

Authentically Buddhist, Distinctively Nyingma: Gyelsé Shenpen Tayé (rgyal sras  
gzhan phan mtha' yas, 1800–1855) and the Formation of the Modern Nyingma  
Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.

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## Abstract

This dissertation investigates the life and works of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Tibetan scholar, Buddhist monk, and pedagogue Gyelsé Shenpen Tayé Özer (rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha' yas 'od zer; 1800–c.1855). Shenpen Tayé has long been referenced in both Tibetan literature and Western academic studies as one of the most important Tibetan scholars and monastic reformers figures of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is perhaps best known as the founder of the modern *shedra* (*bshad grwa*) system of Tibetan monastic education. A member of the Nyingma (*rnying ma*) tradition of Tibetan Buddhism—known primarily for their non-monastic, tantric cycles and lineages—Shenpen Tayé chose to take full monastic ordination and worked to encourage and support the uptake of Buddhist monasticism among other Nyingmapas. Above all, Shenpen Tayé was renowned among his contemporaries and remembered by later generations of Nyingmapas as one of the greatest textual scholars of his generation. He famously collected, edited, and published the first collection of the Nyingma *kama* (*bka' ma*; “Transmitted Precepts”), which subsequently served as the basis for the successively more expansive *kama* collections published in recent decades. Shenpen Tayé was known not only for his scholarly acumen, but for giving lucid and precise teachings and explanations, many of which survive and are still in use today in the form of textbooks, scholastic commentaries, and works of personal advice.

Utilizing a number of contemporaneous texts and documents that have recently become available, this dissertation provides the most detailed study of Shenpen Tayé's life and works to date. The chapters comprise: (i) a background chapter detailing source materials and historical background; (ii) a detailed analytical biography of Shenpen Tayé,



based primarily on sources written during Shenpen Tayé’s lifetime; (iii) a study of his extant literary output, which includes translations of selected passages from a range of his writings, and comparative catalogs that map four of the major recensions of his collected works; and chapters devoted respectively to three of Shenpen Tayé’s most influential projects: (iv) the founding and early development of Śrī Siṃha *shedra* (monastic college), which was to serve as the model for virtually all Nyingma *shedras* today; (v) the publication of the first comprehensive collection of Nyingma *kama* texts; and (vi) his relationship to, and promotion of, Buddhist monasticism among the Nyingma.

Throughout the study, I demonstrate how all of Shenpen Tayé’s various activities were directed towards articulating and advocating for a particular vision of what the Nyingma tradition was, and *should* be. This vision was grounded in a gradualist paradigm, which emphasized the need for the esoteric, *unique* (*thun mong ma yin pa*) tantric practices and teachings of the Nyingma to be preceded by, and grounded in, then exoteric, *shared* (*thun mong*) practices and categories of the wider Buddhist tradition. Concomitant with his emphasis on the *shared* Buddhist practices, we see a notable elision in Shenpen Tayé’s teachings, curricula, and writings, of huge swaths of the specialized lineages and textual heritage of the Nyingma tradition—most notably of the massive and diverse body of Nyingma *terma* (*gter ma*; “revealed treasure”) literature. I argue that although Shenpen Tayé’s stripped-down and cleaned-up vision of the Nyingma tradition did not gain wide purchase among Nyingmapas, his major projects and activities provided invaluable institutional and textual supports for subsequent projects of reform and renewal among Nyingmapas in Tibet and beyond.

## Abbreviations

b. born

*BhCW* (*Bhutan Collected Works*) *Collected Works of rDzogs-Chen rGyal-Sras gZan-Phan-mTha'-Yas, rdzogs chen rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha' yas kyi gsung 'bum*. 2 volumes. Thimphu, Bhutan: National Library of Bhutan, 1984. BDRC 20338.

c. circa

d.u. date(s) unknown

*DzCW* (*Dzokchen Monastery Collected Works*) *rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha' yas kyi gsung 'bum*, edited by Tendzin Lungtok Nyima (bstan 'dzin lung rtogs nyi ma; b. 1974). 2 volumes. Lhasa: bod ljong bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2011.

n.d. no date

n.p. no place

*PCW* (*Pelpung Collected Works*) *gsung 'bum gzhan phan mtha' yas*. Upper Bhattu, Dist. Kangra, HP, India: Pelpung Sherab Ling, 2005. 3 volumes. BDRC W3CN12691.

r. reigned

*XylKB* *Xylograph bKa' 'bum (XylKB)*. *gsung 'bum/ gzhan phan mtha' yas*. 3 volumes. n.p./n.d. BDRC W3CN18521.

# Introduction

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## I.1 Introduction to the Project

This dissertation investigates the life and works of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Tibetan scholar, Buddhist monk, and pedagogue Gyelsé Shenpen Tayé Özer (rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha' yas 'od zer; 1800–c.1855). Shenpen Tayé has long been referenced in both Tibetan literature and Western academic studies as one of the most important Tibetan scholars and monastic reformers figures of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is perhaps best known as the founder of the modern shedra (*bshad grwa*) system of Tibetan monastic education. A member of the Nyingma (*rnying ma*) tradition of Tibetan Buddhism—known primarily for their non-monastic, tantric cycles and lineages—Shenpen Tayé chose to take full monastic ordination and worked to encourage and support the uptake of Buddhist monasticism among other Nyingmapas. Above all, Shenpen Tayé was renowned among his contemporaries and remembered by later generations of Nyingmapas as one of the greatest textual scholars of his generation. He famously collected and edited all the extant ritual manuals and associated texts from the Mindröling system of the Nyingma *kama* (*bka' ma*; “Transmitted Precepts”) and published them in nine volumes in 1845. Shenpen Tayé’s *kama* collection represented the first such comprehensive collection of Nyingma *kama* texts to be published, and served as the basis for the successively more expansive *kama* collections published in recent decades. Shenpen Tayé was also deeply invested in improving Buddhist education amongst his fellow Nyingmapas. In addition to founding the great educational center of Śrī Siṃha (*dpal seng ge*) at Dzokchen Monastery (*rdzogs chen dgon*), he composed numerous curricular texts, including scholastic commentaries

on canonical Buddhist texts, introductory textbooks and summaries covering a variety of Buddhist topics, and works of guidance for Buddhist contemplative practice.

We may get some idea of the respect that Shenpen Tayé commanded from other Nyingma scholars through the sentiments expressed by the Nyingma scholastic luminary Mipham Gyatso, who, almost fifty years after Shenpen Tayé's death (c. 1855), lamented,

I had hoped that by leaving behind a few treatises, it would bring benefit to the Nyingma tradition, but because of the times, that may be difficult. Had the lotus feet of Gyalse Shenpen Taye remained firmly upon this earth, the great philosophical tradition of the Early Translation [i.e., Nyingma] school would have spread, but because our shared merit has been weak, he passed away.<sup>1</sup>

Considering the respect accorded to Shenpen Tayé by the Nyingma tradition, and the range of influential projects that he undertook, it may come as a surprise to learn that there have been no major academic studies published on Shenpen Tayé until recently. As I explain in more detail below, this lacuna has been largely due to a distinct absence of available historical sources on Shenpen Tayé and on the specific details of his projects and activities. Utilizing a number of hitherto unstudied contemporaneous sources and documents, this dissertation provides the most detailed study of Shenpen Tayé's life and works to date. After chapter one details my textual sources and gives some contextual and historical background, the main body of the dissertation begins, in chapter two, with a detailed biography of Shenpen Tayé, drawn primarily from a pair of contemporaneous biographies of Shenpen Tayé. In this chapter, I describe and analyze Shenpen Tayé's life

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<sup>1</sup> As related by the master Ngawang Palzang (*ngag dbang dpal bzang*; 1879–1941) in his autobiography. See *Wondrous Dance of Illusion: The Autobiography of Khenpo Ngawang Palzang*, trans., Heidi L. Nevin, and J. Jakob Leschly (Boston: Snow Lion, 2013), 113.

and activities as well as the interactions that he had with a number of other influential figures and institutions. In chapter three, I shift my focus to Shenpen Tayé’s writings. I survey and analyze the major themes and topics that show up in his works, and present and analyze translated selections from a range of works spanning the major areas and genres of his corpus. Chapters four through six each take up one of the major projects for which Shenpen Tayé is best remembered. Chapter four investigates his role in founding Śrī Siṃha Shedra at Dzokchen Monastery. In this chapter, I describe the earliest recorded curriculum of Śrī Siṃha (c. 1850s) and trace the genesis of Śrī Siṃha—and the modern Nyingma shedra—to a series of shedra teachings given by Shenpen Tayé at Dzokchen in 1828. Chapter five investigates the editorial and publishing project conducted by Shenpen Tayé at Dzokchen between 1840 and 1845 which resulted in the first published collection of Nyingma *kama* texts—a collection that served as the foundation for the recent 100+-volume “extremely extensive *kama*” (*bka’ ma shin tu rgyas pa*) collections. Chapter six looks at Shenpen Tayé’s relationship to Buddhist monasticism: the specific activities that he performed to spread and promote it, and what his recorded thoughts and writings on Buddhist monasticism can tell us about his broader programs and goals.

### Shenpen Tayé’s Gradualist Vision of the Nyingma Buddhist Path

Throughout the study, I show how all of Shenpen Tayé’s various activities were directed towards articulating and advocating for a particular vision of what the Nyingma tradition was and should be. Shenpen Tayé continuously emphasized the need for the esoteric, “uniquely” (*thun mong ma yin pa*) Nyingma tantric practices and lineages to be grounded in the, largely exoteric *shared* (*thun mong*) practices and categories of the

wider Buddhist tradition, which, he argued, acted as necessary prerequisites to the “higher” esoteric practices. This vision was one that had been articulated to varying degrees by past Nyingma figures such as Sherab Özer (shes rab ‘od zer; 1518–1584), Lochen Dharmaśrī (lo chen d+harma shrI; 1654-1718), and Jikmé Lingpa (‘jigs med gling pa; 1730–1798), who, each in their own way, articulated and promoted a gradualist vision of the Nyingma Buddhist path.

As I argue in the chapters that follow, Shenpen Tayé imbibed this gradualist vision of the Nyingma Buddhist path primarily from a coterie of Jikmé Lingpa’s closest students, which included the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen Jikmé Trinle Özer (rdo grub chen ‘jigs med ‘phrin las ‘od zer; 1745–1821), Jikmé Gyelwe Nyugu (‘jigs med rgyal ba’i myu gu; 1765–1842), Jikmé Ngotsar (‘jigs med ngo mtshar; d.u), and Jikmé Kelsang (‘jig med skal bzang; b. 1789). Jikmé Lingpa articulated his gradualist vision of Buddhist practice in texts such as *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities* (*yon tan rin po che’i mdzod*). This path, which was earlier articulated in much the same form by his forerunner at Pelri Monastery, Sherab Özer, in his *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra* (*mdo sngags smon lam*)<sup>2</sup> involves first obtaining a grounding in basic “Hīnayāna” Buddhist topics and categories such as karma, impermanence, and vows of individual liberation, followed by a thorough study of the Mahāyāna path, including the *view* (*lta ba*) of emptiness and the *conduct* (*spyod pa*) of a bodhisattva. Following this, the student receives both theoretical and practical instruction in the *generation stage* (*kyerim*; *bskyed rim*) and *completion stage* (*dzokrim*; *rdzogs rim*) of tantric practice. Finally, the student receives *practical*

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<sup>2</sup> Both of these texts are treated in detail in chapter four.

*instruction (khrid pa)* in the Great Perfection (*dzokchen; rdzogs [pa] chen [po]*) and repairs to an isolated retreat in order to realize the naked awareness that is the true nature of mind. Shenpen Tayé explicitly credits Jikmé Ngostar with “repeatedly explaining the efficacious way for unmistakably progressing from earlier to later [practices] in the proper sequence.”<sup>3</sup> As we shall see, such a concern with the proper sequence of religious study and practice—with the *shared* Buddhist practices of monasticism and exoteric doctrinal study acting as a foundation for “higher” tantric and Great Perfection practice—would come to infuse Shenpen Tayé’s writings and act as a guiding principle that underpinned virtually all of his major projects throughout his life.

### ***What is Added?***

Shenpen Tayé, however, tended to go even further than his teachers and predecessors in the **degree** to which he emphasized the basic *shared* Buddhist traditions as essential precursors to higher tantric practice. Reading Shenpen Tayé’s writings or perusing the titles of his works, one tends to be struck by how many of his writings were dedicated to explaining and promoting basic *shared* Buddhist practices. For example, we see a near-constant emphasis in Shenpen Tayé’s works on the importance of taking and cultivating the Buddhist ethical vows of *individual liberation (so sor thar pa; prātimokṣa)*, the importance of constellating these vows within the rubric of the *three trainings*,<sup>4</sup> and the need to master the intricacies of Buddhist doctrine in order to be able

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<sup>3</sup> gdams khrid kyi lag len de dag kyang // gong 'og gi go rim ma 'khrul bar// gnad smin gyi tshul du lan 'ga' bskyar// mtshams bcad kyi gzungs brnyan 'ga' yang byas. In *rgyal ba'i sras po gzhan phan mtha' yas 'od zer du 'bod pa'i spyod tshul mdor bsdus tshig bcad ma (Verse Autobiography)*, 3a.

<sup>4</sup> The *three trainings (bslab pa gsum; Skt., triśikṣā)* are a foundational Buddhist rubric found throughout the Buddhist world—e.g., in the the two foundational Theravāda treatises, *Vimuttimaggā* (c. 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> century

to properly engage in higher tantric practices. We see a similar focus on the *shared*, exoteric Buddhist tradition and on maintaining a strict order of practice in the design of Shenpen Tayé’s shedra curriculum and in the make-up and organizing rubric of his *kama* collection. Indeed, both of these constellations of Nyingma texts—the shedra curriculum and Shenpen Tayé’s *kama* collection—were unprecedented in their inclusion of foundational Indian Buddhist exoteric scriptures, treatises and—in the case of the *kama* collection—a range of monastic liturgies.

As I will argue in the chapters below, the success and proliferation of Shenpen Tayé’s shedra model and his *kama* collection led to their constituent texts taking on the status and function of “practical” Nyingma canons, which, although they have been variously reshaped, reworked, and expanded in the 170 years since Shenpen Tayé’s death, retain the same basic shape that he gave them when he first brought them into existence.

### ***What Is Taken Away?***

However, it seems to have been the case that Shenpen Tayé’s gradualist vision of the Nyingma tradition was not purely additive. An analysis of the prevalence of the texts and topics treated by Shenpen Tayé in his literary corpus reveals a notable absence of huge swaths of the distinctively Nyingma esoteric cycles and lineages. Perhaps the most obvious lacuna is the paucity of references to, and engagement with, the huge and diverse body of revealed Nyingma *terma* literature in Shenpen Tayé’s writings. Indeed, with a

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CE) and *Visuddhimagga* (c. 5<sup>th</sup> century CE)—and comprise training in: *higher ethics* (*lhag pa tshul ‘khrims*; Skt., *adhiśīla*), *higher meditation* (*lhag pa ting nge ‘dzin*; Skt., *adhisamādhi*), and *higher discriminative wisdom* (*lhag pa shes rab*; Skt., *adhiprajñā*).



few notable exceptions, there is virtually no hint of *terma* in Shenpen Tayé’s writings or in any of his curricula. Particularly noteworthy is the absence of the Eight Proclamation Deities (*kagyé; bka’ brgyad*) material in Shenpen Tayé’s writings and curricula—an absence that is particularly glaring given the ubiquity of the *Kagyé* in the ritual calendars of numerous Nyingma institutions during this period. It is important to make clear that Shenpen Tayé never speaks ill of *terma* nor of their charismatic *treasure revealers* (*tertön; gter ston*), nor does he argue against the utility or authenticity of *terma*; he simply seems to ignore it. As I will explain in more detail in the conclusion to the dissertation, Shenpen Tayé’ de-emphasis and elision of much of Nyingma esoterica was one element of Shenpen Tayé’s general orientation that did *not* catch on in the decades following his death.

### Authentically Buddhist; Distinctively Nyingma

Looking at the arc of Shenpen Tayé’s life and works, a picture emerges of a devout Buddhist monk who is deeply invested in embodying and promoting the Buddhist monastic ideals of rigorous self-restraint, personal humility, impeccable ethical discipline, erudite scholarship, and public ministry. But he is also—equally, it seems—invested in the *Nyingma* Buddhist tradition. All of his closest teachers were Nyingmapas and throughout his career he is drawn again and again to Nyingma themes, texts, and rubrics. These include: the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* and the Zur tradition of structuralist exegesis on it as his preferred lens to organize and understand Buddhist tantra; the Nyingma nine-vehicle rubric as his preferred model of the gradual Buddhist path; the poetic expressions of the freedom and openness of the Great Perfection for describing

and celebrating the possibility of experiencing fully enlightened Buddhahood. As the following study will show, from his earliest studies to his death at age fifty-five, Shenpen Tayé remained deeply invested in his identity as a Nyingmapa. As alluded to in the title of this dissertation, I argue that the implicit underlying principle behind Shenpen Tayé’s many projects and activities was a desire to find, articulate, and embody an approach to spiritual practice that was both **authentically Buddhist and distinctively Nyingma**.

### Summary of Existing Treatments of Shenpen Tayé in English

Due largely to the dearth of detailed direct sources on the life and activities of Shenpen Tayé, there has been very little treatment of him in English-language literature. Perhaps the earliest substantial mention of Shenpen Tayé in English was in Gene Smith’s Preface to an edition of the autobiography of Ngawang Pelzang, published in Sikkim in 1969.<sup>5</sup> Tulku Thondup’s *Masters of Meditation and Miracles* (1996) contains a brief biographical sketch of Shenpen Tayé, running just over a page in length.<sup>6</sup> Thondup’s sketch is based on the brief hagiographical sketch by the 4<sup>th</sup> Shechen Gyaltsab Pema Namgyel’s *History of Nyingma Tantra*,<sup>7</sup> as well as on “some oral traditions.”<sup>8</sup> Georges

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<sup>5</sup> “Preface,” in *The Autobiography of the Nyingmapa Visionary Mkhan po Ngag dbang dpal bzang: The Autobiographical Reminiscences of Ngag-dbang-dpal-bzang, Late Abbot of Kah-tog Monastery* (Gangtok, Sikkim: Sonam T. Kazi, 1969), 10–11. This Preface was reproduced with some edits in *Beyond Tibetan Texts* (2001), 13–31. In the 1969 Preface, Shenpen Tayé’s birthdate is erroneously given as 1740 (the corresponding year in the previous 60-year cycle), which was corrected to 1800 in its edition in *Beyond Tibetan Texts*.

<sup>6</sup> 198–199.

<sup>7</sup> *snga 'gyur rdo rje theg pa gtso bor gyur pa'i sgrub rgyud shing rta brgyad kyi byung ba brjod pa'i gam mdor bsdus legs bshad pad+ma dkar po'i rdzings bu*, Leh, Ladakh: Sonam W. Tashigangpa, 1971[1910], 127b–128a.

<sup>8</sup> Tulku Thondup, *Masters of Meditation and Miracles: Lives of the Great Buddhist Masters of India and Tibet* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1996), 374, note 249.

Dreyfus’ 2005 article “Where Do Commentarial Schools Come From?”<sup>9</sup> contains the most detailed treatment to date on Shenpen Tayé’s role as founder of Śrī Simha Shedra,<sup>10</sup> based largely on Tendzin Lungtok Nyima’s (*bstan 'dzin lung rtogs nyi ma*) *Great Religious History of Dzokchen* (2004).<sup>11</sup> In 2005, an English translation of Nyoshul Khenpo’s massive collection of biographies of Great Perfection lineage lamas entitled *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems* was published, which contains a three-page biography of Shenpen Tayé—probably the lengthiest biography in English up to that point.<sup>12</sup> The most detailed English-language scholarly treatment of Shenpen Tayé to date is in Nathaniel Rich’s 2016 dissertation, “The Modern Development of Scholasticism in the “Ancient” Sect of Tibetan Buddhism,”<sup>13</sup> in which he surveys the life of Shenpen Tayé and the early history of Śrī Simha Shedra, using a range of primary and secondary sources.<sup>14</sup>

### Why Focus on the Life and Works of a Single Individual?

I began this project many years ago in an attempt to answer the question posed in the pages of the *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* in 2005 by Prof. Georges Dreyfus: Where Do Commentarial Schools Come From?<sup>15</sup> My initial research on Shenpen Tayé was primarily focused on fleshing out his role in founding Śrī

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<sup>9</sup> Georges Dreyfus, “Where Do Commentarial Schools Come From: Reflections on the History of Tibetan Scholasticism,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 28, no. 2: 273–297.

<sup>10</sup> 288–289.

<sup>11</sup> *snga 'gyur rdzoks chen chos 'byung chen mo*. See below for specific sections and page numbers.

<sup>12</sup> 404–406.

<sup>13</sup> Ph.D. diss., University of California at Santa Barbara, 2016.

<sup>14</sup> I am grateful to Dr. Rich for sharing his dissertation with me while I was researching and writing the present study.

<sup>15</sup> Dreyfus, “Where Do Commentarial Schools Come From.”

Siṃha Shedra, as part of a wider study of the early history of Nyingma shedras. However, as I continued to investigate Shenpen Tayé and his writings, I began to see that he was involved in much more than the founding of Śrī Siṃha. His editorial efforts in publishing the Nyingma *kama*; his promotion of Buddhist monasticism by editing and publishing a range of core monastic liturgies; and his renown as an engaging and accessible Buddhist teacher, all pointed to a figure who had a range of complex goals and motivations for engaging in the projects that he did. I realized that I wouldn't be able to understand the motivations and vision that led Shenpen Tayé to found Śrī Siṃha if I only studied that particular aspect of his biography. I needed to study and understand him as a whole person: his education and early development, his interpersonal connections, and his other activities and interests. Most of all, I would have to take the time to read his works, to listen to what *he* actually said about why he was doing what he was doing, what he cared about, and why. In this way, my initial focus on the historical development of Nyingma shedras gradually shifted and evolved into this dissertation on the life and works of Shenpen Tayé.

Focusing on a single individual has allowed me—indeed, *forced* me—to study and research a wider range and variety of concerns, forces, and contexts than I would have if I had kept my earlier focus on Śrī Siṃha Shedra and its early development. Shifting my focus to the life and *œuvre* of Shenpen Tayé instead of just Śrī Siṃha, had the unexpected consequence of allowing for a clearer picture of the early years of Śrī Siṃha to emerge organically within the wider field of Shenpen Tayé's activities and concerns. Studying Shenpen Tayé's life and works as a whole within their interpersonal,

institutional, geographic, literary, economic, and socio-political contexts allows us to see what *else* was going on surrounding the founding and early development of Nyingma shedras: what other types of concerns and activities occupied Shenpen Tayé’s life? Who were his main associates and interlocutors and how did their projects and general orientation resonate or reverberate with Shenpen Tayé and his activities? Who were his most important influences? In what ways did Shenpen Tayé modify other streams of concern and influence to achieve his goals? This dissertation attempts to provide some tentative answers to these questions as well as to that initial generative question posed by Georges Dreyfus.

## I.2 Detailed Chapter Summary

The dissertation that follows contains a large amount of **descriptive material** and **analysis** on Shenpen Tayé’s life, works, and milieu. In order to contextualize and understand the terms and categories at stake in these descriptions and analyses, I have included a good deal of background information on topics and categories such as the Nyingma traditions of study and practice, Buddhist monasticism, and Tibetan literary production. This background information makes up the bulk of chapter one as well as the first sections of chapters four, five, and six. Those wishing to jump right in to the life and works of Shenpen Tayé can begin with chapter two on his biography. Those interested primarily in his role in the founding and early development of Śrī Siṃha Shedra can go straight to chapter four. The following pages outline the contents of the dissertation’s chapters in more detail

**Chapter One** contains a range of background material on the present study, and is divided into two main sections. **Section 1** introduces **the methods and textual sources** underpinning the study, beginning with a basic typology of historical sources and the methods that were brought to bear upon them (sec. 1.1.1). I then move on to a detailed description of the historical sources used in this study, ranging from contemporaneous biographical treatments to later biographies and religious histories (sec. 1.1.2). I conclude the first section of chapter one with a detailed bibliographical analysis of the four extant recensions of Shenpen Tayé’s *Collected Works* (*sungbum*; *gsung ‘bum*) (sec. 1.1.3.). In **section 2 of chapter one**, I provide a range of **historical and contextual background** on the following subjects: Firstly, I discuss the various conceptions of what it meant to be a Nyingmapa at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (sec. 1.2.1). Secondly, I examine and unpack the categories of scholarship and scholasticism as they relate to these Nyingma self-conceptions. (sec. 1.2.2). I conclude with a brief set of introductions to Nyingma gradualism (sec. 1.2.3), and to Dzokchen Monastery and the region of Dzachukha—the primary locales of Shenpen Tayé’s life and projects (sec. 1.2.4).

**Chapter two** provides a detailed and comprehensive **biography of Shenpen Tayé** and analyzes his personal and institutional relationships and connections. I have chosen to base my biography and analysis primarily on those textual witnesses produced during or very shortly after Shenpen Tayé’s lifetime, the most important of these being Shenpen Tayé’s *Verse Autobiography*, and the hagiography produced by Pema Vajra in the *Trinchok Catalog*, both of which are described in detail in chapter one.

In **chapter three**, I present a survey of **Shenpen Tayé’s literary corpus** and discuss the doctrinal commitments evident in his writings. I then provide an overview of the general character of Shenpen Tayé’s writings with regard to the prevalence of specific genres and topics (sec. 3.1). I then move to a more detailed analysis of the content and character of some of Shenpen Tayé’s individual works (sec. 3.2), presenting works from a wide range of genres. I conclude with a discussion of some of the themes that characterize Shenpen Tayé’s writings and what Shenpen Tayé’s writings can tell us about his particular doctrinal commitments; his literary style and authorial voice; and his deep investment in presenting the Buddhist teachings in clear, straight-forward language tailored to the particular needs of the intended readership.

**Chapter four** deals with Shenpen Tayé’s role in founding **Śrī Siṃha Shedra** at Dzokchen Monastery, which is widely regarded as the forerunner of all modern Nyingma shedras. I begin by providing some contextual background, describing the impact of Nyingma shedras on the contemporary landscape of Tibetan Buddhism before moving on to tell the story of how Shenpen Tayé’s mission to re-invigorate the “system of study and practice” at Dzokchen led to the founding of Śrī Siṃha Shedra in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Basing my narrative on a range of contemporaneous texts and documents, I describe the first shedra teachings that Shenpen Tayé gave at Dzokchen in or around 1828 when, due to the urging of the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang, Shenpen Tayé gave a series of teachings on a number of key Nyingma texts.<sup>16</sup> These teaching sessions came to be seen as “laying the

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<sup>16</sup> Viz.: *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra (mdo sgnags smon lam)* by Sherab Özer (1518–1584); *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities (yon tan rin po che’i mdzod)* by Jikmé Lingpa (1730–1798); *Ascertainment of the Three Vows (sdom gsum rnam nges)* by Ngari Panchen Pema Wangyal (1487-1542); and the *Guhya-garbha-tantra*,

foundation for [a system of] explanatory teaching (*bshad pa gting tshugs pa*) designed to effectively guide disciples along the path of scriptural study,”<sup>17</sup> and represent the inception of modern Nyingma shedras as we know them. With the aid of other important teachers such as Sengdruk Pema Tashi, these original shedra teachings seem to have continued to expand and becoming more standardized such that, by the end of Shenpen Tayé’s life, his shedra had developed a formal curriculum that combined study of grammar and the literary arts; a range of exoteric and esoteric texts—including foundational Indian treatises, the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*, and Nyingma path literature—and personal guidance on, and intense practice of, the higher Nyingma tantric practices. A record of this early formal curriculum at Śrī Siṃha has come down to us in the form of a set of institutional regulations called a *chayik* (*bca’ yig*), which was ostensibly composed by Shenpen Tayé and published by his student Pema Vajra shortly after Shenpen Tayé’s death in the mid 1850s. I describe the curriculum prescribed in the *chayik* and analyze what its particular shape and content can tell us about Shenpen Tayé’s vision of textual scholarship and Buddhist learning. The *chayik* also contains numerous rules and regulations as well as interesting descriptions of the built structures and administrative systems at the shedra. Using these in tandem with other historical sources and Shenpen Tayé’s own writings, I discuss the place of Shenpen Tayé’s new shedra within the wider institutional matrix of Dzokchen Monastery. In this discussion, I pay particular attention to the role of Dzokchen’s *drupdra* (*sgrub grwa*; “practice section”) in the nascent shedra,

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<sup>17</sup> As described by Shenpen Tayé’s student Pema Vajra in the *Trinchok Catalog* (published in 1845): *gdul bya’i blo dang mtshams par lung rig gi lam nas nges pa ’drong ba’i bshad pa gting tshugs par mdzad*. 40a



arguing that both the shedra and the drupdra were integral loci in Shenpen Tayé’s “new system of study and practice.”

I then move on to answer the question: What was this new shedra curriculum based on? Where were there influences or antecedents that Shenpen Tayé drew upon in designing the curriculum of his new shedra? I look at a number of possible influences, both Nyingma and non-Nyingma, and argue that although we can trace some broad influences on Shenpen Tayé—most notably from Geluk scholastic training and the gradualist paradigm championed by Sherab Özer and Jikmé Lingpa from Palri (dpal ri)—the shedra system was largely a novel form of Buddhist education designed by Shenpen Tayé and his associates in response to local conditions and pressures. I conclude chapter four with a discussion about what Shenpen Tayé’s shedra was *for*. I argue that the early shedra’s distinctive focus on explanation and its complete eschewing of formal debate, in tandem with Shenpen Tayé’s life-long dedication to Buddhist teaching and lay ministry, suggests that the shedra was designed first-and-foremost as a form of *teacher* training. I argue that rather than producing scholastic literati who could hold their own against Gelupas and Sakyapas in formal doctrinal debate, Shenpen Tayé’s shedra was designed to produce Nyingma teachers that were solidly grounded in the *shared* Buddhist doctrinal and ethical systems and could engage with and minister to people from a wide variety of backgrounds. I show how the shedra was designed as an institutional support for a project, pursued by figures including Shenpen Tayé, Jikmé Nyugu, and Dza Patrül,<sup>18</sup> to reform and tame the violent honor-based culture of his home region of *Dza* through a

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<sup>18</sup> Dza Patrül Orgyen Chökyi Wangpo (rdza dpal sprul o rgyan chos kyi dbang po; 1808–1887).

program of Buddhist ethics, which would be upheld, propagated, and embodied by a cadre of learned and morally upstanding Buddhist clerics.

In **chapter five**, I explore the massive editorial and printing project that took place at Dzokchen Monastery between 1840 and 1845, where—based on requests from figures associated with Mindröling Monastery—Shenpen Tayé compiled, edited, and had wood printing blocks carved for a nine-volume anthology, entitled *The Collected Rituals of Enlightened Activity (Trinchok; phrin chog)*<sup>19</sup> from the *Successive Nine Vehicles of the Nyingma Kama* (hereafter: ***Trinchok Collection***).<sup>20</sup> Previously, the Nyingma rubric of *kama (bka' ma)* referred almost exclusively to those texts and ritual cycles belonging to the three *inner* Nyingma tantras, ostensibly translated during Tibet's Imperial Period (c. 7<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries).<sup>21</sup> Shenpen Tayé's anthology fundamentally re-imagined and transformed this rubric, expanding it to include the core Buddhist monastic rituals as well as foundational Indian Buddhist scriptures and treatises—most notably, the *Prātimokṣasūtra* and Śāntideva's *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*. I begin the chapter by providing some background and historical context on Nyingma *kama* and the closely related rubric of the *nine vehicles (theg pa dgu)* detailing the evolution of these categories through the centuries and unpacking their significance for conceptions of institutional and textual authority among Nyingmapas (sec. 5.1). I then move on to a detailed study of the

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<sup>19</sup> I take “*phrin chog*” to be a contraction of *phrin las kyi cho ga* (“ritual of enlightened activity”), which refers specifically to ritual-contemplative practices that invoke a Buddha or other enlightened being. The most common ritual of this type is the *druptab (sgrub thabs)* or *sādhana* ritual.

<sup>20</sup> *bka' ma theg pa rim dgu'i phrin chog mtha' dag phyogs gcig tu bsdus pa (Trinchok Collection)*.

<sup>21</sup> These early translations had subsequently been transmitted directly from teacher to student and were therefore designated as “spoken” (*bka'*) in contradistinction to the revealed *treasure* texts (*terma; gter ma*), which came to be a widespread and distinctive feature of Nyingma textual culture. See the next section below for more detail.

*Trinchok Collection* itself. I begin this study by discussing and analyzing the surviving textual witnesses of the *Trinchok Collection*, which, in tandem with the listing of contents in the accompanying *descriptive catalog* (*karchak*; *dkar chag*) to the *Collection*, allows us to reconstruct the *Collection* as originally published by Shenpen Tayé in 1845 (sec. 5.2). I then move to an analysis of the *Collection*'s contents, examining the specific texts included in the *Collection* and their respective topics and authors (sec. 5.3). I then tell the story of how the *Trinchok Collection* came into being (sec. 5.4). Relying heavily on the account given in the *Catalog to the Collection*, I detail the events and motivations that instigated the project as well as the specific editorial methods deployed by Tayé and his assistants. I then briefly consider the reception and influence of the *Trinchok Collection*, showing both how it became the basis of all later *kama* collections right into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, *and* how these later collections altered the *kama* rubric established by Shenpen Tayé. (sec. 5.5). In the final section (sec. 5.6), I discuss what the *Collection*'s contents and the circumstances surrounding its production can tell us about Shenpen Tayé's goals and general vision towards Nyingma *kama*, and about his desire to more firmly root the Nyingma tradition and its *unique* (*thun mong ma yin pa*) teachings and practices in *shared* (*thun mong*) Buddhist categories and practices.

**Chapter six** investigates Shenpen Tayé's particular approach to **Buddhist monasticism**. Shenpen Tayé was a fully ordained monk and he is often cited as a key figure who encouraged and facilitated the spread of Buddhist monasticism among Nyingmapas. I begin the chapter by clarifying some of the basic categories and terms surrounding what is often referred to in English as Buddhist "monasticism" (sec. 6.1.2). I

then provide a brief historical sketch outlining the status of Buddhist monasticism among Nyingmapas leading up to the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (sec. 6.1.3). In the main section of the chapter (sec. 6.2), I look at Shenpen Tayé’s interactions with, and impact, on monastic practice. I begin by surveying how Shenpen Tayé’s education and interactions with other figures influenced his adoption of, and views on, Buddhist monasticism (sec. 6.2.1). I then detail the various activities and strategies—literary, institutional, and interpersonal—that he used to promote and expand the practice of Buddhist monasticism (sec. 6.2.2). Finally, I take a closer look at how Shenpen Tayé himself talked about monastic practice, arguing that his promotion of monasticism was part of a larger project to “tame” the rough and violent borderlands of his homeland around Dzachukha.

I **conclude** the dissertation with some thoughts about the nature of **Shenpen Tayé’s legacy**, beginning with an analysis of how Shenpen Tayé fit in with the **nonsectarian** (*rimé; ris med*) impulse that swept through Eastern Tibet in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I then look at how some of Shenpen Tayé’s projects and ideas were taken up by later figures, and which aspects of his projects and ideas tended to *not* be taken up by his contemporaries and successors. I conclude with some suggestions for further research.

# Chapter One: Methods, Sources, and Historical Background

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## Section 1: Books, Texts, and How to Read Them

### 1.1.1 Methodology: Textual-Historical Research and Interpretation

#### *1.1.1.1 “Direct” and “Indirect” Sources and Tibetan Approaches to Writing about the Past*

In organizing, analyzing, and interpreting the available sources on Shenpen Tayé and his activities, I made the decision to seek out and prioritize primary sources—that is: records and documents produced at or soon after the events they document—over secondary sources (i.e., reflective, historiographic works produced long after the events they describe).<sup>22</sup> Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier use the terms “direct” and “indirect” sources to make this distinction, arguing that direct sources, such as institutional documents, edicts, personal correspondence, and speeches tend to be more reliable witnesses to the events they describe than later, indirect sources, which are not only further removed in time from the event(s) in question, but are very often written with recent *historical* agendas in mind.

The utility of seeking out contemporaneous sources is particularly important if the person (or event) being studied was—or has come to be seen as—a point of articulation for a paradigm shift of one kind or another. Such cases pose a dual historiographical

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<sup>22</sup> Here, I am guided by Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier’s typology of historical sources. *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 17–42.

peril. Firstly, there is the tendency to “backshadow” the past—to describe and analyze past events in light of eventual outcomes—even outcomes that did not take place until much later. Such teleological thinking is to some degree necessary if the historian is to construct anything resembling a coherent historical narrative. However, if left unchecked, such projections risk obscuring the plurality and messiness of causes and motivations that generate historical events. Secondly, a pivotal historical figure or event, by its nature, straddles different paradigms, zeitgeists, or worldviews. Thus, most secondary treatments written later about that person or event will be written *through*—and often *in service of*—a succeeding paradigm. By going back to what that person—or what other people—were saying and writing *at that time* gives us access to perspectives on people and their actions before later understandings formed them into “historical figures” and condensed their actions into neat teleological presentations of “incidents,” “affairs,” “wars,” “revolutions,” and so forth.

In the case of Shenpen Tayé, the Nyingma tradition underwent a great series of realignments in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. As we will see, what it meant to be “Nyingma” had been constantly contested and reformulated long before Shenpen Tayé’s time. However, the shift that occurred between the early 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries towards a mass movement of Nyingmapas and Nyingma institutions (as wells as Kagyüpas and others) towards celibate monasticism and scholastic philosophical study, was unprecedented in Nyingma history. A good deal of the supports that enabled this realignment were initiated by Shenpen Tayé and then later picked up and extended by succeeding figures in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The basic shedra model that

Shenpen Tayé had initiated and promoted was transformed in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by such figures as Mipham Gyatso (mi pham rgya mtsho; 1846–1912) and Khenpo Shenga (mkhan po gzhan dga’- gzhan phan chos kyi snang ba; 1871–1927)<sup>23</sup>, whose commentaries became core curricular texts.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, Khenpo Shenga’s annotation commentaries (*mchan ‘grel*) on the *Thirteen Great Texts* (*gzhung chen bcu gsum*)<sup>25</sup> comprise(d) the formal curriculum at many Nyingma, Kagyü, and Sakya shedras, and seem to have been responsible for creating the *Thirteen Great Texts* rubric itself. Similarly, Shenpen Tayé’s editing and publishing of his nine-volume *Trinchok Collection* represented the first time that a comprehensive collection of Nyingma *kama* texts had been published. In the succeeding decades, figures such as Pema Dongak Tendzin (*pad+ma mdo sngags bstan ‘dzin*; 1830–1893) and Düdjom Jikdrel Yeshé Dorjé (*‘dud ‘joms rin po che ‘jigs bral ye shes rdo rje*; 1904–1987) published greatly expanded editions of Shenpen Tayé’s initial collection, transforming the loose textual rubric of *kama* into a core Nyingma canon. In such cases, Shenpen Tayé initiated a project that was later extended and expanded, in the process, transforming both itself and the wider landscape of Nyingma religious practice.

In researching this project, it became clear that many later Tibetan religious histories tend to describe Shenpen Tayé and his activities through the lens of the later transformations of his projects. This should not surprise us, as Tibetan religious historiography has its own set of imperatives and functions. Kurtis Schaeffer

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<sup>23</sup> Khenpo Shenga’s full name was Shenpen Chökyi Nangwa (*gzhan phan chos kyi snang ba*).

<sup>24</sup> Khenpo Shenga’s annotation commentaries (*mchan ‘grel*) on the *Thirteen Great Texts* comprise(d) the basic curriculum at many Nyingma, Kagyü, and Sakya shedras.

<sup>25</sup> For a description and listing of the *Thirteen Great Texts*, see chapter four, section 4.2.2, below.

characterizes Tibetan institutional histories as being,

largely serial biographies of Buddhist masters who were renowned in the development and promotion of a particular practice, place, or institution. Often these important figures are held to be continuously and causally linked in a lineage, be it a genealogy or an incarnation series.”<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, Peter Schweiger argues that:

The form of Tibetan historiography largely follows the pattern of genealogical structure. As a formal structure, genealogy divides history into a series of biographies linked by the principle of hereditary succession, which regulates the progression of time and transfer of property and honor.<sup>27</sup>

In short, we can say that Tibetan religious biographies and histories have a basic bridging function—viz., to connect a present reader with the great masters<sup>28</sup> and events of the past. As such, Tibetan religious biographies and histories have a strong tendency to smooth out historical shifts or ruptures in the history of their particular subject matter, be it an institution, incarnation lineage, or religio-philosophical system.

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<sup>26</sup> “Future Directions for Modern Tibetan Studies: Religion/History,” *The Council of Societies for the Study of Religion Bulletin* 35, no. 1 (2006): 17–19, 18.

<sup>27</sup> “History as Myth: On the Appropriation of the Past in Tibetan Culture: An Essay in Cultural Studies,” in *The Tibetan History Reader*, Gray Tuttle and Kurtis R. Schaeffer eds., (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 69.

<sup>28</sup> Although the use of the term “master” in some contexts has drawn criticism in recent years due to its associations with American chattel slavery, in the context of Tibetan religious culture, the term has been used in scholarship for decades to characterize the status of certain highly revered leaders who were known both for their mastery of religious “technique” (meditative, visionary, ritual, doctrinal, literary, and so forth), and for being powerful, high-status authority figures who were responsible for guiding and disciplining students, and often held immense social and political power. There does not seem to be another descriptive term in common usage that clearly condenses and communicates this cluster of meanings.



### ***1.1.1.2 Analyzing and Interpreting Historical Sources: The Importance of “Genre”***

In order to profitably analyze and interpret both direct and indirect historical sources, it is imperative for the historian to attend closely to the particular genre of each source. As Jose Cabezón and Roger Jackson argue, there is no clear correspondence between the Western conceptual category of “genre” and Tibetan typologies of literature.<sup>29</sup> I tend to use the term “genre” in relation to Tibetan literature in both a descriptive way and in a more broadly interpretive way. The former is based simply on how the *author* (or editor) characterizes the work in the title. Tibetan works generally have descriptive titles that explicitly denote the type or genre of the work, which allow the reader to quickly assess the subject and orientation of the work.<sup>30</sup> However, it is often the case that these title-genres can be somewhat misleading or unclear. For example, the autobiography of Do Khyentsé<sup>31</sup> categorizes the work not as autobiography (*rang thar*) but as the more ubiquitous genre of *hagiography* (*namtar*; *rnam thar*), a choice that seems to have been a result of the autobiography being significantly edited by one of Do Khyentsé’s students prior to publication. In this case, the title obscures the fact that the work is primarily a work of autobiography, not hagiography. Because of variations such

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<sup>29</sup> José Ignacio Cabezón and Roger R. Jackson, “Editors’ Introduction,” in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, 11–37, (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1996).

<sup>30</sup> The Tibetan and Himalayan Library has created a “knowledge map” of these genres: <http://www.thlib.org/encyclopedias/literary/genres/>. Also, see the list of Tibetan works provided in the bibliography below, in which I have provided (mostly) verbatim English translations of the Tibetan titles for each entry for examples: e.g., *rnam thar* (“biography/hagiography”); *gsung ’bum* (“collected works”); *bca’ yig* (“monastic customary”); and so forth.

<sup>31</sup> Do Khyentsé Yeshé Dorjé (mdo mkhyen brtse ye shes rdo rje, 1800–1866). *rig ’dzin ’jigs med gling pa’i yang srid sngags ’chang ’ja’ lus rdo rje’i rnam thar mkha’ ’gro’i zhal lung* (*The Autobiography of Do Khyentsé Yeshé Dorjé*) Title Page Title: *mdo mkyen brtse ye shes rdo rje’i rnam thar*. Chengdu: si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1997. BDRC: W21847.

as this, it should be recognized that the titular “genres” of Tibetan works need to be checked against the actual contents of the work in order to get an accurate sense of the specific type of work it represents.

My strategy in approaching the wide range of genres represented by my sources, is to consult previous scholarly studies that directly explore and critically analyze a specific Tibetan literary genre or group of genres in order to better recognize the tropes and conventions of specific types of writing such as *institutional regulations* (*bca' yig*)<sup>32</sup> or works of *personal advice* (*gdams ngag*). The chapters below provide analyses of specific Tibetan literary genres where such texts are discussed. In regards to biographical literature, I have also sought to read all available (auto)biographies in translation of Nyingma figures from 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century Eastern Tibet.<sup>33</sup>

### ***1.1.1.3 Archival Research Methods***

My main research technique for tracking down relevant texts has involved first consulting all the Western scholarly treatments on this period that I could find, making note of relevant primary sources in their bibliographies. I then performed a series of exhaustive searches in the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC.org)<sup>34</sup> online textual database, searching for texts written by, or about, Shenpen Tayé and other adjacent figures with whom he was closely associated. I also searched the database for any texts from this period belonging to two of the most historically useful genres: *institutional*

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<sup>32</sup> For example, Berthe Jansen, *The Monastery Rules: Buddhist Monastic Organization in Pre-Modern Tibet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018).

<sup>33</sup> I am grateful to Kurtis Schaeffer for recommending that I do this early on in my research.

<sup>34</sup> Previously, the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (TBRC).

*regulations* (*chayik; bca' yig*) and *autobiography* (*rangthar/rangnam; rang thar/rang rnam*). Concurrently with this, I searched out and read every biography, autobiography, and lineage history in translation relating to the Nyingma tradition or the Kham region in the 18<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

#### **1.1.1.4 Combining “Big Data” and “Close Reading” in Literary-Historical Research**

The value of employing “**big data**” approaches to literary and historical studies has been repeatedly demonstrated by scholars such as Franco Moretti<sup>35</sup> and Kurtis Schaeffer.<sup>36</sup> This study applies a big(ger) data approach to organize, catalog, and analyze the makeup of Shenpen Tayé’s textual corpus and the relative prevalence of various topics and genres and to compare these with the collected works of other prominent Nyingma figures.

**Close Reading and Discourse Analysis:** Trends illuminated by this big data approach then need to be further fleshed out and checked against what the works themselves actually say. My main sources for understanding the contexts of life in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Eastern Tibet were Tibetan autobiographies from the period, which was made easier through the expanding number of translations of these materials. Tibetan autobiographies often contain frank and detailed discussions of both the quotidian details

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<sup>35</sup> Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History* (New York: Verso Books, 2005).

<sup>36</sup> Schaeffer’s study of the growth and historical development of the genre of Tibetan biography demonstrates the value of a comprehensive, big data approach for the study of the historical development of a particular genre of literature. See “Tibetan Biography: Growth and Criticism,” in *Éditions: l’écrit au Tibet, Évolution et Devenir*, edited by Anne Chayet and Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, 263–306. (Munich: Indus Verlag, 2010).

of daily life and the values and mindsets of their authors. In addition to such autobiographical accounts, I searched Shenpen Tayé’s writings and those of his close associates for official addresses and speeches (*tam*; *gtam*), and institutional documents, such as institutional regulations (*bca’ yig*), all of which provided valuable insight on the values and norms of Shenpen Tayé and his milieu.

### 1.1.2 Historical Source Material on Shenpen Tayé

#### ***1.1.2.1. Availability of Source Material on Shenpen Tayé***

Mentions of Shenpen Tayé in secondary academic scholarship are largely limited to his role as the founder of Śrī Siṃha shedra. There have been a handful of Western academic studies of Nyingma shedras (e.g., Dreyfus 2003; 2005; Pearcey 2015), which shed valuable light on the curricular and institutional life of *contemporary* Tibetan shedras, but none assessed their *history*—viz., their institutional and curricular development over time—in any depth. The relative lack of historical studies on Śrī Siṃha and on Shenpen Tayé has been due, in large part, to a paucity of extant primary sources from this period.<sup>37</sup> In just the last few years however, numerous important Tibetan texts and documents have come to light and been published in China and South Asia—many of which are now easily accessible to the global scholarly community via online databases such as BDRC.org. In addition, recent years have seen a continued increase in the translation and publication of historically important Tibetan works in English

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<sup>37</sup> This paucity of primary sources is evident in the reliance of these previous studies on recent historiographic works by Nyingma monastic figures—e.g., Tendzin Lungtok Nyima’s (2004) *snga’gyur rdzogs chen chos’byung chen mo*.

translation.<sup>38</sup> The recent proliferation and growing accessibility of Tibetan historical sources now allows for a more detailed and nuanced assessment of the life and activities of Shenpen Tayé and his impact on the institutional and intellectual life of Eastern Tibet and beyond.

Tulku Thondrup admits at the conclusion of his brief biographical sketch of Shenpen Tayé that “unfortunately, I don’t think that there has been adequate acknowledgment for the great services he rendered to the heart and core of the Nyingma tradition.”<sup>39</sup> Similarly, Nyoshul Khenpo concludes his brief biography of Shenpen Tayé in *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems* by saying of both Shenpen Tayé and Shenpen Chökyi Nangwa:

Given that [these two masters] were mainstays of the teachings of the Early Translation school, there should be more extensive biographies of both of them. Because of recent events, however, textual sources are not available to me; if they come to light in the future, I ask that people with spiritual insight insert such accounts at this point.<sup>40</sup>

These two writers are emphasizing that, unlike Shenpen Tayé teachers—Jikmé Gyelwe Nyugu (‘jigs med rgyal ba’i myu gu; 1765–1842) and the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen Jikmé Trinle Özer (rdo grub chen ‘jigs med ‘phrin las ‘od zer; 1745–1821), who wrote detailed accounts of their lives that were collected, edited, and published by their students—

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<sup>38</sup> Some recent translations that are particularly relevant to assessing recent Nyingma history, include the autobiography of Ngawang Pelzang (*Wondrous Dance of Illusion: The Autobiography of Khenpo Ngawang Palzang*, trans., Heidi L. Nevin, and J. Jakob Leschly, Boston: Snow Lion, 2013), Matthieu Ricard’s biography of Dza Patrül (*Enlightened Vagabond*, Shambhala, 2017), and the biography of Khyentsé Chökyi Lodrö (*The Life and Times of Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö: The Great Biography by Dilgo Khyentse and Other Stories*, trans. Drubgyud Tenzin Rinpoche and Khenpo Sonam Phuntsok, Shambhala, 2017).

<sup>39</sup> Thondup, *Masters of Meditation and Miracles*, 199.

<sup>40</sup> *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems*, 406.

Shenpen Tayé did not write an extensive autobiography, nor were there any extensive biographies written by any of his immediate successors.

### 1.1.2.2 *Primary Sources on the Life and Activities of Shenpen Tayé*

In the course of my research, I have been able to identify **two brief biographies of Shenpen Tayé written during his lifetime**—a short verse autobiography written sometime in the last few years of his life (c. 1851—1855), and a slightly longer hagiography written by his student Pema Vajra in 1845 (both described below). In addition to these, there are scattered mentions of Shenpen Tayé in a few adjacent biographies of his contemporaries. In addition to biographical literature, we have a number of editions of Shenpen Tayé’s *Collected Works* (*gsung ‘bum*), which contain many and diverse texts that provide a critical reader with valuable historical and biographical information.

Of great historical value for our understandings of Śrī Siṃha’s early shedra curriculum is a set of institutional regulations (*chayik; bca’ yig*) entitled ***Regulations of Daily Conduct at Pel Seng-ge [Śrī Siṃha] Ri Thubten Nyinche Ling*** (*dpal seng ge ri thub bstan nyin byed gling gi rgyun ja’i bca’ yig*).<sup>41</sup> This document records that it was set forth by Shenpen Tayé and written down and published by Pema Vajra shortly after Tayé’s death (c. 1855), and contains a detailed formal curriculum for the shedra, including texts to be studied and prescribed pedagogies and examination methods. This regulatory text—which to my knowledge, has not hitherto been studied or referenced in

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<sup>41</sup> In *gsung ‘bum/ rdzogs chen mkhan po pad+ma ba dz+ra* (*The Collected Works of Pema Vajra*), 193–200. rdzogs chen dgon: [s.n.], 199-?. (BDRC W20319).

any published scholarship—also contains numerous interesting details about the built administration and structures at Śrī Simha during this early period and will be studied and discussed in detail in chapter four.

#### 1.1.2.2.1 Contemporaneous Biographies of Shenpen Tayé

##### ***Brief Verses on the Life and Actions of One Called Gyelwé Sepo Shenpen Tayé Özer***

[*Verse Autobiography*] (*rgyal ba'i sras po gzhan phan mtha' yas 'od zer du 'bod pa'i spyod tshul mdor bsdus tshig bcad ma*) [see Appendix 5 for the full Tibetan text].

This brief set of autobiographical verses, written by Shenpen Tayé sometime after 1850 runs about ten folio sides and contains both specific information found in no other direct sources (such as the murder of Shenpen Tayé's father), and insight into Shenpen Tayé's attitudes and feelings about specific events. The early xylograph of this work appears in the *Xylograph Kabum (XylKB)*<sup>42</sup> *Pelung Collected Works (PCW)*<sup>43</sup> editions of Shenpen Tayé's *Collected Works*, and the *Dzokchen Collected Works (DzCW)*<sup>44</sup> reproduces it with a few minor corrections and edits. The *Verse Autobiography* was also included at the end of the original 2-volume Tibetan language edition of Nyoshul Khenpo's *Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems* (written in 1992, published in 1996),<sup>45</sup> and

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<sup>42</sup> Vol. 1. 357a–362a. The various editions of Shenpen Tayé's *Collected Works* are discussed in detail in section 1.1.3 below.

<sup>43</sup> Vol. 2. 81–91. In the edition of this collection that I downloaded from BDRC.org (BDRC W3CN12691), the pages for this work are mixed in with pages from another work (Shenpen Tayé's biographical verses on the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen). Thus, when citing Shenpen Tayé's *Verse Autobiography*, I cite the folio number of the work itself (printed on the left margin) rather than the page within that volume (given in Arabic numerals on the right side of the folio).

<sup>44</sup> Vol 2. 157–163

<sup>45</sup> *rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po'i chos 'byung rig 'dzin rgyud pa'i rnam thar ngo mtshar nor bu baiDUrya'i phreng ba*, 2 vols (Kathmandu: Samye Memorial Institute, 1996), vol 2: 663–674. Note: The *Verse Autobiography* was not included in the English translation of the *Marvelous Garland* (Junction City, CA: Padma Publishing, 2005).

in the 2004 *Great Religious History of Dzokchen*<sup>46</sup> by Tendzin Lungtok Nyima (*bstan 'dzin lung rtogs nyi ma*).

It should be noted that the versions of the *Verse Autobiography* reproduced in both the *Marvelous Garland* and the *Great Religious History* contain some edits and emendations to the original xylograph edition, with the *Great Religious History* being most heavily edited. Most of the changes seem to be simply correcting misspellings, archaic usages, or misprints, but others are clearly made to alter the meaning of a passage. For example, in the original xylograph version, Shenpen Tayé states that:

The system of study and practice of some Nying[ma] gompas in Central and Eastern Tibet had degenerated and I restored the necessary sustenance to institutions that had been cut off.<sup>47</sup>

This passage is reproduced faithfully in the version of the text reproduced in the *Marvelous Garland*, but the version in the *Great Religious History* modifies this passage to take out reference to *Nyingma* gompas, replacing *rnying* with *gnas* in the first stanza: *kham dbus kyi dgon gnas 'ga' zhig gi* (“at some monastic seats”). It is

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<sup>46</sup> *snga 'gyur rdzogs chen chos 'byung chen mo*, 410–414.

<sup>47</sup>8b: *kham dbus kyi dgon rnying 'ga' zhig gi/ bshad sgrub kyi srol kha nyams pa dang// long spyod kyi gtong sgo chad pa'ng gsos//*. If the phrase “dgon rnying” appeared in regular prose, it would simply mean, “old gompas.” If a Tibetan writer wanted to say “Nyingma Gompas,” he or she would probably use the adjectival genitive construction: *rnying ma'i dgon pa*. In Tibetan verse, however, it is often the case that words and phrases are truncated with grammatical particles and “weaker” syllables (such as the nominalizers, *pa* and *ma*) often being omitted. The phrase here appears in Shenpen Tayé’s characteristic 8-syllable metre, in which verses are comprised of four or six lines of eight syllables each. The 8-syllable metre used by Shenpen Tayé in the autobiography has a trochee (2 syllables) bookended on either side by a dactyl (3-syllables), resulting in a 3 – 2 – 3 metrical pattern. In the above verse, *dgon rnying* makes up the center trochee (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> syllable) of the line, resulting in the dropping of the *ma* in *Nyingma* and the reversing of the word order to utilize the positional adjectival construction (i.e., the following word modifying the first). The fact that the editors of the *Great Religious History* choose to modify this line to take out the “rnying” suggests that they also read the line as denoting—or at least strongly cannoting—Nyingma gompas, rather than simply old gompas.



interesting to note that the version of the *Verse Autobiography* in the 2011 edition of Shenpen Tayé’s *Collected Works (DzCW)*, which was also published at Dzokchen by Tendzin Lungtok Nyima, retains the original *ryings* in this passage. This suggests that, while Lungtok Nyima and the editors at Dzokchen thought that the reference to the “degeneration of some *Nyingma* monasteries” was not an appropriate sentiment to include in their official history of Dzokchen Monastery, they decided to retain the original version in their official version of Shenpen Tayé *Collected Works*.

Here we can perhaps detect a dual set of imperatives for Tibetan compilers and writers of traditional religious histories. On the one hand, these compilers are understandably careful to present their tradition and its lineages in as reverential and positive a light as possible. On the other hand, as scholars, they are also genuinely interested and invested in historical truth and accuracy—especially when reproducing the words of great masters of the past. The reality of such editorial practices demonstrates the importance of comparing as many editions of a text as possible, and the value of consulting earlier editions in order to avoid uncritically reproducing later re-writings and interpolations. Due to the above reasons, I will refer primarily to the original xylograph edition of the *Verse Autobiography* while only noting differences in the various editions where the later emendation helps to clarify a passage that is unclear or obscure.

*Pema Vajra's Hagiography of Shenpen Tayé in the Trinchok Catalog* (*bka' ma theg pa rim dgu'i phrin chog mtha' dag phyogs gcig tu bsdus pa'i dkar chag*)<sup>48</sup>

Shenpen Tayé's student Pema Vajra wrote a detailed descriptive catalog (*dkar chag*) [hereafter, *Catalog*] to Shenpen's nine-volume *Trinchok Collection* of *bka' ma* liturgies,<sup>49</sup> both of which were completed and had their first printing in 1845. The *Catalog* runs about 140 folio sides, about forty of which deal with the life and deeds of Shenpen Tayé (32a–49a). These forty folio sides are comprised of: a compilation of prophecies by earlier Nyingma masters thought to pertain to Shenpen Tayé and his deeds (32a–36b); a brief biography of Shenpen Tayé covering the period from his birth to the writing of the *Catalog* in 1845 (37a–43a); and a section providing specific details about Shenpen Tayé's role in collecting, editing, and publishing the *Trinchok Collection* (43a–49a folio sides). Although many passages in this hagiography are highly laudatory, showing the standard reverence and deference characteristic of Tibetan hagiographical literature, it does also contain a good deal of quotidian information about Shenpen Tayé's interactions with specific people, places, texts, and so forth.

### **Mentions in Biographies of Contemporaneous Figures**

There are a few scattered references to Shenpen Tayé in the biographies written by or about other contemporaneous figures. These include the biography of Jikmé

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<sup>48</sup> The original xylograph edition was included as the last text of the last and Ninth volume of the collection as well as the first text of volume 1 of the *PCW*. It is also available as a separate text on BDRC.org (W3CN1338).

<sup>49</sup> This collection is discussed in depth in chapter five below.

Gyelwé Nyugu<sup>50</sup> and Thubten Kunzang’s biography of Dza Patrul Orgyen Chökyi Wangpo.<sup>51</sup>

### Other Textual Mentions by Shenpen Tayé’s Contemporaries

A number of Shenpen Tayé’s contemporaries later wrote texts that recorded details about Shenpen Tayé’s life and activities. These include: Dza Patrul Orgyen Chökyi Wangpo’s *Transmission Record of Gyelsé Shenpen Tayé*,<sup>52</sup> and Khyentsé Wangpo’s *Verses of Supplication to Shenpen Tayé*.<sup>53</sup>

#### 1.1.2.2.2 Later Biographical Literature

##### *Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

A number of later Nyingma figures wrote brief biographies of Shenpen Tayé in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The most influential of these were **Mipham Gyatso’s** biographical sketch in his *Catalog to the Collected Works of Rongzom*<sup>54</sup> (written in 1904)<sup>55</sup>, and the brief hagiographical sketch in the **4<sup>th</sup> Shechen Gyaltsab Pema Namgyel’s** (zhe chen rgyal tshab pad+ma rnam rgyal; 1871–1926) *History of*

<sup>50</sup> ‘gro mgon bla ma rje’i gsang gsum rnam thar, 247.

<sup>51</sup> thub bstan kun bzang chos grags (1862–1943). *o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po'i rnam thar dad pa'i gsos sman bdud rtsi'i bum bcud*, in *gsung 'bum/\_o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po*. 5 vols. Gangtok, Sikkim., 1970–1971, vol. 5, 775–855. BDRC W5832. See 790:4–5; and 794:2–6.

<sup>52</sup> Patrul Orgyen Chökyi Wangpo’s *Transmission Record of Gyelsé Shenpen Tayé* (*rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha' yas kyi gsan yig gi mgo rgyan*), in *gsung 'bum/\_o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po (Collected Works of Orgyen Jikmé Chökyi Wangpo)*. 8 volumes. Chengdu: si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2017, vol 1: 196–199.

<sup>53</sup> “*rgyal sras rin po che gzhan phan mtha' yas kyi rnam thar gsol 'debs smon lam dang bcas pa byin rlabs bdud rtsi'i snang ster (Hagiographical Verses of Supplication to Gyalsé Rinpoché Shenpen Tayé).*” In *gsung 'bum/\_mkhyen brtse'i dbang po (Collected Works of Khyentsé Wangpo)*. volume 1. Gangtok, Sikkim: Gonpo Tseten, 1977–1980, 293–301. BDRC W21807.

<sup>54</sup> “rong zom gsung ‘bum dkar chag me tog phreng ba”, in *rong zom bka' 'bum*. Thimphu, Bhutan: Kunsang Topgay, 1976, 8b-ff. BDRC W27479.

<sup>55</sup> The author’s colophon says that it was written by Mipham in the Wood Dragon Year (1904), 18b:6

*Nyingma Tantra*<sup>56</sup> (written in 1910)<sup>57</sup>. Both of these works mention that Shenpen Tayé had the ability to discover *treasure* (*terma*) teachings, and that his contemporaries petitioned him to live the life of a non-celibate *treasure revealer* (*tertön*; *gter ston*) in order to benefit the Nyingma teachings and prolong his life—requests that Shenpen Tayé refused, choosing instead to live the life of a celibate monastic.<sup>58</sup> These two biographies are the earliest sources that describe Shenpen Tayé as a (potential) *tertön*. As we will see in chapter two, Mipham’s biography in the *Rongzom Catalog* also contains the only account of the death of Shenpen Tayé, which Mipham says that he obtained directly from Shenpen Tayé’s personal attendant.

### ***Late 20th Century to the Present***

Virtually all of the later biographical treatments and historiography on Shenpen Tayé have been based on some combination of the two early-20<sup>th</sup>-century biographies by Mipham and the 4<sup>th</sup> Shechen Gyaltsab—along with the two earlier contemporaneous biographies mentioned above. The two most influential of these later biographies are those appearing in the two recent histories of Dzokchen Monastery described below.

**Gyelwang Nyima’s *History of the Throne Holders of Dzokchen*** (*mdo khams rdzogs chen dgon gyi lo rgyus nor bu’i phreng ba*, 1986)<sup>59</sup> is essentially a series of hagiographies of the throne holders of Dzokchen Monastery and contains some

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<sup>56</sup> *snga ’gyur rdo rje theg pa gtso bor gyur pa’i sgrub rgyud shing rta brgyad kyi byung ba brjod pa’i gnam mdor bsdus legs bshad pad+ma dkar po’i rdzings bu*, Leh, Ladakh: Sonam W. Tashigangpa, 1971[1910], 127b–128a.

<sup>57</sup> [. . .] lcags pho khyir ‘bod pa’i lo[ . . .], 283b:2–3.

<sup>58</sup> This issue of Shenpen Tayé’s potential to be a treasure revealer will be discussed in section 2.3 below

<sup>59</sup> *rgyal dbang chos kyi nyi ma. mdo khams rdzogs chen dgon gyi lo rgyus nor bu’i phreng ba (History of Dzokchen Monastery)*. New Delhi: Konchhog Lhadrepa, 1986. BDRC W23714; W1KG13823.

interesting details about the founding and development of Śrī Simha—although, like many works of this type, it provides few references or sources, contains some clearly anachronistic descriptions, and rarely specifies dates or even years for the events it describes. The work stands out, however, for its detailed descriptions of the rebuilding of Dzokchen Monastery after the 1842 earthquake and provides a valuable window into how the Nyingma establishment-in-exile (during the critical period of the 1970s) conceived of the history of Dzokchen and its abbots.

A larger and more recent work is **Tendzin Lungtok Nyima's *Great Religious History of Dzokchen*** (*snga 'gyur rdzogs chen chos 'byung chen mo*).<sup>60</sup> This text is the most comprehensive institutional history of Dzokchen and its affiliate institutions written in the modern period.<sup>61</sup><sup>62</sup> Lungtok Nyima's *Great Religious History of Dzokchen* contains a fairly detailed biography of Shenpen Tayé<sup>63</sup> based on Pema Vajra's *Trinchok Catalog* hagiography—reproducing large swaths of it verbatim—and Miphams's biographical sketch in his *Catalog to the Collected Works of Rongzom*. However, it also contains significant portions that are not in any other of the earlier sources listed above.<sup>64</sup>

Lungtok's Nyima's text also reproduces Shenpen Tayé's *Verse Autobiography* with some

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<sup>60</sup> bstan 'dzin lung rtogs nyi ma (b. 1974). *snga 'gyur rdzogs chen chos 'byung chen mo (Great Religious History of the Early Translation [Monastery] of Dzokchen)*. Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2004. BDRC W27401.

<sup>61</sup> For a discussion on these and other institutional histories of Dzokchen Monastery—including the famed lost three-volume history of Dzokchen, entitled: *dbang rdzogs chen po 'i gdan rabs chen mo* (c. early 20<sup>th</sup> cent.)—see Achim Bayer, *The Life and Works of mKhan-po gZhan-dga' (1871–1927)*, Hamburg Buddhist Studies, no. 11 (Freiburg: Project Verlag, 2019), 4–15; 293.

<sup>62</sup> Lungtok Nyima, *Great Religious History of Dzokchen*, 304–318.

<sup>63</sup> Lungtok Nyima, *Great Religious History of Dzokchen*, 355–372.

<sup>64</sup> For example, Lungtok Nyima says that Shenpen Tayé died in 1855, “his fifty-sixth year,” a claim unattested in any of the previously mentioned sources. *Great Religious History of Dzokchen*, 368.

edits and modifications [see above].<sup>65</sup> As with other religious histories, this work contains some clearly anachronistic descriptions, as for example, in its description of Śrī Siṃha’s early curriculum, which seems to project the more structured late-20<sup>th</sup>-century shedra curriculum back onto the early period of Śrī Siṃha.<sup>66</sup> Nonetheless, this history remains a valuable reference, so long as the events described are checked against available primary sources. The list of source texts included at the end of the work<sup>67</sup> contains over fifty texts—mostly religious histories and biographical literature.

#### 1.1.2.2.3 Historical and Biographical Information in Shenpen Tayé’s Corpus

In addition to these biographical sketches, I have also relied on historical and biographical details embedded within Shenpen Tayé’s corpus—in particular, in Shenpen Tayé’s **author colophons**. These authorship statements can range from a short “Shenpenpa wrote this”<sup>68</sup> to detailed, extensive descriptions that list the person who requested the text, the place of composition, and so forth. Unfortunately, unlike many Tibetan authors who also often include a date—or, at least a *year*—of composition, Shenpen Tayé completely eschewed this practice, leaving *not a single date* in any of his almost two-hundred authorship statements. This absence of dates makes it nearly impossible to say with any degree of certainty when any of Shenpen Tayé’s works were

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<sup>65</sup> 410–414.

<sup>66</sup> The available first-hand sources for the actual, lived curriculum of Śrī Siṃha as late as the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (e.g., the autobiography of Ngawang Pelzang) describe a decidedly ad-hoc approach to study, comprised mostly of collecting reading transmissions (*lung*), and, if available, explanatory transmissions (*bshad rgyun*) from whichever teachers happened to be there and were willing to impart these transmissions for a payment (i.e., a “maṅḍala offering”). Pelzang’s extensive and detailed account of his studies and transmissions received at Śrī Siṃha (c. 1900–1902) cover a vast range of texts and subjects and were received in no discernable order.

<sup>67</sup> p. 898ff.

<sup>68</sup> “gzhan phan pas bris.”

actually composed.<sup>69</sup> Some clues however can be gleaned by cross-referencing the place of composition and/or the name of the requestor given in the colophons with Shenpen Tayé’s biographies or other texts that locate Shenpen Tayé or the requestor in that particular place during a particular time range.

### 1.1.3 Shenpen Tayé’s *Collected Works*

#### **1.1.3.1. *The Tibetan Genre of “Collected Works” (gsung ‘bum)***

Aside from a handful of individual works that have been published as individual texts [described in section 2 below], the primary way that Shenpen Tayé’s writings have been preserved and transmitted is through the publication of comprehensive collections of his works—the earliest being published shortly after his death and the latest being published by Dzokchen Monastery in Tibet in 2011. Before I describe these specific collections, it would be worthwhile to provide some context about the Tibetan genre of “collected works.”

In Tibetan literature, it has long been common for an influential lama’s students to collect and publish a comprehensive collection of that lama’s work after he or she has passed away. There have been hundreds if not thousands of such collected works compiled for Tibetan figures of all traditions and from the earliest period of Buddhism in Tibet right down to the present day. The task of collecting and organizing the various writings of the lama was most often done by the lama’s students—often after the lama’s

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<sup>69</sup> A rare exception is his *Verse Autobiography* (6a), in which he mentions in the body of the text that he is “into his 5<sup>th</sup> decade” (*rang lo bcu phrag lnga yan*), which still gives us a five-year window assuming that he died when he was around fifty-five.

death, but sometimes under the direction of the lama himself.<sup>70</sup> It is also common for later generations of devotees to search out and collect ever-more comprehensive and complete editions of these collected works, such that there are often multiple editions of such collected works for many of the revered masters of the past. Jim Rheingans argues that the concept of collected works seems to be Tibetan in origin and not a literary form imported from India or China.<sup>71</sup> The genre of collected works remains little studied in Western scholarship, which is surprising, considering the wealth of information that can be gleaned by a comparative study of various collected works.

### ***1.1.3.2. Editions of Shenpen Tayé’s Collected Works***

In the case of Shenpen Tayé, the earliest known collection of his works was a set of wood block prints produced at Dzokchen sometime shortly after Shenpen Tayé’s death in 1855 and is labelled as *kabum* (*bka’ ‘bum*; “myriad teachings”) in the left verso margins of the prints. At least three different editions of his collected works have been published since the 1980s. These are: a 2-volume edition published in 1984 by the National Library of Bhutan; a 3-volume edition published by Pelpung Monastery in India in 2005; and a 2-volume edition published in 2011 by Dzokchen Monastery in Tibet.

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<sup>70</sup> Jim Rheingans “Collected Writings: (gsung ‘bum) in Tibetan Literature: Towards a Systematic Study of Their Compilation, Redaction and Composition and Its Use for Genre Classifications.” (paper presented at the 12th Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies [IATS], Vancouver, BC, August 16th, 2010).

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*



1.1.3.2.1. The Early *Xylograph Kabum (XylKB)* Edition of Shenpen Tayé’s  
Collected Works

A collection of Shenpen Tayé’s writings was carved into wood blocks and published under the direction of the 2nd Lingla, Thubten Gyeltsen Pelzang (gling bla, thub bstan rgyal mtshan dpal bzang; d.u.),<sup>72</sup> probably sometime towards the end of Shenpen Tayé’s life (see below for dating and chronology). Although the original wood blocks seem to have been destroyed or otherwise lost, there are at least two collections of surviving prints currently available. The two collections where these original prints are available are: volumes 2 and 3 of the *Pelpung* edition of Shenpen Tayé’s *Collected Works* (see below) and the two volumes published by BDRC.org under the bibliographic title *gsung ‘bum/ gzhan phan mtha’ yas (Collected Works of Shenpen Tayé; BDRC W3CN18521)*.<sup>73</sup> The latter of these collections (W3CN18521) is the most extensive of the two and forms the basis of my reconstructed catalog of this early *Xylograph Kabum (XylKB)*<sup>74</sup> [located below in Appendix 1 ].

***Identifying the Original Prints***

With a few exceptions<sup>75</sup>, the prints that are available in W3CN18521 and volumes 2 and 3 of the *PCW* are labelled in the left margin of the verso folios as *kabum (bka’*

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<sup>72</sup> His full name, *thub bstan nyin byed rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po*, was his monastic ordination name given to him by Shenpen Tayé when the latter gave him full monastic ordination.

<sup>73</sup> The numerous examples of unique smudging and other printing imperfections make it clear that these two collections represent separate sets of prints from the same blocks rather than different scans of the same set of prints.

<sup>74</sup> It should be noted, however, that the scans available on BDRC.org of the *Pelpung Collected Works* (which contains prints of many of the texts from the *XylKB*) are much higher quality than the scans of the *XylKB* published as BDRC W3CN18521.

<sup>75</sup> One text (*yang dag lam gyi rten ‘brel theg dgu’i don ston*, 2. 206a–221b) has nothing in the left margin of the vf., while the text—gangs ri’i khrod tsam na phul du byung ba’i mahA paN+Dita chos kyi bzang po la

*'bum*; “myriad teachings”). The term “*kabum*” is sometimes used as a synonym for *sungbum* (*sungs 'bum*), but while “*sungbum*” usually connotes an exhaustive collection of all the available works of a particular figure, “*kabum*” usually carries the meaning of “anthology” in the sense of a *selection* of a figure’s works. Unfortunately, if a *descriptive catalog* (*dkar chag*) was ever written for this *bka' 'bum* collection, it does not appear to have survived, leaving us without a table of contents with which to reconstruct the collection. The prints themselves also have very little in the way of paratextual signposting such as text numbers or volume-level folio numbers.<sup>76</sup> It was a common convention when carving the wood blocks for collections or anthologies of multiple works for Tibetan editors to give each text a number (or letter of the alphabet) that would be carved into the left margin of either the front or back of each folio. As we will see in more detail in chapter five, Shenpen Tayé’s nine-volume *Trinchok Collection* of texts from the Nyingma *kama* includes not only these text numbers, but also volume-level folio numbers on each folio—both of which, in tandem with the listing of the collection’s contents in the accompanying descriptive catalog, make locating texts and cataloging the collection a fairly straight-forward (if very labor-intensive) activity. Unfortunately, the publishers of Shenpen Tayé’s *XylKB* did not systematically add such marking into their wood blocks.<sup>77</sup> This absence of para-textual markings in combination with the lack of a

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gsol 'debs pa dad pa'i rba rlabs mngon par g.yo ba (1. 92a–96a)—has “rong zom paN chen/” in the vf. margin and seems to be from an edition of Ronzom’s collected works.

<sup>76</sup> The *XylKB* prints in BDRC W3CN18521 had volume-level folio numbers (in Arabic numerals) handwritten into the bottom of the recto folios at some point before they were scanned. My references to the folio numbers in the *XylKB* refer to these added folio numbers.

<sup>77</sup> There are a handful of exceptions, with about eight texts being numbered with the Tibetan numerals 1-8 in the top left margin of the recto folios. I have noted these cases in the catalog of the *XylKB* in Appendix 1.

descriptive catalog or any other listing of the *XylKB*'s contents, makes it impossible to give any accounting of the collection beyond the surviving editions that have so far been found and scanned. As such, my catalog of the *XylKB* presents the collection as it appears in the BDRC scans of W3CN18521, noting its overlap with the other editions of Shenpen Tayé's collected works (discussed below).

### *Dating the Xylograph Kabum*

Due to a lack of an extant descriptive catalog for the *XylKB*, we would have very little idea about where, when, and by whom this collection was published if not for a number of editor/publisher colophons that occur at the end of some of the works in the *XylKB*. At the conclusion of the text, *snga 'gyur rnying lugs theg dgu'i lam khrid kyi sa bcad nyung ngu dam pa'i zhal lung* (*XylKB*: 2. 22a–36b)<sup>78</sup> there is an author's colophon by Shenpen Tayé. This is followed by some verses of aspiration that appear to be from the printing of the work. The verses are followed by the following statement:

With regard to this just quoted, the Buddhist monk Shenpen Özer<sup>79</sup> offered a gift of seven boxes of tea of the Dorjé lama who had died, and having taken ownership of it, asked that it be used to print a new edition of the teachings of the Lord Lama [Shenpen Tayé], a task, which was entrusted to me, the contemptable Ösel Nyingpo<sup>80</sup>, who composed [the above verses].<sup>81</sup>

<sup>78</sup> *PCW*: 2. 233–262; *DzCW*: 1. 313–331.

<sup>79</sup> I am assuming that the Shenpen Özer here does not refer to Shenpen Tayé. One possible clue to the identity of this person is a passage in the *Trinchok Catalog* (47b) where a “Shenpen Özer” is mentioned as serving on the editorial staff of the *Trinchok Collection* under Shenpen Tayé.

<sup>80</sup> The *Trinchok Catalog* mentions that Shenpen Tayé appointed, “his disciple, the fully ordained monk, known as Dorjé Dzinpa Pema Gendün Drakpa, or ‘Ösel Nyingpo,’ who was endowed with a wealth of learning, the great khenpo who had crossed to the other side [i.e., mastered] of the ocean of scriptures,”<sup>80</sup> to copy edit and proof the finished texts of the *Trinchok Collection*, acquiring ink and paper, and acquiring and distributing the raw wood for printing blocks. See *Trinchok Catalog*, 47b.

<sup>81</sup> ces pa 'di yang shAkya'i dge slong gzhan phan 'od zer kyis/ zhi bar gshegs pa bla ma rdo rje'i ja bag phyed bdun yod pa yon rtsar phul te do dam par byas nas/ rje bla ma'i gsung 'di nyid gsar du bskos pa'i spar byang du rje gang gi bka' 'bangs tha shal ba 'od gsal snying bos smras pa dge//. 2. 36b.

We also have a publisher’s colophon in the *XylKB*’s version of Shenpen Tayé’s famous commentary *A Magical Key*<sup>82</sup> on Thonmi Sambhota’s two grammar treatises.<sup>83</sup>

‘Having understood that this very teaching of the holy lama—viz., the word-commentary on the two grammar treatises by thonmi Sambhota—is of supreme benefit to those who hear and contemplate it, you should print a few like this when completing the printing at Thubten Nyinche Ling, the seat of that holy lama [Shenpen Tayé].’ This instruction was sent along with a white kata by Ösel Nyingpo, a holy lama endowed with a wealth of learning, holiness, and faith, and so a direct student of [Shenpen Tayé], the tulku named, Thubten Gyeltsen Pelzangpo composed this. May there be auspiciousness and happiness!<sup>84</sup>

In addition to these publisher’s colophons, many of the texts in the *XylKB* have a distinctive dedicatory verse placed after the author’s colophon that signals that Thubten Gyeltsen Pelzangpo was the publisher. The verse, which contains Thubten Gyeltsen’s name embedded within it [bolded below<sup>85</sup>], is as follows:

**thub bstan** snying po bsdus pa’i ngag/  
nub med spar gyi **rgyal mtshan** rtser//  
mchog ‘dis srid zhi’i **dpal bzang po**//  
‘gog med phyogs brgyar ‘bar gyur cig//

May the speech that condenses the heart of the Buddha’s teaching  
Be raised high [like] an unwavering victory banner,  
And by this offering, may the good and glorious one of samsara and nirvana  
Blaze forth, unhindered, into the one hundred directions!

<sup>82</sup> *sum cu pa dang rtags kyi ‘jug pa’i ‘bru ‘grel ‘phrul gyi lde mig. XylKB: 2. 338a–375b.*

<sup>83</sup> *PCW: 3. 581–660; DzCW: 1. 31–87.*

<sup>84</sup> ces ‘jam dbyangs thu mis mdzad pa’i brda sprod kyi gzhung sum cu pa dang rtags ‘jug gnyis kyi ‘bru ‘grel rje bla mas gsung ba ‘di nyid thos bsam byed pa rnams la mchog tu phan par rig nas rje de nyid kyi gdan sa thub bstan nyin byed gling du spar du sgrub skabs spar byang nyung ngu ‘di bzhin dgos zhes dad dam thos pa’i nor gyis phyugs pa’i bla ma dam pa ‘od gsal snying bo nas lha rdzas bcas bka’ phebs gngang bzhin rje bla ma’i zhal slob kyi yang mtha’ sprul ming ba thub bstan rgyal mtshan dpal bzang pos smras pa dge zhing bkra shis bar gyur cig/ dge’o//.

<sup>85</sup> In the *XylKB* the syllables that spell the name are highlighted with a small circle under each.

The 2nd Lingla was a close student of Shenpen Tayé and received monastic ordination from him. Shenpen Tayé was also closely involved with enthroning the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lingla as the head of the shedra at Dzokchen, an event for which Shenpen Tayé composed a number of short reverential works.

#### 1.1.3.2.2. The 1984 Bhutanese Edition of Shenpen Tayé’s Collected Works (*BhCW*)

The first post-1950s edition of Shenpen Tayé’s *Collected Works* was compiled and published by the National Library of Bhutan in 1984 in two volumes as *Collected Works of rDzogs-Chen rGyal-Sras gZan-Phan-mTha’-Yas* (hereafter, *Bhutan Collected Works [BhCW]*). This collection was published in two volumes in traditional *pecha* (*dpe cha*) format. The entire collection consists of 773 folios (350 in volume 1 and 423 in volume 2) and forty-nine individual titles (twenty-six of which are titles with a title page). The collection was published by the National Library of Bhutan in Thimphu and was printed in India at Jayyed Press, Ballimaran, Delhi. The title page to the *BhCW* states that the collection was “collected and rewritten on the basis of all surviving prints and manuscripts so far located in Bhutan.” The various texts in the *BhCW* were first collected by the National Library of Bhutan and then copied by hand in uniformly neat and readable U-Chen (*dbu chen*) script. Unfortunately, I was not able to unearth any information on the specific editorial practices involved in collecting, editing, and compiling the *Collected Works*. It should also be noted that some of the shorter works appear twice in the *BhCW*, appearing in both vol. 1 and 2.<sup>86</sup> Interestingly, the texts are not

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<sup>86</sup> To see which texts have been doubled up in the *BhCW*, see Appendices 1 and 2, which detail the contents of the *XylKB* and the recent *Dzokchen Collected Works* respectively. Both of these catalogs cross-reference

simply doubled up; there are occasional minor differences in spelling and grammar between many of the pairs of doubled texts.<sup>87</sup>

1.1.3.2.3. The 2005 Pelpung Edition of Shenpen Tayé’s Collected Works (PCW)

Pelpung Monastery in northern India, published a 3-volume edition of Shenpen Tayé collected works in 2005.<sup>88</sup> These volumes are comprised of high-resolution reproductions of prints from the original blocks of portions of the *XylKB* and most of the first volume of the *Trinchok Collection* of *bka’ ma* ritual texts edited by Shenpen Tayé as well as Pema Vajra’s catalog (*dkar chag*) for the *Trinchok Collection* (see chapter 5 below). The publisher’s statement that occurs at the end of each of the three volumes of the *PCW* says that they were published by Pelpung monastery in India from prints held in the collections of (the original) Pelpung monastery in Dergé, Eastern Tibet.<sup>89</sup>

1.1.3.2.4. The 2011 Dzokchen Monastery Edition of Shenpen Tayé’s Collected Works (DzCW)<sup>90</sup>

This two-volume edition of Shenpen Tayé’s collected works was edited and published by the head of Dzokchen Monastery in Tibet, Tendzin Lungtok Nyima (*bstan ‘dzin lung rtogs nyi ma*; b. 1974) in 2011. This collection was published in codex format

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the locations (page and volume numbers) of their constituent texts for all four collected works editions (including the *BhCW*).

<sup>87</sup> For example, see the two versions of the untitled text in *BhCW* vol. 1, 98–103 and vol. 2, 688–693: the version in vol. 1 has “gang gi drin gyis nye bar rtogs pa **yi**” (99:1), while that same line in vol. 2 ends with the genitive “yi” (the *XylKB/PCW* and the *DzCW* have “yi”).

<sup>88</sup> BDRC W3CN12691

<sup>89</sup> The publishing colophons are located on the final page(s) of each volume and are virtually identical between the two collections.

<sup>90</sup> *rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha’ yas kyi gsung ‘bum*, 2 vols., Lhasa: bod ljong bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2011.

and is the most comprehensive version of any of the editions of Shenpen Tayé’s collected works. This *Dzokchen Collected Works* (*DzCW*) contains almost all of the works contained in the other editions and has quite a few significant works contained in none of these other editions. We are also fortunate that Nitartha.org has made an e-text of the *DzCW* available online, allowing for easy text searching.<sup>91</sup> Tendzin Lungtok Nyima explains in the editor’s forward to the *DzCW* that when Śrī Siṃha Shedra was refounded at Dzokchen in the 1990s, Lama Pema Kelsang collected together some older prints of Shenpen Tayé’s works and collected them together in a one-volume edition of “miscellaneous works” (*gsung ‘bum thor bu*), which he had carved into wood blocks.<sup>92</sup> The *DzCW* stands out from all the other previous versions of Shenpen Tayé’s collected works in that it extracts the numerous short untitled works of personal advice and poetic songs of realization, which in the other editions had been collected into larger collections with a single title, and gives each of the short works a title based on the information in the respective author’s colophons.<sup>93</sup> The contents of the *DzCW* containing cross-referenced locations for the other three collected works editions are detailed in Appendix 2.

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<sup>91</sup> <http://nitarthadigitalibrary.org/xtf/view?docId=tei/SPT001/SPT001.xml;brand=default;#1>

<sup>92</sup> *DzCW*: vol. 1. 4. I have not been able to locate this collection nor have I seen any references to it in any other sources.

<sup>93</sup> Short works of advice are usually titled with the name of the requestor, e.g.: *rje btsun ma ye shes sgrol ma la gdams pa* [“Advice to Jetsunma Yeshé Drölma”] (2. 257–258). In cases where the colophon of the work didn’t mention a requestor, the editor of the *DzCW* simply used a brief descriptive sentence, e.g., *rdzogs chen lta ba’i nyams mgur ka rtsom ma* [“An Alphabetic-Poetic Song of Realization on the View of the Great Perfection”] (2. 181).

## Section 2: Historical Background

In the chapters that follow, I will provide a good deal of detailed background information about such topics as Nyingma shedras, the Nyingma *kama*, Buddhist monasticism, and so forth. It would be prudent, however, to provide some initial context for some of the major themes and issues that cut across the entirety of the following study and deeply informed virtually all of Shenpen Tayé’s various projects and activities. In the pages that follow, I will provide some basic contextual background on three such themes or topics. Firstly, I will discuss the various conceptions of what it meant to be a “Nyingmapa” at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Secondly, I will examine and unpack Tibetan categories of scholarship and investigate the utility of using “scholasticism” as a comparative category to study Tibetan practices of scholarship and scholarly education. I conclude with a brief set of introductions to Nyingma soteriological gradualism and to Dzokchen Monastery and the region of Dzachukha—the primary loci of Shenpen Tayé’s life and projects.

### 1.2.1 What Does it Mean to Be “Nyingma”?

Although Shenpen Tayé studied and interacted with teachers from a variety of sects other than the Nyingma,<sup>94</sup> virtually the entirety of his teachings and writings dealt with Nyingma texts and topics, and his most important interpersonal institutional affiliations were with Nyingma figures and institutions. The introductory comments above repeatedly referenced Shenpen Tayé’s focus on reformulating and re-invigorating *Nyingma* thought and practice. Indeed, as this study will demonstrate, the question of

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<sup>94</sup> Most significantly, with Gelukpa and Sakyapa teachers. For details, see chapter two, esp. section 2.9.



what exactly the Nyingma *is*—and, more importantly, what it *should be*—formed the major, overarching concern of Shenpen Tayé’s many diverse projects. As such, our study of Shenpen Tayé’s life and works must be grounded in a broad understanding of what it meant to be “Nyingma” at the turn of 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### ***1.2.1.1 Nyingma (rnying-ma), Ngadar (snga dar), and Ngagyur (snga ‘gyur)***

The Nyingma (*rnying ma*), or “Ancient Ones” is today recognized as one of the four major “sects,”<sup>95</sup> “schools,”<sup>96</sup> or “orders”<sup>97</sup> of Tibetan Buddhism. Because all of these terms have their own problems as translation equivalents for the Tibetan term, *luk (lugs)*, I will generally simply refer to the *Nyingma luk (rnying ma lugs)* as the Nyingma *tradition* throughout this study. Of all the *chos lugs*, or “Buddhist traditions” in Tibet, the Nyingma are almost certainly the most internally diverse, comprising a vast range of lineages, practice orientations, doctrinal and doxographic commitments, and institutional models. In trying to characterize or even *loosely* define the Nyingma tradition, one inevitably runs up against the simple fact that the Nyingma are not so much a unitary entity as a loose and eclectic array of lineages and practice cycles that all look to the Tibetan Imperial Period (c. 7<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries CE)—and the “earlier translations” (*snga ‘gyur*) of Indian Buddhist material made during this time—as their ordinary locus. Jann Ronis summarizes this well when he writes that,

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<sup>95</sup> E.g., Abraham Zablocki, “Contemporary Tibetan Buddhism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Buddhism*, ed. Michael K. Jerryson, 143–160 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 147.

<sup>96</sup> E.g., The 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, *The Buddhism of Tibet* (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1987), 22.

<sup>97</sup> E.g., John Powers, *A Concise Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*, Chapter Six: “The Four Orders,” (Boston: Snow Lion, 2008), 103ff.

The internal diversity of the Nyingma is not predicated upon a harmonious systemization, but rather is the production of a dynamic and constantly changing balance of religious modalities in perpetual tension with each other.<sup>98</sup>

Here it would be useful to pause and briefly unpack the category of “Nyingma” and its adjacent terms, *ngadar* (*snga dar*) and *ngagyur* (*snga ‘gyur*). The term “Nyingma”— (“The Ancient”), invokes their tradition’s origins in the ancient Imperial Period (c. 7<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries CE), during which time the imperial Tibetan court initiated the transmission and translation of Buddhist literature. Tibetan accounts trace the inception of this “early transmission” to the first great Tibetan “Dharma King,” Songtsen Gampo, who sent one of his ministers, Thonmi Sambhoṭa, to India in the mid-7<sup>th</sup> century to acquire a script with which to begin the process of translating Indian Buddhist works from Indian languages (mainly Sanskrit) into Tibetan.<sup>99</sup> While in India, Sambhoṭa designed the letters of the Tibetan alphabet, which he derived from variants of the Brahmi and Gupta scripts, and composed the first grammars of the Tibetan language.<sup>100</sup> Once a script had been developed, Tibetan scholars, in tandem with Indian Sanskrit

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<sup>98</sup> Jann Ronis, “Celibacy, Revelations, and Reincarnated Lamas: Contestation and Synthesis in the Growth of Monasticism at Katok Monastery from the 17<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries.” Ph.D. Thesis, University of Virginia, 2009, 3.

<sup>99</sup> Tibetan is part of the Sino-Tibetan language family, and, other than the script, shares little with Indian and Indo-European languages.

<sup>100</sup> Here, it should be emphasized that because the Tibetan script was created especially to translate and record Buddhist scriptures, the *script itself* is considered sacred by Tibetan Buddhists. Thus, from the very beginnings of literacy in Tibet, we have the understanding that the very act of writing—even the physical letters themselves—are imbued with spiritual and religious importance and power. This understanding of the sacred status of texts—and, indeed writing itself—was further developed and extended through subsequent practices of reading, writing, and book production. Indeed, for most of Tibetan history, literacy was primarily the purview of a select number of educated monastic elites. Thus, the practices of reading and writing were seen to be intrinsically religious activities, and thus, books, as the primary material supports for this religious activity, were imbued with a sacred and venerated status. See Bryan Jaré Cuevas and Gregory Alexander Hillis, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: Literature and Artwork On Prayer, Ritual, and Meditation from the Religious Traditions of Tibet, India, and Nepal*, (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Library, 1997), 1-4.

scholars, began one of the largest translation projects in history, translating thousands of Indian literary works from Indian languages (primarily Sanskrit) into Tibetan. The first phase of this massive translation project took place during the Tibetan imperial period from the 7<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries. This phase, called the *early transmission* (*ngadar*; *snga dar*), was mostly limited to the royal court and scholars with royal patronage and formed the basis for the oldest Tibetan sect, the “Ancient Ones” (*Nyingma*; *rnying ma*). After the collapse of the Tibetan empire in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century, virtually all literary activity temporarily ceased and we have very few records of any translation activities for over a century,<sup>101</sup> when a semblance of political order was restored in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century in Western Tibet with the rise of the royal house of *Gugé*<sup>102</sup>.

Foremost among the kings of *Gugé*, was king *Yeshé Ö* (*ye shes ‘od*; 959-1040, r. 967-975), who founded numerous monasteries and translation centers, and eventually abdicated the throne to live the life of a Buddhist monk. The translation activities sponsored by *Yeshé Ö* mark the beginning of the period of *later transmission* (*chīdar*; *phyi dar*), lasting over 250 years. This period saw the rise of the *new translation traditions*, or *sarma* (*gsar ma*), led by the *Kadam* (*bka’ gdams*), *Sakya* (*sa skya*), and *Kagyü* (*bka’ brgyud*) traditions, founded in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, with the *Jonang* (*jo nang*) and *Geluk* (*dge lugs*) traditions arising in the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries. The *Kadam*, *Sakya*, and *Geluk*, in particular, became known for their large, powerful monastic institutions, which

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<sup>101</sup> We have a notable exception to this extinguishing of literary activity in the figure of *Nupchen Sangyé Yeshé* (*gnubs chen sangs rgyas ye shes*; c. 9<sup>th</sup> century). See Manuel López, “Bringing Light into the Darkness: An Intellectual History of Tibet’s Dark Age (842–978 CE),” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 2014.

<sup>102</sup> There is, however, evidence of an unbroken transmission of clan and family chronicles during this time. See section 3.2.1. below on Tibetan chronicles and annals.

came to dominate not simply the religious and intellectual life of Tibet, but also came to be the primary sources of political and economic authority in Central and Southern Tibet by the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>103</sup> This *later transmission* period is also known as a period of great intellectual and literary efflorescence and has been characterized by modern scholars as a period of renaissance.<sup>104</sup>

By the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century, political conditions in India (not least of which being the repeated Muslim invasions and conquests) had resulted in a severe decline of Buddhism in the land of its inception and, thus, Tibetans begin to shift their efforts from translation to systematizing this massive received corpus. This systematization involved processes of doxographical classification, compilation and anthologization, canonization, and composing original synthetic commentaries and treatises. Although Nyingmapas located their origins in Tibet's imperial past, they also engaged in similar programs of systematization, constellation, and realignment during the renaissance of the *later transmission* period.

### ***1.2.1.2 What is “Unique” about the Nyingma?***

Nyingmapas use the standard Tibetan rubric of *shared* (*thun mong*) vs. *unique* (*thun mong ma yin pa*) to distinguish which aspects of their tradition are held in common with other Buddhist traditions and which are unique to their own tradition. The *shared*

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<sup>103</sup> This political hegemony enjoyed by Tibet's monastic institutions reached its peak in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century when, with the support the Mongol leader, Gushi Khan, the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama assumed the role of supreme leader of Tibet in 1642. See Sam van Shaik, *Tibet: A History*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 120-124.

<sup>104</sup> See Ronald M. Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance: Tantric Buddhism in the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

teachings and practices comprise the entire range of Buddhist texts, doctrines, and practices that were considered authentically Buddhist by other Tibetan Buddhist traditions. In general terms, the main criteria for designating a text or teaching to be “authentically Buddhist,” during the earlier and later transmissions of Buddhism from India to Tibet, was that it came from India. In practical terms, this meant any of the Buddhist texts included in the editions of the Buddhist canonical collections—the *Kangyur* (*bka’ gyur*) and *Tengyur* (*bstan gyur*)—that were edited and published by non-Nyingma figures such as Butön Rinchen Drup (*bu ston rin chen grub*; 1290–1364), must have a clear Indian provenance.<sup>105</sup> The teachings and practices *unique* to the Nyingma were primarily those belonging to the three Nyingma classes of *inner tantra*—i.e., Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga. We will discuss these three inner tantras in much more depth in chapter five, but I will briefly summarize here.

Mahāyoga is divided into two main sections—viz., the *tantra section* (*rgyud sde*) and the *accomplishment section* (*sgrub sde*). The most important tantra of the tantra section is the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* (*gsang ba’i snying po*), which has, for centuries, served as the central focus of textual exegesis and scholastic practice among Nyingmapas. The practice section focuses on *druptab* (*sgrub thabs*; skt., *sādhana*), rituals for “accomplishing the deity,” and particularly upon the ritual practice of horrific deities found in the treasure-based Eight Proclamation Deities (*bka’ brgyad*) traditions. The inner tantra of Anuyoga is focused on a set of four tantras—first among them being the

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<sup>105</sup> For a discussion of the specific criteria used in such determinations, and an accompanying discussion of “gray texts” of indeterminate origin, see Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, 148–151.

*Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions* (*dgongs pa 'dus pa 'i mdo*), which is considered the “root” text of the Anuyoga class of tantra. The final inner tantra, Atiyoga, comprises the highest teachings of the Nyingma: the Great Perfection (*dzokchen; rdzogs chen*). The vast body of Great Perfection teachings are generally organized under the three-fold rubric of *mind class* (*smes sde*); *expanse class* (*klong sde*), and *practice instruction class* (*man ngag sde*).<sup>106</sup>

These descriptions of the three inner tantras above has mostly focused on the *transmitted teachings* or *kama* (*bka' ma*). As we will see in chapter five, Shenpen Tayé was a major figure in the transmission and transformation of the Nyingma *kama*. The other major class of Nyingma texts and transmissions is that of *revealed treasures*, or *terma* (*gter ma*), which are apocryphal, revealed texts and teachings ostensibly hidden by the great sage Padmasambhava or his students and revealed by *treasure revealers* (*tertön; gter ston*) in the centuries following the collapse of the Tibetan Empire. These *terma* are also an integral part of category of *unique* Nyingma lineages and should be explained in more depth..

