "Empty in essence, luminous by nature, vast in realization, and pervading the whole of space with compassion. [The ground] is present in terms of these four qualities."¹²⁰

However, across its 113 chapters version of *The Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* says the All Ground of the Primordial Nature has three distinct attributes: primordial purity defines its essence, spontaneous presence characterizes its nature, and all-pervasive pristine awareness embodies its compassion. In essence, it summarizes three core qualities: empty essence, luminous nature, and unceasing compassion.¹²¹

However, Ratna Lingpa's description of the characteristics of the All Ground Primordial Nature in his 18-chapter version of *Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* is quite different. In

¹²⁰ རྩོམ་གྱི་སྐོར་བའི་རང་བཞིན་གསལ་བའི་དགོངས་པ་ཡངས་པའི་ཐུགས་རྗེ་མཁའ་ཁྱེད་ལྟ་ཚོས་བཞི་ལྟན་དུ་བཞུགས་སོང་། Ibid., 202.2.

¹²¹ *Mkha' 'gro thams cad kyi snying khrag klong gsal 'bar ma nyi ma 'i gsang rgyud* in *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009), [BDRC], 75.

his tantra, the characteristics of the All-Ground Primordial Nature are explained through three distinct characteristics. As shown in the passage, “The triad of emptiness, clarity, and pervasiveness are inseparable; this is the singular self-existing state.”¹²²

In brief, this commentary teaches the All-Ground of the Primordial Nature through the introduction that tries to prove one of the most crucial topics, the Prime Common All-Ground of the Primordial Nature, in the context of the Great Perfection tradition. This commentary effectively simplifies complex concepts by utilizing an analogy, making it more accessible for readers to understand and comprehend perspectives such as Ground’s presentation. As the commentary of *Sun Tantra in Golden Mirror* says,

*“The concordant example of the “Ground” is that it is all-pervasive emptiness, remaining like space. It is stainless, clear, pure, and unobstructed, abiding like a crystal. It is like the medicine of camphor, for its unobstructed expression can arise from the expanse of the “Ground.” For example, the essence of camphor is not a medicine or poison, but when it comes together with a fever, it becomes medicine. Likewise, the essence of the “Ground,” the primordially pure absolute body, is not established as anything in cyclic existence or enlightenment. Still, enlightenment will occur when the light of the primordially pure absolute body, the measure of the realization of the mind awareness, and the wisdom of understanding the meaning come together. If camphor comes together with a cold illness, it becomes poison. Likewise, if the light of the body and consciousness are combined, one wanders in cyclic existence. Likewise, when awareness abides in the expanse of the “Ground,” it is not established as enlightened beings or sentient beings but abides as a great indivisibility.”*¹²³

¹²² ལྷོང་དང་གསལ་དང་ཁྱབ་པ་གསུམ་དཔྱད་མེད་ཉག་གཅིག་རང་བྱུང་ངོ་ Ratna gling pa, 2014a, vol. 16, *klong gsal 'bar ma nyi ma'i gsang rgyud bzhugs so:kun kyi thun mong ma yin pa gter ston rat+na'i snying bcud 'di kho na'o*, 146.

¹²³ གཞིའི་མཐུན་དཔེ་ནི་ ལྷོང་པ་ཡོངས་ལ་ཁྱབ་པ་སྟེ་ ནམ་མཁའ་ལྷ་ཕུར་གནས་ཏེ་ སྤྱི་མེད་གསལ་དག་ཟང་ཐལ་ཉི་ མན་ཤེལ་ལྷ་ཕུར་གནས་ཏེ་ གཞིའི་ལྷོང་ནས་རྩལ་པས་སྐྱེན་གཤུར་ལྷ་ཕུར་བཞུགས་སོ་ དཔེར་ན་གཤུར་གྱི་ངོ་བོ་དེ་སྐྱེན་དུག་གང་དུ་ཡང་མ་གྲུབ་པ་ལེ་ ཚ་ནད་ཅན་དང་འཛོམས་ན་སྐྱེན་དུ་འགྱུར་དེ་བཞིན་དུ་གཞིའི་ངོ་བོ་ཚོས་སྐྱེ་ཀྱང་གཤུར་འཁོར་འདས་གང་དུ་ཡང་གྲུབ་པ་ལས་ ཚོས་སྐྱེ་ཀྱང་གཤུག་གི་འོད་དང་ཐུགས་རིག་པའི་རྟོགས་ཚད་དང་ འོན་ཏེ་གོ་བའི་མཐུན་པ་གསུམ་འཛོམས་ན་འཚང་རྒྱ་བར་འགྱུར་སོ་ ཡང་གཤུར་དེ་གང་ནད་དང་འཛོམས་ན་དུག་དུ་འགྱུར་སོ་ དེ་བཞིན་དུ་སྐྱེའི་འོད་སྐྱང་དང་ རིག་པ་གཉེས་འཛོམས་ན་འཁོར་བར་འགྱུར་སོ་ ཡང་གཤུར་དེ་ནད་ཀྱི་གཞི་མེད་པ་སྐྱེན་དུག་གང་ཡང་མི་འགྱུར་བ་ལྟར་དུ་ དེ་བཞིན་དུ་རིག་པ་གཞིའི་ལྷོང་ན་གནས་པའི་དུས་སུ་ མངས་རྒྱས་དང་ལེན་ཅན་གང་དུ་ཡང་མ་གྲུབ་ནས་ དཔྱད་མེད་ཆེན་པོར་བཞུགས་སོ་ Ratna gling pa, 2014a, vol. 16, *klong gsal nyi ma'i rgyud kyi gsang 'grel chen mo lam 'bras gser gyi me long zhes bya ba bzhugs so*:207.6.