### Revealed Treasure Literature

The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries saw a continuation of the importance of *treasure revealers* (*tertön; gter ston*) and their *treasures* (*terma; gter ma*) within Nyingma communities. *Terma* were secret texts and teachings thought to have been hidden by a variety of Indian and Tibetan figures from the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, with an increasing

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<sup>106</sup> For a detailed discussion of these three class, see David Germano, “The Funerary Transformation of the Great Perfection (Rdzogs chen),” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*, no. 1 (October 2005): 1–54.

focus over time on the figure of Padmasambhava, a semi-mythic Indian tantric master who is said to have come to Tibet during the Imperial Period and tamed the natural spirits of Tibet, enabling the establishment of Buddhism in Tibet. These *terma* were understood to be “concealed apocrypha,” and “constitute an unquestionably Tibetan class of heterogeneous literature that began to appear in Tibet around the eleventh century.”<sup>107</sup> These revealed *terma* texts comprised a diverse array of religious literature but most often took the form of esoteric liturgies and practice manuals, which represented “new and innovative interpretations of older religious ideas and techniques, or simply popularized in the form of prayer or liturgy what had previously existed only in the clandestine and rarefied atmosphere of elite yogis and scholarly monks.”<sup>108</sup>

Although treasure revealers are generally non-celibate *tantrikas* (*ngakpa*; *sngags pa*), many of the greatest treasure revealers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century such as Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo and Mipham Gyatso were also known for their scholastic learning and were closely associated with monastic institutions. Others—such as Chokgyur Lingpa (mchog gyur gling pa 1829–1870), Dūdjom Lingpa (bdud ‘joms gling pa, 1835–1904), and Sera Khandro (se ra mkha’ ‘gro 1892–1940)—were more removed from monastic institutions and scholastic pursuits. Instead these treasure revealers headed up religious *encampments* (*sgar*), made up of groups of students, devotees, and practitioners. These encampments were generally nomadic, shifting locations with the season and to gain patrons from surrounding areas for their ritual services. However, as Sarah Jacoby notes, religious

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<sup>107</sup> Brian J. Cuevas, *The Hidden History of the Tibetan Book of the Dead* (New York: Oxford, 2003), 83.

<sup>108</sup> Cuevas, *The Hidden History of the Tibetan Book of the Dead*, 83.

encampments and monastic institutions were not “separate religious spheres, but rather overlapping ones.”<sup>109</sup> She notes that treasure revealers were sometimes abbots of monasteries and religious encampments often included celibate monastics as well as non-celibate practitioners.<sup>110</sup>

The overlapping and mutually-reinforcing nature of celibate monastic and non-celibate communities in Eastern Tibet during this time is clearly evident in numerous autobiographies of the period. The autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Tayé (‘jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha’ yas; 1813–1899), for example, contains numerous instances of close interaction between monastic figures and treasure revealers—the most significant of which is between Chokgyur Lingpa and various Kagyü and Nyingma monastic figures and institutions. Kongtrül’s account relates numerous instances where monastic officials rely on Chokgyur Lingpa for spiritual instruction and even advice on monastic institutional matters.<sup>111</sup> The status that some treasure revealers enjoyed in monastic circles is not surprising given the high value placed on spiritual accomplishment and prophetic abilities within the Nyingma (and Kagyü) traditions. However, it is clear from these same accounts that there were many dubious figures roaming the countryside

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<sup>109</sup> Sarah Jacoby, “To Be or Not to Be Celibate: Morality and Consort Practices According to the Treasure Revealer Sera Khandro’s (1892-1940) Auto/biographical Writings,” in *Buddhism beyond the Monastery: Tantric Practices and their Performers in Modern Tibet*, edited by Sarah Jacoby and Antonio Terrone, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 39.

<sup>110</sup> Jacoby, “To Be or Not to Be Celibate,” 39.

<sup>111</sup> For example, Kongtrül relates an instance in which Chokgyur Lingpa “issued a directive to Situ Rinpoché’s monastic residence, together with a prophetic account, concerning the need to erect a temple to the great and glorious deity on this important spot, for the sake of the teachings in general and our specific tradition. See Jamgön Kongtrül, *The Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrül: A Gem of Many Colors*, translated by Richard Barron (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications), 124.



in Tibet during this period claiming to be authentic treasure revealers.<sup>112</sup> As such, it is clear that claims to be a treasure revealer were usually received with skepticism, and that achieving widespread recognition as a genuine treasure revealer generally required the recognition and promotion of a *tertön*'s treasures by highly respected lamas, who would write letters vouching for the authenticity of the treasure revealers or his/her teachings.<sup>113</sup>

Thus, rather than representing antagonistic or divergent communities and identities, it is clear from the available biographical and historical sources that within the Nyingma and Kagyü traditions, at least, celibate monastics and non-celibate treasure revealers and practitioners existed in a symbiotic relationship, with monastic leaders eager to tap into the charisma of great treasure revealers, who provided lay and monastic

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<sup>112</sup> The autobiography of Dudjom Lingpa contains a wealth of information and numerous fascinating discussions on the phenomenon of treasure revealers. It is clear from these discussions that those who claimed to be treasure revealers were often viewed with suspicion. For example, when Lingpa meets an old sage, the sage has this to say about Lingpa's claim to be a treasure revealer:

“Well then — some people desire women, so they say they are treasure revealers and then write down whatever comes to their minds. Some are of low standing and yearn after high stature, so they do the same. Some despair over becoming destitute and are fed up, so they do the same. Even if they become treasure revealers, what do they need a woman for? Women don't know Buddhist doctrine. Even if people like that become treasure revealers, what can high position and power do? Treasure revealers don't amass followers that way — [that's not the point of revealing treasure,] right? Even if people like that become treasure revealers, why do they lose themselves seeking payments for religious services their whole life long?”

Dudjom Lingpa, *A Clear Mirror: The Visionary Autobiography of a Tibetan Master*, translated by Chönyi Drolma (Hong Kong: Rangjung Yeshe Publications, 2011), 139.

<sup>113</sup> Kongtrül, *The Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrül: A Gem of Many Colors*, note 562. However, the authenticity of a *tertön* could be affirmed by some but rejected by others. An example of this is related in the autobiography of Ngawang Pelzang in which Pelzang relates his disagreeing with the rejection of the treasures of Rinchen Lingpa by Situ Rinpoché:

Later, when Situ Rinpoche proclaimed Rinchen Lingpa to be a false treasure revealer, I did not lose faith. It seemed to me that he was authentic. I took his unusual behavior and minor falsehoods to be part of the natural disposition of a treasure revealer, and all the words and meanings of his treasures were perfect. One cannot establish falsity merely based on the modality of a treasure-teaching. Most of the undisputed treasure-teachings of the past do contain vocabulary approximating that of the revelatory language of Nyangrel Nyima Ozer and Guru Chowang, but how can one possibly prove others to be false merely on that basis?

*Wondrous Dance of Illusion: The Autobiography of Khenpo Ngawang Palzang*, trans. Heidi L. Nevin and J. Jakob Leschley (Boston: Snow Lion, 2013), 111.

Nyingmapas with a direct connection to great figures from their glorious imperial past, which could be drawn upon as an ongoing source of revelation and renewal.<sup>114</sup> On the other hand, treasure revealers relied on monastic figures and institutions as crucial sources of authority and authentication. Given the political and economic clout of large monastic institutions, it is not hard to understand the benefits of a close relationship with such institutions for developing lines of patronage and for political protection from rivals (of which, our accounts show, treasure revealers often had many).<sup>115</sup>

We will now move on to consider the nature of “scholarship” and scholarly education in Tibet.

### 1.2.2 Scholarship, Monastic Education, and “Scholasticism” in Tibet

Shenpen Tayé is remembered in Nyingma historiography for his many path-breaking activities, foremost being his authorship of scholarly commentaries on Tibetan grammar and the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*; his role in editing and publishing the first major collection of Nyingma *kama* texts; and—perhaps most famously—his founding of the first Nyingma *shedra*, which instituted a new form of Buddhist education that developed into perhaps the most influential and widespread systems of higher Buddhist education in the world. In short, he is remembered as a Nyingma *scholar par excellence*. The few pieces of secondary scholarship on Nyingma shedras tend to describe these institutions

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<sup>114</sup> Indeed, the *terma* tradition is often referred to as the “close lineage” (*nye brgyud*), while the *kama* (*bka’ ma*) or “transmitted precepts” is referred to as the “distant lineage” (*ring brgyud*). See Dudjum Rinpoché, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History*, translated and edited by Gyurme Dorjé and Matthew Kapstein, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991), 597ff.; 739ff.

<sup>115</sup> See for example Dūdjom Lingpa’s numerous accounts in his autobiography, *A Clear Mirror: The Visionary Autobiography of a Tibetan Master*, of violent conflicts with rivals (e.g., 154), and the episode in Jamgön Kongtrül’s autobiography, *A Gem of Many Colors*, in which a jealous rival plots to have him murdered (73–4).

and their curricula as a form of “scholastic” education. Before we delve into Shenpen Tayé’s life and works continue then, we should pause to analyze and reflect upon the basic categories and understandings of “scholarship” and scholarly practice in Tibet by summarizing some of the more common emic discourses concerning scholars and scholarship in Tibet.

### 1.2.2.1 Emic Terms and Rubrics

#### **“Scholarship”**

The most common Tibetan term for “scholar(ship)” is *khepa* (*mkhas pa*), which can convey the more general meaning of “skilled” but is also used to refer to someone who is highly educated and learned. Many Tibetan figures—most famously, the great Sakya Paṇḍita Kunga Gyeltsen (*sa skya paN+Dita kun dga’ rgyal mtshan*; 1182–1251)<sup>116</sup> were heavily influenced by systems of textual learning and scholarship from India. In South Asia, the term *paṇḍita* described the highest level of scholarly achievement. In a Buddhist context, it specifically refers to one who has mastered the *five sciences* (*rig gnas chen po lnga*; Skt., *pañcavidyāsthāna*), viz.: language arts (*sgra rig pa*; *śabdavidyā*), logic (*gtan tshig rig pa*; *hetuvidyā*), medicine (*go ba rig pa*; *cikitsāvidyā*), arts and crafts (*bzo rig pa*; *śilakarmasthānavidyā*), and “inner science” or Buddhist doctrine (*nang don rig pa*; *adhyātmavidyā*).<sup>117</sup> The impact of this rubric of the five sciences on today’s shedras is evident in the name of perhaps the largest shedra in the

<sup>116</sup> Sakya Paṇḍita is was the fourth of the Five Patriarchs of the Sakya school, and was, as his name suggests, renowned for his embrace of classical Indian learning.

<sup>117</sup> The *locus classicus* of this five-fold rubric is the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* (ch. XI, verse 60). Leonard van der Kuijp, “Tibetan Belles-Lettres: The Influence of Daṇḍin and Kṣemendra,” in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, 393–410, (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1996), 393.

world today: The Five Sciences Buddhist Academy at Larung Gar in Eastern Tibet.

Shenpen Tayé himself was known to define and characterize scholarship as mastery of these *five sciences* as well.<sup>118</sup> What the *five sciences* rubric shows us is that it wasn't enough for a Buddhist scholar to master Buddhist doctrine, he—and until very recently, it was always *he*—must also master a range of worldly subjects such as medicine, grammar and language arts, arts and crafts, and so forth. *Khe* (*mkhas*) is sometimes paired with its counterpart *drup* (*grub*; Skt., *siddha/siddhi*), “accomplished”—usually in the sense of tantric practice. Thus, the term, *khedrup* (*mkhas grub*) describes the ideal Buddhist master—one who is both learned *and* spiritually accomplished.

### ***Hearing, Thinking, and Meditative Cultivation (thos bsam sgom gsum)***

The methods of actually *studying* and *learning* these subjects are commonly presented as a matter of developing *discriminative wisdom* (*shes rab*; *prajñā*) through the three successive practices of *listening* (*thos*; Skt. *śruta*), *thinking* (*bsam*; Skt., *cintā*), and *meditative cultivation* (*sgom*; *bhāvanā*). This three-fold rubric is discussed in a number of classic Indian Buddhist texts<sup>119</sup> where these three are presented as successive stages. In the first stage one listens to the Buddhist teachings, which includes reading and/or memorizing Buddhist scriptures and/or listening to Buddhist teachings and explanations. Upon hearing these teachings or scriptures, one engages in thoughtful analysis about their details and import. Analysis is often accompanied and aided by formal scholarly practices

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<sup>118</sup> Such as in his work, *Response to the Questions of Kongpo Drogön* (*kong po 'gro mgon gyis dris lan yod lags*), described in chapter six below.

<sup>119</sup> For example, Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya*, Chapter VI, verse 5(a–b). See Marc-Henri Deroche, “Mindful Wisdom: The Path Integrating Memory, Judgment, and Attention,” *Asian Philosophy*, 31:1, (2021): 19-32, 21.

such as dialectical debate and/or giving cursory explanations or glosses of what one has heard. Subsequently, once some measure of deeper understanding has been reached, one *meditates* on the meaning in order to cultivate and stabilize one's understanding.

***Exposition, Debate, and Composition ('chad rtsod rtsom gsum)***

Another classic three-fold rubric of Buddhist scholarship is that of scholarly presentation comprised of the triad of *exposition* ('chad), *debate* (rtsod), and *composition* (rtsom). Exposition or explanation ('chad pa)<sup>120</sup> covers a wide variety of practices ranging from formal textual commentary to more informal explanations of the scriptures. Sakya Paṇḍita in his *Entrance Gate for the Wise* (*mkhas pa la 'jug pa'i sgo*) defines the category of exposition mostly in terms of the various functions of formal textual commentary, such as glossing, summarizing, and so forth.<sup>121</sup> The practices of exposition are also understood to encompass more informal methods of explanation such as thematic summaries and homiletics.<sup>122</sup> Tibetan practices of formal debate were derived from established practices of doctrinal contestation developed in India. The specific procedures have been described elsewhere<sup>123</sup> and since Shenpen Tayé does not seem to have practiced formal debate, I will move on to the last of the triad.

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<sup>120</sup> *bshad pa* (which makes up the *shé* (*bshad*) in *shedra*) is the past and future form of the verb 'chad pa.

<sup>121</sup> See David P. Jackson, *The Entrance Gate for the Wise (Section III): Sa-skya Paṇḍita on Indian and Tibetan Traditions of Pramāṇa and Philosophical Debate*. 2 vols. Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, Heft 17 (I–II). Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, 1987, 195–196.

<sup>122</sup> Dreyfus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Buddhist Monk*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003, 185.

<sup>123</sup> For a basic schematic outline of Tibetan formal debate procedures, see Jackson, *The Entrance Gate for the Wise (Section III)*, 196–199. For a more in-depth study of the various roles of debate in Tibetan scholarly practice, see Dreyfus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping*, chapters 10–12.

Sayka Paṇḍita divides up the art of composition into the twin studies of grammar and *belles-lettres* or poetics, the former comprising the study of lexicography, morphology, syntax, and word classes, and the latter comprising the study of the artful ornamenting of language through prosody, alliteration, allusion, metaphor, and so forth. Tibetan systems of formal grammar are based on the pair of root grammar texts<sup>124</sup> composed by the great imperial translator and litterateur Thonmi Sambhota (c. 7<sup>th</sup> cent.). Shenpen Tayé wrote a hugely influential word-for-word commentary on these two treatises and we will say more about these root grammar texts in chapter four below. In addition to studying *Tibetan* grammar, it was not uncommon for Tibetans with scholarly ambitions to also make a study of Sanskrit grammar. As we shall see, knowledge of Sanskrit grammar was a requirement for editing and correcting editions of Indian Buddhist texts in translation. Although biographical treatments of Shenpen Tayé do not specifically mention that he studied Sanskrit grammar, his position as the head editor of the nine-volume collection of *kama* texts published at Dzokchen in 1845 strongly suggests that he had facility with Sanskrit grammar and orthography.

The other major field of knowledge that needed to be studied to be proficient in composition was *belles-lettres* or poetics (*snyan ngag*; Skt., *kāvya*).<sup>125</sup> Again, the formal study of poetics in Tibet was derived from classical Indian treatises such as Daṇḍin’s

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<sup>124</sup> *Root Text on Grammar in Thirty Verses* (*lung ston pa rtsa ba sum cu pa*), and *Introduction to Grammar* (*lung du ston pa rtag gi ’jug pa*).

<sup>125</sup> Leonard van der Kuijp refers to this field as *belles-lettres*, which seems to be probably the best translation of *kāvya* (*snyan ngag*), although the term “poetics” also works so long as the reader is clear that it does not refer to only poetry, but also prose and mixed prose and verse. See van der Kuijp, “Tibetan Belles-Lettres: The Influence of Daṇḍin and Kṣemendra,” in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, 393–410, (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1996).

*Kāvyaḍarśa*. The field of *kāvya* was concerned with the “artful ornamentation” (*don rgyan*; Skt., *arthālamkāra*) of language as a way to elicit particular aesthetic and emotional responses in the reader or listener. These methods of “artful ornamentation” include simile (*upamā*), metaphor (*rūpaka*), and recurrence (*āvṛtti*), among others.<sup>126</sup> As we will see in our chapter on Shenpen Tayé’s literary corpus below, Shenpen Tayé’s works are filled with a variety of “artful ornamentations,” such as acrostic verse (*ka rtsom*), humorous repetition, and so forth.

### ***Encoding and Recoding the Dharma***

In thinking about how these two triads—thinking-hearing-meditating, and exposition-debate-composition relate to one another, we might follow Jonathan Gold<sup>127</sup> in examining these two rubrics using Stuart Hall’s theory of linguistic *decoding-encoding*.<sup>128</sup> Hall expanded on Saussure’s basic linear model of communication<sup>129</sup> by positing a cycle of meaning-making involving the *production, circulation, use, and reproduction* of “discursive products.” These four steps represent a series of linked yet autonomous processes, in which meaning is *encoded* and *decoded* as part of a system of shared cultural codes. In Hall’s formula, *production* is the process by which an idea, event, etc. is encoded into a “product” that is presented in a particular medium. The product is then *circulated* through the channels of its particular medium (such as print,

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<sup>126</sup> For Sayka Paṇḍita’s glossing of these methods as discussed in the *Kāvyaḍarśa*, see Jackson, *The Entrance Gate for the Wise (Section III)*, 193–194.

<sup>127</sup> Jonathan Gold, *The Dharma’s Gatekeepers: Sakya Paṇḍita on Buddhist Scholarship in Tibet* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007), 31, 94

<sup>128</sup> See Stuart Hall, *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse* (Birmingham, UK: Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, 1973).

<sup>129</sup> I.e., in which meaning arises in the process of a message being sent by a sender to a receiver.

broadcast, public oration, and so forth). An audience then *uses* the product to produce meaning—and not *necessarily* the meaning that was encoded in its production—by decoding the product through learned practices of comprehension and interpretation such that the product comes to have meaning for the recipient. Finally, if the interpreted product was experienced as meaningful by the receiver, it will usually be *reproduced*—in whole (e.g., sharing a song with others) or in part (e.g., quoting from famous literary works)—and will affect their actions and behavior to some degree.

Using Hall's framework, we can say that the Buddha's realization or *intention* (*dgongs*) was linguistically encoded to *produce* authoritative Buddhist texts in order to pass down and preserve (i.e., *circulate*) the Dharma. Students wanting to make *use* of these authoritative texts in order to gain access the meaning or import of the Buddha's realization must *decode* the linguistically encoded scriptures through the practices of listening, thinking, and meditation. Students then *reproduce* the meanings derived from these texts through exposition, debate, and composition, all of which, in different ways, *recode* one's understanding of the Buddha's realization in order to make it accessible and/or meaningful to a particular audience. The students may also change their own behavior and habits in order to *reproduce* some measure of the Buddha's realization in their own lives.

Jonathan Gold makes the point that for Sakya Paṇḍita, the *decoding* practices of hearing-thinking-meditation and the *recoding* practices of exposition-debate-composition are simultaneous and reciprocal. The practices of exposition, debate, and composition—in which one synthesizes and presents the doctrines that one has learned—are vital tools



for learning and internalizing those doctrines in the first place. As Gold puts it, “*there is no decoding without recoding*. This makes for an inseparable unity of the dharma’s form and content.”<sup>130</sup> As we will see in the study that follows, this entanglement of scholarly *decoding* and *recoding*—of *doing* scholarship as a way of learning—was a central component of Shenpen Tayé’s model of Buddhist learning and Buddhist teaching.

### 1.2.2.2 Exposition, Debate, and Composition in Tibetan Monastic Education

Most forms of formal monastic scholarly training in Tibet have been anchored by one or more of the scholarly practices of exposition, debate, and composition. In the section below, I will present and analyze two of the most highly influential forms of monastic education that existed prior to the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: that of the “three seats” of the Geluk sect and the system developed by Terdak Lingpa and Lochen Dharmaśrī at the Nyingma monastic center of Mindröling. As we will see, both of these systems emphasize different members of the triad, with the result that they tended to produce very different kinds of scholars.

#### **1.2.2.2.1 Monastic Training in the Geluk “Three Seats”**

When Shenpen Tayé gave his first set of shedra teachings in 1828, the dominant form of scholarly training in Tibet was that of the Geluk sect. The Geluk system of higher monastic education was concentrated around the colleges at the sect’s *three seats* (*gdan gsum*) in Central Tibet: Sera (se ra), Drepung (‘bras spungs), and Ganden (dga’ ldan). Each of these “seats” had multiple colleges—called *dratsang* (*grwa tshang*)—each with

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<sup>130</sup> Gold, *The Dharma’s Gatekeepers*, 94 (original emphasis).

their own college-specific textbooks and institutional cultures. The overall curriculum of the colleges was similar, however. The preliminary studies involved immersion in the categories and procedures of formal debate through study of college-specific manuals on: *collected topics (bsdus grwa)*, *typologies of mind (blo rigs)*, and *typologies of evidence (rtags rigs)*. During this preliminary phase, students often studied overviews of Buddhist doxography (*grub mtha'*; Skt., *siddhānta*), and the Buddhist *paths* and *stages (sa lam)*. The central exoteric curriculum was/is based around the study of five “root” Indian texts, which are studied in two groups. The first group is comprised of Maitreya/Asaṅga’s *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, Dharmakīrti’s *Pramāṇavārttika*, and Candrakīrti’s *Madhyamakāvatāra* and typically takes six to ten years of study.<sup>131</sup> The second phase involves study of Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośa*, and Guṇaprabha’s *Vinayasūtra*, which are studied for four to eight years.

The methods of study center around the core practices of *memorization (blo 'dzin)* of the root texts, listening to *oral explanations (dpe khrid)* given by a teacher, *reading* and *self-study (dpe klog rgyab pa dang rang sbyong byed pa)*, and *formal debate (rtsod pa)*.<sup>132</sup> Of these methods, the focus of Geluk monastic education has been on formal debate, which was practiced for up to ten hours per day in pre-1959 Tibet.<sup>133</sup> In addition to utilizing debate as the primary pedagogical method, it was also the principal method of examination, culminating with the final formal debate that took place at Lhasa’s Jokhang temple during the time of the Great Prayer Festival (*smon lam chen mo*) following the

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<sup>131</sup> Dreyfus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping*, 113.

<sup>132</sup> Jose Cabezón and Penpa Dorjee, *Sera Monastery* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2019), 223.

<sup>133</sup> Dreyfus, “Where Do Commentarial Schools Come From?” 285.

Tibetan New Year. During these final debates, the candidates that had passed all the earlier debating exams at their home institutions would be examined by some of the most renowned Geluk monastic scholars over the course of a day.<sup>134</sup> Those who could hold their own without making mistakes or becoming confused would receive the title of Geshe Lharampa (*lha ram pa'i dge bshes*)—the highest designation among Geluk scholars. The study of tantric texts and topics is generally either done informally, through lessons outside of class with a teacher, or subsequent to the completion of the monastic curriculum at one of the Geluk tantric colleges.

This brief summary of the Geluk system of monastic education shows how central debate was—and *is*—in Geluk monastic pedagogy. Although it seems to have been the case that students at Geluk colleges sometimes engaged in exposition (*'chad pa*) to some degree, it was mostly in the context of more informal interactions, involving questions and answers with students and their teacher or tutor. What we see virtually nothing of in the training of the Geluk *three seats* during Shenpen Tayé's time, is *composition* (*rtsom*). In fact, training in composition and the literary arts, such as grammar, orthography, and penmanship, was almost unheard of at the Gelukpa training centers of Central Tibet after the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Cabzón and Dorjee note that the disappearance of writing from the main Gelukpa seats in Central Tibet coincided with the rise of the Geshe degree at these institutions.<sup>135</sup> As we noted above, the study and examinations leading to the Geshe degree was based around memorization and formal debate, and involved no actual

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<sup>134</sup> See Dreyfus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping*, 257–260.

<sup>135</sup> *Sera Monastery*, 224.

writing or composition whatsoever. Whatever the reasons for their eschewing compositional skills, Gelukpas trained in Central Tibet, “were (and are) notorious for their poor penmanship, grammar, and orthography.”<sup>136</sup>

#### 1.2.2.2 *Mindröling’s Early Curriculum*

Under its founders, Terdak Lingpa Gyurmé Dorjé (gter dag gling pa ‘gyur med rdo rje; 1646–1714) and Lochen Dharmaśrī, the great Central Tibetan Nyingma monastery of Mindröling (smin grol gling) founded a highly prestigious monastic college that trained monks as well as the scions of the lay aristocracy in Central Tibet. Fortunately, we have a record of the formal curriculum at Mindröling’s *Dharma college* (*chödra; chos grwa*) during the peak of Mindröling’s power prior to its destruction in 1717 by the Dzunkar Mongol purges. The curriculum is detailed in a *chayik* (*bca’ yig*), drafted in 1689 by Terdak Lingpa and revised in 1708 by Lochen Dharmaśrī, which was then published in xylograph in 1717.<sup>137</sup> The curriculum as detailed in the *chayik* is intended only for monastics and there is no mention of the particulars of study for other students such as the lay aristocrats who also studied there.<sup>138</sup> The course of study for monks began with a set of basic, core subjects comprised of: 1) *Language arts*, which served as the basic foundation of studies for all pupils, and included grammar, memorizing words, receiving pointing-out instructions, hearing commentaries, and the

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<sup>136</sup> *Sera Monastery*, 224.

<sup>137</sup> bstan pa’i sgron me, *O rgyan smin grol gling gi dkar chag* (Ziling: Krung go’i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1992). For a detailed description and analysis of Mindröling’s *chayik*, see Townsend, “Materials of Buddhist Culture: Aesthetics and Cosmopolitanism at Mindroling Monastery.” Ph.D. diss. Columbia University, 2012, 193–200.

<sup>138</sup> Townsend, “Materials of Buddhist Culture,” 200.

practice of exegesis of texts from the Mindröling tradition.<sup>139</sup> 2) Introduction to the *fields of arts and sciences* (*rikné*; *rigs gnas*),<sup>140</sup> which focused on the fundamental techniques of Buddhist rituals.<sup>141</sup> 3) Study of the *three vows* (*sdom gsum*), and, particularly, the study of the traditions of the first three (non-esoteric) vehicles (Hearers, Solitary Realizers, and Bodhisattvas) as distinct from Vajrayana.

In addition to the foundational topics listed above, the *chayik* lists **elective courses** in topics such as musical notation, advanced grammar, special ritual offerings, maṇḍala construction, and ritual dancing, which a student could take based on their personal inclinations.<sup>142</sup> The allowance for different approaches and courses of study based on the inclinations and aptitudes of individual students is a notable feature of Mindröling's curriculum<sup>143</sup> and is in contradistinction to the standardized single-stream curricula of the Geluk colleges.

The curriculum also mandated that students adopt a daily study practice, cultivate physical discipline, and be clear about what should be done and what should be avoided. Those students who successfully completed the basic foundational education and examinations and had the requisite vows and initiations could then engage in meditation and solitary retreat.<sup>144</sup> Terdak Lingpa's curriculum gives several choices of which text(s)

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<sup>139</sup> Townsend "Materials of Buddhist Culture," 205. Townsend engages in a detailed discussion on the place of *writing* in the Mindröling system of education vis-a-vis Geluk education on pp. 189–93.

<sup>140</sup> Townsend ("Materials of Buddhist Culture,") describes *rikné* and its place in Mindoling's curriculum in more detail on pp. 187–9. For a list of *rikné*, see [https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Ten\\_sciences](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Ten_sciences).

<sup>141</sup> Townsend, "Materials of Buddhist Culture," 205. Although it is clear that these topics are introduced subsequent to study of the literary arts, Townsend's presentation leaves it unclear in exactly which order these secondary topics are introduced and studied.

<sup>142</sup> Townsend "Materials of Buddhist Culture," 206.

<sup>143</sup> For a discussion of this feature of the curriculum, see Townsend "Materials of Buddhist Culture," 200.

<sup>144</sup> Townsend "Materials of Buddhist Culture," 209.

would be used as the focus of meditation, with exact practice being selected based on the advice of the teacher, who would take into account the student's previous meditation experiences.<sup>145</sup> This advanced level of esoteric practice unfolded over a number of successive stages. First came the practice of the *generation stage* (*kyerim*; *bskyed rim*), comprised of six months of recitation practice on a personal *yidam* deity<sup>146</sup> followed by the practice of the twenty-eight samayas of Mahāyoga (*dam tshig nyer brgyad*). Finally, as part of the *completion stage* (*dzokrim*; *rdzogs rim*), students were advised to engage in whichever of the practices are suitable for their personal experience, choosing from one of two Heart Essence teachings (*snying thig rnam gnyis*) central to the Mindröling tradition: the Vajra Bridge teachings (*rdo rje zam pa*) or Terdak Lingpa's New Treasures (*gter gsar*).<sup>147</sup> Mindröling's *chayik* prescribed that the study year at Mindröling be divided into four seasonal units: winter and summer sessions being devoted to the study of tantric texts (primarily the *Guhyagarbha*), while spring and fall sessions focused on the different categories of vows as well as "textual commentaries, oral instructions, and recitation practices assigned to each individual."<sup>148</sup>

In regard to examinations, Mindröling's *chayik* relates that over the first few years of study, a student would be required to undergo three stages of examinations, which were required in order for a student to move on to the next field of study.<sup>149</sup> Although the

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<sup>145</sup> Townsend "Materials of Buddhist Culture," 206; 208–209.

<sup>146</sup> The *chayik* stipulates the following cycles as the basis for the *yidam* deity meditation: Practices related to peaceful and wrathful deities; Avalokiteśvara (*thugs rje chen po*); the *Magical Net* (*sgyu 'phrul*); the *Eight Sādhana teaching* (*bka' brgyad*); Vajrakīla (*phur pa*); Yamāntaka (*gshin rje gshed*).

<sup>147</sup> Townsend "Materials of Buddhist Culture," 209.

<sup>148</sup> Townsend "Materials of Buddhist Culture," 207.

<sup>149</sup> *O rgyan smin grol gling gi dkar chag*, 287.

specific format of the examination is not mentioned, the *chayik* uses the term *rgyugs*, which carries the sense of an oral exam where a teacher queries the student on various topics and the student must reply satisfactorily—which is not the same as the formal debating used at Geluk institutions.

In addition to the above curriculum designed for monastics, Mindröling was considered the “pinnacle of high culture among the Tibetan nobility” during its heyday around the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>150</sup> and thus became the preferred center of higher education for lay aristocrats—particularly those who sought careers as bureaucrats in the Ganden Podrang government. Such positions required expertise in the literary arts—particularly grammar, composition, and penmanship—areas of training at which Mindröling excelled, in contradistinction to the Geluk colleges where these subjects—and study by the laity—were generally not available. These lay students typically studied at Mindröling for two to four years, and most, if not all, of them would have already had a high degree of literacy upon their arrival at Mindröling, having received training in reading, spelling, grammar, and composition through private tutoring in the home or at one of Lhasa’s private schools.<sup>151</sup>

In addition to improving their facility in the literary arts, Mindröling functioned as a kind of finishing school for these young aristocrats. Mindröling’s curriculum for both monastics and lay persons emphasized developing proper discipline and comportment<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Townsend “Materials of Buddhist Culture,” 171.

<sup>151</sup> Dreyfus lists a number of private schools in Lhasa that focused on training in literacy and the literary arts, including, Nangrosha (*nang rong shag*) and Khangsar (*khang gsar*). *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping*, 82–83.

<sup>152</sup> I discuss this issue of cultivating a proper monastic *habitus* in chapter six below.

and Mindröling’s *chayik* details punishments for breaking specific rules—of which there were many. Through such methods, Mindröling’s lay aristocratic students were initiated into a *habitus* of restraint and scholarly nobility, which served to cement and naturalize both their own status as cultural and political elites, and the elite status of Mindröling as the *alma mater* of so many members of this elite.<sup>153</sup> This issue of how elite educational institutions function as “sites of consecration” for cultural and political elites will be discussed in more detail in chapter six below.

Comparing the curricula of the Geluk three seats and of Mindröling, reveals fundamental differences in both the content and the pedagogies of these institutions. With regard to the triad of hearing-thinking-and meditation, we could say that both systems engage all three but the Geluk system, with its focus on memorization of root texts, analysis of layers of formal commentary, and formal debate, seems to focus more on the first two (hearing and thinking), while the Mindröling system with its more expansive “five sciences” orientation and extensive tantric deities practices, probably focuses more evenly on all three, with perhaps a slight emphasis on meditative cultivation. With respect to the three-fold methods of scholarly presentation—exposition, debate, and composition—we see that the Geluk colleges focused primarily on debate, with some engagement with exposition,<sup>154</sup> and wholly eschewed composition. Mindröling’s

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<sup>153</sup> Townsend, “Materials of Buddhist Culture,” 204.

<sup>154</sup> Geluk education immerses its students in exposition in the form of scholastic commentaries on their root texts, institutional textbooks (*yig cha*), and explanatory lectures delivered by their teachers. Most of this exposure is passive however, with relatively little emphasis on practicing developing one’s own expository skills outside the debating ground.



curriculum, on the other hand, emphasizes exposition and composition, with little to no mention of formal debating in the curriculum.

### **1.2.2.3      *Scholasticism as an Interpretive Category***

Our brief analysis of these two Tibetan monastic educational systems highlights the fact that Tibetan formal systems of Buddhist scholarship and education have varied quite substantially from one institution to another and across time, and reflects the wide range of possible forms that Tibetan “scholasticism” can take, and, indeed, *has* taken. There exists a large and growing body of scholarly literature written on the issue of using scholasticism as a cross-cultural interpretive category. Rather than recapitulating these discussions here, I will direct the reader to the relevant works and passages footnoted below.<sup>155</sup> For my purposes, I do believe that the category of scholasticism has utility in highlighting a cluster of distinctive practices and orientations within the literary and religious cultures of Tibet.

#### **1.2.2.3.1      *A Working Definition of “Scholasticism” in Tibet***

As such, I use the terms “scholastic” and “scholasticism” in relation to Tibetan religious practice, to refer to *formal, received systems of textual practice, in which*

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<sup>155</sup> My understandings of “scholasticism” in a Tibetan context have been deeply informed by Georges Dreyfus’ groundbreaking monograph on Tibetan monastic education (*The Sound of Two Hands Clapping*, 2003), in which he engages in extended discussions surrounding various aspects of “scholarship” and “scholasticism” in Tibet. Jose Cabezón’s classic comparative study on Indo-Tibetan scholastic practice (*Buddhism and Language*, 1994) engages in a detailed and nuanced discussion of (among other topics) the relative utility of “scholasticism” as an interpretive category, and the possibility of developing a cross-cultural, comparative approach to studying practices of religious scholarship. I have also been greatly influenced and inspired by Jan Ronis’ (“Celibacy, Revelations, and Reincarnated Lamas,” 2009) and Sullivan’s (“The Mother of All Monasteries,” 2015) recent dissertations, which both profitably utilize Cabezón and Dreyfus’ insights and categories to study and illuminate practices of scholarship in Tibetan monastic communities.

*rational, exoteric systems of language, logic, and evidence are utilized to organize, read, interpret, and explicate a prescribed body of uniquely authoritative texts, and to justify and expand upon these interpretations and explications.*

Scholastic systems and methods are necessarily *formal* and *received* in that both their constituent methods and practices, and the channels through which these practices are learned, practiced, and transmitted, are carefully prescribed and governed by discursive and institutional structures, whose authority stems from their adherence—both rhetorically and substantively—to a body of received “tradition.” In such a system, the main imperative is gaining deep familiarity with a core body of prescribed texts and learning to deploy the formal methods for engaging with and explicating these texts.

Scholastic systems *utilize rational, exoteric systems of language, logic, and evidence*. Although the primary *subjects* of scholastic study are often religious and even esoteric in nature, the *methods* used to explicate these subjects and justify these explications are drawn from a shared body of linguistic conventions and standards of evidence and argumentation. Although these scholastic methods are highly formalized and complex, they are not esoteric, in the sense that they operate on a shared, exoteric level of language and deploy empirical modes of “philosophical” reasoning, disputation, and logic that are shared across the various sectarian and religious traditions in the society. Conversely, although scholastic practice may be brought to bear on explicating the meaning, function, or even efficacy, of a spell, mantra, or magical incantation, the *use* of such incantations, even in highly structured environment of textual authority, would not be considered scholastic, nor would an institution or community that is primarily

dedicated to such practice be considered so. This is *not* to say that esoteric practice is incompatible with scholasticism—far from it. Many if not most scholastic communities engage in extensive ritual and esoteric practices as an adjunct or compliment to scholastic practice. But it is important to make the point that such esoteric practices are not themselves scholastic in nature because they do not operate under the everyday, exoteric understandings of language and logic.

Scholastic practice seeks to organize, read, interpret, explicate, justify, and expand upon, *a prescribed body of uniquely authoritative texts*. This “prescribed body” is usually centered on a core text or body of texts, the explication of which is the *raison d’être* for the scholastic system. The study of philosophy and religious doctrine in South Asia and Tibet has typically been grounded in study of foundational, “root” texts, which are explicated and expanded upon by a series of nested commentaries that unpack and expand upon its meaning and import. In such commentarial traditions, the core or root text functions not only as the *central* text of the tradition, but, more importantly, as the *formative* text of the tradition in that the tradition evolves and develops *through the practice of explicating and commenting* upon this core text.<sup>156</sup> Such formative texts develop a *uniquely authoritative* status as the definitive text on a given topic or set of topics, whereas the *attached bodies of commentarial literature* may only be considered authoritative by *some* adherents.<sup>157</sup> It is common in Indian and Tibetan scholastic

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<sup>156</sup> Moshe Halbertal describes a “formative” text as “one in which progress in the field is made through interpretation of the text itself. A text-centered culture that has formative texts proceeds in that mode; its achievements are interpretive.” Moshe Halbertal, *People of the Book: Canon, Meaning, and Authority*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 94.

<sup>157</sup> For example, virtually all Nyingmapas venerate the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* as the core scripture of Mahāyoga, whereas Nyingma scholars differ as to which of the classic commentaries on the *Guhyagarbha*

traditions for these formative, “root” texts to be composed—at least ostensibly—as inquiries or commentaries on another, deeper layer of texts—such as a particular canonical scripture.<sup>158</sup> In some cases, one or more of the classic commentaries on a root text may over time come to eclipse the authority of the root text that it comments upon, becoming a formative text in its own right.<sup>159</sup> In addition to the core, formative text(s) and their associated commentarial literature, scholastic traditions also typically study, transmit, and venerate *bodies of supporting reference works*. These reference works include lexicons, grammars, and treatises on such topics as poetics and composition and are sometimes taken as formative texts themselves upon which levels of commentary are composed.<sup>160</sup>

Scholastic practice involves *organizing, reading, interpreting, explicating, justifying, and expanding upon* this body of foundational, commentarial, and reference texts, and upon the methods themselves. One of the main functions and goals of scholastic practice is to *organize* and categorize texts and doctrines in order to understand their mutual relations and how to properly read and understand them in relation to each other. Such organization usually falls under the rubric of doxography—the (often hierarchical) organizing of various doctrines in relation to specific texts and teachings

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are most accurate and authoritative at explicating the true meaning of the *tantra*. It often is the case that the author of such root texts also wrote and attached an autocommentary, which very often is viewed as an extension of the root text and accorded an equal status and authority.

<sup>158</sup> As for example, Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* was seemingly composed to comment upon and systematize the soteriology of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*, particularly in relation to the core Buddhist doctrines of dependent arising and emptiness. See Jan Westerhoff, *The Golden Age of Indian Buddhist Philosophy* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018), 105.

<sup>159</sup> For example Dharmakīrti’s *Pramāṇavarttika*, which is one of the five core texts of Geluk monastic education was originally written as a commentary on Dignāga’s *Pramāṇasamuccaya*.

<sup>160</sup> As was the case with the grammar treatises upon which Shenpen Tayé composed his famous commentaries.

such as to clarify how to read one's texts and which doctrines take precedence over others.<sup>161</sup> Another more tangible form of organization is the division of texts into collections, anthologies, classes, and sometimes, into chapters and verses.<sup>162</sup>

Secondly, scholasticism involves formal practices of *reading*. Although “reading” connotes a whole universe of interpretive practices, here we can understand it as referring more basically to the act of bringing words composed in the past by others into the present through such practices as viewing the visual markings of written language, hearing an oral recitation of a text, or reciting or bringing to mind a text from memory. Here we can understand *reading* as being commensurate with the Buddhist category of *hearing* in the three-fold rubric of Buddhist study.

Thirdly, scholastic practice is dedicated to properly *interpreting* one's readings of these texts. Such interpretation requires that the reader develop a broad familiarity with the type of literature being encountered and become attuned to its grammatical, syntactic, and rhetorical structures and patterns. In Stuart Hall's model of encoding-decoding, interpretation involves the decoding of the written word and a progressively deeper engagement with the various levels of meaning and messaging that arise in the interaction between reading and text. Interpretation can be understood as an ongoing series of encounters with a text leading to deepening familiarity and understanding.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> In Tibet, such doxographies are constructed directly in the genre of “established tenets” (*drubtha*; *grub mtha*) and indirectly in the genre of “history of the Dharma” (*chöjung*; *chos 'byung*)

<sup>162</sup> As for example, with the Bible, which did not have chapter and verse divisions until a series of medieval figures—most notably, Cardinal Stephen Langton (1150–1228)—divided the books of Bible into its current format with numbered chapters and verses. Such division allowed for quick and efficient citation and aided memorization, allowing scholastics to “quote chapter and verse” in their debates and commentaries.

<sup>163</sup> As in Gadamer's conception of the “hermeneutic circle.” Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*. 2nd rev. edition, trans. J. Weinsheimer and D. G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 2004).

Fourthly, scholastic practice involves producing *explications* of the source texts under study. Here, the focus shifts from *decoding* the text to *recoding* the meaning of the source text. explication can take the form of an explanatory lecture (*shepa*; *bshad pa*; Skt., *vyākhyā*; Latin: *lectio*) or of more formal textual commentary (*drelwa*; ‘*grel ba*; Skt., *ṭika*, *vr̥ttih*). We will discuss the varieties of Tibetan scholastic commentary in more detail in chapter three.

This brings us to the key scholastic practice of *justification*. All of the scholastic practices we have discussed up until now can, and have, been dismissed as superfluous and unnecessary by those who practice and advocate for a non-discursive, experiential approach to spiritual liberation. Although scholastic figures in Tibet and elsewhere have long penned erudite rebuttals of these dismissals, most Tibetan Buddhist traditions tend to accept that spiritual liberation is (at least theoretically) possible without formal study for those rare practitioners of extremely high capacity. Indeed, many practice streams within Tibetan Buddhism advocate for the non-intellectual path as the *preferred* path to liberation and spurn the very idea that scholastic proficiency is required—or even *beneficial*—in pursuing spiritual liberation.<sup>164</sup> However, there is at least one important area of religious life where the scholastic method *is* clearly necessary: explaining and defending the practices and tenets of one’s tradition to outsiders. Anne Klein notes that “while unlanguage processes may suffice to bring about the desired goal for those already inside a community of belief, *they leave one vulnerable to the language of*

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<sup>164</sup> A classic example of this dichotomy can be seen in the life story of Milarepa, whose hermetic asceticism is contrasted with a series of grand, educated lamas who are nonetheless enmeshed in worldly concerns and far less spiritually developed.

*outsiders*.”<sup>165</sup> Thus, even for practice traditions that were not scholastically oriented, there would have existed an imperative to develop systematic presentations justifying the main tenets, practices, and general efficacy of one’s system, which, in order to be effective, would necessarily have to use the shared systems of terminology and reasoning utilized by the wider Buddhist tradition. In Tibet, the main practice of scholastic justification was formal debate (*rtsod pa*). We also see doctrinal justification in a range of Tibetan literary genres such as that of *rebuttal* (*dgag lan*) and *response to queries* (*dris lan*).

Finally, we also need to include under the rubric of scholasticism the imperative to not simply explicate or justify the meaning of an authoritative text, but to elaborate and *expand upon* that meaning. This imperative often manifests itself in the composition of large synthetic treatises that synthesize multiple source texts and doctrines. Some examples of this are the *Treasuries* of Longchenpa and Tsongkhapa’s *Stages on the Path* (*lam rim*) treatises.

### **1.2.2.3.2      *The Scholastic Tension Between Reason and Authority***

A sharp reader will have noticed that scholastic practice, as it has been defined above, involves a inborn tension between empirical reason and received authority. The critical turn of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century emphasized that way that all practices of meaning-making take place in environments of authority of some kind, and this is particularly true of scholastic practices—and of religious practice more generally. All scholastic

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<sup>165</sup> Anne Carolyn Klein, *Unbounded Wholeness: Dzogchen, Bon, and the Logic of the Nonconceptual* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) 14, cf. 41.

practices—such as the Tibetan scholarly practices of exposition, debate, and composition—are always mediated by dominant or hegemonic codes *qua* “tradition.”

Stuart Hall echoes this fact when he states that:

There remains a dominant cultural order, though it is neither univocal nor contested. [. . .] We may say, then, that the different areas of social life appear to be mapped out into connotative domains of *dominant or preferred meaning*. [. . .] We say *dominant*, not ‘determined,’ because it is always possible to order, classify, assign and decode an event within more than one ‘mapping.’ But we say ‘dominant’ because there exist a pattern of ‘preferred readings,’ and these mappings both have the institutional/political/ideological order imprinted in them, and have themselves become institutionalized.<sup>166</sup>

Hall’s words quite aptly describe the way that authority functions in a “scholastic” environment. Because such environments rely upon shared practices of logic, evidence, and reason, the tradition cannot simply assert its authority through fiat or *diktat*. It must assert its authority through more subtle means—means that we will look at in detail shortly.

As we will see in chapter four below, Shenpen Tayé developed a new educational model that came to be called a *shedra* (*bshad grwa*). The *shedra* model took a very different approach to Buddhist scholarly education than that of the dominant Gelukpas, focusing not on debate but on training students to provide cogent, synthetic *explanations* (*shepa*; *bshad pa*) on a wide range of Buddhist doctrines, texts, themes, and so forth. Both the pedagogy and the examination methods of the *shedra* utilized this central practice of synthetic explanation. However, if we look for the presence of formal debate at Shenpen

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<sup>166</sup> Stuart Hall, *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse*, 13–14.



Tayé’s early shedra, we find no evidence of any such practice at all.<sup>167</sup> Indeed, it seems that formal debate was not practiced at all at Śrī Siṃha under either Shenpen Tayé or his immediate successors. With regard to composition, although there doesn’t seem to have been as much focus on the literary arts at Śrī Siṃha as there was at Mindröling under Terday Lingpa and Lochen Dharmasrī, the inclusion of formal grammar study and the pedagogical focus on explanation, in tandem with the prodigious literary production of many of Śrī Siṃha’s early alumni—such as Mipham Gyatso and Dza Patrül—suggests that Shenpen Tayé’s singular focus on explanation did not hinder or preclude the development of compositional skills among Shenpen Tayé and his milieu, but instead encouraged and facilitated compositional skills and literary production.

### 1.2.3 Gradualism, Ethics, and Social Responsibility: Shenpen Tayé’s Vision of Buddhist Transformation

Shenpen Tayé’s overall orientation to Buddhist practice was one that emphasized the gradual cultivation of successive levels of spiritual practice culminating in the achievement of Buddhahood in this very life. In his writings, Shenpen Tayé often deployed the rubric of the *three trainings* (*bslab pa gsum*; Skt., *trīśikṣā*), which served as the basic model for the kind of gradual cultivation that he sought to teach and encourage in others. The *three trainings* are a foundational Buddhist rubric found throughout the Buddhist world,<sup>168</sup> and comprise training in: *higher ethics* (*lhag pa tshul ‘khrims*; Skt.,

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<sup>167</sup> Today’s Nyingma shedras typically include some element of formal debate in their curricula, but nowhere near as much as Geluk institutions.

<sup>168</sup> For example, the two foundational Theravāda treatises, *Vimuttimaggā* (c. 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> century CE) and *Visuddhimagga* (c. 5<sup>th</sup> century CE) are primarily dedicated to explicating the *three trainings*.

*adhiśīla*), *higher meditation* (*lhag pa ting nge 'dzin*; Skt., *adhisamādhi*), and *higher discriminative wisdom* (*lhag pa shes rab*; Skt., *adhiprajñā*).

An important source of for Shenpen Tayé's gradualism was the works of the *root lama* (*rtsa ba'i bla ma*) of his main teachers, Jikmé Lingpa ('jigs med gling pa; 1730–1798), who was perhaps the most influential Nyingma figure of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Recent research has shown how Jikmé Lingpa synthesized the Seminal Heart (*snying thig*) system of Longchenpa into a new presentation in the form of his *Longchen Nyingtik* terma cycle and other works, including perhaps his most famous work *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities* (*yon tan rin po che'i mdzod*). Although Shenpen Tayé is remembered as a key link in the transmission of Jikmé Lingpa's *Longchen Nyingtik* cycle, it was the *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities* (*PTQ*) that he seemed to engage with most deeply, teaching it at his inaugural shedra session in 1828, and quoting its passages liberally in his own works. The *PTQ* was a “new presentation of what [Jikmé Lingpa] considered to be the core doctrines of the Nyingma,”<sup>169</sup> presenting the practice of the Great Perfection as a ladder that began with *common preliminaries* (*thun mong gi sngon 'gro*) of considering the precious opportunity afforded by a human birth, the inevitability of suffering and impermanence, and the reality of cause and effect. In short, Shenpen Tayé was trained and educated from a young age by Buddhist teachers who had imbibed this message of gradual cultivation from their teacher, Jikmé Lingpa, and Shenpen Tayé imbibed it from them in turn. It is not an exaggeration to say that everything Shenpen

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<sup>169</sup> Sam van Schaik, *Approaching the Great Perfection: Simultaneous and Gradualist Approaches to Dzokchen Practice in Jigme Lingpa's Longchen Nyingtik* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004), 41.

Tayé did as a Buddhist figure was intimately informed by this gradualist vision promoted by Jikmé Lingpa.

Shenpen Tayé—perhaps due in part to the violence and tragedy that marred his childhood, paid particular attention throughout his life to practicing and promoting the first of the three trainings—the cultivation of pure ethical conduct, repeatedly emphasizing its place as a necessary foundation for success in all further spiritual practice. There is strong evidence that even by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the uptake of Buddhist doctrine and practice among the nomadic populations of Dzachukha, Hor, and Golok remained patchy at best. There are numerous cases of Buddhist teachers who travelled through these regions commenting on the local population’s lack of familiarity with even basic Buddhist concepts.<sup>170</sup> For his own part, Shenpen Tayé seems to have taken his own advice to heart and was renowned among his contemporaries for strictly keeping every minute aspect of his monastic vows, and for his warmth and friendliness to all those he met.<sup>171</sup>

Shenpen Tayé was also known as a highly effective teacher who was particularly skilled at tailoring his teachings or works of personal advice to the particular individual or audience to which it was addressed. Indeed, as we shall see in the chapters below, Shenpen Tayé seemed far more interested in developing and deploying engaging and accessible methods of teaching than he was in producing technical scholastic treatises. Even Shenpen Tayé’s more technical scholastic works—such as his commentary on the

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<sup>170</sup> I describe an example of this from Jikmé Nyugu’s autobiography in chapter four below.

<sup>171</sup> See for example, Mipham Gyatso’s comments in his biography of Shenpen Tayé (discussed in chapter two below): *rong zom gsung ‘bum dkar chag me tog phreng ba*, in *rong zom bka’ ‘bum*. Thimphu, Bhutan: Kunsang Topgay, 1976, 8b-ff. BDRC W27479.

*Guhyagarbha*<sup>172</sup> or his textbook on the “six topics of scholarship”<sup>173</sup>—evinced an investment in providing clear explanations that are accessible to even beginning students. Before we turn to Shenpen Tayé’s biography in the next chapter, we will briefly set the scene of the region of northern Kham, known as Dzachukha and the areas around Dzokchen Monastery, the main loci for most of Shenpen Tayé’s activities.

#### I.2.4 Dzokchen Monastery and the Dzachukha Borderlands

Shenpen Tayé was born and raised in the wild, wind-swept high pastures of the upper *Dza* river (*rdza chu*). Known as the Mekong River further downstream, the source, or “mouth” (*kha*) of the *Dzachu* gives this region its name, *Dzachukha*.<sup>174</sup> At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Dzachukha was, in essence, a borderland of the borderlands. To the northeast lay Golok, a rough nomadic region notorious for banditry, violence, and lawlessness. To the west and southwest lay Jyekundo (modern Yushu) and the Nangchen Kingdom, and beyond them the Hor states. To the southeast lay the kingdoms of Ling (*gling*) and Dergé (*sde dge*). Although the region of Dzachukha was—and is—sparsely populated and “marginal” in most respects, it was to play an outsized role in later Tibetan religious history, serving as the birthplace of some of the most important Nyingma figures of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, including Jikmé Gyelwé Nyugu and Dza Patrül Orgyen Chökyi Wangpo (*rdza dpal sprul o rgyan chos kyi dbang po*; 1808–1887).

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<sup>172</sup> *rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po sgyu 'phrul drwa ba'i rtsa rgyud lung gi spyi gsang ba'i snying po'i 'grel ba kun bzang thugs kyi ti ka*. Discussed in chapter three below.

<sup>173</sup> *Dependent Arising of the Pure Path: Teaching the Meaning of the Nine Vehicles (yang dag lam gyi rten 'brel theg dgu'i don ston); An Analysis of the Five Aggregates and the Six Topics of Scholarship (phung po rab dbye bcas kyi mkhas bya'i gnas drug)*. Discussed in chapter three below.

<sup>174</sup> A few years ago, I traveled by jeep over a few days up the *Dzachu* from the forested valleys of Nyarong to Gemang in Dzachukha and was at first amused, and then alarmed, to notice that both the yaks and the local guard dogs kept getting bigger and bigger the higher up we went.

Dzokchen Monastery<sup>175</sup>

Heading south and back down towards Dergé, the Rudam Kyitram valley stands at about 4000 meters above sea level and runs roughly along a north-south axis, about three kilometers long with a broad, flat bottom about half a kilometer wide. At the head of the valley, the flat bottom gives way to wooded slopes on both sides, on which meditators constructed meditation retreats in caves and rock overhangs, which are still used today. About 100 meters above the valley floor, the trees give way to rocky crags and eventually to the jagged snow peaks and hanging glaciers of Mt. Dorjé Ziltrom, which looms over the entire valley. Apart from being almost impossibly scenic, the valley is also excellently situated for defense with a narrow gorge forming the only entrance at the foot of the valley and steep slopes on either side.<sup>176</sup> The area around the valley is made up of rolling grassland plateau, which extends for at least 200 kilometers to the west and north, and prior to very recently, was populated almost entirely by nomadic yak herders who migrate up and down the grassland slopes with the seasons. Although the valley is situated only about 50 kilometers as the crow flies to the north east of the Dergé royal seat, the actual journey is over 160 kilometers and requires traversing

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<sup>175</sup> My source for the history of Dzokchen in this section is the Second Shechen Rabjam, Gyurmé Kungzang Namgyel's (*she chen rab 'byams 2 'gyur med kun bzang rnam rgyal*, 1713–1769) *Catalog (dkar chag)* to an edition of Longchenpa's *Seven Treasuries* compiled and published by the Second Dzokchen Drupwang Gyurmé Takchok Tendzin (*rdzogs chen 02 'gyur med theg mchog bstan 'dzin*, 1699–1758) in 1755 at the great Dergé Printing House (hereafter, *Catalog to the Seven Treasuries*). For the life of Pema Rikdzin, see 69–88. For the Second Drupwang, see pp. 88ff. I am grateful to Jan Ronis for alerting me to this important source for the early history of Dzokchen Monastery.

<sup>176</sup> The only other point of entry to the valley is a narrow foot path on the western edge of the valley, which passes through a similarly constricting defile.

the rugged Trola mountain range (today there is a 7-km-long tunnel that bores under the pass, shaving about 40 km off the trip).

Situated in this valley are Dzokchen Monastery and its affiliate institutions, including Śrī Siṃha Shedra. Dzogchen was founded in 1684 by Pema Rikdzin (pad+ma rig 'dzin; 1625–1697), who was born in 1625 near Riwoché in the far west of Kham. As a young man he studied extensively with the great Kagyü lama Karma Chakmé (kar+ma chags med; c.1610/13–1678), from whom Rikdzin received many Nyingma, as well as Kagyü, teachings and transmissions. From Chakmé and others such as Dūdül Dorjé, Pema Rigdzin received numerous Nyingma treasure cycles and Great Perfection teachings.<sup>177</sup> He became famous as a master of Great Perfection teachings, even giving teachings to the great Fifth Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (ta la'i bla ma 05 ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho; 1617-1682). His biography makes no mention of him taking monastic vows, and this combined with his focus on tantric treasure cycles, makes it safe to assume that he was a non-celibate tantric lama.

When he was about fifty, Pema Rikdzin received a prophecy from the Fifth Dalai Lama that he would (or should) “endeavor to spread the teachings of the Great Perfection to Domé (Kham).”<sup>178</sup> Pema Rikdzin arrived in Kham in 1684 and, a year later founded a

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<sup>177</sup> From Chakmé he is said to have received Ratna Lingpa's (*rat+na gling pa*, 1403-1479) *Lamai Shidrak* (*bla ma'i zhi drag*) and *Vajrakīlaya*, Nyangrel Nyima Ozer's (*nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer*, 1136-1204) *Black Hayagrīva*, and *Karma Lingpa's* (*kar+ma gling pa*, 14th c.) *Shitro Gongpa Rangdrol* (*zhi khro dgongs pa rang grol*). From the treasure revealer Dūdül Dorjé (*bdud 'dul rdo rje*, 1615- 1672), he received the transmission of Dūdül's own treasures and of the *Dzogchen Nyingtik* (*rdzogs chen snying thig*). From the Second Baka Tulkü, Rikdzin Chökyi Gyatso (*rba kha sprul sku 02 rig 'dzin chos kyi rgya mtsho*, d.u.), he received the transmission and empowerments of the *Khandro Nyingtik* (*mkha' 'gro snying tig*) cycle of Great Perfection teachings, which were to become the main Great Perfection cycle practiced at Dzokchen until it was supplanted by Jikmé Lingpa's *Longchen Nyintik* in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>178</sup> mdo smad du byon na rdzogs chen gyi bstan pa dar rgyas 'byung bar lung bstan pas. *Catalog of the Seven Treasuries*, 83:6.

“practice center” (*sgrub sde*) called Orgyen Samten Chöling (o rgyan bsam gtan chos gling) for the practice and transmission of the Great Perfection. Dzokchen occupied a liminal borderland during much of its existence, variously falling under the sway of the Dergé kingdom, the Oirat Mongols, and, during times of regional crisis or unrest, by less organized authorities such as local warlords or bands of bandits from Golok in the north.

We will remain in this borderland region as we shift to tell the story of Shenpen Tayé life and works in these high pastures.

## Chapter Two: “That Crazy Vagabond Monk:”<sup>179</sup> The Biography of Shenpen Tayé

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*Relating all the details of the outer, inner, and secret deeds of our great lord would exhaust the capabilities of even the great noble ones. How then could we childish beings—whose minds resemble the buzzing wings of bees—be able to recount the life of such a one?*<sup>180</sup>

– Pema Vajra, in the introduction to his hagiography of Shenpen Tayé.

### Introduction

In this chapter, I provide a comprehensive biography of Shenpen Tayé and analyze his personal and institutional relationships and connections. I have chosen to base my biography and analysis primarily on those textual witnesses produced during or very shortly after Shenpen Tayé’s lifetime, the most important of these being Shenpen Tayé’s *Verse Autobiography*, and the hagiography produced by Pema Vajra in the *Trinchok Catalog*, both of which are described in detail in the previous chapter in the section on sources. The reader may also want to refer to Appendix 4, which provides a comprehensive, annotated listing of all the teachings, texts and lineages that Shenpen Tayé gave and received.

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<sup>179</sup> Shenpen Tayé sometimes referred to him self in his colophons as a “vagabond monk” (*sprang btsun*) and “that crazy vagabond” (*sprang nyoms las mkhan de*),

<sup>180</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 22b.



## 2.1 Family Lineage and Birthplace

Shenpen Tayé describes his birthplace and family lineage in some detail in his *Verse Autobiography*. He locates his birthplace in a place called Kamchung (skams chung) in the area of the holy mountain Dzagyel (Dorjé) Phenchuk (rdza rgyal ‘phan phyug), in the Gemang (dge mang) area of the region of Dzachukha (rdza chu kha) in Eastern Tibet.

With regards to Shenpen Tayé’s family lineage, his father’s name was Tsewang Norbu (tshe dbang nor bu; d.u.) and his mother was Karma Chödrön (kar+ma chos sgron; d.u.).<sup>181</sup> His father was the nephew of a wealthy clan chief named Chözung (chos bzung) who was part of the Gemang Adon (dge mang a don) lineage of the Getsé (dge rtse) branch of the Mukpo (smug po) clan.<sup>182</sup> Unfortunately, there seems to be no surviving record of Shenpen Tayé’s birth name. Neither his hagiography nor his verse autobiography mentions any names that he had prior to receiving the name Gyelsé Shenpen Tayé Özer (rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha’ yas ‘od zer) from the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen Jikmé Trinle Özer (rdo grub chen ‘jigs med ‘phrin las ‘od zer; 1745–1821), in or around Tayé’s 18<sup>th</sup> year.

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<sup>181</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 2b.

<sup>182</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 2a–b.

## 2.2 Birth and Early Childhood (c. 1800–1803)

Shenpen Tayé reports that he was born “at the dawn of the iron-monkey year”—corresponding to sometime in late February or early March, 1800.<sup>183</sup> At the time of his birth, he says, “a rainbow spontaneously appeared in the sky.”<sup>184</sup> He goes on to describe how,

Many spiritual masters proclaimed that I was a reincarnated master. Because of this senseless bunch of boasting, [...] a number of high masters came to claim me as the reincarnation [of their master].<sup>185</sup>

This competition for the infant seems to have presented barriers to Shenpen Tayé’s early religious education; he says that “in spite of this [clamor to enthrone him as a reincarnated master], I became acquainted with the Dharma from an early age, due to the merit of previous aspirations.”<sup>186</sup> While we might be tempted to view such claims of early recognition as simply reflecting *de rigueur* conventions of Tibetan hagiography, in this case, it is Shenpen Tayé himself reporting this fact, to which he adds the self-deprecating characterization that such recognition was merely “senseless boasting.” Indeed, the reported “clamor to enthrone him” seems to have been a very real issue that Shenpen Tayé continued to encounter. As we shall see, throughout his life, Shenpen Tayé was repeatedly granted unsolicited high titles and positions—often as the reincarnation or

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<sup>183</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 2a: lo drug pol cags sprul shar ba’i tshe. The first day of that iron monkey year fell on Feb 24, 1800. This may be the only instance in Shenpen Tayé’s entire corpus that he gives the year of an event.

<sup>184</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 2b: rten dal ba’i myu gu gsar pa dang // mkha’ dbang po’i gzhu ris lhan cig mthong //.

<sup>185</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 2b: rje dge ba’i bshes gnyen ‘ga’ zhig gis// ‘di sprul ba’i sku zhig yin zhes bsgrags// gtam rgyu mtshan med pa’i ‘ud gog des// mi kun kyis sprul skur sgro ‘dogs byas// de’i rkyen gyis dam pa ‘ga’ zhig gis// skye srid du thob sha byed pa byung //.

<sup>186</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 2b: de yin yang sngon smon dge ba’i mthus// chung skyes nas chos kyis bsrung mdzad . . .

primary successor of a high lama—appointments which he seemed to largely ignore in order to pursue his own religious vision.

### 2.3 Revealing “Hidden Dispositions”: Early Study and Connections (1803–1810)

According to Shenpen Tayé, he “became acquainted with the Dharma from an early age, meeting spiritual teachers from when I was three years old.”<sup>187</sup> I have reconstructed the following description of Shenpen Tayé’s education and religious training from a comparison of his *Verse Autobiography* and the hagiography contained in the *Trinchok Catalog*. Because neither of these works contain dates nor make reference to Shenpen Tayé’s age for most of the events described, I will present them in their relative order within the sources.<sup>188</sup> Shenpen Tayé’s hagiography, written by his student Pema Vajra in 1845, reports that from very early childhood, Shenpen Tayé possessed “extraordinary inborn intelligence, such that he effortlessly knew how to write and spell and the meaning of words.”<sup>189</sup> He began his studies with Lama Monlam Dargye (bla ma smon lam dar rgyas; d.u.), a “great scholar from the same clan as [Shenpen Tayé].”<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 2b: chung skyes nas chos kyis bsrung mdzad cing // lo gsum nas dge ba'i bshes dang mjal//.

<sup>188</sup> I have engaged in some preliminary cross-referencing of these events with the extensive biographies of both Jikmé Nyugu and the first Dodrupchen—both of which are highly detailed and contain the year and often the specific days for the events they describe. Unfortunately, the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen’s autobiography only covers events up to the year 1810 and, as far as I can ascertain, does not contain any mentions of Shenpen Tayé. Jikmé Nyugu’s biography—which includes extended autobiographical sections that are folded into its larger hagiographical treatment—does contain a reference to Nyugu meeting Shenpen Tayé, but much later in the 1830s.

<sup>189</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 37a: gzhon nu nyid nas skyes thob kyi mkhyen rab khyad par can mnga' bas/ yi ge 'bri klog dang 'bru non gyi don sogs tshogs chung ngus mkhyen.

<sup>190</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 37a. This is probably BDRC person number: P2JM305. I have, however, not been able to find any more information on this figure than is provided in this passage.

With Monlam Dargyé, Shenpen Tayé studied some of the foundational Tibetan and Indian treatises on the literary arts, including, “the root text and commentaries” of Thonmi Sambhota’s *Thirty Verses on Grammar* (*sum cu pa*) and *Guide to Signs* (*rtags kyi ‘jug pa*) and Daṇḍin’s *Mirror of Poetics* (*snyan ngag me long*). He also, studied “worldly topics” with Monlam Dargyé, which included “astrology, and so forth.”<sup>191</sup>

It is interesting to note that Shenpen Tayé studied these foundational texts of grammar and poetics very early on as a young child—such that they formed the foundation of his entire education. The next mention of these grammatical treatises in Pema Vajra’s *Catalog* is in the section describing the editing of the *Trinchok Collection*, where it is mentioned that the textual emendations were made using these treatises as a guide. This suggests one possible reason why Shenpen Tayé was so highly regarded as a religious and scholarly virtuoso even as a very young man: His strong facility with language and the literary arts was likely a major factor in his being singled out and elevated by powerful religious figures in his milieu—a subject to which I will return in more detail in chapter five below.

Shenpen Tayé soon began his formal Buddhist education with Monlam Dargyé, receiving “many other teachings on the various texts and systems of sūtra and mantra such as the root text and commentaries of [Jikmé Lingpa’s] *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities* (*yon tan rin po che ‘i mdzod*) and so forth.”<sup>192</sup> Shenpen Tayé adds to this description, saying that in addition to these texts and topics, he also studied the three

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<sup>191</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 37a.

<sup>192</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 37a: mdo sngags spyi'i gzhung lugs legs par ston pa yon tan mdzod rtsa 'grel sogs mang du gsan.

vows with Monlam Dargyé, which was likely studied through *Ascertainment of the Three Vows* (*sdom gsum rnam nges*), the classic Nyingma work on the topic written by Ngari Panchen Pema Wangyal (mnga' ris paN chen pad+ma dbang rgyal; 1487-1542). As we will see, these two influential Nyingma treatises—Ngari Panchen's *Ascertainment of the Three Vows* and Jikmé Lingpa's *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities*—were two of the four foundational treatises taught by Shenpen Tayé at his first shedra session at Dzokchen Monastery years later (see below), and it is interesting to note that Shenpen Tayé first studied them very early on in his studies.

Shenpen Tayé reports that as a young child he, “displayed some moderate disposition towards spiritual training, and told some unfounded tales of *hidden dispositions* (*lkog gyur*),<sup>193</sup> and he insinuates that it was because of these hidden dispositions that two of the most revered Buddhist masters in the region—Jikmé Gyelwe Nyugu and Ling Drupchen Sonam Jinpa (gling grub chen bsod nams spyin pa; b. 1761)—took the young Shenpen Tayé as their student.<sup>194</sup> These “hidden dispositions” may have been the basis for later characterizations of Shenpen Tayé as a treasure revealer. For example, Mipham Gyatso's brief biographical sketch of Shenpen Tayé in his *Catalog to the Collected Works of Rongzom* contains the following story:

At a particular time when [Shenpen Tayé] was a young child<sup>195</sup>, he was wandering without a care over a mountain pass when a document (*kha byag*) that described a method for preventing a terrible fire [at] Samyé appeared in his hand.

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<sup>193</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 2b: sngon sbyang gi bag chags ra ri dang / lkog gyur gyi gtam 'ga' 'brel med smras/

<sup>194</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 2b.

<sup>195</sup> The *Great Religious History of Dzokchen* says that Shenpen Tayé found this document at Samyé when he had “passed eight winters” (i.e., was around 7 or 8 years old) and describes it as a “profound treasure text” (*zab gter kha byag*): dgung lo brgyad la son skabs dpal gyi bsams yas chos sde la me'i 'jig pa zlog thabs kyi zab gter kha byang phyag tu 'byor, 362.

However, he left it behind, not thinking much about it. Some time later, Samye did indeed suffer a fearful fire and [Shenpen Tayé] felt great regret at discarding the document.<sup>196</sup>

Although I can find no mention of such a story in any sources prior to Mipham’s 1904 account, the previously-quoted passage from Shenpen Tayé’s *Verse Autobiography* about “hidden dispositions,” provides some measure of support from Shenpen Tayé himself for these later stories of Shenpen Tayé being able to reveal treasures as a child. In any case, all the sources agree that Shenpen Tayé eventually chose not to follow the path of a non-celibate treasure revealer, but rather to pursue the path—somewhat rare among Nyingmapas of his day—of a fully ordained monk.

Having been accepted as a disciple by Jikmé Gyelwe Nyugu and Ling Drupchen Sonam Jinpa, Shenpen Tayé received “basic Buddhist teachings”<sup>197</sup> as well as, “oral instructions on the general stages of both the ordinary and extraordinary paths, and, specifically, on cycles of mind training for individuals of great capacity”<sup>198</sup> from Jikmé Nyugu. Although it is not explicitly stated, the above description of these teachings from Jikmé Nyugu bring to mind the *preliminary practices* (*sngon ‘gro*) of the *Longchen*

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<sup>196</sup> *Catalog to the Collected Works of Rongzom*, 9a: sku na chung ngu byis pa ri kha la yan pa’i skabs zhig tu/ bsam yas me ‘jigs bzlog tshul gyi kha byang phyag tu ‘byor kyang btang smyoms su lus pa/ phyis bsam yas la me’i ‘jigs pa byung pa gsan nas thugs ‘gyod chen po byas/ yang lha sar chus ‘jigs bzlog pa’i lung byang yod pa bzhin de don su la’ng ma gsung par sbas tshul gyis lha du ldan du phebs te phyag rdor dregs ‘dul gyi sku mtshams sogs lung byang ltar ma yol bar bsgrub pas de skabs lha sar chu gnod chen po byang yang bzlog par gyur pa sogs rgyal dbang pad+ma’i phrin las kyi byed po gter ston chen po’i skal ba can yin zhing /.

<sup>197</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 37a: chos kyi ‘khor lo thog mar bskor ba—Literally, “turned the initial wheel of dharma.”

<sup>198</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 37a–b: thun mong dang thun mong ma yin pa’i lam gyi rim pa spyi dang / khyad par skyes bu chen po’i blo sbyong gi skor rnam zhal khrid du gsan ba.

*Nyingtik*, which were later to be immortalized in Dza Patrül’s *Words of my Perfect Teacher* (*kun bzang bla ma’i zhal lung*).<sup>199</sup>

## 2.4 Tragedy and Renunciation (c. 1810–1812)

Around the time that Shenpen Tayé began these religious studies with Jikmé Nyugu, a tragic event occurred that profoundly re-oriented the priorities and life-path of the young Shenpen Tayé, who narrates the event thus:

Around that time,<sup>200</sup> some malevolent bandits from the border region<sup>201</sup>  
 Came and stole some of our family’s horses.  
 My father, galloping after them himself, met his death;  
 All his wealth and fortune were not enough to save him.  
 It was then that I saw the true way of things:  
 The ties of worldly wealth are like a noose;  
 Like a river in the summer, glory and fortune flood in but soon dry up.<sup>202</sup>

The violent and tragic death of his father had a profound effect on the young Shenpen Tayé. The event was so tragic and so personal that decades later his close student and hagiographer, Pema Vajra, either didn’t know about the tragedy or didn’t feel

<sup>199</sup> The “perfect teacher” being Jikmé Nyugu.

<sup>200</sup> Shenpen Tayé virtually never gives dates or years in his works. Based on where this episode is placed in the narrative, I would estimate that this event took place when Shenpen Tayé was between nine and eleven years old.

<sup>201</sup> Jann Ronis (“Powerful Women in the History of Degé,” 76) narrates some interesting details about a series of violent raids and local uprisings that occurred in the regions of northern Dergé and Dzachukha in the years 1806–1808 and it is tempting to connect the murder of Shenpen Tayé’s father with this unrest. While this may be possible, numerous contemporary sources from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries relate that the presence of banditry, horse theft, and murderous conflict was a general feature of the nomadic regions of northern Kham and, sadly, the episode described by Shenpen Tayé seemed to be a not-uncommon occurrence even during times of relative calm and stability. Jann Ronis, “Powerful Women in the History of Degé: Reassessing the Eventful Reign of the Dowager Quenn Tsewang Lhamo (d. 1812),” *Proceedings du deuxième séminaire international des Jeunes Tibétologues (ISYT)*, Paris 2009. 21. *Revue d’Etudes Tibétaines*, 76

<sup>202</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 2b: skabs de tshe ar jag ma rungs bas// rta 'ga' zhig brkus pa'i ram zla la// pha de nyid brgyugs pa lnga lam btang // nor 'byor pa rnam kyang rim bzhin bri// tshul de 'dra'i rang bzhin mthong tsa na// nor bsags pa srog gi gshed mar gyur// dpal 'byor pa dbyar chu skam pa 'dra//

comfortable including the episode in his official hagiography in the *Trinchok Catalog*. The poignancy and emphasis with which Shenpen Tayé describes it in his (very brief) autobiography makes the omission of this formative event in the longer hagiography surprising—particularly given that the event as Shenpen Tayé describes it perfectly fits the standard trope in Buddhist hagiography whereby a tragic event early in the life of a nascent master convinces them to dedicate their life to spiritual practice. All of this suggests that the event left a profoundly deep wound on the psyche of the young Shenpen Tayé. As I will argue in the chapters below, the contours of Shenpen Tayé’s major religious projects seem to have been rooted to a significant degree in a need to correct the circumstances that led to this tragic event.

Shenpen Tayé’s desire to right this wrong may have been amplified—and problematized—by the cultural expectations surrounding vendettas and blood feuds among the nomadic pastoralists of northern Kham. According to Namkhai Norbu writing in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, this system required the son(s) of the victim to seek revenge by killing the murderer—a duty that they were honor-bound to carry out. Failure to do so would bring down contempt and condemnation on the entire extended family.<sup>203</sup> These social imperatives add another dimension to our understanding of Shenpen Tayé’s decision to renounce his worldly ambitions in order to pursue a religious life. In the wake of his father’s murder, the young Shenpen Tayé, who had already been drawn towards religious study and practice, would have faced a stark choice: fulfill his duty as a son and

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<sup>203</sup> Namkhai Norbu, *Journey Among the Tibetan Nomads: An Account of a Remote Civilization* (Dharamsala, India: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1997), 8.



seek revenge on his father’s murderers, or renounce these duties and dedicate himself to a religious life instead. I am in no way suggesting that Shenpen Tayé’s decision to dedicate himself to a religious life was in any way motivated by a desire to shirk his filial responsibilities. Rather, I am suggesting that, in light of the cultural expectations surrounding a son’s to duty to avenge his father’s murder, this tragic instance brought the young Shenpen Tayé to a stark fork-in-the-road: stay in the world and seek revenge, or make a formal commitment to the religious path that he had already been pursuing from a young age, thus allowing him to eschew such violent action and the negative karma it would bring.

In any case, the murder of Shenpen Tayé’s father occurred around the time that the boy had begun to receive Buddhist teachings from Jikmé Nyugu. Shenpen Tayé’s hagiography describes these initial teachings as, “awakening in him the mind of enlightenment,” with the result that he became “helplessly preoccupied with a strong tremor of compassion for all beings and with the idea of fully renouncing samsaric existence,” causing him to “completely let go of any clinging to the enchantments of the mundane world and leave behind his worldly duties and relationships.”<sup>204</sup> Shenpen Tayé alludes to the influence of these early Buddhist teachings in describing his resolve to dedicate himself to spiritual practice in wake of his father’s murder:

Seeing that one’s life from beginning to end was as ephemeral as a dew drop,  
I brought to mind the [instructions of my] authentic guru:  
‘Make up your mind to go to an isolated place,

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<sup>204</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 37b: bskal ba du mar byang chub kyi sems la goms pa'i rigs sad de/ 'khor ba las nges par 'byung ba'i blo dang / sems can la brtse ba'i shugs drag po gnyis phan tshun 'gran pa lta bus rgyud dbang med du 'khrul te/ 'jig rten srid pa'i phun tshogs rnams la thugs zhen gting nas log cing 'dir snang mthun 'jug gi bya ba thams cad rgyab tu dor te/.

As in the life stories of the great masters.’  
It was then that I resolved to [practice] day and night.<sup>205</sup>

## 2.5 Auspicious Connections: A Period of Intensive Religious Study and Practice (c. 1810s)

Upon making this commitment to earnestly pursue the spiritual path, Shenpen Tayé began studying intensively with a number of revered Nyingma masters from his home region. We have already described Shenpen Tayé’s early studies with Monlam Dargyé and Jikmé Nyugu—both of which seem to have continued. Another important early teacher was the aforementioned 1<sup>st</sup> Lingla tulku Sonam Jinpa,<sup>206</sup> from whom Shenpen Tayé received the vows of Buddhist layman (*dge snyen*; Skt. *upāsaka*), as well as “numerous [tantric] instructions on ripening and liberation.”<sup>207</sup> Shenpen Tayé later gave vows of full monastic ordination to Sönam Jinpa’s reincarnation, who came to be known by the ordination name given him by Shenpen Tayé: Thubten Nyinche Gyeltsen (thub bstan nyin byed rgyal mtshan). This reincarnation was known as *Lingla* (gling bla: “the lama from Ling”) and so Sönam Jinpa was retroactively known as the “1<sup>st</sup> Lingla.” Later, Shenpen Tayé enthroned the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lingla Thubten Nyinche Gyeltsen as the head Khenpo of Śrī Siṃha and composed verses for the occasion.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 3a: tshe rtsa rtse’i zil ba ltar mthong nas// nga bsam bzhin mtshan ldan bla ma dran// gnas dben pa zhig tu nam slebs snyam// mgon dam pa gong ma’i rnam thar la// nyin mtshan du yid smon byed skabs der.

<sup>206</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> Lingla (gling bla) tulku Sonam Jinpa ([ToL page](#); [BDRP P8701](#))—whom Shenpen Tayé refers to as “Ling Drupchen” (*gling grub chen*), *Verse Autobiography*, 2b. Lingla Sonam Jinpa was born in 1761 in Dzagyü Troshül (*rdza rgyud khro shul*), which is near Shenpen Tayé’s natal home.

<sup>207</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 37b: smin grol gyi gdams pa mang du nos.

<sup>208</sup> See for example, *BhCW*: 2. 259–270.

Sometime during this early period of intensive study, Shenpen Tayé also met and took teachings with “the holy young lama” Jikmé Kelsang (*‘jig med skal bzang*; b. 1789),<sup>209</sup> who was a close disciple of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen. Jikmé Kelsang recognized and enthroned Shenpen Tayé as the reincarnation of Tashi Gyatso (*bkra shis rgya mtsho*; b. 1714), who was considered an emanation of the great founder of Mindröling, Terdak Lingpa Gyurmé Dorjé (*gter dag gling pa ‘gyur med rdo rje*; 1646–1714), and was renowned as a great scholar-practitioner of the *Translated Words of the Buddha* (*Kangyur, bka’ ‘gyur*).<sup>210</sup> Jikmé Kelsang was also a close student of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen—who, as we will see shortly, was soon to become Shenpen Tayé’s closest and most important teacher. Jikmé Kelsang’s recognition of Shenpen Tayé as a reincarnation of Tashi Gyatso also represents the first mention of what was to become one of Shenpen Tayé’s most important institutional connections—that with Mindröling Monastery, and, in particular, to its founder, Terdak Lingpa. Shenpen Tayé records that Jikmé Kelsang also exhorted him to go and meet the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen and also to go to Dzokchen Monastery<sup>211</sup>—advice that Shenpen Tayé would soon follow and which would lead to his rise as one of the most prominent and famed lamas in Eastern Tibet.

Around this time, Shenpen Tayé’s hagiography reports that he studied Tsongkhapa’s *Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path* (*lam rim chen mo*) with Gemang

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<sup>209</sup> Often referred to as *Dola* (*rdo la*) Jikmé Kelsang ([ToL page](#); [BDRC 5221](#))

<sup>210</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 38a. For a brief biography of Tashi Gyatso, see Nyoshul Khenpo’s *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems*, 390–391. A short time later, Jikmé Kelsang also recognized another Nyingma luminary from Dzachukha, Orgyen Chökyi Wangpo (*rdza dpal sprul o rgyan chos kyi dbang po*; 1808–1887), as the reincarnation of Pelgé Lama Samten Phuntsok (*dpal dge bla ma bsam gtan phun tshogs*, d. 1807), which led to Orgyen Chökyi Wangpo being known as Dza Patrül (*rdza dpal sprul*)—“the Pelgé tulku [from] Dza[chukha].” See *thub bstan kun bzang chos grags*. “o rgyan ‘jigs med chos kyi dbang po’i rnam thar dad pa’i gsos sman bdud rtsi’i bum bcud,” 788.

<sup>211</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 3a.

Rabjam Gelek Yarphel (dge man grab ‘byams dge legs yar ‘phel, d.u.),<sup>212</sup> and also received the *Collected Tantras of the Ancients* (*Nyingma Gyübum*; *rnying ma rgyud ‘bum*) from the Nyingma master Jikmé Ngotsar (‘jigs med ngo mtshar, d.u.<sup>213</sup>).<sup>214</sup> The juxtaposition of these two sets of teachings—representing signature Geluk and Nyingma texts and textual collections respectively—suggests a rather less sectarian atmosphere in eastern Tibet than was to develop in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Specifically, we see the willingness of Shenpen Tayé—and likely other Nyingmapas—not only to study with Geluk teachers, but to study *signature Geluk texts*—such as the *Lam Rim Chenmo*—with Geluk teachers. We should not, however, mistake Shenpen Tayé’s broad learning for a kind of open *nonsectarian* (*rimé*; *ris med*) approach. Throughout his education and training—and for the remainder of his life, as we shall see—Shenpen Tayé would remain steadfastly focused on imbibing, formulating, propagating, and enacting a distinctive vision of the *Nyingma* tradition.

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<sup>212</sup> This is obviously a Geluk figure, although I have been able to find very little information on such a figure. The most specific reference to Gelek Yarphel that I could find was a passing mention of him in the colophon to an instructional manual on the *Lam Rim Chenmo*, written by Lobsang Trinlé (1927–1997), in which the following passage occurs: “brag dkar bse shul dge shes rin po che dge legs yar ‘phel gyi gsung rgyun man ngag rnam khri brtan dge slong bstan ‘phel gyis zin bris su ‘god gnang mdzad pa’i lam rim gyi zin bris ‘di bzhin.”

See *blo bzang ‘phrin las*. “byang chub lam gyi rim pa’i dmar khrid bde lam gyi sbyor dngos ‘jug gi rim pa’i dgongs don bston pa’i zin bris ‘od dkar ‘phreng ba’i dpar byang,” in *mkhas dbang dung dkar blo bzang ‘phrin las kyi gsung ‘bum*, 8 vols. (Beijing: mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2004), vol. 3, 756.

<sup>213</sup> Jikmé Ngotsar’s birthdate is sometimes given as 1730 although a later date between 1750–1760 has recently been suggested (for example, in [Jikmé Ngotsar’s Treasury of Lives page](#) recently added by Han Kop). Similarly, Jikmé Ngotsar’s date of death is uncertain. He seems to fall out of the historical record shortly after the event described here, and a date sometime in the later half of the 1810s seems the most likely.

<sup>214</sup> [BDRC P2881](#)

## 2.6 Merging Minds with the Root Lama (1818–1821)

Shenpen Tayé describes how, in his 19<sup>th</sup> year, he “could not help but hear the famed name of that king of Dharma, father, lord of siddhas, the holy protector and best and unfailing refuge.”<sup>215</sup> His hagiography describes how “his mind was captivated by [. . .] the Dharma king known as Jangchub Dorjé (byang chub rdo rje; i.e., the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen).”<sup>216</sup>

The 1st Dodrupchen Jikmé Trinle Özer (rdo grub chen 'jigs med 'phrin las 'od zer; 1745–1821)<sup>217</sup> was one of the “heart students” of the great Nyingma tertön Jikmé Lingpa, who appointed Dodrupchen “custodian of the teaching” (*chos bdag*).<sup>218</sup> As the primary successor and heir of Jikmé Lingpa, the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen was instrumental in propogating Jikmé Lingpa’s signature Dzokchen treasury cycle, the *Longchen Nyingtik* (*klong chen snying tik*). Dodrupchen also composed a set of influential commentaries<sup>219</sup> on Jikmé Lingpa’s hugely influential work on the Nyingma Buddhist path, the *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities* (*yon tan rin po che'i mdzod*). Other noteworthy writings of his include

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<sup>215</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 3b.

<sup>216</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 38a. byang chub rdo rje was one of the names of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen.

<sup>217</sup> There has not been, to my knowledge, any detailed academic studies of the life and works of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen. The most detailed treatments of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen to date is in Nyoshul Khenpo’s *Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems* (319–322); and Jann Ronis, “Powerful Women in the History of Degé.”

<sup>218</sup> Adam Pearcey, “A Greater Perfection? Scholasticism, Comparativism and Issues of Sectarian Identity in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Writings on rDzogs-chen,” Ph.D. diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2018, 68.

<sup>219</sup> These commentaries are reproduced in a recent ten-volume collection of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen’s collected works (*gsung 'bum/ 'jigs med 'phrin las 'od zer/*. 10 vols. khren tu'u/: bla ma bsod dar, 2014. BDRC W4PD1630): *yon tan rin po che'i mdzod kyi sgo lcags 'byed byed bsdus 'grel rgya mtsho'i chu thigs rin chen lde mig*, vol. 3, 1–576; *yon tan rin po che'i mdzod kyi sgo lcags 'byed byed bsdus 'grel rgya mtsho'i chu thigs las sngags 'grel nor bu'i phreng ba*, vol. 4, 1–414; and, *yon tan rin po che'i mdzod kyi 'grel pa rgya mtsho'i chu thigs nor bu'i phreng ba*, vol. 4, 415–822.

the extensive hagiography of Padmasambhava<sup>220</sup> and a detailed autobiography.<sup>221</sup> A number of the cycles that Shenpen Tayé included in his major anthology of Nyingma *kama* rituals<sup>222</sup> were transmitted to him from the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen. These include Longchenpa's *Lama Yangtik (bla ma yang thig)* guidance on the *Vimala Nyingtik (bi ma la snying thig)*, the wrathful deities empowerment from the *General Tantras of the Magical Net*, and the confessional practice “Dredging the depths of hell” (*na rag[raka] dong sprungs*).<sup>223</sup>

It is interesting to note here that the following story of how Shenpen Tayé first met the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen and became his disciple is described in *both* the autobiography and the hagiography in more detail than any other event in Shenpen Tayé's life. In the *Verse Autobiography*, Shenpen Tayé relates how he made the following resolution:

‘Until I come to meet with that Lord, I will not be distracted by the cares of the world by day, nor prevented by the torpor of sleep at night!’ Thinking this, my mind came to burn with the flame of faith.<sup>224</sup>

This decision did not seem to sit well with his family and the local people, who tried to dissuade and prevent Shenpen Tayé from going to study with Dodrupchen.<sup>225</sup> No reason is given for the resistance of his family and neighbors to the prospect of Shenpen

<sup>220</sup> *o rgyan pad+ma 'byung gnas kyi rnam par thar pa dgos 'dod re skong*, in *gsung 'bum/ 'jigs med phrin las 'od zer/*, vol. 1, 367–790.

<sup>221</sup> *rdo grub chen kun bzang gzhan phan gyi rang rnam*, in *gsung 'bum/ 'jigs med phrin las 'od zer/*, vol. 1, 1–366.

<sup>222</sup> See chapter five.

<sup>223</sup> “rgyal bstan snga 'gyur bka' ma theg rim dgu'i phrin chog gzhang phyi mo nams dang bcas pa'i dkar chag bstan pa rgya mtsho'i gru gzings bkra shis dpal brgya'i 'byung gnas, (*A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of the Teachings* [ . . . ])” In *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa/*. BDRC W1PD100944. Vol. 133: 153–458. chengdu: si khron dpe skrun tshogs pa/ si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 356–383.

<sup>224</sup> 3b: nyin 'jig rten bya bas mi g.yeng zhing // mtshan gtí mug gnyid las bshol btabs te// rje gang dang nam zhig mjal 'gyur zhes// yid dad pa'i me lces bsregs bzhin mchis//.

<sup>225</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 38a: gnyen tshan dang yul mi nams kyis bshol 'debs bslab ston sogs gang la yang ma gsan pa.

Tayé going to study with Dodrupchen, but we can speculate on some possibilities. The first and most obvious possible reason is that Shenpen Tayé’s family didn’t want to lose such a talented young man, whose superior intelligence and education were beginning to mark him as a young man of substance and promise. Following the untimely death of Tayé’s father, it is likely that the more senior members of his household and extended family may still have had designs to shift such a promising young man into a position of leadership within the family and sub-clan. This type of dynamic was clearly evident in the early lives of a number of famed lamas from the region, including Jikmé Nyugu,<sup>226</sup> Dilgo Khyentsé,<sup>227</sup> and Khenpo Shenga<sup>228</sup>—not to mention the historical Buddha himself. The passage in the hagiography, however, seems to suggest that it may have been Shenpen Tayé’s specific choice of teacher that was the cause of the concern. The 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen was one of the four “heart sons” of Jikmé Lingpa and largely propagated the same set of teachings and lineages as Jikmé Lingpa’s other heart sons, which included the aforementioned Jikmé Nyugu and Jikmé Ngotsar. The fact that there seems to have been no local resistance to Shenpen Tayé studying with the latter two, suggests that the local resistance to Shenpen Tayé studying with the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen was more regional and/or political rather than doctrinal. The 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen, as his name indicates, was from the Do (rdo) valley in the region of Golok (mgo log), a nomadic region bordering Shenpen Tayé’s home region of Dzachukha that was infamous as a wild, lawless land, infested

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<sup>226</sup> See Ny*Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems*, 216.

<sup>227</sup> See *Brilliant Moon: The Autobiography of Dilgo Khyentse*, translated by Ani Jinba Palmo (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2008), 15–16.

<sup>228</sup> See Bayer, *Life and Works of mKhan-po gZhan-dga’*, 30.

with bandits and feuding clans.<sup>229</sup> It is easy to see how the prospect of losing one of the area’s brightest young lamas to another region—especially one such as Golok—would certainly have been met with resistance from Shenpen Tayé’s family and other local people.

Whatever the case, his hagiography reports that Shenpen Tayé resisted the pressures from his family and kinsmen and stuck to his preferred course, determined to go and meet Dodrupchen. Along with some friends of like mind, he set off to the east, braving heat, cold, fatigue, and the threat of murderous bandits,<sup>230</sup> until he finally arrived at the Dodrupchen’s retreat center at Yarlung Pemakö (yar lung pad+ma bkod), called Tsasum Khandro Duweling (rtsa gsum mkha’ ‘gro ‘du ba’i gling). Shenpen Tayé describes how his companions “offered supplications and prostrations, but it was I who received the four empowerments and his [Dodrupchen’s] mind mixed with mine.”<sup>231</sup> From that time on, Shenpen Tayé served Dodrupchen as his “sovereign lord,”<sup>232</sup> and describes how he and Dodrupchen became “inseparable day and night, supplicating him as Father Vajradhāra, I received from him the skillful path of the profound teachings of secret mantra and absorbed the key points of the practice of yogic winds, channels, and essences.”<sup>233</sup> In short, Dodrupchen, “transmitted all his teachings and empowerments, like a vase filled to the brim, saying to [Shenpen Tayé]: ‘I wish you to hold this special

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<sup>229</sup> For example, see Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 77; and Namkhai Norbu, *Journey Among the Tibetan Nomads*, 3–4.

<sup>230</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 3b.

<sup>231</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 4a: grogs gzhan dag phyag 'tshal gsol ba 'debs// ngas dbang bzhi blangs nas thugs yid bsres//

<sup>232</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 38a: rigs kyi bdag por bkur.

<sup>233</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 4a: dus de nas nyin mtshan g.yel med par// pha rdo rje 'chang de'i zhabs bsten nas// chos zab mo gsang sngags thabs lam zhus// lam rtsa thig rlung la gnad du bsnun/.



lineage of the mind of enlightenment it will benefit others.”<sup>234</sup> By saying this, [Dodrupchen] “implicitly placed Shenpen Tayé as his successor,” and bestowed on him the name Gyelsé Shenpen Tayé Özer<sup>235</sup> and gave him “many personal transmissions and teachings.”<sup>236</sup>

Shenpen Tayé stayed with Dodrupchen for three years, during which time, he also studied with some of the Dodrupchen’s other students—most notably, Jikmé Kelsang, from whom he “received many transmissions, including an exposition on the glorious *Guhyagarbha* and the empowerment and personal guidance on the *Magical Display of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities* (*sgyu ‘phrul zhi khro*; *Skt: śāntikrodhamāyājāla*).”<sup>237</sup> Shenpen Tayé also received “the *Six Dharmas of Naropa* (*na ro chos drug*) and “some cycles on the channels and winds of *inner heat* (*gtum mo*) from “the principle students of the master.”<sup>238</sup>

Around the year 1821, Dodrupchen took ill and Shenpen Tayé describes their final moments together: “Then came our final meeting before my master passed away. Although my mind was gripped with immeasurable sadness, I made a vow to practice in secluded retreats.”<sup>239</sup> After Dodrupchen died, Shenpen Tayé composed funerary verses

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<sup>234</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 38a–b: smin grol gyi gdams pa mtha' dag lhag lus med par bum pa gang byos tshul du gngang zhing bdag la gzhan phan byang chub sems kyi brgyud pa zhig yod pa 'di khyod kyis 'dzin par re'o.

<sup>235</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 38b: zhes gsungs nas don gyis rgyal pa'i gdung 'tshob tu mnga' gsol. Gyelsé Shenpen Tayé Özer (rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha' yas 'od zer) can be translated as: Son of the Conqueror [i.e., a bodhisattva] (rgyal sras), Radiance ('od zer) of Limitless (mtha' yas) Benefit to Others (gzhan phan).

<sup>236</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 38b: zhal gdams dang bslab bya mang du gngang.

<sup>237</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 38b: dpal gsang ba'i snying po'i bshad pa dang/ sgyu 'phrul zhi khro'i dbang dang gdams khrid kyi skor sogs mang du gsan.

<sup>238</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 38b: gzhan yang thugs sras kyi bu chen rnams las/ gtum mo rtsa rlung gi skor 'ga' zhig dang / na ro chos drug.

<sup>239</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 4b: sems skyo ba la tshad bzung ma mchis kyang // gngas dben par sgrub pa'i dam bca' bzungs//.

and verses of praise to Dodrupchen<sup>240</sup> and having performed the funerary ceremonies, he prepared to set out into the wilderness.

## 2.7 There and Back Again: The Life of a Wandering Yogi and Teacher (1821–c. 1827)

The death of Dodrupchen marked the beginning a peripatetic period of around seven years, during which time, Shenpen Tayé describes himself as,

Wandering aimlessly far and wide, meditating in places previously blessed by Panchen Vairo[chana] around the Gyelmorong region<sup>241</sup> and elsewhere according to the Lord’s [Dodrupchen’s] prior prophetic instructions.<sup>242</sup>

The hagiography describes these travels as spanning “all the sacred places between Kokonor Lake near Mongolia and the holy mountain of Langchen Gyngri in China” (rgyan nag glang chen ‘gying ri; i.e., Emai Shan), and mentions specific locales such as Gurchu Nyida Cave (mgur chu nyi zla phug),<sup>243</sup> the upper Senge Hermitage (ga gon seng ge yang dgon), Katishel Cave (ka ti shel phug pa), and Rimo Dentik (ri mo dan tig) and Yangtik (yang tik).<sup>244</sup> The hagiography explicitly mentions Shenpen Tayé as “relying

<sup>240</sup> These have been preserved in the *Bhutan Collected Works*, vol. 2, 221–244.

<sup>241</sup> This is roughly the area on the easternmost edge of Kham, bordered by Dartsedo to the south, the Chinese plains and Chengdu to the east, Nyarong to the west, and through which the Gyelmo Ngul River and its tributaries flow.

<sup>242</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 4b: rje nyid kyi lung bstan gngang don ltar// sngon paN chen bai ros byin rlabs pa'i// gnas rgyal mo rong gi sa phyogs sogs// yul nges med kun tu 'khyams shing bsgom//.

<sup>243</sup> “renowned as the Tsaritra (rtsa ri tra) of Kham and as a citadel of the five Buddha families (*rigs lnga'i rdzongs*). *Trinchok Catalog*, 39a.

<sup>244</sup> This likely refers to the site commonly called Riwo Dentik (ri bo dan tig), a holy mountain in Amdo situated near to the Machu River (rma chu) just north of Xunhua, southeast of Kubum (sku 'bum). Yangtik (BDRC G1PD96175) is located in roughly the same area. The Tibetan *Blue Annals*, describes Dentik as the place where the great Buddhist master Lachen Gongpa Rabtsel (bla chen dgong pa rab gsal; c. 832–915) taught the Vinaya to Ba Yeshé Gyungjung (sba ye shes gyung drung) and others, and thus, a key site for the preservation of the Vinaya during the Age of Fragmentation following the collapse of the Tibetan Empire. See *The Blue Annals*, trans. George N. Roerich, parts I & II (Calcutta: Motilal Banarsidass, 1949), 65–66.

upon the yogic practices of *inner heat* (*tumo*; *gtum mo*) and *extracting the essence* (*chülen*; *bcud len*), and “striving single-mindedly to accomplish the common meditations of the generation and completion stages and the vital point of the clear light of the Great Perfection.”<sup>245</sup> After much practice, “he achieved the signs of accomplishment in both the ordinary and extraordinary practices, and, in particular, by manifesting innate reality, during those times he spontaneously composed many Vajra songs of realization.”<sup>246</sup>

Shenpen Tayé’s choice of locales was no accident; the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen had a very strong personal, institutional, and political connections to many of the places listed above. Of particular importance was the history that Dodrupchen had with Kokonor region in what is now Qinghai, where he had become an important lama to a number of mongol chieftans. There is a story related in some of the historical sources whereby an imperial edict from the Chinese Qing Emperor was issued prohibiting Dodrupchen from leaving the Qinghai region.<sup>247</sup> Dodrupchen eventually was able to circumvent the edict and depart for his seat of Yarlung Pemakö in Golok in 1799 by, in part, leaving behind one of his students to fulfill his functions in his absence. It is possible that part of the reason for Shenpen Tayé’s sojourn in this region following Dodrupchen’s death was to continue this tradition of having a representative of Dodrupchen reside in the Qinghai

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<sup>245</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 39a: bcud len dang gtum mo'i rnal 'byor grogs su brten nas zab gsang bla na med pa'i bskyed rdzogs rim pa gnyis kyi nyams bzhes spyi dang / 'od gsal rdzogs pa chen po'i gnad la rtse gcig tu gzhol ba.

<sup>246</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 39a: thun mong dang thun mong ma yin pa'i lam gyi drod rtags brnyes shing / khyad par gnyug ma'i de nyid mngon du gyur pas skabs 'di dag tu nyams dbyangs rdo rje'i mgur ma thol byung du bzhes pa'ang mang du snang.

<sup>247</sup> Tulku Thondup, *Masters of Meditation and Miracles*, 151–153.

region to perform ritual and ministerial services for Dodrupchen’s erstwhile patrons. The possibility that Shenpen Tayé went to the Qinghai region, at least in part, to fulfill priestly duties promised in the past to powerful patrons in that region by Dodrupchen, is bolstered by the descriptions of Shenpen Tayé’s activities in those regions.

During these years, both of our main biographical sources explicitly mention that Shenpen Tayé also spent a great deal of time and energy teaching and giving transmissions and empowerments to “numerous fortunate students.”<sup>248</sup> Shenpen Tayé relates that during this time,

In assemblies of the faithful across of the three regions of Tibet all the way to the border with China, I worked to more firmly establish people in the profound Dharma. By the binding power of past karma, I circled around again and again, proving whatever benefit I could to all the faithful.<sup>249</sup>

The hagiography adds to this description with a summary of Shenpen Tayé’s activities that contains some interesting claims:

During [these travels] Shenpen Tayé engaged solely in spiritual practice (*sgrub pa kho na mdzad*), and during the intervals between this settled [retreat practice], he bestowed instructions on “ripening and liberation” (*smin grol*) on numerous fortunate students and *taught extensively on the doctrine of karma* (*las ‘bras kyi chos mang du gsungs*) to general gatherings of faithful folk, all of which benefited many disciples.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 39a–b.

<sup>249</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 4b: skabs la lar dad ldan 'dus tshogs la// chos zab mo'i 'brel 'jog nyid kyang bgyis// spyir bod ljong dum bu gsum gyi cha'i// mtha' dkar nag rgya la thug pa tshun// sngon las dbang btsan pos yang yang bskor// mi dad ldan kun la ci phan byas//.

<sup>250</sup> Emphasis mine. *Trinchok Catalog*, 39a–b: sgrub pa kho na mdzad cing bzhugs pa'i bar skabs rnam su las dang skal bar ldan pa'i bu slob 'ga' la smin grol gyi gdams pa phog cing / dad 'dus kyi tshogs pa spyi la'ang las 'bras kyi chos mang du gsungs pas gdul bya rnam la phan 'dogs par mdzad.

Although these brief descriptions contain little in the way of specifics, these passages make clear that Shenpen Tayé was actively engaged in public ministry during these early years. Of particular interest is the *character* of these “general teachings.” Rather than focus on providing ritual services and blessings to the groups of ordinary lay people that came to see him—as most Buddhist lamas of that time would do—Shenpen Tayé chose to focus on teaching them about “actions and their effects” (*las ‘bras*)—in other words, on *ethical behavior*. In essence, these passages provide evidence that Shenpen Tayé was engaging in a program of *lay ministry* and *ethical reform* from very early on in his career. Such a focus on giving accessible teachings on basic Buddhist topics to lay audiences has often been cited as a particular characteristic of two other lamas from Dzachukha: the great Nyingma master Dza Patrül, who studied and received transmissions from Shenpen Tayé, and their mutual teacher, Jikmé Nyugu.

The hagiography summarizes Shenpen Tayé’s activities during these years of wandering by saying:

In particular, in the area of Gyelmorong in places such as Tsaka (*tsha kha*)<sup>251</sup> and Dochen (*mdo chen*),<sup>252</sup> Shenpen Tayé thoroughly *spread a system of study and practice (bshad sgrub kyi srol kyang legs par dar)* that exists to this day in the numerous monasteries and practice centers that he founded.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> I could not find such a place in the Gyelmorong area. *Tsha kha* may refer to the frontier town, Tsakalo (*tsha kha log*; var. *yar kha log*), also known by its Chinese name Yanjing, that sits on the Lacang River in far Southern Kham south of Markham and just north of the border with Yunan. See Stéphane Gros, *Tricks of the Trade*, 151, 167.

<sup>252</sup> Dochen probably refers to the Nyingma Gompa, Dochen Thubten Nyishar Ling (*mdo chen thub bstan nyi shar gling*) <https://www.BDRC.org/#!rid=G1KR43>

<sup>253</sup> Emphasis mine. *Trinchok Catalog*, 39b: khyad par rgyal mo rong gi phyogs tsha kha dang mdo chen sogs su rje 'di nyid kyis phyag 'debs mdzad pa'i sgrub sde dang dgon sde 'ga' zhig yod pa la da lta'i dus su bshad sgrub kyi srol kyang legs par dar/.

The claim in the above passage that Shenpen Tayé was already spreading his distinctive “system of study and practice” (*bshad grub kyi srol*) during this early period of his career is very interesting and will be investigated in more depth in chapter four below. For now, we will note the rather startling fact that the hagiography locates the genesis of Shenpen Tayé’s distinctive educational and scholarly system not within any elite, monastic institution, nor as a product of formal study, but in the mountain retreats and village teachings that Shenpen Tayé engaged in during this peripatetic period in his 20s. With these thoughts in mind, we will now turn to Shenpen Tayé’s first trip to Dzokchen Monastery, which was to have a momentous impact on the future trajectory of the Nyingma tradition as a whole.

## **2.8 Instituting a New System of Study and Practice at Dzokchen Monastery (c. 1827–1829)**

Sometime in the mid-to-late 1820s, Shenpen Tayé made his way to the vicinity of Dzokchen Monastery, which is nestled in a protected valley in lower Dzachukha and overlooked by the jagged, snow-covered peaks of the Rudam (ru dam) mountain range. The hagiography explains that Shenpen Tayé’s motivations for going to the Dzokchen area stemmed from a prophecy made by Dodrupchen to Shenpen Tayé before the former’s death:

Therefore, in isolated retreats in Rudam,  
 You will eliminate the manifold distractions,  
 And in fervently practicing the generation and perfection stages,  
 Beings of the form realms and formless realms  
 Will transform into your myriad disciples.  
 Unifying the dual concerns of oneself and others,

Your actual accomplishments will equal those described in the *Testament of Padma*.<sup>254</sup>

Remembering this prophecy made by his late master, Shenpen Tayé resolved to “engage in one-pointed practice in the isolated retreats of Rudam.”<sup>255</sup> Upon arriving at Dzokchen Monastery, we are told that Shenpen Tayé met with the throne holder of Dzokchen, the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang, Mingyur Namkahi Dorjé (rdzogs chen grub dbang mi ‘gyur nam mkha’i rdo rje; 1793–1870), from whom he received “profound and extensive transmissions,” (*zhib rgyas gsan*) including the “grand empowerment” (*dbang chen mo*) for the *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions* (*dgongs pa ‘dus pa’i mdo*), together with the empowerments, reading transmissions, and guidance (*dbang lung khrid*) for the *Khandro Nyingtik* (*mkha’gro snying thig*).<sup>256</sup> The *Khandro Nyingtik* had been the signature Great Perfection practice lineage at Dzokchen Monastery since the institution’s founding (c. 1687) by Pema Rikdzin (1625–1697). Later, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang, Ngedon Tendzin Zangpo (nges don bstan ‘dzin bzang po; 1759–1792), is remembered as being a particularly strong proponent of the *Khandro Nyingtik* teachings.<sup>257</sup> As I

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<sup>254</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 39b: de phyir na ru dam dben par// 'du 'dzi yi spros pa bcad bzhin// bskyed rdzogs la brtson pa bskyed na// gzugs can dang gzugs med 'gro ba// phal mo che gdul byar 'gyur zhing // rang gzhan gyi don gnyis lhan gtsig// 'grub nges pa pad+ma'i bkar mtshungs//. The *Testament of Padma* (*pad+ma bka' thang*) is an extensive hagiography of Padmasambhava, revealed as a terma by the great 14<sup>th</sup>-century tertön Orgyen Lingpa (o rgyan gling pa; b. 1323). The text tells the life story of Padmasambhava in 108 chapters and runs to between 500 to over 600 folio sides depending on the edition. An English translation (from an earlier French translation) was published in 1978 in two volumes: Yeshé Tsogyal, *The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava*, Kenneth Douglas and Gwendolyn Bays, trans, 2 Vol. (Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1978).

<sup>255</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 39b: ru dam gyi dben gnas rnams su sgrub pa rtse gcig mdzad par bshed. Dodrupchen himself is said to have “devoted seven years to one-pointed spitiual practice at Dewachenpo.” See Nyoshul Khenpo, *Marvalous Garland* 319.

<sup>256</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 39b–40a.

<sup>257</sup> See “Translator’s Introduction” in the Third Dzokchen Rinpoché’s *Great Perfection: Outer and Inner Preliminaries*, trans. Courtland Dahl (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 2007), xv–xvii.

discussed in chapter one, it was during this period in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that Jikmé Lingpa's *Longchen Nyingtik* came to be widely practiced and disseminated by Jikmé Lingpa's students—such as the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen and Jikmé Nyugu—and their students, including Shenpen Tayé and the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang. The resulting popularity of the *Longchen Nyingtik* system was such that it came to supersede the *Khandro Nyingtik* as the preeminent Great Perfection cycle at Dzokchen Monastery. As the above passage shows however, the *Khandro Nyingtik* was still being actively propagated at Dzokchen by the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang during this period.

Shenpen Tayé soon took up residence in the caves on the slopes of the Rudam mountains overlooking Dzokchen Monastery and engaged in a period of intensive spiritual practice. It was during this time—probably in or around the year 1828<sup>258</sup>—that a series of events occurred that were to have a momentous impact not only on the direction of the Nyingma tradition, but on the shape of scholarship and religious education across the entire Tibetan cultural sphere. The hagiography describes the events thus:

Shenpen Tayé was residing in Shingjé and Tsering caves engaging in spiritual practice. During this time, The Lord himself, the precious tulku [4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang] repeatedly came and petitioned Shenpen Tayé to establish a tradition

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<sup>258</sup> Although there are no contemporaneous or near-contemporaneous sources that give the year that Shenpen Tayé arrived at Dzokchen and/or when he gave the initial shedra teachings, the recent institutional history of Dzokchen, *rdzogs chen chos byung chen mo* (2005) says that Shenpen Tayé's first shedra teachings at Dzokchen took place in the earth mouse year (1828): *dgung grangs nyer dgu bzhes pa rab byung bcu bzhi pai sa byi*, 361. This dating fits in well with the timeline that can be reconstructed from the earlier sources: We know that Dodrupchen died in or around 1821 and that, following his stay at Dzokchen, Shenpen Tayé traveled to Central Tibet during which he met with the 6<sup>th</sup> Minling Trichen, Rigdzin Pema Wangyel Dorjé at Lhalung Monastery (described below). The *Trinchok Catalog* (46a–b) records some verses that were spontaneously composed by Pema Wangyel Dorjé for Shenpen Tayé during their meeting, the author's colophon of which states that this meeting occurred in the iron rabbit year (1831). Based on the descriptions of the events between these two attested dates, it seems obvious that Shenpen Tayé's stay in the Dzokchen area happened well into the second half of the period spanning those two datable events (i.e., 1821–1831), resulting in a plausible estimate of these initial shedra teachings taking place sometime between 1827–1829.



of study and practice at the monastery. Due to this urging, Shenpen Tayé offered a course of teachings to a group of about 100 resident ‘monks’ (*grwa tshang*) as well as resident and visiting young lamas and tulküs, which focused on the following texts: [Sherab Özer’s] *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra* (*mdo sngags smon lam*), [Jikmé Lingpa’s] *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities* (*yon tan mdzod*), [Ngari Panchen’s] *Ascertainment of the Three Vows* (*sdom gsum rnam nges*), the glorious *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, and so forth. In so doing, he *laid the foundation for* [a system of] *explanatory teaching* (*bshad pa gting tshugs pa*) designed to effectively guide disciples of various capacities along the path of scriptural study and philosophical reasoning.<sup>259</sup>

We will investigate this event and the texts involved in much more detail in chapter four, but here I will note that three of the four texts mentioned above— *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra*, *Ascertainment of the Three Vows*, and the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*— form core texts of the formal curriculum developed by Shenpen Tayé for the shedra at Dzokchen as recorded in a set of institutional regulations (*chayik; bca' yig*) published about thirty years later by Shenpen Tayé’s student, Pema Vajra (*pad+ma badz+ra*; 1807–1884).<sup>260</sup> We can also see in the above passage, the explicit mention of *shepa* (*bshad pa*) as the specific method with which Shenpen Tayé “guided students [. . .] along the path of scriptural study and analysis” (*lung rig gi lam nas nges pa 'drong ba*). For these reasons, I argue that we can view this set of teachings given by Shenpen Tayé at or near Dzokchen around the year 1828, as the point of inception of what was to develop in the institution known as Śrī Siṃha Shedra at Dzokchen—and, as such, marks the genesis of modern

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<sup>259</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 39b–40a: gshin rje phug dang tshe ring phug sogs su sgrub pa mdzad de bzhugs pa'i bar skabs nams la/ mchog sprul rin po che'i zhal snga nas rje 'di nyid la dgon 'dir bshad sgrub kyi srol ka re btod rgyu byung na legs tshul gyi gsung nan yang yang phebs par brten/ gzhi byis kyi bla sprul dang grwa tshang bcas khyon brgya skor tsam la/ mdo sngags smon lam/ yon tan mdzod/ sdom gsum rnam nges/ dpal ldan gsang ba snying po sogs gdul bya'i blo dang mtshams par lung rig gi lam nas nges pa 'drong ba'i bshad pa gting tshugs par mdzad

<sup>260</sup> dpal seng ge ri thub bstan nyin byed gling gi rgyun ja'i bca' yig. This document is discussed in detail in chapter four below.

Nyingma shedras.<sup>261</sup> These issues will be discussed in far more detail in chapter four below.

Shenpen Tayé’s description in his autobiography of this first momentous visit to Dzokchen is quite brief, saying simply:

At an isolated place in Rudam, I relied on the circle [of teachers] of that blissful place, [sitting] at the feet of the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang Drupwang, Lord Khenchen Pema Mangala, Lingsé Terchen Drodül Tsel (gling sras gter chen ‘gro ‘dul rtsal)<sup>262</sup>, and others, from whom I received the entire treasury of Dharma: *Kama*, *Terma*, and personal instructions.<sup>263</sup>

The “Lord Khenchen Pema Mangala” mentioned here is better known as Sengdruk Pema Tashi (seng phrug pad+ma bkra shis; b. 1798), who was to be a major conduit of practice and textual lineages to Shenpen Tayé. The hagiography describes Shenpen Tayé meeting and studying with Pema Tashi, who was residing in a “mountain retreat” (*ri khrod*) in the vicinity of Dzokchen Monastery. During this time, Shenpen Tayé took his vows of full monastic ordination (*bsnyen par rdzogs pa dge slong*) from Pema Tashi in the main temple of Dzokchen Monastery<sup>264</sup> and also received bodhisattva vows from him.<sup>265</sup> Upon

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<sup>261</sup> And perhaps also Sakya and Kagyü shedras insofar as the most influential of the early modern Sakya and Kagyü shedras (i.e., the shedras at Dzongsar and Pelpung) were heavily indebted to the institutional and curricular models developed at Śrī Siṃha.

<sup>262</sup> I have not been able to identify this person. Perhaps it refers to Nyakla Pema Drodül (*nyag bla pad+ma ‘gro ‘dul*; 1816–1872; [ToL page](#))? Mingyur Namkhai Dorjé’s biography in Gyelwang Nyima’s *History of the Throne holders of Dzokchen* mentions that Mingyur Dorjé met a “gling gter pad+ma ‘gro ‘dul rtsal,” and that their “minds mixed into one” (thugs yid gcig ‘dres). 68b.

<sup>263</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 4b: khyad par du ru dam dben gnas su// mgon grub pa’i dbang phyug rdzogs chen pa’i// sku’i skye srid bzhi pa’i zhabs rdul dang // rje mkhan chen pad+ma mang+ga la// khong gling sras gter chen ‘gro ‘dul rtsal// mgon de sogs dam pa du ma’i zhabs// gnas bde chen ‘khor lor bsten byas nas// chos bka’ gter gdams pa’i mdzod kun blangs//.

<sup>264</sup> Patrul Orgyen Chökyi Wangpo. “rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha’ yas kyi gsan yig gi mgo rgyan (*Transmission Record of Gyelsé Shenpen Tayé*),” 199.

<sup>265</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 40a–b: dben pa’i ri la geig tu dgyes shing sbas pa’i tshul du bzhugs pa’i rdo rje ‘dzin pa chen po pad+ma mang+ga la shrI b+ha dra’i zhal snga nas/ bstan pa’i gzhi ma ‘dul ba so thar gyi rab byung gzhi chog la brten nas bsnyen par rdzogs pa dge slong gi dngos par bsgrub.

receiving full ordination, Shenpen Tayé received the ordination name Thubten Pema Gyepé Nyinché Pelzangpo (thub bstan pad+ma rgyas pa'i nyin byed dpal bzang po) from Pema Tashi.

Shenpen Tayé also received “a host of surviving lineages of Nyingma *kama* and *terma* scriptures” from Pema Tashi—many of which focused on the *Kagyé* (*bka' brgyad*) or Eight Proclamation Deities, a class of Nyingma apotropaic ritual practices focusing on a set of eight wrathful deities.<sup>266</sup> These included: *Magical Display of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities* (*'sgyu 'phrul zhi khro*); *Yangdak Heruka* (*yang dag he ru ka*); Red and Black Bhairava (*gshin rje gzhed dmar nag*); “Rongzom’s system of *Phurba*” (*kilaya*); the commentaries on difficult points known as *Black Myriad* (*'bum nag*); the “early and later systems” of the *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions* (*dgongs pa 'dus pa'i mdo*); the *mind*, *expanse*, and *practice instruction* classes [of Great Perfection teachings] (*sems klong man ngag gi sde gsum*); *Gathering of the Sugatas* (*bde gshegs 'dus pa*) from the *Kagyé*<sup>267</sup>; *United Intent of the Gurus* (*bla ma dgongs 'dus*)<sup>268</sup>; and *Excellent Vase of the Wish-fulfilling Tree* (*'dod 'jo bum bzang*).<sup>269</sup> As we will see in chapter five, many of the texts

<sup>266</sup> Nicholas Trautz summarizes the *Kagyé* thus: “From its revelation by Ngadak Nyangrel Nyima Özer (*mnga' bdag myang ral nyi ma 'od zer*; 1124-92) in the mid-twelfth century, to its curation as a massive compendium of ritual knowledge for the Nyingma’s major temples in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Eight Teachings has supplied unique doctrines, mytho-historical narratives, and ritual programs that have undergirded the development of the Nyingma denomination. The *bka' brgyad*’s wrathful iconography and apotropaic ritualism have provided imaginal and praxical resources for the Nyingma, and the Eight Teachings cycle was coordinated with emergent historiographical conceptions to advance a distinctive vision of Buddhist mastery and denominational identity. Trautz, “The Legacy of the Eight Teachings: Revelation, Ritual, and Enlightened Violence in Classical Tibet,” Ph.D. diss. University of Virginia, 2019, 2.

<sup>267</sup> This is the early anthology of *Kagyé* *termas* compiled by Nyangrel Nyima Özer (*nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer*; 1124–1192)

<sup>268</sup> A *terma* cycle by Sangyé Lingpa (*sangs rgyas gling pa*; 1340–1396)

<sup>269</sup> An encyclopedic collection of *terma* texts compiled by Terdak Lingpa (*gter dag gling pa*; 1646-1714) and his brother Lochen Dharmaśrī (*lo chen d+harma shrI*; 1654-1718) of Mindröling.

and cycles listed above found their way into Shenpen Tayé’s nine-volume *Trinchok Collection of kama* texts.

### ***Sengdruk Pema Tashi***

It is worth saying a bit more about this interesting and influential character. Sengdruk Pema Tashi was an important figure in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century rise of Nyingma monasticism and scholasticism, but about whom precious little information seems to have survived. Virtually all of his literary output appears to have been lost and we do not have any surviving biographies written by his students or contemporaries.<sup>270</sup> Later accounts<sup>271</sup> state that Pema Tashi enrolled at Dzokchen Monastery at a young age and studied with the main teachers there, including the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwangs. He is also said to have studied with and taken transmissions from a number of Shenpen Tayé’s closest teachers, including Dodrupchen Jikmé Trinlé Özer and Jikmé Nyugu, as well as Tashi Gyatso, of whom Shenpen Tayé had been recognized as the incarnation [see above]. Pema Tashi also seems to have spent a good stretch of time at Mindröling Monastery<sup>272</sup> (smin ‘grol gling) prior to his meeting Shenpen Tayé, where he is said to have received full monastic ordination from the 6<sup>th</sup> Minling Khenchen Rikdzin Zangpo (smin gling mkhan chen rig ‘dzin bzang po; d.u.).

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<sup>270</sup> The only text attributed to Pema Tashi on the BDRC online database is a “Note on Consecration,” that runs about 55 folio sides in handwritten cursive *dbu med* script (BDRC W8LS19443).

<sup>271</sup> The following details are taken from Tendzin Lungtok Nyima’s recent history, *Great History of Dzokchen* (*rdzogs chen chos ‘byung chen mo*), 408–409.

<sup>272</sup> Oral tradition has been recorded placing Pema Tashi at Mindröling for 15–20 years. See Andreas Kretschmar, trans., *Drops of Nectar: Khenpo Kunpal’s Commentary on Śāntideva’s Bodhisattva-aṅgāra*. (n.p. 2003), 28, note 177

Pema Tashi was a major conduit for transmitting a broad range of Nyingma cycles and lineages down to Shenpen Tayé. As we saw above, during Shenpen Tayé’s first visit to Dzokchen in the late 1820s, he received a large portion of the Nyingma Kagyé textual heritage, as well as full monastic ordination and bodhisattva vows. As I will explain in more detail in chapter five, Pema Tashi is also recorded as transmitting a large number of Nyingma *kama* (*bka’ ma*) lineages to Shenpen Tayé, including: the Early Translation lineage of the vows of individual liberation; the ritual system of the Eight Medicine Deity Sugatas (*bder gshegs sman lha brgyad*); Mañjuśrī as Black Yamāntaka (*‘jam dpal kha thun nag po*); the set of Vajrakīlaya commentaries called, “*Black Myriad*” (*‘bum nag*);<sup>273</sup> the explanatory lineage of Longchenpa and the empowerment lineages for the *General Tantras of the Magical Net* (*spyi rgyud sgyu ‘phrul drwa ba*); the *Eighteen Thoughts of the mind class* (*sems sde bco brgyad kyi dgongs*) by Mokton Dorjé Pelzang;<sup>274</sup> the “close lineage” (*nye brgyud*) of the A-ro system of mind class; the *Vajra Bridge* (*rdo rje zam pa*) system; and Longchenpa’s *Lama Yangtik* guidance on the *Vimala Nyingtik*. As we shall see in chapter five, many of these texts and lineages that Shenpen Tayé received here from Pema Tashi were to find their way into Shenpen Tayé’s nine-volume anthology of *kama* ritual texts (*Trinchok Collection*). There is also evidence that Shenpen Tayé received the transmission of Śāntideva’s *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* (*byang*

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<sup>273</sup> This is likely the pair of commentaries on the practice of Vajrakīlaya attributed to Padmasambhava entitled *phur pa’i ‘grel chen bdud rtsi dri med* ([BDRC W27485](#)).

<sup>274</sup> The text associated with this entry (*sems sde ma bu bco brgyad kyi dgongs pa ngo sprod pa’i thabs/ rig pa rtsal gyi dbang bco brgyad bskur ba’i chog khrigs bla ma’i zhal gdams*; *Trinchok Collection* text no. 84) is listed on [BDRC.org](#) as being authored by *rmog ston rdo rje dpal* (d.u.; P7682), who was a 15<sup>th</sup>-century figure associated with Katok. Another possibility is *g.yung ston rdo rje dpal* (1284–1365; [BDRC P1454](#)).

*chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa*) from Pema Tashi as well, which was to become a core curricular text in the shedra founded by Shenpen Tayé.<sup>275</sup>

Another important connection that Shenpen Tayé made in his meeting with Pema Tashi that is not explicitly stated but is implicit in the nature of many of the above transmissions, is the connection to Mindröling Monastery and the traditions of its founders, Terdak Lingpa and Lochen Dharmashrī, and their successors. As we will explain in more detail in chapter five, Mindröling Monastery was the site of a profoundly influential realignment of Nyingma practice and Nyingma identity due to the institutional, doctrinal, and ritual innovations of its founder brothers. Although we have very little historical source material on Sengdruk Pema Tashi, the fact that he is widely cited as the first head khenpo of Śrī Siṃha Shedra (Shenpen Tayé is usually cited as the second) strongly suggests that Pema Tashi played a central role in the founding and early years of the shedra. Another clue to Pema Tashi's role in the resurgence of Nyingma scholarship and monasticism during this period is the fact that figures from this period usually affixed the title “Khenchen” (*mkhan chen*)—which means “Great Scholar-Preceptor”—to his name.<sup>276</sup> Such a title, combined with Pema Tashi's attested role as the preceptor that conferred full monastic ordination on Shenpen Tayé, demonstrates that Pema Tashi was a highly revered and respected Buddhist scholar and monastic leader.

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<sup>275</sup> Dza Patrul's *Supplication to the Lineage Masters of the Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* (*spyod 'jug brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs*), lists Shenpen Tayé immediately after Pema Tashi in the lineage supplication. *Collected Works of Orgyen Chökyi Wangpo*, vol. 8, 45.

<sup>276</sup> Other than the reference in Shenpen Tayé's *Verse Autobiography* given above, we also see this title given to Pema Tashi in Gyelwang Nyima's *History of the Throne holders of Dzokchen*, 74b.

We can also assume, based on the extensive esoteric transmissions conferred on Shenpen Tayé by Pema Tashi, and the fact that the latter was described as “residing in a mountain retreat” (*ri khrod du bzhugs*),<sup>277</sup> that Pema Tashi was also a highly accomplished tantric master. In short, the very small amount of direct textual evidence that we have on Pema Tashi shows him to be an example of that oft-cited, but rare-in-reality, category of a fully realized scholar-adept (*khedrup; mkhas grub*). Unfortunately, given the dearth of extant direct sources on the life and activities of Pema Tashi, most of the specific details of his activities and contributions remain largely beyond our reach.

### ***Shenpen Tayé’s Affiliation with Dzokchen Monastery***

Shenpen Tayé’s first visit to Dzokchen was to be a uniquely formative moment in his life. Over the course of the rest of his life, Shenpen Tayé would return again and again to Dzokchen, eventually making it his main seat (*gdan sa*) and establishing his *lama estate* (*labrang; bla brang*) there.<sup>278</sup> Dzokchen was to be the site of the two of Shenpen Tayé’s most influential projects: the founding of what came to be known as Śrī Simha Shedra, and the editing and publishing of a nine-volume anthology of Nyingma texts collected under the rubric of the Nyingma *kama* [discussed below in chapters four and five respectively].

Sources from the period contain very little information about the specific contours of Shenpen Tayé’s affiliation with Dzokchen Monastery, such as his official titles, offices held, and so forth. For example, none of the sources from that period mentions that

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<sup>277</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 40a.

<sup>278</sup> Gyelwang Nyima, *History of the Throne holders of Dzokchen*, 70b.

Shenpen Tayé acted as the throne holder (*Tripa; khri pa*, or *Trichen; khri chen*) of Dzokchen Monastery—a claim that is made in the two most important recent Tibetan religious histories of Dzokchen.<sup>279</sup>

## 2.9 Expanding Horizons: Travels to Central Tibet (c. 1830–1838)

Over the course of the next few years, Shenpen Tayé made at least two trips to Central Tibet, where he took teachings from, and made a number of important connections with, important religious figures. These travels to Central Tibet and the connections and teachings that Shenpen Tayé received therein signaled a distinctive shift from his previous studies and training. Prior to these travels, Shenpen Tayé’s training and personal interactions had taken place almost exclusively within a Nyingma milieu—and, specifically, within the tradition and lineages of Jikmé Lingpa, of whom most of his primary teachers—Dodrupchen, Jikmé Nyugu, Jikmé Ngotsar, and so forth—had been direct students. Shenpen Tayé’s travels to Central Tibet in the early 1830s were to expand this early training considerably.

The hagiography describes Shenpen Tayé meeting and studying with “the abbot of the Upper Tantric College (*rgyud stod*),” Gendün Dargyé (*dge ‘dun dar rgyas*; 1786–c.1850s/60s)<sup>280</sup>, from whom he received:

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<sup>279</sup> The 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang Mingyur Namkhai Dorjé was the throne holder during Shenpen Tayé’s lifetime.

<sup>280</sup> BDRC [P3577](https://www.bdrc.org/#!rid=P3577). A major Gelukpa scholastic figure, who taught extensively at the tantric college of the Gelukpa monastery of Labrang (*bla brang*), eventually acting as the college’s throne holder (*khri pa*). In 1848, he ascended to become to the 43<sup>rd</sup> throne holder of Labrang (*bla brang*) itself and was known for founding both philosophical colleges (*mtshan nyid grwa tshang*) and tantric colleges (*rgyud pa grwa tshang*) at various Gelugpa Monasteries ([https://www.BDRC.org/#!rid=P3577](https://www.bdrc.org/#!rid=P3577)).



The *Five Treatises of Maitreya*, various works on Madhyamaka, including the collection of [Nāgārjuna's] *Six Texts on Reasoning* (*rig pa'i tshogs drug*),<sup>281</sup> and so forth, and all of the extant systems of scholarly texts from India.<sup>282</sup>

During this set of trips he also received “the great collection of the words of the Buddha in translation (*Kangyur*; *bka' gyur*) in its entirety”<sup>283</sup> from Gyurmé Mipam Pelzangpo<sup>284</sup> ('gyur med mi pham dpal bzang po, d.u.), a “Dordzin of Mindröling.”<sup>285</sup> From the Lhalung Peri Tülku<sup>286</sup>, he received the *Black Yamari Six-Faced Tantra* (*gshin rje gdong drug*) and

<sup>281</sup> Karma Phuntsok gives the following summary of these texts by Nāgārjuna: “Traditional historians credited Nāgārjuna with three classes of writings: the scholastic (*rigs tshogs*), hymnic (*bstod tshogs*) and homiletic (*gtam tshogs*) corpuses, to use Seyfort Ruegg's translation. The scholastic *rigs tshogs* or *Yukti* corpus includes the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, *Yuktiṣaṣṭika*, *Śūnyatāsaptati*, *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, *Vaidalyasūtra* and certain lost *\*Vyavahārasiddhi* according to Butön, Longchenpa, Maja Jangchub Tsöndrū, Jigme Lingpa among many others. Tsongkhapa and his followers enumerated six in this corpus but substituted *Vyavahārasiddhi* by *Ratnāvalī*.” In *Mipham's Dialectics and the Debates on Emptiness* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 235, n. 23.

<sup>282</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 40b: de nas dbus phyogs su yang deng sngon lan gnyis tsam rim par phebs shing / der rgyud stod mkhan po dge 'dun dar rgyas las/ byams chos sde lnga dang / dbu ma rig pa'i tshogs drug sogs 'phags yul mkhas pa'i gzhung lugs kyi rgyun yod do cog thams cad dang /

<sup>283</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 40b–41a: o rgyan smin grol gling gi rdor 'dzin mkhan po 'gyur med mi pham dpal bzang po las rgyal ba'i bka' 'gyur chen mo yongs rdzogs/

<sup>284</sup> I have not been able to find any specific information on this figure.

<sup>285</sup> The official Mindröling history has this to say about the title of *rdor 'dzin*:

In the Mindröling tradition, the title of dor dzin was bestowed to a very few select, extremely realized and learned masters who accomplished many retreats and practices and were especially adept at the profound new terms of Mindröling. The title, which means “Holder of the Vajra,” was bestowed by the Trichen. The *dor dzins* were not reincarnate tulkus or recognized teachers rather they were selected from the group of lopöns who had completed all learnings, trainings and retreats. The lopöns were ordinary monks who rose to the position through their learning and accomplishments.

The dor dzins became senior lopöns and presided over drubchens, bestowed transmissions and served as retreat masters and advisors to the general administration of the monastery. Among them, the most accomplished often became the tutors of the sons and daughters of the lineage and also served as regents on many occasions in the history of Mindröling. Many great masters including Minling Chung Rinpoche, the 8th Minling Khen Rinpoche and Kyabje Trulshig Rinpoche studied under the dor-dzins of Mindröling. His Holiness The 11th Mindröling Trichen was also tutored by the great dor dzins as was the previous Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche (Dudjom Jigdral Yeshé Dorje) whose root guru was one of the great dor dzins of Mindröling—Dor-dzin Namdrol Gyatso. See Mindrolling Jetsün Khandro Rinpoché and Mindrolling Jetsün Dechen Paldrön, *Mindrolling History Project* (n.p.: Dharmashri/Mindrolling International, 2015, 98.

<sup>286</sup> This probably refers to the 8th Peling Tukse Kunzang Zinnon Shepa Tsel (*pad gling thugs sras kun bzang zil gnon bzhad pa rtsal*, birth: c.1825) of Lhalung Monastery ([BDRC G389](#)), a branch monastery of Mindröling.

the *Mitra Gyatsa* (*mi tra brgya rtsa*).<sup>287</sup> From the Minling Trichen<sup>288</sup>, he received the entire *Terchen Kabum* (*gter chen bka' 'bum*).<sup>289</sup> From “the Tülku of Nelendra<sup>290</sup> who passed away soon after,”<sup>291</sup> he received Bari [Lotsawa’s] *One Hundred Sādhanas* (*ba ri brgya rtsa*)<sup>292</sup> and the *Ocean of Sādhanas* (*sgrub thabs rgya mtsho*).<sup>293</sup> And from Yongdzin Damjampa Trinlé Yönten (yong ‘dzin dam byams pa ‘phrin las yon tan; b. 18<sup>th</sup> cent.),<sup>294</sup> he received the *Hevra Tantra* empowerment, the *Lamdre* cycle and so forth, and “gained infinite transmissions and teachings from many great non-sectarian teachers of the old and new traditions.”<sup>295</sup>

Shenpen Tayé himself summarizes these travels thus:

In the region of Ü-Tsang (Central and Southern Tibet), I met with many learned and realized (*mkhas grub*) masters of great renown from the Kagyü, Nyingma, Sakya, and Ganden (Gelug) traditions, and received many Dharma teachings (*mtshon chos mang zhus*) through [transmissions of] the *Kangyur* and *Tengyur*.<sup>296</sup>

Here we see that the autobiography describes these transmissions as “receiving many Dharma teachings” (*mtshon chos mang zhus*), suggesting at least some level of

<sup>287</sup> A collection of 100+ initiations originating with the siddha mitrayogin ([BDRC T1774](#)).

<sup>288</sup> It is unclear which Minling Trichen this refers to, but, as described below, Shenpen Tayé is described as meeting with the 7<sup>th</sup> Minling Trichen Gyurmé Sangyé Kunga (‘gyur med sangs rgyas kun dga’, d.u.), so this passage is likely referring to him.

<sup>289</sup> This likely refers to Terdak Lingpa’s *gter chen bka' 'bum*. BDRC has the [dkar chag](#) (W20425) but not the collection itself, it seems.

<sup>290</sup> na len dra; a major Sakya Monastery north of Lhasa renowned for its long history of scholastic learning.

<sup>291</sup> This was likely the 14<sup>th</sup> Chojé Trichen (*bco brgyad khri chen*) of Nalendra, Tenpé Wangchuk Gyurmé Chokdrup (*bstan pa'i dbang phyug 'gyur med mchog grub*; b. 18<sup>th</sup> cent.; [BDRC P8447](#)).

<sup>292</sup> [BDRC W4CZ307390](#).

<sup>293</sup> [BDRC W27253](#). A collection of sādhanas texts written and compiled by the Sakya master from Ngö Monastery, Jampa Namkha Chimé (*byams pa nam mkha' 'chi med*; 176–1820; [BDRC P2526](#)).

<sup>294</sup> [BDRC P7036](#), a major figure from Nalendra Monastery.

<sup>295</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 41a: yongs 'dzin dam byams pa 'phrin las yon tan las/ kyai rdor rgyud dbang dang / lam 'bras kyī skor sogs gsar nying ris med kyī skyes chen du ma las gsan bsam mtha' yas par mdzad/.

<sup>296</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 4b–5a: yul dbus gtsang phyogs na grags che ba'i// dga' ldan dang sa rnying bka' brgyud kyī// khong mkhas grub du ma'i zhabs la gtugs// bka' bstan 'gyur gyis mtshon chos mang zhus//.

substantive engagement with the contents of the transmitted works was occurring. Similarly, the hagiography describes the mode of transmission for all the texts and teachings in this list as “boundlessly listened and contemplated” (*gsan bsam mtha' yas par mdzad*), suggesting that these transmissions involved more than just the requisite *oral transmission (lung)* of the texts,<sup>297</sup> but also included some degree of substantive study. Perhaps the most striking feature of these teachings and transmissions is their highly eclectic and multi-sectarian character. Our two main sources describe Shenpen Tayé receiving major transmissions and teachings from Geluk, Nyingma, and Sakya luminaries—with the autobiography also mentioning unspecified Kagyü masters. I will discuss the potential influences of these inter-sectarian interactions on Shenpen Tayé’s shedra curriculum in more detail in chapter four below.

Also of great interest in the above list of teachings and transmissions, is the extensive transmission of important Sakya texts and lineages to Shenpen Tayé from a number of luminaries associated with the renowned Sakya scholastic center of Nalendra. Such intersectarian study by the founder of the first modern Nyingma shedra is interesting in light of the close Nyingma-Sakya connections of a number of later key shedra reformers and luminaries including Shenpen Chökyi Nangwa<sup>298</sup> (1871–1927) and Khyentsé Chökyi Lodrö (mkhyen brtse chos kyi blo gros; 1893–1959).<sup>299</sup> However, as

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<sup>297</sup> As well as the empowerments (*dbang*) where necessary.

<sup>298</sup> Shenpen Chökyi Nangwa (“Khenpo Shenga”) is known to have had deep and sustained engagement with numerous Sakya figures and institutions. For an in-depth discussion of these connections, see Achim Bayer’s recent study on Shenga, *The Life and Works of mKhan-po gZhan-dga’*, particularly: 87–90 (Shenga and Loter Wangpo), 115–128 (relationship with Khyentsé Chökyi Lodrö and Shenga’s role in founding the shedra at Dzongsar), 139–148 (teaching at the Sakya shedra at *skye dgu don grub gling*).

<sup>299</sup> See Drubgyud Tenzin Rinpoche and Khenpo Sonam Phuntsok, trans. *The Life and Times of Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö* (Boulder: Shambhala, 2017), particularly 23–27 and 39–47 (Chökyi Lodrö’s connection to Katok Monastery).

we shall see, unlike these later figures, Shenpen Tayé seems to have more firmly directed his efforts and activities toward distinctively *Nyingma* projects and institutions, making this period of intersectarian study somewhat of an aberration in the career of a figure that was otherwise consistently focused on propagating, strengthening and reforming *Nyingma* lineages and institutions.

The above list also mentions teachings and transmissions that Shenpen Tayé received from two leading figures from the Nyingma monastery of Mindröling. Interestingly, the only specific mention of Shenpen Tayé in Jikmé Gyelmé Nyugu’s detailed biography, confirms that Shenpen Tayé did indeed receive extensive teachings and transmissions on the *Kangyur* at Mindröling. The passage mentions Jikmé Nyugu meeting Shenpen Tayé at or around Chaktsa Monastery (phyag tshwa dgon) in Dzachukha<sup>300</sup> sometime in 1834. The text states that Jikmé Nyugu had just finished giving eleven days of instructions and public blessings and empowerments (*khrom dbang*) at “*ba yan*,”<sup>301</sup> near Chaktsa and Norling (nor gling) Monasteries, when,

I met my and Dodrupchen’s own student, Shenpen Tayé Özer, to whom I taught the method of granting the necessary preliminaries and method of granting the *energy of awareness empowerment (rig pa’i rtsal dbang)*. He, having received a stream of many teachings, empowerments, and oral transmissions relating to the precious *Kangyur* from Mindröling, offered them [to me] at this time along with 25 pieces of silver.<sup>302</sup>

<sup>300</sup> Chaktsa is a Nyingma Monastery in Dzachukha that is a branch of Katok Monastery. [BDRC G3956](#).

<sup>301</sup> I initially considered the possibility that *ba yan* here refers to the district of Bayan Khar (Hualong in modern Qinghai province) particularly since Shenpen Tayé reportedly did spend time in the nearby areas of Rimo Dentik (*ri mo dan tig*) and Yangtik (*yang tik*) in the preceding years. However, the reference to “*ba yan*” in Jikmé Nyugu’s biography occurs directly between references to teaching at Chaktsa Gumpa and then at Norling Gumpa ([BDRC G3939](#))—which are only about 15 to 20 kilometers apart along the Tongba River in Dzachukha. As there is no reference to travel, I assume that *ba yan* is either a local place name or descriptor (*yan* can mean “upper” or “above”).

<sup>302</sup> Jikmé Gyelmé Nyugu, ‘*gro mgon bla ma rje’i gsang gsum rnam thar*, 247: skyabs rje rdo grub rin po che dang / rang re’i dngos slob dge mang sprul pa’i sku gzhan phan mtha’ yas ’od zer nas khyed par sngon

We will look further at the important set of connections that Shenpen Tayé forged with Mindröling in the next section of this chapter and in chapter five below.

### ***Practice and “Accomplishment”***

Both of our main biographical sources also mention that Shenpen Tayé spent much of his time during these travels in Central Tibet doing spiritual *practice* at holy sites around Central Tibet. Shenpen Tayé himself describes that,

In holy places [In Central Tibet], I made offerings, prostrations, and circumambulations, and did whatever else I could to purify my obscurations and spread the supports of the Buddha’s body, speech, and mind all throughout Central and Eastern Tibet.<sup>303</sup>

The hagiography provides a slightly more specific description, saying that,

He practiced and attained spiritual accomplishment at places such as Samyé Chimpu (bsam yas mchims phu), Drakyang Dzong (sgrags kyi yangs rdzong)<sup>304</sup>, Gangtisé (Mt. Kailash), the glorious Tsaritra (*rtswa ri tra*) and so forth, making large donations at various pilgrimage sites and making offerings to the two Jowo Buddhas and the three doctrinal centers.<sup>305</sup>

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'gro dang rig pa'i rtsal dbang dgos tshul gsungs pa bzhed sbyar byas/ khong gis smin grol gling nas rgyal ba'i bka' gyur rin po che'i mtshon dbang lung mang po'i rgyun blangs nas 'bul skyel du 'byon skabs su 'dug pas dngul srang nyer lnga phyag mthud byas/.

<sup>303</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 5a: gnas khyad 'phags rnams su sgrub pa byas// rten khyad 'phags rnams la khri mchod sogs// phyag skor dang sgrub sbyong gang nus bgyis// mgon rgyal ba'i sku gsung thugs kyi rten// spyir khams dbus kun tu ci rigs spel//.

<sup>304</sup> The location of the Crystal Cave (*shel gyi brag phug*) frequented by Padmasambhava, located near the Nyingma Monastery of Dorjé Drak (*rdo rje brag dgon*) south of Lhasa. *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 795.

<sup>305</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 41a: bsam yas mchims phu/ sgrags kyi yangs rdzong / gangs ti se/ dpal gyi rtswa ri tra sogs su sgrub pa mdzad pa dang / gnas skor pa rnams la rtsam tshul gtong ba sogs sbyin gtong rgya cher mdzad/ chos 'khor gsum dang jo shAka rnam gnyis sogs la mchod 'bul.

The *bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (831) identifies the three doctrinal centers (chos 'khor gsum) as lha sa, bsam yas, and khra 'brug.

Of these places mentioned above, the hermitage of Samyé Chimphu was a particularly important locus of activity for Shenpen Tayé, appearing in a number of his author colophons as the place of composition. Chimphu is an ancient cave complex above the Imperial-Era monastery of Samyé and is revered as the site of practice in ancient times by the great pair Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyel, and by a number of key later Nyingma figures, including the founder of Dzokchen Monastery, Pema Rikdzin (pad+ma rig 'dzin; 1625–1697); Jikmé Lingpa, who received the *Longchen Nyingtik* treasure cycles while at Samyé Chimphu; and Shenpen Tayé's main teacher, the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen, who did extensive practice there during his stays in Central Tibet.<sup>306</sup> None of our sources say how long Shenpen Tayé spent at Samyé Chimphu, but a number of Shenpen Tayé's textual colophons mention Samyé Chimphu as the place of composition, so we can assume that he likely stayed there for a good stretch of time.<sup>307</sup>

Shenpen Tayé also appears to have remained active as a teacher during this period. Of particular interest is a passage from an informal biography of Dza Patrul by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dodrupchen Jikmé Tenpé Nyima ('jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma; 1865–1926)<sup>308</sup> in which it is mentioned that Shenpen Tayé (“Gemang Kushab”) established an annual 45-

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<sup>306</sup> Tulku Thondrup, *Masters of Meditation and Miracles*, 144–145.

<sup>307</sup> For example, Shenpen Tayé wrote a number of short instructional works that mention Samyé Chimphu as their place of composition. See *PCW* vol. 2: 329–355; *BhCW* vol. 1: 29–72. The 2011 *DCW* has produced titles for these works based on their colophons: *o rgyan smin grol gling gi grwa rigs 'gyur med pad+ma la gdams pa*, vol. 2: 269–270; *mchims phu'i sgom brtson pa tshul khrims rnam dag la gdams pa*, vol. 2: 271–277; *mchims phu'i sku gnyer pa gzhan phan blo gros la gdams pa*, vol. 2: 278–279; *bsam yas sgrub brtson gzhan phan bshes gnyen la gdams pa*, vol. 2: 283–287; *phu nas zhal slob pad+ma 'phel rgyas la gdams pa*, vol. 2: 292–294; *sgrub brtson ma ye shes dbang mo la gdams pa*, vol. 2: 317–318; *dge slong blo bzang bsam gtan la gdams pa*, vol. 2: 319–321.

<sup>308</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Dodrupchen Jikmé Tenpé Nyima, “mtshungs bral rgyal ba'i myu gu o rgyan 'jigs med chos ky'i dbang po'i rtogs brjod phyogs tsam gleng ba bdud rtsi'i zil thigs,” in *gsung 'bum/ 'jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma*. (Gangtok, Sikim: Dodrupchen Rinpoché, 1974–1975), vol 4 (101–136); BDRC # W23627.

day “extensive teaching” on the *Guhyagarbha-Tantra* in 1838 at the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen’s seat of Yarlung Pemakö, during which Dza Patrul served as teaching assistant and then lead the teaching at himself the next two years.<sup>309</sup>

## 2.10 Searching for the Word: Mindröling Monastery and the Publishing of the Nyingma *Kama* (*bka’ ma*) (1830–1845)

Undoubtedly, the most important set of connections that Shenpen made during this set of trips to Central Tibet was with Mindröling Monastery and its leadership. The *Trinchok Catalog*—which contains the brief hagiography of Shenpen Tayé that has been one of our primary direct sources for Shenpen Tayé’s life—also contains a detailed account of Shenpen Tayé’s visits with some of the leading figures from Mindröling during these two successive visits to Central Tibet. It was during the course of these visits and interactions, that Shenpen Tayé was convinced to commence the massive editorial project that would result in the publication of the nine-volume *Anthology of Blessings and Rituals from the Nine Vehicles of the Nyingma Kama* (*Trinchok Collection*). I will detail that project and Shenpen Tayé’s relationship with Mindröling in depth in chapter five, but will provide a summary of these events here as part of this biographical sketch.

Shenpen Tayé’s first recorded meeting with an important figure associated with Mindröling happened in 1831<sup>310</sup> when Shenpen Tayé visited the religious seat of Lhalung

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<sup>309</sup> gser thal phyogs yar lung pad+mo bkod du dge mang sku zhabs kyi grwa 'khor gseb tu zhugs nas phebs/ der dge mang rin po ches gsang snying rgyud bshad rgyas par gnang skabs rje 'dis khrid dpon mdzad cing / de rjes kyang gnas der lo gnyis tsam la zhag zhe lnga re'i ring rgyud bshad shin tu rgyas pa bka' drin du bstsal. *ibid.*, 109–110.

<sup>310</sup> Pema Wangyel Dorjé spontaneously composed a set of verses during the meeting, the colophon of which gives the year as the Iron Rabbit year, corresponding to Feb 13, 1831–Feb 1, 1832.

in South Eastern Tibet, which was a branch of Pari (*pad[=dpal] ri*) Monastery and closely associated with Mindröling. It was there that Shenpen Tayé met with the 4<sup>th</sup> Pari Tulku, Pema Wangyel Dorjé (*pad+ma dbang rgyal rdo rje*; 1779–1841),<sup>311</sup> in the course of which, their “minds merged into one.” and Pema Wangyel enthroned Shenpen Tayé as the reincarnation of Terdak Lingpa, the great founder of Mindröling, installed him on a lion throne, and endowed him with a crown, robe, and other vestments.<sup>312</sup> After bestowing this rather stunning set of honors on Shenpen Tayé, Pema Wangyel then petitioned him to gather together “all those ritual arrangements (*chog khrigs*) organized under the ritual rubric of the three inner Nyingma tantras that were established and composed previously by [Terdak Lingpa],” and publish them in a single comprehensive collection (*phyogs gcig tu bsdus*).<sup>313</sup> As part of this request, Pema Wangyel spontaneously composed some verses of petition<sup>314</sup> to Shenpen Tayé, within which Pema Wangyel reveals that his teacher, Tseten Gyalpo (*tshe brtan rgyal po*), had previously

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<sup>311</sup> Pema Wangyel Dorjé’s strong connection to Mindröling opens up the question about whether he was the 6<sup>th</sup> Minling Trichen, Pema Wangyel. As I discuss in detail in chapter five below, the available evidence makes it highly unlikely that the Pema Wangyel Dorjé described here by Shenpen Tayé’s was the same Pema Wangyel who served as the 6<sup>th</sup> throne holder of Mindröling.

<sup>312</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 43b: legs bshad kyi 'bel gnam zhib tu byas pas thugs yid gcig 'dres su gyur cing phyi nang gsang ba'i yon tan dang / 'chad rtsod rtsom pa'i phrin las sogs gang nas kyangter chen chos kyi rgyal po dngos dang tha mi dad par dgongs te/ rje de nyid kyi dbu zhwa dang khri ber bcas sku la phul te mi 'jigs seng ge'i khri la mnga' gsol. Interestingly, Gyelwang Nyima’s *History of the Throne holders of Dzokchen* mentions a very similar meeting between Pema Wangyel and the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang Mingyur Namkahi Dorjé when the later visited Mindröling sometime around 1815: “Trichen Pema Wangyel gave him the empowerment and reading transmission for the *bka' ma* and transmitted the vast profound Mindröling terms of Terdak Lingpa, upon which their minds mixed into one and Pema Wangyel bestowed upon him immeasurable privileges and honor.” *khrid chen pad+ma dbang rgyal las/ bka' ma'i dbang lung dang / gter bdag gling pa'i zab gter gyi smin grol rgya che gsan bzhes dang/ thugs yid gcig dras kyis mthong bkur tshad med gnam* (68a).

<sup>313</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 43b–44a: snga 'gyur nang rgyud sde gsum gyi cho ga'i rim pa ltar chog khrigs yod pa rnam sor bzhas dang / \_\_med pa rnam rje nyid kyis ljags sgrigs mdzad nas mtha' dag phyogs gcig tu bsdus.

<sup>314</sup> These verses are reproduced in the *Trinchok Catalog* (44a–46b). A few of the verses are elided as explained by Pema Vajra: zhes dang skabs 'dir yan lag bdun pa'i tshigs su bcas pa mang tsam 'dug kyang yi ge mang bas ma bris/ (45b–46a).



asked *him* to take on this project many years ago but that Pema Wangyel felt that he did not have the literary skills to accomplish such a daunting project. During a later trip to Central Tibet, Shenpen Tayé met with the 7<sup>th</sup> Minling Trichen Gyurmé Sangyé Kunga (‘gyur med sangs rgyas kun dga’; d.u.),<sup>315</sup> who also presented Shenpen Tayé with lavish vestments and other gifts and similarly exhorted him to collect the Mindröling *kama* ritual texts. Due to this urging and a number of other causes and conditions, Shenpen Tayé agreed to take on the project.

It seems that many or most of these texts were scattered around Tibet in various monasteries and hermitages—a situation that may have stemmed from the destruction of Mindröling and the killing or dispersal of its leadership by the Dzungar Mongols following their invasion of Central Tibet in 1714.<sup>316</sup> As such, Shenpen Tayé “thoroughly searched Central and Southern Tibet” (*dbus gtsang kun tu btal ba*) but could not find any of the rare Nyingma *kama* texts needed to compile the collection.<sup>317</sup> Instead, Shenpen Tayé returned to Mindröling where, with the help of clues that he received in his dreams, he found many of the “lost” texts hiding amongst the myriad texts housed in Mindröling’s library.<sup>318</sup>

Having found and gathered together as many of the relevant texts that he could find at Mindröling, Shenpen Tayé returned to his seat at Śrī Siṃha near Dzokchen

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<sup>315</sup> [BDRC P2698](#).

<sup>316</sup> See Luciano Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early XVIIIth Century* (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1972), 54–56.

<sup>317</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 46b: snga 'gyur bka' ma'i skor gyi dpe rgyun dkon rigs nams dbus gtsang kun tu btsal bas ma rnyed.

<sup>318</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 46b.

Monastery. There, on Wednesday, April 22, 1840,<sup>319</sup> he commenced his great editorial project, which culminated in the carving of over two thousand double-sided wooden printing blocks for a nine-volume anthology of Nyingma *kama* texts. The specifics of the project are detailed in the *Trinchok Catalog* and are discussed in detail in chapter five below. Pema Vajra’s author’s colophon in the *Catalog* states that the *Catalog* was completed by “Pema Damchö Özer (pad+ma dam chos ‘od zer)” (a name often used by Pema Vajra in his colophons) on August 20, 1845, which coincided with the initial printing of the completed collection at the “Dharma center of Dzokchen Monastery.”<sup>320</sup> The *Catalog* states that Shenpen Tayé acted as the chief editor for the duration of the project and was directly involved in all aspects of its production,<sup>321</sup> so we can safely assume that Shenpen Tayé was in residence at Śrī Siṃha or its environs for all or most of this period between April 1840 and August 1845.

## 2.11 Shenpen Tayé’s “Founding” of Śrī Siṃha Shedra and His Wider Relationship with Dzokchen Monastery

In the above narrative about how Shenpen Tayé edited and published this large nine-volume *Trinchok Collection*, the natural question arises: Why did Shenpen Tayé go back to *Dzokchen* to complete this project? Why didn’t he do it at Mindröling, where—as the *Catalog* informs us—most of the texts and manuscripts were located, and where

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<sup>319</sup> I.e., the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the second half of the third month of the iron mouse year. *Trinchok Catalog*, 47b: rje nyid kyis dgung lo bzhi bcu rtsa gcig bzhes pa kun ldan zhes pa lcags pho byi ba’i lo’i hor zla gsum pa chu shel dbang po’i dkyil ’khor dpal ldan lha mo nag pas nya ba’i dmar phyogs kyi rdzogs pa dang po/ gza’ lhag pa/ skar ma snubs ’phrod sbyor rgyal mtshan sogs.

<sup>320</sup> The relevant section of the colophon reads: pad+ma dam chos ’od zer du ’bod pas/ sna tshogs dbyig ces ’bod pa shing mo sbrul gyi lo’i gro bzhin gyi zla ba’i dmar phyogs rgyal ba dang po’i tshes la o rgyan bsam gtan chos gling gi chos grwa chen por grub par bgyis pa. *Trinchok Catalog*, 71b–72a.

<sup>321</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 48a.

Shenpen Tayé had the enthusiastic support of the Mindröling leadership? The reasons for Shenpen Tayé choosing to return to Dzokchen are never made explicit in any of the contemporaneous sources. As we have seen, Shenpen Tayé had spent most of the decade prior to beginning the Trinchok project alternating between living in or around Dzokchen and traveling to various holy sites in Central and Eastern Tibet. As we saw above, Shenpen Tayé had developed a special relationship with Dzokchen Monastery earlier in his life, which he visited initially around 1828 due to an earlier prophecy made his late teacher, the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen. We also saw how Shenpen Tayé formed a particularly close set of bonds with the throne holder of Dzokchen, the 4<sup>th</sup> Drupwang Mingyur Namkhai Dorjé, and with Sengdruk Pema Tashi, who lived in retreat near Dzokchen and who bestowed full monastic ordination on Shenpen Tayé during this initial visit along with numerous teachings and transmissions. Thus, we can deduce that Shenpen Tayé had established a base of support at Dzokchen and, therefore, decided to pursue the Trinchok editorial project there rather than at Mindröling, where many of the collection’s constituent texts were located.

Another possible reason for Shenpen Tayé choosing complete the *Trinchok Collection* at Dzokchen is that he may have had institutional duties at Dzokchen that demanded his presence. As we saw above, the throne holder of Dzokchen, Mingyur Namkhai Dorjé, asked Shenpen Tayé to “establish a new system of study and practice” at Dzokchen—a request that Shenpen Tayé granted through his initial set of teachings described above. Since Mingyur Dorjé’s request to Shenpen Tayé involved not merely giving some teachings, but “*establishing a tradition* of study of practice,” it is very likely

that these initial shedra teachings were repeated in successive years and established as an annual event. Such annual teaching sessions were often called *shedra* (*bshad grwa*; lit., “teaching section”) and were quite common in many monastic centers and religious encampments (*sgar*) throughout Tibet and often took place during the summer “rains retreat.”<sup>322</sup> If Shenpen Tayé was engaged in establishing and coordinating annual teachings such as this at Dzokchen, it would have been feasible for him to undertake travel for some of the year but would required him to be in residence for a significant period—at least two or three months—each year. In such a case, it would make more sense for Shenpen Tayé to establish his “seat” (*gdan sa*) at Dzokchen and to make that the locus for any and all long-term projects he wished to pursue.

If the later institutional histories of Dzokchen are correct, Shenpen Tayé was acting as the throne holder of Dzokchen for extended periods of time while the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang was away—as he was said to be during the massive earthquake in 1842 that levelled many of Dzokchen’s buildings.<sup>323</sup> Gyelwang Nyima’s *History of the Throne holders of Dzokchen* says that Shenpen Tayé managed the rebuilding of the monastery’s buildings, and specifically built a new set of shedra buildings in 1848 that

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<sup>322</sup> For a discussion of this use of the term “shedra,” see Brenton Sullivan, “The Mother of All Monasteries: Gönlung Jampa Ling and the Rise of Mega Monasteries in Northeastern Tibet,” Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 2012, 211–212; and Jann Ronis, “Celibacy, Revelations, and Reincarnated Lamas,” 206.

<sup>323</sup> Jamgön Kongtrül mentions in his *autobiography* that: “the region from Horkhok to Rudam and Lingsang was hit with a violent earthquake, which caused a great deal of destruction.” *Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Tayé*, 42a. This entry is between events said to have taken place in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> months respectively of the Water Tiger Year, which began on Feb 11, 1842. Gyelwang Nyima’s *History of the Throne holders of Dzokchen*, gives the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> month of the Water Tiger Year (October 12, 1842) as the specific date of the earthquake, 69b. Considering the attested strength and damage caused by the earthquake, it is curious that the *Trinchok Catalog*’s fairly detailed account of how the *Trinchok Collection* was compiled, edited, and published, does not mention or even allude to the earthquake that struck right in the middle of this period.

included a main temple and rooms for one hundred monks as well as a new set of residences for himself.<sup>324</sup> Shenpen Tayé, with characteristic humility, describes his institutional relationship with Dzokchen in the following manner:

I did whatever was appropriate to help the residents and the infrastructure of Dzokchen Monastery. Although I am not particularly happy with my past efforts in regards to maintaining and managing the monastery and its associated sites, I did build some retreat sites and smaller monasteries that uphold the tradition of teaching [Buddhist] exegesis and practice (*bshad sgrub kyi bstan pa'i srol*), and I established a system for explaining the tantras and the sūtra systems, exemplified in the practice of the three foundational [Vinaya] rituals.<sup>325</sup>

## 2.12 The Later Years (1845–1855)

The details of the last five to ten years of Shenpen Tayé’s life are, admittedly, hazy. Pema Vajra’s hagiography in the *Trinchok Catalog* was completed in 1845 so it is of no help in this regard. Although Shenpen Tayé’s autobiography was completed a bit later—sometime in his “5<sup>th</sup> decade”<sup>326</sup>—he says very little about what he did during the last decade of his life.

One clue to what Shenpen Tayé was doing during the last years of his life comes from the curious fact—discussed in chapter three—that two of his major commentaries

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<sup>324</sup> Gyelwang Nyima, *History of the Throne holders of Dzokchen*, 70b: lhag par klog pa thos bsam gyi 'khor lo kun mkhyen bla ma gzhan phan mtha' yas dang bka' 'gros te/ shrI sing ha gtsug lag khang grwa khang brgya/ rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha' yas pa'i gzims khang bla brang bcas gar bsakrun.

<sup>325</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 5a: dgos ru dam bsam gtan chos gling gi// rten brten pa'i mthun grogs gang 'os bsgrubs// dgon gnas dang grwa sa'i 'dzin skyong la// rang sngon nas spro ba ma lags kyang // bshad sgrub kyi bstan pa'i srol 'dzin pa'i// dgon chung dang ri khrod 'ga' yang chags// gzhi gsum gyis lag len gyis mtshon pa'i// mdo phyogs dang rgyud kyi bshad srol btsugs//. The *three foundations* (*gzhi gsum*) refers to the three core Vinaya rituals that for the basis of the Buddhist monastic calendar. These three are: the repairing and purifying of precepts (*gso sbyong*); the summer rains retreat (*g.yar gnas*); and “lifting of the prohibitions” (*dgag dbye*) at the end of the retreat.

<sup>326</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 6a: rang lo bcu phrag lnga yan.

on curricular texts at Śrī Siṃha were left incomplete,<sup>327</sup> as was at least one other work: a guidance text on the *Longchen Nyingtik*.<sup>328</sup> All of these instructional/commentarial works read as if they were derived from an oral teaching or from a set of teaching notes and my sense is that they were compiled from a set of actual teachings given by Shenpen Tayé. The fact that three explanatory works by Shenpen Tayé were left unfinished—two of them commentaries on core curricular texts at Śrī Siṃha (see chapter four)—raises the likelihood that Shenpen Tayé was in the midst of teaching at Śrī Siṃha when he died or was permanently incapacitated. As we will see presently, the tendency of later biographers to characterize Shenpen Tayé’s life as being cut short due to his becoming a monk and not practicing as a non-celibate tantrika, supports the possibility that Shenpen Tayé died due to an unexpected illness or injury.

In short, although we have no clear record of Shenpen Tayé’s activities during the last years of his life, the circumstantial evidence suggests that he remained based at his seat at Dzokchen Monastery, guiding students and teaching at the shedra that he founded.

### ***Gemang***

Gene Smith has emphasized Shenpen Tayé’s connections to the “retreat in rdza

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<sup>327</sup> These were a commentary on the *Guhyagarbha*: *rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po sgyu 'phrul drwa ba'i rtsa rgyud lung gi spyi gsang ba'i snying po'i 'grel ba kun bzang thugs kyi ti ka*, (DzCW: text no. 19, vol. 1. 345–447; XylKB: text no. 1, vol. 1. 1a–73a; PCW: 3. 1–145), and a commentary on the first section of Sherab Özer’s *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra* (*mdo snagags smon lam*): *byang chub spyod pa'i smon lam phan bde'i ljon pa'i 'grel ba rgyal sras lam gyi shing rta'i bsdus don* (DzCW text 11: 1. 182–193; XylKB, text no. 76: 2. 230a–238b; PCW: 3. 685–688; BhCW: 1. 575–601).

<sup>328</sup> This was an originally untitled work, which the DzCW titled: *rdzogs chen klong chen snying thig gi sgo nas skal ldan ji ltar bkri ba'i tshul* (*How to Guide the Fortunate According to the Longchen Nyingtik*), DzCW: 1. 289–305; XylKB 1. 183b–197a; PCW: 3. 147–175.

chu kha” called Gemang (dge mang)<sup>329</sup> and has characterized the scholastic and monastic reforms made by Shenpen Tayé and his successors as the “*dge mang* movement.” As we saw above, Shenpen Tayé was born and raised in the Gemang region and maintained close connections with the region and with other figures from there.<sup>330</sup> His connections with specific *institutions* in the Gemang region, are less well attested. The only evidence from contemporaneous sources that I have found of Shenpen Tayé being directly associated with an institution in the Gemang area is in his text *Banging the Divine Drum: An Exhortation to the Assembly at Dzagyel Monastery*,<sup>331</sup> which I discuss in chapter six below. This text is addressed to the residents of Dzagyel Monastery (rdza rgyal dgon), which was the main residence of Jikmé Nyugu and was located in Shenpen Tayé’s natal area of Dzagyel, and either part of or adjacent to the Gemang region. The text is labelled a *chayik* (“institutional regulations”),<sup>332</sup> which suggests that Shenpen Tayé had a formal leadership position there. Unfortunately the sources are silent about the specific role that he occupied at Dzagyel, how long he stayed there, how often he visited, and so forth.

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<sup>329</sup> E. Gene Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts: History and Literature of the Himalayan Plateau*, edited by Kurtis Schaeffer (Boston: Wisdom, 2001), 23.

<sup>330</sup> Such as Jikmé Nyugu and Dza Patrül.

<sup>331</sup> *rdza rgyal dgon gyi 'dus par 'bel gtam du bgyis pa lha yi rnga sgra*, *DzCW*: 2. 166–174; *XylKB*: 1. 363a–369a; *PCW*: 2. 109–124. Page numbers given in the footnotes below are the work-level folio numbers from the *XylKB* edition.

<sup>332</sup> Although the term *bca' yig* does not appear in the title, it does appear in the left margins of the verso sides of the original xylograph edition of the text (preserved in the *PCW* version) where a text’s genre or topic is usually displayed.

## 2.13 Loosening the Fetters of the Body: The Death of Shenpen Tayé

Although there are no contemporaneous sources that report the year of Shenpen Tayé’s death, we do have one account that contains an intimate—if brief—portrayal of Shenpen Tayé’s last days and hours. This is the account of Shenpen Tayé’s personal attendant, Pema Zangpo (pad+ma bzang po; d.u.), and related by Mipham Gyatso in his brief biography of Shenpen Tayé contained in his descriptive catalog to the *Collected Works of Rongzom*.<sup>333</sup> Mipham’s biography describes how Shenpen Tayé initially focused mostly on doing tantric practice in isolated places [described in section 2.1.7 above] before shifting his focus towards being a monastic *scholar-adept* (*mkhas sgrub*). Mipham suggests that for all the vast actions that Shenpen Tayé had taken to spread the Buddhist teachings, such merit was unequal to the power of tantric practice in staving off death.

Although Mipham never describes what exactly killed Shenpen Tayé, the context of his account suggests a serious illness—serious enough that normal medicine and rituals would not be effective but leaving enough time for his disciples to plead that he enact a radical, last-ditch cure. Mipham describes how, as Shenpen Tayé’s life-force was exhausted (*sku tshe mthar phyin*), others “having seen the benefit that comes from the blessings of secret mantra,”<sup>334</sup> entreated him to take up these practices, which would require him to give up his vows of full ordination in order to practice the sexual yoga

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<sup>333</sup> mi pham rgya mtsho, "rong zom gsung 'bum dkar chag me tog phreng ba/," (*Rongzom Catalog*) In *gsung 'bum/\_rong zom chos kyi bzang po*, vol. 1. 15–36. Chengdu: si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1999. BDRC W21617.

<sup>334</sup> *Rongzom Catalog*, 12.



practices considered most efficacious. Shenpen Tayé responded to these entreaties to give up his monastic vows and take up the lifestyle of a mantrin by saying:

‘I am following the example of the holy teacher [the Buddha], if I die, I will have no regrets whatsoever. In whatever place [I have been], I have spread the activities of the Buddhist teachings. I will go on by the power of my aspiration to not relax my efforts.’<sup>335</sup>

It seems that the threat to Shenpen Tayé health and life that had precipitated the above discussions was very serious indeed, because the next passage describes Shenpen Tayé’s passing:

On the evening when [he] died, [he] requested only the bestowal of Tathāgata (*de bzhin gshegs pa*), and, loosening the fetters of his body, he stayed awake, lucid, and mindful. His conduct in such things as lying down and resting and his adherence to the Vinaya was flawless in every way.<sup>336</sup>

Mipham describes how he received this intimate information directly from the personal attendant of Shenpen Tayé, Pema Zangpo, who was the constant companion of Shenpen Tayé during his later years. Mipham describes how Pema Zangpo related this account of Shenpen Tayé’s last days to him in private, and Mipham says that he relates it in his biography, “exactly as he heard them from Pema Zangpo without exaggeration or modification.”<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> *Rongzom Catalog*, 12–13: kho bo ston pa mchog de'i brtul zhugs kyi rjes su slob pa'i rten 'di las ma 'gyur bar shi na rang don du 'gyod pa gang yang med la gzhon don du ni phyogs gang nas kyang bstan pa'i bya ba 'di'i 'phro mthud de brtson pa mi lhod pa smon lam gyi dbang gis 'ong zhes gsungs. *Rongzom Catalog*, 12–13.

<sup>336</sup> *Rongzom Catalog*, 13: sku 'da' ba'i nub mo kho nar de bzhin gshegs pa la gngang ba zhus te sku chings dkrol nas dran bzhin shes bzhin du gzim pa las dus rgyun sku chings mi grol zhing nyal snyes 'phres pa sogs kyi spyod lam dang 'dul ba dang mi mthun pa'i nyes byas phra mo tsam gyi kun spyod kyang mi mnga' ba yin zhes/.

<sup>337</sup> *Rongzom Catalog*, 13: sngar kha byang bab tshul dang / gsung 'phros 'di dag rje nyid kyi sku tshe smad kyi zhabs zhur rtag tu sdod pa dge ba'i bshes gnyen pad+ma bzang po la nang 'phros su gngang ba tsam las gzhan yongs grags su ma gyur kyang / bla ma de las bdag gis dngos su thos pa ltar 'dir sgro 'dogs rdul tsam dang ma 'dres par bris pa yin no/.

## 2.14 A Note on the Year of Shenpen Tayé's Death

None of the early biographical accounts of Shenpen Tayé—including Mipham's account of his death related above—state the year of Shenpen Tayé's death. This has resulted in ongoing uncertainty in more recent sources and studies about the year of Shenpen Tayé's death. The two main candidates that have been put forward are 1855 (wood-rabbit year) and 1869/70 (iron-horse year). As I argue below, although final, definitive evidence on this question does not appear to be extant, the historical evidence that I have analyzed strongly points to **the wood-rabbit year (1855) as the most likely** candidate. Because there is no surviving textual evidence that allows us to definitively name the year of Shenpen Tayé's death, it behooves us to take a careful look at the options that have been suggested. I will start by assessing the merits of the later date suggested (1869/70), which occurs often enough in recent Tibetan and Western works that it warrants serious consideration.

A number of recent works give the date of Shenpen Tayé's death as occurring sometime between 1865 and 1870. The first instance that I have been able to find of such a later date occurs in the 2005 English translation of Nyoshul Khenpo's *Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems*, where, in the section containing the biography of Shenpen Tayé, his dates are given as “1800–1869/70.”<sup>338</sup> The original Tibetan text of *Marvelous Garland*—written in 1992; published in 1996—does not provide any dates for Shenpen

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<sup>338</sup> P. 404.

Tayé,<sup>339</sup> and so it seems that the dates given in the English translation were added by the translator, Richard Baron (aka Chökyi Nyima). Matthieu Ricard, in his recent book on the life of Patrul Rinpoché, argues that a date of 1865–1866 makes the most sense in light of the dating of other adjacent figures, including Khenpo Shenga and Orgyen Tendzin Norbu.<sup>340</sup> Recently, Achim Bayer’s excellent detailed study on the life and works of Khenpo Shenga gives Shenpen Tayé’s dates as “ca. 1800 to ca. 1865,” but does not cite a specific source for those dates.<sup>341</sup>

Because none of the sources that use this later date cite a source for that date, we are left to wonder how these authors came to settle on this later set of dates. There are at least three potential kinds of sources that could have informed such a reckoning. The first is oral history and personal stories, which are a common source of important historical information in both traditional Tibetan historiography and in modern works on Tibet written in the West.<sup>342</sup> However, since none of the sources that use the later date mention that this date was reported to them by such-and-such person, there is no way to know whether this date was communicated in such a manner.

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<sup>339</sup> The corresponding section of the original Tibetan text by Nyoshul Khenpo can be found in *rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po'i chos 'byung rig 'dzin rgyud pa'i rnam thar ngo mtshar nor bu baiDUrya'i phreng ba*, 2 vols (Kathmandu: Samye Memorial Institute, 1996, BDRC W23682), vol. 2, ff. 94a–97a.

<sup>340</sup> *Enlightened Vagabond: The Life and Teaching of Patrul Rinpoché*, (Boulder, CO: Shambhala Publications, 2017), 244, n. 233. For a detailed discussion of these dating issues in relation to the dates of Shenpen Tayé’s nephew, Orgyen Tendzin Norbu, see Adam Pearcey’s series of blog posts on the topic (Pearcey seems to largely agree with the earlier 1855 date for Shenpen Tayé’s death): “(More) On the Dates of Orgyen Tendzin Norbu,” June 23, 2017. <https://adamspearcey.com/2017/06/23/more-on-the-dates-of-orgyen-tendzin-norbu/>.

<sup>341</sup> *The Life and Works of mKhan-po gZhan-dga'*, 32.

<sup>342</sup> For works on Tibet that rely heavily on oral history, see for example, Thomas Liard, *The Story of Tibet: Conversations with the Dalai Lama* (New York: Grove Press, 2006); and *The Life and Times of Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala Publications, 2017).

A second—and more likely—possibility is that the later date(s) may have been calculated based on the dates for other adjacent figures. In this regard, there are two figures that stand out. The first is Shenpen Chökyi Nangwa (aka “Khenpo Shenga”)—who was widely recognized as *one* of the *tulkus* (*sprul sku*; “reincarnation,” “emanation”) of Shenpen Tayé—and whose dates (1871–1927) are more firmly established.<sup>343</sup> If we assume that Chökyi Nagwa was born shortly after Shenpen Tayé’s death, this would, indeed, give us a date of death for Shenpen Tayé of around 1870. However, there are numerous cases in Tibetan history of long gaps between the death of a master and the birth of their recognized tulku or tulkus and so the date of birth of someone who later came to be recognized as one of a deceased person’s tulkus is, by itself, not a reliable method of dating the death of the prior figure. Secondly, later historical sources tend to agree that while Khenpo Shenga was widely regarded as the tulku of Shenpen Tayé, he was not the *only* tulku. The person who was officially recognized and enthroned as Shenpen Tayé’s reincarnation was named Tenpé Nyima (*bstan pa’i nyi ma*). Lungtok Nyima’s *Great History of Dzokchen* doesn’t give a date for the birth of Tenpé Nyima, saying simply that he was born in the “lower” (i.e., the later part of) 14<sup>th</sup> sexagenary cycle (1807–1866). Samten Chhoshpel’s biography of Tenpé Nyima on *Treasury of Lives* gives his dates as “b.1857?–d.1925.”<sup>344</sup> While it is not unheard of for a tulku to be born before the death of their previous incarnation, it is extremely rare and runs counter to the

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<sup>343</sup> It seems that there was at least one other recognized tulku of Shenpen Tayé. In Jackson’s *Saint in Seattle*, Dezhung Rinpoché says that, “Shenga was counted by some to have been the rebirth of that Gemang Khenpo [Shenpen Tayé] (though at Dzokchen there also lived an officially recognized tulku of Shenpen Tayey).” 28. For a detailed discussion of the various possible tulkus of Shenpen Tayé, see Bayer, *The Life and Works of mKhan-po gZhan-dga’*, 66–67.

<sup>344</sup> <https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Second-Gemang-Tenpai-Nyima/13163>

underlying logic of sequential reincarnation. Therefore, if the date of Tenpé Nyima's birth was indeed somewhere around 1857, this makes it very unlikely that Shenpen Tayé was still alive into the 1860s as the later dating presumes. For the reasons given above, although it is not possible to date Shenpen Tayé's year of death with any certainty by using the known or presumed year(s) of birth of his recognized re-incarnations, the earlier date of 1855 presents fewer problems—and thus is more plausible—than a date in the mid-late-1860s

The third possibility for the source of the later dating is that someone simply made a mistake and misread one of the earlier sources. For example, one of Shenpen Tayé's main students, Pema Vajra, provided a short biographical sketch of Shenpen Tayé in a monastic address that he gave at Dzokchen, which was preserved in Pema Vajra's *Collected Works*.<sup>345</sup> In this speech, Pema Vajra provides a series of short biographies of the throne holders of Dzokchen monastery. In the section on the 4<sup>th</sup> Drupwang Mingyur Namkhai Dorjé, Pema Vajra gives a brief description of Shenpen Tayé in relation to the 4<sup>th</sup> Drupwang, saying that:

During the life of this lord [4<sup>th</sup> Drupwang], he was connected with the activities of the spiritual son and principle lineage holder, the all-pervading lord and great Kangyur-pa, Gyelsé Shenpen Tayé Özer, who, by acting to promote the adoption of the Vinaya—the basis of the teachings of the holy Dharma—and teaching the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* and so forth, spread the study and practice of sūtra and mantra such that they pervaded in all directions.<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> *legs bshad tshogs gtam 'bul ba'i mgo bskul mtshams sbyor lha yis sil snyan*, in *pad+ma ba+dz+ra bka' 'bum* (BDRC title: *gsung 'bum/ rdzogs chen mkhan po pad+ma ba dz+ra*). Old xylograph produced at the printing house of Dzokchen Orgyen Sampten Chöling [n.d.], 703–722. BDRC W20319.

<sup>346</sup> rje 'di nyid kyi ring la/ thugs sras brgyud 'dzin yongs kyi gtso bo khyab bdag bka' 'gyur pa chen po rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha' yas 'od zer kyi thugs bskyed dang 'brel bar/ bstan pa'i gzhi ma dam pa'i chos 'dul ba'i phyag bzhes dang / rgyud kyi rgyal po dpal ldan gsang ba snying po'i bshad pa sogs mdo sngags bshad grub kyi snang bas phyogs thams cad du khyab par mdzad. 714.

Immediately following this sentence, Pema Vajra shifts back to talking about the 4<sup>th</sup> Drupwang, mentioning on the next folio side that he died in the iron-horse year (1870), “having passed his 78<sup>th</sup> winter.”<sup>347</sup> The way the blurb on Shenpen Tayé is casually inserted within the longer biography of the 4<sup>th</sup> Drupwang makes it is easy to mistake the description of the 4<sup>th</sup> Drupwang’s death as referring to Shenpen Tayé—especially given that Pema Vajra does not explicitly use the 4<sup>th</sup> Drupwang’s name or title following the section on Shenpen Tayé to signal to the reader that he has finished talking about Shenpen Tayé and is shifting back to his main subject. Because we know with relative certainty that Shenpen Tayé was born in 1800—Shenpen Tayé tells us himself in his *Verse Autobiography* that he was born “at the dawn of the iron-monkey year,” corresponding to sometime in late February or early March 1800<sup>348</sup>—he cannot be the person that Pema Vajra describes as “dying in 1870, having passed his 78<sup>th</sup> winter” (most likely 77 years old by Western reckoning). Notwithstanding, it is entirely possible that the date of death given above may have been misread at some point in the past as referring to Shenpen Tayé rather than the 4<sup>th</sup> Drupwang, leading to a misidentification of Shenpen Tayé’s year of death.

In conclusion, I have not been able to find any solid evidence that supports a date of death for Shenpen Tayé beyond the mid-1850s.

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<sup>347</sup> dgung grangs bdun cu rtsa bryad bzhes pa lcags pho rta'i lo'i smin drug zla ba'i dmar phyogs kyi rgyal ba dang po'i tshes la gzugs sku'i bkod pa gdod ma'i gzhi dbyings nang gsal chen por 'khyil bar gyur pa de lta na'ang. 715.

<sup>348</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 2a: lo drug pol cags sprel shar ba'i tshe. The first day of that iron-monkey year fell on Feb 24, 1800. This may be the only instance in Shenpen Tayé’s entire corpus that he gives the year of an event.

So what evidence do we have for the earlier date of 1855 as Shenpen Tayé’s year of death? To begin with, the official institutional history of Dzokchen Monastery—the *Great Religious History of Dzokchen*—proffers this earlier date of 1855 in its hagiography of Shenpen Tayé, in which it asserts that, “having past 56 winters, [Shenpen Tayé] died in the wood rabbit year (1855).”<sup>349</sup> Although I have not found any source from before the late 20<sup>th</sup> century that explicitly mentions Shenpen Tayé’s year of death, 1855 is consistent with a number of earlier, near-contemporaneous sources. Unfortunately, Shenpen Tayé did not include a single reference to dates or years in any of his author colophons so we cannot use these to create a *terminus post quem* for his death. There are, however, references in works by other contemporaneous figures that can help us narrow down the possible date range. For example, in a set of institutional regulations for Śrī Siṃha shedra [discussed in depth in chapter four], composed by Shenpen Tayé and “written down” by Pema Vajra,<sup>350</sup> Shenpen Tayé is referred to as “the refuge lord who has passed away” (*skyabs rje zhi bar gshegs po*) followed by a reference to “our two tulkus . . . the Fourth Dzokchen and Fourth Ponlop” (*nged sprul sku gnyis . . . rdzogs chen bzhi pa dang dpon bzhi pa*).<sup>351</sup> From this, we can deduce that the document was published sometime *after* Shenpen Tayé had died but *before* the death of the 4<sup>th</sup> Drupwang in 1870. While it is certainly mathematically possible that the text could have

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<sup>349</sup> dgung grangs lnga bcu rtsa drug bzhes pa rab byung bzhi pa’i shing yos lor sku gshegs so, 368.

<sup>350</sup> *dpal seng ge ri thub bstan nyin byed gling gi rgyun ja’i bca’ yig*. The authorship statement at the end of the text reads: “The preceding text was written by Khen Pema Vajra in accordance with the instructions of Gyelsé Shenpen Tayé (*ces pa ’di’ang 7rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha’ yas kyis bka’ bkod ltar mkhan pad+ma dz+ra nas bri gnang mdzad pa’o*), 197.

<sup>351</sup> The passage contains the names/titles of the three in smaller text that seems to have been added by the editor/publisher of the xylograph: [. . .] *skyabs rje zhi bar gshegs po de nyid dang nged sprul sku gnyis bcas . . . gzhan phan mtha’ yas/ rdzogs chen bzhi pa dang dpon bzhi pa . . . kyi chos dang dam tshig* [. . .], 195–196.

been written and published in the short window of time between 1869 and the 4<sup>th</sup> Drupwang’s death in late 1870, it is much more likely that there was a longer gap between their deaths, supporting an earlier date of death for Shenpen Tayé.

Another piece of evidence that supports the earlier date is the author’s colophon by Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo for his text *gangs ri'i khrod tsam na phul du byung ba'i mahA paN+Dita chos kyi bzang po la gsol 'debs pa dad pa'i rba rlabs mngon par g.yo ba*,<sup>352</sup> which says that he composed the work on “Turning of the Wheel Day, iron-monkey year of the 14th cycle (Weds, July 18, 1860), in order to “fulfill the previous holy wishes of Shenpen Tayé.”<sup>353</sup> The use of this phrase, and the extremely reverential terms with which Shenpen Tayé is described, make it almost certain that the text was written *after* Shenpen Tayé’s death.

Another piece of evidence for the earlier date of death comes in Mipham’s brief biography of Shenpen Tayé in the *Rongzom Catalog*. Although Mipham does not state how many years Shenpen Tayé lived or how old he was when he died, Mipham describes how Shenpen Tayé died prematurely which he could have avoided if he had become a mantrika.<sup>354</sup> It is hard to understand Mipham making this claim if Shenpen Tayé had

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<sup>352</sup> PCW, 3: 675–683.

<sup>353</sup> The entire author’s colophon reads: zhes gang ri'i khrod tsam na phul du byung ba'i ma hA paNti ta rnam snang mchog gi sprul pa'i sku'i rong zom chen po chos kyi bzang po'i rnam par thar pa yi ge nying pa las ji ltar 'byung ba cha tsam gzhir bkod de gsol ba 'debs pa dang / /theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa dang / /snying po'i lam tim zung 'brel gyi tshul smon lam du bgyis pa'i tshigs su bcad pa nyu[...].ngu/du 'di'ng snye mo bye mkhar gyi lo tsA ba chen po bai ro tsa na rak+Shi ta bsam bzhin du srid pa nye bar bzung pa **rgyal sras rdo rje 'chang gzhan phan mtha' yas 'od zer gyi thugs dgongs rdzogs pa'i ched** dang bslab gsum rin po che mdzod 'dzin dge slong dge ba'i bshes gnyen ma ny+dzu shrI sA ga ras lchang ra lha klu 'chi med dga' tshal nas bkra shis pa'i lha rdzas dang bcas nan tan chen pos bskul ba ltar/ /bya bral ba 'jam dbyang mkhyen brtse'i dbang pos rab yid lcags sprel lo'i chu stod zla ba'i tshes ba'i rgyal bas chos 'khor bskor ba'i dus chen la dpal lhun grub steng gi chos grar bris te rtse gcig gus pas gsol ba btab pas dge legs 'phel/.

<sup>354</sup> Mipham Gyatso, *Rongzom Catalog*, 12–13.



lived to be 70 years of age—which, in fact, would have been unusually old for that time and place. Mipham’s insistence that Shenpen Tayé died prematurely, makes it very unlikely that he lived to be 70 years of age. Thus, it is my contention that the available evidence supports a date of death for Shenpen Tayé sometime around the mid 1850s, making 1855 the most plausible and supportable year of death for Shenpen Tayé—albeit with still a fairly high degree of uncertainty due to lack of direct and specific evidence.

## **2.15 A Note on Shenpen Tayé’s Various Names**

### ***Birth Name:***

As I mentioned above, I have not been able to find any mention or record of his name or names prior to being given the name Shenpen Tayé Nyima Özer by the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen when he was nineteen or twenty years of age. Shenpen Tayé’s refusal to even mention his birth name can be contextualized and perhaps understood in relation to an exhortation that he gave to the monks of Dzagyel monastery—discussed in chapter six below. In this talk, Shenpen Tayé admonishes the assembled monks that once they “go forth” (*rab tu byung ba*) and become renunciate monks, they need to hold fast to the *three changes*: changing their name, appearance, and mindset from their prior secular iterations to new religious ones. It is likely that Shenpen Tayé saw his change of name to be an important marker of his renunciation, and, as such, refused to use it, and perhaps even asked others not to use it or refer to it.

### *Ordination Name*

The other name that Shenpen Tayé sometimes used to refer to himself was his monastic ordination name, Thubten Pema Gyepé Nyinché Pelzangpo (*thub bstan pad+ma rgyas pa'i nyin byed dpal bzang po*), given to him by Sendruk Pema Tashi in the late 1820s upon conferring vows of full monastic ordination on Shenpen Tayé. Although Shenpen Tayé usually signed his author colophons with some version of “Shenpen Tayé,” there are at least two examples of him using the above ordination name in an author’s colophon. The colophon to his work, *Auspicious Crossing: Instructions for the Practice of the "Assemblage of the Blissful Awareness Holders"* (*zab chos rig 'dzin bder 'dus kyi lam khrid skal ldan 'jug ngogs*),<sup>355</sup> uses both his main names, signing the work, “the fully ordained [monk of] Shakya[muni], the Vajradhara called Thubten Pema Gyepé Nyingché Pelzangpo, also called by the name, Gyelwé Sepo Shenpen Tayé Özer.”<sup>356</sup> The colophon to his work, *Clarifying the Nyingma Tradition of Monastic Ordination* (*snga 'gyur snying lugs kyi rab byung gi gzhi chog lung don rab tu gsal*),<sup>357</sup> uses only the ordination name. In both cases, the ordination name is prefixed with the epithet “the fully ordained [monk of] Shakya[muni]” (*shAkya'i dge slong*), suggesting that Shenpen Tayé used his ordination name in the colophons to highlight his status as a fully ordained monk, giving him the authority to write on monastic topics.

<sup>355</sup> PCW vol. 3, 189–316; D<sub>z</sub>CW vol. 1, 198–288; BhCW, vol 2, 343–543.

<sup>356</sup> shAkya'i dge slong rdo rje 'dzin pa thub bstan pad+ma rgyas pa'i nyin byed dpal bzang po'am ming gzhan rgyal ba'i sras po gzhan phan mtha' yas 'od zer du 'bod pas.

<sup>357</sup> PCW vol. 3, 365–433; D<sub>z</sub>CW vol. 1, 105–154.

### ***Rigpé Dorjé***

The name Rigpé Dorjé (*rig pa'i rdo rje*) was also (rarely) used to refer to Shenpen Tayé. It occurs in at least one primary source of which I am aware: The *Trinchok Catalog* (discussed in chapter five) contains lineage lists for the texts and cycles published in the *Trinchok Collection*. These lineage lists all skip most of the links in the middle, ending with some version of, “and then the lineage came down successively to Shenpen Tayé.” However, the lineage list for the *mind class* (*sems sde*) of the Great Perfection end the lineage list with, “and from them the lineage came down in stages to the lord lama, Rikdzin Chenpo Rigpé Dorjé Bairotsana.<sup>358</sup> Nyoshul Khenpo’s *Marvolous Garland of Rare Gems* uses this name when referring to Shenpen Tayé.<sup>359</sup>

### ***Kushab Rinpoché / Gemang Rinpoché***

Shenpen Tayé was occasionally referred to by others as Gemang Rinpoché (*dge mang rin po che*), due to his being from the Gemang region. He was also sometimes posthumously referred to with the high honorific title, Kushab (*sku zhabs*). Sometimes these titles were combined, as in a passage from an informal biography of Dza Patrul by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dodrupchen Jikmé Tenpé Nyima<sup>360</sup> in which is referred to as “Gemang Kushab” (*dge mang sku zhabs*).

<sup>358</sup> *Trinchok Catalog* 32a: [. . .] gnubs chen sangs rgyas ye shes sogs nas rim par brgyud de rje bla ma rdo rje ‘dzin pa chen po rig pa’i rdo rje bai ro tsa na rtsal la’o/.

<sup>359</sup> As for example in the main section on Shenpen Tayé, where he is called, “Gemang Gyelse Rigpai Dorje.”

<sup>360</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Dodrupchen Jikmé Tenpé Nyima, “mtshungs bral rgyal ba’i myu gu o rgyan ‘jigs med chos kyi dbang po’i rtogs brjod phyogs tsam gleng ba bdud rtsi’i zil thigs,” in *gsung ‘bum/ ‘jigs med bstan pa’i nyi ma*. (Gangtok, Sikim: Dodrupchen Rinpoché, 1974–1975), vol 4 (101–136); BDRC # W23627.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

In the preceding look at Shenpen Tayé’s life we see a sensitive and serious child raised in the rough nomadic borderlands of Eastern Tibet. In the wake of losing his father to predatory violence, he is brought face-to-face with the futility of living a life chasing fame, wealth, security, and comfort in the samsaric world. Seeking to dedicate himself instead to spiritual pursuits, he takes Buddhist teachings from a range of revered teachers, most of whom espouse the path advocated by their teacher, the great Jikmé Lingpa, who advocated a course of gradual training in ethical behavior, contemplation, and study of the Buddha’s teachings. As the boy is on the verge of manhood, he departs his home and family and goes off in search of his true spiritual guru. After suffering many trials and dangers, he finally arrives at the hermitage of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen, a cultured and politically connected spiritual master, who takes the young man under his wing and appoints him his premier student and personal successor. Upon the death of his revered teacher, the young man—now a respected lama in his own right—becomes a wandering yogi and spiritual teacher, practicing in remote locations and honing his teaching skills, instructing ever-growing crowds of faithful mountain folk in the basic imperatives of Buddhist ethics.

His life takes a dramatic turn when, following up on a series of prophecies, he goes to the sacred Dzokchen valley. There, in the shadow of the hanging glaciers of Dorjé Ziltrom, he begins an intensive regimen of prayer and meditation, during which time he also receives many Nyingma lineages and takes full monastic ordination with the “great preceptor,” Sengdruk Pema Tashi. The young master’s fame as a teacher and

Buddhist practitioner reaches the ears of the throne holder of the nearby great religious seat of Dzokchen, the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang, who makes the hike up to the meditation caves across the valley to petition the young lama to personally redesign and implement a new system of study and practice at Dzokchen. After repeated badgering, the young lama finally agrees and gives a series of revolutionary teaching sessions, wherein he gives cogent explanations on foundational Buddhist practice and doctrine and the advanced principles of the Nyingma *inner tantras*, combining all of these into a coherent and comprehensive system of Buddhist study and practice for attaining “Buddhahood in this very life.” These teachings continue, eventually being formalized into a new kind of Buddhist training institution, known as the *shedra*, or “place of explanation.”

The lama, now even more famous, makes a series of trips to Central Tibet, where he studies a range of foundational Indian Buddhist treatises with the famed Gelukpa Geshé Gendün Dargyé, and makes a series of profound connections with a number of the lamas from the famed Nyingma monastery of Mindröling. Some of these lamas from Mindröling, noting his keen intelligence and monastic rigor, petition him to take on the massive editorial project of collecting, editing, and publishing the great body of Mindröling’s “transmitted” (*kama*) ritual texts that were written or compiled during Mindröling’s golden age at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The—now not-so-young—lama agrees and spends years amassing and editing the collection. In his 45<sup>th</sup> year, he publishes the collection in nine volumes, expanding it beyond its initial parameters to include a range of monastic liturgies and core Indian Buddhist scriptures and treatises. After another ten years, mostly spent teaching and writing at Dzokchen and his home region of

Gemang, the master falls ill and dies. His legacy survives in the shedra that he founded, which continues to grow and evolve, eventually become one of the most widespread modes of Buddhist education in the world. In the decades following his death, his student the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lingla Thubten Nyinche Gyeltsen and others edit and publish editions of the master's writings and teachings, preserving his explanations and advice, and transmitting them to future students and practitioners.

In the next chapter, we will take a closer look at these works left behind by Shenpen Tayé and preserved by his students, and hear some of what Shenpen Tayé, himself, had to say about how to engage in the spiritual path in a way that is both authentically Buddhist and distinctively Nyingma.

# Chapter Three: Shenpen Tayé's Writings

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## Introduction and Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I present a survey of Shenpen Tayé's diverse literary corpus and discuss the doctrinal commitments evident in his writings. We have already taken a close look at Shenpen Tayé's *Collected Works* (*gsung 'bum*) in chapter one, where I outlined each of the four extant editions of his collected writings. I will begin this chapter by providing an overview of the general character of Shenpen Tayé's writings and the prevalence of specific genres and topics (sec. 3.1). I then move to a more detailed analysis of some of Shenpen Tayé's individual works (sec. 3.2), taking care to present works from the full range of genres in which Shenpen Tayé wrote. Throughout this chapter—and in this last section in particular—I will examine what Shenpen Tayé's writings can tell us about his particular doctrinal commitments; his literary style and authorial voice; and his deep investment in presenting the Buddhist teachings in clear, straight-forward language tailored to the particular needs of the intended readership.

### 3.1 Genre and Topics in Shenpen Tayé's Collected Works

In the following pages, I present an analysis of the genres and topics covered in the more recent *Dzokchen Collected Works* (*DzCW*). The *DzCW* is the most comprehensive of all the extant collections of Shenpen Tayé's works, containing numerous texts not contained in any other collection nor published anywhere else. As

such, the *DzCW* is the collection that most closely reflects Shenpen Tayé’s literary output *in toto*, making it the best collection with which to assess the kinds of topics and concerns that Shenpen Tayé actually wrote about.