Chapter Three Overview

In chapter three, the emphasis is on two key aspects: first, the way to Samsara through delusion within the Primordial Ground, and second, the way to nirvana through liberation within the Primordial Ground. Firstly, this chapter focuses on the way samsara is deluded within the primordial nature in this chapter, three ways of wandering in samsara, and how sentient beings get confused in the cycle of existence.¹²⁴ When discussing how delusion occurs within the context of the primordial ground, three causes of delusion in cyclic existence are highlighted. Awareness is the basis for the confusion of the mind. The five lights are the basis for the confusion of the body, and the nature of phenomena is the basis for the confusion of objects. This chapter mentions that the “All-Ground of the Primordial Nature is undeluded, yet delusion arises from its dynamic energy. Undeluded, there is no movement from the ground. Deluded, awareness is unceasing.”¹²⁵ Secondly, the way to recognize these delusions and gain liberation is to recognize and see the tremendous self-existing mandala of self-appearances. Then, one enlightenment with the threefold knowledge, which is knowledge of the body, speech, and mind.

Chapter Four Overview

Chapter four begins with the essence of wisdom abiding in the bodies of sentient beings, and the five pith instructions for breaking the bonds of Samsara is the introduction to Buddhahood in its place within the inner sanctum of one’s being. However, this chapter primarily emphasizes three principles: an explanation of the body as a support, an explanation of the supported channel, and an explanation of the supported winds. In brief, this chapter deals with the body, described in detail

¹²⁴ Ibid., 210-226.

¹²⁵ དེ་ཡང་གཞི་མི་འབྲུལ་ཏེ་རྩལ་ལས་འབྲུལ་བ་བྱུང་ཅུ་མི་འབྲུལ་ཏེ་གཞི་ལས་གཡོས་བ་མེད་ཅུ་འབྲུལ་ཏེ་རིག་བ་མ་འགགས་མོ་ Ratna gling pa, 2014a, Vol. 16, *klong gsal nyi ma'i rgyud kyi gsang 'grel chen mo lam 'bras gser gyi me long zhes bya ba bzhugs so*:211.2.

as the body of the intermediate state, the body of flesh and blood, and the way the body is produced.¹²⁶ As for the five pith instructions, the first introduces the nature of the body. The second identifies the place where self-arisen wisdom dwells and how it dwells. The third outlines how to know the signs that awareness of the wisdom of naturally occurring timeless awareness is present. The fourth explains how to introduce naturally occurring awareness whenever it occurs and through which gateway it emerges. The fifth details how the wisdom of the nature of the phenomenon is expanded while the method of radiance of the nucleus is introduced.

Chapter Five Overview

The beginning of this chapter mentions the importance of understanding the body's natural state and channels; without this insight, even meditation may not unveil nonconceptual wisdom because wisdom resides inherently within the body. Understanding your body's natural state leads to understanding its channel, winds, and, eventually, the movement occurrence of no conceptuality. This understanding is central to the emergence of nonconceptual wisdom, making it essential to understand the body's natural state.¹²⁷

In particular, this chapter primarily focuses on the channels that sustain the four main chakras, as these chakras encompass vital points throughout the body. These four key chakras include the heart dharma chakra (*snying kha chos kyi 'khor lo*), throat Sambhoga chakra (*mgrin pa longs spyod kyi 'khor lo*), the excellent bliss chakra at the top of the head (*spyi bo bde chen gyi 'khor lo*) and the emanation Chakra at the navel. (*lte ba sprul pa'i 'khor lo*)¹²⁸ The essence of these

¹²⁶ Ibid., 226-242.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 243.3.

¹²⁸ In this commentary, the four chakras are listed from bottom to top, which is different from the usual top-to-bottom order found in other sources, such as the head, throat, heart, and navel.

channels is explained, as well as the significance of the syllables. In addition, it identifies the locations of the sixty-eight branches of the channels and the other principal points.¹²⁹

Chapter Six Overview

Chapter Six delves into the characteristics of wind, portraying them not merely as physical phenomena but as nonconceptual wisdom beyond concentration and description; for example, the yogis, having diligently honed their skills in manipulating the winds, unveil inconceivable qualities that transcend ordinary understanding due to the remarkable characteristics inherent in the very essence of these winds.

Moreover, this chapter illuminates the essence of wind as embodied in its dynamic energy and motion. It underscores the fundamental principle that the potency of wind manifests only through its movement, highlighting the inseparable connection between wind and its inherent strength. Within this framework, the discourse distinguishes between the nonconceptual wind, and the profound wisdom embodied within it, recognizing these as foundational elements. Additionally, the chapter meticulously explores various facets of wind, delving into classifications, training methods, benefits, and indispensability, offering a comprehensive understanding of its significance in spiritual practice.¹³⁰

Chapter Seven Overview

Chapter seven explains the nature of the nuclei (*thig le*), which is dependent on the winds, and the nuclei's gnosis spreading through all the body's channels. Similarly, the chapter concludes by briefly explaining how the seminal fluid descends into the male and female organs. The entire

¹²⁹ Ibid., 242-253.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 253-281.

description of the abiding state of the nuclei was already introduced in the context of the four chakras, so this chapter functions to explain the topic in detail.¹³¹

Sun Tantra in Golden Mirror in Comparison

In the 14th century, one of the most influential of Longchenpa's commentary, *A Cloud of the Ocean of Profound Meaning, Found in The Quintessence of Dākinīs*, offers an extensive explanation of the instruction on the ground, path, and fruition of the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs* tradition. In this commentary, Longchenpa explained the All-Ground of the Primordial Nature through five sections: First, the fundamentally unconditioned All-Ground of the Primordial Nature abides before establishing either cyclic existence or an enlightened one; second, from that state, spontaneous presence arises; third, recognizing that awareness liberates one into the All-Ground of the Primordial Nature of the original Samantabhadra; fourth, the teaching on how sentient beings of the three realms wander in cyclic existence due to ignorance; fifth, the teaching on how primordial Buddhas abide in the realms of sentient beings.¹³²

There are several differences one notices between Ratna Lingpa's and Lonchenpa's commentary on explaining the "Primordial Ground" according to the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* tradition. First, Longchenpa's commentary on the All-Ground of the Primordial Nature stands out as a more structured text peppered with complex questions and concepts. The commentary draws upon references from the *Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*¹¹³ chapters, virions, quotes from the *Seventeen Tantras*, and other citations. On the other hand, while explaining the All-Ground of the Primordial Nature, Ratna Lingpa's commentary does not cite any other tantra as a source of the system. Instead, it opts for a succinct and accessible approach, employing metaphors

¹³¹ Ibid., 281-282.

¹³² Dri med 'od zer, *zab don rgya mtsho'i sprin*. In *gsung 'bum dri med 'od zer (dpal brtsegs mes po'i shul bzhag)*, 69.2.

to directly introduce the fundamental concepts in a transparent manner. Secondly, Longchenpa's explanation of the All-Ground of the Primordial Nature is imprinted with philosophical inquiry, characterized by exploring questions and refuting other objections. In contrast, Ratna Lingpa's elucidation on the All-Ground of the Primordial Nature is less tethered to philosophical systematicity, as he abstains from posing philosophical inquiries and does not refute other's projections. Longchenpa adopts a primarily defensive stance in his approach, whereas Ratna Lingpa's approach exudes an unapologetic confidence. Finally, engaging deeply with the intricate depths of Longchenpa's elucidations concerning the All-Ground of the Primordial Nature proves immensely beneficial. It illuminates profound insights at every nuanced layer of contemplation. Furthermore, upon reflection, practitioners discern the distinctive quality in Ratna Lingpa's teachings: their innate simplicity facilitates comprehension while seamlessly intertwining with lived experiential wisdom, enriching the spiritual journey with profound clarity and resonance.