The editors of the *DzCW* organized the collection’s constituent works into seven sections according to the literary category of the respective works. These categories along with the number of texts and pages given to each are as follows:

Literary Category	No. of texts	Vol. and page range	No. of pages
Lucid expositions and textual commentaries ( <i>legs bshad gzhung 'grel</i> )	24	1. 24–510	484
Essential instructions in response to queries ( <i>dris lan stong thun</i> )	12	2. 1–153	153
Biography and narrative ( <i>rnam thar 'bel gtam</i> )	4	2. 154–174	20
Songs of realization ( <i>rtogs nyams gsung mgur</i> )	24	2. 175–221	48
Personal advice and practice instructions ( <i>zhal gdams man ngag</i> )	66	2. 223–385	153
Devotional and propitiatory works ( <i>gsol 'debs zhabs brtan</i> )	42	2. 387–460	73
Rituals and offering liturgies ( <i>sgrub chog bsang gsol</i> )	19	2. 461–591	131

The following graph helps to visualize the percentage of pages in the *DzCW* given to each category:



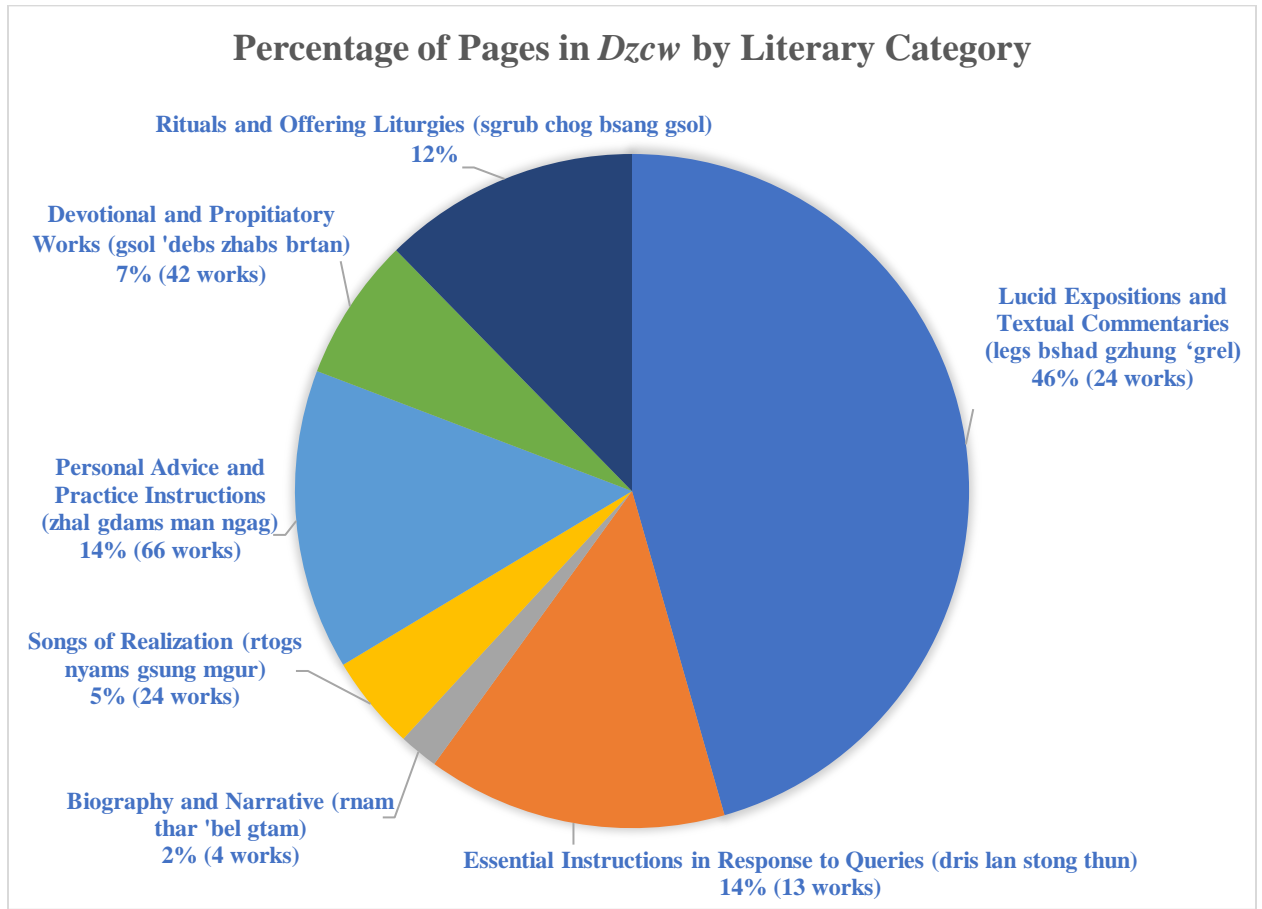


Figure 1: percentage of pages in the DzCW by literary category

We will now turn to a more detailed discussion of the individual works that comprise Shenpen Tayé’s oeuvre before concluding the chapter with a discussion of what the shape and content of Shenpen Tayé’s literary corpus can tell us about his wider goals and general orientation towards effective Buddhist teaching.

### 3.2 A Closer Look at the Writings of Shenpen Tayé

In the following pages, I will engage in a more detailed examination of Shenpen Tayé’s writings. I will use the *DzCW*’s seven-fold literary category rubric to organize and guide our exploration. Treating each of these sections in turn, I will discuss the general

makeup of each section—i.e., what are the works about? For whom were they written?—and take a closer look at some of the individual texts in more detail.

### 3.2.1 Lucid Expositions and Textual Commentaries (*legs bshad gzhung ‘grel*)

As the title of this section of the *DzCW* denotes, it is made up of “lucid expositions”<sup>361</sup> (*legs bshad*) and “commentaries on authoritative texts” (*gzhung ‘grel*). Although the *DzCW* doesn’t seem to explicitly divide the texts in this section into one or the other of these categories, the descriptive titles of the texts make clear which works are formal commentaries (*‘grel pa*) on “authoritative texts” (*gzhung*), and which texts are synthetic “explanations” (*bshad*) on a particular theme or topic. I will begin with Shenpen Tayé’s textual commentaries on authoritative texts.

#### **3.2.1.1 Textual Commentaries**

Considering the degree to which Shenpen Tayé is currently revered as one of the foundational figures of modern Nyingma scholasticism, it is somewhat surprising to note the relative paucity of formal commentaries on foundational Buddhist texts in his corpus.<sup>362</sup> This is in contradistinction to the output of the next generation of Nyingma scholastic figures, with figures such as Mipham Gyatso<sup>363</sup> and Khenpo Shenga<sup>364</sup> each

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<sup>361</sup> Or, alternatively, “eloquent explanations.”

<sup>362</sup> By “foundational text,” I mean any of the canonical texts contained in the *bka’ ‘gyur* or *bstan ‘gyur* and/or the “root” texts of the later shedra curriculum (many of which—such as the works of Longchenpa and Jikmé Lingpa— were authored by Tibetans and, thus, not included in the *bka’ ‘gyur* or *bstan ‘gyur*).

<sup>363</sup> *mi pham rgya mtsho*; 1846–1912. See Douglas Duckworth, *Jamgön Mipham: His Life and Teachings* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2011).

<sup>364</sup> *Mkhan po gzhän dga’*. AKA: *gzhän phän chos kyi snang ba*, 1871–1927. See Bayer, *The Life and Works of mKhan-po gZhan-dga’*.

authoring more than a dozen commentaries on foundational Buddhist texts.<sup>365</sup> Shenpen Tayé did, however, author three works that are labelled in their titles as “commentary” (*'grel*), with at least two of these going on to be highly influential in Nyingma educational and scholarly circles.

### The “Magical Key” Grammar Commentary

Undoubtedly, the most influential and widely studied of Shenpen Tayé’s scholastic commentaries—indeed, the most influential of *any* of his works—is his commentary on two of the foundational works of Tibetan grammar entitled *A Magical Key: A Syllable-by-Syllable Commentary on “Thirty Verses” and “Introduction to Grammar”* (*sum cu pa dang rtags kyi 'jug pa'i 'bru 'grel 'phrul gyi lde mig*).<sup>366</sup> In this commentary, Shenpen Tayé goes verse-by-verse through the two foundational texts of Tibetan grammar—*Root Text on Grammar in Thirty Verses* (*lung ston pa rtsa ba sum cu pa*), and *Introduction to Grammar* (*lung du ston pa rtag gi 'jug pa*)<sup>367</sup> and expands on the meaning of each word. In the colophon, Shenpen Tayé says that his commentary is based on the earlier *Great Commentary* (*'grel chen*) of Situ Panchen.<sup>368</sup> In the early xylograph edition of Shenpen Tayé’s commentary, the syllables of the root text are embedded

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<sup>365</sup> These commentaries by Mipham and Khenpo Shenga feature heavily in the current curricula of most Nyingma shedras.

<sup>366</sup> *DzCW*, Text 2: vol. 1. 31–87; *XylKB*, text 89: 2. 338a–375b; *PCW*: 3. 581–658; *BhCW*: 2. 555–685.

<sup>367</sup> These texts were authored by Thonmi Sambhota (c. 7<sup>th</sup> cent.) who, legend has it, instituted Tibetan writing by formulating the first Tibetan script. The two texts are considered to be the originary texts on Tibetan grammar and form the basis for the formal grammar of literary Tibetan.

<sup>368</sup> The entire author’s colophon reads: zhes pa’ang rje btsun bla ma dam pa kun dga’ rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po’i zhal snga nas dang / rang nyid kyi rdo rje’i mched po bsod nams rin chen sogs kyi bkas bskul ngor las dang po ba nmams la phan pa’i phyir/ 7grub dbang rdzogs chen pa yab sras kyi bka’ ’bangs kyi tha shal rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha’ yas ’od zer du ’bod pas si tu’i ’grel chen las btus pa ste ’di nyid shes nas slar gzhung de nyid zhib tu blta ba gal lo/ /des na ’grel ba gzhan las khyad par du ’phags pa’i gzhung la brten pa yin pas nor ’khrul med phyir kun gyis brtson pa mi g.yel bar ’di la nan tan bgyid par zhu’o/.

within the commentary and subscribed with a small circle. In this way, Shenpen Tayé’s commentary appears to be virtually identical in form and function to the later *annotation commentaries* (*mchan ‘grel*) written by Khenpo Shenga and others, and one cannot help wonder if this commentary by Shenpen Tayé served as an early model and inspiration for the explosion of annotation commentaries in Kham in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Shenpen Tayé’s *Magical Key* commentary is still used in many Tibetan shedras today and is by far the most common point of contact that contemporary Tibetan scholars and monastic students have with Shenpen Tayé’s writings.<sup>369</sup>

Commentary on Sherab Özer’s *Aspiration Prayers of the Conduct of a Bodhisattva*

The second text in Shenpen Tayé’s *DzCW* that is classified as a “commentary” on a core text is his commentary on the first section of *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra* (*mdo sngags smon lam*) by the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Nyingma master Sherab Özer.<sup>370</sup> Shenpen Tayé’s commentary, entitled *Condensing the Meaning of the Bodhisattva’s Chariot: A Commentary on “A Paradise of Ease and Bliss: Aspiration Prayers of the Conduct of a Bodhisattva.”* (*byang chub spyod pa’i smon lam phan bde’i ljon pa’i ‘grel ba rgyal sras lam gyi shing rta’i bsdus don*),<sup>371</sup> treats the first section of Sherab Özer’s *Aspiration Prayers*, which deals with sūtra topics, with a focus on the path and conduct of bodhisattvas. As I describe in more detail in chapter four below, *Aspiration Prayers of*

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<sup>369</sup> In the current shedra curriculum taught at Śrī Siṃha (in Tibet), the root text of the *Thirty Verses* is taught in the 1<sup>st</sup> class/year, and the *Intro to Grammar* is taught in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, with Shenpen Tayé’s commentary on both being taught in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year (*snga ‘gyur rdzogs chen chos byung chen mo*, 307). At the Ngagyur Nyingma Institute (NNI) at Namdroling in South India, these are all taught in the 1<sup>st</sup> year.

<sup>370</sup> shes rab ‘od zer; 1518–1584.

<sup>371</sup> *DzCW* text 11: 1. 182–193; *XylKB*, text no. 76: 2. 230a–238b; *PCW*: 3. 685–688; *BhCW*: 1. 575–601.

*Sūtra and Mantra* was one of the core texts on which Shenpen Tayé taught during his initial shedra teachings at Dzokchen in 1828, and it later became one of the four foundational texts of the earliest known formal curriculum of Śrī Siṃha Shedra. Marc-Henri Deroche describes the *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra* as constituting “an inspiring rNying ma doxography written according to the genre of ‘aspiration’ (*praṇidhana*; *smon lam*), from the initial refuge in the Three Jewels to the ultimate realization of the Great Perfection.”<sup>372</sup> Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation, a close study of this commentary as one of the basic texts of the early shedra would likely yield many insights into Shenpen Tayé’s style of teaching and exposition.

Unlike the *Magical Key* commentary discussed above, Shenpen Tayé’s commentary on *Aspiration Prayers* does not go through and unpack the semantic meanings of the root text verse-by-verse. Instead, Shenpen Tayé focuses on explicating some of the basic categories and concepts contained in the text, moving back and forth through the text and selecting specific passages of the root text to explain how these concepts arise in the text. Georges Dreyfus notes that Tibetan scholars make a distinction between *word commentaries* (*tshig ‘grel*) and *meaning commentaries* (*don ‘grel*), with the latter type tending to be more synthetic, explaining broader points of meanings of the root text without treating it verse-by-verse as is the case with “word commentaries.”<sup>373</sup> In

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<sup>372</sup> Marc-Henri Deroche, “History of the Forgotten Mother Monastery of the rNying ma School: dPal ri Monastery in the Tibetan ‘Valley of the Kings,’” *Bulletin of Tibetology*, 49, no. 1 (2013): 77–112, 77–111, 98–99. For a critical edition of *Aspiration Prayers* along with a French translation, see Marc Deroche, “Prajñāraśmi (‘phreng po gter ston shes rab ’od zer, Tibet, 1518-1584) Vie, Oeuvre, et Contributions à la Tradition Ancienne (rnying ma) et au Mouvement Non-Partisan (Ris Med),” Ph.D. diss., École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, 2011.

<sup>373</sup> *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping*, 184.

this formulation, Shenpen Tayé’s commentary on *Aspiration Prayers* is a kind of *meaning commentary*, and, in fact, reads more like a teaching or *explanation* (*bshad pa*) rather than a formal textual commentary (*’grel pa*) as such. It is also the case that Shenpen Tayé likely had access to Jikmé Lingpa’s influential commentary<sup>374</sup> on the *Aspiration Prayers*, and perhaps even included this commentary by Jikmé Lingpa in his early shedra teachings and the formal shedra curriculum that followed.<sup>375</sup> We should also note that, like many explanatory works by Shenpen Tayé, this text looks very much like a set of teaching notes—or, perhaps, an oral teaching that was recorded—rather than commentary written and edited gradually. It should be noted that this commentary is unfinished, dropping off abruptly without the usual colophon and/or dedicatory verses. The *DzCW* is different from the version of the commentary in the other editions of Shenpen Tayé’s collected works in that it appends without comment or annotation what appears to be a separate work by Shenpen Tayé onto the end of the commentary.<sup>376</sup> This abrupt ending is interesting given that the same is the case for Shenpen Tayé’s extensive *Guhyagarbha* commentary to be discussed presently.

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<sup>374</sup> ‘jigs med gling pa, byang chub spyod pa’i smon lam phan bde’i ljon pa’i Ti ka rgyal ba’i gzhung lam, in *gsung ’bum ’jigs med gling pa*, vol. 5, 541–620, (a ’dzom par ma ’brug spa gro la bskyar par brgyab pa, 1999). BDRC WA1KG10193.

<sup>375</sup> Indeed, Śrī Simha’s modern curriculum includes these texts along with Jikmé Lingpa’s commentary upon them in its 2<sup>nd</sup> year of studies (*snga ’gyur rdzogs chen chos byung chen mo*, 307). I have not found any evidence that the modern Namdroling shedra curriculum includes study of *Aspiration Prayers* or any of its commentaries.

<sup>376</sup> In the *XyIKB* and *BhCW*, the text ends with the phrase: zhes brjod par mdzad do// de dag gis ni bsdus don rjes ’brel dang bcas pa smros te klad don song /. The *DzCW* immediately follows this phrase with the phrase, “*kun bzang don gyis ’phrin las,*” followed by a short work on propitiating Samāntabhadra, which appears as a separate work in *PCW*: 3. 685–688 and *XyIKB* 1. 232a–233b.

Guhyagarbha Commentary:

The third and final formal commentary on a foundational text that Shenpen Tayé is known to have composed is his commentary on the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*, entitled ***Revealing Samāntabhadra’s Intent: A Commentary on the Difficult Points of the Guhyagarbha-tantra***.<sup>377</sup> Running to 73 folios in the early xylograph edition, this is the longest single work that Shenpen Tayé wrote and seems to have been widely transmitted and studied. For example, Khyentsé Wangpo’s *Biographical Verses of Supplication to Shenpen Tayé*<sup>378</sup> includes the statement that Shenpen Tayé “established a system of explicating the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*.”<sup>379</sup> Shenpen Tayé was reported to have been a key link in the chain of the full transmission of the Mindröling lineage of the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*. For example, in his influential commentary on the *Guhyagarbha*, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dodrupchen Jikmé Tenpé Nyima says that Jikmé Ngotsar (‘jigs med ngo mtshar; d.u.) passed the *Guhyagarbha* lineage transmission to Shenpen Tayé and Sengdruk Pema Tashi. From there it was transmitted to Dza Patrül Orgyen Chökyi Wangpo and Pema Vajra, the later of whom transmitted it to Mipham Gyatso.<sup>380</sup> Shenpen Tayé’s biography in the *Trinchok Catalog* also states that that while he was residing at the seat of the 1<sup>st</sup>

<sup>377</sup> Full title: rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po sgyu 'phrul drwa ba'i rtsa rgyud lung gi spyi gsang ba'i snying po'i 'grel ba kun bzang thugs kyi ti ka. *DzCW*: text no. 19, vol. 1. 345–447; *XylKB*: text no. 1, vol. 1. 1a–73a; *PCW*: 3. 1–145.

<sup>378</sup> rgyal sras rin po che gzhan phan mtha' yas kyi nram thar gsol 'debs smon lam dang bcas pa byin brlabs bdud rtsi'i snang ster *DzCW*, text no. 25 *XylKB*, text no. 3: 1. 83a–89a.

<sup>379</sup> Verse 18 reads: so sor thar ba gzhi gsum phyag bzhes dang // rgyud rgyal gsang ba snying po'i bshad srol sogs// mdo sngags shing rta'i lam chen rab dbye bas// rgyal bstan nyin mor mdzad la gsol ba 'debs//.

<sup>380</sup> *Key to the Precious Treasury*, trans. Lama Chönam and Sangye Khandro, (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2010), 29. This account of the lineage transmission from Jikmé Ngotsar and Shenpen Tayé to Dza Patrül is also related in Patrül’s namthar. See thub bstan kun bzang chos grags (1862–1943). “o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po'i nram thar dad pa'i gsos sman bdud rtsi'i bum bcud.” In *gsung 'bum/\_o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po*, vol. 6, 794 (Lhasa: Zhol par khang, n.d.). BDRC W5832.

Dodrupchen, he received “an exposition on the glorious *Guhyagarbha* and the empowerment and personal guidance on the *Magical Display of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities* (*sgyu ‘phrul zhi khro*; *Skt: śāntikrodhamāyājāla*) from Jikmé Kelsang”<sup>381</sup> Beyond its appearance in the various editions of *The Collected Works of Shenpen Tayé*, the commentary is available in numerous stand-alone published editions.<sup>382</sup>

With regard to the format and content of the commentary, it presents itself, as its title announces, as a textual commentary (*‘grel pa*) on the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*—and specifically as a “*ṭika*.” The designation of the work in the title with the sub-genre “*ṭika*” is interesting. The term *ṭika* in traditional Sanskrit commentary usually refers to a type of commentary that is written as a supplement to a primary extensive commentary—typically called a *bhāṣya*—and typically involves clarifying difficult points raised in the *bhāṣya*.<sup>383</sup> The designation of “*ṭika*” in Sanskrit philosophical commentary can sometimes be used more loosely to designate a commentary that comments on *selected* passages and topics with a text, as opposed to the *bhāṣya*, which treats the entire root text systematically.<sup>384</sup> It is this latter sense of *ṭika* as denoting a kind of “meaning commentary” that seems to apply here. The commentary itself systematically treats a

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<sup>381</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 38b: dpal gsang ba’i snying po’i bshad pa dang/ sgyu ‘phrul zhi khro’i dbang dang gdams khrid kyī skor sogs mang du gsan.

<sup>382</sup> These include an edition edited by kar+ma bde leg in 2008, which was published at least twice: (Lhasa: *dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib ‘jugs khang*, 2008, BDRC W1KG1802); and: (Serta County: *bla rung gzhung las khang*, d.u., BDRC W3CN4313).

<sup>383</sup> Jonardon Ganeri, “Sanskrit Philosophical Commentary,” *Journal of the Indian Council of Philosophical Research*, no. 27 (2010), 107–127.

<sup>384</sup> Jonardon Ganeri cites Bhartrhari’s *Mahābhāṣyaṭīkā* on Pāṇini’s *Mahābhāṣya* to *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, his treatise on Sanskrit grammar, as an example of a *ṭīkā* that does the latter. *Sanskrit Philosophical Commentary*, note 16.



range of topics and categories and contains extensive quotations from canonical sources—such as Buddhaghosa’s *Stages of the Path*—as well from older commentaries on the *Guhyagarbha*. He also spends almost the final quarter of the commentary elucidating and elaborating on the lineage of the *Guhyagarbha* in India and Tibet. As I explain in more detail in chapter five below, Shenpen Tayé tended to follow the “Zur tradition” (*zur lugs*) of exegesis on the *Guhyagarbha*, and this commentary appears to maintain the Zur approach, which was also followed by Lochen Dharmaśrī and, later, by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dodrupchen.<sup>385</sup>

One notable feature of this commentary—and one that may have prevented it from becoming a more central commentary in later years—is that it is clearly unfinished. The text simply drops off after the conclusion of a section on the “aural transmission of human beings” (*gang zag rna bar brgyud pa*). Mipham Gyatso, in his biography of Shenpen Tayé notes that some “supplementary material” (*ram ’degs*) was added to the commentary by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lingla Thubten Gyeltsen Pelzang,<sup>386</sup> but, even so, the text in all its published forms contains no dedicatory verses and no author’s or editor’s colophon; the text simply ends.

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<sup>385</sup> The 3<sup>rd</sup> Dodrupchen Jikmé Tenpé Nyima (‘jigs med bstan pa’i nyi ma; 1865–1926) wrote a highly influential commentary on the *Guhyagarbha*, entitled *Key to the Precious Treasury* (*rin chen mdzod kyi lde mig*). A brief comparison between Shenpen Tayé and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dodrupchen’s respective commentaries on the *Guhyagarbha* demonstrates quite a few shared references and other common features, which suggests that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dodrupchen’s commentary was likely influenced by Shenpen Tayé’s earlier commentary. For more on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dodrupchen’s commentary, see Nathaniel Garson’s 2004 dissertation, “Penetrating the Secret Essence Tantra: Context and Philosophy in the Mahāyoga System of rNying-ma Tantra (University of Virginia).

<sup>386</sup> “gsang snying ’grel pa ni rje de’i dngos slob sdom brtson sde snod ’dzin pa chen po gling sprul ba’i skus ram ’degs su bsgrub cing de min ’phros rnam rgyal sras gzhan phan pa nyid kyi bsgrub par mdzad mod/.” Mipham Gyatso, *Rongzom Catalog*, 14.

The fact that two of the three formal commentaries explored above seem to have been unfinished may have been a product of Shenpen Tayé’s “untimely death” reported by Mipham and other biographers. It may also have been influenced by the purpose and intent of the works themselves. As we will see in the chapter on the development of shedras below, the first shedra teachings given by Shenpen Tayé in 1828, and the formal shedra curriculum that soon followed, both included the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* and *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra* as core curricular texts. This raises the likelihood that the two commentaries on these texts discussed above were written by Shenpen Tayé, at least initially, more as teaching notes, which were then later compiled and edited into a more formal format of “textual commentary” by his students. Mipham’s statement above about the role of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lingla in rounding out and publishing Shenpen Tayé’s commentary on the *Guhyagarbha* seems to lend credence to such a possibility.

We should also mention in relation to Shenpen Tayé’s works on the *Guhyagarbha*, a “general framework and outline”<sup>387</sup> (*khog 'bub sa bcad*) that he wrote on the *Guhyagarbha*, entitled *dpal ldan gsang ba snying po'i khog 'bub sa bcad kyi rim pa nyung du 'khor 'das bar gyi lo tsa*.<sup>388</sup> This text reads very much like a condensed version of the commentary discussed above and is mostly concerned with elucidating the lineage transmission of the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* in India and Tibet.

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<sup>387</sup> Janet Gyatso characterizes the Tibetan genre of *khog 'bub* as “specialized histories of [. . .] origins.” Gyatso notes that the moniker of *khug 'bub* means literally, “to pitch a tent” or “frame a space” as was most often used in titles of texts that dealt with the history of Tibetan medicine, “to distinguish medical history from other kinds of histories, especially those of religion, and suggested an alternate textual space.” (ibid.) In this case, it is used alongside the term *sa bcad* (“outline”), resulting, perhaps, in a general meaning of “general framework and outline.” See Janet Gyatso, *Being Human in a Buddhist World: An Intellectual History of Medicine in Early Modern Tibet* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 131.

<sup>388</sup> *DzCW*: text no. 18, vol. 1. 332–344; *XylKB*: text no. 2, vol. 1. 74a–82b; *PCW*: 2. 215–232.

### 3.2.1.2 *Textbooks, Summaries, and Other Synthetic Scholarly Presentations*

Although Shenpen Tayé’s corpus does not evince the kind of extensive formal scholastic engagement with foundational Buddhist texts that was to characterize the next generation of Nyingma figures, the *DzCW* contains numerous *synthetic* scholarly works that present Buddhist concepts and categories in a manner that reflects Shenpen Tayé’s commitment to *explanation* (*bshad pa*) if not formal textual commentary (*‘grel ba*). Aside from the formal commentaries described above, the titular *genres* of the texts contained in the first section of the *DzCW* (text nos. 1–24) include:

- *bsdus pa* (“summary”)
- *bsdus don* (“summarizing the meaning”)
- *bshad pa* (“explanation”)
- *rnam bshad* (“detailed explanation”)
- *dpyad pa* (“systematic analysis”)
- *rnam bzhag* (“systematic presentation”)
- *don gsal* (“clarifying the meaning”)
- *lam khrid* (“step-by-step practical guidance”)
- *spyi chings* (“general outline”)
- *sa bcad* (“topical outline”)
- *zin bris* (“notes”)

The *topics* treated in these works include:

- The proper way to formulate logical arguments<sup>389</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> Text no. 3: *rtags gsal ‘god tshul gyi rnam bzhag nyung ngu*.

- The five aggregates<sup>390</sup>
- The ritual for conferring the temporary precepts<sup>391</sup>
- The Nyingma tradition of monastic ordination<sup>392</sup>
- The evils of engaging in the tobacco trade<sup>393</sup>
- Dependent arising<sup>394</sup>
- Various tantric practices<sup>395</sup>
- The Great Perfection tradition<sup>396</sup>
- The Nyingma nine vehicles<sup>397</sup>
- Tantric mandalas<sup>398</sup>
- The lives of past tantric adepts<sup>399</sup>

I will now discuss some of these texts in more detail.

***A Brief Systematic Presentation on the Formulation of Logical Reasoning (rtags gsal 'god tshul gyi rnam bzhag nyung ngu)***<sup>400</sup>

This brief text—comprising only about six folios in the earlier xylograph version—reads somewhat like an abbreviated “collected topics” (*bsdus grwa*) text. It contains a succinct and lucid introduction to the general principles of Buddhist logic and argumentation and links these principles with specific Indian figures, treatises, and tenet

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<sup>390</sup> Text no. 4: *phung lnga'i rab dbye bsdus pa*.

<sup>391</sup> Text no. 6: *bsnyen gnas kyi cho ga mdo don gsal ba*.

<sup>392</sup> Text no. 7: *snga 'gyur ring lugs kyi rab byung gi gzhi chog lung don rab tu gsal*.

<sup>393</sup> Text no. 10: *rab byung gi tha ma kha la spyod pa'i nyes pa la dpyad pa log 'tsho'i gnyen po*.

<sup>394</sup> Text no. 12: *rten 'brel gyi bsdus don stong nyid la 'jug pa'i sgo*.

<sup>395</sup> Text nos. 13, 20, 21, and so forth.

<sup>396</sup> Text no. 16: *rdzogs pa chen po'i spyi chings*.

<sup>397</sup> Text no. 17: *snga 'gyur rnying lugs theg dgu'i lam khrid kyi sa bcad nyung ngu dam pa'i zhal lung*.

<sup>398</sup> Text no. 24: *maN+Da la'i rnam bshad nyung ngu tshogs gnyis gter bum*.

<sup>399</sup> Text no. 23: *bla na med pa'i theg pa dang 'brel ba'i gam sngags 'chang mgul rgyan*.

<sup>400</sup> DzCW text no. 3: vol. 1, 88–95; XylKB: 1. 286a–292a; PCW: 2. 287–299.

systems, concluding with an extended discussion of the three jewels (Buddha, Dharma, and sangha).

***A General Summary of the Great Perfection (rdzogs pa chen po’i spyi chings)***<sup>401</sup>

This short, three-folio text provides a brief introduction to the Great Perfection, describing it in terms of its *basic nature* (*ngo bo*), *etymology* (*nges tshig*); *analytical categories* (*rnam dbye*), and *enumerative lists* (*rnam grangs*). The text provides an explicit explanation and rationale of Shenpen Tayé’s gradualist orientation and, in particular, how he saw the Great Perfection within the larger arcs of Buddhist practice. For this reason, it will be useful for our study to take a closer look at this text.

In this text, Shenpen Tayé recognizes that the Great Perfection is ultimately free of all elaboration and cannot be cognized nor cultivated. However, he mentions that many people hearing these descriptions of the Great Perfection may come to erroneously think that spiritual practice and cultivation are useless and unnecessary. In the analytical categories (*rnam dbye*) section, which makes up the bulk of the text, Shenpen Tayé discusses three common errors made by those seeking to realize the Great Perfection. The first error is trying to realize the Great Perfection by engaging in “pointless intellectual chatter” (*kha ‘byams blo*). Regarding this, he says:

The Great Perfection is the highest state of realization of the Buddha(s) and the true meaning of [this] basic state of abiding is neither cognizable nor able to be experientially cultivated. As such, it is impossible to express its meaning through mere words.<sup>402</sup>

<sup>401</sup> DzCW: 1. 309–312; XylKB: 2. 47a–50; PCW: 2. 73–79; BhCW: 2. 121–131.

<sup>402</sup> rdzogs chen sangs rgyas kyi dgongs pa’i mthar thug yin pa la/ gnas lugs kyi don ma nor pa ni ma rtogs shing nyams su ma lon pas/ kha tshig tsam du don gyi tshig bzang po rnams kha tshig tu song ba yin no//.

The second error involves misunderstanding the teachings on being spontaneously liberated in the *bardo* (*bar do rang grol*). Shenpen Tayé describes how some people hear the teachings about being spontaneously liberated, and finding practice to be a long and arduous slog, come to adopt the view that such practice is unnecessary. Thinking that everything is primordially pure and already intrinsically liberated, such people abandon their practice and ethical discipline. Shenpen Tayé argues that “this is an annihilationist view and the scriptures explain that those who hold such views disavowing the existence of positive or negative karma will burn in the hot hells!”<sup>403</sup>

The third error involves those who quote many scriptural passages saying that “all phenomena are unborn” (*chos thams cad skye ba med po yin*) but misunderstand these as being *conventional* descriptions, leading them to reify transitory phenomena. Shenpen Tayé argues that this represents a kind of “eternalist view” (*rtag par lta ba*) and will result in those who hold such views being reborn in the unending hell (*mnar med pa; avici*).

It is interesting here to note that the first of these errors—engaging in pointless intellectual chatter—does not have any harsh consequences explicitly attached to it, while the other two result in rebirth in the hells. The ostensible reason for the terrible consequences of the latter two mistakes probably has to do with the kinds of evil behaviors that these mistakes engender, and one wonders why the mistake of engaging in useless intellectual chatter over the Great Perfection gets let off so lightly by Shenpen

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<sup>403</sup> de ni chad par lta ba rnams yin te/ las dge sdig gang yang med par lta ba ni tsha ba'i dmyal bar skye ba lung nas bshad do//.

Tayé. It seems clear that Shenpen Tayé is trying to communicate that although such intellectualization is ultimately useless, it is not dangerous *per se*; the problem only arises when one thinks that such discursivity can, in fact, encompass and communicate the true nature and meaning of the Great Perfection.

Indeed, the next section of the text argues that intellectual discursivity and other forms of mental and behavioral cultivation form an important part of the foundational stages of the path. The three errors just discussed are followed by their counterpoint: the Great Perfection that is the fruit of practice (*nyams len ‘bras bu’i rdzogs chen*). In many cases, such practice may involve “elaboration” (*spros bcas*), with Shenpen Tayé saying that:

The path from the vehicle of the Hearers up until the vehicle of Atiyoga involves being led by a variety of means including the ultimately nonexistent dualities of abandoning-adopting, refuting-affirming, great-small, higher-lower, and so forth. Through such means, the final Great Perfection of empty luminosity free from extremes is actualized.<sup>404</sup>

Soon thereafter, Shenpen Tayé describes such a *gradualist path* (*lam rim gyis pa ‘jug pa*) to realizing the Great Perfection, saying:

By gradual training, involving empowerments, commitment vows, and the cultivation of meditative concentration, stabilization, and absorption, you will perfect the final goal of attaining the realization of a Buddha.<sup>405</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> nyan thos kyi theg pa nas bzung nas a ti'i theg pa'i bar du spang blang dgag sgrub che chung mtho dman phyogs ris la sogs pa med par thabs sna tshogs kyis lam du 'khyer te/ de rnam kyang mtha' bral stong gsal chen por yongs su rdzogs par byed pa'o//.

<sup>405</sup> dang po ni dbang dang dam tshig thob par byas te/ sems 'dzin dang / bsam gtan dang / sgom pa ting nge 'dzin la rim gyis bslabs te/ de nas sangs rgyas kyi dgongs pa mthar thug pa'i don rnam rdzogs par byed pa'o//.

Shenpen Tayé also mentions those who have already realized the primordial ground of basic reality (*gnas lugs gzhi*), and, “for those with such realization, there is no need to travel the path because one who has such realization and is endowed with keen faculties, is already a Buddha.”<sup>406</sup>

From this text, we can distill Shenpen Tayé’s approach to Nyingma practice as involving a gradual progression in which ethical behavior and familiarity with Buddhist doctrine are gradually cultivated so as to avoid the pitfalls that could derail one’s spiritual goals and even, in the worst cases, lead to a terrible rebirth in the hells. Within this gradualist paradigm, however, Shenpen Tayé recognizes that there do exist some rare, highly talented individuals who may be able to skip stages in the path or even achieve sudden enlightenment with little or no formal practice in their current lifetime. The terrible consequences of misunderstanding many of the Great Perfection’s teachings, however, should make the gradual path the standard and preferred path even for extremely talented individuals.

### ***A Condensed Presentation of the Five Aggregates and Six Topics of Scholarship***

The *DzCW* contains a very short text on the divisions of the five aggregates (text no. 4: *phung lnga’i rab dbye bsdus pa*)<sup>407</sup> that serves as an introduction to not only the five aggregates but also to basic Abhidharma categories and terminology more broadly.<sup>408</sup> This work seems to have served as the basis for a longer work composed by Shenpen Tayé on the “six topics of scholarship” (*mkhas bya’i gnas drug*), which was to

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<sup>406</sup> de rtogs pa ni lam ma bsgrod par dbang po rnon pos rtogs pa tsam gyis sangs rgyas so//.

<sup>407</sup> *DzCW*: 1. 96–98; *XylKB*: 2. 58a–60b; *PCW*: 3. 177–182.

<sup>408</sup> Specifically, the “six topics of scholarship” listed below.



become highly influential for the development of Nyingma scholarship—serving as the basis for Khenpo Shenga’s own text on the six topics<sup>409</sup> and for Mipham Gyatso’s extensive work on the “ten topics of scholarship” (both discussed below).<sup>410</sup> This longer text on the “six topics of scholarship” also contains a number of passages where Shenpen Tayé explicitly states his position on the relation between textual study and spiritual realization. For these reasons, it would be appropriate to describe this work in more detail.

Shenpen Tayé’s longer treatise on the six topics of scholarship did not find its way into the *DzCW* but was published in two slightly different versions in other collections. The version of the *XyIKB* available on BDRC contains a version of this six topics text, entitled *Dependent Arising of the Pure Path: Teaching the Meaning of the Nine Vehicles* (*yang dag lam gyi rten 'brel theg dgu'i don ston*),<sup>411</sup> although it should be noted that there is evidence that this text was not part of the *XyIKB* as first published but, rather, made its way in to the collection prior to being scanned by the BDRC.<sup>412</sup> There is also an edition of this work entitled *An Analysis of the Five Aggregates and the Six Topics of Scholarship* (*phung po rab dbye bcas kyi mkhas bya'i gnas drug*) that was

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<sup>409</sup> *Mkhas par bya ba'i gnas drug bstan ba shes bya gsal ba'i me long* (A Mirror Clarifying the [Proper] Objects of Knowledge: A Teaching on the Six Subjects of Scholarship), (Bir, Distt. Kangra, HP, India: Tsondu Senghe, 1985), BDRC W27512. English translation: Tony Duff, trans., *The Six Topics That All Buddhists Learn: A Text of Khenpo Zhan-ga of Dzogchen Shri Singha College*, (Kathmandu: Padma Karpo Translation Committee, 2012).

<sup>410</sup> Khyentsé Wangpo’s *Biographical Verses of Reverence to Shenpen Tayé* dedicates a verse to praising Shenpen Tayé’s explication of the six topics: *phung po skye mched khams dang rten cing 'brel// gnas dang gnas min tshul la mkhas pa dang // theg pa chen po'i chos kyi sdom bzhi la// bsam byung 'khrul med skye bar byin gyis rlobs//* (verse 31). *XyIKB*, 1. 83a.

<sup>411</sup> *XyIKB*, text no. 74: 2. 206a–221b.

<sup>412</sup> This is based on the fact that the text as it exists in the *XyIKB* does not have the designation “*bka' 'bum*” in the left margins as do virtually all other texts in the collection.

included in a 31-volume collection of Nyingma and Drukpa Kagyü texts that was assembled, edited, and published by the Ladakhi scholar Tripön Pema Chögyel (khri dpon pad+ma chos rgyal) between 1934 and 1958.<sup>413</sup> Both of these texts— *Dependent Arising of the Pure Path*, and *An Analysis of the Five Aggregates and the Six Topics*— appear to contain the same root text to which slightly different sets of annotations have been inserted directly into the text in slightly smaller font. A more recent collection of Nyingma texts published by Dharma Publishing contains an edition of *An Analysis of the Five Aggregates and the Six Topics*.<sup>414</sup> In addition to the variations in their respective explanatory annotations, there are occasional differences in orthography between *Dependent Arising of the Pure Path* and *An Analysis of the Five Aggregates and the Six Topics* that, while generally minor and inconsequential to the texts’ meaning, are clearly intentional changes (rather than typos), from which we can deduce that the two editions were not edited and published by the same person, nor was the later text simply a copy of the earlier text with the addition of annotations. The fact that the two texts have completely different titles further bolsters the likelihood that these two versions had very different provenances and were transmitted and propagated in distinct institutional spheres. As with many of these *lucid exposition (legs bshad)* texts included in this section of the *DzCW*, it is likely that this text was produced from Shenpen Tayé’s teaching notes or from an actual set of teachings that he gave.

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<sup>413</sup> BDRC W20749, vol. 27, 95–143. Publication information given by BDRC: <https://www.BDRC.org/#!rid=W20749>.

<sup>414</sup> “Pung po rab dbye bcas kyi mkhas bya’i gnas drug,” in *Dpal snga ’gyur rnying ma’i gzhung lugs chen mo’i skor*, (Odiyan, CA: Dharma Publishing, 2004). Unfortunately, it appears that this edition cut out the final few lines of the xylograph text, including the author colophon (the text ends abruptly at the bottom of p. 791 and the top of p. 792 begins with some dedicatory verses from the (modern) publisher.

As the title of the second version denotes, the text deals with the *six topics of scholarship*,<sup>415</sup> which are listed as: 1) the aggregates (*phung po*; Skt: *skanda*), 2) the sense fields (*skye mched*; Skt., *āyatna*), 3) the constituents (*kham*s; Skt., *dhātu*), 4) dependent arising (*rten cing ‘brel bar ‘byung ba*; Skt., *pratīyasamutpāda*), 5) what is correct (*gnas la mkhas par bya*), and 6) what is not correct (*gnas ma yin pa la mkhas par bya*).<sup>416</sup>

In Shenpen Tayé’s author’s colophon, he says that he “wrote the work in order to help beginners,”<sup>417</sup> and the work certainly has the feel of an introductory textbook on basic Buddhist Abhidharma categories. But although the material is intended as an entry point for those beginning their study of Buddhist doctrine and practice, Shenpen Tayé makes an explicit argument within the text itself for why such scholarly study of the minutiae of Buddhist doctrine is essential preparation for the more advanced, non-discursive mystical practices that lead to “Buddhahood in this very life.” Following a brief salutation to “the lamas,” Shenpen Tayé begins his text thus:<sup>418</sup>

Those lucky ones who desire liberation in this very lifetime [should] study the six topics of scholarship.<sup>419</sup>

<sup>415</sup> Or, alternatively, the “six topics of the learned.”

<sup>416</sup> *XylKB*: 2. 207b. Compare this list of six topics to the list of ten prescribed by Mipham Gyatso in his *Gateway to Knowledge* (Vol. 1, Rangjung Yeshe Publication: 14): 1) the aggregates, 2) The elements [*de bzhin du khmas*], 3) the sense fields [*skye mched*], 4) Dependent Origination (*rten ‘brel*), 5) the correct and the incorrect [*gnas dang gnas ma yin pa*], 6) the faculties [*dbang po*], 7) time [*dus*], 8) the Truths [*bden pa*], 9) the Vehicles [*theg pa*], and 10) conditioned and unconditioned things [*‘dus byas ‘dus ma byas*]

<sup>417</sup> *las dang po pa la phan pa’i phyir bris pa. XylKB* 2. 221b.

<sup>418</sup> Khenpo Shenga in his later text on the six topics quotes this entire segment of Shenpen Tayé’s text verbatim.

<sup>419</sup> It is interesting to note here that the *yang dag lam* (*XylKB*) version of the text tends to use the *present* tense of most verbs whereas the *phung po gnas drug* version tends to use the *imperative* tense more often. For example, the *yang dag lam* here uses the present tense of the verb *slob* (to study, train), whereas the *phung po gnas drug* uses the imperative tense (*slobs*). So, where the *yang dag lam* says, “those desirous . . . train in the six topics,” the *phung po gnas drug* says, “those desirous . . . *should* train in the six topics.” It is also interesting to note that Khenpo Shenga’s verbatim quotation of this section in his own text on the six

If you are ignorant of these six topics of scholarship, [you] will not know the internal divisions of [Buddhist] doctrine (*chos kyi rnam dbye*).<sup>420</sup>

Not knowing the internal divisions of [Buddhist] doctrine, you will not know what is true and false [in relation to] inner and outer [phenomena] (*phyi nang bden rdzun*).

Not knowing what is true and false [in relation to] inner and outer [phenomena], you will not reject truly existent external objects (*phyi don bden grub mi ‘gog*).

Not rejecting truly existent external objects, you will not know [how to] engage with internal phenomena (*nang la ‘jug pa*).

Not knowing [how to] engage with internal phenomena, you will not know appearances as mind (*snang ba sems*).

Not knowing appearances as mind, you will not know the fundamental basis of consciousness (*kun gzhi’i rnam shes*).

Not knowing this fundamental basis of consciousness, you will not know that which is beyond intellectualization and free of elaborations (*spros bral blo ‘das*).

Not knowing that which is beyond intellectualization and free of elaborations, you will not know the view of the Middle Way (*dbu ma’i lta ba*).

Not knowing the view of the Middle Way, you will not know the luminosity of emptiness (*stong pa’i ‘od gsal*).

Not knowing the luminosity of emptiness, you will not know the luminosity of appearances (*snang ba ‘od gsal*).

Not knowing the luminosity of appearances, you will not know the co-emergence of appearances and emptiness (*snang stong zung ‘jug*).

Not knowing the co-emergence of appearances and emptiness, you will not know the luminosity of co-emergence (*zung ‘jug ‘od gsal*).

Not knowing the luminosity of co-emergence, you will not know the Great Perfection (*rdzogs pa chen po*).

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topics uses the imperative (*slobs*), suggesting that it was most likely this version of the text that made its way to Khenpo Shenga.

<sup>420</sup> *rnam dbye*: also means “divided into categories”; *chos kyi rnam dbye* therefore may suggest the various levels of truth of the various Buddhist doctrines.

Not knowing the Great Perfection, you cannot attain Buddhahood in this very lifetime (*tshe 'dir sang rgyas mi thob*).

Therefore, those desirous of obtaining Buddhahood in this very lifetime, should first study the six topics of scholarship, after which they should study the four defining doctrines of the Great Vehicle (*theg chen chos kyi sdom bzhi*),<sup>421</sup> and then should enter into the Middle Way, and finally, cultivate the Great Perfection of clear light.<sup>422</sup>

What we see here, is a clear and explicit formulation of a gradual path of Buddhist study and practice, rooted in the study of basic Buddhist doctrine and culminating in the realization of the Great Perfection and the attainment of Buddhahood in one’s present lifetime. As I argue elsewhere in this dissertation, gradualist presentations of Nyingma study and practice can certainly be found in the works of earlier Nyingma figures such as Sherab Özer and Jikmé Lingpa. What seems to be new with Shenpen Tayé is the explicit centering of *doctrinal study* as a key—even *necessary*—preparation for the higher Nyingma tantric practices and the ultimate realization of the Great Perfection. Nathaniel Rich shares this opinion on the import of these verses, arguing in his dissertation that,

The view that Shenpen Tayé articulates in these verses is one in which gradualism has come to encompass scholastic study as much as the practice of renunciation (*nges 'byung*). What’s more, so far as present research has determined, these verses constitute the earliest expression of such a view, which was, in retrospect,

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<sup>421</sup> Sometimes called the “four summaries of the Dharma,” the “four dharma emblems” (*chos rtags kyi phyag rgya bzhi*), or the “four seals” (*phyag rgya bzhi*). The four are: 1) All conditioned/compounded things are impermanent (*'du byas thams cad mi rtag pa*); 2) all defiling things [defiled with the clinging to self] are suffering (*zag bcas thams cad sdug bsngal*); 3) all phenomena are empty and devoid of a self-entity (*chos thams cad stong zhing bdag med pa'o*); and. 4) nirvana is peace (*mya ngan las 'das pa ni zhi ba*).

<sup>422</sup> *rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas thob 'dod rnams// dang po mkhas bya'i gnas drug slob// de rjes theg chen sdom bzhi slob// de nas dbu ma la 'jug pas// 'od gsal rdzogs pa chen po sgom//*.

Shenpen Tayé’s announcement of the ideological foundation for the development of Nyingma scholasticism.<sup>423</sup>

As I argued above, Shenpen Tayé’s writings show that he recognized that it was at least theoretically possible for a person with extremely high capabilities to skip over the foundational practices of ethical discipline and doctrinal study and obtain instant enlightenment. However, because such advanced beings are extremely rare and the risks of such skipping-over are so dire, the best strategy is for everyone to progress in stages through the entirety of the path, beginning with the ethical vows of *prātimokṣa* and learning the six topics of Buddhist scholarship.

It is also interesting to note that the *locus classicus* of this rubric of “the six topics of scholarship,” is a passage from the “ordination chapter” (*rab tu ‘byung ba’i gzhi*) of the *Vinayavastu* (*‘dul ba gzhi*)—one of the core Vinaya texts of the *Kangyur*. As part of the liturgy for giving full monastic ordination (*dge slong*) the preceptor is to say:

Henceforth, you shall receive instruction in the scriptures; you shall read them; you shall recite them. You shall become knowledgeable in the aggregates (*phung po*), the constituents (*kham*s), the sense fields (*skye mched*); dependent arising; what is correct; and what is not. You shall obtain that which has not been obtained; realize that which has not been realized; and actualize that which has not been actualized; and you should never forsake these endeavors.<sup>424</sup>

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<sup>423</sup> “The Modern Development of Scholasticism in the “Ancient” Sect of Tibetan Buddhism,” Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2016, 258.

<sup>424</sup> *deng phyin chad khyod kyis lung mnod par bya/ bklag par bya/ kha ton du bya'o// phung po la/ mkhas pa dang / kham*s la mkhas pa dang / *skye mched la mkhas pa dang / rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba la mkhas pa dang / gnas dang gnas ma yin pa la mkhas par bya'o// ma thob pa thob par bya ba dang / ma rtogs pa rtogs par bya ba dang / mngon du ma byas pa mngon du bya ba'i phyir khyod kyis brtson pa mi 'dor bar bya'o//*. *Vinayavastu, Dergé Kangyur*, vol. 1, 63b.

The fact that the six topics have their grounding in the monastic ordination liturgy is significant. We know that Shenpen Tayé was very aware of this passage from the *Vinayavastu* because he included it in the monastic ordination liturgy contained in his work *Clarifying the Nyingma Tradition of Monastic Ordination* (*snga ‘gyur ring lugs kyi rab byung gi gzhi chog lung don rab tu gsal ba*).<sup>425</sup> As I will discuss in detail in chapter six below, one of Shenpen Tayé’s lasting legacies is the shift within the wider Nyingma tradition towards the *shared* Buddhist practices of Buddhist monasticism and exoteric doctrinal scholarship, and the positioning of these as the necessary ground of the “unique” Nyingma esoteric traditions represented by the three “inner tantras.” These editions of *the Six Topics*, authored by Shenpen Tayé, provided an explicit argument for such a grounding and, in their intended function as a textbook for beginners, acted as a tangible material support for this vision.

### 3.2.2 Essential Instructions in Response to Queries (*dris lan stong thun*), vol. 2: pp. 8–153.

The second textual category in the *DzCW* is “essential instructions in response to queries” (*dris lan stong thun*), which comprises thirteen texts (nos. 25–37). The texts in this section differ from those in the “personal advice and oral instructions” section discussed below, not only because they represent responses to *particular* questions but also by virtue of treating their respective topics more systematically and in far greater detail and length than the works of personal instructions (*zhal gdams*). Indeed, the “response to queries” texts in this section are virtually indistinguishable in both form

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<sup>425</sup> *DzCW*: 1. 105–154; *XylKB*: 2. 257a–301a; *PCW*: 3. 365–433.

and general content to many of the systematic scholarly presentations contained in the previous section. Looking at the author colophons of the texts in the first section reveals that most of them were *also* written in response to questions from particular individuals. If both sets of texts in the two sections are indistinguishable in terms of form and substance, and both contain texts that Shenpen Tayé composed in response to questions from specific individuals named in the colophons, why then are only some of them designated “response to queries”—both in their original titles and, more recently, by being put in different sections by the editors of the *DzCW*?

The answer likely has to do with the fact that the texts categorized as “response to queries” tend to have requestors that were famous or widely known and tended to be from *other* illustrious institutions. This list includes the important female master from Mindröling, Trinle Chödrön<sup>426</sup> (*DzCW* text no. 28); Dorjé Dzinpa Gyurme Chöwang<sup>427</sup> (text no. 29, whom the colophon of the work describes as “a proponent of countless tantras and the former abbot of tantric exegesis at Mindröling”<sup>428</sup>); Pelyul Wöntrül Rikdzin Jikmé Rangdrol<sup>429</sup> of Pelyul Monastery (text no. 30); Shechen Wöntrul Tutob Namgyel<sup>430</sup> from Shechen Monastery (text no. 31); and many more. In contrast, the synthetic texts given in response to queries included in the first section of the *DzCW*—i.e., those that are entitled and categorized by their topic rather than their requestor—tend

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<sup>426</sup> phrin las chos kyi sgron me; d.u.; BDRC P2701. Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo (‘jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse’i dbang po, 1820-1892) is reported to have written a short biography of this important female figure. Townsend, “Materials of Buddhist Culture,” 249–250.

<sup>427</sup> rdo rje ‘dzin pa ‘gyur med chos dbang; d.u.

<sup>428</sup> o rgyan smin grol gling gi rgyud bshad mkhan zur ba bshags rgyud rab ‘byams smra ba’i dge slong rdo rje ‘dzin pa ‘gyur med chos dbang.

<sup>429</sup> dpal yul dbon sprul rig ‘dzin ‘jigs med rang grol; b. 1820; BDRC P6171.

<sup>430</sup> zhe chen dbon sprul mthu stobs rnam rgyal; 1787–1854; BDRC P558.



to have requestors that were close students of Shenpen Tayé or figures that were affiliated with Shenpen Tayé’s home institution of Dzokchen. For example, text no. 23 was requested by “my vajra brother Jikmé Dorjé”;<sup>431</sup> and text no. 17 by “my own student [...] Gyelsé Shiwa Zangpo.”<sup>432</sup>

It seems then that in the case of Shenpen Tayé’s textual corpus at least, the categorization of “response to queries” as a distinct genre was not so much influenced by any literary or topical criteria within the texts themselves, but rather, it was a publishing decision aimed at highlighting the wide-ranging influence and respect enjoyed by Shenpen Tayé within the wider Nyingma world.<sup>433</sup> The fact that a number of key institutional leaders from some of the major Nyingma “mother” monasteries—Mindröling, Pelyul, Shechen—came to ask questions and learn from Shenpen Tayé would have been a strong and clear statement of the extremely high level of regard with which Shenpen Tayé was held in the broader Nyingma world. The fact that the institutional leaders of other top Nyingma institutions publicly came to him and respectfully asked him questions relating to such topics as the history of the Nyingma tradition, the nature of Great Perfection practice, and so forth is also evidence that Shenpen Tayé’s life-long efforts to establish and foster a broader and more inclusive

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<sup>431</sup> rang nyid kyi rdo tje’i mched po ‘jigs med rdo rje . . .

<sup>432</sup> rang nyid kyi slob bu [...] rgyal sras zhi ba bzang po.

<sup>433</sup> We should also note that at least eight of the twelve texts in this “response to queries” section are each marked with a different Tibetan numeral in the left margin of the verso folio in the *XyIKB*. The texts in question are given a number between 1 and 8. Other than one other instance that I found in the *XyIKB* of a text being numbered in this way [Shenpen Tayé’s *Verse Autobiography* is numbered “1”], it seems that it was exclusively the “response to queries” texts that are marked this way. This suggests to me that these texts were collected together and perhaps formed a sub-section within the *XyIKB*. The following details the texts given such numerals in the *XyIKB*: *DzCW* text. no. [Tibetan numeral]: *DzCW* text no. 28 [8]; text no. 30 [4]; text no. 31 [6]; text no. 32 [7]; text no. 33 [5]; text no. 34 [1]; text no. 35 [3]; text no. 37 [2].

vision of the Nyingma tradition—one that reached across the boundaries of specific institutions, lineages, and so forth—bore tangible fruit and was—at least to some degree—recognized and applauded by contemporaneous Nyingma institutional leaders.

### 3.2.3 Biography and Speeches (*rnam thar 'bel gtam*), vol. 2: pp. 154–174.

This is a very short section, containing only four brief works. Two of these works are short biographical verses of reverence to the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen, Shenpen Tayé’s “root” lama. The section also contains Shenpen Tayé’s *Verse Autobiography* that we discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

#### ***An Exhortation Made to the Assembly of Dzagyel Göñ***

This section also contains a very interesting speech given by Shenpen Tayé to the assembly at Dzagyel Göñ (*rdza rgyal dgon*), entitled *Banging the Divine Drum: An Exhortation Made to the Assembly of Dzagyel Göñ*.<sup>434</sup> This text is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, it records what is ostensibly a public address given by Shenpen Tayé to a “monastic” audience, and so allows us a view of his oral teaching style. Secondly, the text provides both an exhortation to spiritual practice, and an outline for engaging in such practice, thus providing us with a valuable example of Shenpen Tayé’s practical path systematics. Thirdly, the speech contains an extended discussion on monastic codes of conduct, in which Shenpen Tayé explicitly addresses the values and discipline required to live under the monastic rule. I will discuss the work as it relates to the second of these three concerns here and will discuss the first and third issues—

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<sup>434</sup> *rdza rgyal dgon gyi 'dus par 'bel gtam du bgyis pa lha yi rnga sgra*, DzCW: 2. 166–174; XylKB: 1. 363a–369a; PCW: 2. 109–124.

concerning how this text can inform us about Shenpen Tayé’s views on Buddhist monasticism—in chapter six below.

Shenpen Tayé begins banging the proverbial drum with the requisite obeisance made to the “glorious lama” before posing his opening rhetorical question, “what is the path of liberation?” (*thar ba’i lam*) He begins his answer with the following entreaty:

Whatever state of omniscience and liberation you attain will depend entirely on you! If you don’t take [the teachings] into your own experience, how can the lama purify you? Any personal advice he gives—even if it is profound—will bring no benefit. For example, if you are ill, even if you seek treatment from an excellent doctor; if you don’t take the medicine that he prescribes, your illness won’t get better.<sup>435</sup>

After some more examples and scriptural citations, Shenpen Tayé gets to the point, saying:

So, what is it that you are to take into your own experience? It is the precious Buddhist tradition (*bstan pa*; Skt., *sāsana*) of scripture and realization, and you need to take these into your own experience by means of study and practice.<sup>436</sup>

Shenpen Tayé then introduces the *three baskets*<sup>437</sup> of the Buddhist scriptures and connects them to the *three trainings*<sup>438</sup> (*bslab pa gsum*), which constitute the Buddhist path, saying:

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<sup>435</sup> 1b: de yang 'dir thar ba dang rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa'i go 'phang gang sgrub kyang de nyid rang la rag las kyi/ rang gis nyams su ma blangs na bla ma ji tsam bzang / gdams ngag ji ltar zab kyang phan pa med pa/ dper na sman pa ci tsam bzang / sman ji ltar nus pa che rung / rang gis sman ma btung na nad la mi phan pa dang /.

<sup>436</sup> 2a: 'o na rang nyid kyi nyams su blang bya'i chos de'ang gang zhe na/ rgyal ba'i lung rtogs kyi bstan pa rin po che 'di nyid yin zhing / de yang bshad sgrub kyi sgo nas nyams su len dgos.

<sup>437</sup> Skt., *tripitika*. These are Vinaya, Sūtra, and Abhidharma.

<sup>438</sup> The “three trainings” (Skt., *triśikṣā*) are a foundational Buddhist rubric comprising: higher ethics (*lhag pa tshul 'khrims*; Skt., *adhiśīla*), higher meditation (*lhag pa ting nge 'dzin*; Skt., *adhisamādhi*), and higher discriminative wisdom (*lhag pa shes rab*; Skt., *adhiprajñā*).

Training in higher ethics is the primary teaching of the Vinaya basket; training in higher meditation is that of the Sūtra basket; and training in higher discriminative wisdom is that of the Abhidharma basket.<sup>439</sup>

Shenpen Tayé goes on to say that ethical training is accomplished through *guarding* (*bsrung ba*), meditation through *cultivation* (*sgom pa*), and discriminative wisdom through *analysis* (*rnam par dpyod pa*).<sup>440</sup> He explicitly argues for an order of practice that puts ethical training first, saying, “concerning what acts as a support and what is supported, it is ethical training that provides the support for subsequently pursuing the other two [trainings].”<sup>441</sup> He then provides the analogy of ethics being like the field, meditation the manure and rain, and wisdom the seeds. Shenpen Tayé continues to emphasize the foundational importance of ethical cultivation throughout his speech, and soon moves into a detailed discussion of the role of monastic vows and other vows of *individual liberation*, to which we will return in depth in chapter six below.

One other element of this text that we should mention before moving on, is the fact that Shenpen Tayé liberally sprinkles his speech with verbatim passages from a range of canonical scriptures and treatises, including the *Prātimokṣa-sūtra*, *Śīlasamyukta-sūtra*, Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośa*, and Nāgārjuna’s *Suhṛllekha* (*Letter to a Friend*) to support his points. Such quotations not only lend canonical authority to Shenpen Tayé’s exhortations, but also act as a kind of performative enactment of their authority by Shenpen Tayé, emphasizing their value and relevance for Nyingma thought and practice.

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<sup>439</sup> 2b.

<sup>440</sup> 2b–3a.

<sup>441</sup> 3a: rten dang brten pa'i sgo nas bzhag na tshul khirms rten dang phyi ma gnyis brten par 'gyur.

### 3.2.4 Poetic Works

#### **3.3.4.1      *Introductory Comments***

The next two sections of the *DzCW* are comprised of poetic works in verse—the first of the two sections being labelled, “Songs and Expressions of Realization” (*rtogs nyams gsung mgur*; vol. 2: pp. 175–221) and the second, “Personal Advice and Oral Instructions” (*zhal gdams man ngag*; pp. 223–385). Because the earlier editions of Shenpen Tayé’s collected works gathered many of the works in these two sections together, I will start by treating these poetic works together before describing them in more detail under the twin rubric used by the *DzCW*.

The works contained in the “songs and expressions of realization” section of the *DzCW* were first gathered together along with many short poetic works of personal advice, and published in the *XylKB* as part of a section entitled: *Spontaneously Composed Songs of Realization of the Excellent, Exalted Spiritual Teacher and Poetic Utterances of Comprehensive Advice Made to Benefit the Disciples* (*rje bla ma dam pa'i nyams mgur thol byung dang slob ma rnams la phan par gdams pa'i rab tu byed pa mgur du gsungs pa rnams*).<sup>442</sup> Although the works collected together in this section of the *XylKB* represent a host of distinct genres (described below), they are all written in poetic verse, ranging from seven to ten syllables per line. Many of the works in both sections also contain sophisticated formal elements such as acrostic verse.<sup>443</sup> Acrostic verse—called

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<sup>442</sup> *XylKB*: 2. 78a–136b.

<sup>443</sup> See for example, *ka rtsom gros 'debs bslab bya* [*DzCW* title], *DzCW*: 2. 182–183; *XylKB*: 2. 126b–127a; *BhCW*: 1. 391–394; and, *rdzogs chen lta ba'i nyams mgur ka rtsom ma* [*DzCW* title], *DzCW*: 2. 181; *XylKB*: 2. 107b–108b/136a–136b; *BhCW*: 1. 329–332/2. 7–9.

*ka-tsom* (*ka rtsom*) in Tibetan—is even more challenging to compose in Tibetan than in languages such as English. In both cases, each line of the poem begins with a successive letter of the alphabet, but in the Tibetan case, this involves not simply beginning the lines with a word (or syllable) that *starts* with that letter, but using *only* that letter as the first syllable.<sup>444</sup> The use of such devices shows Shenpen Tayé as a skilled litterateur, and demonstrates the degree to which his early education in the literary arts—described in the last chapter—seems to have stuck.

We will now turn to a more detailed consideration of the two main types of poetic works that Shenpen Tayé composed.

### **3.3.4.2      *Songs and Expressions of Realization (rtogs nyams gsung mgur);* *vol. 2: pp. 175–221***

The songs and poems composed by Shenpen Tayé and collected together in the *DzCW* as “Songs and Expressions of Realization” (*rtogs nyams gsung mgur*) are—as their titles denote— of a wide range of types and genres, ranging from simple “songs” (*glu*) to “songs of praise” (*bstod pa’i mgur*), “songs of realization” (*nyams mgur*), “words of counsel” (*gros ‘debs bslab bya*), “songs of remembrance” (*rjes su dran pa’i glu*), “calling the lama from afar” (*bla ma dran pa’i rgyangs ‘bod ring mo*), and “adamantine verses” (*rdo rje tshig*). Some of these works are more formal in nature and reflect Shenpen Tayé’s role as an institutional leader. For example, the work *Calling the Lama from Afar* (*bla ma dran pa’i rgyangs ‘bod ring mo*)<sup>445</sup> says that it was composed during

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<sup>444</sup> This is possible because all the letters of the Tibetan alphabet also carry semantic meaning as “words”—for example, *kha* means “mouth” or “opening,” and *da* means “now.”

<sup>445</sup> *DzCW*: 2. 191–196; *XylKB*: 2. 78a–82b; *BhCW*: 1. 222–236.

an initiation ceremony given by Shenpen Tayé to the Dorjé Drak Rikdzin and a gathering of monks and lamas. Other works reflect the opposite tendency—that of a carefree yogi practicing in isolated places.

Shenpen Tayé’s song of realization *Indestructible Sky Verses (nam mkha’ rdo rje’i tshig)*<sup>446</sup> provides an example of this latter tendency. In this cheeky work, Shenpen Tayé expresses the openness and naturalism of the Great Perfection while simultaneously poking fun at the tropes that often imbue such songs. The poem begins:

Ho ho!  
From the expanse that is like the sky  
I, a yogi of the sky  
Fling into the expanse of the sky  
These indestructible verses of the sky.

All phenomena in samsara and nirvana are [like] the sky.  
Even the sky itself is [like] the sky!<sup>447</sup>

The levity of these verses—with their repetition of the word “sky” in each line soon gives way to a more earnest expression of the Great Perfection:

Thoughts of becoming and cessation  
Cease in the coalescence of the Great Perfection.  
The stages, path, and basis are perfected and spontaneously accomplished;  
One taste, free and boundless.

The massed clouds spontaneously dissolve;  
Expansive openness exhausts all hopes and fears.  
Isolated, with a mind free from such conventions as ‘exhaustion’

<sup>446</sup> DzCW: 2. 221; XylKB: 2. 85b–86a; BhCW: 2. 21–23, 1. 247–249.

<sup>447</sup> ho ho/ nam mkha' lta bu'i klong nas// nam mkha'i rnal 'byor nga yis// nam mkha' rdo rje'i tshig 'di// nam mkha'i klong du shor song // 'khor 'das chos kun nam mkha'// nam mkha' nyid kyang nam mkha'//.

All virtue and sin are spontaneously purified!<sup>448</sup>

The poem then concludes by shifting back to the “sky” trope from whence it began:

A drop of rain forms in the sky  
 And whether the masses of clouds are white or black,  
 There is no change to the sky itself;  
 Such is the nature of the sky!

These spontaneous utterances, having resounded across the sky,  
 Spontaneously dissolve into the sky and are gone.<sup>449</sup>

This poem demonstrates another side of Shenpen Tayé, one that shows him to be more than simply a scholastic luminary and monastic reformer. In these verses we see a reflection of Shenpen Tayé’s years of solitary retreat as well as the sense of humor and irony for which many teachers from Shenpen Tayé’s home region of Dzachukha were well-known.<sup>450</sup> Shenpen Tayé’s poetic works also demonstrate his investment in effective teaching and personalized instruction, and it is to these works of personal advice that we shall now turn.

### 3.3.4.3 *Personal Advice and Oral Instructions (zhal gdams man ngag); pp. 223–385*

Shenpen Tayé’s corpus is particularly notable for the large number of works of personal advice written for specific people. The *DzCW* contains 66 individual works of

<sup>448</sup> skyes dang 'gag pa'i blo bral// zung 'jug rdzogs pa chen po// sa lam gzhi rdzogs lhun 'grub// ro mnyam gu yangs dmigs med// sprin tshogs dbyings su denga pa// phyal yas re dogs kun zad// zad pa'i tha snyad bral bzhin// bral ba'i blo yang dben pa// dge dang sdig kun dbyings dag.

<sup>449</sup> nam mkhar chu thigs cig chags// sprin tshogs dkar nag gang gis// nam mkha' bsgyur nus ma yin// 'di 'dra nam mkha'i rang bzhin// nam mkha' rang sgrar grags nas// nam mkha' rang dang thim song //.

<sup>450</sup> I am thinking here, in particular, of Shenpen Tayé’s teacher Jikmé Nyugu and his main student Dza Patrül.



this sort spanning a total of 145 pages. All of the works contained in the section of the *DzCW* entitled “Personal Advice and Oral Instructions” (*zhal gdams man ngag*) are also found in the earlier *XyKB*, where they are largely amalgamated without individual titles into a set of collections (*XyKB* text nos. 72 & 73). The editors of the *DzCW* gave titles to these works based on information contained in the colophon and/or the dominant topic(s) of the work. The most common format for these added titles in the *DzCW* is: “Advice (*gdams pa*) to [name or title of person].”

Such works of personal advice are most commonly referred to as *sheldam* (*zhal gdams*).<sup>451</sup> Holly Gayley and Joshua Schapiro, in their recent edited work on works of personal advice by 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century Tibetan masters, describe the depth and range of the genre, saying:

While shaldam texts retain a quality of spoken advice, they are unmistakably literary. This is the case whether the advice was originally composed in writing or whether it was transcribed and edited from an oral teaching. Shaldam are at once personal advice for a specific disciple and carefully crafted compositions for a broader readership. The audience indicated in these works span from village practitioners to novice monks and from ordinary laity to advanced tantric adepts. Shaldam thus constitute an appealing combination of proximity and accessibility. They provide practical, direct, essential advice for meditation and tantric practice, packaged in a style capable of provoking, at times, strong affective responses.<sup>452</sup>

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<sup>451</sup> This is indeed, the “genre” given in the left margins of the texts collected in *XyKB* text no. 73, which make up over half of the individual works contained in the section on “Personal Advice and Oral Instructions” (*zhal gdams man ngag*) in the *DzCW*.

<sup>452</sup> Holly Gayley and Joshua Schapiro, “Introduction,” in *A Gathering of Brilliant Moons: Practice Advice from the Rimé Masters of Tibet*, ed. Gayley and Shapiro (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2017), 8.

Shenpen Tayé’s *sheldam* works are generally short in length (1–3 folios) and are all rendered in verse containing between seven and ten syllables per line.<sup>453</sup> The works are addressed to a broad range of people, ranging from tulkus and institutional leaders,<sup>454</sup> monks from other institutions,<sup>455</sup> yogins,<sup>456</sup> monastic staff,<sup>457</sup> lay persons,<sup>458</sup> and Shenpen Tayé’s personal students. Shenpen Tayé’s works of personal advice are also notable in that the recipients include a number of women from various walks of life. Shenpen Tayé’s female recipients include a number of highly respected female practitioners such as Druptsonma Yeshé Wangmo,<sup>459</sup> Druptsonma Namkar Drönma,<sup>460</sup> Jetsunma Yeshé Drölma,<sup>461</sup> and Jetsunma Kunzang Chödrön.<sup>462</sup> In addition to these revered religious figures, Shenpen Tayé also addressed at least one work of advice to a laywoman—Dorjé Yudrön, the “wife of a patron.”<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>453</sup> Out of the 66 works of “advice” in the *DzCW*, one work has 10-syllable meter; twenty-seven works have 9-syllable; sixteen works have 8-syllable; twenty-one works have 7-syllable; and one work (*DzCW* text no. 78) uses a combination of 7- and 9-syllable meter.

<sup>454</sup> E.g., *DzCW* text no. 67 (2. 226–231) addressed to the Dorjé Drak Shabdrung Tulku (*rdo rje brag zhabs drung sprul ba'i sku*).

<sup>455</sup> E.g., text no. 75 (2. 269–270) addressed to “Gyurmé Pema, a monk of Mindröling” (*o rgyan smin grol gling gi grwa rigs 'gyur med pad+ma*).

<sup>456</sup> E.g., text no. 99 (2. 325) addressed to “the yogi, Longsel Dorjé (*rnal 'byor pa klong gsal rdo rje*).

<sup>457</sup> E.g., text no. 77 (2. 278–279) addressed to “the shrine-keeper at Samyé Chimphu” (*mchims phu'i sku gnyer pa*).

<sup>458</sup> E.g., text no. 103 (2. 335) addressed to “the master craftsman. Lobsang Dargyé” (*bzo rig 'dzin pa blo bzang dar rgyas*).

<sup>459</sup> *sgrub brtson ma ye shes dbang mo*; (dates unknown); text no. 95 (2. 317–318).

<sup>460</sup> *sgrub brtson ma rnam dkar sgron ma* (dates unknown); text no. 107 (2. 340–341).

<sup>461</sup> *rje btsun ma ye shes sgröl ma* (dates unknown); text no. 73 (2. 257–258).

<sup>462</sup> *rje btsun ma kun bzang chos sgron* (dates unknown); text no. 108 (2. 342). Note: there was a famous and still-revered female practitioner from Nyarong named Jetsunma Kunzang Drölma who was the daughter of Rangrik Dorjé (*rang rig rdo rje*; 1847–1903). However, given the dates of Rangrik Dorjé, it is likely that his daughter was not even born until well after Shenpen Tayé’s death so it must have been that there was another figure named Jetsunma Kunzang Drölma who lived earlier.

<sup>463</sup> “sbyin bdag lcam rdo rje g.yu sgron la gdams pa; text no. 130 (2. 383).

Perhaps the most notable feature of Shenpen Tayé’s works of personal advice is that virtually all of them contain panoramic yet succinct summaries of the Buddhist path as formulated specifically for that person. Ranging in length from many folio sides to a single four-line verse, these path summaries often provide the recipient with a sweeping, birds-eye-view of the Buddhist tradition along with a guide to the preferred *order* that one is to progress through these various practices. Although these path presentations vary somewhat between the individual works, they all tend to focus on a proper grounding of advanced practices in the broader, *shared* (*thun mong*) array of foundational Buddhist practices such as ethics and “generating the mind of awakening.” A few examples will serve to illustrate these features.

The short, 5-verse work *Advice to Gegyel Monlam* (*dge rgyal smon lam*)<sup>464</sup> provides an example of a more truncated version of the Buddhist path that focuses on *shared* exoteric Buddhist practices and does not include tantric practice:

Those who desire liberation, should take the holy Dharma as their practice support. Having obtained a perfect human birth, you should properly set up the conditions that support the good fortune of self and other and bring to mind [the inevitability of] impermanence and death.

Such is the basis of the path of liberation; simply setting your mind wholeheartedly on the *three refuges* provides freedom from the fears of samsara. Because that is the case, it is essential to first familiarize yourself with the key points of going for refuge.

Subsequently, you need to fully appreciate, with great compassion, the torment of all those suffering in samsara, and, then, generating the stages of the

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<sup>464</sup> *dge rgyal smon lam la gdams pa*, DzCW text no. 88 (2. 307); XylKB: 2. 200a–b; PCW: 2. 437–438; BhCW: 1. 200–202, 2. 712–713.

two bodhisattva activities of aspiration and application, enter into the treasury of the precious *three trainings*.

With regard to these three trainings, if you do not first restrain your own mind by the training of pure ethical conduct, then [the subsequent two trainings of] concentration and wisdom will not arise. Therefore, you should first earnestly train in ethical conduct.

Then, having trained successively in hearing, contemplating, and meditating, you will definitely achieve the excellent ground of total omniscience, the full attainment of all of the glorious ten stages and five paths. With all this in mind, I beseech you to practice diligently!<sup>465</sup>

In another work of advice, Shenpen Tayé offers a similarly tantric-free path outline to a disciple, Pema Dönden Zangpo<sup>466</sup>:

Those who wish to engage with the teachings of the Buddha with a mind of renunciation, should first properly restrain their own mind through ethical conduct. Subsequently, they should make unwavering effort in the practices of listening, contemplating, and meditation.

That is to say, you should properly analyze the meaning of what is heard by thinking it through. Then, it is imperative to attain a direct experience of the view of the emptiness through the [analysis of] self and phenomena that begins with the training in the stages of meditation that unify calm and insight meditations.

Having attained this [view of emptiness], go to an isolated mountain retreat and, motivated by a sense of impermanence, love, and compassion, grasp

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<sup>465</sup> thar 'dod rnams kyis dam chos sgrub pa'i rten/ /skyon med dal rten thob nas rang gzhan gyi/ /'byor ba'i rten 'brel legs par sgrig pa dang / /mi rtag 'chi ba rjes su dran par bya//.

de yang nam grol lam gyi gzhir gyur cing / /srid pa'i 'jigs las sgrol byed skyabs gsum la/ /snying nas blo gtad byed pa nyid yin phyir/ /skyabs 'gro'i gnad la goms pa thog mar gces//.

de rjes ma rnams srid pa'i sdug bsngal gyis/ /gdung la snying rje chen pos gzhi bzungs nas/ /smon 'jug byang chub sems gnyis rim bskyed de/ /bslab gsum nor bu'i mdzod khang la 'jug bya//.

de yang thog mar nam dag tshul khriims kyis/ /rang rgyud bsdams pa min na ting 'dzin dang / /shes rab nyid kyang don du mi 'gyur bas/ /dang po tshul khriims bsrung la nan tan mdzod//.

de nas thos bsam sgom la rim bzhin du/ /bslab nas sa bcu lam lnga'i dpal yon kun/ /ji bzhin thob mthar nam mkhyen mchog gi sa/ /mngon du byed phyir 'bad pas sgrub 'tshal lo//.

<sup>466</sup> pad+ma don ldan bzang po la gdams pa; *DzCW* text no. 111; 2. 348.

the fundamental root of it all by cultivating the two practices of awakening. Then, may you swiftly achieve the goals of both self and other!<sup>467</sup>

A number of Shenpen Tayé’s works of personal advice are addressed to lay people. In these works, Shenpen Tayé tends to focus his advice on the importance of adopting ethical behavior, while, at the same time, situating these ethical imperatives within the wider world of Buddhist categories and practices. We can see such positioning of basic instructions in a wider Buddhist framework in Shenpen Tayé’s “Advice to Abu Tsering, a Devotee from Kokonor.”<sup>468</sup> The work begins with the following injunction:

Father, having made prostrations with faith and a one-pointed mind to the lama,  
the lord himself of the four kayas,  
Listen respectfully to these good words that are the pith of the Lord Buddha’s  
teachings.

You are fixated on the wealth and glory of the samsaric world, but there will  
come a time when these will fail you.  
Because the only infallible refuge is the three jewels, you should make respectful  
offerings to them in whatever way you can.<sup>469</sup>

Shenpen Tayé continues over the next few verses to emphasize the reality of impermanence and the need to engage in virtuous behavior, continuing on to a

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<sup>467</sup> gang zhig nges 'byung bsam pas thub bstan la// 'jug 'dod de dag thog mar tshul khirms kyis// rang rgyud legs par bsams nas de rjes su// thos bsam sgom la g.yel med brtson par bya//  
de yang thos don bsam pas legs dpyad nas// zhi lhag zung du 'jug pa'i sgom rim la// slob pa'i thog mar bdag gnyis kyis stong pa'i// lta ba'i dmigs nmam nges pa shin tu gces//

de ltar nges nas dben pa'i ri khrod du// mi rtag byams dang snying rjes kun bslangs pa'i// byang chub sems gnyis sgom pas gzhi bzungs te// rang gzhan don gnyis myur du sgrub 'tshal lo//

<sup>468</sup> mtsho sngon po'i dad ldan a but she ring la gdams pa, *DzCW* text no. 104, 2. 336–337.

<sup>469</sup> pha sku bzhi'i bdag nyid bla ma la// yid rtse gcig dad pas phyag 'tshal nas// mgon thub pa'i dbang po'i gsung gsang don// de legs par bshad kyis gus pas nyon// khyed 'jig rten srid pa'i dpal 'byor la// blo gtad kyang nam zhig bslu nges pas// skyabs bslu med dkon mchog rin chen gsum// 'dir gus pas phyag mchod ci nus mdzod//

description of the three trainings—ethical conduct, meditation, and wisdom—before shifting to a capsule summary that condenses his basic advice:

If I explain all this in detail, there will be no end, so, in brief: although you are living as a householder in the world,  
You should arrive at a correct view of that life and hold the five precepts.

Repeatedly, and at all times, go for refuge to the three jewels. During the three auspicious times, take temporary precepts,  
And, on occasion, practice meditation and so forth and apply yourself earnestly in the vehicle of gods and men.

These practices do not entail cutting off the root of worldly existence at all.  
Rather, these methods are like the rungs of a ladder.  
Stabilizing oneself with these more basic supports will lead to higher results later.  
This is the “gradual becoming” described by Nagarjuna.<sup>470</sup>

Here we see Shenpen Tayé providing spiritual advice that is appropriate for a lay person, while, simultaneously, constellating the “basic” recommended practices within a longer arc of spiritual development that leads to the higher modes of Buddhist practice. We should also note the ubiquity in these various works of advice of the rubric of the *three trainings*—viz. ethics, meditation, and wisdom. As we discussed above in relation to Shenpen Tayé’s exhortation given at Dzagyel, the repeated appearance of the three trainings in Shenpen Tayé’s teachings speaks to Shenpen Tayé’s deep investment in foundational *shared* Buddhist practices, categories, and rubrics. The three trainings, with their emphasis on ethical training as being the indispensable cornerstone upon which all

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<sup>470</sup> de mang du bshad na mi zin pas// mdor 'jig rten khyim par gnas rnam kyang // de'i yang dag lta la nges rnyed nas// rten dge bsnyen gyi blang 'das lnga po srungs//  
yang rtag par dkon mchog skyabs 'gro dang // dus bzang po gsum la bsnyen gnas dang // yang skabs 'gar bsam gtan sgom pa sogs// lam lha mi'i theg la nan tan 'tshal//  
des srid rtsa gcod pa ma lags kyang // thabs 'di dag skas kyi gdang bu bzhin// rten snga mar goms na phyi ma'i 'bras// de rim bzhin 'byung ba klu sgrub bzhed//

Buddhist practice is built, speaks to Shenpen Tayé’s deep and pervasive interest in the taming power of Buddhist practice, a theme that we will continue to discuss in the pages and chapters below.

### 3.2.5 Devotional and Propitiatory Works (gsol ‘debs zhabs brtan), vol. 2: pp. 387–460

Shenpen Tayé wrote numerous devotional works, most of which focused on the lineage lamas (*bla ma’i brgyud*) of a particular teaching or practice lineage. As we will see in chapter five, many of these verses of reverence to the lineage lamas were composed for the nine-volume collection of *kama* (*bka’ ma*) ritual texts that Shenpen Tayé edited and published in 1845. The subjects of Shenpen Tayé’s propitiatory works include the lineage lamas of the Nyingma lineage;<sup>471</sup> *The Magical Net Tantra* (*sgyu ‘phrul drwa ba*);<sup>472</sup> the *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions* empowerment;<sup>473</sup> and many, many more. There are also numerous supplications to more limited lineages such as his devotional verses to the female Dorjé Pakmo lineage, entitled *A Continuous Rain of Blessings: Devotional Verses Enumerating the Successive Incarnations of the Venerable Dorje Phagmo Lineage* (*sku zhabs rdo rje phag mo’i ‘khrungs rabs gsol ‘debs byin rlabs char rgyun*).<sup>474</sup>

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<sup>471</sup> snga ‘gyur mnying lugs kyi bla ma rgyud pa’i gsol ‘debs gzhan phan mtha’ yas: *DzCW* text no. 132 (2. 387–391); *XylKB*: 2. 376a–380a; *BhCW*: 2. 203–217.

<sup>472</sup> rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po sgyu ‘phrul drwa ba ji ltar brgyud pa’i srol ‘dzin gyi dge ba’i bshes gnyen chen po nams la gsol ba ‘debs pa’i tshigs su bcad pa skal ldan thar par ‘gro ba’i sa mkhan: *DzCW* text no. 133 (2. 392–396); *XylKB*: 2. 381a–384b; *PCW*: 3. 531–538; *BhCW*: 2. 173–185.

<sup>473</sup> *DzCW* text no. 134 (2. 397); *Trinchok Collection* text no. 73.

<sup>474</sup> *DzCW* text no. 149 (2. 435–438); *XylKB*: 2. 39a.–42b; *BhCW*: 2. 191–202.

The often-brief and succinct nature of these lineage supplications belies the importance of these works within Tibetan religious communities. These supplications are designed to be chanted together as a community as part of the ritual calendar. On a general level, the chanting of these supplications acts to strengthen group identity, solidarity, and cohesion by performatively constructing a positive—often mythic—vision of the community and its lineage(s) in the minds of its members. These devotional supplications are also one of the primary means by which members of the community learn about their tradition and its lineages, and forge a personal connection with them.

As a kind of historic and doxographic literature, lineage supplications are concerned with maintaining a connection to an ideal religious past as a means to provide direction and guidance in the present. For Tibetans, the past exists as both close and remote; the tendency of religious communities to idealize past figures and events tends to imbue the past with a kind of ontological other-ness. The rupture that results between the past and present, risks making the ideal past seem irrelevant to the problems and realities of the lived present. Tibetans have long deployed discursive “technologies” to bridge this gap that allows people in the present to access and draw on the power of the ideal past. These “technologies” include elaborate communal rituals of remembrance, such as the Great Kalachakra Initiations (“Wheel of Time”); personal contemplative practices that invoke past masters, such as the practice of *Guru Yoga*; and communal lineage supplications as part of the daily liturgical schedule. Such discursive and performative ritual practices connect present and past and help to manage the way the past *persists* in the present. Berber Bevernage describes the difficulty of managing the persistence of the



past, arguing that although “the delineation between past and present is not absolute and the past sometimes persists in the present,” discourses of history are often deployed in order to “actively establish a break or temporal ‘distance’ between past and present.”<sup>475</sup> Tibetan lineage supplications are primarily concerned with establishing a deep connection to the (ideal) past.

***Limitless Benefit: Devotional Verses to the Lineage Lamas of the Nyingma Old Translation Tradition***

A closer look at Shenpen Tayé’s lineage supplication, *Limitless Benefit: Devotional Verses to the Lineage lamas of the Nyingma Old Translation Tradition*<sup>476</sup> reveals Shenpen Tayé’s vision of a Nyingma tradition that is firmly rooted in the wider Buddhist tradition. The work comprises thirty-four verses, with the first twenty-seven making up the body of the supplication and the final seven verses containing the concluding aspirations. In keeping with the conventions of the genre, the text is written in verse—in this case, verses of four lines, each containing nine syllables. Each verse focuses on a particular subject or subjects to be supplicated or propitiated and ends with either “[I] supplicate” (*sölwa deb*; *gsol ba ‘debs*) or “I prostrate to” (*chak tsel-lo*; *phyag ‘tshal lo*). This text is particularly interesting because it allows us a glimpse at Shenpen Tayé’s view of the nature and character of the Nyingma tradition—or, at least, the way

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<sup>475</sup> Berber Bevernage, *History, Memory, and State-Sponsored Violence: Time and Justice*, (New York: Routledge, 2012), x.

<sup>476</sup> snga 'gyur mying lugs kyi bla ma rgyud pa'i gsol 'debs gzhan phan mtha' yas: *DzCW* text no. 132 (2. 387–391); *XylKB*: 2. 376a–380a; *BhCW*: 2. 203–217.

that he wanted to that tradition to be viewed. The subjects of each of the verses of this work are as follows:

[verses ending in *chak Tsel-lo* (*phyag 'tshal lo*) are marked with a “\*”]

1. The historical Buddha (implied)\*
2. The historical Buddha (implied)\*
3. The Buddhas of the past, present, and future.\*
4. The twelve sections of the *sūtra-pitika* (*mdo sde*).\*
5. The Dharma of realization (*rtogs chos*).\*
6. Holy Buddhist sites in India.\*
7. The eight stupas that mark events in the life of the Buddha.\*
8. The three bodies of the Buddha (*sku gsum ston pa rnams*).
9. The eight principal bodhisattvas (*nye ba 'i sras chen brgyad*).\*
10. The five “excellent beings” (*rigs can dra ma lnga*) [early masters of Anuyoga]
11. The retinue of the shared tradition (*thun mong 'khor rnam bzhi*).<sup>477</sup>
12. The first seven holders of the Buddhist teachings (*bstan pa 'i gtan rabs bdun*).<sup>478</sup>
13. The Mahāsiddhas of the Dzokchen tradition.\*<sup>479</sup>
14. The six Indian scholastic masters.<sup>480</sup>
15. The eight great siddhas (*grub pa 'i rig 'dzin brgyad*).
16. The hundreds of great scholars of the Early Translations (*snga 'gyur paN chen brgya rtsa*)
17. The three Dharma Kings (*chos rgyal mes dbon gsum*).\*
18. The hundreds of great translators (*sgra bsgyur lo tsA brgya rtsa*).
19. The first seven [Tibetan] monks who upheld the Vinaya.\*

<sup>477</sup> This retinue is described as being comprised of: the eight principal disciples of the Buddha; the sixteen elders (*gnas brten*; Skt.: *sthavira*) such as Rahula, and so forth; fully ordained monks and nuns (*dge slong*); and faithful laymen and laywomen (*dge bsnyen*).

<sup>478</sup> These were the Buddha and his six successors who assumed leadership of the Buddha’s monastic order. The six successors were: Mahākāśyapa ('od srung chen po), Ānanda (kun dga' bo), Śāṅkakāśin (sha na'i gos can), Upagupta (nyer sbas), Dhṛtika (dhi' ti ka), Kṛṣṇa (nag po), and Sudarśana (legs mthong can).

<sup>479</sup> Listed as: Garab Dorjé, Indrabhūti, Saraha, Mañjuśrīmitra, Srī Simha, and Jñānasūtra.

<sup>480</sup> Viz.: Nāgārjuna, Āryādeva, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, Dignāga, Dharmakīrti.

20. The lineage-holders of Dzokchen.\*
21. The ten monks from Ü-Tsang who transmitted the Prātimokṣa of the Early Translations.
22. The scholar-adepts (*mkhas grub rnams*).
23. The tertöns (*gter ston*).
24. Successive holders of the teachings (*bstan ‘dzin dam pa rnams*).\*
25. The virtuous beings who systematized the four tenet systems, three vehicles for traversing the five paths, ten stages, and eight Hīnayāna paths.
26. The Lords of the Retinue (*‘khor lo ‘i dbang phyug*).\*
27. The guru, the peaceful and wrathful deities, the dākinīs, and the guardian deities.

Surveying the subjects here, one would probably agree with Nathaniel Rich in characterizing this work as “a veritable tour of the entire ideal Buddhist world.”<sup>481</sup> Indeed, we see many of the major aspects of the (Indian) Buddhist tradition represented. Although the work includes supplications to the lineage holders of Anuyoga and Dzokchen, as well as Nyingma *tertöns*, the majority of the verses are directed towards persons and categories from the shared Buddhist tradition. Particularly notable is the repeated mention of historic *Indian* Buddhist figures, sites, and teachings, which gives the work a distinctively exoteric-historical orientation that sets it apart from virtually all other Nyingma lineage supplications that I have seen, which tend focus on the “unique” Nyingma tantric systems, constructing the Nyingma lineage in more esoteric-mythic terms.

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<sup>481</sup> “The Modern Development of Scholasticism in the ‘Ancient’ Sect of Tibetan Buddhism,” Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2016, 262.

Shenpen Tayé’s supplication concludes with seven verses of aspiration (verses 28–34), the subjects of which are:

28. May we be protected by the Three Jewels.
29. May the mind of enlightenment be born.
30. May we practice the three-fold rubrics of Buddhist study and practice.<sup>482</sup>
31. May we abandon samsara through Hīnayāna (Abhidharma) and Mahāyāna views.
32. May we become a Buddha through tantric meditation.
33. May we accomplish measureless enlightened actions.
34. May all beings be liberated.

These seven verses of aspiration summarize the Buddhist path in its entirety, starting with going for refuge in the Three Jewels, through generating the appropriate intention, engaging in study and practice, developing Buddhist views, attaining accomplishment through the generation and perfection stages of tantric meditation, benefitting others, and ultimately, achieving enlightenment. One cannot help comparing this work to Sherab Özer’s *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra*,<sup>483</sup> which contains a similarly comprehensive vision of the Nyingma Buddhist path, and one that emphasizes the *shared* Buddhist tradition throughout.

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<sup>482</sup> The verse reads: Through hearing, contemplating, and meditating, may we tame our minds / Through exposition, debate, and composition, may we enact the teachings / Through learning, discipline, and excellence, may we accomplish the benefit of beings / May suffering not arise throughout all of our lives / (thos bsam bsgom pas rang rgyud gdul ba dang // 'chad rtsod rtsom pas bstan la bya ba byed// mkhas btsun bzang pos 'gro phan sgrub pa la// tshes rabs kun tu skyo bar ma gyur cig/).

<sup>483</sup> This work is described in detail in the next chapter.

### 3.2.6 Rituals of Invocation and Offering (*sgrub chog bsang gsol*), vol. 2: pp. 461–591

This section contains nineteen ritual works—most of which are less than ten folios in length.<sup>484</sup> The longest work in the section—*Introductory Notes to the Dredging the Depths of Hell Empowerment Ritual*<sup>485</sup>—was actually composed by Jetsunma Mingyur Peldrön of Mindröling with Shenpen Tayé editing it and adding some supplemental material and publishing it in his nine-volume *Trinchok Collection*.<sup>486</sup> The next-longest work in this section is also a *Trinchok Collection* text, entitled *An Appendix for Quickly Purifying Beings: The Complete Ritual Empowerments of Mahāyoga*,<sup>487</sup> which seems to have been composed by Shenpen Tayé based on explanations by Lochen Dharmaśrī. Among the other works in this section, there is a focus on the practice of Guru Yoga (*bla ma’i rnal ‘byor*)<sup>488</sup> as well as Karma Lingpa’s *terma* cycle on the *Peaceful and Wrathful Deities* (*zhi khro*). One of the texts on this latter topic—*Condensed Essence: An Introduction for Stabilizing the Practice of Karma Lingpa’s Peaceful and Wrathful Deities Terma*<sup>489</sup>—states in its author colophon that the text was written for “the benefit of those contemporaries of mine performing village rites.”<sup>490</sup>

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<sup>484</sup> In the earlier xylograph edition, that is.

<sup>485</sup> na rag dong sprugs kyi dbang gi cho ga mtshams sbyor gyis brygan pa bde chen lam bzang, *DzCW* text no. 175: 2. 505–557.

<sup>486</sup> See chapter five below.

<sup>487</sup> ma hA yo ga’i dbang thams cad kyi thog mthar ‘gro ba’i rgyug byang lhan thabs, *DzCW* text no. 174: 2. 472–504.

<sup>488</sup> *DzCW* text nos. 169, 170, and 171.

<sup>489</sup> kar gling zhi khro’i gnas ‘dren gyi mtshams sbyor snying por dril ba. *DzCW* text no. 177: 2. 562–566.

<sup>490</sup> rang dang na mnyam gyi grong chog mkhan po rnams la phan sems.

In short, although Shenpen Tayé is primarily remembered for his scholastic and monastic activities, the diverse range of texts in this section demonstrate his interest and investment in ritual performance as a central aspect of Nyingma practice.

### 3.3 Broader Themes in Shenpen Tayé’s Writings

#### 3.3.1 History, Memory, and Lineage in Shenpen Tayé’s Writings

One of the ways that Shenpen Tayé’s corpus stands out from that of his contemporaries is in its relative **paucity of explicitly historical and biographical texts** (*rnam thar*, *lo rgyus*, etc). As we saw above, the *DzCW* contains only three very short biographical works and nothing in the way of explicitly historical works (*lo rgyus*, *chos byung*, and so forth). This is in contra-distinction to the output of most of Shenpen Tayé’s Nyingmapa contemporaries. For example, both Shenpen Tayé’s main teacher, the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen (1745–1821), and the famed Dza Patrül Orgyen Jikmé Chökyi Wangpo (1808–1887) composed numerous historical and biographical works that were included in their later collected works. The 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen’s 2014 *Collected Works*<sup>491</sup> contains two biographies of Padmasambhava,<sup>492</sup> totaling 225 folios, and a 180-folio autobiography,<sup>493</sup> which together make up an entire volume and 12% of the folios of the collected works. We also see in Dza Patrül’s 2009 *Collected Works*<sup>494</sup> two texts labelled “history” (*lo*

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<sup>491</sup> 'jigs med 'phrin las 'od zer, *gsung 'bum/ 'jigs med phrin las 'od zer*. 10 volumes. (khren tu'u/: bla ma bsod dar, 2014). BDRC W4PD1630.

<sup>492</sup> o rgyan pad+ma 'byung gnas kyi rnam par thar pa dgos 'dod re skong (vol. 1, pp. 367–790); slob dpon chen po pad+ma 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar bsod pa nyi ma'i 'od zer (vol. 1, pp. 791–816).

<sup>493</sup> rdo grub chen kun bzang gzhan phan gyi rang rnam (vol. 1, pp. 1–366).

<sup>494</sup> rdza dpal sprul o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po. *gsung 'bum o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po*. 8 volumes, (Par gzhi 2, Si khron dpe skrun tshogs pa si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2009). BDRC W1PD107142.

rgyus)<sup>495</sup> and one text containing “discourses about religious history” (*chos ‘byung ‘bel gtam*).<sup>496</sup>

The relative paucity of biographical and historical writing in Shenpen Tayé’s corpus is particularly curious given the way that many Tibetan—and, in particular, *Nyingma*—reformers and reformulators tended to use historical excavation and history (re-)writing as way to reframe and re-align their traditions and lineages in new and creative directions. For example, Jacob Dalton describes how Mindröling’s Lochen Dharmaśrī reformulated the *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions* ritual system by researching and writing a new history of the system and publishing it in his seminal text *The General Exposition*,<sup>497</sup> by which he “excavat[ed] the long-buried foundations of this influential text so that they might serve as the basis for his new system.”<sup>498</sup>

With regards to biographical writing, it is common for Tibetan masters to write spiritual biographies (*rnam thar*) of the past masters in their lineage in order to inspire their students and to emphasize their connection to their lineage. Shenpen Tayé was renowned as an institutional founder and monastic reformer and one might expect that his reputation as an innovator and revivalist within the *Nyingma* tradition would have predisposed him to utilize the genre of religious biography to portray himself and his activities as being in line with the activities of past *Nyingma* masters as a way to

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<sup>495</sup> rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po sgyu 'phrul gsang ba snying po'i 'chad thabs brgyud pa gsum gyi lo rgyus (vol. 2, pp. 398–409); and, zhar byung nyan pa po spro ba bskyed pa la sogs pa'i ched du nang rgyud yo ga gsum gtso bor gyur pa'i bstan pa'i byung tshul lo rgyus gsungs pa (vol. 3, pp. 509–530).

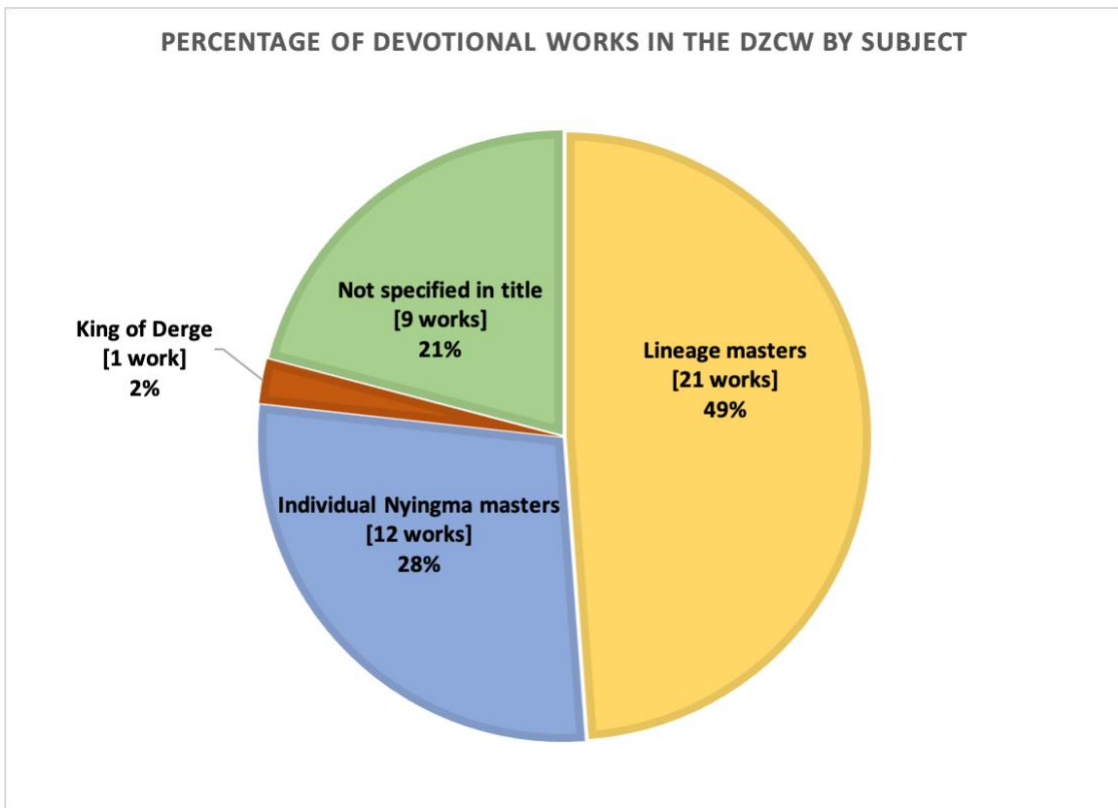
<sup>496</sup> chos 'byung 'bel gtam nyung ngu (vol. 1, pp. 435–471).

<sup>497</sup> 'dus pa'i mdo dbang spyi don rgyud lung man ngag gi gnad gsal byed sgron me, in *Rnying ma bka' ma rgyas pa*, (Dudjom Kama), vol. 14, 5–345.