The principal significance of the *Tantra of Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* for Ratna Lingpa and Longchenpa preceding him and the vast community following the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* stems from its foundational importance in their spiritual practices. In exploring Ratna Lingpa's discourse on this tradition, we delve into his profound insights and interpretations. Our examination of Ratna Lingpa's profound impact on the evolution of the *Tantra of the Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* allows us to comprehend how he determinedly dedicated himself to benefiting sentient beings through the application of the *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse*. Moreover, in his prolific contributions to his new tradition of *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse*, he produced a variety of sādhanas, empowerments, rituals, pith instructions, commentaries, summaries, and introductory songs, which illustrate the breadth and depth of his influence on its dissemination and practice.

Overall, tantric Buddhism in India was far more focused on ritual practice than philosophical speculation, even if a cottage industry gradually developed in scholastic exegesis on these rituals and iconography.¹³³ Ratna Lingpa, a treasure revealer and scholar, emphasized ritual rather than philosophy so that Indian Tantric Buddhism might have had more influence on him. Unlike Ratna Lingpa, Longchenpa is a Tibetan tantric scholar who emphasized philosophical speculation of the *Seminal Heart of the Dakṇinī*, one of the differences between the two scholars.

One notable contrast between Longchenpa and Ratna Lingpa is their approaches: Longchenpa's methodology in his Great Perfection writings is characterized by a strong philosophical focus and sophistication, whereas Ratna Lingpa's approach leans more towards meditation and ritualistic practices. This distinction is underscored by Longchenpa's contemporary significance within the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism, a status he has maintained from the 18th century to the present day with the rise of monastic education in the tradition. Ratna Lingpa integrated pivotal heart practices into various rituals, yet these are not mere rituals but alive scriptures. He imbued them with a ritual essence, compelling practitioners to engage even in moments of unawareness. This accessibility broadens the scope for widespread participation. While Longchenpa merely elucidates, Ratna Lingpa offers the opportunity to mount the steed of spiritual growth instead.

Concluding Notes and Future Prospects

I conclude with a quote from Longchenpa's conclusion of *Gter 'byung rin po che o rgyus*. In its closing passages, Longchenpa highlights his historical perspective on the *Seminal Heart of Dakṇinī*'s tradition, based on his perspective on its history and significance.

¹³³ David Germano, Dzogchen, 2547. (Encyclopedia of Religion, Second Edition, 2005)

“In particular, Özer Gocha (*’od zer go cha*) requested to write down the text for this autumn term. From the beginning of the treatise’s body of accomplishing until its completion, I received the appearance, blessings, and natural sounds of the *Dakīnī* and various excellent signs of natural sounds and blessings. Therefore, this *Dharma* [the *Seminal Heart of Dakīnī*] is extraordinarily sacred and gathers mass clouds of blessings. Also, it has the immeasurable crucial points of liberation in this very life. I have not heard of any other *Treasure teaching* with such miracles and signs. They do not appear like this because the essential points of *Dharma* and the profound meaning are not the same in those teachings. If I had explained this miracle of the story in detail, it would have been endless. In these degenerate times, most people have faith in the forces of evil and denigrate them, seeing them as nothing more than deceitful, so I do not indulge in this. It is enough for me to have as my witness nonhuman spiritual beings who are the result of wisdom and action.”¹³⁴

As Longchenpa has said, the significance of the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinī* tradition is within the Nyingma school’s Great Perfection tradition. It aligns with Ratna Lingpa, a *Treasure revealer* emerging as a pivotal figure in the 15th century, restructuring and reimagining the *Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs* into his own tradition, the *Seminal Heart of Luminous Expanse*. I attempted to explore only a fragment of the significant role played by the *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* within the broader context of Tibetan Vajrayāna Buddhism, particularly within the Great Perfection of Seminal Heart tradition. Through his extensive revelations, Ratna Lingpa not only expanded the corpus of Nyingma scriptures but also deepened the understanding of key concepts within the Great Perfection tradition. His version of *The Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*, complemented by comprehensive commentaries, played a significant role in the