<sup>498</sup> Jacob P. Dalton, *The Gathering of Intentions: The History of a Tibetan Tantra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 102.

legitimate his activities and to deflect the inevitable resistance and institutional inertia that he and his reforms would have faced from others in the Nyingma establishment. As such, it is curious to see so little explicitly historical or biographical writing in the collected works of a figure such as Shenpen Tayé.

However, when we look at the individual titles and topics of Shenpen Tayé’s *Collected Works* more closely, we see that there actually *are* quite a lot of works within Shenpen Tayé’s corpus concerned with the history of the Nyingma tradition and the lives of past Nyingma masters. The following table provides a break-down of the subjects of the 42 works in the “devotional and propitiatory works” (*gsol 'debs zhabs brtan*) section of the *DzCW*:





In this chart we can see that the overwhelming majority of Shenpen Tayé’s devotional and propitiatory works are addressed either to the masters of various lineages or to individual Nyingma figures from the past and present. Here, perhaps, is an example of how the simplified doxographical schemas and genre categories that we often use as heuristics can sometimes obscure important themes in a given body of work. Looking more closely at the focus of Shenpen Tayé’s devotional works, we can now see that Shenpen Tayé was indeed very invested in harnessing and deploying a particular vision of the past in his bid to move the Nyingma tradition closer towards the broader, shared foundation of the wider Buddhist tradition.

### 3.3.2 Teaching and Pedagogy in Shenpen Tayé’s Writings

When we look at the generic and topical make-up of Shenpen Tayé’s corpus, we can clearly see a marked **emphasis on commentarial and didactic literature**, with genres such as personal advice (*gdams ngag*), textual commentary (*‘grel ba; Ti ka*), systematic presentation (*rnam bzhag*), clarifying the meaning (*gsal don*), replies to queries, explanation (*bshad pa*), and so forth, taking up approximately 75% of Shenpen Tayé’s *Dzokchen Collected Works*. Of these commentarial and didactic works, there are relatively few formal commentaries on authoritative texts compared to the many synthetic presentations, informal teachings, and works of personal advice. As we saw above, there are only three works in Shenpen Tayé’s corpus that could be described as formal commentaries on authoritative texts. If we compare this number to the volume of formal commentaries produced by many later Nyingma scholastic figures, the contrast is

startling. For example, a text search on BDRC.org of text titles for the word “commentary” (*grel*) in the collected works of various figures reveals 41 texts with *grel* in the title of Mipham Gyatso’s 32-volume *Collected Works*;<sup>499</sup> 18 instances in that of Dza Patrül;<sup>500</sup> and 23 instances— almost the entire collection—in that of Kenpo Shenga.<sup>501</sup>

But while Shenpen Tayé authored few formal scholastic commentaries, his *Collected Works* are filled with an abundance of didactic writing, written for a wide range of students on an array of topics distributed across multiple genres. Although Shenpen Tayé’s reputation as a high-level scholar is clearly evident in his handful of formal scholastic commentaries, the make-up of his collected works as a whole shows a figure dedicated not so much to high-level scholastic exegesis, as to reflexive pedagogy and effective Buddhist teaching. The repeated emphasis in Shenpen Tayé’s works of advice on the need to engage in religious study and practice in the *proper order*, combined with his willingness to provide summaries, introductions, and lucid explanations aimed at beginners of all sorts, demonstrates that Shenpen Tayé’s gradualism was not so much driven by doctrinal or theoretical investments on his part, so much as it seems to have arisen from a genuine concern for finding and propagating more effective modes of Buddhist *teaching*.

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<sup>499</sup> ‘ju mi pham ‘jam dbyangs nam rgyal rgya mtsho. *gsung ’bum mi pham rgya mtsho*, 32 volumes, (Chengdu: gangs can rig gzhung dpe rnying myur skyobs lhan tshogs, 2007). BDRC WA3CN21303.

<sup>500</sup> rdza dpal sprul o rgyan ’jigs med chos kyi dbang po. *gsung ’bum o rgyan ’jigs med chos kyi dbang po*. 8 volumes, (Par gzhi 2, Si khron dpe skrun tshogs pa si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2009). BDRC W1PD107142.

<sup>501</sup> gzhan phan chos kyi snang ba. *gsung ’bum gzhan phan chos kyi snang ba*, 13 volumes, (Par gzhi dang po, Chendu: si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2006). BDRC WA1PD2074.

In the next chapter, we will continue to explore Shenpen Tayé's investments in effective teaching with a study of perhaps the most famous and impactful of Shenpen Tayé's contributions to Buddhist education and pedagogy: the development of a new mode of Buddhist study and practice that came to be known as the *shedra*.

## Chapter Four: A New System of Study and Practice: Shenpen Tayé and the Birth of Nyingma Shedras

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*Although I had not previously been focused on the maintenance of the monastery and its associated sites, I did build some retreat sites and smaller monasteries in order to establish a system for teaching [Buddhist] study and practice.*

– Shenpen Tayé (Verse Autobiography)<sup>502</sup>

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter traces Shenpen Tayé’s role in founding a new kind of educational institution—the *shedra* (*bshad grwa*)—which can be translated as “commentarial college” or “exegetical seminary.” I locate the genesis of the Nyingma *shedra* model in Shenpen Tayé’s introduction, beginning in 1828, of a “new system of study and practice” at Dzokchen monastery. It was at this time that Shenpen Tayé, under the urging of the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang, instituted a course of study that provided a thorough—and thoroughly *Nyingma*—presentation of Buddhist ethics, path systems, and tenet systems. Over the subsequent decades, this basic program was expanded by Shenpen Tayé and his associates into a more in-depth and comprehensive Buddhist curriculum that included the first recorded instance of Indian philosophical treatises being included in the core curriculum of a Nyingma educational institution. I argue that this new system of *shedra* education was not developed to mimic or compete with existing models of Tibetan monastic education—such as that of the dominant Geluk sect or that designed by Terdak

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<sup>502</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 5a: dgon gnas dang grwa sa'i 'dzin skyong la// rang sngon nas spro ba ma lags kyang // bshad sgrub kyi bstan pa'i srol 'dzin pa'i// dgon chung dang ri khrod 'ga' yang chags//.

Lingpa and Lochen Dharmaśrī at Mindröling. Instead, Shenpen Tayé designed his new shedra curriculum from the ground up in order to cultivate a distinctly *Nyingma view* of the *shared* (*thun mong*) Indian Buddhist philosophical and ethical systems, and to integrate and constellate these *shared* Buddhist systems into broader Nyingma arcs of study and practice. I also investigate Shenpen Tayé’s early shedra curriculum in light of his life-long commitment to Buddhist teaching and argue that Shenpen Tayé’s early shedra was intended as much—if not more—as a method of Buddhist *teacher training*, as it was intended to produce Nyingma scholastic literati. Although the modern Nyingma shedra curriculum as we know it today did not arise until the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the introduction of Khenpo Shenga’s annotation commentaries on the Thirteen Great Texts, the basic character and orientation of modern Nyingma monastic education was instituted and codified by Shenpen Tayé almost a century prior.

The chapter begins by providing some **contextual background in section. 4.2**, describing the modern Nyingma shedra curriculum and these institutions’ impact on the contemporary landscape of Tibetan Buddhism. **Section 4.3** describes and analyzes **the first shedra teachings** that Shenpen Tayé gave at Dzokchen in 1828, when, due to the urging of the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang, Shenpen Tayé gave a series of teachings on a number of Nyingma treatises. **Section 4.4** describes and analyzes the **earliest known curriculum at Śrī Siṃha Shedra**, which was laid out in a set of institutional regulations called a *chayik* (*bca’ yig*), which was ostensibly composed by Shenpen Tayé and published by his student, Pema Vajra, shortly after Shenpen Tayé’s death. **Section 4.5** looks at **the institutional structure** of Dzokchen’s early shedra and analyzes the role of

Dzokchen’s *drupdra*, or *practice grounds*, in Shenpen Tayé’s new system of study and practice, arguing that the *drupdra* was a key site in Shenpen Tayé’s new shedra system.

**Section 4.6** analyzes the **influences and antecedents** to Shenpen Tayé’s new shedra model of education, describing the influence of Geluk figures and of the gradualist paradigm championed by Sherab Özer and Jikmé Lingpa from Palri (*dpal ri*). The final **section (4.7)**, asks a more fundamental question: **What was Shenpen Tayé’s shedra intended to do?** I argue that the contemporaneous evidence shows that Shenpen Tayé developed his shedra not so much to train scholastic literati, but rather to train effective and engaging Buddhist teachers.

## 4.2 Background and Context

### 4.2.1. The Recent Growth and Influence of Nyingma Shedras

Over the past three decades, a number of Tibetan Buddhist monastic colleges belonging to the Nyingma tradition—such as Larung Gar Five Sciences Buddhist Academy in Sichuan, China, and the Ngagyur Nyingma Institute at Namdröling Monastery in South India—have grown to become the largest centers of religious learning in the world. These large Nyingma monastic colleges all utilize a particular institutional model, called a *shedra* (*bshad grwa*; “commentarial college” or “exegetical seminary”).<sup>503</sup> The term *shedra* is based on the Tibetan verb *shé-pa* (*bshad pa*)—meaning, to “explain” or “expound upon”—with the term *shedra* having the sense of “a group or

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<sup>503</sup> The Sakya and Kagyü sects have also adopted the *shedra* model of higher monastic education. However, the adoption of the *shedra* model among Kagyü and Sakya seems to have begun around the turn the 20<sup>th</sup> century—in particular, with Khenpo Shenga’s tenure at the Kagyü center of Pelpung in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—and, as such, is beyond the scope of this dissertation. For Khenpo Shenga’s role in founding Pelpung’s *shedra*, see Achim Bayer, *The Life and Works of mkhan-po gZhan-dga’*, 94ff.

institution dedicated to explanatory teaching.” Before I get into their historical development, it would be useful to quickly describe the main features of the Nyingma shedra curriculum as it exists today.

#### 4.2.2. The Modern Nyingma Shedra Curriculum

Ngagyur Nyingma Institute (NNI), the Nyingma shedra at Namdröling Monastery in South India, is perhaps the most influential Nyingma shedra of the past 40 years, its graduates serving as heads of hundreds of Nyingma institutions worldwide. NNI offers a 12-year course of studies that includes both exoteric-philosophical and esoteric-tantric texts and topics in the core curriculum.<sup>504</sup> The exoteric-philosophical portion of today’s Nyingma shedras is based around the study of thirteen foundational Indian Buddhist treatises, known as the Thirteen Great Texts, which are studied and unpacked through a set of accompanying commentaries—most notably, the *annotation commentaries* (*mchan ‘grel*) written by Khenpo Shenga (1871–1927).<sup>505</sup> The thirteen texts as they are presented in NNI’s curriculum is as follows:

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Text Title</b>	<b>Attributed to:</b>
Vinaya	<i>Prātimokṣa Sūtra</i> <i>Vinayasūtra</i>	Śākyamuni Buddha Guṇaprabha
Abhidharma	<i>Abhidharmakośa</i> <i>Abhidharmasamuccaya</i>  <i>Mūlamadhyamakakārikā</i>	Vasubandhu Asaṅga  Nāgārjuna

<sup>504</sup> An outline of NNI’s shedra curriculum is available on their website: <https://namdrooling.net/Portal/Page/Academic-Curriculum-NNI>

<sup>505</sup> Mkhan po gzhan dga’. AKA: gzhan phan chos kyi snang ba. See Achim Bayer, *The Life and Works of mKhan-po gZhan-dga’*.

“Profound View” <sup>506</sup> ( <i>lta ba zab mo</i> )	<i>Madhyamakāvātāra</i> <i>Catuḥśataka</i> <i>Bodhicaryāvātāra</i>	Candrakīrti Āryadeva Śāntideva
“Vast Conduct” <sup>507</sup> ( <i>rgya chen spyod pa</i> )	<i>Abhisamayālaṃkāra</i> <i>Mahāyānasāutrālaṃkāra</i> <i>Madhyāntavibhāga</i> <i>Dharmadharmatāvibhāga</i> <i>Mahāyānottaratantra</i>	Maitreya/Asaṅga

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The Thirteen Great Texts rubric seems to have been introduced into Śrī Siṃha’s shedra curriculum by Khenpo Shenga during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and there is no evidence of this rubric in earlier iterations of any shedra curriculum prior to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, in Ngawang Pelzang’s (*snga dbang dpal bzang*; 1879–1941) detailed description of his studies at Śrī Siṃha (circa 1900–1902), there is no mention or evidence of the Thirteen Great Texts being part of the curriculum there. However, Pelzang’s account does provide evidence that *annotation commentaries* had already become widely popular prior to Khenpo Shenga publishing his famous set. Pelzang relates that the 16<sup>th</sup> abbot of Śrī Siṃha, Khenpo Sönam Chöpel, said to him that,

Nowadays, in these parts, people are all caught up in annotated commentaries. No one engages in the study and comprehension of the great canonical scriptures. Regarding the classifications of past actions and their results, other than explanations given in the works of monastic discipline, there is no way to analyze them through logical reasoning.<sup>508</sup>

<sup>506</sup> “Profound view” refers to the view of emptiness as expressed in the “Middle Way” (*Madhāmaka*; Tib., *dbu ma*) tradition.

<sup>507</sup> “Vast Conduct” refers to the Yogācāra tradition.

<sup>508</sup> *da res phyogs 'di na mchan 'grel zhig la mgo 'khor nas sdod pa'i dus zhig byung 'dug/ gzhung chen po la lta rtog byed pa su med/ las 'bras kyi nram bzhag 'dul ba nas gsungs pa 'di las rig pas dpyad du med gsungs/*. Translation in *Wondrous Dance of Illusion: The Autobiography of Khenpo Ngawang Palzang*, trans. Heidi L. Nevin and J. Jakob Leschley (Boston: Snow Lion, 2013), 111.



This passage shows that annotation commentaries had already become widely popular prior to Khenpo Shenga’s arrival at Dzokchen Śrī Siṃha a short while later, suggesting that it was not Khenpo Shenga’s annotated commentaries that led to the mania for annotated commentaries, but rather it was the mania for annotated commentaries that led Khenpo Shenga to compose his own. As I speculated in the previous chapter in section 3.2.1.1, Shenpen Tayé’s *Magical Key* commentary on the two classical texts of Tibetan grammar, although it was not explicitly labelled an *annotation commentary* in its title, was virtually identical in form and function to Khenpo Shenga’s later annotation commentaries. This raises the strong possibility that it was Shenpen Tayé’s *Magical Key* commentary that initiated the mania for annotation commentaries that Pelzang describes at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Namdröling curriculum also includes the study of tantric texts and topics in the core curriculum, focusing on the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* and Great Perfection treatises by Longchenpa and Jikmé Lingpa (*jigs med gling pa*; 1729/30–1798).

#### 4.2.3 Where Do Shedras Come From: A Review of Secondary Scholarship

Regarding the question of how, when, and why the shedra model first arose, the general consensus of existing scholarly studies—such as Georges Dreyfus’ 2005 article “Where do Tibetan Commentarial Schools Come From?”<sup>509</sup>—is that Nyingma shedras can trace their origin to the first Nyingma shedra of “Śrī Siṃha,” which was founded near Dzokchen monastery in Eastern Tibet in the 1840s by Shenpen Tayé.

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<sup>509</sup> *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 28, no. 2: 273–297.

Virtually all the previous treatments of Śrī Siṃha’s history in Western scholarship have been based on fairly recent religious histories of Dzokchen monastery written in Tibetan. The main source is Tendzin Lungtok Nyima’s *Great Religious History of Dzokchen* (2005), with some attention being paid to Gyelwang Chökyi Nyima’s *History of Dzokchen Monastery* (1986). These more recent Tibetan historiographic accounts generally agree that Śrī Siṃha was founded by Shenpen Tayé under the auspices of the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzogchen Drupwang and the patronage of the King of Dergé during the years following the great earthquake of 1842.<sup>510</sup> Some accounts also mention other figures—including Pema Vajra<sup>511</sup>, Sengdruk Pema Tashi<sup>512</sup>, and Do Khyentsé Yeshé Dorjé<sup>513</sup>—as being co-founders of Śrī Siṃha.<sup>514</sup>

### 4.3 Shenpen Tayé’s First Shedra Teaching (c. 1828)

The contemporaneous sources that we looked at in chapter two present evidence that Śrī Siṃha Shedra had its beginnings in an earlier teaching session given at Dzokchen by Shenpen Tayé in the late 1820s. As we saw in chapter two, the hagiography of Shenpen Tayé written by Pema Vajra and contained in the *Trinchok Catalog* (1845) records the following episode that occurred in or around the year 1828:

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<sup>510</sup> E.g., Nyoshul Khenpo (Baron, trans.) 2005, 401; 406; Tarthang Tulku 1996, 198–9.

<sup>511</sup> *pad+ma ba+dz+ra*, 1807–84; BDRC# P6744. ([ToL page](#))

<sup>512</sup> *seng phrug pad+ma bkra shis*, b. 1798, 1<sup>st</sup> abbot of Śrī Siṃha; BDRC# P2914. ([ToL page](#))

<sup>513</sup> *mdo mkhyen brtse ye shes rdo rje*, 1800–1866, BDRC# P698 ([ToL page](#)).

<sup>514</sup> For example, Khenpo Chöga describes Do Khyentsé, the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang Rinpoché, and Shenpen Tayé conducting an “earth-claiming ritual” (*sa ’dul*) at the spot where Śrī Siṃha was to be built, during which Do Khyentsé “subdued all spirits and demons in the area [and] with his sword he traced the border within which the shedra was to be constructed.” Following this, Khenpo Chöga says that Śrī Siṃha was “founded” by these three already listed along with Sengdruk Pema Tashi. According to this account, Do Khyentsé seemed to have had a central role in the founding of Śrī Siṃha, making his elision from other accounts curious. See Kretschmar, trans., *Drops of Nectar*, 379.

The Lord [Shenpen Tayé] arrived in the area of Dzogchen monastery and took up residence in Shingjé and Tsering caves [above Dzokchen] where he engaged in spiritual practice. During this time, The Lord himself, the precious holy tulku [the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang] came to him and asked repeatedly that he *establish a tradition of study and practice (bshad sgrub kyi srol ka re btod)* at the monastery. Due to this urging [Shenpen Tayé] offered a course of teachings to a group of about 100 resident ‘monks’ (*grwa tshang*) as well as resident and visiting young lamas and tulküs, which focused on the following texts: *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra (mdo sngags smon lam)*, [Jikmé Lingpa’s] *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities (yon tan rin po che’i mdzod)*, *Ascertainment of the Three Vows (sdom gsum nam nges)*, the glorious *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, and so forth. In so doing, he *laid the foundation for [a system of] explanatory teaching (bshad pa gting tshugs pa)* designed to effectively guide disciples along the path of scriptural study.<sup>515</sup>

As we will see below, the set of texts taught by Shenpen Tayé at this early set of teachings are strikingly similar to those described in the earliest-known record of Śrī Siṃha’s formal curriculum (c. 1850s). Before I analyze the above passage further, it would be useful to first provide some basic information on the texts taught by Shenpen Tayé at this early teaching.

***Sherab Özer’s Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra (mdo sngags smon lam)***

The *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra (mdo sngags smon lam)* are a pair of texts—one dedicated to sūtra (*mdo*) and the other to mantra (*sngags*)—written by the great 16<sup>th</sup>-century Nyingma scholar Sherab Özer (shes rab ‘od zer, 1518–1584, BDRC P

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<sup>515</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 40a: gshin rje phug dang tshe ring phug sogs su sgrub pa mdzad de bzhugs pa’i bar skabs nam la/ mchog sprul rin po che’i zhal snga nas rje ‘di nyid la dgon ‘dir bshad sgrub kyi srol ka re btod rgyu byung na legs tshul gyi gsung nan yang yang phebs par brten/ gzhi byis kyi bla sprul dang grwa tshang bcas khyon brgya skor tsam la/ mdo sngags smon lam/ yon tan mdzod/ sdom gsum nam nges/ dpal ldan gsang ba snying po sogs gdul bya’i blo dang mtshams par lung rig gi lam nas nges pa ‘drong ba’i bshad pa gting tshugs par mdzad.

638) who founded the Nyingma monastery of Pelri Thekchen Ling (dpal ri theg chen gling). The first of the two texts is entitled *A Paradise of Ease and Bliss: Aspiration Prayers of the Conduct of a Bodhisattva* (*byang chub spyod pa'i smon lam phan bde'i ljon pa*), while the second is entitled *A Celebration that Grants All Desires: Aspiration Prayers of Secret Mantra* (*gsang ba sngags kyi smon lam 'dod 'jo'i dga' ston*). Marc-Henri Deroche describes these texts as constituting “an inspiring rNying ma doxography written according to the genre of ‘aspiration’ (*prañidhana*; *smon lam*), from the initial refuge in the Three Jewels to the ultimate realization of the Great Perfection.”<sup>516</sup> The following table outlines the topics of these two texts:

Text 1 (Sūtra): byang chub spyod pa'i smon lam phan bde'i ljon pa:

Verse no(s) <sup>517</sup>	Theme/Topic
I. 1–7	Seven-branch prayer (homage, offering, confession, rejoicing, request to teach, request to remain, dedication)
<b>II.</b>	<b>Main Text</b> <sup>518</sup>
1	Wish to recall the precious human existence difficult to obtain
2	. . . . to bring to mind impermanence
3	. . . . to trust in the law of karma

<sup>516</sup> See “History of the Forgotten Mother-Monastery of the Rnying Ma School: Dpal Ri Monastery in the Tibetan “Valley of the Emperors.” *Bulletin of Tibetology*, 77–111, 98–99. For a critical edition of the texts along with a French translation, see Marc Deroche, “Prajñāraśmi (‘phreng po gter ston shes rab ’od zer, Tibet, 1518-1584) Vie, Oeuvre, et Contributions à la Tradition Ancienne (rnying ma) et au Mouvement Non-Partisan (Ris Med)” Ph.D. diss., École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, 2011.

<sup>517</sup> The verse numbers given correspond to the stanza numbers given by Jikmé Lingpa in his commentaries to these texts and reproduced by Marc-Henri Deroche in the critical edition and translation of the text contained in his dissertation. Jikmé Lingpa’s commentary to the first of these two aspiration texts can be found in various recensions of his collected works, including: *byang chub spyod pa'i smon lam phan bde'i ljon pa'i Ti ka rgyal ba'i gzhung lam*, In *gsung 'bum 'jigs med gling pa*, vol. 5, 541–620. (a 'dzom par ma 'brug spa gro la bskyar par brgyab pa, 1999). BDRC WA1KG10193

<sup>518</sup> The verses of this main portion of the text are all comprised of four lines of nine syllables each.

Verse no(s) <sup>517</sup>	Theme/Topic
4	. . . . to recall the imperfection of saṃsāra
5	. . . . for the absence of obstacles on the way to liberation
6	. . . . to go for refuge
7	. . . . to generate the spirit of awakening ( <i>byang chub kyi sems</i> ; <i>bodhicitta</i> )
8	. . . . to engage in the conduct of the bodhisattvas
9	. . . . to engage in the four immeasurables and the four magnetizing behaviors <sup>519</sup>
10	. . . . to perfect the three types of generosity ( <i>sbyin pa</i> ; <i>dāna</i> )
11	. . . . to perfect the three ethical disciplines ( <i>tshul khrim</i> s; <i>śīla</i> ) <sup>520</sup>
12	. . . . to perfect the practice of the three forbearances ( <i>bzod pa</i> ; <i>kṣānti</i> )
13	. . . . to perfect the practice of the three diligences ( <i>brtson 'grus</i> ; <i>vīrya</i> )
14	. . . . to perfect the practice of meditation ( <i>bsam gtan</i> ; <i>dhyāna</i> )
15	. . . . to perfect the practice of wisdom ( <i>shes rab</i> ; <i>prajñā</i> )
16	. . . . to progress through the five paths and ten stages
17	. . . .to enter the path of accumulation ( <i>tshogs kyi lam</i> ; <i>saṃbhāra-mārga</i> )
18	. . . . to enter the path of application ( <i>sbyor lam</i> ; <i>prayoga-mārga</i> )
19	. . . . to enter the path of seeing ( <i>mtshong lam</i> ; <i>darśana-mārga</i> )
20	. . . . to enter the path of meditation ( <i>sgom lam</i> ; <i>bhāvanā-mārga</i> )
21	. . . . to obtain the <i>ten grounds</i>
22-1	. . . . to spontaneously accomplish every activity
22-2	. . . . to manifest the bodies and fields of the Buddhas
23	. . . . to obtain the reality body ( <i>chos sku</i> ; <i>dharmakāya</i> )
24	. . . .to obtain the enjoyment body ( <i>long spyod rdzogs pa'i sku</i> ; <i>saṃbhogakāya</i> )
25	. . . . . to manifest emanation bodies ( <i>sprul sku</i> ; <i>nirmāṇakāya</i> )
26	. . . . . to obtain the five wisdoms ( <i>ye shes</i> ; <i>jñāna</i> )
27	. . . . .to obtain the ten powers ( <i>stobs</i> ; <i>bala</i> )

<sup>519</sup> bsdu dngos bzhi.

<sup>520</sup> Abandoning non-virtuous actions, engaging in virtuous actions, and bringing benefit to others.

Verse no(s) <sup>517</sup>	Theme/Topic
28	. . . . .to obtain the four qualities of fearlessness ( <i>mi 'jigs pa; vaiśāradya</i> )
29	. . . . . to obtain the eighteen uncorrupted dharmas of a Buddha
30	. . . . . to obtain the physical marks and signs [of a Buddha]
31	. . . . . to obtain the five immaculate aggregates ( <i>zag med phung po lnga</i> )
32	. . . . . to obtain the five “eyes” of a Buddha <sup>521</sup>
<b>III. Aspirations to Benefit Others</b>	
1	Wish to work for the good of beings in general
III.2.1–2.8	. . . . . to benefit beings in specific ways
N.A.	Dedication [two four-line verses]

Text 2 (mantra) *gsang ba sngags kyi smon lam 'dod 'jo'i dga' ston*:

Verse no(s).	Number of lines	Theme/Topic
I	4	Opening tribute
II.1	7	Reversing the mindset by realizing all [worldly existence] is pointless
2	4	Wish to properly rely on the spiritual master
3	8/9 <sup>522</sup>	. . . . . to enter into refuge and generate of the <i>spirit of awakening</i>
4	6	. . . . . to engage in spiritual training on the path of lower and intermediate people
5	10	. . . . . to enter the way of the higher persons
6.1–6.3	14	. . . . . to learn and actualize the <i>Three Baskets</i>

<sup>521</sup> Viz., the eye of the omniscience of the Buddha state (*sangs rgyas kyi sa'i rnam pa thams cad gzigs pa'i spyan*); 2. the eye of the Dharma (*chos kyi spyan*) who perceives by direct perception the higher or lower faculties of the different persons; 3. the eye of wisdom (*shes rab kyi spyan*) who knows the essence of all phenomena (*chos thams cad rang gi ngo bo nyid*) ie emptiness; 4. the divine eye (*lha'i spyan*) who perceives death, the transfer of consciousness and the place of rebirth of beings; 5. the eye of flesh (*sha'i spyan*) that simultaneously perceives the world.

<sup>522</sup> Deroche's critical edition has 8 lines while the *shin tu rgyas pa* edition has an extra line for a total of 9 lines.

Verse no(s).	Number of lines	Theme/Topic
7	8	. . . . to identify the vajrācārya, who shows the way of mantra
8	15	. . . . to engage in the two tantras of action (Kriyā) and conduct (Caryā)
9	8	. . . . to engage in yoga-tantra
10	5	. . . . to engage in the secret tantras of inner means (Anuttarayogatantra)
10.1	9	. . . . to be purified at the moment of death in the <i>reality body</i> .
10.2	7	. . . . to be purified in the <i>intermediate state (bar do; antarābhava)</i> in the <i>enjoyment body</i>
10.3	10	. . . . to be purified at the moment of birth in the <i>emanation body</i>
11	12	. . . . to achieve the divine body of bliss-emptiness [through Mahāyoga]
12	10	. . . . to achieve creation stage of Anuyoga
13	14	. . . . to achieve perfection stage of Anuyoga
14.1	14	. . . . to realize the meaning of Atiyoga through the <i>mind class (sems sde)</i>
14.2	12	. . . . to realize the essence, nature, and compassion of Atiyoga through the <i>expanse class (klong sde)</i>
14.3	8	. . . . to transcend conceptual analysis with <i>practice instruction class (sman ngag sde)</i> of Atiyoga
15	7	. . . . to realize the three classes of Atiyoga
N/A	13	. . . . to realize the inseparability of the three bodies
16	5	. . . . to manifest awakened activities
17	5	. . . . to use the moment of death [to attain liberation]
III.1	5	. . . . to obtain the intelligence to distinguish the specific import of each of the two treatises
2	6	. . . . to not be separated from the spiritual master

As may be evident from pursuing their contents, the two constituent works of the *Aspiration Prayers* function in tandem to present the Nyingma Buddhist path in distinctly gradualist terms, emphasizing the foundational Buddhist practices and categories. The first text (*Sūtra*) presents the bodhisattva path from start to finish, beginning with the seven-branch prayer, moving to the “common preliminary” meditations, going for refuge, and generating bodhicitta. The text then presents the six perfections, five paths, ten grounds, the various aspects of Buddhahood (three bodies, five wisdoms, etc.), and concludes with an extended, poetic contemplation on benefiting other sentient beings.

The *Aspiration Prayers of Mantra*, although dealing mostly with the tantric path, begins with the same basic Buddhist categories as the *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra*—covering such themes as the unsatisfactoriness of samsara, the need to rely on a spiritual master, going for refuge, generating bodhicitta, and so forth. Of particular interest is a 14-line section (verses 6.1–6.3) dealing with the three baskets (Sūtra, Vinaya, and Abhidharma). It is interesting to note that while the *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra* contains no reference to tantric material or concepts, the *Aspiration Prayers of Mantra* begins with an extended section of *sūtric* material that emphasizes such basic Buddhist practices as being foundational for tantric practice. The tantric topics covered comprise a survey of the four classes of tantra in their *Sarma (gsar ma)* presentation (Kriyā-, Caryā-, Yoga-, and Uttarayoga-tantra) as well as the three “inner” Nyingma tantras (Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga [Dzokchen]). Deroche notes that,

Such a doxographical scheme is certainly both *gsar ma pa* and *rnying ma pa* (four sections of tantras and Rdzogs chen), but ultimately gives the preeminence to the *rnying ma pa* tradition, concluding with its three superior tantra systems,



Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and above all the ultimate vehicle of Atiyoga or Rdzogs chen, which is treated in a masterly way in this text.<sup>523</sup>

As we saw in chapter three above, Shenpen Tayé wrote a commentary on the first of these works entitled *Condensing the Meaning of the Bodhisattva’s Chariot: A Commentary on “A Paradise of Ease and Bliss: Aspiration Prayers of the Conduct of a Bodhisattva.”* (*byang chub spyod pa’i smon lam phan bde’i ljon pa’i ‘grel ba rgyal sras lam gyi shing rta’i bsdus don*).<sup>524</sup> Śrī Siṃha’s modern curriculum includes these texts along with Jikmé Lingpa’s commentary upon them in its 2<sup>nd</sup> year (*snga ‘gyur rdzogs chen chos byung chen mo*, 307). The NNI (Namdröling) curriculum does not include these texts.

***Jikmé Lingpa’s Precious Treasury of Good Qualities (yon tan rin po che’i mdzod)***<sup>525</sup>

Much like the *Aspiration Prayers*, Jikmé Lingpa’s *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities*, presents a comprehensive, gradual path to liberation, rooted in basic Buddhist categories and practices and culminating in the Great Perfection. The text is divided into thirteen topics as follows:

1 [16 verses]: The value of human existence (*dal ‘byor gyi nam par dbye ba*).

2 [10 verses]: Impermanence (*mi rtag pa*).

<sup>523</sup> “Prajñāsaśmi (‘phreng po gter ston shes rab ‘od zer, Tibet, 1518–1584): *Vie Œuvre, et Contributions à la Tradition Ancienne (rNying ma)* et au Mouvement Non-Partisan (*ris med*),” Ph.D. thesis, École Pratique des Hautes Études (Paris), 2011, 404. The passage in the original French reads: la structuration de l’ensemble selon une doxographie certes à la fois gsar ma pa et rnying ma pa (quatre sections de tantras et Rdzogs chen), mais donnant finalement la prééminence à la tradition rnying ma pa en concluant par ses trois systèmes de tantras supérieurs, Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, et surtout le véhicule ultime de l’Atiyoga ou Rdzogs chen qui est traité de façon magistrale dans ce texte.

<sup>524</sup> *DzCW* text 11: 1. 182–193; *XylKB*, text no. 76: 2. 230a–238b; *PCW*: 3. 685–688; *BhCW*: 1. 575–601.

<sup>525</sup> An English translation of the full *Treasury*, along with commentary is available in two volumes: *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities: The Rain of Joy*. Translated by the Padmakara Translation Group. (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2001 [Book One], 2013 [Book Two]).

- 3 [43 verses]: The law of karma (*las rgyu 'bras*).
- 4 [47 verses]: The sufferings of samsara (*'khor ba sdug bsngal*).
- 5 [62 verses]: The four wheels (*'khor lo chen po bzhi*).
- 6 [27 verses]: Refuge (*skyabs su 'gro ba*).
- 7 [18 verses]: The four immeasurables (*tshad med bzhi*).
- 8 [53 verses]: The vow of bodhichitta (*byang chub kyi sems yongs su bzung ba*).
- 9 [161 verses]: The bodhisattva precepts (*smon 'jug gi bslab bya*).
- 10 [154 verses]: The teachings of the Vidyadharas (*rig pa 'dzin pa'i sde snod*).
- 11 [29 verses]: The ground of the Great Perfection (*gzhi'i bzhugs tshul*).
- 12 [37 verses]: The unique path of practice of the Great Perfection (*rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po'i lam thun mong ma yin pa*).
- 13 [49 verses]: The ultimate result, the bodies and wisdoms [of the Buddhas] (*mthar phyin 'bras bu sku dang ye shes*).

Sam van Schiak summarizes the *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities* as “taking on the task that Longchenpa had attempted in his *Ngalso Korsum*: the presentation of the Great Perfection as the pinnacle of a graduated path.”<sup>526</sup> However, van Schiak insists that the *Treasury* is, “more than a mere rewriting of [the *Ngalso*],” the main difference being that Longchenpa writes the *Ngalso* from the point of view of the *mind class*, while Jikmé Lingpa’s presentation of the Great Perfection in the *Treasury* is “thoroughly based in Seminal Heart (*Longchen Nyingtik*) terminology.”<sup>527</sup>

Shenpen Tayé received the root text of the *Treasury* in his early studies with Monlam Dargyé (see chapter two, section 1.3). Shenpen Tayé’s root teacher, the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen composed a set of influential commentaries<sup>528</sup> on the *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities*. The *Treasury* is studied today at NNI in the 8<sup>th</sup> year of the curriculum.

<sup>526</sup> *Approaching the Great Perfection*, 25.

<sup>527</sup> *Approaching the Great Perfection*, 25.

<sup>528</sup> These commentaries are reproduced in a recent ten-volume collection of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen’s collected works (gsung 'bum/ 'jigs med phrin las 'od zer/. 10 vols. khren tu'u/: bla ma bsod dar, 2014. BDRC W4PD1630): *yon tan rin po che'i mdzod kyi sgo lcags 'byed byed bsodus 'grel rgya mtsho'i chu thigs rin*

### ***Ngari Panchen's Ascertainment of the Three Vows (sdom gsum rnam nges)***

Ngari Panchen Pema Wangyal's (1487-1542) *Ascertainment of the Three Vows* (*sdom gsum rnam nges*) presents the three sets of Buddhist vows—individual liberation, bodhisattva, and tantric—from a Nyingma perspective rooted in the Great Perfection.

Like the *Aspiration Prayers* and *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities*, *Ascertainment of the Three Vows* functions to provide students with an outline of the entire Buddhist path and to clarify the differences, and the relationship, between the various levels of practice and their associated vows. The root text along with a commentary by Dūdjom Rinpoché has been translated and published by Wisdom Publications as *Perfect Conduct:*

*Ascertaining the Three Vows*.<sup>529</sup> Śrī Siṃha's current curriculum studies *Ascertainment of the Three Vows* along with Terdak Lingpa's (1646–1714) commentary in the 6<sup>th</sup> year. NNI's curriculum studies it in the first year.

### ***Guhyagarbha-tantra (gsang ba'i snying po'i rgyud)***

The *Guhyagarbha-tantra* is widely regarded as the root tantra of the Mahāyoga class and the main tantra of the *Māyājāla* cycle of tantras. Ostensibly of Indian origin, the *Guhyagarbha* gained influence and prestige in the late 8<sup>th</sup> and early 9<sup>th</sup> centuries in Tibet, where it became the “principal inspiration for the early rdzogs chen movement.”<sup>530</sup>

Famous scholastic commentaries were composed on the *Guhyagarbha* by Rongzom and

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*chen lde mig*, vol. 3, 1–576; *yon tan rin po che'i mdzod kyi sgo lcags 'byed byed bsdus 'grel rgya mtsho'i chu thigs las sngags 'grel nor bu'i phreng ba*, vol. 4, 1–414; and, *yon tan rin po che'i mdzod kyi 'grel pa rgya mtsho'i chu thigs nor bu'i phreng ba*, vol. 4, 415–822.

<sup>529</sup> Translated by Khenpo Gyurmé Samdrub and Sangyé Khandro (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1996).

<sup>530</sup> “Guhyagarbhatantra,” In *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 334–335.

Longchenpa as well as by Mindröling’s co-founder Lochen Dharmaśrī.<sup>531</sup> As Dominique Townsend’s recent research has shown, the *Guhyagarbha* had a pride of place in Mindröling’s early curriculum, where the formal curriculum directed students to “study the detailed commentary and the general essence of the glorious *Guhyagarbha* tantric cycle, as the pedagogical exegesis that constitutes the stable center of our Mindröling system.”<sup>532</sup> Such centering of the *Guhyagarbha* was not unusual—indeed, it would not be too much of a stretch to say that the *Guhyagarbha* was the most important locus of scholastic exegesis in the Nyingma tradition, and has remained a central curricular text in today’s Nyingma shedras.

Shenpen Tayé himself is recorded as receiving an “exposition on the glorious *Guhyagarbha*” from Jikmé Kelsang when he was staying at the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen’s residence sometime around 1819–1820.<sup>533</sup> After the initial 1828 shedra teachings, we have evidence that Shenpen Tayé continued to teach the *Guhyagarbha* at locations other than Dzokchen-Śrī Simha. There is a passage from an informal biography of Dza Patrül by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dodrupchen Jikmé Tenpé Nyima<sup>534</sup> in which it is mentioned that Shenpen Tayé (“Gemang Kushab”) established an annual 45-day “extensive teaching” on the *Guhyagarbha-Tantra* in 1838 at the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen’s seat of Yarlung Pemakö, during

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<sup>531</sup> These were: *dpal gsang ba snying po de kho na nyid nges pa'i rgyud kyi 'grel ba gsang bdag dgongs rgyan*; and *dpal gsang ba snying po de kho na nyid nges pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po sgyu 'phrul drwa ba spyi don gyi sgo nas gtan la 'bebs par byed pa'i legs bshad sang bdag shal lung*.

<sup>532</sup> This is from Mindröling’s early *chayik* contained in the *Catalog of Mindröling (O rgyan smin grol gling gi dkar chag)*. Quoted in Townsend, *A Buddhist Sensibility*, 130.

<sup>533</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 38b: *dpal gsang ba'i snying po'i bshad pa dang/ sgyu 'phrul zhi khro'i dbang dang gdams khrid kyi skor sogs mang du gsan*.

<sup>534</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Dodrupchen Jikmé Tenpé Nyima, “mtshungs bral rgyal ba'i myu gu o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po'i rtogs brjod phyogs tsam gleng ba bdud rtsi'i zil thigs,” in *gsung 'bum/ 'jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma*. (Gangtok, Sikim: Dodrupchen Rinpoché, 1974–1975), vol 4 (101–136); BDRC # W23627.

which Dza Patrül served as teaching assistant and then led the teaching himself the next two years.<sup>535</sup> As we saw in chapter three above, Shenpen Tayé also wrote an extensive commentary on the *Guhyagarbha* that, although it was left unfinished, was influential enough to inform the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dodrupchen’s famous commentary some decades later.

### *Analysis of these first shedra teachings*

The way that these early teachings are described, as “laying the foundation for [a system of] *explanatory teaching* designed to effectively guide disciples along the path of scriptural study,”<sup>536</sup> emphasizes their focus on “explanation” (*bshad pa*) and clearly marks them as a precursor to the later more formalized shedra at Dzokchen, which we will describe shortly. The importance and lasting impact of these early shedra teachings is made explicit in the account quoted above in which we are told that Shenpen Tayé gave this extensive set of teachings at the urging of the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang—the throne holder of Dzokchen—for the express purpose of “establishing a tradition of teaching and practice” (*bshad sgrub kyi srol ka re btod*) at the monastery. This claim—that the throne holder of a prestigious and influential institution such as Dzokchen would ask a young visiting lama with no formal title or position to inaugurate a new system of Buddhist learning and practice at that institution—seems at first glance to be rather incredible. However, we must keep in mind that even at this early stage, Shenpen Tayé was not just

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<sup>535</sup> gser thal phyogs yar lung pad+mo bkod du dge mang sku zhabs kyi grwa 'khor gseb tu zhugs nas phebs/ der dge mang rin po ches gsang snying rgyud bshad rgyas par gnang skabs rje 'dis khrid dpon mdzad cing / de rjes kyang gnas der lo gnyis tsam la zhag zhe lnga re'i ring rgyud bshad shin tu rgyas pa bka' drin du bstsal. *ibid.*, 109–110.

<sup>536</sup> gdul bya'i blo dang mtshams par lung rig gi lam nas nges pa 'drong ba'i bshad pa gting tshugs par mdzad.

any old lama; he was one the main students and the primary successor of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen, who, himself, had spent many years living and practicing at Dzokchen and its environs and had developed deep personal ties with many of Dzokchen’s important figures, including the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang. We may also cite the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen’s Drupwang’s interest and investment in Jikmé Lingpa’s *Longchen Nyingtik* cycle, of which Shenpen Tayé was one of the principle lineage holders through his teacher the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen, as another likely point of connection between the two.<sup>537</sup>

Beyond the description quoted above, virtually no other details about the specific nature of these early shedra teachings seem to have survived. For example, we do not know what form they took or how they evolved over the decades between the late 1820s and the instituting of the formal curriculum (c. 1850s) discussed below. Indeed, there is no explicit mention in the contemporaneous sources that these first shedra teachings continued to be given after the initial session in the late 1820s.<sup>538</sup> However, the brief description of these first shedra teachings given above seems to strongly suggest that they did continue in the following years and eventually became regularized and institutionalized at Dzokchen. Firstly, the teachings are explicitly described as “laying the foundation for a system of scriptural study,” from which we can surmise that the “teaching” must have involved more than simply giving the reading transmission (*lung*)

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<sup>537</sup> Achim Bayer notes that “The pivotal role of rGyal-sras gZhan-phan mtha’-yas in the *Klong chen snying thig* transmission is emphasized in mkhan-po Chos-dga’s prayer to the transmission lineage of rGyal-sras gZhan-phan mtha’-yas, rDza dPal-sprul, bsTan-lu and gZhan-dga’.” *The Life and Works of mKhan-po gZhan-dga’*, 66, note 290.

<sup>538</sup> There is a mention in an early source that Shenpen Tayé gave an “extremely extensive set of teachings on the *Gugyagarbha-Tantra*” in 1838 at Yarlung Pemakö, during which Dza Patrül served as teaching assistant. The teaching was repeated by Dza Patrül the next two years in the form of 45-day extensive teachings. See chapter two, section 1.9 above.

and some basic practical guidance (*khrid*) on the texts, but must have also involved systematic explanation (*bshad*) of them. In order to give such instruction—even of a very basic and perfunctory sort—on the texts listed above, the sessions would likely have extended over a number of weeks or months. It is likely that the 1828 shedra teachings described above took the form of a multi-month “teaching session,” which was often referred to as a “shedra.” Brenton Sullivan describes a similar use of the term shedra by Geluk institutions such as Drepung in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries:

Occasionally, the early heads of these *dratsang* would establish “commentary classes” or “commentary schools,” called *shedra* in Tibetan [. . .]. Most likely these were short, irregular classes similar to the *shedra* of non-Geluk monasteries in Eastern Tibet of the early nineteenth century. A *dratsang* would have such classes *if* a qualified teacher was able to establish and maintain them. This is a far cry from the fully formed curriculum of later “philosophical colleges,” a curriculum that includes upwards of ten hours of debate practice each day.<sup>539</sup>

Jann Ronis explains that the term shedra was used at Katok during the early–mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to describe short-term, irregular study sessions set up to teach and study the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*.<sup>540</sup> Interestingly, as mentioned above, Shenpen Tayé, himself, is reported to have inaugurated an annual 45-day “extensive teaching session” (*bshad rgyas pa*) on the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* at the late 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen’s seat of Yarlung Pemakö in or around 1838.<sup>541</sup> It is likely that the early shedra teachings given by Shenpen Tayé at

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<sup>539</sup> “The Mother of All Monasteries,” 211–212.

<sup>540</sup> Ronis describes this early use of the term *bshad grwa* thus: “Zhingkyong refers to a teaching session on the tantra held at Dralak Monastery in 1824 as a *bshad grwa* (lit., exegetical school), whereas Getsé always called them simply ‘(periods for) explanation of the tantra’ (*rgyud bshad*). Zhingkyong’s use of *bshad grwa* contributes to our knowledge of the history of this term’s usage. Later in the same century it would be used to mean a full time academy. Here we can see that in the early nineteenth century the term meant short term, irregular study sessions.” “Celibacy, Revelations, and Reincarnated Lamas,” 206.

<sup>541</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Dodrupchen Jikmé Tenpé Nyima, “mtshungs bral rgyal ba’i myu gu o rgyan ’jigs med chos kyi dbang po’i rtogs brjod phyogs tsam gleng ba bdud rtsi’i zil thigs,” in *gsung ’bum/ ’jigs med bstan pa’i nyi ma*.

Dzokchen Śrī Siṃha were of this more short-term, text-specific variety and it was only over the decades following these early teachings that these informal, ad-hoc sessions evolved into the more formalized and institutionalized curriculum described below (c. late 1850s).

## 4.4 Śrī Siṃha’s Earliest Formal Curriculum (c. 1850s)

### 4.4.1 Śrī Siṃha’s “Institutional Regulations” (*chayik; bca’ yig*)

The earliest surviving official document from Śrī Siṃha Shedra is a set of institutional regulations (*chayik; bca’ yig*), entitled *Regulations of Daily Conduct at Pel Seng-ge* [Śrī Siṃha] *Ri Thubten Nyinche Ling* (*dpal seng ge ri thub bstan nyin byed gling gi rgyun ja’i bca’ yig*)<sup>542</sup> [hereafter, referred to as the *chayik*]. As the author statement at the end of the document attests, the *chayik* was composed by Shenpen Tayé and his student Pema Vajra (pad+ma ba+dzra, 1807–1884)<sup>543</sup> and published by Pema Vajra shortly after Shenpen Tayé’s death [c. 1855]. Although there is no mention of the *chayik*’s year of publication either in the body of the text or in its author’s colophon, the text mentions Shenpen Tayé as “the Refuge Lord who has passed away” (*skyabs rje zhi bar gshegs po*) alongside a reference to “our two tulkus . . . the Fourth Dzokchen and

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(Gangtok, Sikim: Dodrupchen Rinpoché, 1974–1975), vol 4, 109–110 (BDRC # W23627). The source also reports that Dza Patrül served as teaching assistant to Shenpen Tayé and then ran the sessions the next two years. The passage reads: gser thal phyogs yar lung pad+mo bkod du dge mang sku zhabs kyi grwa 'khor gseb tu zhugs nas phebs/ der dge mang rin po ches gsang snying rgyud bshad rgyas par gnang skabs rje 'dis khrid dpon mdzad cing / de rjes kyang gnas der lo gnyis tsam la zhag zhe lnga re'i ring rgyud bshad shin tu rgyas pa bka' drin du bstsal.

<sup>542</sup> In *gsung 'bum/ rdzogs chen mkhan po pad+ma ba dz+ra* (The Collected Works of Pema Vajra), 193–200. rdzogs chen dgon: [s.n.], 199-?. (BDRC W20319).

<sup>543</sup> The authorship statement reads: “The preceding text was written by Khen Pema Vajra in accordance with the instructions of Gyelsé Shenpen Tayé (*ces pa 'di'ang 7rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha' yas kyis bka' bkod ltar mkhan pad+ma dz+ra nas bri gnang mdzad pa'o*), 197.



Fourth Ponlop” (*nged sprul sku gnyis . . . rdzogs chen bzhi pa dang dpon bzhi pa*).<sup>544</sup>

Since we know the probable years of death for Shenpen Tayé and the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang to have been circa 1855 and 1870 respectively, we can date the publication of the *chayik* to sometime between these dates. Given the strong and repeated rhetorical deploying of Shenpen Tayé’s authority by the primary author, Pema Vajra, it is most likely that the *chayik* was published not long after Shenpen Tayé’s death. As such, I argue for a likely publication date sometime during the second half of the 1850s.

The *chayik* is relatively brief—spanning only six folio sides—and is comprised of two main sections. The first section details the specific rules, regulations, and day-to-day running of the institution, while the second section lays out the full curriculum of the shedra. I have included the Tibetan text and my English translation of the *chayik* in Appendix 5 below. Before we delve in to the contents of this document, it would be useful to say something about the form and function of the Tibetan *chayik* genre.

#### 4.4.2 Tibetan *Chayik*: Form and Function

Berthe Jansen has cautioned against the tendency to read Tibetan *chayik* through the lens of our own modern, depersonalized bureaucratic structures, and the assumption that they represent a “legal” or “regulatory” document in the way we understand it. She argues, instead, that such documents had and have a wide range of functions: some were central documents of their particular institutions, being recited communally on a regular

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<sup>544</sup> The passage contains the names/titles of the three in smaller text that seems to have been added by the editor/publisher of the xylograph: [. . .] *skyabs rje zhi bar gshegs po de nyid dang nged sprul sku gnyis bcas . . . gzhan phan mtha' yas/ rdzogs chen bzhi pa dang dpon bzhi pa . . . kyi chos dang dam tshig* [. . .], 195–196.

basis.<sup>545</sup> Others were only allowed to be seen and read by the monastic leadership. Premodern Tibetan monasteries were led and administrated by small groups of elite individuals, whose rule generally depended, to a large degree, on their maintaining and projecting an aura of personal authority and charisma. Any regulatory force that *chayiks* tended to have, came from their role in representing the stated intentions of a particular authoritative person or set of persons in absentia. Indeed, there seem to be no instances of a *chayik* being resorted to as a precedent by either monastic administrators or a “defendant” monk to resolve a contentious disciplinary dispute. On the other hand, we have mountains of evidence of monasteries and their residents ignoring the dictates of their *chayik* when it suited them.<sup>546</sup> Thus, although *chayik* often deploy a *rhetoric* of legality and authority, they generally function more as a stern reminder from an absent and revered “founding father,” and are deployed to bolster the more mundane, often tenuous, authority of a current coterie of monastic administrators. In short, the kind of authority that a *chayik* provided was not the legal-bureaucratic authority of a legal document, but, rather, a kind of displaced personal authority. In Weberian terms, we could say that these documents tend to function as instruments of charisma projection and transference. Indeed, as we shall see, this was the case with Śrī Siṃha’s *chayik*, which not only states in the colophon that the text was “proclaimed” (*bka’ bkod*) by the late Shenpen Tayé himself, but also explicitly deploys the authority of Shenpen Tayé within the body of the text. Thus, although though we cannot use the *chayik* to definitively posit

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<sup>545</sup> See Berthe Jansen, *The Monastery Rules*, 14ff.

<sup>546</sup> See for example, Jansen, *The Monastery Rules*, 47ff.

any particular *lived* curriculum at Śrī Simḥa, it does tell us what the formal, or ideal, curriculum was, and, in particular, what figures such as Pema Vajra and Shenpen Tayé *wanted* it to be. With this in mind, we will now turn to an analysis of the contents of the *chayik*.

### 4.4.3 The Contents of Śrī Simḥa’s *Chayik*

#### **4.4.3.1 Title and Preamble**

The *chayik*’s title— *dpal seng ge’i ri thub bstan nyin byed gling gi rgyun ja’i bca’ yig*—identifies it as regulating the “daily activities”<sup>547</sup> of “Pel Senge Ri Thubten Nyinchéling” (*dpal seng ge’i ri thub bstan nyin byed gling*). The name “Pel Senge” (*dpal seng+ge*) is one way to render the Sanskrit name “Śrī Simḥa” into Tibetan.<sup>548</sup> Śrī Simḥa was a semi-mythical Indian tantric adept who is said to have lived around the 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> century CE, and is one of the most important early lineage masters of the Great Perfection.<sup>549</sup> The name *thub bstan nyin byed* (“sun of the Buddha’s teachings”) is almost

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<sup>547</sup> The title uses the term, *rgyun ja*, which literally means “regular tea [service],” and, more specifically, refers to the daily morning liturgy held in a monastery’s main temple during which tea is served to all those assembled. In the context of the *chayik*, the term “*rgyun ja*” is used to indicate *those who participate in the morning liturgy: i.e* the monastery’s *resident students* (all of whom, with the exception of those engaged in intensive retreat, are required to attend the morning liturgy).

<sup>548</sup> The various renderings of “Śrī Simḥa” into Tibetan reveal the plurality of translation and transliteration conventions in Tibet. Sometimes the name is *transliterated* into Tibetan as: *shrI sing+ha* or *shrI seng ha*. Other times, as in the *chayik* under discussion, it is *translated* into Tibetan as *dpal seng ge* (“glorious lion”). Due to this variety of ways that the name Śrī Simḥa can be and has been rendered, I have made the decision to render the name as “Śrī Simḥa”—the Latin-alphabet transliteration of the original Sanskrit.

<sup>549</sup> Later sources describe Śrī Simḥa appearing to Shenpen Tayé on a rock where the shedra was later founded. I could not locate such an account in any sources from that period but it does seem that there was a site near Dzokchen that bore the name “Śrī Simḥa” prior to Shenpen Tayé’s arriving at Dzokchen in the late 1820s. For example, Do Khyentsé Yeshé Dorjé mentions in his autobiography that he camped at a place called “*shrI sing ha*” when he visited Dzokchen in the mid-1820s: “*shrI sing har zhag shas bsdad nas . . .*” See Do Khyentsé Yeshé Dorjé (*mdo mkhyen brtse ye shes rdo rje*, 1800–1866). *rig ‘dzin ‘jigs med gling pa’i yang srid sngags ‘chang ‘ja’ lus rdo rje’i rnam thar mkha’ ‘gro’i zhal lung* (*The Autobiography of Do Khyentsé Yeshé Dorjé*) Title Page Title: *mdo mkyen brtse ye shes rdo rje’i rnam thar* (Chengdu: si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1997), 170.

certainly derived from Shenpen Tayé’s monastic ordination name: Thubten Pema Gyepe Nyinche Pelzangpo (*thub bstan pad+ma rgyas pa’i nyin byed dpal bzang po*), which he received when he took full monastic ordination from Sengdruk Pema Tashi at Dzokchen sometime around 1830,<sup>550</sup> and which Shenpen Tayé sometimes used to sign the colophons for some Vinaya-related works that he wrote or edited.<sup>551</sup>

The *chayik* opens with an introductory verse that pays homage to the historical Buddha and introduces the text to follow as a discussion of “the lineage of the pure teaching and the practice of proper speech.”<sup>552</sup> The body of the text then begins by indicating the intended audience of the work, addressing it to:

The general assembly of domestic and visiting “monks” (*grwa tshang*) residing here at the great Buddhist center of Glorious Lion Mountain (Sengé ri) Thubten Nyinchéling, the shedra folks (*bshad grwa ba*) of Orgyen Samten Chöling [Dzokchen Monastery], that great establishment that adheres to the stainless tradition of the old translations of the Vajrayāna.<sup>553</sup>

Here it should be noted that although the *chayik* uses terms such as *grwa tshang* and *bshad grwa ba*—which are often used to refer to the ordained, monastic population of an institution—there is actually *no mention whatsoever* in the *chayik* of students being

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<sup>550</sup> This ordination name is not mentioned in either the *Verse Autobiography* or the biography in the *Trinchok Catalog*. It is, however provided by Dza Patrül in his “Record of Transmissions of Shenpen Tayé” (“rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha’ yas kyi gsan yig gi mgo rgyan”). See: o rgyan ‘jigs med chos kyi dbang po, *gsung ‘bum/ o rgyan ‘jigs med chos kyi dbang po*, vol. 1: 337–342. khreng tu’u: si khron dpe skrun tshogs pa/ si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2009. (BDRC W1PD107142)

<sup>551</sup> For example, see the text snga ‘gyur ring lugs kyi rab byung gi gzhi chog lung don rab tu gsal, in the *Pelpung Collected Works*, vol. 3, p. 428, line 3. Also see Shenpen Tayé’s colophon to his text *zab chos rig ‘dzin bder ‘dus kyi lam khrid skal ldan ‘jug ngogs* where he gives both his names: “shAkya’i dge slong rdo rje ‘dzin pa thub bstan pad+ma rgyas pa’i nyin byed dpal bzang po’am/ ming gzhan/ rgyal ba’i sras po gzhan phan mtha’ yas ‘od zer du ‘bod pas . . .” (*PCW*: 3. 316).

<sup>552</sup> mam dag bstan pa’i ring lugs dang// mthun pa’i gtam gyi sbyor ba gleng //, 192.

<sup>553</sup> de la ‘dir snga ‘gyur rdo rje theg pa’i ring lugs dri ma med pa ‘dzin pa’i gdan sa chen po o rgyan bsam gtan chos gling gi bshad grwa ba / dpal seng ge ri’i chos grwa chen po thub bstan nyin byed gling ‘dir bzhugs pa’i gzhi byes grwa tshang spyi nas, 192.

required to hold or take monastic vows of any kind.<sup>554</sup> Based on adjacent historical sources, it is clear that only a very few of the students at early Nyingma shedras would have been fully ordained monks.<sup>555</sup> Indeed, a number of the most famous early head khenpos (*mkhan po*, “abbot”) at Śrī Siṃha—such as Dza Patrül (*rdza dpal sprul*)—were not fully ordained (*dge slong*) monastics.<sup>556</sup> It is also interesting to note that the characterization of Śrī Siṃha’s residents as being “the shedra folk” of Dzokchen, strongly suggests that Śrī Siṃha arose out of, and existed as a component of, the larger Dzokchen complex.

The *chayik*’s preamble goes on to state that “this place was founded for the sole purpose of *study and practice (bshad sgrub)*,” and that all residents must “dedicate their time exclusively to *hearing and contemplating the recited [Buddhist teachings] (klog pa thos bsam)* and the practice of *contemplative renunciation (spong ba bsam gtan)*.”<sup>557</sup> The next paragraph stipulates that all residents are expected to attend the morning liturgy without fail except for “those who have asked and received permission from the office of the head lama as well as the abbot and head disciplinarian (*mkhan chos*)<sup>558</sup> to be in

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<sup>554</sup> The terms, *grwa tshang* and *bshad grwa ba* in this context, simply mean, “those people living and studying at the shedra” without carrying the connotation that those “monks” have taken either novice or full monastic ordination. Personal conversation with Khenpo Yeshé, December 7, 2018.

<sup>555</sup> For example, it seems that Dza Patrül left his position of khenpo at Śrī Siṃha in disgust over the fragrant flouting of monastic celibacy at the institution (see Ricard, *Enlightened Vagabond*, 107–108). We also have evidence that the practice of “monks” keeping women in the “monastery” was endemic at the large Nyingma monastery of Katok well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see *The Life and Times of Jamyang Khentse Chökyi Lodrö*, 39–40).

<sup>556</sup> This question of the role of monastic ordination among Nyingmapas of this period—and in early Nyingma shedras in particular—is treated in depth in chapter six below.

<sup>557</sup> *spyir gling 'di bshad sgrub kho na'i ched du bskrun pa yin pas/ 'dir bzhugs thams cad yang na klog pa thos bsam dang / yang na spong ba bsam gtan gyi bya ba kho nas dus 'da' dgos pas/*, 192.

<sup>558</sup> *mkhan chos* is a contraction of two words: *mkhan po* (abbot/head teacher) and *chos khrims pa* (the head proctor or disciplinarian).

retreat, and who are strictly and unfailingly adhering to their daily retreat schedule (*thun bzhi chag med kyi mtshams*).”<sup>559</sup> This first section is interesting in that it states explicitly that the shedra was founded to foster not only study, or “exposition” (*bshad*), but also to support “practice” (*sgrub*). As I will explain in more detail below, this early shedra curriculum was based on a *system* (*srol*) that Shenpen Tayé had begun to develop decades earlier, which both he and his contemporaries described as “a system of explaining and practicing [the Buddhist teachings]” (*gsol gyi bshad sgrub*).

#### 4.4.3.2 *Admission Procedures and Entrance Exams*

The next section of the *chayik* addresses how new students are to be admitted into the shedra. The text stipulates that newly admitted students must remain at the shedra during their first year, with no leaves of absence permitted. During this first year, the new students are required to memorize the “liturgies for the assemblies” (*tshogs kyi ‘don cha rnams*) and “the root [texts] of the [first] four classes” (*‘dzin grwa bzhi’i rtsa ba*) at the college. Unfortunately, the *chayik* does not provide a list of the specific liturgies that are to be memorized, and since no other documentation detailing the ritual program during these early years at Śrī Siṃha seems to have survived, we are left in the dark regarding the specifics of this important aspect of Śrī Siṃha’s early development.<sup>560</sup>

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<sup>559</sup> There is no mention of dedicated retreat facilities or specific retreat schedules or programs anywhere in the *chayik*. My sense is that “those in retreat” at Śrī Siṃha were shedra students and teachers, who would occasionally do intensive practice retreats in their quarters or at some other location in the surrounding area.

<sup>560</sup> On the important role of monastic liturgies and prayers in Tibetan scholastic training, see Cabezón and Dorjee, *Sera Monastery*, 259–261.

Thankfully, the *chayik* does provide specific information on the texts of the “first four classes.” As in English, the Tibetan word *dzindra* (*'dzin grwa*, “class”) can mean both or either a cohort of students, and/or a specific text or topic to be studied.<sup>561</sup> In this case, it is the latter meaning that is intended. These four classes are listed as comprising the following root texts: 1) Thonmi Sambhota’s two classic texts on Tibetan grammar: *Root Text on Grammar in Thirty Verses* (*lung ston pa rtsa ba sum cu pa*), and *Introduction to Grammar* (*lung du ston pa rtag gi 'jug pa*), 2) Sherab Özer’s *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra*, 3) Ngari Panchen’s *Ascertainment of the Three Vows*, and 4) Longchenpa’s *Wish-Fulfilling Treasury*.<sup>562</sup> We have already discussed *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra* and *Ascertainment of the Three Vows* in some detail above so we should say something about the texts from the other two “classes.”

#### 4.4.3.3 *The Root Texts of the “Four Classes”*

##### Thonmi Sambhota’s two classic texts on Tibetan grammar

These two texts— *Root Text on Grammar in Thirty Verses* (*lung ston pa rtsa ba sum cu pa*), and *Introduction to Grammar* (*lung du ston pa rtag gi 'jug pa*) were written by the great imperial translator and litterateur Thonmi Sambhota (c. 7<sup>th</sup> cent.) who, legend has it, instituted Tibetan writing by formulating the first Tibetan script. The two texts are considered to be the originary texts on Tibetan grammar and form the basis for the formal grammar of literary Tibetan. Shenpen Tayé wrote a famous word-by-word

<sup>561</sup> Cabezón and Dorjee, *Sera Monastery*, 261–262.

<sup>562</sup> *Yid bzhin mdzod*. Doxographical text on the Buddhist tenet systems as they relate to the Nyingma path, written by Longchenpa. Śrī Simha mod: 6<sup>th</sup> year; Mipham’s Condensed Tenet’s of (*bsdus grub*): 3rd year; NNI: 8<sup>th</sup> year (tantra course); Mipham’s Condensed Tenet’s of (*bsdus grub*): 2nd year (lower sūtra course)

commentary<sup>563</sup> on these two texts, entitled *A Magical Key: A Word-for-Word Commentary on 'The Thirty Verses' and 'Introduction to Grammar'* (*sum cu pa dang rtags kyi 'jug pa'i 'bru 'grel 'phrul gyi lde mig*), that is still used in many shedras today.<sup>564</sup>

Longchenpa's Wish-Fulfilling Treasury (yid bzhin mdzod)<sup>565</sup>

One of the “Seven Treasuries” (*mdzod bdun*) by the great Nyingma synthesizer Longchenpa, the *Wish-Fulfilling Treasury* (*yid bzhin mdzod*) comprises a detailed doxography that presents the Buddhist tenet systems as they relate to the Nyingma path. Germano argues that the *Wish-Fulfilling Treasury*, in contrast to Longchenpa's other *Treasuries*, presents Buddhist tantra in terms of the *Sarma* (“modernist”) schools,<sup>566</sup> presentation of Buddhist tantra, and “consequently ignores the Great Perfection as well as Nyingma doxography to focus on the standard four tantric sets of the modernists.”<sup>567</sup> Germano further argues that Longchenpa's intent in the *Wish-Fulfilling Treasury* is,

In part to provide a mildly Great Perfection-influenced reading of Mahāyāna and other Vajrayana traditions that can reach out to other circles of Tibetan Buddhism not directly involved with the Great Perfection's own unique terminology and practices.<sup>568</sup>

<sup>563</sup> In: *DzCW* vol. 1, 31–87; *PCW* vol. 3, 581–658; *BhCW* vol. 2, 555–685.

<sup>564</sup> In the current shedra curriculum taught at Śrī Siṃha (in Tibet), the root text of the *Thirty Verses* is taught in the 1<sup>st</sup> class/year, and the *Intro to Grammar* is taught in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, with commentaries on both taught in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year (*snga 'gyur rdzogs chen chos byung chen mo*, 307). At the Ngagyur Nyingma Institute (NNI) at Namdröling in South India, these are all taught in the 1<sup>st</sup> year.

<sup>565</sup> Taught in the modern Śrī Siṃha curriculum in the 6<sup>th</sup> year and through Mipham's Condensed Tenet's of (*bsdus grub*) in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year; At Namdröling (NNI): root text taught in the 8<sup>th</sup> year (tantra course); Mipham's *Condensed Tenet's* (*bsdus grub*) taught in 2<sup>rd</sup> year (lower sūtra course).

<sup>566</sup> i.e., the non-Nyingma traditions, which developed during the *later diffusion* (*phyi dar*) of Buddhism to Tibet after the turn of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>567</sup> David Germano, “Architecture and Absence in the Secret Tantric History of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*),” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 17, 2, 251.

<sup>568</sup> Germano, “Architecture and Absence,” 314.



#### 4.4.3.4 *Further Lists of Texts to Be Memorized*

Returning to our analysis of the *chayik*, the text says that upon successfully reciting these four sets of texts from memory in front of the main assembly, students are then instructed to memorize the texts for the next classes, which are comprised of the “root texts relating to Vinaya, Abhidharma, Perfection of Wisdom, Madhyamaka, and so forth, as well as the introductory explanations on the *Guhyagarbha*,”<sup>569</sup> after which an exam must be taken before engaging in further study.<sup>570</sup> Because the *chayik* later details a curriculum that involves the more advanced study of these texts just mentioned, this preceding list of texts to be memorized and recited seems to represent a kind of *comprehensive entrance exam* that students had to complete in order to engage in higher study of these texts and of other topics at the shedra. It is interesting to note that this preliminary study seems to be comprised entirely of the *memorization* of the shedra’s core liturgical and curricular texts. The use of such a large volume of rote memorization as a kind of general entrance exam demonstrates a distinct effort to institute a formal, standardized curriculum; rather than students coming and going, studying whatever happened to be on offer, these entrance requirements require an extremely high “buy in” by prospective students. This *de facto* entrance exam also emphasizes how such mnemonic ability was seen as a reliable measure of intelligence and scholarly potential

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<sup>569</sup> de nas 'dul mngon sher phyin dbu ma sogs dang / gsang snying gi rgyud bshad la 'jug pa rnams nas thog mar rtsa ba blo thog nas, 193.

<sup>570</sup> de nas 'dul mngon sher phyin dbu ma sogs dang / gsang snying gi rgyud bshad la 'jug pa rnams nas thog mar rtsa ba blo thog nas rgyug sprod nas slob dgos/, 193.

and underlines the singular value placed on the ability to memorize and retain huge volumes of textual material across virtually all forms of Tibetan scholarly education.<sup>571</sup>

#### 4.4.3.5 *General Rules and Regulations*

At this point the *chayik* turns to the specific regulations of day-to-day life at the shedra. The text begins by specifying the protocol to be followed for monastic assemblies, including the means of summoning the monks, the need to arrive on time, and admonitions for monks to sit only in their proper place and to keep silence while in the hall. The text then lists a number of behaviors that are prohibited at all times in the shedra.<sup>572</sup> These include:

- Not wearing one's monastic robes (*gzan sham*) within the shedra grounds
- Shouting, clamor, and other unnecessary noise
- Coming and going from the shedra grounds on a horse
- Keeping many horses and pack animals within the shedra grounds
- Taking tea served at assembly to one's room
- Leaving the assembly hall without first asking for permission

For infractions of this sort, the *chayik* dictates that the miscreant should perform 100 prostrations and make offerings of butter lamps. The text then lists a further set of more serious proscribed behaviors, which include disrespecting, disobeying, or assaulting the head abbot or other monastic officials, and fighting with or spreading bad rumors about another resident of the monastery. For these infractions, the text stipulates that the

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<sup>571</sup> Cabezón and Dorjee echo this assessment in their discussion of the importance of memorization in the Geluk Monastery of Sera, saying that “those that are gifted at memorization are said to have keen intellects (*rig pa yag po*) [. . .] which bespeaks the importance of memorization to scholastic studies.” *Sera Monastery*, 144.

<sup>572</sup> 193–194.

perpetrator be “bound to the flagpole until they have offered 100 butter lamps and the tea service for the whole assembly.”<sup>573</sup>

The *chayik* then moves on to give instructions for the maintenance and security of the shedra buildings and compound. Of particular interest is a section imploring the shedra authorities to properly check and maintain the drainage systems in and around the various buildings in the complex, explicitly mentioning the lama’s residence (*bla brang*), the printing house (*spar khang*), and the main temple (*gtsug lag khang*). This brief passage gives us a rare glimpse into the institutional ordering and the kind of built structures that existed at Śrī Siṃha during this early period. Of particular note is the presence of a printing house at the shedra, which provides evidence that Śrī Siṃha had by this time developed into a full-fledged center of mass textual learning necessitating a printing house to store printing blocks and publish curricular texts.<sup>574</sup>

The *chayik* moves on to cover the issue of personal vs. institutional property, saying that however long one has resided at the shedra, upon leaving, they must return any and all articles belonging to the shedra.<sup>575</sup> The *chayik* also stipulates that residents must be careful not to damage any of the shedra’s property and will responsible to replace any items that they damage.<sup>576</sup>

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<sup>573</sup> khyad par mkhan chos sogs la brtsi med kyi kha len lag len byed pa dang / gling nang nas 'dzing rtsod rgyab res byed pa bcas drag zhan su thad nas byung yang / mang ja dang / brgya mchod ma phul gyi bar du/ dar chen la bcing pa'i chad pa la sbyor/, 194.

<sup>574</sup> Shenpen Tayé’s editing and publishing of his nine-volume *Trinchok Collection* at Dzokchen between 1840 and 1845 (treated in chapter five), likely led to the founding or expansion of this printing house.

<sup>575</sup> The *chayik* does not mention what kinds of property this covers so presumably, it covers anything that the student was furnished with during their time at the shedra. The passage reads: rang rang 'dug ring la sdod cing 'gro dus/ mkhan chos la rtsis sprod ba las phan tshun nyo btsong byed mi chog pa, 194–195.

<sup>576</sup> gra gshag so sor sdod mi gzhi byas kyi grwa pa su yin kyang / nyar tshag tshul bzhin byed pa ma gtogs zhe med chog bsam gyis 'thor zhig su gtong mi chog cing / zhig ral byung na de nyid nas gso dgos pa [. . .], 195.

#### 4.4.3.6 *General Advice on Leadership and Administration*

Before the *chayik* moves on to outline the formal shedra curriculum, it provides some general advice on how to maintain a harmonious atmosphere within the shedra. The advice contains some interesting passages and is worth quoting in full:

A harmonious system requires those in charge and those under them to act as one towards a common goal in accordance with the directives of the abbot, disciplinarian, and senior trainees. If, instead, the [community] is in discord, the foundation of the teachings [and the community] will be disgraced and destroyed. Such discord would be against not only the teaching and the personal commitments (*dam tshig*) of the Refuge Lord himself, the late Shenpen Tayé and our [present] two tulkus—the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen [Drupwang] and the 4<sup>th</sup> [Dzokchen] Ponlop—but would also be against the host of guardian deities (*srung ma*) who uphold the teachings.<sup>577</sup>

Since early times,<sup>578</sup> we [Tibetans] have been propitiating these guardian deities—who grant their blessings, help those who keep their spiritual commitments, and punish those who break such commitments—and we are still doing so today. As such, it is essential to properly engage in adopting [good behavior] and discarding [bad behavior] in accordance with this system.<sup>579</sup>

These earnest injunctions to maintain institutional harmony combined with the harsh penalties for fighting and discord mentioned earlier suggests a darker aspect of Tibetan monastic life that often goes unrecognized and unspoken. Tibetan oral histories and autobiographies are filled with references to serious—often deadly—conflicts within and

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<sup>577</sup> mkhan chos dang bslab pa rgan rim rnams kyi zhal bkod ji ltar gnang ba ltar/ mgo 'og lus chud/ dpon zhabs g.yogs 'dus kya lugs ka'i/ zhe sems bsam pa gcig bsgril gyis tshul bzhin sgrub dgos pa ma gtogs/ mi mthun pa'i log sbyor bstan pa'i zhabs 'dren du 'gro ba su thad nas shor tshe 7skyabs rje zhi bar gshegs po de nyid dang nged sprul sku gnyis bcas . . . gzhan phan mtha' yas/ rdzogs chen bzhi pa dang dpon bzhi pa . . . kyi chos dang dam tshig la 'gal ba 'gro nges yin par ma zad/\_\_\_bstan skyongs srung ma'i tshogs la yang /, 195–196.

<sup>578</sup> i.e., before Buddhism came to Tibet.

<sup>579</sup> dam tshig can la sdong grogs byed cing 'phrin las bsgrub pa dang / dam nyams rnams la bka' chad 'bebs pa'i phrin bcol sngar nas byas shing da lta yang byed bzhin pas/ de lugs kyi blang dor tshul bzhin byed pa gal che/, 196.

between monastic communities.<sup>580</sup> The fact that the *chayik* repeatedly addresses problems of conflict between members of the shedra, strongly suggests that such conflict was an ever-present danger at Dzokchen and posed a very real threat to the future prospects of the shedra as a flourishing institution.

It is also interesting that the *chayik* doesn't frame the consequences of disobedience or conflict in standard Buddhist terms such as *downfall* (*nyams pa*), *sin* (*sdig pa*), and the like, but, instead, invokes the anger of the *guardian deities* (*srung ma*), which tend to be understood as “worldly” powers. Such protector deities are particularly associated with apotropaic practices to avert worldly harm such as disease, floods, fires, and so forth. The fact that most of Dzokchen's infrastructure had recently been destroyed in the deadly 1842 Dergé earthquake, would likely have made such an injunction even more pointed and powerful for the population at Śrī Siṃha.

#### 4.4.3.7. *The Formal Curriculum*

##### Textual Studies

The final section of the *chayik* prescribes a detailed and comprehensive curriculum for those “engaged in training” (*bslab grwa ba*), which begins with a detailed list of curricular texts and topics:

Those engaged in training should begin with the *Thirty Verses on Grammar and Introduction to Grammar*,<sup>581</sup> after which they should study, [Ngari Panchen's]

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<sup>580</sup> For example, see *The Life and Times of Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö: The Great Biography by Dilgo Khyentse and Other Stories*, trans. Drubgyud Tenzin Rinpoche and Khenpo Sonam Phuntsok. (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 2017); and Ricard, *Enlightened Vagabond*, within which there are many references to violence amongst monks and conflict within large monasteries in Eastern Tibet.

<sup>581</sup> *sum rtags*: an abbreviation of *lung ston pa rtsa ba sum cu pa*—the *Root Text on Grammar in Thirty Verses*, and *lung du ston pa rtag gi 'jug pa*—*Introduction to Grammar*, the two originary texts of Tibetan grammar, written by the great imperial translator and litterateur Thonmi Sambhota (c. 7<sup>th</sup> cent.).

*Ascertainment of the Three Vows*, [Sherab Özer's] *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra*; [Longchenpa's] *Wish-Fulfilling Treasury* (*yid bzhin mdzod*), followed by Abhidharma, the root *Vinaya-sūtra*,<sup>582</sup> Madhyamaka, Perfection of Wisdom, the *Five Treatises of Maitreya*, and the Queen of Tantras—the glorious *Guhyagarbha*, and so on. One should study these texts in the proper order, not putting the intermediate texts before the earlier ones or after the later ones.<sup>583</sup>

This list mirrors the prior list of texts to be memorized by new students, with the small difference that the *Five Treatises of Maitreya* mentioned in the latter list are not explicitly mentioned in the prior list. Also noteworthy is the explicit injunction to study these texts and topics in the “proper order.” In the absence of any explicit discussion of doxography in the *chayik*, we can presume that this “proper order” is indicated by the order in which the texts and topics are listed in the passage.

The *chayik* then goes on to prescribe specific methods of study and examination to be used at the shedra:

Students should study diligently during the first and third watches of the night. After finishing the evening prayer, the students of the various classes should recite, repeat, and so forth, the texts specified by their teacher on the roof of the residence buildings. After finishing the study of a text, the student will need to recite and provide an explanation of the text and submit to an oral examination (*bshad kyi rgyug*) on it in the presence of the general assembly during the time of the intensive summer sādhana retreat and the main monastery's *Dongak Mönlam* Gathering (*mdo sngags smon lam*).<sup>584</sup>

<sup>582</sup> I am assuming that this refers to the *Vinaya-sūtra* by Guṇaprabha, although it is usually rendered in Tibetan as ‘*dul ba’i mdo* rather than ‘*dul ba mdo*. The other option is that it refers to the *Prātimokṣa-sūtra* (*so sor thar pa’i mdo*), which is sometimes referred to as the root sūtra of Vinaya because of its ubiquitous use in monastic rituals such as the fortnightly *sojong*.

<sup>583</sup> bslab grwa pa rnam nas kyang / thog mar sum rtags/ de nas sdom gsum/ mdo sngags smon lam/ yid bzhin mdzod/ mngon pa/ ‘dul ba mdo rtsa ba/ dbu ma sher phyin/ byams chos/ rgyud kyi rgyal mo dpal ldan gsang ba’i snying po sogs kyi bar snga ma snga ma sngon du ma song bar phyi ma phyi ma la mtho snyegs kyis mi slob par go rim bzhin ’jug dgos pa, 196.

<sup>584</sup> nam gyi cha stod dang cha smad sogs la brtson ’grus kyi bslab sbyong dang / dgongs tshogs grol ba dang rang gshag steng nas ’dzin grwa so so’i dpe cha skyor ba sogs bslab don ltar bya/ ’di nas gzhung tshan rdzogs pa rnam kyis gzhung de dang de’i bshad pa/ dgon chen gyi mdo sngags smon lam dang / dbyar gnas sgrub mchod sogs kyi skabs tshogs bshad kyi rgyug ’bul byed dgos shing, 196–197.

These late-evening (and early-morning) cacophonous open-air recitation sessions will be familiar to anyone who has lived near a Tibetan shedra or monastery with monastic students. The examination method requiring students to give a public synthetic *explanation* of a particular text or topic was to become perhaps the defining characteristic of the shedra model of monastic education, and it is interesting to note that it was clearly present very early on in this early curriculum.<sup>585</sup> We will also note here the absence of any kind of formal debate—either as pedagogy or as a method of examination.

### Experiential Guidance and Practice

The curriculum then shifts towards the student receiving “experiential guidance” in the Great Perfection, with a focus on the works of Longchenpa:

Once such study has been completed, one can receive the proper *experiential guidance* (*nyams khrid*) in the unsurpassable secret, the *mind* (*sems sde*), *expanse* (*klong sde*), and *practice instruction* (*man ngag sde*) classes [of the Great Perfection], as well as on [Longchenpa’s] *Precious Treasury of Phenomena’s Expanse* (*chos dbying rin po che’i mdzod*) and *Precious Treasury of the Great Vehicle* (*theg chog rin po che’i mdzod*).<sup>586</sup>

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Note: As we saw above, the *mdo sngags smon lam* is the collective title of a set of two curricular texts by the 16<sup>th</sup>-century master Sherab Özer. In this context, it seems to refer to a collective ritual done periodically by the entire Dzokchen community, somewhat akin to the Geluk *Monlam Chenmo* (*smo lam chen mo*, “Great Prayer Festival”) that was traditionally held annually in Lhasa. While it is reasonable to assume that the Dzokchen *mdo sngags smon lam* used the set of texts of the same name as its liturgical basis, I have as yet not found any other references to such an event or its liturgical content.

<sup>585</sup> In my research, I have found that the practice of requiring students to give public explanations—often with very little time to prepare—is perhaps the single thing that virtually all institutions calling themselves “shedras” have in common, whether they be Nyingma, Sakya, or Kagyü, and whether based in monastic settings or non-monastic “encampments” (*sgar*).

<sup>586</sup> de ltar slob gnyer rdzogs pa dang / gsang ba bla na med pa sems klong man ngag sde so so dang / chos dbyings rin po che’i mdzod dang / theg mchog rin po che’i mdzod sogs kyi nyams khrid legs par nos te. 197.

The curriculum culminates by shifting from study (*bshad*) and *guidance* (*khrid*) to intensive contemplative *practice* (*grub*):

Thereupon, one should go to a solitary mountain retreat and, remaining fixed one-pointedly on accomplishing the heart-essence, seek to manifestly realize the profound meaning [of the teachings]. With such training, one should be able to hold high the tenets of the stainless tradition of the early translations of the Vajrayana, which were previously set down by Padmasambhava, Śāntaraṅgita, and the Dharma king Trisong Detsen. May it be so!<sup>587</sup>

#### 4.4.4 Analysis of the *chayik* Curriculum

##### 4.4.4.1 *Texts and Topics*

Here, in this mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century document, we can already see the basic framework for today's Nyingma shedra curriculum: There is a graduated course of studies laid out with specific guidelines regarding the texts and topics to be covered, pedagogical methods, and the schedule and format of examinations. The curriculum covers both sūtric and tantric texts and topics in its core curriculum. Although there is no explicit reference to the “thirteen great texts,” the mention of “Abhidharma, Madhyamaka, the root *Vinaya-sūtra*, Perfection of Wisdom, and the *Five Treatises of Maitreya*” includes all of the topics covered in the thirteen texts. The fact that the *chayik* does not list specific titles for most of the exoteric philosophical material—for which only the *subject* is listed—suggests that this portion of the curriculum may have still been in the process of crystalizing at this early stage. Indeed, there is strong evidence that this portion of Śrī

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<sup>587</sup> dben pa'i ri khrod nams su song nas zab don snying po'i sgrub pa la rtse gcig tu gzhol ba'i sgo nas grub 'bras mngon sum du mdzad/ rgyal dbang pad+ma sam b+ha wa dang / mkhan chen zhi ba 'tsho/ chos kyi rgyal po khri srong lde'u btsan gsum kyi rjes su 'brangs pa'i snga 'gyur rdo rje theg pa'i ring lugs dri ma med pa'i grub mtha' s'long nus pa zhig dgos pa lags so, 197.



Siṃha’s curriculum remained fluid and open until Khenpo Shenga’s annotation commentaries popularized the rubric of the Thirteen Great Texts in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>588</sup> It is instructive that Ngawang Palzang, who studied at Śrī Siṃha half a century later (c. 1900–1901) reports a high degree of variation in which texts were studied depending on which teachers were currently in residence.<sup>589</sup> Pelzang’s account informs us that at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Śrī Siṃha was still relying on Geluk teachers and Geluk commentaries to teach and study some of the Indian philosophical treatises and topics. For example, as part of Pelzang’s studies of the *Root Sūtra on Monastic Discipline*, Khenpo Sonam Chöphel transmitted commentaries and other associated Vinaya texts by Kadampa and Gelukpa figures including the 1st Dalai Lama Gedün Drubpa (dge ‘dun grub pa; 1391–1474), Je Tsong Khapa (rje tsong kha pa; 1357–1419), and Tsonawa Sherab Zangpo (mtsho sna b ashes rab bzang po; c. 13<sup>th</sup> cent.). In another instance, the attendant of Gelugpa Geshe Kunzang Sonam was invited to Śrī Siṃha to “establish the explanatory transmission” (*bshad srol ‘dzugs pa*) of Vasubandhu’s *Treasury of Abhidharma* (*Abhidharmakośa*; *chos mngon pa ‘i mdzod*).<sup>590</sup>

We may note that there is no mention of practices associated with the Nyingma *Kagyé* (*bka’ brgyad*; Eight Proclamation Deities) during this early period of Śrī Siṃha.. These apotropaic rituals surrounding one or more of the eight wrathful deities of the

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<sup>588</sup> Although the phrase “thirteen great texts” (*gzhung chen bcu gsum*) has been used by some Tibetan writers of the past century to describe the studies or teaching activities of earlier Tibetan figures, I have found no evidence that this phrase or the rubric that it describes actually existed prior to the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it began to be propagated by Khenpo Shenga’s commentaries.

<sup>589</sup> See Heidi L. Nevin and J. Jakob Leschly, trans. *Wondrous Dance of Illusion: The Autobiography of Khenpo Ngawang Palzang*, 103–116.

<sup>590</sup> *Wondrous Dance of Illusion: The Autobiography of Khenpo Ngawang Palzang*, 111.

*Kagyé* were a mainstay of Nyingma communities during this time. Although the *Kagyé* is more firmly rooted in Nyingma *ritual praxis*, rather than textual exegesis, such exegesis is not altogether non-existent.<sup>591</sup> Indeed, the study and transmission of exegetical works on *Kagyé*—such as Mipham Gyatso’s *bka’ brgyad rnam bshad*—had become a regular part of study at Śrī Siṃha by at least the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>592</sup> and we even have accounts of extended *Kagyé* retreats being incorporated into the curriculum at Śrī Siṃha at this time. For example, Ngawang Pelzang describes attending a six-month *Kagyé* retreat at Śrī Siṃha around 1900–1901, during which he acted as retreat attendant for Śrī Siṃha’s main teacher and abbot, Khenpo Sonam Chöpel, who led the retreat. During breaks in the retreat Pelzang describes Khenpo Chöpel teaching Nāgārjuna’s *Root Verses on the Middle Way*.<sup>593</sup> Shenpen Tayé, however, seems to have totally eschewed the *Kagyé* rituals, never writing about them or mentioning them. Much like his orientation toward *terma* in general, Shenpen Tayé does not appear to have been hostile to the *Kagyé*—he just seems to have been wholly uninterested in it, viewing it as non-essential to his Nyingma “system of study and practice.”

#### 4.4.4.2 *Pedagogy*

With regards to specific *pedagogy* employed in the early shedra, the *chayik* recommends the following methods:

- *Memorizing and internalizing (blo thog)* the core curricular texts.

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<sup>591</sup> E.g., Mipham Gyatso’s *Essence of Spiritual Attainment: An Explanation of the General Meaning of the Kagyé Drupchen (sgrub chen bka’ brgyad kyi spyi don rnam par bshad pa dngos grub snying po)*.

<sup>592</sup> Our main source for this period is Ngawang Pelzang’s detailed account of his studies at Śrī Siṃha in 1900–01 provided in his autobiography, *Wondrous Dance of Illusion: The Autobiography of Khenpo Ngawang Palzang*, 103–116.

<sup>593</sup> See *Wondrous Dance of Illusion: The Autobiography of Khenpo Ngawang Palzang*, 106.

- The ability to provide glosses, expound upon, or otherwise *explain* (*bshad pa*) a wide range of textual passages and/or points of doctrine.
- *Experiential guidance* (*nyams khrid*) in the Great Perfection, the signature Nyingma contemplative regime.
- *Direct realization* of the heart of the “profound meaning” (*zab don sying po ’i sgrub*).
- An emphasis on maintaining a *proper order of studies*.

The curriculum described above represents a significant departure in both content and pedagogy from any other recorded Tibetan educational program—monastic or otherwise—prior to this period. Its *content* is unique in that it includes extensive study of both tantric material and Indian philosophical treatises in its *core* curriculum—with tantric material being included from the very beginning of the program.<sup>594</sup>

With regard to its methods, the shedra curriculum also represented a radical departure from other pre-existing forms of Tibetan monastic education. As we discussed above, Tibetan monastic education generally comprises a three-fold set of formal scholastic practices that involves *memorization* of core texts, which are then unpacked through layers of authoritative *scholastic commentary*, and synthesized through extensive practice of *formalized debate* (*tsöpa; rtsod pa*). The early shedra curriculum described in Śrī Siṃha’s *chayik*, however, retains the memorization of core texts, and, although there is no explicit mention of formal textual commentaries (*drelwa; ’grel ba*), there is strong evidence that such commentaries were being used and studied as part of this early curriculum at Śrī Siṃha. The primary piece of evidence for the presence of scholastic

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<sup>594</sup> i.e., three of the four preliminary texts of the curriculum—*Ascertainment of the Three Vows*, [Jikmé Lingpa’s] *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra*; and [Longchenpa’s] *Wish-Fulfilling Treasury*—contain significant esoteric material.

commentaries during this early period is the fact that Shenpen Tayé himself authored formal commentaries on three of the shedra curriculum’s core texts—viz. the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*;<sup>595</sup> *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra*;<sup>596</sup> and Thonmi Sambhota’s foundational grammar treatises.<sup>597</sup> As such, although there seems not to have been a formally prescribed set of authoritative commentaries that were used during this early period at Śrī Siṃha, it is likely that formal commentaries on the core curricular texts were utilized to some degree.

What we see no evidence for whatsoever, is the use of formal debate at Śrī Siṃha during this early period. As we discussed in chapter one, formal debate has long been a core scholastic practice in Tibet and widely prized as a method to develop clarity on difficult points of doctrine and as a means to propagate the tenets of one’s own school and defeat the doctrinal positions of other schools. There is no evidence of such any kind of debating practice at Śrī Siṃha during these early decades. Instead, the entire pedagogical focus of the “study” portion of the curriculum is on *explanation (bshad pa)*—both as the main pedagogy and as the primary method of examination. We will conclude the chapter with some thoughts about what such a focus can tell us about what Shenpen Tayé’s wanted his shedra to be *for*.

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<sup>595</sup> *Revealing Samantabhadra’s Intent: A Commentary on the Difficult Points of the Guhyagarbha-tantra* (rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po sgyu 'phrul drwa ba'i rtsa rgyud lung gi spyi gsang ba'i snying po'i 'grel ba kun bzang thugs kyi ti ka): DzCW: text no. 19, vol. 1. 345–447; XylKB: text no. 1, vol. 1. 1a–73a; PCW: 3. 1–145.

<sup>596</sup> *Condensing the Meaning of the Bodhisattva’s Chariot: A Commentary on “A Paradise of Ease and Bliss: Aspiration Prayers of the Conduct of a Bodhisattva.”* (byang chub spyod pa'i smon lam phan bde'i ljon pa'i 'grel ba rgyal sras lam gyi shing rta'i bsdu don): DzCW text 11: 1. 182–193; XylKB, text no. 76: 2. 230a–238b; PCW: 3. 685–688; BhCW: 1. 575–601.

<sup>597</sup> *A Magical Key: A Syllable-by-Syllable Commentary on “Thirty Verses” and “Introduction to Grammar”* (sum cu pa dang rtags kyi 'jug pa'i 'bru 'grel 'phrul gyi lde mig): DzCW, Text 2: vol. 1. 31–87; XylKB, text 89: 2. 338a–375b; PCW: 3. 581–658; BhCW: 2. 555–685.

#### 4.4.4.3 *Awarding of Degrees at the Early Shedra*

We should also note that the *chayik* makes no mention of any kind of academic “degrees” awarded at the conclusion of studies. Indeed, there does not appear to be any evidence for the title of “khenpo” being awarded as a formal academic degree at a Nyingma shedra until the development of Namdröling’s mature curriculum in the 1980s. Kyabje Khenpo Tashi Pelden, who studied at Tashi Yangshak Khyilwa Shedra<sup>598</sup> in Eastern Tibet immediately before the Chinese take-over of the 1950s, makes very clear that in his shedra there was no standardized khenpo “degree” even at this late period:

In our shedra after five years of intensive studies, only a few students qualified as assistant teachers. The best of those advanced to become khenpos. Minor assistant teachers must have studied for at least three years; greater assistant teachers for at least five years. Our shedra had no fixed rule for the number of years required to become a khenpo. This depended utterly on the individual’s knowledge. Khenpos at our shedra did not get written certificates as is the custom nowadays. The main khenpo did not publicly acknowledge someone’s promotion from ‘assistant teacher’ to ‘khenpo’ by an enthronement ceremony. [. . .] It was neither the aim nor was it within the capacity of every shedra student to become a khenpo.<sup>599</sup>

#### 4.4.5 The Formation of Śrī Simha’s “*Chayik*” Curriculum (1820s–c.1860)

Although the *chayik* was written down by Pema Vajra after Shenpen Tayé’s death, Pema Vajra makes explicit throughout the document that it was compiled based directly on the prior wishes and instructions of Shenpen Tayé.<sup>600</sup> We might be tempted to

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<sup>598</sup> bkra shis g.yang zhag ‘khyil ba bshad grwa, which was attached to Kyabje Monastery (skyabs rje dgon), was a Sakya shedra that followed the curriculum established at Dzongsar by Khenpo Shenga.

<sup>599</sup> Kretschmar, trans., *Drops of Nectar: Khenpo Kunpal’s Commentary on Śāntideva’s Bodhisattvāvatāra*, 124–125.

<sup>600</sup> For example, the colophon describes the text as being “in accordance with the instructions” (*bka’ bkod ltar*) of Shenpen Tayé (197), a sentiment that is echoed in the body of the document (*chos rje rin po che’i zhal bkod ltar*, 194).

take such claims as being simply an example of the tendency of Tibetan writers to downplay their personal role in their achievements by giving credit to their teachers and/or past masters, if not for the earlier 1828 shedra teaching given by Shenpen Tayé described earlier in the chapter. The similarities between Śrī Simha’s formal curriculum described in *chayik* and the set of teachings given in 1828 are obvious: Three of the four texts in the earlier teaching—the *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra*, *Ascertainment of the Three Vows*, and the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*—are core texts in the later curriculum. This early set of shedra teachings, however, differs from the later curriculum in teaching Jikmé Lingpa’s *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities*, which seems to have been swapped out in the later *chayik* curriculum with Longchenpa’s *Wish-Fulfilling Treasury* (*yid bzhin mdzod*). The earlier teaching also does not explicitly include the grammar treatises, Indian philosophical treatises, nor the two Longchenpa *Treasuries* included in the later curriculum.

We should note here that even in the *chayik* the term shedra is used only once and only as part of the demonym *bshad grwa ba*, “shedra residents,” or “those participating in the study section.”<sup>601</sup> Throughout the *chayik*, the institution that hosts such “study sessions” is not referred to as a shedra, but, rather, as a *chödra* (*chos grwa*; “Dharma

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<sup>601</sup> This appears in the introductory section of the *bca’ yig*: de la 'dir snga 'gyur rdo rje theg pa'i ring lugs dri ma med pa 'dzin pa'i gdan sa chen po o rgyan bsam gtan chos gling gi bshad grwa ba / dpal seng ge ri'i chos grwa chen po thub bstan nyin byed gling 'dir bzhugs pa'i gzhi byes grwa tshang spyi nas thugs nges gnam rgyur/ “Now then: you, the general monastic assembly (*grwa tshang*) [of] domestic and visiting monks residing here at the great Dharma center of Glorious Lion Mountain (Sengé ri) Thubten Nyinchéling, the shedra monks of Orgyen Samten Chöling [Dzokchen Monastery]—that great monastic establishment that adheres to the stainless tradition of the old translations of the Vajrayāna—need to take the following to heart: . . .” 192.

center”),<sup>602</sup> or, most commonly as a *ling* (*gling*; “precinct”).<sup>603</sup> It is clear, however, that by the time the *chayik* was published, the shedra at Dzokchen had evolved into a formal educational institution. This is reflected in the *chayik*’s description of the shedra’s built structures (compound, main gates, main temple, printing house, etc.) as well as in its prescribed formal curriculum, which is much more regularized than the informal shedra teaching sessions described by Sullivan and Ronis above.

### ***Formalization and Institutionalization***

It is worth unpacking here what we mean when we speak of the shedra and its curriculum becoming more “regularized” or “formalized.” If we compare the earlier shedra teachings given by Shenpen Tayé in the late 1820s with the later formal curriculum described in the *chayik* we can see a number of key developments. Firstly, and perhaps most obviously, we see an *expansion* of texts, topics, and practices covered. The list of four basic texts taught in the initial shedra teaching<sup>604</sup> is greatly expanded in the *chayik*’s formal curriculum to include a much greater number of texts. We also see an

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<sup>602</sup>192. This is perhaps the most common generic Tibetan term for a religious (usually monastic) study center and is used by Shenpen Tayé in a number of his author colophons to refer to the place of composition.

<sup>603</sup> The term *gling* is generally appended to the end of the proper names of Tibetan religious establishments (as in the proper name of Dzokchen, *o rgyan bsam gtan chos gling*; and of its “shedra,” *dpal seng ge ri thub bstan nyin byed gling*). In the *bca’ yig*, the term *gling* is used repeatedly when referring to the walled area containing the shedra buildings; e.g., nub dus rgyal sgo rgyab nas **gling** rgyab tu ‘grims ‘grul byed mi chog pa; “no one shall be permitted to enter or leave the **compound** after the gate is closed” 195. It also is used in a more abstract sense to mean the shedra as an institution; e.g., spyir **gling** ‘di bshad sgrub kho na’i ched du bskrun pa yin pas/ ‘dir bzhugs thams cad yang na klog pa thos bsam dang/ yang na spong ba bsam gtan gyi bya ba kho nas dus ‘da’ dgos pas; “Generally speaking, because this **institution** was founded for the sole purpose of study and practice, all those who reside here need to dedicate their time exclusively to hearing and contemplating the recited [Buddhist teachings] and the practice of contemplative renunciation” 192.

<sup>604</sup> *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra* (*mdo sngags smon lam*), [Jikmé Lingpa’s] *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities* (*yon tan rin po che’i mdzod*), *Ascertainment of the Three Vows* (*sdom gsum rnam nges*), and the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* (*gsang ba’i snying po*).

expansion of the *type* of texts and topics covered from the earlier to the later curricula. The four texts of the earlier shedra teaching were clearly selected to offer a comprehensive treatment of Buddhist thought and practice from a Nyingma perspective, and as such, three of its four texts are comprehensive surveys of their respective topics rather than classical “root” texts. The later curriculum expands on this base, adding a range of Indian Buddhist “root” philosophical texts as well as three of Longchenpa’s *Treasuries*.

Another noticeable difference from the earlier informal shedra teaching to the later curriculum is the development and codification of a preferred *order of studies*. We see this in the grouping of texts and topics into separate “classes” (*dzin grwa*), the explicit injunction to study the texts in the proper order, and the introduction of formal entrance exams as well as methods of examination to evaluate and regulate students’ progress from one class or topic to the next. Thirdly, and related to this last element, is the *formalization of the pedagogy*. The brief description of the early shedra teachings does not include even a basic mention of *how* Shenpen Tayé taught the texts listed. In contrast, the more expansive curriculum prescribed in the later *chayik* explicitly prescribes specific methods of teaching, self-study, and examination.

Comparing Shenpen Tayé’s initial shedra teaching session with the later more formalized *chayik* curriculum, we can also see not only a natural *expansion* of texts and topics as the shedra curriculum developed and took shape, but also a clear movement towards establishing a broader, more “classical” curriculum (i.e., comprised of canonical and/or more widely accepted texts). This move towards “classical” or “canonical” texts



as the shedra teaching sessions became more institutionalized at Dzokchen is plainly evident in both the exoteric and esoteric parts of the curriculum. The later addition of classical Indian philosophical treatises and topics (e.g., “Madhyamaka,” the *Five Treatises of Maitreya*, *Vinaya-sūtra*, and so forth) demonstrates a desire to ground the shedra curriculum in the *shared (thun mong)* Buddhist tradition of “canonical” *Tengyur (bstan ’gyur)* treatises. Such a move was, to say the least, unusual for Nyingmapas, who had not previously emphasized the formal study of *Tengyur* treatises and their associated commentaries in their home institutions. As I argue below, this novel inclusion of Indian philosophical treatises in Shenpen Tayé’s shedra curriculum was likely influenced by his interactions with Gelukpa scholars and their form of monastic education.

In the *chayik*, we also see a parallel move towards a more “classical” tradition with respect to the *unique (thun mong ma yin pa)*—i.e., Nyingma-specific—texts and topics studied. In particular, with regard to the Great Perfection, we see a move towards a broader pan-Nyingma textual basis of the Great Perfection as represented by the *Treasuries* of Longchenpa. The addition in the later *chayik* curriculum of Longchenpa’s *Precious Treasury of Phenomena’s Expanse (chos dbying rin po che’i mdzod)* and *Precious Treasury of the Great Vehicle (theg chog rin po che’i mdzod)* is, most obviously, the product of the expansion of the later curriculum to include an experiential guidance (*nyams khrid*) component, which did not explicitly exist in the earlier 1828 shedra teachings. But the fact that the later curriculum drops Jikmé Lingpa’s *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities* (a core text of Shenpen Tayé’s earlier shedra teachings), and replaces it with Longchenpa’s *Wish-Fulfilling Treasury (yid bzhin mdzod)* as one of its

four core foundational “classes,” demonstrates a clear preference for the more canonical (for Nyingmapas) works of Longchenpa over the more recent work by Jikmé Lingpa.<sup>605</sup> Although Jikmé Lingpa was soon to be embraced by a wide swath of Nyingmapas—mostly due to the popularity of his *Longchen Nyingtik* terma cycle—this support was still crystalizing in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>606</sup>

As I will discuss in the next chapter, Shenpen Tayé followed the “Zur” system of exegesis on the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* as opposed to the system developed by Rongzom and Longchenpa. As such, one may wonder whether the addition of Longchenpa’s *Treasures* in the later curriculum was perhaps instigated by a later figure, such as Pema Vajra—in spite of his claims that the *chayik* represented the “commands” of Shenpen Tayé himself. Although it is impossible to say for sure whether the inclusion of Longchenpa’s works in the *chayik*’s curriculum did originate with Shenpen Tayé, there is evidence in Shenpen Tayé’s body of writings that he was not averse to Longchenpa or his works. Specifically, Shenpen Tayé’s writings contain multiple references to Longchenpa’s *Treasures*, including instances of Shenpen Tayé’ quoting directly from

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<sup>605</sup> Sam van Schaik summarizes the *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities (PTQ)* as “taking on the task that Longchenpa had attempted in his *Ngalso Korsum*: the presentation of the Great Perfection as the pinnacle of a graduated path” (*Approaching the Great Perfection*, 25). However, van Schaik insists that the *PTQ* is “more than a mere rewriting of [the *Ngalso*],” the main difference being that Longchenpa writes the *Ngalso* from the point of view of the *mind class (sems sde)*, while Jikmé Lingpa’s presentation of the Great Perfection in the *PTQ* is “thoroughly based in Seminal Heart terminology.”

<sup>606</sup> Even by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was still reluctance by some Nyingma luminaries to engage with the work of Jikmé Lingpa. For example, van Schaik notes that Mipham Gyatso—who had a massive impact on the shape of Nyingma scholasticism in general and the curriculum of Śrī Simha in particular—“seems to have consciously avoided the work of Jigme Lingpa, preferring to refer directly to the work of Longchenpa.” *Approaching the Great Perfection*, 28.

the *Wish-Fulfilling Treasury* (*vid bzhin mdzod*),<sup>607</sup> *Precious Treasury of Phenomena's Expanse* (*chos dbying rin po che'i mdzod*),<sup>608</sup> and *Precious Treasury of the Great Vehicle* (*theg chog rin po che'i mdzod*).<sup>609</sup> The fact that Shenpen Tayé does indeed cite the three *Treasuries* by Longchenpa that are included in Śrī Simha's curriculum as authoritative texts, provides evidence that Shenpen Tayé doesn't seem to have had any specific animus against Longchenpa's *Treasuries*. Thus, I argue that Śrī Simha's early curriculum as presented in the *chayik* reflects a project conceived of and initiated by Shenpen Tayé. The project centered on developing a broad form of Nyingma education that emphasized *shared*—i.e., pan-Buddhist and pan-Nyingma—systems, texts, and lineages.

## 4.5 Institutional Structures

### 4.5.1 The Rise of Śrī Simha as a Formal Institution

Later secondary sources such as Lungtok Nyima's *Great History of Dzokchen* tend to date the “founding” of Śrī Simha to the period immediately following the great Dergé earthquake that struck the region in late 1842. Jikmé Samdrup's *Survey of the Religious Establishments in Kandze Prefecture* (1995) says that a project to rebuild the damaged buildings was initiated in 1848 by the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang, Sengdruk Pema

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<sup>607</sup> For example, in: *rdzogs chen klong chen snying thig gi sgo nas skal ldan ji ltar bkri ba'i tshul* (DzCW: 1. 289–305; XylKB 1. 183b–197a; PCW: 3. 147–175); and *zab chos rig 'dzin bder 'dus kyi lam khrid skal ldan 'jug ngogs* (DzCW: 1. 198–288; XylKB: 1. 102a–165b; PCW: 3. 189–316; BhCW: 2. 343–553).

<sup>608</sup> E.g., in: *dpal yul dbon sprul rin po che'i dris lan zla zhun snang ba* (DzCW: 2. 81–86; XylKB: 1. 338a–346a; PCW: 3. 317–328 ; BhCW: 1. 524–543).

<sup>609</sup> E.g., in *srin rdzong dge slong pad+ma blo gsal gyi dris lan snying por dril ba* (DzCW: 2. 112–117; XylKB: 1. 377a–382b; PCW: 3. 329–340); and: *dbon sangs rgyas chos 'phel gyi dris lan* (DzCW: 2. 133–136; PCW: 3. 501–505; BhCW: 2. 89–97).

Tashi, and Shenpen Tayé.<sup>610</sup> Gyelwang Nyima’s *History of the Throne Holders of Dzokchen* (1986),<sup>611</sup> although it does not give the year(s), provides some detail about this rebuilding of Dzokchen Monastery, saying that it was supported and funded by the king of Dergé, Damsik Dorjé (*dam tshig rdo rje*; 1811–1853), as well as by “liberal endowments from other monasteries and wealthy donors.”<sup>612</sup> Gyelwang Nyima describes how groups of nomads as well people from the monastery and surrounding villages took turns performing the work, which was “closely overseen” (*zhib gzigs*) by Shenpen Tayé, eventually completing a new main temple and a lama’s residence (*labrang*) with sanctuaries and sacred images, as well as “a newly built main temple and 100 monk cells at Śrī Siṃha and the *labrang* and upper residence of Shenpen Tayé.”<sup>613</sup>

Shenpen Tayé’s author colophon to his short ritual work *sku lha zil khrom rdo rje g.yung drung gi gsol mchod 'dod don myur 'grub*<sup>614</sup> provides a contemporaneous mention of new building at Dzokchen, saying that “the high scholar (*mkhas thog pa*) Pema Damchö”<sup>615</sup> requested Shenpen Tayé to compose the work, so Shenpen Tayé wrote it and presented it “on the occasion of the completion of a new main temple (*gtsug lag khang*)” at Dzokchen.<sup>616</sup> Although there is no mention of the shedra in relation to the new temple,

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<sup>610</sup> Jikmé Samdrup (*Jigs med bsam grub*, b. 1957), ed. *dkar mdzes khul gyi dgon sde so so'i lo rgyus gsal bar bshad pa* (*Survey of the Religious Establishments in Kandze Prefecture*), 3 volumes (Beijing: krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1995), 494. BDRC W19997.

<sup>611</sup> *mdo khams rdzogs chen dgon gyi lo rgyus nor bu'i phreng ba*, (New Delhi: Konchhog Lhadrepa, 1986). BDRC W23714; W1KG13823.

<sup>612</sup> 139.

<sup>613</sup> *shrI sing ha gtsug lag khang grwa khang brgya/ rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha' yas pa'i gzims khang bla brang bcas gsar bskrun*. 140.

<sup>614</sup> *DzCW*: 2. 585–587; *XylKB*: 1. 225a–227b.

<sup>615</sup> I.e., Pema Vajra.

<sup>616</sup> The full colophon reads: *zhes pa'ang snga mo zhig nas ru dam o rgyan bsam bstan chos gling gi mkhan thog pa pad+ma dam chos bzang po nas 'di 'dra zhig dgos zhes lha rdzas dang bcas bskul ba/ re zhig btang*

Śrī Siṃha's *chayik* provides solid evidence that by the 1850s at least, Śrī Siṃha was a formal complex comprising a walled compound containing monks' residences, an assembly hall, a printing house, and so forth. The fact that Shenpen Tayé's biography in the *Trinchok Catalog*, published in 1845, does not mention Shenpen Tayé re-building the structures at Dzokchen, suggests that the new temple and any new building associated with the shedra complex were not constructed until after this time, making a rough date for the commencement of the rebuilding in or around 1848 entirely plausible.

#### 4.5.2 The Role of the *Drupdra/Drupdé* in Shenpen Tayé's Shedra Curriculum

In investigating the institutional and administrative structure of Shenpen Tayé's nascent shedra, we should also ask what connection, if any, existed between the shedra and Dzokchen's *drupdra* (*sgrub grwa*). Briefly, Tibetan “monasteries” (*gön; dgon*) are typically comprised of a number of sub-institutions dedicated to particular functions. These sub-institutions are usually classified as a particular *dra* (*grwa*) or *dé* (*sde*), both meaning “section” or “division.”<sup>617</sup> The most common of these sections in contemporary Tibetan monasteries are the *shedra* and the *drupdra/drupdé*.<sup>618</sup> A *drupdra*—being concerned with “accomplishment” of Buddhist practice—may be primarily oriented towards *performing rituals* for the benefit of patrons and training monastics in these

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snyoms su lus thog slar yang rten 'brel 'ga' zhig gis nye bar bskul nas dgon sde 'di nyid kyi gtsug lag khang gsar bzheng gi skabs su btsun pa gzhan phan mtha' yas su 'bod pas shar mar spel ba dge/.

<sup>617</sup> Of these two—*grwa* and *sde*—*grwa* is more commonly used to refer to a section of a monastic complex. *sde* is a more general term for “section” or “division” and is most commonly associated with scriptural categories, including the sections of the *Kangyur*, and so forth.

<sup>618</sup> In my historical sources, the terms *drupdra* and *drupdé* seem to be used interchangeably. although the I will use the more common *drupdra* in discussing these institutions but will sometimes use *drupdé* when directly quoting sources that use this term.

rituals, or it may function more as a retreat center for intensive meditation practice, both collective and individual. Usually a monastery’s drupdra exists somewhere on a spectrum that combines these two functions.<sup>619</sup> The recurring references to Shenpen Tayé instituting a new system of study *and practice* (*bshad sgrub kyi srol*) should alert us to the possibility that Dzogchen’s *drupdra* may have been a key in the development and delivery of Shenpen Tayé’s educational program. Indeed, as we saw above, even in Śrī Simha’s early *chayik*, the only explicit mention of a shedra is in the preamble when the document addresses itself to the “shedra folks” (*bshad grwa ba*) of Dzokchen Orgyen Samten Chöling. Is there any evidence that the drupdra also played a role in Shenpen Tayé’s system of study and practice?

The short answer is yes, there is strong evidence in contemporaneous documents and records that Shenpen Tayé had significant interactions with Dzokchen’s drupdra and that the drupdra was an integral part of Shenpen Tayé’s shedra system. Before we look at this contemporaneous evidence, it would be useful to quickly survey what we know about the drupdra at Dzokchen during the period before and during Shenpen Tayé’s involvement with Dzokchen.

Tenzin Lungtok Nyima’s *Great History of Dzokchen Monastery* (2004) describes how the drupdé at Dzokchen had its roots in a group of thirteen great practitioners, renowned as the “Drupdé Thirteen” who lived and practiced above Dzokchen during the later lifetime of the 3rd Dzokchen Drupwang Ngedon Tenzin

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<sup>619</sup> In some cases, such as at the Sakya Monastery of Dzongsar in Kham, there exists a third institution—the *gomdra* (*sgom grwa*)—that focuses on intensive meditation retreat, leaving the drupdra to focus more squarely on training monks to perform the main ritual cycles of the monastery.

Zangpo (nge don bstan 'dzin bzang po; 1759–1792).<sup>620</sup> Under the auspices of the 3rd Dzokchen Drupwang, and based on a prophecy made by Jikmé Lingpa, the drupdé was officially founded in 1779 at a location in a mountain hollow on the right side of the upper valley, about four miles distant from the main monastery.<sup>621</sup> The drupdé was called Ogmin Khachö Dechen Ling ('og min mkha' spyod bde chen gling) or Sangchen Ngedön Ling (gsang chen nges don gling). Lungtok Nyima's *History* describes the beautiful setting of the drupdé, mentioning the thick forested slopes, the many birds, bees, and flowers, the beautiful sound of the cascading glacial brook that runs past the drupdé, and the many fixtures and features of the drupdé's main temple (*lha khang*).<sup>622</sup> The drupdé's residents are described as practicing in small cells arranged around a central meditation hall (*sgom khang*). According to Lungtok Nyima, this early drupdré focused on the following practices:<sup>623</sup>

- The *approach and accomplishment* (*bsnyen sgrub*) of various *yidam* deities, principally, Ranta Lingpa's practice of Dorjé Phurba.
- The "yoga of the four daily sessions" that one-pointedly cultivates the Great Perfection practices of *trekchö* (*khregs chod*) and *thögel* (*thod rgal*).
- The monastic *three foundations* (*gzhi gsum*): the vow-mending ceremony (*sojong*; *gso sbyong*; Skt.: *poṣadha*); the annual rainy season retreat (*yarné*; *dbyar gnas*; Skt.: *varṣā*); and the release from the rains retreat (*gakyé*; *dgag dbye*; Skt.: *pravāraṇa*).
- Gathering for *tsok offering feast* (*tsogs mchod*) on the 10th and 25th days of the lunar month.

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<sup>620</sup> *Great History of Dzokchen*, 318.

<sup>621</sup> *Great History of Dzokchen*, 318.

<sup>622</sup> Having visited this site, I can attest that Lungtok Nyima's superlative descriptions are actually quite descriptively accurate!

<sup>623</sup> *Great History of Dzokchen*, 319

Lungtok Nyima mentions a number of figures who acted as “khenpo of the drupdra” or as its “principal master” (*khri dpon*)” during the time of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwangs (c. 1760s–1870). The list includes the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen and Jikmé Nyugu, among others, who were said to have specifically taught “explanatory guidance” (*bshad khrid*) in the *Seven Treasuries of Longchenpa*, and training instructions (*khrid sbyang*) for practicing the *Nyingtik Yabzhi* (*snying thik ya bzhi*) and, in particular, the *Khandro Nyingtik* (*mkha’ gro snying thig*).<sup>624</sup>

If we compare the above information about the early years of the drupdé with references in Shenpen Tayé’s writings and other related contemporaneous texts, we will begin to see a number of interesting lines of connection between Shenpen Tayé and Dzokchen’s drupdé. One place where these connections are made explicit is in Shenpen Tayé’s author colophons, wherein he sometimes records the place where the text was written. In a number of cases, the place of composition is recorded as Khachö Dechen Ling Drupdra or some similar name, as for example, in his works: *Clarifying the Nyingma Tradition of Monastic Ordination* (*snga ’gyur ring lugs kyi rab byung gi gzhi chog lung don rab tu gsal*);<sup>625</sup> *Responses to Questions Posed by Some Folks from Mindröling* (*’og min gnyis pa o rgyan smin grol gling nas dri ba ji ltar phebs pa rnams kyi dris lan skor*);<sup>626</sup> and *Outline of Guidance to the Path of the Nyingma Nine Vehicles* (*snga ’gyur rnying lugs theg dgu’i lam khrid kyi sa bcad nyung ngu dam pa’i zhal*

<sup>624</sup> *Great History of Dzokchen*, 319.

<sup>625</sup> *DzCW*: 1. 105–154; *XylKB*: 2. 257a–301a; *PCW*: 3. 365–433. Composed “in the vicinity of Ogmin Khacho Ling, the drupdé of Rudam Orgyen Samten Chöling Chödra” (*ru dam o rgyan bsam gtan chos gling gi bsgrub sde ’og min mkha’ spyod gling du nye byar sbyar ba*).

<sup>626</sup> *DzCW*: 2. 59–80; *XylKB*: 1. 166a–182b; *PCW*: 2. 17–50. Composed at “the retreat place of Khachö Dechen Ling” (*mkhas spyod bde chen gling gi dben gnas*).



*lung*).<sup>627</sup> The first text mentioned above on monastic ordination is particularly significant in light of Lungtok Nyima’s claim that the drupdé was a primary site for the practice of the three main monastic practices (*gzhi gsum*).

In addition to this direct evidence in his colophons that Shenpen Tayé spent a good deal of time at the drupdé, there is also a range of circumstantial evidence. For example, Shenpen Tayé mentions in the colophon of his work *The First Light of Dawn: Clarifying Difficult Points of Karma Lingpa’s Terma on the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities* (*kar gling zhi khro ’i dka’ gnas la dpyad pa’i gsal byed skya rengs dang po*)<sup>628</sup> that it was composed at “the Forest of Spontaneous Accomplishment (lhun grub nags tshal), a retreat of Rudam Orgyen Samten Chöling.”<sup>629</sup> The colophon relates that the text was composed in response to questions posed to Shenpen Tayé by Lama Adzi Chöjong (a ‘dzi chos skyong; d.u.) and Lama Damchö Lhundrup (dam chos lhun grub; d.u.) about Karma Lingpa’s *terma* *Self-Liberation through the Intention of the Peaceful and Wrathful Ones* (*zhi khro dgongs pa rang grol*).<sup>630</sup> It is interesting to note that Shenpen Tayé wrote very few works on any *terma* topics,<sup>631</sup> and the fact that he composed a substantial (30-folio) work on Karma Lingpa’s *terma* while at a retreat near Dzokchen raises the possibility that he may have been participating in—perhaps even *guiding*—the yidam

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<sup>627</sup> *DzCW*: 1. 313–331; *XyIKB*: 2. 22a–36b; *PCW*: 2. 233–262. Composed at “a cave of Dewa Chenpo, the isolated mountain hermitage of Rudam Orgyen Samten Chöling” (ru dam o rgyan bsam gtan chos gling gi yang dben gangs khrod bde ba chen pa’i pho brang nas).

<sup>628</sup> *DzCW*: 2. 8–49; *XyIKB*: 2. 302a–331a; *BhCW*: 1. 395–510.

<sup>629</sup> ru dam o rgyan bsam gtan chos gling gi dben gnas lhun grub nags tshal.

<sup>630</sup> The cycle contains the two books of the *Bardo Thödöl* (*bar do thos grol*), popularly known in the West as the “Tibetan Book of the Dead.”

<sup>631</sup> My survey reveals only this text and a short accompanying text on Karma Lingpa and three short texts on topics related to the Longchen Nyingtik.

practices from Karma Lingpa’s *terma*, which are described in Lungtok Nyima’s *History* as one of the drupdé’s principal practices.

Another point of connection lies in Śrī Siṃha’s curriculum as related above in Śrī Siṃha’s *chayik*. As we discussed above, the formal curriculum prescribed by the *chayik* culminates with a shift from study (*bshad*) to practice (*sgrub*). Upon successfully completing the study of the texts and treatises outlined in the early curriculum,

One can then receive the proper *experiential guidance* (*nyams khrid*) in the unsurpassable secret, the *mind* (*sems sde*), *expanse* (*klong sde*), and *practice instruction* (*man ngag sde*) classes [of the Great Perfection], as well as on [Longchenpa’s] *Precious Treasury of Phenomena’s Expanse* (*chos dbying rin po che’i mdzod*) and *Precious Treasury of the Great Vehicle* (*theg chog rin po che’i mdzod*). Thereupon, one should go to a solitary mountain retreat and, remaining fixed one-pointedly on accomplishing the heart-essence, seek to manifestly realize the profound meaning [of the teachings].<sup>632</sup>

This passage parallels Lungtok Nyima’s assertion that teachers were giving “explanatory guidance on the *Treasuries of Longchenpa*” at the drupdé during this time. Although Lungtok does not mention Shenpen Tayé in particular, he does mention Shenpen Tayé’s two closest teachers—the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen and Jikmé Nyugu—as giving such teachings at the drupdé around this same time. Here, we can recall the preamble of the *chayik* as well, which states that “this place was founded for the sole purpose of *study and practice* (*bshad sgrub*),” and that all residents must “dedicate their time exclusively to *hearing and contemplating the recited* [Buddhist teachings] (*klog pa thos bsam*) and the practice

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<sup>632</sup> de ltar slob gnyer rdzogs pa dang / gsang ba bla na med pa sems klong man ngag sde so so dang / chos dbyings rin po che’i mdzod dang / theg mchog rin po che’i mdzod sogs kyi nyams khrid legs par nos tedben pa’i ri khrod nmams su song nas zab don snying po’i sgrub pa la rtse gcig tu gzhol ba’i sgo nas grub ’bras mngon sum du mdzad/ 197.

of *contemplative renunciation* (*spong ba bsam gtan*).<sup>633</sup> This is followed by the insistence that all residents are expected to attend the morning liturgy without fail *except* for “those who have asked and received permission [. . .] to be in *retreat*, and who are strictly and unfailingly adhering to a their daily retreat schedule (*thun bzhi chag med kyi mtshams*).<sup>634</sup> These injunctions, combined with the tendency of Shenpen Tayé and other contemporaneous figures to refer to his training program as “a system of study and practice” (*bshad sgrub kyi srol*), should make us think twice calling Shenpen Tayé’s educational system a “shedra.” In fact, it would probably be more accurate to characterize the model of religious training that he developed as a “*shedrupdra*”—one which utilizes both the shedra *and* the drupdra as distinct yet complimentary institutions for guiding students along a comprehensive path of Buddhist study and practice.

Our study of Shenpen Tayé reveals a rather surprising characteristic of the relative roles of the shedra and the drupdra at Dzokchen during the period of our study. Contrary to current understandings of shedras as being primarily—or at least substantially—*monastic* spaces, and drupdras as being more likely to be comprised of communities of non-monastic, “tantric” practitioners, at Dzokchen, this seems to have been reversed. During Shenpen Tayé’s lifetime, it was the drupdra rather than the shedra that is more often associated with monastic practice. As we saw above, the *chayik* has no mention whatsoever of monastic vows—either as a requirement or as an incidental feature of life

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<sup>633</sup> spyir gling 'di bshad sgrub kho na'i ched du bsakrun pa yin pas/ 'dir bzhugs thams cad yang na klog pa thos bsam dang / yang na spong ba bsam gtan gyi bya ba kho nas dus 'da' dgos pas/, 192.

<sup>634</sup> There is no mention of dedicated retreat facilities or specific retreat schedules or programs anywhere in the *bca' yig*. My sense is that “those in retreat” at Śrī Siṃha were shedra students and teachers, who would occasionally do intensive practice retreats in their quarters or at some other location in the surrounding area.

for the “shedra folks” at Śrī Siṃha—and we have no other evidence produced during Shenpen Tayé’s lifetime that such vows were in any way required for study at Śrī Siṃha.<sup>635</sup> Conversely, the drupdra and other retreat facilities and hermitages around Dzokchen have a number of strong monastic associations that are described in our sources. Firstly is the fact that Sengdruk Pema Tashi, the fully ordained monk who ordained Shenpen Tayé is described as residing in a “retreat place” or “mountain hermitage” near Dzokchen.<sup>636</sup> Lungtok Nyima’s more recent description of Dzokchen’s drupdé as being a site where the three basic monastic ceremonies were performed is supported by the fact, mentioned above, that Shenpen Tayé wrote his detailed ordination guide—*Clarifying the Nyingma Tradition of Monastic Ordination (snga 'gyur ring lugs kyi rab byung gi gzhi chog lung don rab tu gsal)*—“in the vicinity of Ogmin Khacho Ling, the drupdé of Rudam Orgyen Samten Chöling Chödra.”<sup>637</sup> These examples strongly suggest that Dzokchen’s durpdra was a central locus of practice for both monasticism and Shenpen Tayé’s developing system of shedra education.

#### 4.6 Where Did Śrī Siṃha’s Curriculum Come From?

In our description of the development of the early Nyingma shedra curriculum, the question then arises: if Śrī Siṃha’s early curriculum as described in its early *chayik* didn’t seem to be based on any other known form of monastic education, where *did* it

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<sup>635</sup> Indeed, I have not been able to find evidence of such a requirement at a Nyingma shedra until the founding of Namdröling’s shedra in South India in the 1970s.

<sup>636</sup> Shenpen Tayé’s *Verse Autobiography* has “ru dam dben gnas” (4b), and the hagiography in the *Trinchok Catalog* describes Pema Tashi as living in a “mountain hermitage” (*ri khrod*).

<sup>637</sup> ru dam o rgyan bsam gtan chos gling gi bsgrub sde ‘og min mkha’ spyod gling du nye byar sbyar ba.

come from? In the following section, I analyze the specific concerns and influences that formed and influenced the specific shape of Shenpen Tayé's shedra curriculum.

#### 4.6.1 Figures Associated with Dzokchen Monastery

According to the contemporaneous sources, during his first extended visit to Dzokchen in the late 1820s, Shenpen Tayé formed close relationships with a number of figures based there. The first and most obvious connection was with the throne holder of Dzokchen, the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang, Mingyur Namkhai Dorjé, from whom Shenpen Tayé received a wide range of tantric transmissions and empowerments during this time. However, the fact that the 4<sup>th</sup> Drupwang asked Shenpen Tayé to set up a new system of study and practice at the monastery strongly suggests that the 4<sup>th</sup> Drupwang did not feel confident in his own ability to do so, and, absent any explicit mention in the sources that the 4<sup>th</sup> Drupwang took any part in shaping Śrī Siṃha's early curriculum, we must assume that the 4<sup>th</sup> Drupwang's role was limited to exhorting and enabling Shenpen Tayé to do so.

#### ***Sengdruk Pema Tashi***

Another figure at Dzokchen that may actually *have* had a major role in shaping the early shedra curriculum was the hermit-monk Sengdruk Pema Tashi. The *Trinchok Catalog* describes how Shenpen Tayé studied with Pema Tashi in the latter's hermitage above Dzokchen in the year or so after the initial shedra teaching. The *Catalog* describes how Shenpen Tayé received vows of full monastic ordination and bodhisattva vows from

Pema Tashi as well as a host of Nyingma tantric cycles.<sup>638</sup> This is the only mention of Pema Tashi in contemporaneous sources that I have been able to find. More recent Tibetan religious histories of Dzokchen list Pema Tashi as being the first khenpo of Śrī Siṃha. As we discussed in chapter two above, although there is no explicit mention in the contemporaneous sources of Pema Tashi assuming this role, it would be reasonable to assume that the initial shedra teachings given by Shenpen Tayé at Dzokchen in the late-1820s may have been picked up and overseen by Pema Tashi when Shenpen Tayé went on his journeys to Central Tibet in the early 1830s. Indeed, the *Trinchok Catalog* speaks of Pema Tashi in extremely laudatory terms, describing him as, “a holy Lama residing in a mountain retreat in the vicinity of the monastery, who was truly elevated with the glory of excellent learning and virtue, with a learned intelligence that was as expansive as the ocean!”<sup>639</sup>

As I discussed in chapter two above, Pema Tashi was a major conduit for transmitting a broad range of Nyingma cycles and lineage down to Shenpen Tayé, including a large number of *kama* (*bka' ma*) lineages for texts that would find their way

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<sup>638</sup> The passage reads:

“ [From Pema Tashi, Shenpen Tayé] received a host of extant lineages of the early translation Kagyé *termas* (*bka' gter*) texts, which these days are like the ocean, including: *Gyutrül Shitro* (*Magical Display of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities*); Yangtak; Shinjé Shemarnak (Red and Black Bhairava), Rongzom's system of Phurba (kilaya); the commentaries on difficult points known as *Black Myriad*; and the early and later systems, such as the *Sūtra of the Great Assemblage*; mind, expanse, and practice instruction classes [of Great Perfection teachings]; the *Kagyé Deshek Düpa*; *Lama Gongdü* (treasure cycle by Sangyé Lingpa); the *Excellent Vase of the Wish-fulfilling Tree*; and so forth.

(gzhan yang sgyu 'phrul zhi khro/ yang dag/ gshin rje gshed dmar nag/ phur pa rong zom pa'i lugs/ dka' 'grel 'bum nag tu grags pa mams dang/ snga phyi ci rigs su/ 'dus pa mdo dang/ sems klong man ngag gi sde gsum/ bka' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa/ bla ma dgongs 'dus/ 'dod 'jo bum bzang sogs snga 'gyur bka' gter gyi gzhung rgya mtsho lta bu las deng sang gi dus su yod pa'i rgyun phal che ba zhig gsan/) *Trinchok Catalog*, 40b.

<sup>639</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 40a: skabs 'dir dgon 'di ga'i ri khrod du bzhugs pa'i bla ma dam pa/ mkhas btsun bzang po'i dpal gyis mngon par mtho zhing / mang du thos pa'i blo gros rgya mtsho dang mtshungs kyang /. Note: *blo gros rgya mtsho* is also epithet used in the text for the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen

into Shenpen Tayé’s nine-volume anthology of *kama (bka’ ma)* ritual texts (*Trinchok Collection*). More specifically relevant to the shedra and its curriculum is that Shenpen Tayé is said to have received the transmission of Śāntideva’s *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* (*byang chub sems dpa’i spyod pa la ’jug pa*) from Pema Tashi.<sup>640</sup> The *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* made its way into Shenpen Tayé’s *Trinchok Collection* and became a core curricular text at Śrī Siṃha.<sup>641</sup> Indeed, if Shenpen Tayé was the “father” of Nyingma shedras, then Pema Tashi should by all rights be considered the *grandfather* of the shedra by virtue of his role in transmitting so many important lineages to Shenpen Tayé and serving as the first head teacher and monastic preceptor (*khenpo*) of the nascent shedra. Given Pema Tashi’s central role in the founding and early administration of Śrī Siṃha Shedra, it might even have been more of a case of Shenpen Tayé and Pema Tashi *co*-founding Śrī Siṃha together. In the absence of more detailed sources on Pema Tashi and his activities, we can at the least say that he was an important influence on Shenpen Tayé and seems to have played a central role in the early development of Śrī Siṃha Shedra.

#### 4.6.2 Geluk Influences

Following his sojourn at Dzokchen in the late 1820s, Shenpen Tayé made at least two extended trips to Central Tibet in the 1830s where he began to study with a much

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<sup>640</sup> Dza Patrul’s *Supplication to the Lineage Masters of the Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* (*spyod ’jug brgyud pa’i gsol ’debs*), lists Shenpen Tayé immediately after Pema Tashi in the lineage supplication. *Collected Works of Orgyen Chökyi Wangpo*, vol. 8, 45.

<sup>641</sup> The *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* was widely taught and propagated in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by Dza Patrül who also served as the head *khenpo* of Śrī Siṃha in the 1870s or early 1880s. See Markus Viehbeck, “An Indian Classic in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Tibet and Beyond: Rdza Dpal sprul and the Dissemination of the *Bodhi(sattva)caryāvatāra*,” *Revue d’Etudes Tibétaines*, no. 36, (October 2016): 5–44.

wider range of teachers—both Nyingma and non-Nyingma. Of the non-Nyingma teachers, perhaps the most significant connection that Shenpen Tayé made was with a renowned Gelukpa scholar monk. The episode, as related in Shenpen Tayé’s biography, took place during one of Shenpen Tayé’s visits to Central Tibet sometime in the early 1830s:

In Central Tibet, from the khenpo of the [Geluk] Upper Tantric College, Gendün Dargyé (*dge 'dun dar rgyas*; 1786–c.1850s/60s)<sup>642</sup>, [Shenpen Tayé] received the *Five Treatises of Maitreya*, the collection of [Nāgārjuna’s] six texts on reasoning, and all of the extant systems of scholarly texts from India. [. . .]<sup>643</sup>

This passage in the biography seems to be the only mention of these studies in any of the sources and so we are left with no specific information about the duration and depth of these studies. The above passage in the biography is included as part of a list of teachings that Shenpen Tayé received from various teachings during this time. The list does not include specific descriptions of what *type* of transmission took place for each interaction but simply lists all the teachers and teachings and concludes the list with the phrase, *gsan bsam mtha' yas par mdzad*,<sup>644</sup> which is a high honorific phrase which roughly translates as “thoroughly learned.” The brief description given above, in tandem with the known timeline for Shenpen Tayé’s travels and studies during this time (see chapter 2), and the fact that these studies are not mentioned or alluded to anywhere else in the historical

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<sup>642</sup> BDRC [P3577](https://www.bdrc.org/#!rid=P3577). A major Gelukpa scholastic figure, who taught extensively at the tantric college of the Gelukpa monastery of Labrang (*bla brang*), eventually acting as the college’s throne holder (*khri pa*). In 1848, he ascended to become the 43<sup>rd</sup> throne holder of Labrang (*bla brang*) itself and was known for founding both philosophical colleges (*mtshan nyid grwa tshang*) and tantric colleges (*rgyud pa grwa tshang*) at various Gelukpa Monasteries (<https://www.bdrc.org/#!rid=P3577>).

<sup>643</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 40b: de nas dbus phyogs su yang deng sngon lan gnyis tsam rim par phebs shing / der rgyud stod mkhan po dge 'dun dar rgyas las/\_byams chos sde lnga dang / dbu ma rig pa'i tshogs drug sogs 'phags yul mkhas pa'i gzhung lugs kyi rgyun yod do cog thams cad.

<sup>644</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 41a.



record, strongly suggests that these studies were rather informal and the result of a *personal* interaction between Shenpen Tayé and Gendün Dargyé, rather than as a result of Shenpen Tayé engaging in formal study at a Geluk institution. These studies with Gendün Dargyé are significant, however, in that they represent the only record of Shenpen Tayé studying named Indian Buddhist philosophical treatises with anyone.

Indeed, we should pause to recognize the significance of the soon-to-be founder of a new form of Nyingma higher education receiving an expansive range of foundational Indian philosophical treatises from a major Gelukpa scholastic figure—one who rose to become the 43rd throne holder of Labrang Monastery in Amdo and was known for founding both philosophical colleges (*mtshan nyid grwa tshang*) and tantric colleges (*rgyud pa grwa tshang*) at various Gelugpa Monasteries.<sup>645</sup> The treatises that Shenpen Tayé received from Gendün Dargyé—viz., the *Five Treatises of Maitreya*, various treatises on Madhyamaka (not to mention “all of the extant systems of scholarly texts from India”!)—would soon show up among the core curricular texts in Shenpen Tayé’s shedra curriculum.<sup>646</sup> Although the shedra curriculum that Shenpen Tayé developed differs substantively from the curricula of Geluk monastic colleges,<sup>647</sup> there is good evidence here that the Geluk scholastic educational system perhaps indirectly influenced the nascent Nyingma shedra system through the figure of Gendün Dargyé and his transmissions of some of the foundational Indian philosophical treatises to Shenpen Tayé. Such a possibility is bolstered by the fact that there seems to be no evidence whatsoever

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<sup>645</sup> <https://www.BDRC.org/#!rid=P3577>.

<sup>646</sup> See chapter four.

<sup>647</sup> Most obviously in the absence of formalized debate in Shenpen Tayé’s model and the dual focus in Shenpen Tayé’s shedra on both exoteric and esoteric materials in the basic curriculum.

in either Shenpen Tayé’s own writings or in the early biographical literature on him, of any animosity, critique, or tension between him and the Geluk sect.<sup>648</sup>

Shenpen Tayé’s openness and willingness to study within the Geluk tradition was not at all unusual amongst Nyingmapas in Kham and Amdo during this period. Shenpen Tayé may even have been influenced in this regard by the example of his main teacher, the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen, who was known to have had close interactions with a number of important Geluk figures in Amdo.<sup>649</sup> As recent studies by Douglas Duckworth<sup>650</sup> and Adam Pearcey<sup>651</sup> have shown, there was actually a great deal of productive interaction and reciprocal influence between Nyingma and Geluk figures in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in and around Shenpen Tayé’s home region of Dzachukha. These interactions sometimes extended so far as to produce a kind of Nyingma-Geluk hybridity or even outright syncretism. Such syncretism seems to have been the case in the works of later figures such as Dongak Chökyi Gyatso (mdo sngags chos kyi rgya mtsho; 1903–1957), whose works combine elements of Geluk and Dzokchen thought.<sup>652</sup>

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<sup>648</sup> The only other interaction with a Geluk figure mentioned in the contemporaneous biographical treatments is the mention that when Shenpen Tayé was a teenager he studied Tsongkhapa’s *Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path (lam rim chen mo)* with Gemang Rabjam Gelek Yarphel (*dge man grab ‘byams dge legs yar ‘phel*, d.u.). *Trinchok Catalog*, 38a.

<sup>649</sup> For example, see Tulku Thondrup, *Masters of Meditation and Miracles*, 152.

<sup>650</sup> Douglas Duckworth, “The Dge mang Movement: Rnying ma and Dge lugs Hybridity in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Khams,” in , *Nonsectarianism (ris med) in 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Eastern Tibet*, Brill’s Tibetan Studies Library, no. 49, 66–80 (Leiden: Brill, 2021).

<sup>651</sup> Adam Pearcey, “A Greater Perfection? Scholasticism, Comparativism and Issues of Sectarian Identity in Early 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Writings on rDzogs-chen,” Ph.D. dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2019.

<sup>652</sup> See chapter five of, Adam Pearcey, “A Greater Perfection.”

In our case, however, Shenpen Tayé’s interactions with Geluk figures, texts, and institutions seem to have been more a case of “elective affinity”<sup>653</sup> rather than of synthesis, syncretism, or hybridity. Shenpen Tayé’s scholarly and interpersonal forays into the Geluk world seem to reflect a very natural course of action for a (newly) fully ordained monk with a deep and abiding interest in the *shared* Buddhist tradition who sought to study the classical texts that formed the scriptural foundation of that shared tradition. He would, thus, naturally seek out those who were most renowned in this regard—which in the nomadic borderland area of Dzachukha and the nomadic marches to the north-west of Dzokchen Monastery, meant the Gelukpas. If Shenpen Tayé had been located more in the central area of Dergé, his options for receiving and studying classical Indian Buddhist treatises would probably have included some non-Geluk options such as the royal monastic center of Dergé Gonchen with its coterie of Sakya scholar monks, the Kagyü monastic center of Pelpung, and perhaps even the Nyingma Monastery of Katok.<sup>654</sup> However, in the Dzachukha area in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Gelukpas were probably Shenpen Tayé’s main—even *only*—point of contact with high-level classical scholastic study performed in a community of monastic renunciates. Shenpen Tayé’s Gelukpa interlocutors, for their part, were likely drawn in by the figure of a Nyingma

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<sup>653</sup> Max Weber famously used the notion of *elective affinity* (*Wahlverwandtschaft*) in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* to describe—as Michael Löwy puts it—“a process through which two cultural forms—religious, intellectual, political or economical—who have certain analogies, intimate kinships or meaning affinities, enter in a relationship of reciprocal attraction and influence, mutual selection, active convergence and mutual reinforcement.” See Michael Löwy, “The Concept of Elective Affinity According to Max Weber,” in *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions*, vol. 127, issue 3, July 2004, 6.

<sup>654</sup> Katok had undergone a monastic and scholastic revival in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, beginning with the reforms of Katok Rigdzin Tsewang Norbu (1698–1755) and the mass ordinations in Kham of Situ Panchen (1700–1774), and continuing with the educational reforms of Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita (1761–1829). See Ronis, “Celibacy, Revelations, and Reincarnated Lamas.”

lama from the rough nomadic borderlands who was nonetheless a fully ordained monk, fastidious in guarding his vows, and—if the biographical sources are even minimally accurate—possessed of an almost preternaturally sharp intellect.

Notwithstanding such affinity and the productive interactions that they engendered, the nature of Shenpen Tayé’s interactions with Gelukpa figures as presented in our sources is one of a proudly Nyingma figure who admired some aspects of Geluk practice—such as the high-level scholastic study of Indian treatises and “pure” monastic conduct for which the Gelukpas were known—and sought to stimulate and encourage some of these same practices in his own Nyingma milieu. Beyond such generalities, it must be said that evidence of Geluk influences on the form and content of Shenpen Tayé’s new shedra curriculum is slight and almost entirely circumstantial, and is limited to, at most, the inclusion of Indian philosophical treatises in the core curriculum—a feature that does not seem to have been a part of the curriculum at any Nyingma institution prior to this. However, we can say fairly definitively that Shenpen Tayé and Pema Vajra’s choices about *which* of the Indian treatises to include, *how* to study and unpack their meaning, and what *methods of examination* to employ, were not influenced in any discernable way—neither *pro* nor *contra*—by Gelukpa forms of monastic education.

#### 4.4.3 Possible Sakya Influences

With regard to Shenpen Tayé’s documented interactions with Sakya figures, the *Trinchok Catalog* recounts how Shenpen Tayé received a number of important Sakya

lineage cycles from figures at the famed Sakya monastery of Nalendra<sup>655</sup> during his travels to Central Tibet in the 1830s. Specifically, he received Bari Lotsawa's *One Hundred Sādhanas (ba ri brgya rtsa)*<sup>656</sup> and the *Ocean of Sādhanas (sgrub thabs rgya mtsho)*<sup>657</sup> from “the Tulku of Nelendra.”<sup>658</sup> He also is reported to have received the *Hevra Tantra* empowerment, the *Lamdre* cycle, “and so forth,” from Yongdzin Damjampa Trinlé Yönten,<sup>659</sup> a major figure at Nalendra.<sup>660</sup> Although these teachings seem to be the extent of Shenpen Tayé's recorded interactions with Sakya teachers, they represent the transmission of a number of the Sakya's signature textual cycles and practice lineages. However, there is no evidence that any of these Sakya cycles came to be taught or studied at the Nyingma shedra at Dzokchen and there is similarly no evidence that Shenpen Tayé was influenced in any significant way by the Sakya scholastic commentarial tradition or educational methods.

#### 4.6.4 Mindröling and Associated Figures

Perhaps the most significant set of connections that Shenpen Tayé made during his travels to Central Tibet during the 1830s was with figures associated with the great Nyingma monastic seat of Mindröling (*smiñ grol gling*). We detailed Mindröling's early curriculum, developed by its founders Lochen Dharmasrī and Terdak Lingpa, in chapter

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<sup>655</sup> na len dra, a major Sakya Monastery north of Lhasa renowned for its long history of scholastic learning.

<sup>656</sup> [BDRC W4CZ307390](#).

<sup>657</sup> [BDRC W27253](#). A collection of sādhanas texts written and compiled by the Sakya master from Ngor Monastery, Jampa Namkha Chimé (*byams pa nam mkha' 'chi med*; 1765–1820; [BDRC P2526](#)).

<sup>658</sup> This was likely the 14<sup>th</sup> Chojé Trichen (*bco brgyad khri chen*) of Nalendra, Tenpé Wangchuk Gyurmé Chokdrup (*bstan pa'i dbang phyug 'gyur med mchog grub*; b. 18<sup>th</sup> cent.; [BDRC P8447](#)).

<sup>659</sup> *yong 'dzin dam byams pa 'phrin las yon tan*; b. 18<sup>th</sup> cent.; [BDRC P7036](#), a major figure from Nalendra Monastery.

<sup>660</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 41a: na len+t+ra'i gzims 'og sprul pa'i sku las/ ba ri brgya rtsa dang / sgrub thabs rgya mtsho/ yongs 'dzin dam byams pa 'phrin las yon tan las/ kyai rdor rgyud dbang dang / lam 'bras kyi skor sogs.

one above, and given Shenpen Tayé’s close connections with Mindröling, we should ask to what degree Shenpen Tayé’s shedra curriculum was influenced by Mindröling and its systems of study.

The short answer to this question, is that there does not seem to be any explicit evidence of such influence. There are no passages that I have read in Shenpen Tayé’s writings or in biographical treatments of him that mention any influence from Mindröling or its associated figures on the shape of the early shedra curriculum at Śrī Siṃha. This still leaves the possibility that Shenpen Tayé was influenced or inspired by a past or present Mindröling curriculum without such influence being explicitly mentioned in the historical record.

If we compare the basic structure of Mindröling’s early curriculum (described in chapter one) with that of Śrī Siṃha as laid out in their respective *chayiks*, there are certainly a number of important similarities. At a basic level, we can see similarities in the broad structure of the course of studies in both curricula, with each including both exoteric philosophical and esoteric tantric material, with textual study serving as a foundation for more advanced tantric study and practice. Both the curricula also share more specific features, viz: study of grammar and the language arts as foundational subjects; a shared emphasis on studying the theory and practice of the three sets of Buddhist vows; and—with regard to the esoteric portion of the curriculum—in-depth study of the exegetical tradition of the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*. With regard to this latter element, the Mindröling *chayik* prescribes summer and winter sessions dedicated to

“hearing and contemplating teachings on tantric exegesis,”<sup>661</sup> which Townsend says refers primarily to the *Guhyagarbha*.<sup>662</sup> On a broader level, both curricula share an orientation toward a broad inclusivism with regard to the Nyingma tradition, as well as a gradualist approach to the Buddhist path to liberation, making them stand out from most other Nyingma curricula that existed prior to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Notwithstanding these similarities, there are numerous differences between Mindröling and Śrī Siṃha’s respective curricula that make it unlikely that the former served as the model for—or otherwise influenced the shape of—the latter. One important difference is that Mindröling’s curriculum does not explicitly mention nor prescribe the study of the Indian philosophical treatises themselves, which formed a core part of Śrī Siṃha’s curriculum and which set it apart from other Nyingma curricula up to that point. With regard to the study and practice of the Great Perfection, Śrī Siṃha’s curriculum differs from that of Mindröling in utilizing (at least) three of Longchenpa’s *Treasures*, whereas the works of Longchenpa are not explicitly mentioned in Mindröling’s *chayik*, which prescribes its own cycles of Great Perfection teachings—“Guidance on the two Heart Essence teachings (*snying thig nam gnyis*): the Vajra Bridge (*rdo rje zam pa*) and [Terdak Lingpa’s] New Treasures (*gter gsar*)”—neither of which appear in Śrī Siṃha’s curriculum.<sup>663</sup> The absence of Longchenpa’s works in Mindröling’s early curriculum was probably a result of Lochen Dharmaśrī’s strong preference for the Zur system of exegesis

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<sup>661</sup> dbyar dgun gyi chos dus gnyis la rgyud bshad kyi mtshon thos bsam [. . .]. *O rgyan smin grol gling gi dkar chag*, 289.

<sup>662</sup> “Materials of Buddhist Culture,” 206–207.

<sup>663</sup> This is in spite of the fact that Shenpen Tayé would have been intimately familiar with at least the Vajra Bridge cycle, via its inclusion in the *Trinchok Collection*, edited and published by Shenpen Tayé in 1845 (see chapter five below).

on the *Guhyagarbha* (*zur-luk*; *zur lugs*), which was contrasted to the exegetical system of Rongzom and Longchenpa (*ronglong-luk*; *rong klong lugs*).<sup>664</sup> We also see a marked difference in the respective approaches to Buddhist monasticism in the two *chayiks* with that of Mindröling making repeated references to monastic ordination as necessary to engage in its prescribed curriculum, whereas Śrī Siṃha's *chayik* makes no reference whatsoever to monastic ordination.<sup>665</sup>

In addition to the above noted substantive differences in the content and structure of their respective curricula, there looms an even bigger barrier to positing a definite influence of Mindröling's early curriculum on the structure of Śrī Siṃha's later educational program: viz., the absence of any evidence that the pre-1717 curriculum described by Terdak Lingpa and Lochen Dharmaśrī in their *chayik*, was present in any form at Mindröling, or anywhere else, during Shenpen Tayé's lifetime—or, indeed, whether such a curriculum was re-instituted at Mindröling (or anywhere else) *at all* following Mindröling's destruction in 1717. Although the textual cycles and liturgical programs instituted by Terdak Lingpa and Lochen Dharmaśrī certainly continued (and *continue*) to impact and influence Nyingma institutions across the Tibetan cultural sphere, the destruction of Mindröling in 1717 and the accompanying murder or dispersal of its leadership, led to a more decisive and lasting disruption to some of the institutional forms of Mindröling. Even after Mindröling was rebuilt by Terdak Lingpa's daughter and

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<sup>664</sup> Shenpen Tayé followed the Zur system as well but seems to have been more amenable to including Longchenpa's works in his curriculum and citing them in his own writings. See chapter five, section 5.1.3 more on the Zur and Rong-Long traditions of Guhyagarbha exegesis.

<sup>665</sup> Shenpen Tayé's views and impact on the practice of Buddhist monasticism at Śrī Siṃha—and more broadly among Nyingmapas—will be discussed in detail in chapter six.



son, Mingyur Peldrön (mi ‘gyur dpal sgron; 1699-1769) and Rinchen Namgyel (rin chen rnam rgyal; 1694–1758), political instability and anti-Nyingma sentiment continued to reverberate through Central Tibet, acting to constrain the activities of Mindröling and its leading figures.<sup>666</sup> The biography of Mingyur Peldrön—the primary figure responsible for rebuilding Mindröling—says that in spite of the emphasis given to the study and mastery of *rikné* (arts and sciences) in the pre-1717 Mindröling tradition, Mingyur Peldrön was not trained in these subjects because her father, Terdak Lingpa, wanted her to focus on receiving and transmitting his religious teachings.<sup>667</sup> Perhaps because of this omission in her training, her biography suggests that she was suspicious of the value of the “conventional” fields of arts and science, favoring to focus instead on Buddhist doctrine.<sup>668</sup> More research is required in order to understand the specific contours of Mindröling’s institutional development in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, but, as far as I have been able to deduce, there is no evidence that Mindröling’s pre-1717 curriculum was reinstated nor have I been able to find evidence in the historical record for what kind of educational program or programs *were* in place at Mindröling at the time of Shenpen Tayé’s visits there in the 1830s and -40s. In short, we must conclude that although the curriculum of Mindröling under Terdak Lingpa and that of Śrī Simha under Shenpen Tayé are similar in some respects, there is no firm evidence that Mindröling or any of its

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<sup>666</sup> See Townsend “Materials of Buddhist Culture,” 230ff.; and, Alison Melnick, “The Life and Times of Mingyur Peldron: Female Leadership in 18th Century Tibetan Buddhism,” Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 2014. 145ff.

<sup>667</sup> Townsend “Materials of Buddhist Culture,” 233–234.

<sup>668</sup> Townsend “Materials of Buddhist Culture,” 234.

associated figures had a *direct* impact or influence on the specific shape of Śrī Simha’s early curriculum.

#### 4.6.5 The Pelri (*dpal ri*) Tradition and Its Influence on Shenpen Tayé and Śrī Simha’s Curriculum

To find the strongest influences on Shenpen Tayé’s shedra curriculum, we must look to Shenpen Tayé’s formative years when he studied under teachers such as the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen, Jikmé Nyugu, Jikmé Kelsang, Jikmé Ngotsar, and others in his home region of Dzachukha. The four figures just mentioned were all close students of Jikmé Lingpa or his students. It was through study with these early teachers that Shenpen Tayé imbibed the teachings and the gradualist orientation of Jikmé Lingpa and the broader “Pelri tradition.” Marc-Henry Deroche has made the case that the Nyingma monastery of Palri Tekchen Ling (*dpal ri theg chen gling*)—Jikmé Lingpa’s home institution—in Central Tibet was far more central to the development of the Nyingma tradition than has been previously realized.<sup>669</sup> Palri was founded in the “valley of the kings” in 1571 by Sherab Özer, author of the *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra*. It seems that Palri was once considered one of the six Nyingma “mother” monasteries until it declined and its position as a mother monastery was taken by Shechen (*zhe chen*).<sup>670</sup> Deroche argues that,

dPal ri monastery formed a precedent for what I will heuristically call the ‘Renaissance’ of the rNying ma school under the patronage of the Fifth Dalai Lama during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. [. . .] [S]uccessive “revivals” of the rNying ma school in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries also contained significant relations with dPal ri monastery.<sup>671</sup>

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<sup>669</sup> Marc-Henry Deroche, “History of the Forgotten Mother Monastery of the rNying ma School: dPal ri Monastery in the Tibetan ‘Valley of the Kings,’” in *Bulletin of Tibetology*, 49, no. 1 (2013): 77–112.

<sup>670</sup> Deroche, “History of the Forgotten Mother Monastery,” 79.

<sup>671</sup> Deroche, “History of the Forgotten Mother Monastery,” 78.

Palri’s founder, Sherab Özer, was a hugely influential figure in the history of Tibetan Buddhism. Deroche describes how he seems to have been the source of the rubric of the “Eight Lineages of Attainment” (*rgrub brgyud shing rta chen po brgyad*),<sup>672</sup> which organized the various Tibetan lineages of esoteric teachings (*gdams ngag*) into eight major lineages, with each being presented as a valid means to obtaining Buddhahood—providing an important precursor and ideological basis for the later “nonsectarian” movement in Eastern Tibet in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Sherab Özer was also notable for having studied across a wide range of Tibetan sects and traditions and is virtually unique in Tibetan history in being considered both a *geshe* (*dge shes*) and a *tertön* (*gter ston*) during his lifetime.<sup>673</sup> As our analysis of his *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra* has shown, Sherab Özer was interested in articulating an expansive and gradualist vision of the Nyingma Buddhist path, in which basic Buddhist foundational practices serve as necessary supports for the more rarified, esoteric practice systems for which the Nyingma were known. As far as I can tell, Sherab Özer was the *locus classicus* for the gradualist vision of Nyingma practice articulated by Jikmé Lingpa in such texts as his *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities*, and further developed and articulated by Shenpen Tayé.

Deroche shows how the Palri tradition of Sherab Özer was funneled through the figure of Jikmé Lingpa (1729/30–1798), who was born in or around Palri and remained

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<sup>672</sup> Marc-Henri Deroche, “Phreng po gter ston Shes rab ‘od zer (1518–1584) on the Eight Lineages of Attainment,” *Contemporary Visions in Tibetan Studies. Proceeding of the First International Seminar of Young Tibetologists*, Brandon Dotson *et al.*, eds. (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2009), 319-342.

<sup>673</sup> Deroche, “Phreng po gter ston Shes rab ‘od zer (1518–1584) on the Eight Lineages of Attainment,” 323.

closely associated with the monastery for much of his life.<sup>674</sup> Jikmé Lingpa became one of the most influential figures of his era and was known, in particular, for revealing the *Longchen Nyingtik* cycle, which ostensibly reformulated and repackaged the Great Perfection system of Longchenpa and soon became the most widespread contemplative tradition of the Great Perfection.<sup>675</sup> Although, Shenpen Tayé was recognized as a key figure in the transmission of the *Longchen Nyingtik*, neither the 1828 shedra teachings nor the later formal shedra curriculum—as laid out in the 1850s *chayik*—contain any material revealed by Jikmé Lingpa as part of the *Longchen Nyingtik* cycle. Instead, in his inaugural shedra teaching in 1828, Shenpen Tayé taught Jikmé Lingpa’s path treatise, *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities*, which lays out a nearly identical expansive and gradualist path as Sherab Özer’s *Aspiration Prayers*.<sup>676</sup>

In sum, looking at Shenpen Tayé’s early education and training, we see that almost all of his study and training was done with students of Jikmé Lingpa or their students<sup>677</sup> and it was through this early training that Shenpen Tayé imbibed the teachings of Sherab Özer and Jikmé Lingpa and their gradualist vision of the Buddhist path, which he then forged into the system of study and practice that became Śrī Siṃha Shedra.

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<sup>674</sup> He was said to have trained in its monastery (although he did not take monastic ordination) and received the first revelation of the *Longchen Nyingtik* at Pelri’s hermitage. Deroche, *History of the Forgotten Mother Monastery*, 78.

<sup>675</sup> For an in-depth scholarly treatment of Jikmé Lingpa’s *Longchen Nyingtik* cycle, see Sam van Schaik, *Approaching the Great Perfection*.

<sup>676</sup> As discussed above, the strong thematic overlap between *Aspiration Prayers* and the *Treasury* may account for the latter not being included in the later formal curriculum at Śrī Siṃha.

<sup>677</sup> I.e., the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen, Jikmé Nyugu, Jikmé Kelsang, Monlam Dargyé, and so forth. See chapter two above for detailed descriptions of Shenpen Tayé’s interactions with these figures.

## 4.7 What Was Shenpen Tayé’s Shedra *For*?

Today’s Nyingma shedra system, with its utilization of formal debate and a prescribed set of authoritative textual commentaries, has been aptly characterized by Georges Dreyfus (and others) as scholastic in its methods and monastic in its general orientation. That Shenpen Tayé’s *early* shedra curriculum has tended to be characterized as scholastic or monastic seems to be due to a tendency of recent Tibetan religious histories to read the hitherto sparse historical record of the early development of Śrī Siṃha through the lens of *later* iterations of the Nyingma shedra. These later iterations, which took hold beginning in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, certainly did embrace formal scholastic training methods and began to argue that celibate monasticism was, indeed, a necessary requirement for such prolonged, intensive scholastic training.

However, the early shedra curriculum as described in Śrī Siṃha’s contains no explicit requirements that students be ordained monastics, and, indeed, makes no mention of *monastic vows* at all in any context. The inclusion of “the root *Vinaya-sūtra*” (*‘dul ba mdo rtsa ba*) in the core curriculum provides clear evidence of monastic *topics* being studied and it is certainly common today to hear that full ordination is a prerequisite to fully study the *Vinaya* in Tibetan institutions.<sup>678</sup> Although this seems to broadly be the accepted view today, it is unclear how widespread and consistently applied such a requirement was in past centuries—especially among the Kagyü and Nyingma traditions where full ordination was less common than in the Geluk or Sakya tradition. The fact that

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<sup>678</sup> For example, see Jansen, *The Monastery Rules*, 18; and Nicola Schneider, “The Ordination of dGe sLong Ma: A Challenge to Ritual Prescriptions?” in *Revisiting Rituals in a Changing Tibetan World*, ed. Katia Buffetrille (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 117.

the *chayik* also prescribes the memorization of “the root texts of Vinaya, Abhidharma [ . . . etc.]” as part of the preliminary exams required in order to *begin* formal study is significant. The forms of Tibetan monastic education that require full ordination to read or study Vinaya material—such as the Geluk system leading to the *geshé* degree—all wait for many years to begin formal study of the Vinaya, allowing students to begin their studies while progressing through the steps of novice ordination. The fact that Śrī Siṃha’s early formal curriculum engages with Vinaya material almost immediately makes it rather unlikely that full ordination was required for Vinaya studies at Shenpen Tayé’s early shedra.

As we have discussed at length in the chapters above, Shenpen Tayé was clearly invested in more firmly grounding the Nyingma tradition in the *shared* practices and categories of the normative Buddhist tradition. For Shenpen Tayé, this *could* mean monasticism, but, as we saw in our survey of his works of personal advice, it usually involved more basic teachings and practices such as ethical precepts and practicing “contemplative renunciation.”<sup>679</sup> As we will see in chapter six, Shenpen Tayé’s position on monastic vows was basically that students and spiritual aspirants should be grounded in the vows of *individual liberation* (*prātimokṣa*) *in the form that is appropriate for them*.<sup>680</sup> Although he argues that full ordination is indeed the “best” (*mchog*) level of these *prātimokṣa* vows, he clearly did not see full ordination as a necessary requirement for pursuing higher Buddhist study nor for achieving higher spiritual attainments. In

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<sup>679</sup> Such orientations are evident in Shenpen Tayé’s many short works of personal advice (*gdams ngag*), discussed in chapter three.

<sup>680</sup> E.g., vows of a householder, a novice renunciate, or full ordination.

short, we should see Shenpen Tayé’s embrace of the Vinaya and its three foundational rituals as encompassing the full range of *prātimokṣa* vows, such as *householder* vows (*dge bsnyen; upāśka*)—not specifically or only to those of *full ordination* (*dge slong*).

I contend that one of the central factors that motivated and informed Shenpen Tayé’s new “shedra” system of study and practice was his demonstrated investment in developing and promoting more effective methods of Buddhist ministry and outreach to the diverse populations in the border regions in and around his home region of Dzachukha—a concern shared by other figures from that region such as Jikmé Nyugu and Dza Patrül. It is my contention that Shenpen Tayé developed his shedra first-and-foremost as an institution to train Buddhist *teachers*. The evidence for Shenpen Tayé’s deep and pervasive investment in Buddhist teaching runs throughout the contemporaneous biographies of him. For example, as we saw above in chapter two, during the years leading up to Shenpen Tayé’s first shedra teachings at Dzokchen in 1828, both of our main biographical sources explicitly describe him travelling to far-flung regions north of Dergé, teaching and giving transmissions and empowerments to “numerous fortunate students.”<sup>681</sup> Shenpen Tayé himself relates that during this time,

In assemblies of the faithful across of the three regions of Tibet all the way to the border with China, I worked to more firmly establish people in the profound Dharma. By the binding power of past karma, I circled around again and again, proving whatever benefit I could to all the faithful.<sup>682</sup>

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<sup>681</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 39a–b.

<sup>682</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 4b: skabs la lar dad ldan 'dus tshogs la// chos zab mo'i 'brel 'jog nyid kyang bgyis// spyir bod ljong dum bu gsum gyi cha'i// mtha' dkar nag rgya la thug pa tshun// sngon las dbang btsan pos yang yang bskor// mi dad ldan kun la ci phan byas//.

Shenpen Tayé’s hagiography in the *Trinchok Collection* adds to this description with a summary of Shenpen Tayé’s activities that contains some interesting claims:

During [these travels] Shenpen Tayé engaged solely in spiritual practice (*sgrub pa kho na mdzad*), and during the intervals between this settled [retreat practice], he bestowed instructions on *ripening and liberation* (*smin grol*) on numerous fortunate students and *taught extensively on the doctrine of karma* (*las ‘bras kyi chos mang du gsungs*) to general gatherings of faithful folk, all of which benefited many disciples.<sup>683</sup>

Although this is a very brief description that contains little in the way of specifics, this passage offers some important clues for understanding Shenpen Tayé’s approach to Buddhist teaching, and what may have motivated him to pursue the specific projects that he did. The first thing to which I want to draw the reader’s attention is the explicit mention of Shenpen Tayé repeatedly giving Buddhist teachings on karma to “*general gatherings of faithful folk*” (*dad ‘dus kyi tshogs pa spyi*), suggesting that even during this early stage of his career, Shenpen Tayé seemed to possess both the *desire* and the *teaching ability* to engage with and teach the Dharma to people of various capacities and backgrounds.<sup>684</sup>

The claim that Tayé *repeatedly* taught such groups of people is perhaps even more instructive. Rather than focus on providing ritual services and blessings to the groups of ordinary lay people that came to see him, Shenpen Tayé chose to give them

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<sup>683</sup> Emphasis mine. *Trinchok Catalog*, 39a–b: *sgrub pa kho na mdzad cing bzhugs pa’i bar skabs mams su las dang skal bar ldan pa’i bu slob ‘ga’ la smin grol gyi gdams pa phog cing / dad ‘dus kyi tshogs pa spyi la’ang las ‘bras kyi chos mang du gsungs pas gdul bya rnams la phan ‘dogs par mdzad.*

<sup>684</sup> Such a focus on giving direct teachings to lay audiences has been cited as a distinctive feature of the great Nyingma master Dza Patrül, who studied and received transmissions from Shenpen Tayé. Interestingly, their mutual teacher, Jikmé Nyugu, was also specifically known for his accessible and down-to-earth teachings. All three of these figures were from the same area of upper Dzachukha.



basic teachings on “actions and their effects” (*las ‘bras*)—in other words, on *ethical* behavior. In short, this passage shows Shenpen Tayé engaging in a program of *lay ministry* from very early on in his career that focused on teaching Buddhist ethics to ordinary people.

It seems that these years of wandering, practicing in mountain retreats, and teaching various groups of people were deeply formative and profoundly influenced Shenpen Tayé’s later projects and activities. For example, the contemporaneous hagiography of Shenpen Tayé contained in the *Trinchok Catalog* says that during these years of wandering between 1821 and 1828, Shenpen Tayé “thoroughly *spread a system of study and practice (bshad sgrub kyi srol kyang legs par dar)* that exists to this day in the numerous monasteries and practice centers that he founded.”<sup>685</sup> This claim that Shenpen Tayé was already spreading his distinctive “system of study and practice” during this early period of his career is very interesting and bears closer scrutiny. As we have seen, the idea that Shenpen Tayé was responsible for developing and instituting a distinctive “system” or “tradition” (*srol*) appears numerous times in both his hagiography and his autobiography and is repeatedly emphasized in virtually all later biographical treatments of Shenpen Tayé. In particular, this claim appears repeatedly in reference to Shenpen Tayé’s founding of Śrī Siṃha. It is interesting that Shenpen Tayé’s hagiography locates the genesis of his distinctive educational and scholarly system not within any elite

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<sup>685</sup> Emphasis mine. *Trinchok Catalog*, 39b: khyad par rgyal mo rong gi phyogs tsha kha dang mdo chen sogs su rje 'di nyid kyis phyag 'debs mdzad pa'i sgrub sde dang dgon sde 'ga' zhig yod pa la da lta'i dus su bshad sgrub kyi srol kyang legs par dar/.

institution, nor as a product of formal scholastic study, but in the mountain retreats and village teachings that he performed during the peripatetic period in his 20s.

Unfortunately, because contemporaneous sources for this early period of Shenpen Tayé's life are virtually non-existent, it is very difficult to fully assess the veracity of such a claim. However, as we have seen, the degree to which a number of great Nyingma luminaries lauded and even seemed to defer to Shenpen Tayé's scholarly knowledge even during this early period, seems to support the hagiography's claim that Shenpen Tayé was already gaining renown as a great Nyingma scholar, teacher, and systematizer during this early period in his 20s.

Another interesting thing to note about the above passages, is that neither the content nor the target audience of Shenpen Tayé's system of study and practice are particularly monastic or scholastic. Rather, the system described above seems to involve mostly informal teachings involving a *range* of topics, audiences, and teaching styles. Such an eclectic and informal orientation toward teaching is reflected in Shenpen Tayé corpus, in which most of his synthetic treatises seem to have been informal teachings or explanations given to a specific individuals or groups of students who had asked him to explain a particular topic. These teachings were evidently recorded by one of Shenpen Tayé's students and later published in the form that we have them today. All of this speaks to Shenpen Tayé's life-long investment in effective Buddhist teaching.

If we analyze the *chayik's* curriculum in light of *contemporaneous* descriptions of Shenpen Tayé and his priorities rather than through the lens of the later conceptions and iterations of the shedra, we begin to see a different picture of the early shedra. What we

see is not a bounded monastic space for cultivating high-level scholastic practice, but rather, a space for creating a class of public-facing Nyingma scholar-practitioners, deeply learned in the foundational texts and doctrines of the shared Buddhist tradition, spiritually realized through extended practice of the unique Nyingma practices of the inner tantras and the Great Perfection, and embodying and exemplifying the highest standard of ethical behavior. Such scholar-practitioners, not being trained in formal debate, would not be known so much for challenging and defeating sectarian rivals in doctrinal debates. Rather, their training—which focused on delivering coherent explanations, often on very short notice—would have prepared them to give teachings and answer questions, drawing not only on textual sources and references but also on their own experiences as accomplished Buddhist practitioners. One example of such a Nyingma scholar-practitioner for whom there is a wealth of published literature in English is Shenpen Tayé’s student Dza Patrül, who was renowned for his superlative teaching skills.<sup>686</sup> Known for his wickedly playful sense of humor, wry irony, and his mastery of the nuances of voice and register, Patrül was a hugely popular teacher throughout Eastern Tibet, coming to take on the role of head teacher at Śrī Siṃha sometime after Shenpen Tayé’s death.<sup>687</sup> Patrül, Shenpen Tayé, and their mutual teacher, Jikmé Nyugu, were all Nyingma teachers from Dzachukha and all of them were renowned for their investment in effective teaching.

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<sup>686</sup> For an in-depth study of Patrül and his teaching style, see Joshua Schapiro, “Patrul Rinpoché on Self-Cultivation: The Rhetoric of Nineteenth-Century Tibetan Life-Advice,” Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2017.

<sup>687</sup> Although, as we shall see in chapter six, he was eventually to resign in disgust over what he perceived as ethical lapses at Dzokchen.

We will now turn our study of Shenpen Tayé to his great editorial project that reimagined the Nyingma rubric of the “Transmitted Precepts” (*kama*) and pushed them to the forefront of Nyingma thought and practice.

# Chapter Five: The Enlightened Activity of the Word: The *Trinchok (phrin chog) Collection* and the Rise of Nyingma *Kama*

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## Introduction and Outline

In this chapter, I explore the massive editorial and printing project that took place at Dzokchen between 1840 and 1845, where—based on requests from figures associated with Mindröling Monastery—Shenpen Tayé compiled, edited, and had wood printing blocks carved for a nine-volume anthology, entitled *The Collected Rituals of Enlightened Activity (Trinchok; phrin chog)*<sup>688</sup> from the *Successive Nine Vehicles of the Nyingma Kama* (hereafter: *Trinchok Collection*).<sup>689</sup> Previously, the Nyingma rubric of *kama (bka' ma)* referred almost exclusively to those texts and ritual cycles belonging to the three “inner” Nyingma tantras, ostensibly translated during Tibet’s Imperial Period (c. 7<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries).<sup>690</sup> Shenpen Tayé’s anthology fundamentally re-imagined and transformed this rubric, expanding it to include the core Buddhist monastic rituals as well as foundational

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<sup>688</sup> I take “*phrin chog*” to be a contraction of *phrin las kyi cho ga*, (“ritual of enlightened activity”), which refers specifically to ritual-contemplative practices that invoke a Buddha or other enlightened being. The most common ritual of this type is the *druptab (sgrub thabs)* or *sādhana* ritual.

<sup>689</sup> *bka' ma theg pa rim dgu'i phrin chog mtha' dag phyogs gcig tu bsdu pa (Trinchok Collection)*.

<sup>690</sup> These early translations had subsequently been transmitted directly from teacher to student and were therefore designated as “spoken” (*bka'*) in contradistinction to the revealed treasure texts (*terma; gter ma*), which came to be a widespread and distinctive feature of Nyingma textual culture. See the next section below for more detail.

Indian Buddhist treatises—most notably, the *Prātimokṣasūtra* and Śāntideva’s *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*.

I begin the chapter by providing some **background and historical context on Nyingma kama (sec. 5.1)** and the closely related rubric of the *nine vehicles*, detailing the evolution of these categories through the centuries and unpacking their significance for conceptions of institutional and textual authority among Nyingmapas. I then move on to a detailed **bibliographical analysis of the *Trinchok Collection* itself (sec. 5.2)**. I begin this study by discussing and analyzing the surviving textual witnesses of the *Trinchok Collection*, which, in tandem with the listing of contents in the accompanying descriptive catalog (*karchak*; *dkar chag*) to the *Collection*, allows us to reconstruct the *Collection* as originally published by Shenpen Tayé in 1845. I then move to an **analysis of the *Collection*’s contents (sec. 5.3)**, examining the specific texts included in the *Collection* and their respective topics and authors. I then tell the story of **how the *Trinchok Collection* came into being (sec. 5.4)**. Relying heavily on the account given in the descriptive *Catalog to the Collection*, I detail the events and motivations that instigated the project as well as the specific editorial methods deployed by Tayé and his assistants. I then consider the **reception and influence of the *Trinchok Collection* (sec. 5.5)**, showing both how it became the basis of all later *kama* collections right into the twenty first century, and how these later collections variously maintained and altered the *kama* rubric established by Shenpen Tayé. In the final section, I discuss what the *Collection*’s contents and the circumstances surrounding its production can tell us about **Shenpen Tayé’s goals and general vision towards Nyingma kama (sec. 5.6)**, and about his

desire to more firmly root the Nyingma tradition and its *unique* (*thun mong ma yin pa*) teachings and practices in *shared* (*thun mong*) Buddhist categories and practices.

## 5.1. Nyingma Kama (*bka' ma*): The Development of a Category

### 5.1.1 The Rubric of “Kama”: Early Developments

The term *kama* (*bka' ma*) carries the semantic meaning of “that which has been spoken,” with the highly honorific form *ka* (*bka'*) denoting the speech of a highly exalted person.<sup>691</sup> The *ka* in *kama* is the same as in the term *Kangyur* (*bka' gyur*)—the Tibetan canonical collection containing translations of those texts “spoken” by the Buddha(s) (i.e., sūtras, tantras, and so forth). The category of *kama* developed among the Nyingma to refer to those Buddhist texts that were said to have come from India<sup>692</sup> and were imported into Tibet and translated into Tibetan during the *early diffusion* (*ngadar; sngadar*) of Buddhism Tibet before the collapse of the Tibetan Empire in the wake of Emperor Relpachen in or around 841 CE.<sup>693</sup> After a period of political fragmentation following the collapse of the Tibetan Empire, during which the Buddhist tradition nearly disappeared in Tibet, a revival took place beginning in the Western Tibetan kingdom of Gugé at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. This revival of Buddhism in Tibet initiated one of the

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<sup>691</sup> *bka'* is the Tibetan translation equivalent of the Sanskrit word *vacana*, as in the compound *Buddhavacana*, “the word of the Buddha.” Ronis, “Celibacy and Revelation,” 6.

<sup>692</sup> I leave aside the question about whether many of these *early translation* tantras were actually first composed in an Indian language in India or whether many of them were actually composed in Tibetan and then passed off as translations of Indian originals (as many non-Nyingma Tibetan figures later claimed). Suffice it to say that the Nyingma tradition, itself, believes and acts as if they were.

<sup>693</sup> My brief description of the “early” and “later” diffusions is taken from Ronald Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance: Tantric Buddhism in the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

largest translation projects in world history, which came to be known as the *later diffusion* (*chidar*; *phyi dar*) of Buddhism to Tibet. Over the next several centuries, numerous Tibetan translators travelled to India to find and translate Buddhist texts, and Indian Buddhist monks and scholars were invited to Tibet to teach, transmit, and provide guidance for these translations. This later diffusion also saw the (re)introduction of Buddhist monasticism to Tibet under the aegis of the “eastern Vinaya monks,” and the concomitant rise of powerful monastic institutions that acted as the new political centers of gravity in Central Tibet. By the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the forms of Buddhism that arose before the collapse of the Tibetan Empire came to be known as *Nyingma* (*rnying ma*; “The Ancient”), as opposed to the more recently imported forms, which were characterized as *Sarma* (*gsar ma* “The New”). In later centuries, the textual cycles that were passed down from the Imperial Period by Nyingmapas came to be known as *kama* in order to distinguish them from *treasure texts* (*terma*; *gter ma*) that were revealed in later centuries.<sup>694</sup>

Among the Buddhist texts that were ostensibly received from India and translated into Tibetan during the Imperial Period, were a number of highly secret tantras that were no longer extant in India by the time the translators of the *later diffusion* went searching for texts. Many of the scholars and literati of these later *Sarma* schools were suspicious or outright contemptuous of the authenticity of these Nyingma tantras. The question of the authenticity of a given tantra or text was mostly a matter of being able to demonstrate a

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<sup>694</sup> These *terma* texts were said to have been hidden (either physically or in the mind-streams of their discoverers) by the great Indian tantric adept Padmasambhava and his disciples, and represent one of the most expansive and distinctive features of Nyingma religious and textual culture.



clear and documented *Indian origin* for the text in question.<sup>695</sup> Because the Nyingma often could not produce such clear documentation (such as a Sanskrit “original”), many *Sarma* figures—such as Butön Rinchendrup (bu ston rin chen grub; 1290–1364)—went so far as to refuse to include many of the Nyingma tantras in their editions of the *Kangyur* (*bka’ gyur*)—the canon of the words of the Buddha(s) in translation. This suspicion and rejection of the authenticity of their scriptures motivated the Nyingma to compile their own canon of tantric texts—the *Nyingma Gyübum* (*rnying ma rgyud ‘bum*) beginning sometime in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The *Nyingma Gyübum* in its various recensions, however, also included *terma* literature as well as “transmitted” *kama* texts. Because Nyingma *terma* are “revealed” by a particular person, usually through the aid of visionary experiences, there is no easy way for Nyingmapas to distinguish “genuine” *termas* from the many fakes produced by charlatans and lunatics that—Nyingmapas themselves admitted—proliferated due to the wealth and fame enjoyed by famous treasure revealers. In the end, the way that such treasures and their revealers were authenticated was through receiving recognition and support of a highly respected Buddhist master or masters. Even those treasure revealers who held high positions—such as a re-incarnated lama and/or institutional leader, for example—typically had to secure the approval of another high figure in order to have any chance of having their *terma* be widely viewed as authentic. Of course, there was no central authority that determined the authenticity of various *terma*: everyone was free to make up their own minds about whether they thought a given *terma* or *tertön* was authentic or a sham. In fact, it was not unusual for there to be

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<sup>695</sup> See Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, 151–154

widespread disagreement between leading Nyingma figures about the legitimacy of a *tertön* and the authenticity of his *terma*.<sup>696</sup> For this and other reasons, *terma* has tended to be a source not only of innovation and renewal for Nyingmapas, but also of tension and disagreement. The *kama* texts, on the other hand, were generally considered authentic by all Nyingmapas and thus served as a kind of common ground within a tradition that tended to be rooted in a myriad of more narrowly proprietary lineages.<sup>697</sup> Therefore, even with the production of the *Nyingma Gyübum* beginning in the 12<sup>th</sup> century—which contained many of the central *kama* texts—there remained an important place for *kama* as a distinct organizing principle among the diverse Nyingma lineages and communities. Before we move on to consider the later historical development of the Nyingma rubric of *kama*, we should say something about the closely related category of the Nyingma “nine vehicles.”

### 5.1.2. The Nyingma Nine Vehicle System

The Nyingma rubric of the *nine vehicles* (*theg pa dgu*) forms the organizing hierarchy for the myriad practice orientations and *doctrinal views* (*lta ba*) within the Nyingma tradition. The title of Shenpen Tayé’s *Trinchok Collection*—*The Collected Rituals of Enlightened Activity* (*Trinchok; phrin chog*) *from the Successive Nine Vehicles*

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<sup>696</sup> Tibetan autobiographies from Nyingma and Kagyü figures are full of such cases. See for example the discussion in the Translator’s Introduction to Traktung Dudjom Lingpa, *A Clear Mirror: The Visionary Autobiography of a Tibetan Master*, trans. Chönyi Drolma (Hong Kong: Rangjung Yeshe Publications, 2011), xxxiii–xxxiv.

<sup>697</sup> For a succinct treatment of the origin and early transmission lineages of the Nyingma *kama*, see the section entitled “1. Nyingma: Lineage History,” in Jamgon Kontrul, *The Treasury of Knowledge, Book Eight, Part Four: Esoteric Instructions*, trans. Sarah Harding (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2007), 63ff.

of the *Nyingma Kama*<sup>698</sup>—situates the *nine vehicles* as the dominant organizing principle of the *Collection* and of the *Nyingma kama* in general.<sup>699</sup> As such, we should ask: What exactly is this *nine vehicles* rubric? Where did it come from? What distinguishes something as being part of one vehicle or another? Is it method? Doctrine? Textual provenance? How, specifically, does the nine-vehicle rubric order or organize the *Nyingma kama* corpus? In other words: what does the rubric allow Nyingmapas to *do* that they otherwise couldn't? Recent scholarship has provided us with a far more detailed and expansive view of how *Nyingma* rubric of the *nine vehicles* (*theg pa dgu*) arose and developed in Tibet.<sup>700</sup> A few comments will serve to contextualize this important rubric within the world of *Nyingma* thought and praxis inhabited by Shenpen Tayé.

The *Nyingma nine vehicles* rubric has existed in a number of iterations across the centuries.<sup>701</sup> The most common formula in recent centuries—and the one used by Shenpen Tayé—is outlined in the following table:

“Dialectical” Vehicles (*mtshan nyid kyi theg pa*)

1. Hearers (*nyan thos; śrāvaka*)
2. Self-Realized Buddhas (*rang sangs rgyas; pratyekabuddha*)
3. Bodhisattvas (*byang chub sems dpa'*)

“Adamantine” Vehicles (*rdo rje'i theg pa*)

*Outer Tantras* (*phyi'i rgyud*) / *Tantras that emphasize Vedic-like asceticism* (*dka' thub rig byed kyi rgyud*):

4. Kriyā-tantra (*bya ba'i rgyud*)

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<sup>698</sup> *bka' ma theg pa rim dgu'i phrin chog mtha' dag phyogs gcig tu bsdus*

<sup>699</sup> Indeed, as we will see below, the entire *Trinchok Collection* is organized and presented according to the nine-vehicles rubric.

<sup>700</sup> See for example, José Cabezón's *The Buddha's Doctrine and the Nine Vehicles: Rog Bande Sherab's Lamp of the Teachings*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

<sup>701</sup> A schematic listing of various presentations of the nine vehicles from different *Nyingma* texts is provided in Samten Karmay, *The Great Perfection (rDzogs chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 172–174.

5. Caryā/upa/upāya/ubhayā -tantra (*spyod pa 'i/upa/thabs kyi/gnyis ka rgyud*)
6. Yoga-tantra (*rnal 'byor gyi rgyud*)

*Inner Tantras (nang gi rgyud); Tantras of Method (thabs kyi rgyud):*

7. Mahāyoga (*rnal 'byor chen po*)
8. Anuyoga (*rjes su rnal 'byor*)
9. Atiyoga (*shin tu rnal 'byor*)

In the above presentation, the vehicles move from *outer* (more exoteric) to *inner* (more esoteric), beginning with vehicles 1–3, which represent the exoteric or *sūtric* path of philosophical reasoning (“dialectics”).<sup>702</sup> Moving inward from these are the six adamantine or tantric vehicles—divided into *outer* and *inner* classes. According to Nyingmapas, the six tantric vehicles represent progressively subtler *views* and more powerful methods.<sup>703</sup>

The Nyingma nine-vehicle rubric as presented above differs from similar presentations by other schools of Tibetan Buddhism in two major ways. Firstly, and most obviously, the Nyingma have three vehicles that are generally not found in other rubrics—viz., the three *inner tantra* vehicles. The first six vehicles also exist in one form or another (see below) in the doxographies and path presentations of virtually all other schools of Tibetan Buddhism. The most obvious difference between the *nine vehicles*

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<sup>702</sup> The first two paths—Hearers (*śrāvakayāna*) and Self-Realized Buddhas (*pratyekabuddhayāna*) represent the *lower vehicle* (Hīnayāna), while the third—the Bodhisattvayāna—represents the *great vehicle* (Mahāyāna).

<sup>703</sup> It should be noted here that neither the nine-vehicle rubric, nor the *Sarma* four-fold tantric rubric (discussed below) seem to have existed in India. It does certainly seem to be the case that most if not all of the individual tantric *classes* (or “*vehicles*” in the case of the Nyingma) existed in India as discrete systems of tantric practice. However, the *organization* of these various systems into inclusive hierarchical schema (such as the nine vehicles) was initiated by Tibetans in the centuries following the early and later diffusions in order to try to create some kind of order and organization to the masses of disparate texts and systems that had flooded into Tibet.

rubric and *Sarma* presentations is in the presentation and understanding of the various classes of tantra. In general, both the Nyingma and the *Sarma* schools recognize the first three classes of tantra—Kriyā, Caryā, and Yoga-tantra. However, the non-Nyingma *Sarma* schools—such as the Geluk and Sakya—posit only a single class of tantra above these three—that of Anuttarayoga-tantra. In place of this 4<sup>th</sup> class of highest tantra, the standard Nyingma nine-vehicle doxography has three *inner tantras* (*nang rgyud sde gsum*) culminating in Atiyoga—also referred to as Dzogchen (*rdzogs chen*, “Great Perfection”).<sup>704</sup> As we saw above, these three inner classes of tantra comprised the *unique* (*thun mong ma yin pa*) material specific to the Nyingmapas, and, thus, as we will see below, formed the basis and the core of what became known as the Nyingma *kama*.

The second major way that the Nyingma nine-vehicle system diverged from the *Sarma* schools’ doxographies is in their conception of what, specifically, constitutes a Buddhist *vehicle* (*theg pa*; Skt. *yāna*). Nyingma writers have generally asserted that the nine vehicles—and the six tantric vehicles, in particular—are distinct *vehicles*, rather than simply different doctrinal or tantric *classes* (*sde*) or *cycles* (*skor*). Many writers from the *Sarma* sects have insisted that the various classes of tantra simply represent more efficacious methods that exist within the bodhisattva vehicle and do not constitute distinct “vehicles” themselves. For example, the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Kadam master Chomden Rigpé Raltri (bcom ldan rig pa’i ral gri; 1227–1305) penned a rebuttal of the Nyingma nine-vehicle rubric that argued that canonical Buddhist treatises position the tantric classes as

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<sup>704</sup> There are, however, examples of Nyingma doxographies that don’t separate the final three “inner tantras” into distinct “vehicles.” One such example comes from the *Garland of Views: An Instruction* (*man ngag lta ba’i phren ba*), attributed to Padmasambhava, which I discuss in detail in section 5.4 below.

being part of the bodhisattva vehicle and that, properly speaking, the Buddhist scriptures support only a two-fold rubric (Hīnayāna-Mahāyāna) or a three-fold one (Hearers-Self-Realized Buddhas-Bodhisattvas).<sup>705</sup>

The central question about the nine-vehicle rubric for our purposes is in regards to what, exactly, the rubric is meant to represent. Jacob Dalton argues that, in the Indian Buddhist context, “doxography” is somewhat of a misnomer because Indian Buddhist tantric classification systems tended to be based less on differences in doctrine, or *view* (*lta ba*; *darśana*), and more on differences in ritual *praxis*.<sup>706</sup> However, Dalton argues that as Tibetans imported and translated these tantric texts from India, they did tend to organize these myriad tantric texts around differences in doctrine or *view*.<sup>707</sup> Such is the case with the early doxographical text, *The Garland of Views: An Instruction* (*man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba*), attributed to Padmasambhava. As I discuss in a later section of this chapter, this text frames the various vehicles as being principally defined by the *view* of those who have entered into it. In many of the classic texts of Indian and Tibetan Buddhist doxography, it is often unclear whether the divisions in vehicle of tantric class are meant to provide a range of discrete, self-contained paths for people of varying capacities and inclinations, or are meant to be *stages* in a comprehensive, graduated path wherein aspirants begin with the lower vehicles and gradually move their way up towards the highest vehicle (or as high as their capacities allow). In other words, are the nine

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<sup>705</sup> See Cabezon, *The Buddha's Doctrine and the Nine Vehicles*, 30–31. For a discussion of Sakpa Paṇḍita's rebuttals to the nine-vehicle system, see Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, 147–148.

<sup>706</sup> Jacob Dalton, “A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra During the 8<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> Centuries,” in *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 28, no. 1 (2005): 119.

<sup>707</sup> Dalton, “A Crisis of Doxography,” 120.

vehicles a kind of schematic snapshot of the Buddhist paths, representing the various approaches available to aspirants based on their particular abilities, or are they successive stages along a more comprehensive path of practice and accomplishment? For many of these Tibetan and Indian doxographical texts, the answer is not altogether clear.<sup>708</sup> In much of the Nyingma literature on the ninth and highest vehicle—Atiyoga or the Great Perfection—the lower eight vehicles are often denigrated and disparaged as *lower* (*'og ma*) or *inferior* (*dman pa*).<sup>709</sup>

For Shenpen Tayé, however, it is clear that he sees the nine vehicles as a set of ascending steps in which the lower vehicles function as necessary preparation for the higher. Shenpen Tayé professed this gradualist imperative clearly throughout his diverse corpus, as, for example, we saw in our discussion in chapter three on his text *Dependent Arising of the Pure Path: Teaching the Meaning of the Nine Vehicles*” (*yang dag lam gyi rten 'brel theg dgu'i don ston*). Perhaps the best evidence for Shenpen Tayé’s conception of the nine vehicles as a gradualist path is in the title of the collection itself, which explicitly characterizes the nine vehicles as being successive stages (*rim pa*). As I will argue in more detail in the last section of this chapter, Shenpen Tayé’s explicit framing of the Nyingma *kama* as comprising the “nine successive vehicles” of the Nyingma was a skillful rhetorical move that allowed him to expand the category of *kama* from its commonly understood meaning—viz., the transmitted cycles of the three *unique* Nyingma inner tantras—to an expanded rubric that included robust representation of

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<sup>708</sup> For example, see José Cabezón’s discussion on this question in regards to the *Mārgavyūha* by the 8<sup>th</sup>-century Indian master Buddhaguhya in *The Buddha’s Doctrine and the Nine Vehicles*, 28–29.

<sup>709</sup> Such is the case even in the more gradualist-oriented works of Jikmé Lingpa such *Triyik Yeshé Lama* (*khrid yig ye shes bla ma*). See Sam van Schaik, *Approaching the Great Perfection*, 76–78.

monastic rituals, Mahāyāna practices and treatises, and rituals from the *outer* tantric vehicle of *Kriyā-tantra*. With this in mind, we will now return to an investigation of the development of Nyingma *kama*, and see how elements of the nine-vehicle rubric featured prominently in the systematization and ordering of *kama* as a central category in the development of a distinctive Nyingma identity.

### 5.1.3. The *Kama* Takes Shape: The Rise of the Zur Spoken Class in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Centuries

Of primary importance to the formation of the Nyingma *kama* were the efforts of a successive set of figures from the Tibetan Zur clan: Zurpoché Shakya Jungné (zur poche shakya 'byung gnas; 1002–1062); Zurchung Sherapdrak (zur chung shes rab grags; 1014–1074) and Zur Shakya Sengé (zur shakya seng ge; 1074–1134). These figures were responsible for codifying the disparate *kama* texts into “a textual corpus that came to be shared across the entire (Nyingma) school.”<sup>710</sup> The Zurpas focused, in particular, on three core texts:<sup>711</sup> the *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions* (*Do Gongpa Düpa*; *mdo dgongs pa 'dus pa*); the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* (*Sangwe Nyingpo*; *gsang ba'i snying po*); and the *All-Accomplishing King* (*Kunché Gyelpo*; *kun byed rgyal po*). Jacob Dalton describes how the Zurpas gathered these core texts along with their respective commentarial and ritual textual cycles into a triad known as the *sūtra-tantra-mind* triad (*mdo-rgyud-sems-gsum*) and established these three texts as the *root* texts of their own specific tantric vehicle. The *Guhyagarbha-tantra* (“tantra” in the triad) became the root text of Mahāyoga; the *Sūtra*

<sup>710</sup> Dalton, *The Gathering of Intentions*, 48–49.

<sup>711</sup> Often translated into English as “Secret Essence” or “Secret Nucleus.”



*that Gathers All Intentions* (“sītra”) formed the basis of Anuyoga; and the *All-Accomplishing King* (“mind”) anchored the vehicle of Atiyoga. As described above, these three vehicles make up the three *inner tantras* of the Nyingma *nine vehicles* system and comprise the *unique* (*thun mong ma yin pa*), Nyingma-specific tantric systems. Zurpoché Shakya Jungné also worked to systematize the mass of textual material *within* each of these inner tantric vehicles. As Lochen Dharmśrī would later write, Zurpoché “distinguished the root tantras and explanatory tantras, organized the root texts and their commentaries, combined the tantras and their sādhanas, and put into writing the sādhanas and ritual manuals. Then he spread extensively the teachings on their theory and practice.”<sup>712</sup>

These textual cycles as ordered by the Zurpas came to be called the “Zur Spoken Class” (*bka’ sde zur pa*), as early as the 11<sup>th</sup> century and these *spoken teachings* (*kama*) came to be presented in juxtaposition to the newly emerging Nyingma *treasure teachings* (*terma*).<sup>713</sup> Thus, due in large part to the systematization of these *early translation* tantric materials led by the Zurpas, the Nyingma *kama* came to refer specifically to *the root texts of the three inner tantras* along with their associated commentaries and ritual arrangements. It should be clear, however, that the *kama* as developed by the Zurpas remained a loose rubric and it wasn’t until Shenpen Tayé’s *Trinchok Collection* and the *kama* collections that later followed that “*kama*” came to refer to a specific, authoritative collection of texts.

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<sup>712</sup> Quoted in Dalton, *The Gathering of Intentions*, 51.

<sup>713</sup> Dalton, *The Gathering of Intentions*, 49

### ***The Zur Tradition of Exegesis on the Guhyagarbha-Tantra***

The Zurpas were also instrumental in founding one of the two dominant schools of exegesis on the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*. As noted above, Zurpoché Shakya Jungné and his successors situated the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* as the root text of the Mahāyoga class of tantra, and their system of exegesis on the *Guhyagarbha* maintains this Mahāyoga frame as the dominant interpretive lens on the *tantra*. Alternatively, other Nyingma exegetes, such as Rongzom Chökyi Wangpo and Longchenpa, chose instead to interpret the *Guhyagarbha* through the lens of the Great Perfection of the highest vehicle of Atiyoga.<sup>714</sup> What does this distinction actually mean? The great Nyingma scholar-adept Mipham Gyatso (mi pham rgya mtsho; 1846–1912) discussed these two hermeneutical approaches in his famous commentary<sup>715</sup> on the *Guhyagarbha*. After introducing the two “great chariot” traditions of exegesis—that of the Zurpas and that of Rongzom and Longchenpa, Mipham explains how the latter system interprets the *Guhyagarbha* through the lens of the Great Perfection (Atiyoga), saying that:

Because the [*Guhyagarbha*] tantra is the *ati* of Mahā[yoga], it is also the *mahā* of Ati[yoga] in terms of the three-fold division of the Great Perfection. This three-fold division corresponds to the three ways that the Great Perfection can be taught or indicated (*bstan pa*): 1) by teaching the mandala in which mind and gnosis are self-manifesting and indivisible from creation and perfection [stages]; (2) by mind itself to be the natural expression of primordial Buddhahood with regard to creation and perfection; and (3) that which reveals gnosis in its essence, self-

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<sup>714</sup> Gyurme Dorjé, “The *Guhyagarbhatantra* and its XIVth Century Tibetan Commentary, *phyogs bcu mun sel*,” Ph.D. dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1987, 123–127.

<sup>715</sup> ‘Ju mi pham ’jam dbyangs nam rgyal rgya mtsho. “gSang ’grel phyogs bcu’i mun sel gyi spyi don ’od gsal snying po” (“Luminous Essence: A General Outline of [Longchenpa’s] ‘Dispelling the Darkness in the Ten Directions’”), in *gSung ’bum mi pham rgya mtsho (Collected Works of Mipham Gyatso)*, vol. 19, Lama Ngodrup And Sherab Drimey, 1984–1993, pp. 3–274. BDRC W23468.

manifesting as the nature of Buddhahood. Of these three, this exposition [*qua* Rongzom and Longchenpa] follows the first method.<sup>716</sup>

Mipham states that while the two traditions of interpreting the *Guhyagarbha* differ in their focus and method, “they are of the same taste regarding their realization of the essential points.”<sup>717</sup>

In more general terms, the Western scholar Gyurme Dorje explains that the Zur tradition of exegesis on the *Guhyagarbha* tends towards “reductionism and classification with emphasis on the structural basis of Mahāyoga,” while the Rongzom-Longchenpa tradition tends to “[elaborate] the essential, often covert meanings,” of the *Guhyagarbha*.<sup>718</sup>

My cursory analysis of Shenpen Tayé’s unfinished commentary on the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*<sup>719</sup> shows that Shenpen Tayé was firmly wedded to the Zur tradition of exegesis. This is not surprising given how influenced Shenpen Tayé was by figures from Mindröling—a tradition that largely followed the Zur tradition of exegesis in deference to Lochen Dharmaśrī’s famous commentary on the *Guhyagarbha*,<sup>720</sup> written according to the Zur exegetical tradition. In a more general sense, the Zur tradition of

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<sup>716</sup> de yang rgyud 'di ni ma hA'i a ti yin pas/ rdzogs chen la gsum du phye ba'i a ti'i ma hA dang gnad gcig pas na/ gsang ba rdzogs pa chen po la/ bskyed rdzogs dbyer med sems dang ye shes rang snang gi dkyil 'khor bstan pa dang / bskyed rdzogs la mi ltos par sems nyid ye nas sangs rgyas pa'i rang bzhin du bstan pa dang / ye shes rang snang ba'i ngo bor sangs rgyas pa'i rang bzhin du bstan pa gsum las snga ma ltar du 'chad pa'o//. 11–12.

<sup>717</sup> 'chad tshul de gnyis mthar thug gi gnad la dgongs pa ro gcig na yang /. 12.

<sup>718</sup> Gyurme Dorje, “The *Guhyagarbhatantra* and its XIVth Century Tibetan Commentary, *phyogs bcu mun sel*,” 127.

<sup>719</sup> “Revealing Samāntabhadra’s Intent” Full title: rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po sgyu 'phrul drwa ba'i rtsa rgyud lung gi spyi gsang ba'i snying po'i 'grel ba kun bzang thugs kyi ti ka. *DzCW*: text no. 19, vol. 1. 345–447; *XylKB*: text no. 1, vol. 1. 1a–73a; *PCW*: 3. 1–145

<sup>720</sup> Lochen’s commentary is entitled: Dpal gasang ba'i snying po de kho nan yid nges pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po sgyu 'phrul dra ba spyi don gyi sgo nas gtan la 'babs par 'byed pa'i legs bshad gsang bdag zhal lung.

*Guhya garbha* exegesis, with its focus on structural analysis and clearly demarcated hermeneutical boundaries between the various classes of tantra, fits very well with Shenpen Tayé’s gradualist and structuralist orientation towards the Buddhist path.