¹³⁴ ལྷན་པར་དུ་སྒྲིན་སོར་འདིའི་ཡིག་ཆ་འཇོག་པར་འོད་ཟེར་གོ་ཆས་བསྐུལ་ཏེ། བསྐྱན་བཅོས་ལུས་གྲུབ་ཀྱི་འགོ་བརྒྱུམས་པ་ནས་ཡོངས་སུ་རྫོགས་པའི་བར་དུ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་གནད་བ་དང་།
བྱིན་ཆུབས་དང་། རང་སྐྱོད་དང་། བྱིན་གྱིས་ཆུབས་པའི་མཚན་མ་བཟང་པོ་སྣ་ཚོགས་སུ་བྱུང་ངོ་། དེའི་ཕྱིར་ཚོས་འདི་ནི་ཤིན་ཏུ་གཉན་ཞིང་བྱིན་ཆུབས་ཀྱི་སྤྱིན་ཕུང་འདུ་བས།
ཚོ་འདི་ཉིད་ལ་གྲོལ་བའི་གནད་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པ་ཡོད་དོ། འདིའི་ངོ་མཚར་དང་ལྷན་གྱི་རིམ་པ་བྱུང་བ་དེ་ལྟ་བུ་གཏོར་ལ་གཞན་ལ་བྱུང་བ་མ་ཐོས་ཤིང་།
མི་སྣང་སྤྱི་ཚོས་ཀྱི་གནད་དང་ཟབ་དོན་མི་གཅིག་པའི་ཕྱིར་རོ། རང་མཚར་བའི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་ཞིབ་ཏུ་བཤད་ན་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་དེ། དེང་སང་དུས་སྤྱིགས་པ་དང་།
མི་རྒྱུས་ལལ་ཆེར་བདུད་ཀྱི་རྩྭ་གསལ་དང་པས། ལྷན་པ་འདེབས་ཤིང་ཚོགས་ཏུ་མཐོང་བ་ཙམ་ལས་མེད་པས་མི་སྤྱི་ཞིང་།
ཡི་ཤེས་དང་ལས་གྲུབ་པའི་མི་མ་ཡིན་པ་ཉིད་བདག་གི་དཔང་པོར་བཞུགས་པས་དེས་ཚོགས་གོ།

Drimed 'od zer, 2009, vol. 6, *gter 'byung rin po chi lo rgyus*, 116.

flourishing of the Seminal Heart tradition. Ratna Lingpa's emphasis on ritual and meditation, influenced by his background and minimal exposure to formal monastic education, provided a unique perspective that complemented the more scholarly approach of figures like Longchenpa. Despite Ratna Lingpa's profound influence within the Nyingma school and Tibetan Buddhism, figures like Longchenpa have often overshadowed his work, particularly in recent centuries as monastic education has surged in the Nyingma sect.

I see generative avenues for further work in this area, particularly regarding the authorship of early versions of *The Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* and the roles played by other significant figures in shaping the Seminal Heart tradition - and perhaps in the process, also explore seriously claims to - or lack thereof - as well as forms of authorship not limited to a bounded 'self.' By continuing to investigate Ratna Lingpa's legacy and its implications, scholars can deepen their understanding of Tibetan Buddhist history and contemporary practices within the Nyingma school.

Ratna Lingpa's visionary revelations and scholarly accomplishments have left an indelible mark on Tibetan Buddhism, underscoring the dynamic interplay between revelation, interpretation, and tradition within the Great Perfection lineage. As we embark on further research, we honor Ratna Lingpa's legacy and contribute to the ongoing dialogue surrounding the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs* tradition and its enduring relevance in the modern world.

Prospects for the Future

Future research in this field holds promise for deepening our understanding of the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs* tradition. Several avenues warrant exploration. Firstly, a comprehensive examination of biographies and related documents of seminal figures is imperative to grasp the historical trajectory of the Seminal Heart tradition. Valuable insights into its development and transmission are to be found by delving into the lives and works of key figures from the tradition's

inception. Secondly, a close analysis of the *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity* is essential for us to explore the convergences and departures in the variations of this text that may have emerged from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. This can help us understand this tantra's textual development and transmission dynamics.

Lastly, a focused investigation into the works of Ratna Lingpa, particularly his teachings and contributions related to the *Tantra of The Blazing Expanse of Luminosity*, presents a fertile ground for future inquiry. By studying Ratna Lingpa's collection of teachings and his specific engagement with this tantra, scholars can deepen their understanding of his interpretative framework, doctrinal insights, and the broader implications of his contributions within the Seminal Heart tradition. In summation, future research endeavors should prioritize interdisciplinary approaches to develop a textured understanding of the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs* tradition. By engaging with biographical, textual, and doctrinal sources, scholars can illuminate hitherto unexplored facets of this tradition, enriching our scholarly discourse and adding to our understanding of Tibetan Buddhist history and philosophy.

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