#### 5.1.4. Initiating the Multitudes: The Rise of the Mindröling “Sūtra Initiation” System

The rise of Mindröling Monastery in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century was to have a momentous impact on the future direction of the Nyingma tradition. The Monastery was founded by brothers Terdak Lingpa Rikdzin Gyurmé Dorjé (1646–1714) and Lochen Dharmasrī (1654–1717) in 1676. Several major recent studies have greatly increased our knowledge about the early years of Mindröling and the impact of Terdak Lingpa, Lochen Dharmasrī, and their immediate successors on Tibetan religion and literary culture.<sup>721</sup> As we saw in chapter two above, Shenpen Tayé was recognized and enthroned as an emanation of Terdak Lingpa and had numerous close contacts with figures from Mindröling. As we will soon see, Shenpen Tayé’s *Trinchok Collection* project was instigated by figures associated with Mindröling, and a large majority of the *Collection*’s constituent texts were authored by Mindröling figures—primarily Terdak Lingpa and Lochen Dharmasrī. As such, although Shenpen Tayé did craft the *Collection* in such a way as to accomplish a number of his own goals and projects, the basic shape and contents of the *Collection* derived from a ritual program initiated by Terdak Lingpa and

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<sup>721</sup> E.g., Dalton, *The Gathering of Intentions*; Dominique Townsend, *A Buddhist Sensibility: Aesthetic Education at Tibet’s Mindröling Monastery*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021); Alison Melnick, “The Life and Times of Mingyur Peldron.”

Lochen at Mindröling a century before Shenpen Tayé was born. The following comments provide a brief summary of this Mindröling ritual program.

Lochen Dharmasrī and Terdak Lingpa were key figures in the development of Nyingma *kama* in a number of important and long-lasting ways. Jacob Dalton describes how the brothers “remade the [*kama*] from the bottom up,” by combining, “extensive historical research with creative innovation to provide a new ritual platform that could be shared across the Nyingma School.”<sup>722</sup> The vehicle for these changes was their *Sūtra* initiation system, which was based on Lochen Dharmasrī’s reconstruction of the various ritual initiation’s that arose from the *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions* (*dgongs pa ‘dus pa’i mdo*)—the root text of the Anuyoga class of tantra.<sup>723</sup> The central set of empowerment rituals for the *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions* granted initiation into all of the nine vehicles of the Nyingma tradition. Prior to Dharmasri’s reformulation, this empowerment ceremony had become increasingly byzantine with the addition of numerous so-called “branch mandalas” for each of the nine vehicles.<sup>724</sup>

Lochen Dharmasrī’s principal concern in reformulating the initiations from the *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions* was to simplify the ceremony and make it more internally coherent. Grounding his reformulation in extensive and meticulous historical research into the origins and development of the ritual system, Dharmasrī discarded the branch mandalas in favor of a single root mandala with nine levels, and chose to work only with the “common” version of each mandala, discarding the “uncommon” versions

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<sup>722</sup> *The Gathering of Intentions*, 98.

<sup>723</sup> Dalton details Dharmasrī’s reconstruction in *The Gathering of Intentions*, 102ff.

<sup>724</sup> *The Gathering of Intentions*, 95.

that were only of use to the rare expert.<sup>725</sup>

Dharmaśrī also made changes to the division of labor, braking down the performance into separate tasks and specialties, each with its own ritual manual, “making possible a larger ritual performance that was easier to assemble.”<sup>726</sup> Although the ritual performance grew more elaborate, the discarding of the branch and uncommon mandalas helped to reduce the length of the entire ceremony from ten to three days, making it more accessible and appealing to the general public. The result was that the ceremony no longer functioned primarily as a means to initiate disciples into the esoteric practices of the *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions*, but now functioned as a community-building event. Dalton characterizes this new ritual system as the utilization of “public ritual as political strategy,” in which new large-scale and elaborately choreographed public rituals were performed over the course of numerous days, with most of the attendees taking the initiation as a blessing. Such mass rituals served to forge important bonds of support and patronage between the members of the general public and Mindröling’s leadership, making the new Mindröling system a valuable addition to the ritual program of the monastery and its affiliates. After the destruction of Mindröling and the murder or dispersal of its leadership in 1717, the center-of-gravity of the Nyingma world began to

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<sup>725</sup> Dalton relates Dharmaśrī’s decision to utilize the common mandalas and discard the uncommon ones thus: “The former was used for the “inner” Mahāyoga initiations and the latter for the “accomplishment” Anuyoga initiations. On this point, Dharmaśrī decides to simplify the situation by using the common mandala for both sets of initiations. He does this because he expects that “the vast majority” of those receiving the initiation will not have attained the high level of realization needed to benefit fully from the Anuyoga initiations. Most will be there just for the blessings, for “merely aspiration or study,” as he writes elsewhere, and for this reason, it does not matter if one abbreviates the ritual, even if it means less benefit for the rare expert in the crowd.” *The Gathering of Intentions*, 108.

<sup>726</sup> *The Gathering of Intentions*, 97.

shift to Eastern Tibet, where Mindröling’s *Sūtra* initiation system took root alongside other long-standing articulations of the Nyingma *kama*.

### 5.1.5. Kama in Eastern Tibet at the Dawn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

#### **5.1.5.1. *Transmitting the Word at Katok Monastery: Kama as Monastic and Scholastic Practice***

Jann Ronis, in his dissertation on the history of Katok Monastery in Kham, describes the tension that existed throughout Katok’s history between *kama* and *terma*. At Katok, *kama* was associated with monasticism and scholasticism and a meritocratic system of institutional governance and succession headed by scholar monks. *Terma*, on the other hand, was associated with non-celibate treasure revealers and a model of governance and succession based on a series of reincarnated masters (*tulku*; *sprul sku*). Ronis describes how, at Katok, *kama* referred to, “the study and ritual practice of the three inner tantras in an institutional setting where monastic purity and scholasticism were core elements of the monastery’s identity and self-representation.”<sup>727</sup>

As the 18<sup>th</sup> century neared a close, there was a growing interest among Nyingmapas in utilizing the rubric of *kama* as a vehicle for exploring and articulating a particular vision of Nyingma identity. In Kham—at Katok and elsewhere—the *kama* traditions had long enjoyed widespread currency among Nyingma figures and institutions. Indeed, even the specific Mindröling *kama* ritual system had already been in wide circulation across Kham for some time before Shenpen Tayé compiled and

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<sup>727</sup> Ronis, “Celibacy and Revelations,” 13.

published his anthology.<sup>728</sup> Dalton describes how the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dzokchen Drupwang Ati Tenpé Gyeltsen (1759–1792) and Katok Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita (1761–1829) had revived the Kama in Kham in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century:

In 1791, they invited a party of monks from Mindröling in central Tibet to come to Degé and teach the rituals of the thirteen principal mandalas of the [*kama*] in all their detail. With the financial support of the Degé court, the event was a great success, and the monks proceeded to Katok, Getsé’s base, to repeat the entire transmission there.<sup>729</sup>

Dalton argues that:

Getsé’s aim was to provide an institutional structure not just for his own monastery but for the entire Nyingma School, to unite its followers around the ‘central pillar’ of the elaborate rituals of the [*kama*]. As at Mindröling previously, this was a concerted effort to reform the whole school, to shift its focus away from the local level toward the traditions of elite monasticism. Those who did not worship the [*kama*], he explained, were no better than ignorant village priests.<sup>730</sup>

He also claims that, “today’s Nyingmapa may follow any of a vast array of treasure-based ritual systems, but they all have one canon in common: the [*kama*].”<sup>731</sup>

As I argue below, Shenpen Tayé’s motivations in publishing and promoting his *Trinchok Collection* of *kama* texts seems to have been very similar to that of Getse Mahāpaṇḍita. Shenpen Tayé’s robust inclusion of an array of monastic rituals and classical Vinaya texts demonstrates a desire to provide a tangible support for the expansion of rigorous monasticism in Nyingma institutions. In short, our investigation has shown that, although the Nyingma *kama* developed clear associations with large

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<sup>728</sup> See Dalton, *The Gathering of Intentions*, 116.

<sup>729</sup> Dalton, *The Gathering of Intentions*, 117.

<sup>730</sup> Dalton, *The Gathering of Intentions*, 118.

<sup>731</sup> Dalton, *The Gathering of Intentions*, 131.



monastic institutions and scholastic practice, the rubric of *kama*—what the category actually represented—remained rather fluid and abstract. Perhaps the single biggest reason for the fluidity of the *kama* rubric up to Shenpen Tayé’s time was that there had not been any recorded instances of the large body of *kama* literature being collected and published in a single collection. As we shall see, Shenpen Tayé’s *Trinchok Collection* was to change all that, leading to a series of ever-expanding collections of *kama* texts that would transform the fluid rubric of *kama* into a Nyingma canonical collection.

With the preceding historical background in mind, we will now turn to analyze Shenpen Tayé’s *Trinchok Collection* itself, beginning with a critical bibliographical appraisal of the *Collection* and its contents.

## **5.2. Text and Textuality: The *Trinchok Collection* and Its Witnesses**

### **5.2.1. Defining and Identifying the *Trinchok Collection***

The *Trinchok Collection* spans nine volumes and includes just under ninety individual texts. In trying to determine the specific contents and “boundaries” of the *Collection*, I ran up against a number of complicating questions: What is the “*Trinchok Collection*?” Where can it be found? What actually is a “text”? Before we move on to analyzing the contents of the *Collection*, I should first discuss these questions and my provisional answers to them.

### 5.2.1.1. What is the “*Trinchok Collection*?”

My study of the *Trinchok Collection* as presented in this chapter moves between a number of different disciplinary frames, ranging from literary studies, bibliography and book history, biography, and doctrinal history and doxography. The central guiding concern of this dissertation as a whole, however, focuses on Shenpen Tayé and his role in shaping the modern Nyingma tradition. As such, I am primarily interested in what the *Trinchok Collection* says about Shenpen Tayé—in particular, his doxographical commitments and his vision of what the Nyingma tradition was and/or should be. With these concerns as my primary focus, my analysis has to begin with reconstructing the *Collection* as originally published by Shenpen Tayé. In other words, I am interested in reconstructing the full set of texts published by Shenpen Tayé and his team in their intended order.

The nature of Tibetan books and Tibetan book-making present us with some distinct challenges to this goal of accessing an “original” published edition of the *Trinchok Collection*. The main problem involves the literally *unbounded* nature of the Tibetan book. Until quite recently, Tibetan “books” were virtually never published as bound codices. Instead, they took the form of individual sheets of paper that were stacked and held together by external removable bindings such as string, cloth wraps, and so forth. This type of book, called a *pecha* (*dpe cha*), allowed for individual texts or folios to be removed or reordered in any way the user saw fit. This unbounded nature of Tibetan *pechas* results in a situation where we cannot uncritically take a surviving *pecha* edition of the *Trinchok Collection* to be a complete and/or correctly-ordered edition of the

*Collection* as it appeared in its initial publication in 1845. Indeed, as we will see, the extant reproductions of the original wood block edition of the *Collection* have texts out of order as well as texts that are simply missing.

Perhaps we could seek to define the *Collection* as the complete set of wood printing blocks. Do they still exist? Are they complete? Sadly, it seems that the original wood blocks carved for the *Collection* in 1845 are no longer extant. This is not surprising, given the violence and destruction that engulfed Dzokchen in the wake of the Chinese invasion. However, it should be said that even if we had access to the original wood-blocks themselves, this does not solve the problems that we listed above in relation to extant prints because the blocks are themselves single pieces of wood that can potentially be re-ordered, misplaced or lost.

Fortunately, the blocks cut for the *Collection*—and by extension, the prints made from these original blocks—contain a wealth of bibliographical information that, through careful cataloging and analysis, can be used to reconstruct the full set of wood blocks carved for the *Collection*. Specifically, each block carved for the *Collection* contains identifying markings that provide the reader with the following pieces of information: that the text is part of the *Trinchok Collection*; which volume of the *Collection* the text is from; the text's order within the *Collection*; and both volume-level and text-level folio numbers. The figures below show where this information is contained within the folios:<sup>732</sup>

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<sup>732</sup> Both images are from the edition of this text published in BDRC W3CN12210: *dpal spungs dpe rnying gsar bskrun las dkyil chog phyogs bsgrigs/* (gnyis pa/). 19 vols. Upper Bhattu, Distt. Kangra, HP, India: dpal spungs gsung rab nyams gso khang /, 2005, vol. 15.

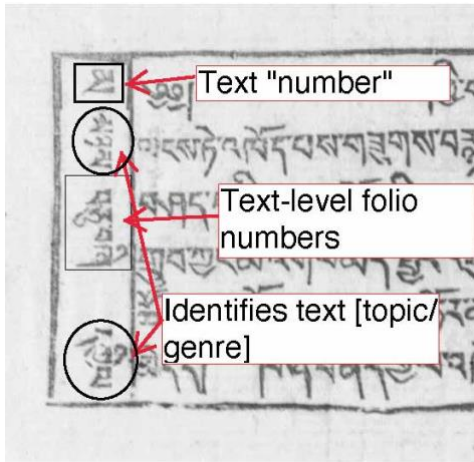


Figure 2: *recto folio [side a]*

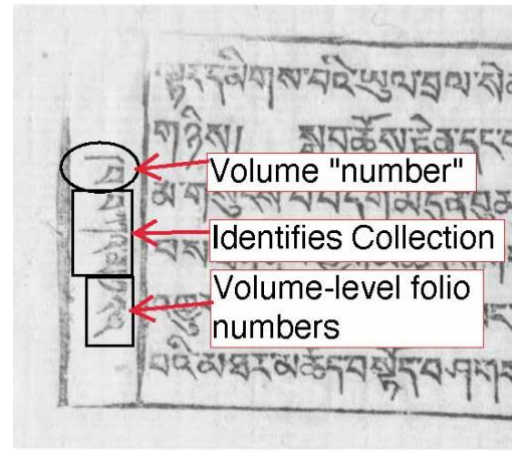


Figure 3: *verso folio [side b]*

The examples in figures 2 and 3 are from a print of the original wood blocks of text no. 18<sup>733</sup> (*sangs rgyas thams cad mnyam par sbyor ba'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga kun tu bzang po'i zhal lung*) from the second volume of the collection. In figure 2, above, we see a detail of the left margin of a *recto* [front] folio side, which contains information relating to the individual text. At the top of the margin, we see a single syllable—*ma*—that designates the text's order within the collection. This aligns with the traditional way of numbering volumes or individual texts within collections by using the letters of the alphabet as ordinal numbers.<sup>734</sup> In this case, the syllable *ma* designates this text as the 16<sup>th</sup> text in the collection.<sup>735</sup> In the middle of the margin is a spelled-out number that designates the order of that folio within that specific text—i.e., the text-level folio number. The third designator on the *recto folio* margin is a descriptor of the text that is

<sup>733</sup> In my catalog contained in Appendix 3.

<sup>734</sup> Much like English speakers and others often use a., b., c. etc. in lists.

<sup>735</sup> *ma* is the 16<sup>th</sup> letter of the alphabet. See below for my criteria for numbering the texts in my catalog of the *Collection* (Appendix 3, below).

split on either side of the text-folio number. In this case, we have the two syllables *mnyam* (above the folio number) and *dkyil* (below), which signals to the reader that this is a text about the mandala (*dkyil 'khor*) of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* (*sku 'i rgyud dpal sangs rgyas thams cad mnyam sbyor*). My detailed catalog of the *Trinchok Collection* [Appendix 3] records these marginalia (where legible).<sup>736</sup>

Moving on to the *verso* [reverse] folio side (figure 3), we have more higher-level information about where that folio belongs within the volume and within the collection as a whole. In the center of the margin, is the word, *bka' ma*, which identifies it as belonging in the *Trinchok [Kama] Collection*. Above this is the single syllable *kha* that designates it as belonging to the 2<sup>nd</sup> volume of that collection.<sup>737</sup> Underneath this is a set of Tibetan numerals which designate this folio as the 122<sup>nd</sup> folio of that volume.

These paratextual signposts are included in every folio of the *Collection*<sup>738</sup> and provide us with a clear, well-thought-out, and regularized system for organizing and cataloging the folios, texts, and volumes in the *Collection*. It is interesting to note the use of three different systems of ordinal numbering—numerals, spelled-out numbers, and sequential letters/syllables—to respectively designate volume-level folio numbers, text-level folio numbers, and volume and text numbers. Such a system provides a framework for reconstructing the original *Collection* by cataloging and comparing the information contained in the margins of the prints from the original blocks.

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<sup>736</sup> It would be interesting to do a broader, more general study of the patterns and conventions governing how such condensed text-identifying marginalia is used across a range of collections and anthologies. Including such information when cataloging Tibetan anthologies would be a great help that would enable such a study in the future.

<sup>737</sup> *Kha* is the second letter of the Tibetan alphabet.

<sup>738</sup> With some small variations in the title page folios.

The second method for reconstructing the contents of the original *Collection* is through reference to the listing of the *Collection*'s contents given in the descriptive *Catalog* (*dkar chag*) to the collection (*Trinchok Catalog*<sup>739</sup>) that was written by Shenpen Tayé's student Pema Vajra upon the first printing of the collection from the wood printing blocks in 1845. This listing of contents in the *Catalog* is written in the form of a doxography of what the title of the *Collection* calls the “successive nine vehicles of the transmitted precepts” (*bka' ma theg rim dgu*). This doxographical table of contents runs from folios 49a to 56b and comprises a detailed, sequential listing of the titles, authors, and subject matter of the texts included in the *Collection*. This section of the *Catalog* represents one authoritative witness to the contents of the *Collection* as originally published by Shenpen Tayé and his team.

My own catalog of the *Trinchok Collection* (Appendix 3) uses both of these sources of information—the listing of texts in Pema Vajra's *Catalog*, and the paratextual marginalia from the original wood block prints—to reconstruct the original *Collection* as published by Shenpen Tayé and his team. My catalog lists 85 separate “texts” plus the descriptive catalog (*dkar chag*) to the *Collection* written by Pema Vajra. I designate each text with a number based on its order in the *Collection*. In most cases, the order of the text in the *Trinchok Catalog* matched the relative order of the volume-level folio numbers. In cases where these disagreed, I generally put the text in the order denoted by the folio numbers and made a note of the discrepancy in my catalog. Sometimes, it was

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<sup>739</sup> *bka' ma theg rim dgu'i phrin chog mtha' dag phyogs gcig tu bsdus pa'i dkar chag yid bzhin dbang gi rgyal po'i bang mdzod.*

unclear simply by looking at the prints whether to count something as a *section* of a text or a text in its own right. Although most of the texts have separate title pages that clearly mark them as discrete texts, many of the texts do not have a separate title page and simply put the title at the beginning of the regular text on a new folio. I designated as a separate text any work that had *one or more* of the following characteristics:

- It was given its own text “number” in the left margin of the recto folio of the original xylograph.<sup>740</sup>
- At least a portion of its title appears in the listing of texts in the *Catalog*.
- The text itself has all of the following: a title (but not necessarily a separate title page), an author’s colophon, and volume-level folio numbers that clearly denote its location in the *Collection*.

### 5.2.2.1. *Shenpen Tayé’s Dedicatory Verse*

Because my primary interest in the *Trinchok Collection* for the purpose of this study was to reconstruct Shenpen Tayé’s role in compiling and publishing it, it was imperative to access witnesses from the *original* wood blocks of the *Collection* that were carved in 1845. The first question to deal with is, how do we know that a given set of prints came from the original set of blocks? My method for determining this largely relied on the distinctive paratextual elements listed above in concert with the colophons placed at the end of most of the texts. In addition to the original author colophons that are reproduced at the end of most Tibetan texts, most of the texts in the *Trinchok Collection* also have the following final dedicatory verse placed after the colophons:

*rgyal dang de sras rig pa 'dzin rnams kyi//*

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<sup>740</sup> This criteria was used to make Text no. 6 (*'di dag mar ngo'i gso sbyong bcu bzhi pa'i dus so*) count as a separate text. This “text” is simply a single folio side containing a calendrical chart used to schedule the fortnightly *sojong* ritual and did not have its own title nor author’s colophon. Although it is listed as an addendum to text *ca* in the *Catalog*, the left folio margin clearly lists it as a separate text (text no. *cha*).

*ring lugs snga 'gyur 'o ma'i rgya mtsho las//*  
*phrin chog zhun mar snying po bsdus pa 'dis//*  
***gghan la phan pa mtha' yas 'grub gyur cig /***

“This collection of rituals of enlightened activity (*trinchok*) condenses the essential core of the Early Translation tradition of those that hold the awareness of Buddhas and bodhisattvas, [like] clarified butter condensed from an ocean of milk. May it produce limitless benefit for all!”

Deploying a common Tibetan literary convention, Shenpen Tayé embeds his name within the verse [bolded above],<sup>741</sup> as well as the partial title of his *Collection* [underlined above]. In this way, this verse serves as both a final dedication and as Shenpen Tayé’s official editor’s imprint, marking the text as being printed from the blocks carved under the direction of Shenpen Tayé for his *Trinchok Collection*. With the exception of some of the shorter texts, this verse occurs after virtually all of the texts in the *Collection*.

Conversely, the verse does not appear in other collections or printed editions of these same texts. Those few texts in the *Collection* without the verse can be authenticated by comparing their paratextual elements (i.e., folio and volume numbers in their margins) to surrounding texts that do have the verse.

## 5.2.2. Textual Witnesses

### **5.2.2.1. Scanned Editions of the *Trinchok Collection* Published on *BDRC.org***

The Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC.org) has two versions of prints from the original blocks for (at least part of) all nine volumes of the *Collection*. These

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<sup>741</sup> In the original xylograph, the syllables of Shenpen Tayé’s name in these verses are identified by a small subscribed circle.



two collections are designated W4PD1990 and W3CN3427. Both of these appear to be different scans of the same set of prints,<sup>742</sup> and, unfortunately, are often barely legible due to a combination of the low resolution of the scans and defects in the original prints that resulted in blotchy lettering and ink transfer between folios. Of these two versions of the *Collection* on BDRC, W4PD1990 is the most complete and conforms most closely to the listing of texts in the *Catalog*, while W3CN3427 more often has texts out of order (in relation to both the volume-level folio numbers and the *Catalog* listings). For this reason, I chose to work primarily with W4PD1990 as the most complete edition of the original xylograph printing available.

However, as stated above, the folios of these editions are very often barely legible—and this is particularly the case with regards to the marginalia, which is often totally illegible in the BDRC editions mentioned above.<sup>743</sup> Fortunately, high quality reproductions of the original wood-block prints of *some* of the *Collection*'s texts have recently been published in other collections, which are also available on BDRC.org. My catalog of the *Collection* notes the availability of alternate reproductions for each text, but I will summarize these here.

#### 5.2.2.2. *Prints Published by Pelpung and Dzongsar Monasteries*

Pelpung Monastery in northern India has published a number of the *Collection*'s texts from the original blocks as part of other collections and anthologies that they have published in the last decade or so. The first volume of their three-volume collection of

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<sup>742</sup> By this, I mean the same printed folios (not just prints from the same blocks).

<sup>743</sup> Sadly, even in high-quality prints the information in the left margins of Tibetan folios generally tends to be more faded and/or obscured than the central text due to its position at the edge of the wood block.

Shenpen Tayé's collected works (*Pelpung Collected Works [PCW]*),<sup>744</sup> published in 2005, contains high-resolution reproductions of the prints of most of the first volume of the *Trinchok Collection* (Text nos. 2–11), as well as Pema Vajra's *Catalog*. Pelpung Monastery also published a nine-volume collection of ritual texts in 2005<sup>745</sup> that reproduces prints from the original blocks for most of volumes two (vols. 14–16 of the Pelpung collection) and nine (vol. 7). The publisher's statement from both of these collections says that they were published by Pelpung monastery in India from prints held in the collections of (the original) Pelpung monastery in Dergé, Eastern Tibet.<sup>746</sup>

A collection of various old texts from Dzongsar Monastery (also in Dergé) that was recently scanned and published by BDRC.org, also contains prints from the original blocks of three *Trinchok Collection* texts: Text no. 53 (vol. 213: pdf. pp. 522–523); Text no. 54 (vol. 213: pdf. pp. 520–609; some folios missing or out of order); and Text no. 84 (vol. 195: pdf pp. 3–98; some folios missing or out of order).

We should note here that although both Pelpung and Dzongsar had a history of close relationships with Nyingma figures and institutions, neither of them *are* Nyingma institutions: Pelpung is Kagyü and Dzongsar is Sakya. The inclusion of the prints from the *Trinchok Collection* blocks in collections of texts from these institutions' holdings provides tangible evidence that the *Trinchok Collection* enjoyed a wide circulation

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<sup>744</sup> BDRC W3CN12691.

<sup>745</sup> *dpal spungs dpe rnying gsar bskrun las dkyil chog phyogs bsgrigs/* (gnyis pa/). 19 vols. Upper Bhattu, Distt. Kangra, HP, India: dpal spungs gsung rab nyams gso khang /, 2005. BDRC W3CN12210.

<sup>746</sup> The publishing colophons are located on the final page(s) of each volume and are virtually identical between the two collections.

throughout a range of communities and institutions—at least within the region of Dergé.<sup>747</sup>

### 5.3. The Contents of the *Trinchok Collection*

My critical catalog of the texts that comprise Shenpen Tayé’s *Trinchok Collection*—provided in Appendix 3—lists 86 separate texts, including the *Catalog*, organized in nine volumes and printed by Shenpen Tayé and his team in 1845. As I have mentioned above, the texts and volumes were organized by Shenpen Tayé into a specific order that mirrored his vision of the Nyingma “nine vehicles” as a progressive and comprehensive system of Buddhist thought and praxis. As I argued above, this progressive vision of the Nyingma nine vehicles is evident in the title of the collection itself: *The Collected Rituals of Enlightened Activity (Trinchok) from the Successive Nine Vehicles of the Nyingma Kama (Trinchok Collection)*.<sup>748</sup> This progressive, inclusive doxographical scheme is further emphasized and fleshed out in the descriptive *Catalog (dkar chag)* to the *Collection* in which the listing of the *Collection*’s contents is explicitly organized as a doxography that runs through the vehicles in successive order.

#### 5.3.1 A Doxographical Outline of the *Trinchok Collection*

The following table gives a summary of how the texts in the *Collection* map onto the doxography of the Nyingma nine vehicles as presented in the *Catalog*:

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#### **Vol. 1:**

#### I. The Philosophical Vehicle(s) of Causal Dialectics<sup>749</sup> (Vehicles 1–3)

<sup>747</sup> Dzokchen Monastery sits on the northern border of Dergé.

<sup>748</sup> *bka' ma theg pa rim dgu'i phrin chog mtha' dag phyogs gcig tu bsdus*

<sup>749</sup> rgyu mtshan nyid kyi theg pa. *Trinchok Catalog*: 49b–50b.

1. **Hearers** (*nyan thos*); Catalog: “the gradual vehicle of vinaya and prātimokṣa”<sup>750</sup>

- Prātimokṣa vows (*so thar sdom*): **Texts 1, 7.**<sup>751</sup>
- Temporary precepts (*bsnyen gnas*): **Texts 2, 3.**
- The three foundations (*gzhi gsum*): **Text 5.**
- Mending-purifying ritual (*gso sbyong*): **Text 6.**

2. **Self-realized Buddhas** (*rang sang rgyas*): No texts; not mentioned in the *Catalog*.

3. **Mahāyāna** (*theg chen pa*): **Texts 8–10.**

## II. The Resultant Vehicle(s) of Vajrayana<sup>752</sup> (Vehicles 4–9)

*II.a. The Outer Tantric Vehicles (Vehicles 4–6):*

4. **Kriyā-tantra** (*bya ba'i rgyud*)

- Atisha's system of the retinue of Bhaiṣajyaguru (*sangs rgyas sman bla mched bdun jo bo rje'i lugs*): **Text 11.**

### **Vol. 2:**

- Raśmivimāla (*'od zer dri med*): **Texts 12–14.**
- Vimaloṣṇīṣa; Ngor 5-deities tradition (*gtsug tor dri med lha 5 ngor lugs*): **Text 15.**

5–6. **Caryā Tantra** (*spyod pa'i rgyud*) and **Yoga Tantra** (*rnal 'byor gyi rgyud*):

The *Trinchok Collection* has no texts from these two vehicles and states that they need to be added later.<sup>753</sup>

*II.b. The Inner Tantras: The Great Unsurpassable Secret*

7. **Mahāyoga**

<sup>750</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*: 49b: bstan pa'i gzhi ma 'dul ba so thar gyi mam ni rim bzhin.

<sup>751</sup> Text numbers given here correspond to the text numbers that I have assigned them in my catalog (Appendix 3).

<sup>752</sup> 'bras bu rdo rje theg pa. *Trinchok Catalog*: 50b–56b.

<sup>753</sup> “At this time, because the ritual arrangements of our tradition that had previously been established in relation to the *Trinchok* rituals from the Caryā-tantra class—the *Vairocana-Abhisambodhi-Tantra*, and so forth—and from the Yoga-tantra class—the *Delivery from Hell Tantra* and so forth—have not been found, they will need to be added here later. Also, the subsidiary rituals from the *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions* from our own scriptural tradition, mentioned below, provide a timely clarification of these [missing two vehicles].” *Trinchok Catalog*, 51b: skabs 'dir spyod pa'i rgyud las mam snang mngon byang dang / rnal 'byor gyi rgyud las ngan song sbyong rgyud sogs kyi phrin chog 'god par 'os kyang sngon chad rang lugs kyi chog khriḡs ma byung bas/ slar bsgrigs zin pa dang 'dir 'dzud dgos shing / rang gzhung 'dus mdo'i yan lag gi cho ga dag ni 'og tu de nyid kyi skabs su gsal ba ltar ro/

### 7.1 The Five “Root” Mahāyoga Tantras (*rtsa ba’i rgyud sde*)

7.1.1. *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* (*sku’i rgyud dpal sangs rgyas thams cad mnyam sbyor*): **Texts 16–19.**

\*Here, the *Catalog* notes that, “the other four root tantras “have not had ritual arrangements produced for them, so this will need to be done in the future.”<sup>754</sup>

### 7.2 The Five “Display” Tantras (*rol pa’i rgyud sde*)

7.2.1. *Tantra of the Display of Compassion* (*snying rje rol pa’i rgyud*):

- Mañjuśrī as Black Yamāntaka (*‘jam dpal kha thun nag po*): **Texts 20–24.**
- Mañjuśrī as Red Yamāri (*‘jam dpal gshed dmar po*): **Texts 25–28.**

7.2.2. *Tantra of the Display of the Supreme Horse* (*rta mchog rol pa’i rgyud*)

[*Catalog*: “the ritual cycles for this still need to be found and added here later”]<sup>755</sup>

## Vol. 3:

7.2.3. *Tantra of the Display of Heruka* (*he ru ka rol pa’i rgyud*)

- Viśuddha Heruka (*yang dag he ru ka*): **Texts 29–32.**

7.2.4. *Tantra of the Display of Nectar* (*bdud rtsi rol pa’i rgyud*)

[*Catalog*: “the ritual cycles for this still need to be found and added here later”]<sup>756</sup>

7.2.5. *Tantra of the Display of the Twelve Vajrakīlayas* (*phur pa bcu gnyis rol pa’i rgyud*)

- Vajrakīlaya (*rdo rje phur pa*) in the tradition of Rog Sherab Lama (*rog lugs*):<sup>757</sup> **Texts: 33–37**
- Vajrakīlaya (*phur pa*) in the tradition of Rongzom (*rong lugs*): **Texts 38–41.**

[*Catalog*: “Ritual arrangements for the *Five Tantras Functioning as Subsidiaries to Conduct* (*spyod pa’i yan lag tu ‘gro ba’i rgyud sde lnga*) and the two *Subsequent Tantras of Amending Incompleteness*<sup>758</sup> (*ma tshang kha*) are not extant and need to be added later.”<sup>759</sup>]

<sup>754</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 52a: sngar chog khrigs ma byung bas slar ‘dir ‘dzud dgos so/.

<sup>755</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 52b–53a: rta mchog rol pa’i phrin chog skor rnamslad nas ‘dir ‘dzud dgos so/.

<sup>756</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 53a: yon tan bdud rtsi rol pa’i ‘i phrin chog skor rnamslad nas ‘dir ‘dzud dgos so/.

<sup>757</sup> The *rog* system of Dorjé Phurba is so named because it was propagated by Rog Sherab Lama (*rog shes rab bla ma*; 1090–1173) and his descendants—largely within the *zhi byed* school. See Mengyan Li, “Origination, Transmission, and Reception of the Phur-pa Cycle: A Study of the rDo-rje-phur-pa Cycle of Tantric Teachings in Tibet with Special Reference to Sog-bzlog-pa Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan’s (1552-1624) Phur pa’i lo rgyus,” Ph.D. diss., University of Hamburg, 2019, 139–142.

<sup>758</sup> 1) *Net of Magical Manifestation of Vairochana* (*rnam par snang mdzad sgyu ‘phrul drva ba’i rgyud*), which contains supplementary instructions concerning mandala rites and sādhanas to attain powers, and 2) *Lasso of Method: Tantra of the Lotus Garland* (*thabs kyi zhags pa pad mo’i phreng ba’i rgyud*).

<sup>759</sup> 53b.

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**Vol. 4:****7.3. *Tantras of the Magical Net*** (*rgyud sgyu 'phrul drwa pa*)

- Peaceful Vajrasattva deities of the *Magical Net* (*rdo rje sems dpa' sgyu 'phrul zhi ba*): **Texts 42–45.**
- Wrathful deities of the *Magical Net* (*sgyu 'phrul khro bo*): **Texts 46–48.**
- Peaceful and wrathful deities (*zhi khro*): **Texts: 49, 50.**

**7.4. *The System of Buddhaguhya*** (*sangs rgyas gsang ba'i lugs*)

- Amitayus (*tshe dpag tu med pa*): **Texts 51, 52.**
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**Vol. 5:****7.5. *Rituals for purifying the five heinous acts*** (*khrus mtshams med lnga sbyong*)

- The confessional practice “Dredging the depths of hell” (*na rag[raka] dong sprungs*): **Texts 53–57.**

**7.6. *Subsidiary and concluding rituals*** (*rjes 'brel du 'gro ba'i phrin las*): **Texts 58–62.****7.7. *Tantric Guardians*** (*rgyud kyi bka' srung*)

- Bhagavān Mahākāla (*mgon po legs ldan tshogs kyi bdag po*): **Texts 63, 64, 67.**
  - The Obran system (*'o bran lugs*) of Red Wrathful Guru Rinpoché (*gu ru drag dmar*):<sup>760</sup> **Texts 65, 66.**
  - Vyāghravāhana Mahākāla (*mgon po stag zhon ma*): **Text 68.**
  - Dandadhāra Mahākāla (*mgon po beng gter ma*): **Text 69.**
  - Mahākālī Rematī (*dpal ldan lha mo re ma tI*): **Text 70.**
  - Vaiśravaṇa Nīlāsva Raktasūla (*rnam sras mdung dmar rta sngon can*): **Text 71.**
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**Vols. 6–8:****8. *Anuyoga***

- *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions* (*mdo dgongs 'dus*): **Texts: 72–79**
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**Vol. 9:****9. *Atiyoga*****9.1. *Mind Class*** (*sems sde*)

- Kagyé Kama (*bka' brgyad bka' ma*); Breach of the Citadel (*rdzong 'phrang*): **Texts 80–82**

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<sup>760</sup> For a discussion of the 'o bran lugs see Mengyan Li, “Origination, Transmission, and Reception of the Phur-pa Cycle,” 78–79, 232.

- *mind class*, General: **Texts 83–84**

**9.2. Expanse Class (*klong sde*): Text 85**

----- **End of Collection** -----

The listing of contents in the *Catalog* contains a number of explicit references to omissions in the *Collection*'s contents, noting that certain texts or cycles “have not had ritual arrangements produced for them, and these will need to be added in the future.”<sup>761</sup>

These omissions include ritual cycles from:

- The Caryā-tantra class, including the *Vairocana-Abhisambodhi-Tantra*.
- The Yoga-tantra class, such as *Delivery from Hell Tantra* and so forth.
- Four of the five “root” Mahāyoga tantras.<sup>762</sup>
- Two of the five Mahāyoga “expression tantras:” *Tantra of the Expression of the Supreme Horse* (*rta mchog rol pa'i rgyud*), and *Tantra of the Expression of Nectar* (*bdud rtsi rol pa'i rgyud*).
- The two Mahāyoga “supplementary tantras” (*ma tshang kha skong gi rgyud sde gnyis*).<sup>763</sup>
- The protector deity Raudrāntika (*mgon po trag shad*).

The following table summarizes the number of texts and total folios dedicated to each of the nine vehicles in the *Collection*:

Vehicle	Number of Texts	Total Folios
1. Hearers ( <i>nyan thos</i> )	7	119.5
2. Self-realized Buddhas ( <i>rang sang rgyas</i> )	0	0

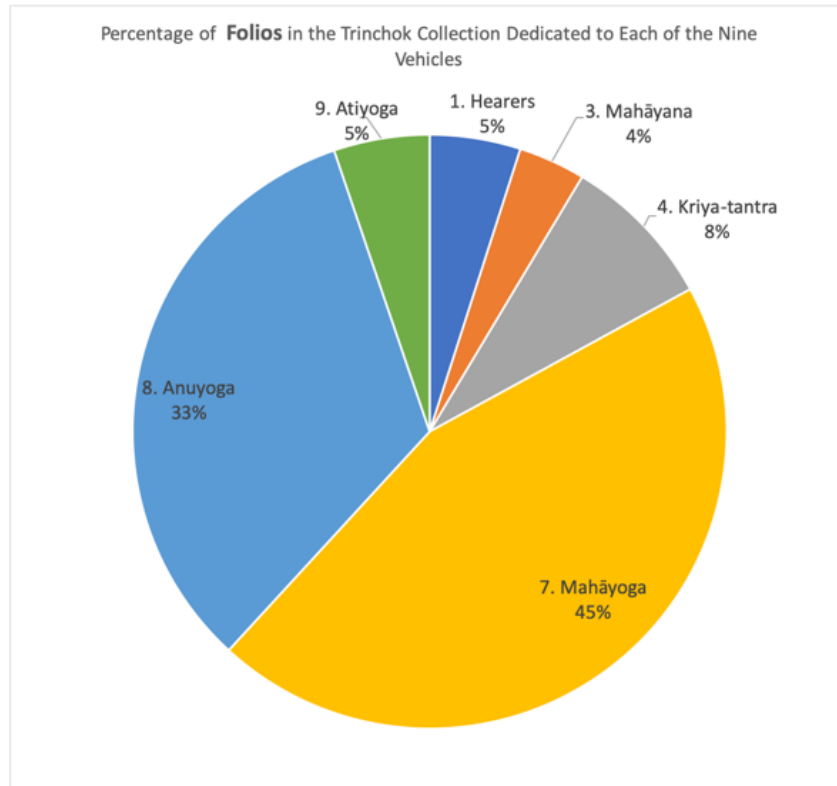
<sup>761</sup> See for example, *Trinchok Catalog*, 52a: sngar chog khriḡs ma byung bas slar 'dir 'dzud dgos so/.

<sup>762</sup> viz., *Root Tantra of the Secret Moon's Essence* (*dpal zla gsang thig le rtsa ba'i rgyud*); *Guhyasamaja-tantra* (*dpal gsang ba 'dus pa*); *Tantra of the Glorious Supreme Original Being* (*dpal mchog dang po*); and *Tantra of the Garland of Actions* (*kar ma ma le*).

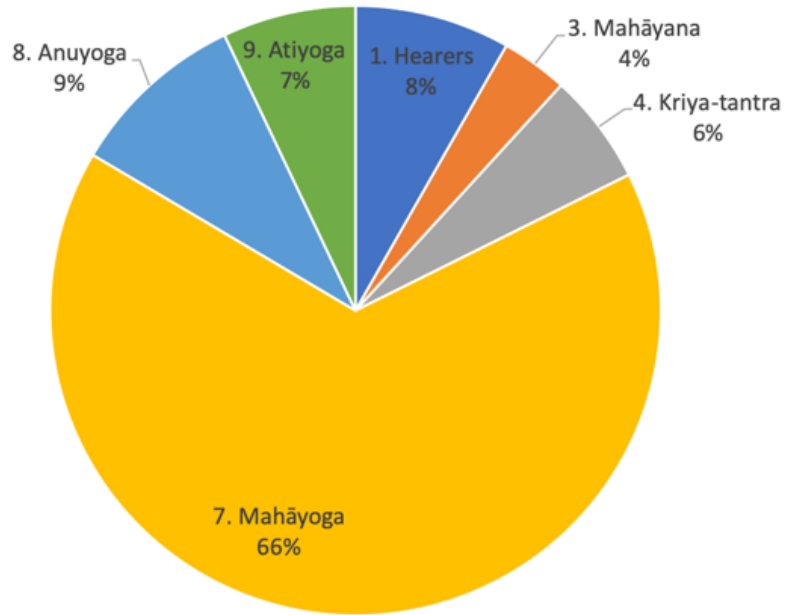
<sup>763</sup> The *Tantra of the Net of Magical Manifestation of Vairochana* (*rnam par snang mdzad sgyu 'phrul drva ba'i rgyud*); and *Lasso of Method: Tantra of the Lotus Garland* (*thabs kyis zhags pa pad mo'i phreng ba'i rgyud*).

3. Bodhisattvas (Mahāyāna)	3	88
4. Kriyā-tantra ( <i>bya ba'i rgyud</i> )	5	204
5. Caryā-tantra ( <i>spyod pa'i rgyud</i> )	0	0
6. Yoga-tantra ( <i>rnal 'byor gyi rgyud</i> )	0	0
7. Mahāyoga	56	1082
8. Anuyoga	8	796
9. Atiyoga	6	126

The following charts can help us visualize the percentage of folios and texts dedicated to each vehicle:





Percentage of **Texts** in the *Trinchok Collection* Dedicated to Each of the Nine Vehicles

As the above charts make clear, the bulk of the *Collection*—the last eight volumes and a part of the first—is taken up by texts relating to the tantric vehicles, with Mahāyoga texts making up the bulk of these. This tantric material is comprised mostly of ritual manuals and liturgies for a range of tantric texts and deities.

### 5.3.2. Genre and Authorship in the *Trinchok Collection*

In general, for each of the major tantric cycles, Shenpen Tayé includes four basic kinds of texts: a *lineage supplication* (*brgyud ‘debs*), an *initiation ritual* (*dbang chog*), a *mandala ritual* (*dkyil chog*), and an *invocation ritual* or *sādhana* (*sgrub thabs*). In some cases, there are also analytical texts included, such as Lochen Dharmasrī’s analytical overview (*spyi don*) to the *Sūtra that Gathers all Intentions* (text 72), or Mingyur

Peldrön's linear notes (*mtshams sbyor*) to the *Peaceful and Wrathful Deities* cycle (text 57).

Notwithstanding the prevalence of tantric material in the *Collection*, it is the non-tantric material that sets the *Collection* apart from previous understandings and formulations of Nyingma kama. Indeed, Shenpen Tayé dedicates almost a full volume (vol. 1) to monastic ritual texts and two canonical Indian texts—the *Prātimokṣa-sūtra* and the *Bodhisattvacāryāvatāra*—in their entirety. The table below details the non-tantric texts included in vol. 1 of the *Collection*:<sup>764</sup>

**Text 1:** *so thar sdom brgyud kyi gsol 'debs* (lineage supplication to the vows of *individual liberation* [*prātimokṣa*]), by the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (3 folios).

**Text 2:** *khyim pa rjes su 'dzin pa so sor thar pa'i cho ga thar lam rab gsal* (vow liturgy [*'bogs chog*] for taking *temporary precepts* [*bsnyen gnas*]), by Terdak Lingpa (11 folios).

**Text 3:** *bsnyen gnas kyi cho ga mdo don gsal ba* (clarifying the meaning of the *temporary precepts*), by Shenpen Tayé (3 folios).

**Text 4:** *rab byung gi gzhi'i cho ga rin chen them skas* (vow liturgy for the monastic *ground of renunciation* [*rab byung gi gzhi*] ritual), by Lochen Dharmasrī with supplemental material by Shenpen Tayé (42 folios).

**Text 5:** *bslab pa yongs su sbyong ba gzhi gsum gyi cho ga thar gling du bgrod pa'i gru chen* (*ritual of the three foundations*), by Lochen Dharmasrī with supplemental material by Shenpen Tayé (27 folios).

**Text 6:** *'di dag mar ngo'i gso sbyong bcu bzhi pa'i dus so* (calendrical tables for scheduling the *mending-purifying* monastic ritual [*gso sbyong*]), by Shenpen Tayé (1 folio side).

**Text 7:** *dge slong pha'i so sor thar pa'i mdo* (*prātimokṣa-sūtra*), canonical sūtra (*Kangyur*) (33 folios).

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<sup>764</sup> See my detailed catalog [Appendix 3] for more detailed listings of these texts.

**Text 8:** *smon 'jug sems bskyed kyi brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs* (supplication to lineage of generating the mind of awakening), by Terdak Lingpa with supplemental material by Shenpen Tayé (3 folios).

**Text 9:** *theg pa chen po dbu ma lugs kyi sems bskyed kyi cho ga rgyal sras lam bzang* (ritual for the mind generation tradition of the Madhyamaka Mahāyāna), by Terdak Lingpa (19 folios).

**Text 10:** *byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa* (*Bodhisattvacāryāvātāra*), canonical treatise (*Tengyur*) (66 folios).

I will discuss these texts and the implications of their inclusion in the *Collection* in further detail below. For now, let us turn to consideration of the authorship of the *Collection*'s various texts.

### ***Authorship***

As would be expected, texts written by leading figures from Mindröling make up the majority of the *Trinchok Collection*. Of the *Collection*'s 85 texts, 56 were authored by Mindröling figures. Taking pride-of-place are the founders of Mindröling: Terdak Lingpa (34 texts) and his brother Lochen Dharmaśrī (14 texts), followed by Terdak Lingpa's son, Gyurmé Rinchen Namgyel<sup>765</sup> (six texts), with Mingyur Peldron<sup>766</sup> and Orgyen Tendzin Dorjé<sup>767</sup> each having one authored text. Of the texts authored by non-Mindröling figures, Shenpen Tayé has the most with ten texts (mostly short lineage supplication texts). Shalu Rinchen Sonam Ckokdrup<sup>768</sup> authored three texts (nos. 13, 14, 15). The following figures each authored two texts: Pema Vajra (nos. 63, 65 + the *Catalog*); Katokpa Gyurme

<sup>765</sup> 'gyur med rin chen nam rgyal; 1694–1758; P674.

<sup>766</sup> mi 'gyur dpal sgron; 1699–1769.

<sup>767</sup> o rgyan bstan 'dzin rdo rje; 1742–c.1789; P683.

<sup>768</sup> zha lu ba rin chen bsod nams mchog grub; 1603–1659; P3256.

Tsewang Chokdrup (nos. 81, 85); the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso<sup>769</sup> (nos. 1, 11); Padmasambhava (nos. 23, 82); and Canonical sources (nos. 7, 10). Authoring one text each are: Butön Rinchendrup<sup>770</sup> (no. 12); Lodrö Gyeltsen Pelzangpo<sup>771</sup> (no. 83); Ngawang Drakpa<sup>772</sup> (no. 24); and Yungtön Dorjé Pelzangpo<sup>773</sup> (no. 84).

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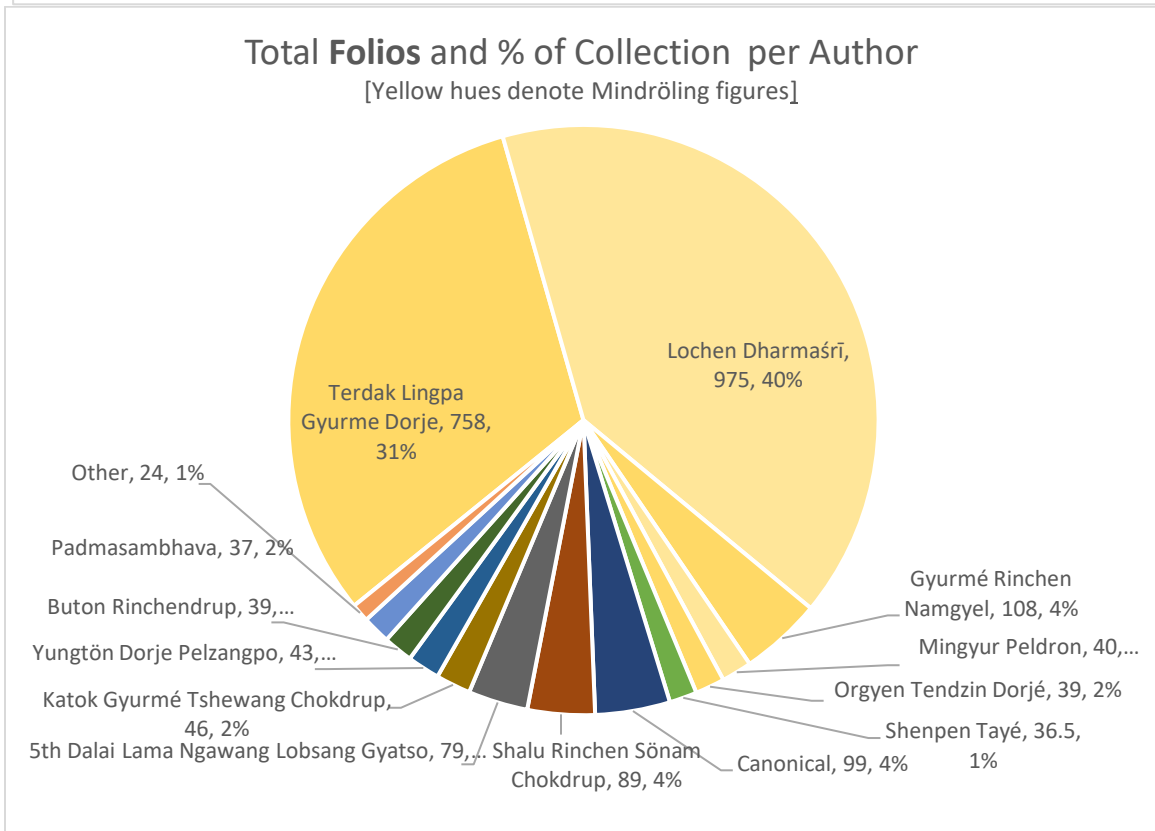
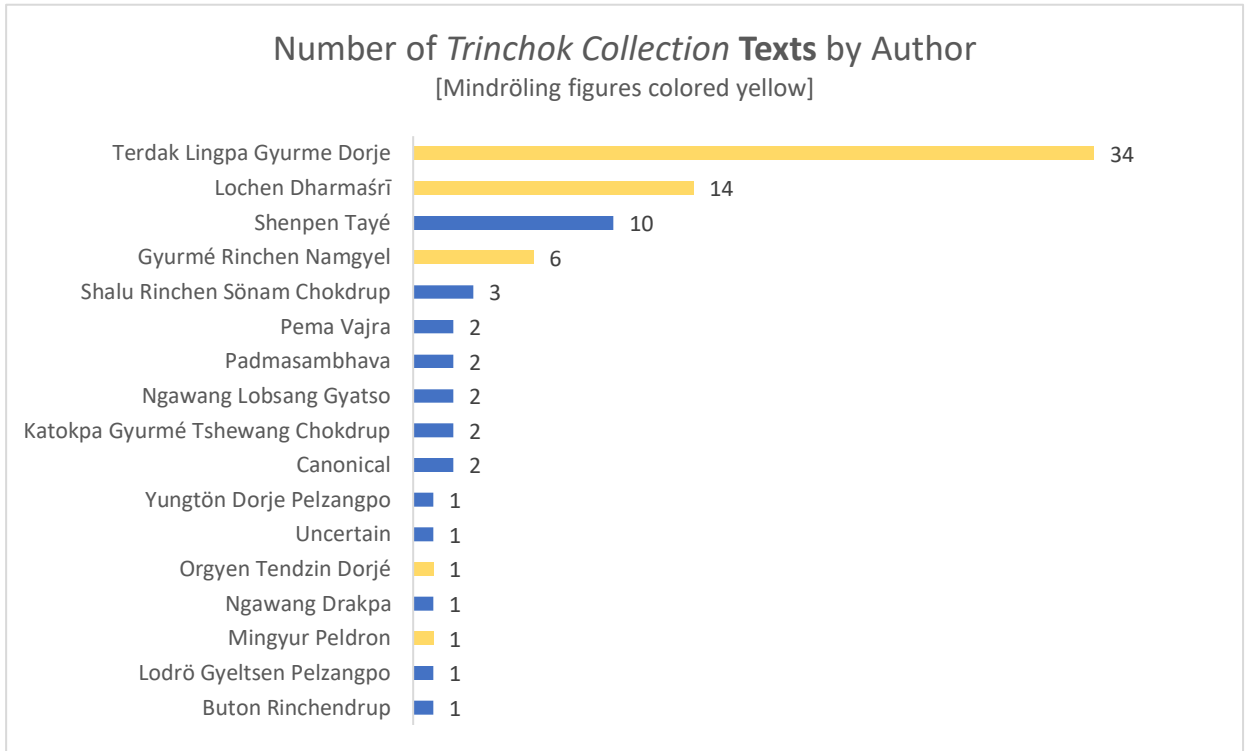
<sup>769</sup> ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho; 1617–1682.

<sup>770</sup> bu ston rin chen grub; 1290–1364.

<sup>771</sup> blo gros rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po; 1552–1624; P645.

<sup>772</sup> ngag dbang grags pa; d.u.

<sup>773</sup> g.yung ston rdo rje dpal bzang po; d.u.



As mentioned above, the *Trinchok Collection* generally includes four basic kinds of texts for each of the main tantric cycles: a lineage supplication (*brgyud 'debs*), an initiation ritual (*dbang chog*), a mandala ritual (*dkyil chog*), and an invocation ritual or *sādhana* (*sgrub thabs*). The tables below summarize the prevalence of various authors with regard to these four main types of texts.

Lineage Supplications (*brgyud 'debs*) 16 total texts:

- Shenpen Tayé (7 texts)<sup>774</sup>
- Terdak Lingpa Gyurmé Dorjé (4 texts)<sup>775\*</sup>
- Pema Vajra (2 texts)<sup>776</sup>
- Lochen Dharmasrī (1 text)\*
- 5th Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (1 text)\*<sup>777</sup>
- Lodrö Gyeltsen Pelzangpo<sup>778</sup> (1 text)

\* supplemental material added by Shenpen Tayé (as described in the *Catalog*)

Initiation Rituals (*dbang chog*) 21 total texts

- Terdak Lingpa Gyurmé Dorjé (11 texts)<sup>779</sup>
- Shenpen Tayé (2 texts)<sup>780</sup>
- Lochen Dharmasrī (2 texts)<sup>781</sup>
- Gyurmé Rinchen Namgyel (2 texts)<sup>782</sup>
- Padmasambhava (2 texts)<sup>783</sup>

<sup>774</sup> Texts no. 16, 20, 25, 29, 38, 50, 80.

<sup>775</sup> Texts no. 8, 42, 53, 73.

<sup>776</sup> Texts no. 63, 65.

<sup>777</sup> Supplemental material added by Shenpen Tayé and Lochen Dharmasrī.

<sup>778</sup> blo gros rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po; 1552–1624.

<sup>779</sup> Texts no. 19, 32, 45, 48, 52, 55, **66, 67, 68, 70, 71**, 82, 84 [bolded numbers denote texts that contain *both* an initiation ritual *and* an invocation ritual].

<sup>780</sup> Texts no. 49, 58

<sup>781</sup> Texts no. 36, 79.

<sup>782</sup> Texts no. 23, 41. Text no. 23 is attributed to Padmasambhava with the “ritual arrangement” by Rinchen Namgyel.

<sup>783</sup> Texts no. 23, 82. See previous note.

- Ngawang Drakpa (1 text)<sup>784</sup>
- Orgyen Tendzin Dorjé (1 text)<sup>785</sup>
- Yungtön Dorjé Pelzangpo (1 text)<sup>786</sup>

Mandala Rituals (*dkyil chog*) 13 total texts

- Terdak Lingpa Gyurmé Dorjé (6 texts)<sup>787</sup>
- Gyurmé Rinchen Namgyel (3 texts)<sup>788</sup>
- Shalu Rinchen Sönam Chokdrup (2 texts)<sup>789</sup>
- Lochen Dharmasrī (1 text)<sup>790</sup>
- Būton Rinchendrup (1 text)<sup>791</sup>

Invocation Rituals (*sgrub thabs*) 17 total texts<sup>792</sup>

- Terdak Lingpa Gyurmé Dorjé (12 texts)<sup>793</sup>
- Lochen Dharmasrī (2 texts)<sup>794</sup>
- Gyurmé Rinchen Namgyel (2 texts)<sup>795</sup>

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<sup>784</sup> Text no. 24.

<sup>785</sup> Text no. 28.

<sup>786</sup> Text no. 84.

<sup>787</sup> Texts no. 18, 31, 44, 47, 54, 76.

<sup>788</sup> Texts no. 22, 27, 40.

<sup>789</sup> Texts no. 13, 14.

<sup>790</sup> Text no. 77. The *Catalog* also lists him as having “written down” text no. 47, authored by Terdak Lingpa.

<sup>791</sup> Text no. 12.

<sup>792</sup> There is one text in this category, *na rag dong sprugs las phyag gi bkol byang* (text no. 56), that does not have an author attributed to it in either the *Catalog* or in the colophon of the text itself.

<sup>793</sup> Texts no. 17, 26, 30, 43, 46, 64, **66, 67, 68**, 69, **70, 71** [bolded numbers denote texts that contain *both* an initiation ritual *and* an invocation ritual].

<sup>794</sup> Texts no. 34, 74. Lochen also wrote *invocation frameworks* (*sgrub khog*) for these two cycles, which are included in the *Collection* as texts no. 35 & 75.

<sup>795</sup> Texts no. 21, 39.

### 5.3.3 Summary of the Contents of the *Trinchok Collection*

To summarize, Shenpen Tayé's *Trinchok Collection* was constructed from a core set of ritual texts on Mahāyoga and Anuyoga, which together comprise 65 of the *Collection*'s 85 total texts—the vast majority of which were written by figures from Mindröling. The other two tantric vehicles that are represented in the *Collection*—Kriyā-tantra and Atiyoga (*dzokchen*)—comprise only a small number of texts, all of which were authored by non-Mindröling figures. The biggest innovation with regards to the kama rubric is the inclusion of monastic and *prātimoska* rituals and non-esoteric canonical Indian texts.

## **5.4. How (and Why) the *Collection* Was Published**

The descriptive catalog (*karchak; dkar chag*)<sup>796</sup> for the *Trinchok Collection*, written by Pema Vajra upon the publication of the *Collection* in 1845, contains a detailed account of the circumstances that led to the compilation and publication of the *Collection*. In this section, I describe and analyze the *Catalog*'s account of how and why the *Trinchok Collection* came into being.

### 5.4.1. Inception: Searching for the Garland of Views (man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba)

The account in the *Catalog* begins with an episode that took place when Shenpen Tayé was residing at Dodrupchen's seat of Yarlung Pemakö—likely sometime between

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<sup>796</sup> [*Trinchok Collection* text no. 86]: *bka' ma theg rim dgu'i phrin chog mtha' dag phyogs gcig tu bsdu pa'i dkar chag yid bzhin dbang gi rgyal po'i bang mdzod*.



1819–1821.<sup>797</sup> One night, Shenpen Tayé had a dream in which someone gave him a book and told him, “this is the actual speech of the lotus teacher [Padmasambhava].”<sup>798</sup> The next day, Shenpen Tayé talked to his fellow practitioners, lamenting that “these days we are in the dark; we have no texts of the actual spoken teachings of the precious lopön [Padmasambhava]!”<sup>799</sup> In response, some of them said that previously there had existed a text composed by Padmasambhava called *Garland of Views: An Instruction* (*man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba*), along with a commentary, but that these had been lost and they had not been able to locate them.<sup>800</sup> Shenpen Tayé responded that he had just had a dream in which someone gave him such a book. Seeing the dream now as an omen, Shenpen Tayé suggested that they search the library. They all went and searched through the library, but were unable to find any such text. At a later point, however, Shenpen Tayé found some pages from the *Garland of Views* in a pile of dust and refuse under the dharma throne and upon reading it, “he understood that its words and their meaning were perfect.”<sup>801</sup> Due to this, Shenpen Tayé “developed a constant and strong intention that he should spread the Buddhist teachings in general, and the system of the Nyingma *kama*, in particular.”<sup>802</sup>

<sup>797</sup> The passage in the *dkar chag* reads: skyes bu dam pa de nyid/ sngar grub dbang bla ma'i gdan sar bzhugs yod pa'i skabs shig tu/, (*Trinchok Catalog*, 43a). Although no years are given, we can assume that this was during the 3-year period prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen's death (1819–1821) or shortly thereafter when Shenpen Tayé was known to have resided at Yarlung Pemakö.

<sup>798</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 43a: 'di slob dpon bad+ma'i gsung dngos yin.

<sup>799</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 43a: deng sang slob dpon chen po'i gsung dngos bka' mar gyur pa'i yig cha khung ldan 'dra 'dir yod min sogs gleng mol mdzad pas.

<sup>800</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 43a: khong rnam nas man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba rtsa 'grel bcas sngar yod kyang / de'i dpe stor nas yun ring song yang rtsad ma chod/ gzhan de 'dra cang med zer ba la/.

<sup>801</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 43b: slar chos khri'i 'og gi sa rdul rnam la gad bgyab pa'i khrod nas lta phreng gi dpe cha thon byung ba gzigs pas tshig don phun sum tshogs par 'dug pa la nges shes thun mong ma yin pa 'khrungs pa'i rkyen gyis/.

<sup>802</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 43b: rgyal bstan spyi dang /\_bye brag tu snga 'gyur bka' ma'i phyogs 'di ga dar ba zhig byed dgos dgongs pa'i thugs 'dun drag po rgyun chags su yod khar/.

Before we continue with the narrative, it might be useful to say a little more about this text, *Garland of Views*.

### ***Padmasambhava’s Garland of Views: An Instruction***

*Garland of Views: An Instruction (man ngag lta ba’i phreng ba)*<sup>803</sup> is a short text comprising about fifteen folio sides that provides a succinct and comprehensive outline of the Buddhist vehicles from a Nyingma perspective.<sup>804</sup> The text is attributed to Padmasambhava—being the only text that was *directly transmitted (gsung dngos bka’ ma)*<sup>805</sup> by Padmasambhava himself rather than hidden by him as a *treasure (gter ma)* to be discovered later. As the title suggests, the *Garland* presents a comprehensive doxography of the Buddhist vehicles,<sup>806</sup> each of which is defined by its particular *view (lta ba ; Skt.: darśana)*.

The text begins by enumerating and defining the four principal erroneous *worldly paths (’jig rten gyi khams)*—viz., the unreflective (*phyal ba*), the materialists (*rgyang ’phel ba*), the nihilists (*mur thug pa*), and the eternalists (*mu stegs pa*)—before laying out the Buddhist path, the “path that transcends the world” (*’jig rten las ’das pa’i lam*). This “world-transcending path” encompasses the entirety of Buddhist study and practice and is divided into a set or series of *vehicles (theg pa)*, which are presented *almost* identically to

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<sup>803</sup> In *snga ’gyur bka’ ma shin tu rgyas pa*, vol 73, 147–162 (Chengdu: si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2009).

<sup>804</sup> Samten Karmay’s, *The Great Perfection* (137–174) contains a study of *The Garland of Views*.

<sup>805</sup> The *Trinchok Catalog* has Shenpen Tayé describing the *Garland of Views* as the “actual speech of the lotus teacher” (*slob dpon pad+ma’i gsung dngos*, 43a).

<sup>806</sup> Although, as explained below, the text only presents seven vehicles, with the final and highest vehicle—“the vehicle of inner yoga, the tantra of method (*rnal ’byor nang pa thabs kyi rgyud kyit heg pa*)—being subdivided into three distinct “modes” (*tshul*).

the *nine vehicle* presentation described above. The difference is that the *Garland*, instead of dividing up the three *inner tantras* into three separate vehicles, presents them all as part of the vehicle of “*inner yoga, the tantra of method*” (*rnal 'byor nang pa thabs kyi rgyud*). This vehicle is then further subdivided into three *modes* (*tshul*): the *mode of generation* (*b skyed pa 'i tshul*), the *mode of perfection* (*rdzogs pa 'i tshul*), and the *mode of Great Perfection* (*rdzogs pa chen po 'i tshul*). Describing these as “modes” rather than distinct vehicles is significant because the text presents the vehicles as being principally defined by their own particular *view* (*lta ba*), introducing each in turn with the phrase, “the view of those who have entered the vehicle of \_\_\_\_\_ is as follows: [...]”<sup>807</sup>

One may ask why the *Garland of Views* was not, itself, included in the *Trinchok Collection*, given that it seems to have been the generative impetus for the entire project. The answer may lie in the fact that the *Garland* diverges in many respects from the *Trinchok Collection*'s presentation of the nine vehicles as derived from the Mindröling ritual initiation system, as well as from Shenpen Tayé's overarching gradualist approach to Buddhist practice. We can first note some differences in the specific presentation of the vehicles of the *Garland* and those of the *Trinchok Collection*. Specifically, as stated above, the *Garland* has seven vehicles with the last subdivided into different modes. Because the *Trinchok Collection* is primarily comprised of ritual texts derived from the Mindröling sūtra-initiation system, it may have been thought that the *Garland*'s divergent presentation of the Nyingma vehicles would be inappropriate and would interfere with the ritual coherence of the *Trinchok Collection* as a whole.

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<sup>807</sup> [ . . . ] theg pa la zhugs pa rnam kyi lta ba ni, 150.

### 5.4.2. Meeting of Minds: Pema Wangyel Dorjé and the Mindröling Connection

Moving back to our historical narrative, we hear that in or about 1831, during Shenpen Tayé’s first recorded trip to Central and Southern Tibet, he had what would turn out to be a momentous meeting with the 4<sup>th</sup> Pari (*pad [=dpal] ri*) Tulku, Rikdzin Pema Wangyel Dorjé (rig ‘dzin pad+ma dbang rgyal rdo rje, 1779–1841),<sup>808</sup> at the latter’s seat of Lalung (*lha lung*) in Southern Tibet. According to a biography<sup>809</sup> written in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Pema Wangyel Dorjé was born in Yidong Samang (yid ‘ong sa mang) in the region of Powo (spo bo) in South Eastern Tibet and, having been recognized and enthroned as the 4<sup>th</sup> Pari Tulku, he was sent to Mindröling for his education and training. Interestingly, the institutional histories of Mindröling list a “Gyurmé Pema Wangyel” as being the sixth Minling Trichen (throne holder).<sup>810</sup> Although no dates are given in the sources cited, the tenure of the 6<sup>th</sup> Trichen would have been sometime around this period in the early-to-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, raising the possibility that the Pema Wangyel Dorjé that Shenpen Tayé met in 1831 may have been the throne holder of Mindröling.

However, a number of facts suggest otherwise. Firstly, the brief biography of the 4<sup>th</sup> Pari Tulku Pema Wangyel Dorjé written by Kunzang Ngedön Longyang (cited above)

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<sup>808</sup> For a translation of a brief biography of Pema Wangyel Dorjé, see Franz-Karl Ehrhard, “Turning the Wheel of the Dharma in Zhing Sa Va Lung: The dPal Ri sPrul sKus (17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries),” *Bulletin of Tibetology* 44, no. 1-2 (2008): 12–14.

<sup>809</sup> Kunzang Ngedön Longyang (kun bzang nges don klong yangs), *bod du byung ba’i gsang sngags snga ’gyur gyi bstan ’dzin skyes mchog rim byon gyi rnam thar nor bu’i do shal’*, BDRC W19708, (Dalhousie, India: Damchoe Sangpo, 1975), 319–321. English translation in Ehrhard, “Turning the Wheel of the Dharma in Zhing Sa Va Lung,” 12–14.

<sup>810</sup> Pema Wangdu (padma dbang ’dus; b. 1933). *o rgyan smin grol gling gi dkar chag*. BDRC W20250. 1 vols. pe cin: krung go’i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1992, 128. Also see Mindrolling Jetsün Khandro Rinpoché, *Mindrolling History Project*, 96.

makes no mention whatsoever that its subject was the Minling Trichen. Secondly, the succession of the Minling Trichens followed a system of primogeniture (passing from father to eldest son) and, indeed, the 6<sup>th</sup> Minling Trichen Pema Wangyel is known to have been the eldest son of the 5<sup>th</sup> Trichen, Gyurmé Trinlé Namgyel (*'gyur med phrin las rnam rgyal*).<sup>811</sup> However, in the biography of Pema Wangyel Dorjé, he is described as going to Mindröling and “offering a lock of his hair to the throne holder, Gyurmé Trinlé Namgyel,”<sup>812</sup> with no mention or insinuation that Gyurmé Trinlé Namgyel was his father. Thirdly, other than the strong connection that Pema Wangyel Dorjé had with Mindröling, there is virtually no other overlap between the biography of Pema Wangyel Dorjé and the descriptions of the 6<sup>th</sup> Trichen Pema Wangyel in the institutional histories of Mindröling—none of which mention, for example, that he might have been the Pari Tulku, nor that he was born in Powo, nor that he gained great fame and political influence by doing rituals in Western Tibet to turn back the invading armies of the Dogra Raja of Jammu.<sup>813</sup> For these reasons, it appears to be most likely that the Pema Wangyel Dorjé that Shenpen Tayé met was not the 6<sup>th</sup> Trichen.

But even if the person encountered by Shenpen Tayé at Lhalung was not the actual throne holder of Mindröling, what is certain is that he was an important and influential figure within the wider orbit of Mindröling. This is clear from the descriptions of Pema Wangyel Dorjé’s early study at Mindröling provided in his biography, as well as

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<sup>811</sup> Mindrolling Jetsün Khandro Rinpoché, *Mindrolling History Project*, 96.

<sup>812</sup> Kunzang Ngedön, *nor bu'i do shal*, 319: *smin gling du khri rin po che 'gyur med phrin las rnam rgyal la gtsug phud phul/*.

<sup>813</sup> This was during the Tibetan-Dogra war that took place between 1834 and 1842 and involved a number of battles and skirmishes in the Western Tibetan region of Ngari (*mnga' ris*). See Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967) 176-180.

from the specifics of Pema Wangyel Dorjé and his meeting with Shenpen Tayé as described in Pema Vajra's *Trinchok Catalog*.

The *Trinchok Catalog* describes this initial meeting thus:

Then, [Shenpen Tayé] went to Central Tibet, and, travelling to the regions of Pu[wo] Kong[po], he arrived at Lhalung Pari, a branch of Mindröling monastery, where he met the excellent tulku Rigdzin Pema Wangyel Dorjé. The two engaged in a detailed and articulate conversation and their minds merged into one. Thereupon, [Pema Wangyel] felt that [Shenpen Tayé] shared the same inner, outer, and secret qualities and the actions of exposition, debate, and composition as the great tertön Dharma king [Terdak Lingpa] himself—and that they were actually the same person. Because of this, Pema Wangyel Dorjé installed Shenpen Tayé on a lion throne and gave him all the vestments such as a crown and a robe and performed the extensive long-life ritual within the mandala of the innermost deathless long-life sādhana.<sup>814</sup>

In other words, Shenpen Tayé was recognized by Pema Wangyel Dorjé as an emanation of the great Mindröling founder Terdak Lingpa. We should pause here for a moment to consider what that means exactly. As mentioned above, the system of succession of Mindröling's throne holders did not follow the *tulku* (*sprul sku*) model, whereby a rebirth of the previous throne holder is identified following his or her death. In this system, the gap in leadership between the death of the former throne holder and the reincarnation's age of majority (usually recognized as being eighteen years of age), is filled either by the rule of an interim regent (as is the case with the Dalai Lama incarnations), or by the rule

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<sup>814</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 43b–44a: dbus phebs snga ma spu kong brgyud nas phebs skabs/ sngar dwags brgyud pa'i gdan sa physis smin grol gling ba'i dgon lag tu gyur pa lha lung pad ri ru byon/ der mchog gi sprul ba'i sku rig 'dzin pad+ma dbang rgyal rdo rje dang zhal mjal/ legs bshad kyi 'bel gtam zhib tu byas pas thugs yid gcig 'dres su gyur cing phyi nang gsang ba'i yon tan dang / 'chad rtsod rtsom pa'i phrin las sogs gang nas kyang gter chen chos kyi rgyal po dngos dang tha mi dad par dgongs te/ rje de nyid kyi dbu zhwa dang khri ber bcas sku la phul te mi 'jigs seng ge'i khri la mnga' gsol/ tshe sgrub 'chi med yang snying gi dkyil 'khor du brtan bzhugs kyi cho ga rgyas par mdzad pa dang bstun/.

of a parallel series of incarnations (as was the case at with the Drupwang and Pönlop incarnations at Dzokchen). At Mindröling, however, the office of throne holder was passed down from father to eldest son. Such a system allowed for a much more flexible and pluralistic conception of emanations or tulkus, allowing for multiple recognitions and for longer time gaps between the death of a figure and the birth of their emanation(s). The reasons for Pema Wangyel Dorjé's recognition of Shenpen Tayé as an emanation of Terdak Lingpa, becomes evident in what immediately followed:

Then [Pema Wangyel Dorjé] said, “Those ritual arrangements (*chog khrigs*) already established previously according to the *sādhanas* of the three inner Nyingma tantras, and those ritual arrangements not yet established were composed by the lord himself [Terdak Lingpa] and collected into a single system. If there is a chance to collect the propagation of the empowerments and reading transmissions [of these], it would be of great benefit, making it more straight forward to find those lineages, and would be necessary to prevent the decline of the Buddhist teachings in the future.”<sup>815</sup>

Pema Wangyel Dorjé then spontaneously composed a series of reverential verses of petition to Shenpen Tayé, which were reproduced in an abridged form in the *Trinchok Catalog*, within which Pema Wangyel reveals that his teacher, Tseten Gyalpo had asked him to complete that exact project. Pema Wangyel reports that Tseten Gyalpo told him that “It would be beneficial to compile into a single collection the stream of empowerments and oral transmissions of the Nyingma Kama.”<sup>816</sup>

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<sup>815</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 44a: snga 'gyur nang rgyud sde gsum gyi cho ga'i rim pa ltar chog khrigs yod pa rnam sor bzahag dang / med pa rnam rje nyid kyis ljags sgrigs mdzad nas mtha' dag phyogs gcig tu bsdus te dbang lung gi 'chad spel sogs chun gcig tu byed rgyu zhig byung na/ dngos su de dag gi rgyun btsal sla ba dang / brgyud nas bstan pa mi nyams pa'i gtsas su dgos pa dang / phan cha shin tu che bar 'dug ces nan tan chen pos zhu mchid tshigs bcad kyi lam nas spel ba 'di ltar/.

<sup>816</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 46a: snga 'gyur bka' ma'i dbang lung rgyun// phyogs gcig bsdebs na bstan la phan//.

The *Trinchok Catalog* then moves on to describe a subsequent meeting with the actual head of Mindröling, Gyurmé Sangyé Kunga (‘gyur med sangs rgyas kun dga’; d.u.):

Subsequently, Shenpen Tayé met with the sixth successive throne holder (i.e., the 7<sup>th</sup> [6+the first]) of Orgyen Mindröling, Gyurmé Sangyé Kunga, who also gave Shenpen Tayé gifts—including a kata beautifully painted with the [8] auspicious symbols, a golden embroidered vest, and some robes of fine cloth—and fervently entreated him in the same manner [as had Pema Wangyel Dorjé].<sup>817</sup>

In addition to these inducements by influential *human* figures, the *Catalog* also describes the additional supernatural exhortation:

And during the time he was residing in Central Tibet, [Shenpen Tayé] had a dream in which a woman that he thought was his mother said, ‘Look!’ And he looked and saw that everything appeared to be filled with many huge radiant syllables. The woman threw a blazing, golden dorjé into the sky three times right in front of him. On the third time, the dorjé stayed floating in the sky, jumping to-and-fro wherever the woman pointed her wrathful finger. He understood this as the dākinī telling him to ‘venerate the Vajrayāna teachings!’<sup>818</sup>

The above episodes act as a kind of statement of authorial intent, or “reasons to compose”—or, in this case, compile and edit. These episodes also emphasize and buttress the *authority* of Shenpen Tayé in his endeavor to complete such a massive editorial and authorial undertaking.

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<sup>817</sup>*Trinchok Catalog*, 46b: slad nas o rgyan smin grol gling ba'i gdung 'dzin khri rabs drug pa 'gyur med sangs rgyas kun dga'i zhal snga nas kyang / bkra shis pa'i re kha bkra ba'i mdzod btags/ stod 'gag gser jus ma/ bzang phrug gi na bza' rnam kyis skyes dang bcas te/ nye bar bskul bas mtshams sbyar/.

<sup>818</sup>*Trinchok Catalog*, 46b: gzhan yang dbus phyogs su bzhugs yod pa'i skabs shig gi mnal lam du/ rje nyid kyis ma yum de yin snyams pa'i bud med zhig gis ltos dang zer/ gzigs pas/ gang snang thams cad yig 'bru shin tu che ba mang pos gang nas khra chem chem 'dug pa la/ bud med des gser gyi rdo rje 'od 'bar ba zhig mdun thad kyis nam mkhar lan gsum 'phang ba'i mthar bar snang der rten med du bsdad song ba/ sdigs mdzub kyis brda' thabs gang du bstan pa'i phyogs der hril hril 'gro ba zhig gzigs pas/ rdo rje theg pa'i bstan la ri mor gyis shig ces mkha' 'gros brdas bskul bar thugs su chud/.



It is interesting to note, however, that in all three of the exhortations detailed above, the interlocutors are specifically focused on *tantric* material: in the case of Pema Wangyel, the focus is on collecting “ritual arrangements (*chog khrigs*) already established previously according to the *sādhana*s of the three inner Nyingma tantras, and those ritual arrangements not yet established,” and Gyurmé Sangyé Kunga is described as repeating this request. In the visionary episode, Shenpen Tayé interprets the *dākinī* as asking him to, “venerate the Vajrayāna teachings!” In this light, it is clear that the decision to include monastic rituals and other non-tantric material—such as the foundational Indian philosophical treatise *Way of the Bodhisattva*—in the *Collection* did not come from the requestors and did not seem to be part of the project as initially conceived and requested by the pair of Mindröling-associated figures (or tantric *dākinīs*). All of this provides further evidence that it was Shenpen Tayé, himself, who guided and shaped the project and is the primary figure responsible for the final form that it took.

#### 5.4.3. Sourcing and Compiling the Texts and Their Lineages

The first thing that Shenpen Tayé would have to do in order to begin compiling and editing a comprehensive anthology of Nyingma *kama* ritual cycles from Mindröling, was to find the actual texts themselves. The *Trinchok Catalog* states that at that time, although a thorough search had been done throughout Central and Southern Tibet (*dbus gtsang*), many of the Nyingma *kama* textual cycles—both the transmissions and the texts themselves—had been lost and could not be located.<sup>819</sup> Jake Dalton describes how many

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<sup>819</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 46b: snga 'gyur bka' ma'i skor gyi dpe rgyun dkon rigs nmams dbus gtsang kun tu btsal bas ma rnyed par yod pa'i tshe/.

of the texts that were compiled and transmitted by Terdak Lingpa and his brother, Lochen Dharmasri, had been destroyed or otherwise lost in the 1717 destruction of Mindröling by the Dzungar Mongols.<sup>820</sup>

Shenpen Tayé began his search at the source—Mindröling. The *Catalog* describes this initial phase of the project thus:

While staying at Min[dro]ling, [Shenpen Tayé] had a dream in which he was told that some of [the rare *kama* texts] were right there in the library, so he went and read through all the books there in a single day, not returning to his rooms to sleep. That next night, he searched still more and heard a [voice] saying, ‘They are definitely here!’ He looked again and discovered two volumes containing works on the *Gyutrül Tramo* cycle<sup>821</sup> and other subjects. In this and in other ways, Shenpen Tayé relied on the *dākinīs* and *dharmapālas*, who exhorted him and displayed amazing signs and enlightened actions again and again.<sup>822</sup>

### ***Lineage Transmissions***

Almost as important as finding the physical texts themselves, was the need for Shenpen Tayé to obtain the appropriate reading transmissions (*lung*) and empowerments (*dbang*) from verified lineage holders for all the texts. In short, it was not enough to simply find the physical texts themselves; the tantric nature of most of these texts requires that anyone who wants to study and practice these texts—never mind editing and publishing them—would need to obtain the ritual permission to do so from someone who

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<sup>820</sup> *The Gathering of Intentions*, pdf 147.

<sup>821</sup> i.e. *Mayajala Guhyagarbha*. Here, *gyütrul tramo* refers to some minor texts on Mahayoga/Guyhagarbha.

<sup>822</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 46b–47a: smin gling du bzhugs skabs cha shas tsam 'di ga'i dpe mdzod du yod zer ba zhig gzims lam du byung nas nyin gcig thog thag la phyag dpe thams cad klog kyang rnyed rgyu ma byung bar slar gzims shag tu phebs/ de nub kyang da dung tshol dang nges par yod zer ba zhig gsan nas slar yang btsal bas sgyu 'phrul phra mo'i skor sogs kyi pu sti gnyis tsam phyag tu 'byor/ de la sogs pa mkha' 'gro dang chos skyong rnams kyis kyang bskul ma dang phrin las sgrub pa'i rtags mtshan ngo mtshar ba mang po yang yang byung bar brten/.

has themselves received these from a holder of that lineage. This permission is granted in a ritual *empowerment*, known as a *wang* (*dbang* [*bskur*]; Skt.: *abhiṣeka*), which is usually accompanied by the oral *reading transmission* (*lung*) of the text in question and *practical guidance* (*tri*; *khrid*).<sup>823</sup> The imperative here is to be able to trace the *wang-lung-tri* all the way back to the originator of the text or practice in question. For this reason, Tibetan authors often provide lineage lists that explicitly demonstrate how they fit into the lineage transmission of the cycle in question.

The *Trinchok Catalog* has a section where the lineages for all the texts included in the collection are listed along with partial lists of successive lineage holders. I say “partial,” because the lineage lists provided by Pema Vajra in the *Catalog* all generally start with the founding figure of the lineage—usually an Indian figure, sometimes a cosmic Buddha—and then list successive figures to whom the lineage was directly passed. In the *Catalog*, however, the lineage lists provide only the first five to ten of the early lineage holders before simply saying, “and then it came down in stages to the lord lama [Shenpen Tayé].”<sup>824</sup> Such a formula leaves us without information about *who* specifically transmitted these various lineages to Shenpen Tayé.

Fortunately, we have another source written a few decades later that *does* provide us with this information. As I will discuss in more detail below, Shenpen Tayé’s *Trinchok Collection* was soon expanded to 25 volumes and published at Pelyul (*dpal yul*) Monastery in or around 1875 by Pema Dongak Tendzin (*pad+ma mdo sngags bstan*

<sup>823</sup> For a comprehensive treatment of Tibetan Buddhist tantric empowerment, see Alex Wilding, “Some Aspects of Initiation,” in *The Tibet Journal* 3, no. 4 (1978): 34–40. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43299919>.

<sup>824</sup> *Trinchok Catalog* 29b: [. . .] *sogs nas rim par rje bla ma’i bar du’o/*

‘dzin; 1830–1893). This expanded *kama* collection contained all of the texts contained in Shenpen Tayé’s *Trinchok Collection* along with many additions (described in sec. 5.5.2 below). Pema Dongak’s 25-volume collection also has an accompanying catalog, entitled *A Source of Glory and Auspiciousness, A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of the Teachings: Addenda and Catalog for “The Rituals of Enlightened Activity of the Nine Vehicles of the Early Translations of the Buddha’s Teachings.”*<sup>825</sup> It seems that this catalog was published years later in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Thubten Shedrup Gyatso (*thub bstan bshad sgrub rgya mtsho*; 1879–1961). This catalog is similar in many ways to Pema Vajra’s *Trinchok Catalog*. One difference, however, is that the later catalog provides much more detailed and complete lineage lists for its constituent texts than does Pema Vajra’s *Catalog*. A close study of these lineage lists reveals that Shenpen Tayé shows up 16 times in these lists. Because these lists show us *from whom* Shenpen Tayé received these lineages (as well as *to whom* he transmitted them), they allow us to at least partially reconstruct Shenpen Tayé’s sources for the various lineages of the texts in the earlier *Trinchok Collection*. Below is a detailed listing of the mentions of Shenpen Tayé in the lineage lists of Thubten Shedrup’s *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings* along with the persons who transmitted the lineage to Shenpen Tayé and the person to whom Shenpen Tayé transferred it (and from there down to Pema Dongak Tendzin):

**Vinaya:**

*The Early Translation lineage of the vows of individual liberation:*

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<sup>825</sup> “rgyal bstan snga 'gyur bka' ma theg rim dgu'i phrin chog gzhung phyi mo rnam dang bcas pa'i dkar chag bstan pa rgya mtsho'i gru gzings bkra shis dpal brgya'i 'byung gnas,” In *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa/*. BDRC W1PD100944. Vol. 133: 153 - 458. chengdu: si khron dpe skrun tshogs pa/ si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

Sengdruk Pema Tashi > Shenpen Tayé<sup>826</sup> > Khenpo Konchok Özer<sup>827</sup>

*Explanatory lineage of the Vinaya ('dul ba'i bshad rgyun):*

Gendün Dargye<sup>828</sup> > Shenpen Tayé (List ends with Shenpen Tayé)<sup>829</sup>

**Kriyā-tantra:**

*The ritual system of the Eight Medicine Deity Sugatas (bder gshegs sman lha brgyad):*<sup>830</sup>

Sengdruk Pema Tashi > Shenpen Tayé (List ends with Shenpen Tayé)<sup>831</sup>

**Mahāyoga:**

*Mañjuśrī as Red Yamāri ('jam dpal gshed dmar po):*

Pema Wangyel Dorje > Shenpen Tayé > Pema Vajra<sup>832</sup>

*Mañjuśrī as Black Yamāntaka ('jam dpal kha thun nag po):*

Sengdruk Pema Tashi > Shenpen Tayé > Pema Vajra<sup>833</sup>

*Display of Vajrakīlaya Tantra (phur pa rol pa'i rgyud) in the tradition of Rog Sherab:*

<sup>826</sup> Here, Shenpen Tayé's monastic ordination name, thub bstan pad+ma rgyas pa'i nyin byed, is used.

<sup>827</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 322: bstan pa'i gzhi ma 'dul ba so thar sdom brgyud la [. . .] 'dir phyi ma snga 'gyur lugs kyi brgyud pa ni/ [. . .] rdzogs chen mkhan po pad+ma bkra shis/ dge mang rin po che thub bstan pad+ma rgyas pa'i nyin byed/ mkhan po dkon mchog 'od zer/. Note, that here, the catalog gives Shenpen Tayé's ordination name (thub bstan pad+ma rgyas pa'i nyin che) in the list.

<sup>828</sup> *dge 'dun dar rgyas*; 1786–c.1850s/60s; BDRC [P3577](#). A major Gelukpa scholastic figure, who taught extensively at the tantric college of the Gelukpa monastery of Labrang (*bla brang*) and acted as the 43<sup>rd</sup> throne holder of Labrang.

<sup>829</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 322, 324: 'dul ba'i bshad rgyun ni [. . .] dge 'dun dar rgyas/ gzhan phan mtha' yas so//.

<sup>830</sup> It is curious that the *Boat* catalog gives the lineage as “*bder gshegs sman lha brgyad*” (“The eight Sugatas who are medicine gods”), which does not appear in any of the texts or cycles listed anywhere else in the catalog (or in any other Nyingma *kama* collection as far as I can tell). Perhaps *sman lha* was a misspelling of *sman bla* (Bhaiṣajyaguru, i.e., Medicine Buddha). The only reference to *bder gshegs sman lha brgyad* that I could find anywhere is to an “obscure” retinue of Tibetan Bön deities described by Masahide Mori in his study “The Bon Deities Depicted in the Wall Paintings in the Bon-brgya Monastery,” in *New Horizons in Bon Studies*, pp. 509-549, (Osaka, Japan: National Museum of Ethnology, 2000): “sMan-lha bde-gshegs-brgyad (The Eight bDe-gshegs, who are Medicine gods) [Plate 10]. The Eight bDe-gshegs are obscure. In the thang ka one large deity is in the center and seven smaller deities are around him. All of them have the earth touching hand posture (*bhūmisparśamudrā*) with their right hands and hold a medicine jar each in their left hands on the left thighs” (511).

<sup>831</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 328–329: bder gshegs sman lha brgyad kyi cho ga'i brgyud pa ni/ pad+ma bkra shis/ gzhan phan mtha' yas/ 'dis brgyud pa ma myed/.

<sup>832</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 342–343: 'jam dpal ma ru rtse gshed dmar ru mtshon dmar po'i brgyud pa ni/ [. . .] pad sprul rin po che rig 'dzin pad+ma dbang rgyal rdo rje/ rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha' yas/ mkhan chen pad+ma badz+ra/ [. . .].

<sup>833</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 344, 346: 'jam dpal gshin rje gshed nag po kha thun gyi brgyud pa pad+ma mang+ga/ gzhan phan mtha' yas man 'dra/. In this and the next entry, the lineage list simply has *man 'dra* (“like before”), which I interpret that the list continues and concludes the same as the previous list that had Shenpen Tayé in it (the Mañjuśrī as Red Yamāri lineage that has Shenpen Tayé passing the lineage on to Pema Vajra).

Pema Wangyel Dorje > Shenpen Tayé > Pema Vajra<sup>834</sup>

*The set of Vajrakīlaya commentaries called “Black Myriad” (‘bum nag):*<sup>835</sup>

Sengdruk Pema Tashi > Shenpen Tayé > Pema Vajra<sup>836</sup>

*Rongzom tradition of Vajrakīlaya: reading transmission (po ti’i lung):*

Pema Wangyel Dorje > Shenpen Tayé > Pema Vajra<sup>837</sup>

*General Tantras of the Magical Net (spyi rgyud sgyu ‘phrul drwa ba): empowerment lineage:*

Sengdruk Pema Tashi > Shenpen Tayé > Pema Vajra<sup>838</sup>

*General Tantras of the Magical Net: wrathful deities empowerment:*

1st Dodrupchen<sup>839</sup> > Shenpen Tayé > Pema Vajra<sup>840</sup>

*General Tantras of the Magical Net: explanatory lineage of Longchenpa:*

Sengdruk Pema Tashi > Shenpen Tayé > Pema Vajra<sup>841</sup>

*The confessional practice “Dredging the depths of hell” (na rag[raka] dong sprungs):*

1st Dodrupchen > Shenpen Tayé > Khyentsé Wangpo / Pema Vajra<sup>842</sup>

**Atiyoga: mind class (sems sde):**

*The lineage of Dzokchen Atiyoga:*

<sup>834</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 348–349: phrin las phur pa rol pa’i rgyud la/ [. . .] phur pa rog lugs su grags pa’i brgyud pa ni/ [. . .] pad+ma dbang rgyal/ gzhan phan mtha’ yas man ‘dra/.

<sup>835</sup> This is likely the pair of commentaries on the practice of Vajrakīlaya attributed to Padmasambhava entitled *phur pa’i ‘grel chen bdud rtsi dri med* ([BDRC W27485](#)).

<sup>836</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 349–350: rdo rje phur pa’i bshad pa ‘bum nag slob dpon rnam gsum dgongs pa mkhar chen bza’ la brgyud pa/ [. . .] pad+ma bkra shis/ gzhan phan mtha’ yas/ pad+ma rdo rje/.

<sup>837</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 350–351: rong zom lugs kyi phur pa’i brgyud pa ni/ [. . .] po ti’i lung brgyud ni/ [. . .] rig ‘dzin pad+ma dbang rgyal rdo rje/ rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha’ yas/ mkhan pad+ma badz+ra/.

<sup>838</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 352–353: spyi rgyud sgyu ‘phrul drwa ba’i skor la/ dang po dbang ka’i brgyud pa ni/ [. . .] pad+ma bkra shis/ gzhan phan mtha’ yas/ dam chos ‘od zer/.

<sup>839</sup> Here, the list uses a common name of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen, Jangchub Dorjé [Nyingpo]. For example, see chapter 2, sec 1.6 above, where Shenpen Tayé uses this name to refer to the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen.

<sup>840</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 356: khro bo’i dbang brgyud ni/ [. . .] byang sems rdo rje snying po/ gzhan phan mtha’ yas/ mkhan pad+ma dam chos ‘od zer/.

<sup>841</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 357–358: sgyu ‘phrul don khrid snying po kun mkhyen klong chen pa’i gsung ltar zhib khrid kyi brgyud pa ni/ [. . .] pad+ma mang+ga/ gzhan phan mtha’ yas man sgyu ‘phrul ltar ro//.

<sup>842</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 358–359: rnal ‘byor spyi khros na rag dong sprungs skor gyi brgyud pa ni/ [. . .] byang sems rdo rje snying po/ gzhan phan mtha’ yas pad+ma rdo rje/ mkhyen brtse’i dbang po. The text may be missing a sheg (།) in between “gzhan phan mtha’ yas” and “pad+ma rdo rje,” in which case, the lineage would pass from Shenpen Tayé to Pema Dorjé (Vajra) and then to Khyentsé Wangpo.

Rigdzin Zangpo<sup>843</sup> > Shenpen Tayé > Pema Vajra<sup>844</sup>

*The 18 Thoughts of the mind class (sems sde bco brgyad kyi dgongs)* by Mokton Dorjé Pelzang:<sup>845</sup>

Sengdruk Pema Tashi > Shenpen Tayé > Khyentsé Wangpo<sup>846</sup>

*The A-ro system of mind class: close lineage (nye brgyud):*

Sengdruk Pema Tashi > Shenpen Tayé > Jamgön Kongtrül<sup>847</sup>

**Atiyoga: expanse class (*klong sde*):**

*Vajra Bridge (rdo rje zam pa) system:*

Sengdruk Pema Tashi > Shenpen Tayé > “The Omniscient Lama Manjoghosha”<sup>848</sup>

**Atiyoga: practice instruction class (*man ngag sde*):**

*Longchenpa’s Lama Yangtik (bla ma yang tik) guidance on the Vimala Nyingtik (bi ma la’i snying tik): lineage from Terdak Lingpa:*

Mingyur Namkhai Dorjé > Shenpen Tayé > Pema Vajra<sup>849</sup>

*Longchenpa’s Lama Yangtik guidance on the Vimala Nyingtik: lineage through Pema Rikdzin and the 1st Dodrupchen:*

<sup>843</sup> Rig ‘dzin bzang po (d.u). This is most likely the 6<sup>th</sup> Minling Khenchen of Mindröling Monastery from whom Sengdruk Pema Tashi was said to have received monastic ordination.

<sup>844</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 366–367: rdzogs chen a ti yo ga’i brgyud pa ni/ [. . .] rig ‘dzin bzang po/ gzhan phan rig pa’i rdo rje/ mkhan pad+ma badz+ra/.

<sup>845</sup> The text associated with this entry (sems sde ma bu bco brgyad kyi dgongs pa ngo sprod pa’i thabs/ rig pa rtsal gyi dbang bco brgyad bskur ba’i chog khrigs bla ma’i zhal gdams; *Trinchok Collection* text no. 84) is listed on BDRC.org as being authored by rmog ston rdo rje dpal (d.u.; P7682), who was a 15<sup>th</sup>-century figure associated with Katok. Another possibility is g.yung ston rdo rje dpal (1284–1365; [BDRC P1454](#)).

<sup>846</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 373, 375: gsum pa rdzogs pa chen po a ti yo ga’i sems phyogs kyi skor la sems sde ma bu bco brgyad kyi dgongs pa btsan thabs su ngo sprad pa rig pa’i rtsal dbang bco brgyad kaH thog pa rmog ston rdo rje dpal bzang gi yig cha’i steng nas bskur ba’i brgyud pa ni/ [. . .] pad+ma bkra shis/ gzhan phan mtha’ yas/ ‘jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse/.

<sup>847</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 378–380: rdzogs pa chen po sems sde khams lugs a ro snyan brgyud kyi khrid zhwa dmar mkha’ spyod dbang pos mdzad pa’i mkha’ dbyings snying po’i don khrid kyi brgyud pa ni/ [. . .] nye brgyud ni/ [. . .] mkhan pad+ma bkra shis/ gzhan phan mtha’ yas/ kun mkhyen gsum pa blo gros mtha’ yas/.

<sup>848</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 380, 382: rdzogs pa chen po nang klong sde’i skor la/ klong chen rab ‘byams rgyal po’i rgyud sogs kyi dgongs pa klong sde rdo rje zam pa pu sti gnyis/ zhwa dmar spyan snga chos grags kyi snyan brgyud khrid yig sogs dbang lung khrid gsum yongs rdzogs kyi brgyud pa ni/ [. . .] byang sems pad+ma mang+ga la/ mkhas grub rig pa’i rdo rje/ kun mkhyen bla ma many+dzu g+ho Sha las/. Note here, Shenpen Tayé is referred to as Khedrup Rigpe Dorjé.

<sup>849</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 382–383: gsum pa gsang ba ‘od gsal rdzogs pa chen po man ngag sde/ bi ma la’i snying thig gzhung dang / de’i dgongs gnad gsal bar ston pa kun mkhyen klong chen rab ‘byams bzang pos mdzad pa’i bla ma yang tig yid bzhin nor bu bcas kyi dbang lung khrid gsum gyi brgyud pa ni/ [. . .] mi ‘gyur nam mkha’i rdo rje/ gzhan phan mtha’ yas/ mkhan chen pad+ma badz+ra/.

Sengdruk Pema Tashi > Shenpen Tayé > Pema Vajra<sup>850</sup>

*Longchenpa's Lama Yangtik guidance on the Vimala Nyingtik: "close lineage" (nye brgyud) from Jikmé Lingpa:*

1st Dodrupchen > Shenpen Tayé > Pema Vajra<sup>851</sup>

These lineage lists show that Shenpen Tayé was a key lineage holder of the *kama* teachings. They also emphasize the importance of Sengdruk Pema Tashi, who transmitted to Shenpen Tayé the majority of the lineages listed here. Also featured prominently are Pema Wangyel Dorjé, who, as we saw above, was responsible for first asking Shenpen Tayé to collect and publish these *kama* texts. We also see the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen Mingyur Namkai Dorjé and the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen show up repeatedly. Also of note, is the ubiquity of Pema Vajra as the *recipient* of most of these lineages from Shenpen Tayé, strongly suggesting that Pema Vajra was being positioned by Shenpen Tayé to be his primary successor.

We shall now investigate the actual editing and printing of the *Trinchok Collection* itself.

#### 5.4.4. Project Location and Staffing

##### ***5.4.4.1. Locating the Project at Dzokchen Monastery***

The *Catalog* records that Shenpen Tayé commenced the process of editing the collected texts and carving them into wood blocks in his 41<sup>st</sup> year, “at an auspicious time

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<sup>850</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 383: [. . .] pad+ma mang+ga la/ gzhan phan mtha' yas/ mkhan pad+ma rdo rje/.

<sup>851</sup> *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings*, 384: nye brgyud ni/ kun mkhyen chen pos/ rig 'dzin 'jigs med gling pa/ 'jigs med phrin las 'od zer/ gzhan phan mtha' yas sogs sngar dang 'dra/.



when the stars aligned, on a Wednesday, the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the second half of the third month of the iron mouse year (Weds, April 22, 1840).”<sup>852</sup> Shenpen Tayé chose to situate his base of operations for the project, “Here, at the seat of Śrī Siṃha Mountain (*dpal seng ge ri*) near to the monk’s quarters (Gandhola<sup>853</sup>) of Ogmin Orgyen Samten Chöling [Dzokchen Monastery] situated below Mt. Lhanyen Chenpo Dorjé Yungdrung.”<sup>854</sup> Here, we can note that the *chayik* (*bca’ yig*) regulations for Śrī Siṃha shedra—published 10–15 years after the *Catalog*—give the name of the shedra as “Śrī Siṃha Mountain, Thubten Nyinché Ling” (*dpal seng ge ri thub bstan nyin byed gling*). The description of the specific location of the “seat at Śrī Siṃha Mountain,” is also very interesting and instructive. Its location “near the monks’ quarters” of Dzokchen, and “below Mt. Lhanyen Chenpo Dorjé Yungdrung,” would locate it right in the vicinity of the established shedra buildings of Śrī Siṃha.<sup>855</sup>

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<sup>852</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 47a–b :rje nyid kyis dgung lo bzhi bcu rtsa gcig bzhes pa kun ldan zhes pa lcags pho byi ba’i lo’i hor zla gsum pa chu shel dbang po’i dkyil ’khor dpal ldan lha mo nag pas nya ba’i dmar phyogs kyi rdzogs pa dang po/ gza’ lhag pa/ skar ma snubs ’phrod sbyor rgyal mtshan sogs phun sum tshogs pa’i dus tshes dge ba la bya ba las kyi ’khor lo chen po ’dir dbu ’dzug par mdzad pa yin no/.

<sup>853</sup> “Gandholi” has the meaning of “monks’ quarters” that are in the vicinity but set some ways away from the main monastery. (Conversation with Khenpo Yeshé, November, 2019).

<sup>854</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 47a: lha gnyen chen po rdo rje g.yung drung gi ri zhol ’og min o rgyan bsam gtan chos gling gi gan+d+ho la’i nye gam/ dpal seng ge ri’i gdan sa ’dir/.

<sup>855</sup> The various foundations that make up the religious complex of Dzokchen are situated in a high mountain valley about three kilometers long with a broad, flat bottom about half-a-kilometer wide. At the head of the valley, the flat bottom gives way to wooded slopes on both sides, on which meditators constructed meditation retreats in caves and rock overhangs, which are still used today. About 100m above the valley floor, the trees give way to rocky crags and eventually to the jagged snow peaks and hanging glaciers of Mt. Dorjé Ziltrom, which looms over the entire valley. The main cluster of buildings, known as Orgyen Sampten Chöling, sits on a slope at the foot of the valley facing north towards the head of the valley. Today, the monks’ residential buildings are strung out on the hillside of the valley just north of the main complex. The various buildings of Śrī Siṃha shedra are situated roughly halfway between the main complex to the south and the head of the valley to the north, over which looms the icy, craggy peak of Dorjé Yungdrung Mountain.

Here we have direct evidence that by 1840, Shenpen Tayé had made Dzokchen his primary base of operations. The *chayik* for Śrī Simha that we looked at in the last chapter mentions a *labrang* (“lama’s residence”), and the fact that Shenpen Tayé chose to base the Trinchok project at Dzokchen suggests that Shenpen Tayé had an established *labrang* in the Dzokchen area by this time. Such a *labrang* probably consisted of a set of residences with amenities and an income.<sup>856</sup> Shenpen Tayé’s gravitation to Dzokchen during this time also provides indirect evidence that the shedra teachings that Shenpen Tayé first gave at Dzokchen in 1828 had likely continued, as such regular teachings would have provided a strong incentive for Shenpen Tayé to remain at or near Dzokchen.

#### 5.4.4.2. *Project Staff*

Shenpen Tayé amassed a coterie of trained scholars and skilled artisans to work on the project. The *Catalog* lists the names of many of these—although, due largely to a paucity of studies on the period, I have not been able to identify most of them beyond their mention in the *Catalog*. To manage the logistics of the project, Shenpen Tayé appointed “his disciple, the fully ordained monk, known as Dorjé Dzinpa Pema Gendün Drakpa, or ‘Ösel Nyingpo,<sup>857</sup> who was endowed with a wealth of learning, the great khenpo who had crossed to the other side [i.e., mastered] of the ocean of scriptures.”<sup>858</sup>

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<sup>856</sup> Ngawang Pelzang relates in his autobiography that when he was asked to become the khenpo of Śrī Simha in 1901, he was offered a choice of residences, each of which came with amenities.

<sup>857</sup> An Ösel Nyingpo is mentioned as the main figure behind the publishing of Shenpen Tayé’s *bka’ ‘bum* in the printer’s colophon for *snga ‘gyur rnying lugs theg dgu’i lam khrid kyi sa bcad nyung ngu dam pa’i zhal lung* (PCW: 2. 233–262; DzCW: 1. 313–331).

<sup>858</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 47b: nyid kyi zhal slob sdom brtson dam pa mang du thos pa’i nor gyis phyug cing gzhung lugs rgya mtsho’i pha rol du son pa’i mkhas pa chen po dge slong rdo rje ‘dzin pa pad+ma dge ‘dun grags pa’am mtshan gzhan ‘od gsal snying po zhes bgyi ba.

Pema Gendün Drakpa was tasked with copy editing and proofing the finished texts, acquiring ink and paper, and acquiring and distributing the raw wood for printing blocks.<sup>859</sup> A few passages later, the *Catalog* mentions that Shenpen Tayé’s attendant, Gelong Dorjé Dzinpa Pema Dargyé,<sup>860</sup> “acted as general manager (*spyi gnyer gyi las*), organizing the beginning, middle, and end of the teachings.”<sup>861</sup> Pema Dargyé seems to have acted as both fundraiser and bursar for the project, with the *Catalog* reporting that, “as a rough estimate, [Pema Dargyé] collected and disbursed over 1000 bricks of high quality Powa-tse tea to pay the workers’ wages and buy the paper and wood for the printing blocks.”<sup>862</sup>

Shenpen Tayé appointed Gelong Dongak Tendzin<sup>863</sup> (*dge slong mdo sngags bstan 'dzin*; d.u.)—whom the *Catalog* describes as “the lord of the scribes, skilled in the forty

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<sup>859</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 47b: zhus dag dang snag shog gi las 'dzin spar shing sprod len sogs gnang khur gyi do dam pa/.

<sup>860</sup> Perhaps this is the Pema Dargye (BDRC P2JM324) that BDRC lists as the astrology teacher of Mipham Gyatso. <https://www.BDRC.org/#!rid=P2JM324>.

<sup>861</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 48b: thog tha bar gyi chos ston sogs sbyor ba spyi gnyer gyi las.

<sup>862</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 49a: spar shing dang shog rin yon 'bul bcas la zhib tshags mi bgrang par rags pa zhig bsdoms pas/ bzung ja spo ba rtse stong phrag gcig lhag tsam zhig song bas mtshon/.

<sup>863</sup> The only reference that I could find to someone with this name that was active during this period was Gyatrül Pema Dongak Tendzin (1830–1891; [BDRC P6169](#)), who served as the seventh throne holder of Pelyul Monastery and was responsible for publishing an expanded edition of the *Trinchok Collection* in 1875 (see sec. 5.5.2 below). The possibility of Gyatrul Pema’s involvement in Shenpen Tayé’s *Trinchok Collection* is particularly intriguing given this later work on the *kama*. However, it is exceedingly unlikely that Gyatrul Pema was the Dongak Tendzin referred to here in the *Catalog* for the simple reason that, based on his commonly cited dates (1830–1891), Gyatrul Pema would have been between ten and fifteen years of age during the duration of the *Trinchok* project—and hardly likely to be referred to as “the lord of the scribes” at such a tender age. Furthermore, although Gyatrul Pema is reported to have had deep contacts with numerous Nyingma institutions over his lifetime, there is no indication that he had any significant relationships with Dzokchen Monastery or its major figures. Indeed, Gyatrul Pema is said to have been enthroned at Pelyul Monastery in 1842—right in the middle of the *Trinchok* project. (see his bio at Treasury of Lives: <https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/First-Gyatrul-Dongak-Tendzin/8754>). For these reasons, it appears that the Dongak Tendzin referred to here is another scholarly figure associated with Dzokchen for which further information has since been lost.

aspects of writing”<sup>864</sup>—to write the final proofs that the carvers would use to carve the texts into the printing blocks. The *Catalog* goes on to list a number of assistant editors (*zhus dag bcas kyi grogs dan pa*) who were involved at various points of the project. These are listed as follows: Jamyang (‘jam dbyangs; d.u.), a “holy lama of broad general learning, and the supreme eye of wisdom with regard to the uncommon textual systems;” Khedrup Sangyé Tendzin (mkhas grub sangs rgyas bstan ‘dzin; d.u.); “the holy nephew” Thubten Özer (thub bstan ‘od zer; d.u.); “the heart nephew” Jangchup Dorjé Sangye Gyatso (byang chub rdo rje sangs rgyas rgya mtsho; d.u.); and Shenpen Özer (gzhan phan ‘od zer; d.u.).<sup>865</sup>

The *Catalog* rounds out the list of project staff with a listing of thirteen master carvers who were employed during the final year and provided with high-quality, expensive food and drink.<sup>866</sup> Many of the names of these thirteen are unusual Tibetan names and seem to be Khampa nicknames.<sup>867</sup> The names are numbered in the *Catalog* from 1 to 13 and are as follows: 1. Lugyel (klu rgyal), 2. Luchuk (klu phyugs), 3. Gönli (mgon li),<sup>868</sup> 4. Budok (bu rdog), 5. Anam (a rnam), 6. Tsering Gyel (tshe ring rgyal), 7. Damchö (dam chos), 8. Tsultrim (tshul khriims), 9. Gönsam (mgon bsam), 10. Tashi (bkra shis), 11. Tsegyel (tshe rgya)l, 12. Adö (a ‘dos), and 13. Bushik (bu shig).<sup>869</sup>

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<sup>864</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 47b: spar gzhi ‘dri mkhan yig chos bzhi bcu sogs la mkhas pa’i smyug ‘dzin gyi dbang po.

<sup>865</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 47b: thun mong ma yin pa’i gzhung lugs rnam la mkhyen rab kyi sphyan dkyus yangs pa’i bla ma dam pa ‘jam dbyangs dang/ mkhas grub sangs rgyas bstan ‘dzin/ rigs dbon dam pa thub bstan ‘od zer/ snying dbon byang chub rdo rje sangs rgyas rgya mtsho/ gzhan phan ‘od zer rnam kyis kyang bgyis.

<sup>866</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 48b: de dag gi tshe nor mar sbur ba’i bza’ btung.

<sup>867</sup> Personal correspondence with Khenpo Yeshé.

<sup>868</sup> The edition of the *Catalog* in the *shin tu rgyas pa bka’ ma* has this name as *mgon lo* (100).

<sup>869</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 48b.

### 5.4.5. Editorial Methods and Practices

The *Catalog* also provides a brief but highly informative description of the editorial principles and practices used to correct, edit, and emendate the texts published in the anthology.

#### ***5.4.5.1. Sourcing, Composing, and Authenticating the Texts***

The *Catalog* first summarizes the guiding editorial practices with regards to the sourcing and general editing of the texts. Interestingly, it makes a primary distinction between the Vinaya texts and the texts that represent the “higher” vehicles of Mahāyāna and tantra, treating each of these two categories in turn. This distinction is significant in that it signals an important innovation in Shenpen Tayé’s conception of *kama*. As we have seen, in the Nyingma tradition up to this point, the category of *kama* typically referred to the transmitted texts relating to the *three “inner” tantric vehicles* of Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga. The Mindröling ritual system introduced by Terdak Lingpa and Lochen Dharmaśrī, focused on the public performance of ritual system of the central Anuyoga text, the *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions*, which involved initiations into the mandalas of all nine Nyingma Buddhist vehicles. However, Shenpen Tayé, for the first time, includes *monastic* texts and rituals (as part of the lower two vehicles) in a *kama* rubric. As such, the author(s) of the *Catalog* seem to feel the need to explain their specific approach to editing these monastic Vinaya texts. Thus, we are told that:

The whole Vinaya section was compiled by relying on our own textual tradition,<sup>870</sup> and where the words and/or meanings were a bit unclear, the root text

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<sup>870</sup> i.e., Nyingma commentaries on Vinaya, the three vows, and so forth.

of [Guṇaprabha's] *Vinaya-sūtra*,<sup>871</sup> [Kalyāṇamitra's] *Extensive Commentary on the Basis* ('*dul ba gzhi rgya cher 'grel; Vinayavastuṭīkā*), and so forth, were then consulted."<sup>872</sup>

Here we see an example of Shenpen Tayé's textual epistemology at work. He is a Nyingmapa, working entirely among Nyingmapas in order to provide textual resources for Nyingmapas to use in Nyingma institutions. Therefore, the monastic ritual texts are compiled based on "our own"—i.e., the Nyingma—tradition of Vinaya literature. However, as the *Catalog* states, when there are gaps in this Nyingma tradition of Vinaya literature such that "the words or meaning are not clear," then the editors are to rely on the classical Indian Buddhist Vinaya literature. What is left unsaid, but clearly implied, is what editors are *not* to do: they should *not* base their Vinaya texts on other (non-Nyingma) Tibetan Vinaya traditions, nor should they resort to other (non-Vinaya) classes of Nyingma texts to compose, edit, or authenticate Vinaya texts. What this short passage makes clear is that it was Shenpen Tayé's intention to make the *Collection's* Vinaya texts be both distinctively Nyingma *and* authentically Buddhist—that is: based on Nyingma textual sources that are checked and validated against Indian Buddhist canonical literature.

Moving on to the texts from the upper seven vehicles—which make up approximately eight of the nine volumes—we are told that:

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<sup>871</sup> For a treatment of Guṇaprabha's *Vinaya-sūtra* and its commentarial tradition in India and Tibet, see Paul K. Nietupski, "Guṇaprabha's Vinayasūtra Corpus: Texts and Contexts," *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 5 (December 2009): 1–19.

<sup>872</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 48a: rab byung gzhi chog sogs so thar gyi skor rnam rang gzhung gi bka' dang bstun cing / tshig don cung zad mi gsal ba yod rigs/ 'dul ba mdo rtsa dang / gzhi 'grel chen po sogs la gtugs shing gtan la phabs/.

The mind generation rituals [. . .], the rituals of [bodhicitta] mind-generation and so forth, through to the successive ritual stages of the six classes of tantra that follow, were all based on the extant prints from Min[drö]ling and old preserved texts from Central and Eastern Tibet. These were compared to, and thoroughly checked against, the corresponding Indian texts and their respective commentaries and so forth. Where greater doubts still existed, they were brought to the Lord [Shenpen Tayé] himself to adjudicate.<sup>873</sup>

The hermeneutical principles underlying the editing of these upper vehicle texts mirror those governing the editing of the Vinaya texts: In both cases, care is taken to source textual witnesses from Nyingma sources, which are then checked—one might say, *authenticated*—against the *shared* Indian Buddhist textual tradition. The emphasis here on the *Trinchok Collection*'s texts being checked against their *corresponding*<sup>874</sup> Indian texts and commentaries shows an investment in maintaining the *hermeneutical boundaries* between different classes of texts. For Shenpen Tayé, the naturalness, primordial purity, spontaneous presence, and so forth, of the Great Perfection—the highest vehicle of Atiyoga—cannot be taken as a basis for analyzing, interpreting, or correctly practicing the monastic discipline of the Buddhist Vinaya, the imperatives of the bodhisattva vows, or the view of emptiness. Similarly, while all of these more foundational views and practices serve as an important foundation for approaching the Great Perfection, they cannot themselves be used to understand, define, practice, or directly experience the Great Perfection. Such a conception of the vehicles as unique and irreducible stages on the Buddhist path is in keeping with Shenpen Tayé's pervasive

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<sup>873</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 48a: sems bskyed kyi cho ga rgyal sras lam bzang sogs dang / 'og nas 'byung ba'i rgyud sde drug gi cho ga'i rim pa ji snyed pa nmams kyang / ma phyi smin gling gi spar yod pa nmams de dang / kham dbus kyi yig mnying khung thub nmams la gzhi byas/ rang rang gi rgya gzhung dang 'grel ba sogs sgo bstun nas legs par zhus shing / dogs gnas che ba nmams rje nyid kyi spyang sngar phabs te/.

<sup>874</sup> The Tibetan phrase used is *rang rang*, which has the sense of “each to each” or “respective.”

emphasis on establishing a progressive, inclusive, and comprehensive Nyingma doxography.

#### 5.4.5.2. *Emendation and Copy Editing*

The *Catalog* then moves on to outline the principles used to correct and copy-edit the texts themselves. Firstly, we are told that “Lexical and grammatical particles in the text were made to be in accord with the *Thirty Verses on Grammar, Introduction to Grammar*, and so forth.”<sup>875</sup> Here we see Shenpen Tayé’s investment in correcting these core Nyingma texts such that they would exhibit the standardized classical Tibetan grammar as set down during the Imperial Period by Thonmi Sambhoti in treatises such as the *Thirty Verses on Grammar* and *Introduction to Grammar*. Here we are reminded that Shenpen Tayé’s most influential and lasting textual contribution to Tibetan monastic education and Tibetan scholarship was his commentary on the *Thirty Verses* and *Introduction to Grammar*, entitled *A Magical Key*.<sup>876</sup> The specific mention that these treatises were used as a basis for resolving grammatical issues during the project shows that Shenpen Tayé (as chief editor) had already mastered these grammar treatises and was utilizing them by at least the early 1840s. This helps to reconstruct our understanding of how these grammar treatises found their way into the shedra curriculum between its inception in 1829 and the shedra curriculum as laid out in its early *chayik* in the mid 1850s [see chapter four above].

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<sup>875</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 48a: sngon rjes kyi 'jug pa rnam dbye tshig phrad bcas sum rtags sogs kyis gzhang dang mthun par bgyis/.

<sup>876</sup> Full Title: *sum cu pa dang rtags kyi 'jug pa'i 'bru 'grel 'phrul gyi lde mig*, *BhCW*: vol 2. 555–685; *PCW*: vol. 3. 581–658; *DzCW*: vol. 1. 031–87.



The *Catalog* does however, demonstrate a somewhat restrained attitude toward textual emendation, saying that,

The texts were carefully emendated to correct obvious typos and malapropisms. However, minor discrepancies in orthography or syntax that didn't affect the meaning in any way were left as is.<sup>877</sup>

The transliteration of Sanskrit mantras posed another problem for the editors. Because the majority of the texts in the collection were liturgical, there was a massive amount of Sanskrit material in the form of mantras and proper names and titles that needed to be rendered in Tibetan script. The *Catalog* describes the problems and their solution thus:

There were many cases where the syllables of [Sanskrit] mantras were different from those that exist in spoken [Tibetan], or where it was not possible to properly render them. In such cases, we relied on other tantric collections and on authoritative texts on Sanskrit composition to perfectly render [the mantras].<sup>878</sup>

Shenpen Tayé and his editorial staff had to make editorial decisions not only in regard to the *texts* that they were collecting, but also in regard to the *paratextual* elements of these texts. Gérard Genette developed the category of the “paratext” to refer to the elements that “surround” a text and influence and mediate a reader’s interaction with the text.<sup>879</sup> Paratextual elements exist within a book itself in the form of its cover art, frontispiece, publication statement, table of contents, preface, pagination, annotations,

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<sup>877</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 48a: mi bcos su mi rung ba'i tshig don gyi cha la skyon zhugs pa nams legs bar bcos/ brda' khyad dang / sdeb sbyor gyi tshul cung zad mi 'dra yang don la skyon med pa nams rang sor bzhag.

<sup>878</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 48a–b: sngags tshigs la skad rigs mi 'dra ba dang / bcos mi nus pa nams dpe mthun mang ba dbang btsan du byas/ gzhan sngags btu dang legs sbyar gyi gzhung nams la brten nas dag par bsgrub/.

<sup>879</sup> See Gérard Genette, “Introduction to the Paratext,” *New Literary History* 22, no. 2 (Spring, 1991): 261–272.

marginalia, indexes, and so forth. There are also paratextual elements external to the book itself, such as published reviews of the book, advertising, other related works by the author, and so forth. The line between text and paratext is sometimes fuzzy and often permeable. Paratextual elements—such as prefaces or notes—can, over time and through repeated editorial choices, become established as part of the central text. Such has often been the case with explanatory interpolations such as marginalia and interlinear annotations.<sup>880</sup> A prime example of this phenomenon in the Tibetan context is the annotation commentaries of “Khenpo Shenga,”<sup>881</sup> in which the “root” text and the explanatory annotations were merged and rendered in a single continuous text—albeit, with the syllables of the root text being rendered slightly larger or in bold font to mark them out.<sup>882</sup>

Shenpen Tayé and his staff seem to have had to tackle the problem of determining *what exactly constituted a “text.”* They needed to ask themselves: How do we take such a vast array of texts that (by our own admission) span the entire range of Nyingma thought and practice and are comprised of manuscripts and other textual witnesses from a wide array of authors and sources and composed across many centuries, and combine them into a single, coherent textual anthology? How much of the paratextual elements of the source texts should be carried into or reproduced in the anthology? We have little detail

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<sup>880</sup> For example, medieval Christian scholastic texts often developed specific, localized sets of interlinear annotations which tended to be copied and reproduced over time, leading sometimes to a merging of the text and its annotations into a new expanded text. See Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), 39ff.

<sup>881</sup> Shenphen Chökyi Nangwa (gzhan phan chos kyi snang ba; 1871–1927)

<sup>882</sup> In this case, we could say perhaps, that the marking out of the root text syllables with a different font is a sort of paratextual element that, while it doesn’t change the syntactical or lexical meaning of the text, nonetheless communicates important information to the reader and serves to guide and frame one’s reading of the text.

about the specifics of these choices, but the *Catalog* does include the following passage that gives some indication that they were having to regularly deal with these issues:

In places where erroneous clarifications—such as rambling and misguided annotations—had been added, these were discarded and decisively corrected. And so it was, that those endowed with discriminative intelligence made [the texts in the collection] reliable and trustworthy sources.<sup>883</sup>

#### 5.4.6. Carving the Printing Blocks

Once the texts had been corrected and the proofs finalized, the texts were then transferred onto the raw wooden blocks:

Having thus edited the proofs, they were then written onto the raw wood blocks [for carving]. These were then proofread first by an individual scribe and then, for a second time, by the khenpos.<sup>884</sup>

The blocks then went to the carvers—viz., the thirteen master carvers mentioned above. The *Catalog* states that actual carving took place during the wood-snake year (c. 1845) and the colophon to the *Catalog* says that it was completed on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month of that year, which coincided with the first full printing of the *Collection*.<sup>885</sup> We can therefore surmise that the actual carving of the blocks took place

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<sup>883</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 48b: mchan bu dkyus shor sogs ma dag pa ngos gsal rnams dor te shin tu dag par gtan la phabs cing rnam par dpyod pa'i blo gros dang ldan pa dag gis yid rton par 'os pa'i gnas su bgyis pa yin no/.

<sup>884</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 48b: de ltar ma phyi rnams zhus dag zin pa dang / spar gzhi bris nas yig mkhan so sos zhus dag lan re dang / zhus dag mkhan po rnams kyis lan gnyis rer zhus/.

<sup>885</sup> The entire colophon reads: //zhes pa 'di ni skyabs rje thams cad mkhyen pa mtshan brjod par dka' yang don gyi slad du mtshan nas smos te/ rgyal ba'i sras po gzhan phan mtha' yas 'od zer mchog gi zhal snga nas kyis rmad du byung ba'i thugs bskyed rgya chen pos chos sbyin mi zad pa'i phyi mo spar du bskrun skabs nas rje de nyid kyis zhabs rdul la spyi bos reg pa'i slob 'bangs yongs kyis tha shal du gyur pa/ shAkya'i sras po'i gzugs brnyan tsam 'dzin pa'i rmongs rtul snyom las pa pad+ma dam chos 'od zer du 'bod pas/ sna tshogs dbyig ces 'bod pa shing mo sbrul gyi lo'i gro bzhiin gyi zla ba'i dmar phyogs rgyal ba dang po'i tshes la o rgyan bsam gtan chos gling gi chos grwa chen por grub par bgyis pa 'dis kyang phyogs dus gnas skabs

over a final six- or seven-month period. As stated above, the entire collection comprises nine volumes totaling over 2400 folios. Each of these double-sided folios represents a two-sided printing block, meaning that the carvers would have had to carve over 4800 sides of the kind seen below in *figure 4*.

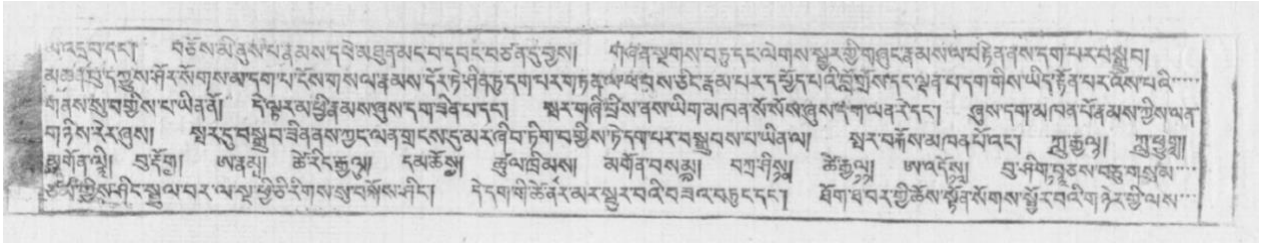


Figure 4: A folio side (48b) from the *Catalog* produced from the original blocks, with the passage listing the names of the master carvers

If we divide this number between the thirteen master carvers, we arrive at a figure of about 370 sides per carver. As I have stated above, passages in the *Catalog* suggest that the carvers were employed only at the end of the project during the first six or seven months of the wood-snake year. If this is correct, it would result in an average of around one block (2 sides) per carver per day.<sup>886</sup> Such a figure is unusually high given that it tends to take a carver about three days to carve a typical block on both sides<sup>887</sup> so it is likely that there were others—such as apprentices—who assisted the thirteen carvers listed by name.<sup>888</sup>

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thams cad du rgyal ba'i bstan pa rin po che dar zhing rgyas pa'i rgyur gyur cig//. *Trinchok Catalog*, 71b–72a.

<sup>886</sup> This assumes that with festival days and ordinary days off, the carvers could reasonably have been expected to work not much more than 150 of the approximately 225 days between the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> month and the 18<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> (when the colophon says the project was finished).

<sup>887</sup> This figure is given in Matthieu Ricard, *Tibet: An Inner Journey* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2006), 140.

<sup>888</sup> There is evidence that Tibetan wood-block carvers would sometimes combine their efforts with each doing a different aspect of the carving for each block—e.g., straight cuts, circular cuts, cutting out the

The *Catalog* goes on to state that, “once the blocks had been carved, every detail was checked and rechecked until they were perfect.”<sup>889</sup> We get some idea what this means from Corneille Jest’s “A Technical Note on the Tibetan Method of Block-Carving,” which relates that once the carver has finished carving both sides of the block, “he thoroughly washes and dries the block and makes a trial print. Any defects must be made good by inserting, if necessary, small pieces of wood and re-carving them.”<sup>890</sup>

As stated above, the first printing of the nine-volume *Trinchok Collection* was begun in the 7<sup>th</sup> month of the wood-snake year (August, 1845). Although prints from these blocks are still extant [see section 5.2.2. above], it seems that the blocks themselves were lost or destroyed—probably in the destruction of Dzokchen in the late 1950s in the wake of the Chinese takeover.

#### 5.4.7. Summary of the Project and Its Phases

The *Catalog*’s description of the *Trinchok* project presented above shows that the project unfolded in three main phases. The first phase began with Pema Wangyel Dorjé’s request to Shenpen Tayé in 1831 to “collect the propagation of the empowerments and reading transmissions of those ritual arrangements (*chog khrigs*) [. . .] of the *sādhanas* of the three inner Nyingma tantras [. . .] into a single system.”<sup>891</sup> This phase, most obviously, involved the sourcing and collecting of the required texts. Less obviously, but

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spaces (*btsab pa*), and so forth each of which requires a different tool and a varying level of expertise. It is easy to imagine how such an “assembly-line” method, if managed skillfully, could greatly speed up the speed of production. See Corneille Jest, “A Technical Note on the Tibetan Method of Block-Carving,” *Man*, vol. 61 (May, 1961: 83-85), 84.

<sup>889</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 48b: spar du bsgrub zin nas kyang lan grangs du mar zhib tig bgyis te dag par bsgrubs pa yin la/.

<sup>890</sup> Corneille Jest, “A Technical Note on the Tibetan Method of Block-Carving,” 84.

<sup>891</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 44a.

just as important, was the conceptual work that must have been done by Shenpen Tayé in determining the shape and scope of the anthology. In other words: what was its *purpose*?

The second phase was the editorial phase that began on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the second half of the third month of the iron mouse year (Wed, April 22, 1840)<sup>892</sup> with the formal initiation of the project at Dzokchen by Shenpen Tayé. This phase of the project would have involved perhaps a dozen or so scribes and editors closely editing the collected texts and creating corrected proofs in preparation for the printing. These editorial staff members would have had to have been fed and housed and perhaps some of them may even have been paid a wage.<sup>893</sup> Another major task that seems to have taken place during this time was fundraising.<sup>894</sup> [see below for an analysis of the costs of the project].

The third phase, which took place in the last six to seven months of the project, involved the carving of the wood printing blocks. As I argue below, this was probably the most expensive part of the project.

#### 5.4.8. Project Costs

A project of this scope—involving years of work and dozens of scribes, editors, and craftsmen—would have required a great deal of funding and shrewd management of funds. We read in the *Catalog* that Shenpen Tayé’s attendant Gelong Dzinpa Pema Dargyé collected the equivalent of over 1000 bricks of tea to pay wages and buy materials.<sup>895</sup> Although bricks of tea were a common medium of exchange throughout

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<sup>892</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 47a–b.

<sup>893</sup> Kurtis Schaeffer provides a table of costs for the *Dergé Tengyur* project that took place between 1738 and 1744, which records the editor (*zhus dag pa*) and editors-in-chief (*zhus dag pa rnam kyis zhus dpon*) being paid wages. *The Culture of the Book in Tibet*, 159.

<sup>894</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 49a.

<sup>895</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 49a.

Tibet, it is difficult to determine with any accuracy the relative value of “1000 bricks of tea” in any particular time or place, because of the numerous factors—including the quality of tea, size of the “brick,” and geographic location—that determined the value of that (or any) commodity. We can, however, get a general sense of what “1000 bricks of tea” was worth by looking at records and reports from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries that give prices or exchange equivalents for “bricks of tea” in this area of Kham. For example, a report from the late 1870s by the British diplomat and explorer Edward Colborne Baber declared that “a brick of the common tea, which forms about four-fifths of the whole trade,” weighed about 60 English ounces, and sold in Batang for one rupee and double that in Lhasa.<sup>896</sup> The British-issued silver rupee was worth approximately 20 pence in the late 1870s,<sup>897</sup> giving us a rough exchange rate of 12 bricks of common tea per pound sterling in Batang. Batang is in southern Kham along the major tea trade route between Dartsedo and Lhasa, and we may assume that the exchange value of tea would be somewhat higher in the Dzokchen area than in Batang—although not nearly as high as in Lhasa, which is much farther away.<sup>898</sup> We may therefore roughly estimate the exchange value of 1000 bricks of tea in the Dzokchen area at being somewhere in the area of 100 pounds sterling in the mid–late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>896</sup> Edward Colborne Baber, *Travels and Researches in Western China*, (London: John Murray, 1882), 197. It should be mentioned that other sources describe a wider range of tea “grades.” See Wolfgang Bertsch, “The Use of Tea Bricks as Currency among the Tibetans,” *The Tibet Journal*, vol. 34, no. 2 (Summer 2009), 35-80.

<sup>897</sup> A. Piatt Andrew, “Indian Currency Problems of the Last Decade,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 4, vol. 15 (August 1901): 483–516.

<sup>898</sup> The Dartsedo-Batang-Chamdo-Lhasa trade route, along which most of the tea trade from China to Tibet flowed, formed the southern trade route through Kham. Dzokchen was north of this route, situated on the trade route between Dartsedo and Jyekundo (Yushu) and close to the northern branch of the Dartsedo-Dergé-Chamdo-Lhasa route.

Another more local cost comparison can be made in the accounting figures for the *Tengyur* editorial project that took place nearby in Dergé between 1738 and 1744,<sup>899</sup> in which we read that “16 [wood] blocks” and “40 square bundles of paper” were each worth the equivalent of one “brick of tea.”<sup>900</sup> In the *Dergé Tengyur* project, we see that the largest cost by far was the wages for the block carvers (202,335 bushels of barley), which made up about half of the project’s total expenditure. In contrast, the combined wages for all the editors, scribes, and proofreaders was just over 44,000 bushels. The second-highest expenditure after wages for wood-block carvers was “food and drink” (168,400 bushels). The cost of paper and wood blocks was relatively minor in comparison at 3,123 and 19,455 bushels respectively.<sup>901</sup>

## 5.5 The Reception and Influence of Shenpen Tayé’s *Trinchok Collection*

### 5.5.1 General Comments

In his expansive survey of the Nyingma tradition completed in 1966,<sup>902</sup> Dudjom Rinpoché mentions that the Mindröling *kama* lineage extended from Terdak Lingpa down to his son, Rinchen Namgyel and from him to Orgyen Tendzin Dorjé. From these last two, “the lineage divided into many streams, extending all the way from Katok, Pelyul, Shechen, and Dzokchen in Kham, to Gyelmorong in the far east and the Golok

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<sup>899</sup> These figures are given in the Catalog and history of the Dergé Tengyur written by Shuchen Tsultrim Rinchen (*zhu chen tshul khrims rin chen*; 1697–1769) and reproduced in Kurtis Schaeffer’s *The Culture of the Book in Tibet*, 159–160.

<sup>900</sup> Schaeffer, *The Culture of the Book in Tibet*, 160.

<sup>901</sup> The figures are given in Schaeffer, *The Culture of the Book in Tibet*, 159–160.

<sup>902</sup> Translated and published as, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History*, translated and edited by Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991).



region of Amdo.”<sup>903</sup> With regards to the contributions of Shenpen Tayé in transmitting the *kama*, Dudjom says:

During the period of the fourth Dzokchen emanation Mingyur Namkei Dorjé, Gyelsé [Shenpen Tayé], the emanation of the great treasure-finder of Mindröling [Terdak Lingpa], made vast spiritual efforts on behalf of the exegesis and attainment of many textual traditions of the sūtras and mantras, and especially on behalf of the transmitted precepts of the Ancient Translation School. Therefore, he sought out and greatly propagated manuscripts of them, and their continuous empowerments, transmissions, and esoteric instructions. He published some ten volumes<sup>904</sup> of ceremonial arrangements for the *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions*, the *Magical Net*, and so forth. Thus, his kindness and legacy to the continuous teaching surpass the imagination.<sup>905</sup>

As I described above, prints of texts from the original blocks of the *Trinchok Collection* have shown up in collections of older texts from the Kagyü Monastery of Pelpung and the Sakya Monastery of Dzongsar, providing strong evidence for a wide circulation of the *Trinchok Collection* and its constituent texts.

### 5.5.2 Influence on Later *Kama* Collections

Perhaps the best evidence of the immediate and lasting impact of Shenpen Tayé’s *Trinchok Collection* is the fact that it formed the core of all of the later *kama* collections.

#### ***Pema Dongak Tendzin’s 25-Volume Kama Collection (c. 1876)***

We can follow the lines of influence of Shenpen Tayé’s *Trinchok Collection* on later *kama* collections by comparing Shenpen Tayé’s *Collection* with the next *kama* collection to be published. This is the collection compiled and published at Pelyul (*dpal*

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<sup>903</sup> *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, 733.

<sup>904</sup> This seems to be a mistake as there were only nine volumes in Shenpen Tayé’s *Trinchok Collection*.

<sup>905</sup> *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, 737.

*yul*) Monastery in or around 1875 by Pema Dongak Tendzin (*pad+ma mdo sngags bstan 'dzin*; 1830–1893)—the 7<sup>th</sup> throne holder of Pelyul. Pema Dongak Tendzin’s collection, entitled *The Rituals of Enlightened Activity of the Successive Nine Vehicles of the Early Translations of the Buddha’s Teachings Along with Texts Lately Added*,<sup>906</sup> expanded on Shenpen Tayé’s original *Trinchok Collection*, adding numerous additional texts, swelling Pema Dongak’s collection to twenty-five volumes (as compared to the nine volumes of Shenpen Tayé’s *Collection*).

We have evidence of the influence of Shenpen Tayé’s *Collection* on that of Pema Dongak in the form of a detailed catalog to Pema Dongak’s collection. The catalog—entitled *A Source of Glory and Auspiciousness, A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of the Teachings: Catalog for “The Rituals of Enlightened Activity of the Nine Vehicles”* [. . .]<sup>907</sup>—was published in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Thubten Shedrup Gyatso (*thub bstan bshad sgrub rgya mtsho*; 1879–1961) and included in the recent *Extremely Extensive Kama Collection* (*bka’ ma shin tu rgyas pa*). This catalog provides important information about the contents and compilation of Pema Dongak’s collection that confirms the deep debt that it owes to Shenpen Tayé and his *Trinchok Collection*. First of all, we see that Pema Dongak’s collection contains virtually every single text from Shenpen Tayé’s *Trinchok Collection*, including Shenpen Tayé’s numerous lineage supplications and even

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<sup>906</sup> *rgyal bstan snga 'gyur bka' ma theg rim dgu'i phrin chog gzhung phyi mo rnams dang bcas pa*. This is the title given to the collection in its *dkar chag* (discussed below), p. 320.

<sup>907</sup> *rgyal bstan snga 'gyur bka' ma theg rim dgu'i phrin chog gzhung phyi mo rnams dang bcas pa'i dkar chag bstan pa rgya mtsho'i gru gzings bkra shis dpal brgya'i 'byung gnas*, in *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa/*. BDRC W1PD100944. Vol. 133: 153-458. Chengdu: si khron dpe skrun tshogs pa/ si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

Pema Vajra’s *Catalog to Shenpen Tayé’s original Trinchok Collection*.<sup>908</sup> Secondly, as we saw above in section 5.4.3, the lineage lists in *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean* show Shenpen Tayé as a key figure in transmitting the *kama* lineages to Pema Dongak. Shenpen Tayé shows up as a link in these lineage lists for nineteen different cycles, ranging from Vinaya, Kriyā-tantra, Mahāyoga, and Atiyoga.<sup>909</sup>

One may then ask, what did Pema Dongak Tendzin add to Shenpen Tayé’s *Collection* to expand it from nine to twenty-five volumes? One possibility arises from the numerous mentions in Pema Vajra’s *Catalog to Shenpen Tayé’s Collection* of certain texts or cycles which “have not had ritual arrangements produced for them, and need to be added in the future.” These lacunae included arrangements for the entire Caryā-tantra and Yoga-tantra classes and for the following *Mahāyoga* cycles: four of the five *root tantras* of Mahāyoga; the *Tantra of the Display of the Supreme Horse* (*rta mchog rol pa’i rgyud*); the *Tantra of the Display of Nectar* (*bdud rtsi rol pa’i rgyud*); the *Five Tantras Functioning as Subsidiaries to Conduct* (*spyod pa’i yan lag tu ‘gro ba’i rgyud sde lnga*); and the two *Subsequent Tantras of Amending Incompleteness*<sup>910</sup> (*ma tshang kha*).

A comparison of the two collections, however, reveals that Pema Dongak’s later collection did not fill in any of these lacunae, with the catalog to his collection simply restating that these are missing and still need to be added. A close comparison of the two

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<sup>908</sup> The only major omission from Shenpen Tayé’s *Collection* to Pema Dongak’s is that the latter did not include Śāntideva’s *Bodhisattvacāryāvātara* (*Trinchok* text no. 10). This was most likely not due to any negative animus towards this classic Indian treatise on the part of Pema Dongak Tendzin, but rather to the fact that Śāntideva’s treatise was commonly available and thus did not need to be included in an anthology made up primarily of rare *kama* ritual texts.

<sup>909</sup> See section 5.4.3 above for a detailed listing of Shenpen Tayé’s mentions in these lists.

<sup>910</sup> *Net of Magical Manifestation of Vairochana* (*rnam par snang mdzad sgyu ‘phrul drva ba’i rgyud*), which contains supplementary instructions concerning mandala rites and sādhanas to attain powers, and *Lasso of Method: Tantra of the Lotus Garland* (*thabs kyis zhags pa pad mo’i phreng ba’i rgyud*).

collections shows that Pema Dongak did not add new *cycles* or *topics* so much as he added new *genres* of texts to Shenpen Tayé’s existing framework. The texts that Pema Dongak added were primarily of three types. Firstly, he added a great many foundational Indian texts (*rgya gzhung*), including root tantras, such as the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*,<sup>911</sup> and a range of commentarial treatises by Indian masters.<sup>912</sup> Secondly, he added a large body of Tibetan commentarial literature written by such luminaries as Nupchen Sangyé Yeshé,<sup>913</sup> Longchenpa,<sup>914</sup> and Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Tayé (1813–1899). Thirdly, Pema Dongak added almost four full volumes of “hagiographies of the lineage lamas” (*bla ma brgyud pa’i rnam thar*).<sup>915</sup> Essentially what Pema Dongak did was take Shenpen Tayé’s core collection of *kama* ritual texts and add the *root* Indian texts, a wealth of exegetical material, and four volumes of biographical literature on figures associated with the Nyingma *kama*. In this way, we must look at Pema Dongak as a key figure in the transformation of Nyingma *kama* from a rather vague and shifting rubric, to a collection of mostly ritual texts, to its current status as a textual *canon*—such that it is now common to hear the newer expanded *kama* collections referred to as “*the Kama*” in the same way that we would refer to “*the Kangyur*” or “*the Tengyur*.”

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<sup>911</sup> Volume 10 (tha), text no. 1.

<sup>912</sup> These include: Kukurāja’s “two Indian texts” on the *sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* (vol. 3 [ga]) and Dharmabodhi and Sthiramati’s respective commentaries on the *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions* (vol. 17 [tsa]).

<sup>913</sup> For example, the collection contains his *Armour Against Darkness* (*mun pa’i go cha rnal ‘byor nyi ma*) commentary (vol. 17 [tsa]).

<sup>914</sup> The commentary *The Excellent Path to Enlightenment* (*byang chub lam bzang*) to *The Trilogy of Finding Comfort and Ease in the Nature of Mind* (*sems nyid ngal gso’i gnad gsum dge ba*) (vol. 25 [a]).

<sup>915</sup> volumes 19–22. *A Boat to Navigate the Ocean of Teachings* does not give a listing of the contents of these volumes and I have not had an opportunity to look at these volumes and compile a list of the lineage figures included.

### ***The “Extensive” and “Extremeley Extensive” Kama Collections***

Pema Dongak’s 25-volume edition of the *kama* was expanded upon in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century by Düdjom Jikdrel Yeshé Dorjé,<sup>916</sup> who published the 58-volume *Extensive Nyingma Kama Collection*<sup>917</sup> (1982–1987). More recently a number of “extremely extensive” (*shin tu rgyas pa*) collections of the Nyingma *kama* have been published by students of Khenpo Münsel (mkhan po mun sel; 1916–1993), a renowned monastic scholar-adept from Golok in Eastern Tibet who was closely associated with Katok Monastery. Khenpo Münsel had repeatedly exhorted his students to collect and preserve the numerous Nyingma *kama* texts that had not been included in the earlier collections. In the year following his death, Khenpo Münsel’s students published a number of large *kama* collections. The first was the 120-volume *bka’ ma shin tu rgyas pa*, published in a limited run of 100 copies by Katok Monastery in 1999,<sup>918</sup> with a slightly pared down 110-volume edition edited by Karma Delek, published in 2000.<sup>919</sup> The latest and largest *kama* collection is the 133-volume *snga ‘gyur bka’ ma shin tu rgyas pa*, edited by Tsering Gyatso and Zenkar Rinpoché and published in 2009.<sup>920</sup> All of these editions can ultimately be traced back to Shenpen Tayé’s *Trinchok Collection*, and the enduring—we could even say, *growing*—interest in collecting and preserving the texts and teachings of the Nyingma *kama* is one of Shenpen Tayé’s enduring legacies.

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<sup>916</sup> bdud ‘joms ‘jigs bral ye shes rdo rje, 1904–1987.

<sup>917</sup> *rnying ma bka’ ma rgyas pa*, 58 vols. Kalimpong, India: Dupjung Lama, 1982–1987.

<sup>918</sup> BDRC# W25983.

<sup>919</sup> BDRC# W21508.

<sup>920</sup> Chengdu: si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang; BDRC W1PD100944.

## 5.6 Conclusion: Comprehensiveness, Gradualism, and the Reimagining of Nyingma *Kama*

### Kama and Terma

In this chapter on Shenpen Tayé's *kama* collection, I have largely avoided mentioning the very large elephant in the room, that is, the diverse traditions of Nyingma *terma*. As I discussed in the introduction to this chapter, the rubric of Nyingma *kama* arose largely as a kind of foil to the ever-expanding category of *terma*. As other scholars have shown, *terma* and *kama* have tended to exist as a binary pair in Nyingma history. It would not be wildly inaccurate to characterize *terma* as often exerting a kind of centrifugal force on Nyingmapas with its diverse range of competing proprietary cycles, while the shared texts and categories of *kama* have tended to have a more centripetal effect. It is also the case that *terma* has often been associated with non-celibate and antinomian modes of practice (e.g., apotropaic ritual) and with the rule of reincarnated lamas as an institutional governing paradigm. *Kama*, on the other hand, has tended to be closely associated with celibate monasticism, scholasticism, and a model of institutional leadership focused on scholar-monks chosen by merit. Our case study of Shenpen Tayé seems to conform to this general picture. Shenpen Tayé was indeed a fully ordained monk and a highly learned scholar who rose to a high position of leadership at Dzokchen Monastery due to his renown as a great scholar and teacher, and who sought to find ways to regularize and harmonize the cacophony of Nyingma thought and practice.

This chapter has made Shenpen Tayé's deep investment in Nyingma *kama* beyond doubt, and we might then inquire into his involvement with, and attitudes

towards, *terma*. The short answer is that Shenpen Tayé seems to have been almost totally uninterested in the large body of Nyingma *terma* literature. Shenpen Tayé rarely talked or wrote about any of the many well-established *terma* cycles.<sup>921</sup> Even in regard to the *Longchen Nyingtik* cycle of Jikmé Lingpa—of which Shenpen Tayé was a major lineage holder from his root guru, the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen—he rarely showed much sustained interest.<sup>922</sup> This is not to say that Shenpen Tayé was hostile to *terma*. In my years of research on Shenpen Tayé, I have never come across any instances of him disparaging *terma* or *tertöns* in any way. Perhaps it would be most accurate to say that Shenpen Tayé saw the body of received *kama* texts as both the core, and the necessary extent, of the Nyingma tradition, and although he didn't have any negative animus as such for *terma*, he simply didn't seem to have much use for it.

### The Expansion of the *Kama* Rubric

Shenpen Tayé's *Trinchok Collection* stands out most noticeably in its radical inclusion of basic *shared* Buddhist texts, including core Buddhist monastic rituals and foundational Indian Buddhist texts, such as the *Prātimokṣasūtra* and Śantideva's *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*. Previously, the rubric of Nyingma *kama* had been understood to refer almost exclusively to the non-*terma* texts and transmissions belonging to the three

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<sup>921</sup> For example, Shenpen Tayé's corpus and biographical materials contain virtually no mention of the classic *Kagyé* (*bka' brgyad*) cycles or ritual practices.

<sup>922</sup> Shenpen Tayé did author two short works on topics related to the *Longchen Nyingtik*: One is an originally untitled work, which the *DzCW* titled: *rdzogs chen klong chen snying thig gi sgo nas skal ldan ji ltar bkri ba'i tshul* (*How to Guide the Fortunate According to the Longchen Nyingtik*; *DzCW*: 1. 289–305; *XylKB* 1. 183b–197a; *PCW*: 3. 147–175). This text simply drops off and was clearly unfinished. The other text is: *klong chen snying thig gi gtum mo'i me'i bogs dbyung gi dmigs pa gab pa mngon phyung* (*Revealing the Secret: The Visualization That Enhances the Practice of Inner Heat of the Longchen Nyingtik*; *DzCW*: 1. 306–308; *XylKB* 2. 67a–69b; *PCW*: 2. 67–72; *BhCW*: 2. 145–152).

inner Nyingma tantras. Shenpen Tayé, however, found a loophole, in the form of the Mindröling *Sūtra* initiation system, which involved initiation into (or blessings from) the mandalas of *all* of the nine vehicles. Mindröling’s *Sūtra* initiation system was based in the root text of Anuyoga, the *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions*, and, as Jake Dalton has shown, was developed by Mindröling’s founders to enable and facilitate a program of mass ritual empowerments. Such mass rituals functioned as grand spectacles that concentrated and amplified the power and charisma of Mindröling and its leading figures. Although Mindröling was—and remained—a major center of Buddhist monasticism and rigorous philosophical study in the Nyingma world, it does not seem that these orientations were specifically tied to the rubric of *kama* nor to Mindröling’s *sūtra* initiation system, *per se*. In this light, Shenpen Tayé’s utilization of the nine-vehicle rubric to expand the category of *kama* to include core monastic rituals and foundational exoteric Indian philosophical treatises was both novel and fundamentally in-line with the integrationist and pluralist orientation of Mindröling’s signature ritual system.

### The *Trinchok Collection* as Representing a Gradualist Vision of Nyingma Practice

If we compare Shenpen Tayé’s editorial approach to the *Trinchok Collection* with the development of the early shedra curriculum, we see some interesting parallels. In both cases, Shenpen Tayé moved to expand a Nyingma “curriculum” (ritual, doxographical) by grounding the *unique* (*thun mong ma yin*) Nyingma elements in the *shared* (*thun mong*) foundation of classical Indian textual learning and Buddhist monasticism. Within a strictly Nyingma context, Shenpen Tayé’s signature projects also sought to emphasize



and buttress a shared, pan-Nyingma set of practices and categories rooted in the rubric of the Nyingma *kama* while, simultaneously, eliding the vast body of *terma* lineages and apotropaic rituals that had long formed the core of the Nyingma identity. I will return to this elision and its impacts on Shenpen Tayé projects and his legacy in the concluding chapter.

Our study of Shenpen Tayé's *Trinchok Collection* and its production demonstrates, yet again, the way that Shenpen Tayé repeatedly acted to provide real, tangible supports for practicing a gradualist iteration of the Nyingma Buddhist path. The shedra, as we saw last chapter, functioned as an *institutional* support for initiating students into such a vision, and for training effective teachers to guide students through its stages. Shenpen Tayé's particular editorial choices and the shape and makeup of his *Trinchok Collection* show a concomitant investment in providing a set of *textual* supports for this gradualist vision. As we have seen, the *Trinchok Collection* presents the varieties of Buddhist thought and practice—from core monastic rituals to the highest visionary tantrās—as a series of successive vehicles that lead the practitioner from the *outer* practices of monastic discipline and Mahāyāna *mind generation* through the increasingly subtler *inner* views and modes of practice.

In this way, we can understand Shenpen Tayé's particular path systematics as representing the interpenetration of two key ideas: Firstly, he argued for the importance of not skipping over the lower, outer vehicles of practice, seeing these “lower” practices as fundamental and indispensable supports for the “higher” esoteric practices. Secondly, although he saw the vehicles as mutually supporting each other, he insisted that each

vehicle presented a unique *view* and mode of practice—and, thus, must always be approached, interpreted, and understood on its own terms. In this pluralist and gradualist conception of the Buddhist path, each vehicle supports and reinforces the others, yet each has its own specific ontology, epistemology, and hermeneutics, for which their specific Indian root text(s) and commentaries serve as an authoritative basis. The *Trinchok Collection*'s make-up, organization, and the editorial principles underpinning its production all speak to Shenpen Tayé's investment in providing spiritual aspirants with the necessary training, equipment, and map to gradually ascend the highest peaks of the Nyingma spiritual path.

In the next and final chapter, we will analyze the place of Buddhist monasticism in Shenpen Tayé's vision of the Nyingma Buddhist path and investigate what sort of supports he developed to ensure its practice and promote its uptake among his fellow Nyingmapas.

# Chapter Six: Shenpen Tayé and the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Expansion of Nyingma Monasticism

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*[Shenpen Tayé] took on the shaved head, bare feet and yellow robes of a monk and followed the rules of the Vinaya naturally and flawlessly, not even transgressing the minor proscriptions. In this way he resembled the great noble Buddhist monks of yore such as the venerable Upāli.*

– Mipham Gyatso<sup>923</sup>

## Introduction

It would be impossible to discuss Shenpen Tayé’s impact on Nyingma religious culture without giving special attention to his role in the expansion of Buddhist monasticism among Nyingmapas that has taken place over the past century and a half. Indeed, Shenpen Tayé’s emphasis on strict observance of the Buddhist Vinaya has been a core element of all the various biographical treatments of Shenpen Tayé, from those written during his lifetime down to the present day. For example, the *Trinchok Catalog*, published in 1845, says:

In particular, because it is the common foundation of the precious Buddhist teachings, [Shenpen Tayé] instituted a tradition of pure and comprehensive Vinaya instruction, including the three basic Vinaya rituals and so forth, paying

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<sup>923</sup> *Rongzom Catalog*, 11: dbu reg zhabs rjen ngur smrig 'chang ba'i brtul zhugs dang du bzhes nas 'dul ba'i gnang bkag la tshul bzhin du bslab pas rang bzhin ngang gis nyes ltung phra mos kyang ma gos pa 'phags pa nye ba 'khor dang mtshungs par bsngags 'os pa/.

attention to aptitudes of individual students. In so doing, he rekindled the lamp of the teachings and exists as the lord of the entire range of Buddhist teachings in this time and place.<sup>924</sup>

And Shenpen Tayé, himself, says in his *Verse Autobiography*:

I established a system for explaining the tantras and the sūtra systems, which was exemplified in the practice of the three basic Vinaya rituals. [. . .] I also maintained all of my monastic and tantric vows and commitments as well I possibly could. Based on that, [I] also urged others to properly hold their three levels of vows.<sup>925</sup>

In this final chapter, I investigate Shenpen Tayé’s investment in Buddhist monasticism and analyze his impact on the landscape of Nyingma religious practice in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I begin in **section 6.1.2** by clarifying some of the **basic categories and terms** surrounding what is often referred to in English as Buddhist “monasticism.” **Section 6.1.3** then provides a brief **historical sketch** outlining the status of **Buddhist monasticism among Nyingmapas** leading up to the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In **section 6.2** I look at the **monastic influences on Shenpen Tayé**, focusing on how his education and interactions with other figures influenced his adoption of, and views on, Buddhist monasticism. **Section 6.3** identifies and analyzes the various **activities and strategies**—literary, institutional, and interpersonal—that Shenpen Tayé used **to promote and expand the practice of Buddhist monasticism**. I focus in particular on passages in

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<sup>924</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 41b: khyad par du rgyal bstan rin po che spyi'i gzhi ma yin pa dang / gdul bya'i gang zag rnams kyi mig rkyen du dgongs nas/ gzhi gsum gyi cho ga sogs 'dul ba'i phyag bzhes rnam par dag pa'i srol btod nas bstan pa'i me ro slong bar mdzad cing / deng gi gnas skabs 'dir bstan pa yongs rdzogs kyi bdag por bzhugs bzhin pa 'di nyid do/.

<sup>925</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 5a–5b: gzhi gsum gyis lag len gyis mtshon pa'i// mdo phyogs dang rgyud kyi bshad srol btsugs// so byang dang sngags kyi dam sdom kun// rang gang nus srung ba gzhi bzhag nas// gzhan rnams kyang sdom pa gsum la bskul//.

Shenpen Tayé’s works where he explicitly discusses the place of monastic practice in his system of study and practice.

## 6.1 Contextual Background: Buddhist Monasticism in Tibet

### 6.1.2 Concepts and Categories: Tibetan Buddhist “Monks” and “Monasteries”

#### 6.1.2.1 “Monks”

We should begin our investigation of Shenpen Tayé’s impact on Buddhist monastic practice by asking what we mean when we speak of “monasticism” in a Tibetan Buddhist context. We should mention that Buddhist monasticism in Tibet and around the Buddhist world has encompassed both male *and* female practitioners since the time of the historical Buddha. The past three decades or so have seen an historic flowering of high-level religious practice—both monastic and non-monastic—among women in Tibetan religious institutions, the impacts of which are being felt well beyond the nunneries and *gars* (“encampments”) that have been the epicenters of such female-centered practice. However, in the case of early-19<sup>th</sup>-century Dergé and Dzachukha, I have not come across any references in my historical sources from this period that describe women being ordained or studying at the early Śrī Siṃha Shedra. This is not to say that there is not mention of high-level female practitioners—Shenpen Tayé was petitioned for works of personal advice from a number of highly revered female practitioners—but it does not seem that any of the female practitioners that turn up in relation to our study were ordained. As such, my brief treatment of Tibetan monasticism that follows focuses on the Buddhist tradition of *male* ordination and monastic life.

### Monasticism and the “Three Vows”

In order to understand the place that monastic ordination occupies within the matrix of Tibetan religious praxis, it should be understood as existing within the wider rubric of the “three vows” (*sdom gsum*). Theory on the three vows seems to have been a Tibetan innovation, developed in order to constellate the three basic levels of Buddhist practice and their respective vows and commitments. These three levels or orientations are:

- 1) *Individual liberation* (*so sor thar ba*; Skt., *prātimokṣa*), often characterized as Hīnayāna (*Lower Vehicle*) in Tibet
- 2) *Bodhisattva* (*byang chub sems dpa’*), i.e., Mahāyāna (*Great Vehicle*)
- 3) *Tantric commitments* (*dam tshig*; Skt., *samaya*): Vajrayāna (*Adamantine Vehicle*).

The relationship between these three sets of vows has generated a robust body of literature representing a distinct field of study in Tibet.<sup>926</sup> In general, one begins with some degree of the vows of individual liberation, and then may move on to taking bodhisattva vows, and finally commitments of tantric practice, with each set of vows being seen as a necessary prerequisite to the following set.

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<sup>926</sup> As, for example, the study of Ngari Panchen’s *Ascertainment of the Three Vows* (*sdom gsum rnam nges*) in the shedra curriculum.

### Vows of “Individual Liberation”

What we call Buddhist “monasticism” is primarily comprised of the upper tier of the vows of individual liberation.<sup>927</sup> In general, the vows of individual liberation are of three levels:

- *Genyen* (*dge bsnyen*; *upāsaka*): Buddhist layperson
- *Getsül* (*dge tshul*; Skt., *śrāmaṇera/ śrāmaṇerikā*): monastic novice
- *Gelong* (*dge slong*; *bhikṣu/bhikṣuṇī*): full monastic ordination

Those who have taken at least the *getsül* (novice) vows are said to have *gone forth* (*rab tu byung ba*; Skt., *pravrajita*), renouncing their lives and identities as householders to become religious mendicants. Such “going forth” involves an initiation ceremony overseen by a *monastic preceptor* (*khenpo*; *mkhan po*), wherein the supplicant has their head shaved, exchanges their clothing for religious robes, and takes the set of vows in front of the monastic assembly. Generally, the terms “monk,” “nun,” and “monastic” are used in the Tibetan context to refer to those who have taken either the vows of a *novice* (*dge tshul*) or those of *full ordination* (*dge slong*) and have maintained their vows appropriately.

### Novice Ordination

With regard to the ordination procedure and the specific nature of the vows, Tibetans follow the *Mūlasarvāstivāda* recension<sup>928</sup> of the Buddhist Vinaya, from which the procedures and liturgy for the novice and full ordination ceremonies are derived. The

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<sup>927</sup> Although most Tibetan monastics also take some version of bodhisattva and tantric commitments as well.

<sup>928</sup> *gzhi thams cad yod par smra ba'i 'dul ba.*

*novice vows* (*dge tshul*; *śrāmaṇera*) are the required first stage of ordination and are often taken when the supplicant is an adolescent<sup>929</sup> and has previously taken the vows of a layperson.<sup>930</sup> The vows of novice ordination require the aspirant to observe ten basic precepts, which prohibit killing; stealing; sexual activity and sensuality; false speech; intoxicants; eating after midday; dancing, singing, music, and other unseemly forms of entertainment; using garlands, perfumes, and cosmetics to adorn the body; using high and luxurious beds and couches, and accepting gold and silver. The Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya subdivides and expands these ten into a list of thirty-three.<sup>931</sup>

Once the ordinand receives the ordination in a ceremony with a monastic preceptor, he is then instructed to find a tutor to engage in studying and internalizing the full complement of monastic precepts held by fully ordained monks. Classical Vinaya treatises such as Śākyaprabha's *Commentary on the Three Hundred Verses on Novice Ordination*,<sup>932</sup> explain that the novice should strive to learn and maintain the precepts of a fully ordained monk, but should be given latitude to transgress these as they learn.

Jamgön Kongtrül explains in his *Treasury of Knowledge* that Śākyaprabha lists thirteen

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<sup>929</sup> The classic prescription is that the ordinand “must be able to drive away crows,” which is usually interpreted to mean one who is at least eight years old. See Jamgön Kongtrül, *Treasury of Knowledge, Book Five: Buddhist Ethics*, trans. International Translation Committee (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1998), 92.

<sup>930</sup> The full version of the layperson's vows—known as “perfect discipline”—requires the aspirant to take all five lay precepts, forswearing: killing, lying, stealing, sexual misconduct, and taking intoxicants. The “partial discipline” version allows the aspirant to take only the precept against killing and any of the others that they feel they can honor. See Jamgön Kongtrül, *Treasury of Knowledge, Book Five: Buddhist Ethics*, 93–94; 102–104.

<sup>931</sup> For an authoritative summary of the requirements and procedures for novice ordination, see Jamgön Kongtrül, *Treasury of Knowledge: Buddhist Ethics*, 94–95.

<sup>932</sup> *Mūlasarvāstivādiśrāmaṇerakārikāvṛttiprabhāvati*; *gzhi thams cad yod par smra ba'i dge tshul gyi tshig le'ur byas pa'i 'grel ba'od ldan*.



rules for fully ordained monastics that are permissible for novices, as well as six other transgressions that are permissible for novices according to Tibetan monastic scholars.<sup>933</sup>

It has been, and remains, common for Tibetans to take novice monastic vows for a period in their adolescence or young adulthood before giving up their vows and returning to lay life. The reasons for such temporary ordination range from the desire to obtain a rudimentary education and basic literacy,<sup>934</sup> the desire to gain merit for oneself and one's family, and/or as a consequence of the web of relationships that tie specific Tibetan families and communities to particular monastic institutions.<sup>935</sup>

### Full Monastic Ordination

The vows of full ordination (*dge slong*; *bhikṣu/bhikṣuṇī*) are restricted to those who have reached the age of majority—typically considered to be twenty years of age—and who have received and upheld novice vows for a significant period of time. The vows of full ordination are considered to be for life and Tibetans widely consider it to be a major source of shame for someone to disrobe and return to lay life once they have

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<sup>933</sup> Śākyaprabha's thirteen exceptions are 1) Keeping extra cloth, 2) being separate from one's robes, 3) keeping an extra begging bowl, 4) tilling the soil, 5) handling precious objects, 6) lighting a fire, 7) resuming eating, 8) climbing or 9) cutting trees, 10) eating what has not been ritually offered and accepted, 11) urinating or defecating on the grass, 12) partaking of food that has been stored, and 13) destroying seeds. The six are: 1) retaining [cloth] for more than a month, 2) storing [any of the three kinds of food], 3) being without [one's robes] while in seclusion, 4) [Going to the village] without informing [a senior monk], 5) withdrawing assent, and 6) sleeping in the same room as the unordained. Jamgön Kongtrül, *Treasury of Knowledge: Buddhist Ethics*, 104.

<sup>934</sup> Prior to modern educational reforms of the mid to late-20<sup>th</sup> century, monasteries was often the only option for those wishing to obtain a basic education—although even rudimentary education in basic literacy was often only given to those monastics who showed talent and desire to learn and was by no means universally available across Tibetan monastic institutions.

<sup>935</sup> Based on my conversations with Tibetans, it seems to be a common practice for boys and young men to take such temporary ordination and then later return to lay life to start a family. When this happens, it seems to not result in much if any social stigma or shame. Of course, the same cannot be said of fully ordained monks who disrobe.

taken full ordination. The ordination ceremony for the vows of full ordination requires a quorum of four fully ordained monks in addition to the head preceptor who confers the vows. A fully ordained monk or nun must abide by the regulations set out in Vinaya, and there are various punishments depending on the relative severity of the offense. The most serious offenses—known as *defeating offenses* (*phas pham pa; pārājika*)—are engaging in sexual intercourse, theft, murder, and lying about one’s spiritual attainments. Knowingly engaging in these acts results in immediate—and usually permanent—loss of one’s vows and expulsion from the Sangha. Slightly less serious are a group of behaviors known as *probational offenses* (*dge ‘dun lhag ma; saṃghāvaśeṣa*), which can be ameliorated through public confession.<sup>936</sup> The Vinaya also lists thirty *downfalls requiring forfeiture* (*spang ba’i ltung byed; naihsargikapāyattika*), ninety *downfalls requiring only private confession* to another monk (*ltung byed; pāyattika*), and 112 *minor infractions* (*nyes byas; duṣkṛta*).

### The Three Foundations of Buddhist Monastic Practice

In general, the manner through which to purify lapses in monastic discipline is the *three foundations* (*gzhi gsum*): the *vow-mending ceremony* (*sojong; gso sbyong*; Skt.: *poṣadha*); the *annual rains retreat* (*yarné; dbyar gnas*; Skt.: *varṣā*); and the *release from the rains retreat* (*gakyé; dgag dbye*; Skt.: *pravāraṇa*). These *three foundations* are all

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<sup>936</sup> There are thirteen partial defeats, viz.: ejaculation, touching a woman and/or speaking to a woman about sexual intercourse, using others’ reverence towards the Sangha for false ends, matchmaking, building a hut or dwelling that is larger than the prescribed size, making trivial or groundless accusations, causing a schism in the Sangha or taking sides in a dispute, causing a layperson to lose faith, and defying monastic rules and authority. Jamgön Kongtrül, *Treasury of Knowledge: Buddhist Ethics*, 109–111.

communal rituals and we will turn now to what we mean when we talk about Tibetan “monasteries.”

### 6.1.2.2 “Monasteries”

#### Terms and Categories

Buddhist monastics often live together in a communal setting within a bounded community that, in India, was called a *vihara*, typically consisting of an enclosure of monks’ cells surrounding a central hall or temple where communal rituals take place. In canonical literature translated into Tibetan from Sanskrit, the term *vihāra* is most commonly translated as *tsuk lakhang* (*gtsug lag khang*), which in common usage usually refers only to the central temple within a monastic complex. In Tibet, multiple terms have been used to designate religious communities where ordained renunciates reside—places that are typically called “monasteries,” in English scholarship. The most common Tibetan terms for these communities are:<sup>937</sup>

- *gömpa* (*dgon pa*; Skt. *aranya*; “remote place”)
- *drasa* (*grwa sa*; “monks’ locality/residence”)
- *chöde* (*chos sde*; “religious enclave/unit/entity”)
- *chödra* (*chos grwa*; “religious faculty/school”)
- *densa* (*gdan sa*; “seat [of successive teachers]”)

A resident of one of these “monasteries” is called *drapa* (*grwa pa*) in the case of males or *ani* (*a ni*) in the case of females. Collectively, the monastic residents are usually called

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<sup>937</sup> This list is derived from: Mathias Fermer, “Among Teachers and Monastic Enclaves: An Inquiry into the Religious Learning of Medieval Tibet,” in *Meanings of Community across Medieval Eurasia*, Brill’s Series on the Early Middle Ages, vol. 25, 417–450, (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 419, note 4.

the *dratsang*, which has a similar meaning to “college,” in that it also refers to the main monastic residence and/or the study section that they attend. None of the above terms for “monastery” or “monk(s)/nun(s)” necessarily denote that they have taken full monastic ordination, and, indeed, many of the largest “monasteries” of the Nyingma tradition have been headed by lineages of non-celibate tantric adepts. However, there are terms that more specifically denote various kinds of communities of non-monastic religious practitioners. These include:

- **Chögar** (*chos sgar*; “religious encampment”):<sup>938</sup> Typically, an ad-hoc temporary encampment of devotees and practitioners that forms around a revered, (usually) non-monastic teacher. Because *chögars* tend to form where the teacher is living and practicing, they are often located in isolated, mountain locales.<sup>939</sup>
- **Ngakpa/Ngakma communities** (*sngag pa / ma*; “tantrika”): *Ngakpas* [male] and *Ngakmas* [female] are tantric specialists skilled in tantric meditation and ritual praxis, and are often highly sought-after as ritual specialists. Some examples of specific communities of *Ngakpa/mas* are the formal *College of Ngakpas* (*Ngakpa Dratsang*; *sngag pa grwa tshang*) that exists as an off-shoot of the large Geluk Monastery of Labrang (bla brang);<sup>940</sup> and the Ngakmang (*sngags mang*) community of Rebkong in the Nanchen region of Eastern Tibet.<sup>941</sup>

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<sup>938</sup> See Sarah Jacoby and Antonio Terrone, eds, *Buddhism Beyond the Monastery: Tantric Practices and Their Performers in Tibet and the Himalayas* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

<sup>939</sup> There are examples of mobile encampments—such as the famed *gar* of the 4<sup>th</sup> Karmapa Rolpé Dorjé (*kar+ma pa rol pa'i rdo rje*; 1340–1383)—which functioned much like a medieval European royal progress. In recent times, there have been a number of *gars* in Eastern Tibet that have become permanent settlements, swelling to tens of thousands of residents in the case of Larung Gar and Yarchen Gar, becoming some of the largest Buddhist practice communities in the world.

<sup>940</sup> See Paul Nietupski, *Labrang Monastery: A Tibetan Buddhist Community on the Inner Asian Borderlands, 1709–1958* (New York: Lexington Books, 2011), 31–36.

<sup>941</sup> See Ben Philip Joffe, “White Robes, Matted Hair: Tibetan Tantric Household, Moral Sexuality, and the Ambiguities of Esoteric Buddhist Expertise in Exile.” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Colorado at Boulder, 2019.

- ***Serkhyim Gönpa*** (*ser khyim dgon pa*): entire villages of non-monastic male and female ritual practitioners who dress in monastic robes and perform ritual services for surrounding villages.<sup>942</sup>

Such communities of non-monastic religious specialists have been the norm throughout most of the history of the Nyingma tradition and continue to form a vibrant and essential part of the living Nyingma tradition. As we will see below, there was often tension—and sometimes outright conflict—in Nyingma “monastic” institutions between those who sought to foster strict celibate monasticism and those who resisted these strictures.

### Functions of Monasteries and Monasticism in Tibetan Societies

Buddhist monasticism has served a range of important social, political, economic, and cultural functions since its introduction to Tibet in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The following section outlines a few of these functions.

#### ***Monasticism as a Field of Merit***

As in other Buddhist societies, Buddhist monks and nuns support the wider society by functioning as an ideal ***field of merit*** (*bsod nams kyi zhing; puṇyakṣetra*).

Dominique Townsend explains that the idea of Tibetan monasteries as fields of merit,

reflects a classical Indian Buddhist premise that monasteries benefit the laity because monks and nuns conduct productive rituals, negotiate with supernatural forces, and generally maintain behaviors deemed to be virtuous and conducive to the continuation of the Buddha’s teachings and the well-being of the broader

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<sup>942</sup> The Serkhyim of the Southern Tibetan region of Dingri (*ding ri*) near Mt. Everest are described in detail by Barbara Aziz, who speculates that these communities may be lapsed monasteries. See: Barbara Nimri Aziz, *Tibetan Frontier Families: Reflections on Three Generations from D’ing-ri* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978).

community. A good monastery creates a font of positive karma while perpetuating Buddhist teaching and practice.<sup>943</sup>

In other words, in dedicating their lives to spiritual awakening and ending the cycle of re-birth through the cultivation of moral restraint, equanimity, and wisdom, Buddhist monastics are seen as both spiritually *heroic* and far more spiritually *pure* than ordinary people. Such dedication and purity are thought to generate extraordinary amounts of positive karma, known as *merit* (*sönam*; *bsod nams*; *punya*). Ordinary people can share in this merit to some degree by contributing to the material support of the monastic community in the form of food, clothing, land, and so forth, and by having one or more of their children—usually a son—take ordination and providing for their support. The focus on monastics exhibiting rigorous ethical discipline—and celibacy in particular—in order for the Sangha to serve as an appropriate field of merit for the wider society, has been a major focus of recent Tibetan Buddhist reform movements in eastern Tibet—such as that initiated by Jikmé Phuntsok (‘jigs med phun tshog; 1933–2004) and continued by his successors at Larung Gar.<sup>944</sup>

### ***Preserving the Sāsana (Buddhist Tradition)***

A central function of the monastic Sangha in Buddhist societies is to act as preservers of the Buddhist tradition, or *sāsana* (*bstan pa*).<sup>945</sup> Such preservation has repercussions for the entire society because the *sāsana* is considered to be the main

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<sup>943</sup> Townsend, *A Buddhist Sensibility*, 124.

<sup>944</sup> Germano, “Re-membering the Dismembered Body of Tibet,” 70–71.

<sup>945</sup> Alicia Turner provides a detailed and insightful discussion on how discourses and debates about the preservation of the *sāsana* played out and affected monastic and educational institutions in colonial-era Burma. See *Saving Buddhism: The Impermanence of Religion in Colonial Burma* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2014).

bulwark that slows down the inevitable degeneration of human society in this, the *kālī-yuga* (*Degenerate Age*). The survival of the *sāsana* is generally thought to depend upon the continuous, pure practice of the Buddhist Vinaya and the concomitant learning and faithful transmission of the Buddhist scriptures.<sup>946</sup> This idea that pure monastic practice helps preserve the Buddhist tradition as a whole shows up repeatedly in Tibetan religious literature, even being espoused by non-monastic figures. For example, there is a story in which the great Dza Patrül went to meet the family of the Lila Tulku of Dzokchen and discovered to his surprise that all nine of the family’s sons had taken full monastic ordination and were all strictly keeping their vows. Upon leaving their home, he was said to have remarked, “From what I’ve seen today, I’m reassured that the Buddha Dharma will last a little longer.”<sup>947</sup> Such comments echo the historical Buddha’s prediction that as long as the practice of the Vinaya remains in the world, the Buddhist teachings will remain as well. For these reasons, Buddhist monasteries are often generously supported and patronized by all levels of society from poor villagers up to the ruling monarch.

### ***Monasteries as Economic Centers***

In Tibet, many of the larger monasteries did not have to rely purely on donations from wealthy patrons because they *themselves* were large landholders and centers of profitable long-distance trade networks. In general, political and economic power in Tibet had long been based on the control of agricultural “estates”—large tracts of productive land and agricultural workers, which were owned and controlled by aristocratic families,

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<sup>946</sup> Alicia Turner, *Saving Buddhism: The Impermanence of Religion in Colonial Burma*, 7.

<sup>947</sup> Mathieu Ricard, *Enlightened Vagabond*, 76.

as well as monastic institutions. Monastic corporate entities called *labrang* (*bla brang*; lit., “lama’s house”) often owned large agricultural estates, which were transmitted through the monastery’s line of incarnate lamas.<sup>948</sup> The reincarnation system of monastic succession posed a problem for this system of landed wealth. In general, there was a clear expectation that the families of newly-recognized reincarnations would be given a gift of landed estates befitting the status of the specific reincarnation in exchange for giving up their young child to the monastery. Additionally, it was also generally required for the monastic seat to pay a substantial payment to the local chieftain of the child’s home region in order to secure his permission for the reincarnated child to be taken away to the monastery. Such a system, requiring the monastic institution to periodically carve out and dispense with part of its land holdings, came up against the hard fact that virtually all of the productive land in most Tibetan regions was already under intense cultivation or grazing pressure, meaning that the number (and productive capacity) of Tibetan estates was a distinctly *finite* resource. This resulted in a “circulation of estates” in Tibet, whereby land-holders were in constant danger of having their estates confiscated by more powerful political rivals—monastic or secular—who needed them to fulfill obligations to a new incarnation or provide for lines of patronage. These imperatives produced what Melvyn Goldstein terms, a “pattern of pervasive intense competition among the upper echelons of Tibetan society—both noble families and landed monastic *labrangs*.”<sup>949</sup>

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<sup>948</sup> Melvyn Goldstein, “The Circulation of Estates in Tibet: Reincarnation, Land, and Politics,” in *The Tibetan History Reader*, edited by Gray Tuttle and Kurtis R. Schaeffer, 477–490, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 480.

<sup>949</sup> Goldstein, “The Circulation of Estates in Tibet,” 482.



There is evidence of such economic pressure and predation at Dzokchen Monastery during Shenpen Tayé’s lifetime. Jikmé Nyugu relates an episode in his autobiography that occurred in the 1830s, where he and his small entourage were passing through the area near Dzokchen Monastery when they were pursued and waylaid by the steward of Dzokchen and five of his officers. These mounted officials insisted that Jikmé Nyugu and his companions present themselves at the monastery in order to ask permission to pass through the area. Jikmé Nyugu describes how they went up to Dzokchen as requested and found that Dzokchen Rinpoché had been thrown off his horse and injured. Jikmé Nyugu politely asked how he was doing in the wake of this accident, and then presented a silver-plated statue, a tall silver statue of Yabyum, five silver coins, and a high-quality robe, and sponsored a long-life ceremony for Dzokchen Rinpoché,<sup>950</sup> after which he was allowed to continue on his way.

This episode related by Jikmé Nyugu speaks to the way that large monastic institutions in Tibet were often involved in regulating and taxing the movement of goods through their territories and were often central players in the long-distance trade networks into and through Tibet. Already by the 14<sup>th</sup> century many of the great Tibetan monasteries in Central and Eastern Tibet had grown exceedingly wealthy on long-distance trade with China. From this time, it became a common practice for powerful Tibetan monastic institutions to send regular “tribute missions” to the Chinese imperial

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<sup>950</sup> *jigs med rgyal ba'i myu gu'i rnam thar: 'gro mgon bla ma rje'i gsang gsum rnam thar rgya mtsho las thun mong phyi'i mngon rtogs rgyal sras lam bzang (the Biography of Jikmé Gyelwé Nyugu). Bodhgaya, India: Shechen Publications, 2004. BDRC W27884, 176–177.*

court, which often functioned primarily as expeditions to trade in luxury goods.<sup>951</sup> By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, large, powerful monastic institutions such as the Geluk centers of Kumbum and Labrang were closely involved in providing the necessary infrastructure for international trade and commerce.<sup>952</sup>

The fact that many monastic institutions and their leadership had become so deeply embroiled in political and economic machinations was clearly a source of concern among many Tibetan monastic and religious figures. This concern shows up repeatedly in the autobiographies of Tibetan figures from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which often express exasperation and dismay over the need to engage in economic activity—such as performing ritual services for patrons—that are felt to be a distraction from spiritual practice. For example, Dūdjom Lingpa relates a visionary interaction with a great tantric master in which Lingpa bemoans that “Under the sway of craving food and clothing, / I have no choice but to go off seeking provisions, / Because by nature, this is what sentient beings do.” To this the master responds: “Throughout your lifetime don’t lose yourself to undeserved payments. / For the rest of your human life / Devote yourself to spiritual practice—focus on that.”<sup>953</sup>

In a similar vein, Jamgön Kongtrül, in his autobiography, repeatedly expresses his fear about the negative consequences that may arise for him due to the *obscurations due*

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<sup>951</sup> William van Spengen, “The Geo-History of Long-Distance Trade in Tibet 1850–1950,” in *The Tibetan History Reader*, edited by Gray Tuttle and Kurtis R. Schaeffer, 491–522 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 507; and, J. K. Fairbank and S. Y. Têng, “On the Ch’ing Tributary System,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 6 (1941): 135–246.

<sup>952</sup> For the role of Kumbum in this trade, see William Rockhill, *The Land of the Lamas: Notes of a Journey Through China, Mongolia and Tibet* (New York: Century Co., 1891), 90. For the role of Labrang, see Nietupski, *Labrang Monastery*, 82ff.).

<sup>953</sup> Dūdjom Lingpa, *A Clear Mirror: The Visionary Autobiography of a Tibetan Master*, translated by Chönyi Drolma (Kathmandu: Rangjung Yeshe Publications, 2011), 98.

to misappropriation (*dkor sgrib*).<sup>954</sup> The conclusion of Kongtrül’s autobiography contains a very interesting passage that is relevant to this discussion, which is worth quoting in full:

I have not truly been able to apply myself to the essentials of spiritual practice in the way that I intended. Instead, I have been distracted by an uninterrupted process of projects—activities that I never intended to pursue. Nevertheless, from an early age I have, as a matter of course, rejected things of this world. I have not been given any title as some great incarnation. I have not been burdened with the effects of unintentional misappropriation incurred by anyone overseeing a monastery. I have had no need for any such activities, but rather have, up to the present, striven solely at positive and spiritual activities. This is the very essence of what someone’s biography should contain, and up until my thirties I had not been affected by any misappropriation of support offered by the faithful or offerings made on behalf of deceased individuals. Since that time, however, the negative effects of such unintentional misappropriation has become a heavier and heavier burden to me. My clear inner vision and positive qualities have become more obscured, while the effects of my harmful actions, moral failings, and negative habits have become more prevalent. As one of the sūtras states, ‘It is a more grievous fault for someone to violate their ethical discipline and become involved in misappropriation than for an evil person to kill a thousand people every day.’<sup>955</sup>

We can see from passages such as these that many Tibetan figures saw the economic activities required of monastic administrators to be a serious obstacle to authentic spiritual practice. Such sentiments show how ubiquitous it had become for Tibetan monasteries to rely upon economic ventures such as long-distance trade and money lending.<sup>956</sup>

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<sup>954</sup> Jamgön Kongtrül, *The Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrül: A Gem of Many Colors*, translated by Richard Barron. (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2003), 58, 68, 102, 252.

<sup>955</sup> Jamgön Kongtrül, *The Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrül*, 252.

<sup>956</sup> Buddhist monasteries were known to have long been major economic centers going back to their inception in ancient India. See for example, Gregory Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters: Still More Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004).

### ***Provision of Ritual Services***

Notwithstanding the ambivalence expressed by many Tibetan figures about the damaging effects that participating in economic activity might have on monastic decorum and ethics, the fact remains that Tibetan monasteries have been, and largely remain, first-and-foremost, *ritual* centers. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century—as today—the overwhelming majority of the resident population of Tibetan monasteries were engaged in providing ritual services to the surrounding community. These ritual services run the gamut from funerary rituals, ceremonies for healing and long-life, rituals for suppressing or averting harmful influences, as well as collective and communal rituals such as *offering feasts* (*tsok*; *tshogs*) and the annual masked dances of the Cham “demon dance.” The focus of Tibetan monastic communities on performing a prodigious range of ritual services, comprising complex liturgies and choreography, means that most residents of Tibetan monasteries are primarily devoted to learning and performing the ritual services of the monastic calendar, with comparatively few Tibetan monastics ever engaging in extended meditation retreat or intensive philosophical study.<sup>957</sup>

### ***Scholarship and Literacy***

That being said, Tibetan Monasteries *were* also important centers of education and scholarship. If only a minority of Tibetan monastic residents ever engaged in high-level textual study, this minority had an outsized influence due to the fact that, historically, almost every Tibetan that was literate—aside from a wealthy upper crust of

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<sup>957</sup> Dreyfus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping*, 44ff.

aristocrats who could afford private instruction—became so through studying at a monastic institution.<sup>958</sup>

Although Tibetan monasteries had long been the primary centers of learning, scholarship, and literary production, the specific form that these took varied considerably from institution to institution and across time. Our introduction to scholarship and “scholasticism” in Tibet in chapter one provided examples of two of the most influential monastic curricula in Tibet prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century: that of the Geluk colleges attached to the “three seats” in Central Tibet, and the various courses of study for monks and lay students offered at Mindröling under Terdak Lingpa and Lochen Dharmaśrī.

In our discussion of scholasticism in chapter one, we mentioned the productive tension between “reason” and authority that undergirds much of scholastic practice. It is also true that the very practice of scholasticism itself tends to exude an aura of authority. Indeed, one of the defining characteristics of scholasticism is its elite status—or rather, its role in conferring elite status and authority on the individuals who practice it. Scholastic techniques are highly technical, formalized, and artificial. They are the antithesis of “natural”; they are almost always taught and practiced in highly formal and hierarchical settings. The monastery—in which the day is subdivided and regimented in minute parcels of time and activity, in which obedience to the monastic preceptor and monastic administrators is written into the “rule,”<sup>959</sup> provides both the perfect setting and the

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<sup>958</sup> Dominique Townsend provides a fascinating study of how the Nyingma monastery of Mindröling evolved into a center of both monastic education and an elite training institute for lay aristocrats to train in the literary arts and *belles lettres* in her recent book, *A Buddhist Sensibility: Aesthetic Education at Tibet's Mindröling Monastery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021).

<sup>959</sup> In the form of both the Vinaya vows taken by the monks, and the “rule” prescribed and formalized in regulatory documents such a monastic *chayik* (*bca' yig*).

underlying logic for the scholastic method. As we will see in our analysis of Shenpen Tayé’s *Exhortation to the Assembly at Dzagyel Monastery* below, maintaining the *decorum* and *appearance (rtags)* appropriate to one’s monastic vows was something that Shenpen Tayé was deeply concerned with impressing on his monastic audience.

In medieval Europe, the discursive artifice demanded by scholastic pursuits was widely felt to be incompatible with the contemplative life to which the monastic rule was primarily directed. A solution was found by replicating the regimen, the hierarchy, and the cloistered environment of the monastery in a new set of institutions—the cathedral school and the university—where prayer and contemplation were superseded—if not replaced—by the scholastic practices of memorization, *lectio*, and *disputatio*.

In the case of Tibetan “monasteries,” we see a similar desire to create distinct institutions—or distinct *spaces* within institutions—for the practice of such disparate pursuits as study, prayer, and meditation. Thus, most large Nyingma monasteries today have a “study section” or *shedra (bshad grwa)* for scholastic study, a “practice section” or *drupdra (sgrub grwa)* for ritual-contemplative practices, and sometimes also a “meditation section” or *gomdra (sgom grwa)* for contemplative retreat.

In short, Tibetan monasteries had both the ideal environment—in the form of a structured, disciplined, hierarchical, single-sex<sup>960</sup> community dedicated to the religious life—and the economic and political resources to foster high-level study, scholarship, and literary production, and thus, became the premier centers for such activities in Tibet.

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<sup>960</sup> Single-sex in theory at least. We will discuss how this issue manifested in Nyingma monasteries below.

### 6.1.3 The Development of Buddhist Monasticism in the Nyingma Tradition

It is well beyond the scope of this chapter to provide either a comprehensive history of monasticism in Tibet or an overarching survey of its functions in Tibetan society. Instead, I will focus in the next section in providing some context for understanding and appreciating Shenpen Tayé’s contributions to monastic practice among Nyingmapas in the early modern period.

#### **6.1.3.1 *The Imperial Period and the Age of Fragmentation and the Transmission of the “Lower” Vinaya Lineage***

Virtually all Nyingmapas who take monastic ordination today are ordained in the “Lower Vinaya” (*smad ‘dul*) lineage.<sup>961</sup> This lineage is said to have been the earliest surviving lineage of the Buddhist Vinaya in Tibet, tracing its introduction to Tibet to the Indian scholar monk Śāntarakṣita in the 8<sup>th</sup> century CE. This ordination lineage was nearly wiped out in the anti-Buddhist persecutions of the Tibetan king Langdarma at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century but survived by being carried to the east by a small handful of monks, who, in concert with Lachen Gongpa Rab sel (*bla chen dgongs pa rab gsal*; c. 832–915) from Amdo, preserved the monastic ordination lineage in the “lower” regions of Eastern Tibet, allowing it to be subsequently reintroduced back into Central Tibet. The Lower Vinaya became contrasted with the Upper Vinaya (*stod ‘dul*), which was introduced in the 10<sup>th</sup> century in the “upper” country of Western Tibet by the Indian

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<sup>961</sup> The Lower Vinaya is sometimes also referred to as the “Eastern Vinaya” by virtue of being preserved in Eastern Tibet. See for example, Ronald Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, 84ff.

scholar-monk Dharmapāla.<sup>962</sup> The Kadmapa sect that was founded and propagated by the students of the Bengali monk Atiśa Dīpankara (982–1054) generally followed the Lower Vinaya tradition,<sup>963</sup> as did their successors, the *Gelukpas*. Later, the Nyingma monastery of Mindröling came to play a key role in preserving and transmitting the Lower Vinaya lineage to numerous other Nyingma figures and institutions.

### 6.1.3.2 *Mindröling Monastery*

We saw in chapter five how the ritual initiation system developed by Mindröling’s founders spread throughout the premier Nyingma centers across Tibet, leading to the transformation of the previously nebulous rubric of Nyingma *kama* into its current status as a canonical collection of transmitted Nyingma scriptures that stands outside the revelatory processes of the treasure tradition. Mindröling was also the key site for the propagation of Buddhist monasticism throughout the wider Nyingma world.

Mindröling’s transmission of monastic ordination following the Lower Vinaya (*smad ‘dul*) lineage has occurred continuously through the office of Mindröling’s “Khenchen” (*mkhan chan*), meaning “great abbot” or “head preceptor.” The first Mindröling Khenchen was Gyelsé Tenpé Nyima (*rgyal sras bstan pa’i nyi ma*; 1648–1674), who was the brother of Terdak Lingpa and Lochen Dharmaśrī, with Lochen taking

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<sup>962</sup> Both of these “upper” and “lower” lineages of the Vinaya were from the Mūlasarāstivāda Vinaya tradition.

<sup>963</sup> Although Atiśa himself was ordained in the completely different Buddhist Vinaya tradition of the Lokottaravāda section of the *Mahāsāṃghika-vinaya*, his Tibetan students and successors tended to be ordained in the Lower Vinaya tradition. See Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, 110–111; and James Apple, *Jewels of the Middle Way: The Madhyamaka Legacy of Atiśa and his Early Tibetan Followers* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2018), 10–14.



the position of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Khenchen with the death of Tenpé Nyima in 1674.<sup>964</sup> Although Lochen was given both novice and full ordination by the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (1617–1682), these ordinations were evidently not in the Lower Vinaya lineage because Lochen re-took his full ordination in the lineage of the Lower Vinaya with a Nyingma preceptor named Kharab Shelngane Konchok Tendzin (Kha rab zhal snga nas dkon mchok bstan ‘dzin, d.u.).<sup>965</sup> Over his lifetime, Lochen Dharmasrī is said to have personally bestowed full ordination to 447 monks, and novice vows to 1298 novices.<sup>966</sup>

Mindröling remained a key site for monastic ordination for Nyingmapas in Eastern Tibet well into the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, with many Nyingma luminaries from Eastern Tibet going to Mindröling to take monastic ordination, including Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo (‘jam dbang mkhyen brtse’i dbang po; 1820–1892) and Dzongsar Khyentsé Chökyi Lodrö (rdzong gsar mkhyen brtse chos kyi blo gros; 1893–1959). Thus, it became the case that the propagation of Buddhist monasticism was yet another important aspect of Mindröling’s continuing influence as an institutional center-of-gravity in the wider Nyingma world.

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<sup>964</sup> Mindröling’s leadership succession generally had the oldest son of the head throne holder or *Trichen* (*khri chen*) succeed his father in that role with the next youngest son assuming the office of Khenchen.

<sup>965</sup> Dudjum Rinpoché, *History of the Nyingma School*, 728–729. For a detailed lineage history of the Nyingma transmission of the Lower Vinaya down to Lochen Dharmasrī see the 4<sup>th</sup> Shechen Gyaltsab Gyurmé Pema Namgyel (zhe chen rgyal tshab 04 ’gyur med padma rnam rgyal), *zhe chen chos ’byung* (Leh, India: Sonam W. Tashigangpa, 1971).BDRC WIKG9453, 63–100.

<sup>966</sup> Mindrolling Jetsün Khandro Rinpoché, *Mindrolling History Project*, 29.

### 6.1.3.3 *Revival and Reform: Nyingma Monasticism in 18<sup>th</sup> - and Early 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Kham.*

In the wake of the destruction of Mindröling and the purges of other non-Geluk institutions in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, many Nyingma and Kagyü lamas fled Central Tibet for other regions such as Bhutan and Kham in eastern Tibet. Many of these lamas eschewed formal monastic institutions in favor of more decentralized institutional forms such as mobile encampments (*gar*; *sgar*) or village-based practices that relied on family or clan affiliation—modes of practice that had a long history among both Nyingmapa and Kagyüpas.

Those Nyingma and Kagyü lamas who desired to re-emphasize celibate monasticism and reestablish monastic centers of scholastic learning and exegesis in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries thus faced a fight on two fronts. Not only did they have to find a way to counter the increasingly sectarian hegemony of Gelukpa monastic elites, who already had long-standing and highly developed systems and institutions of scholastic learning and philosophical exegesis; they also had to combat those in their own traditions who were invested in non-monastic and non-scholastic modes of practice, and therefore saw monastic institutions as intrinsically hostile to their interests. As we shall see, the answer for many of the non-Geluk monastic reformers was to shift the focus of scholastic study away from simply internalizing and articulating particular sectarian interpretations of Buddhist thought and practice, and focus instead on developing two related skill sets:

*comprehension* of the foundational “root” Indian Buddhist Treatises from India<sup>967</sup> and facility in *composition* and the *literary arts*.

The center of this scholarly revival was the kingdom of Dergé in the eastern Tibetan region of Kham. Jann Ronis, in his 2009 dissertation on the Nyingma monastery of Katok in Dergé, details the following emerging trends in the religious landscape of Kham in the mid-to late 18<sup>th</sup> century: 1) the Royal Court and the heads of the major monasteries maintained close relations, whereby “the growth of the kingdom and monasteries progressed in mutually advantageous ways”; 2) celibate monasticism came to be of increasing importance in the Nyingma (and Kagyü) traditions; and 3) the study of literary arts was emphasized.<sup>968</sup>

#### **6.1.3.4      *Situ Panchen and the Promotion of Monasticism and the Literary Arts in Kham in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century***

The re-editing and re-printing of the Tibetan Buddhist canon in Dergé in eastern Tibet in the first decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was a watershed moment in Tibetan intellectual and textual history that was to have far-ranging and profound impacts on the intellectual, institutional, and literary culture of Tibet. The 18<sup>th</sup> century also saw a monastic revival in Kham and the rise of mass ordinations of monks in Nyingma and Kagyü communities. The figure at the head of both of these projects was Situ Panchen

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<sup>967</sup> Throughout the history of Buddhism in Tibet, India was consistently accorded a favored status as the place of origin of the Buddhist tradition and the various “high” literary and cultural forms and institutions associated with Buddhist learning. Thus, for Tibetans, the standard of authenticity, with which the myriad Buddhist institutions, doctrines, and practices in Tibet were judged, was whether they originated in India. Therefore, throughout Tibetan Buddhist history, a common strategy of monastic and institutional reformers was to go back to the “root” texts (*bstan ‘gyur*, Skt, *śāstra*). See Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*.

<sup>968</sup> Ronis, “Celibacy, Revelations, and Reincarnated Lamas,” 146-185.

Chökyi Jungné (si tu paN chen chos kyi 'byung gnas; 1700-1774), an extraordinary figure who changed the landscape of religious and intellectual life in Eastern Tibet. As we saw in chapter five, Situ Panchen's editorial strategies were to be emulated by Shenpen Tayé in his efforts to compile and publish the first-ever collection of Nyingma *kama* texts. Beyond such methodological concerns, Situ Panchen's emphasis on grammar and the literary arts was to have a profound and broad influence on the status and the study of these subjects in ways that directly impacted Shenpen Tayé and his educational and scholarly visions. Furthermore, Situ Panchen's promotion of Buddhist monasticism in Kham provides an interesting precursor and comparative example to Shenpen Tayé's own efforts to promote Buddhist monasticism among Nyingmapas. As such, it will be useful to introduce Situ Panchen and say a bit more about the influential master's activities and legacy.

#### Editing the Buddhist Canon at Dergé

Situ Panchen, the 8<sup>th</sup> incarnation of the Tai Situ lineage, is remembered for his tireless efforts to promote celibate monasticism among the Nyingma and Kagyü in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and for his mastery of the literary arts as evidenced by his role in editing and overseeing the publishing of the canonical collection of Indian Buddhist treatises, known as the *Tengyur* (*bstan 'gyur*), at the great publishing house of the Kingdom of Dergé in Kham from 1729-1733.<sup>969</sup> This collection was comprised of 4,469 individual works

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<sup>969</sup> For a description of the history of the Buddhist canons in Tibet see Kurtis Schaeffer, *The Culture of the Book in Tibet*, and Paul Harrison, "A Brief History of the Tibetan bKa' 'gyur," in *Tibetan Literature, Studies in Genre*, eds. Cabezón and Jackson, (Ithica, NY: Snow Lion, 1996). For a comprehensive treatment of the history of the Dergé publishing house see Schaeffer, *The Culture of the Book in Tibet*, pp. 90-119, 140-146, and 151-160.

organized into 316 separate volumes containing over 64,000 two-sided folios. Such a massive editorial project required a small army of editors, scribes, wood carvers (for the wood printing blocks), paper makers, ink makers, and so on. Because a collection of such a size was bound to have textual errors from previous editions, Situ Panchen took great care to go through the texts word-by-word and letter-by-letter, correcting orthographic, grammatical, and syntactical errors from previous editions.

Situ Panchen’s approach to editing and emendating was rooted in the reasoned approaches of earlier generations of editors and translators.<sup>970</sup> Centuries earlier, the great scholar-monk Butön Rinchendrup led the first major cataloging, and editing of the *Tengyur* in 1335 at the monastery of Zhalu. Still extant is the text of a letter that Butön wrote as chief editor to his assistant editors regarding proper editorial practices.<sup>971</sup> The letter is a fascinating document that describes the *conjectural* nature of much of this emendation. For example, the letter advises the editors that,

Since an understanding of the word and meaning are dependent upon one another, when some doubt arises, understand the meaning from the word by looking at [the word] *analytically*, and the [correct spelling] will be understood from the meaning.<sup>972</sup>

Kurtis Schaeffer takes this instruction as meaning that “the text should make sense, and if it does not the editor is encouraged to emend in accordance with his *reasoned understanding* of what the text *should* say.”<sup>973</sup>

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<sup>970</sup> Schaeffer, *The Culture of the Book in Tibet*, 101.

<sup>971</sup> For a full translation of this letter see Schaeffer, *The Culture of the Book in Tibet*, 149-150.

<sup>972</sup> Schaeffer, *The Culture of the Book in Tibet*, 23.

<sup>973</sup> Schaeffer, *The Culture of the Book in Tibet*, 23.

Here we have a fascinating example of Tibetan scholars opening up a space for systematic and *rational* scholarship that can trump the authority of canonical texts (as they currently existed). However, it is important to note that this scholarly space is not constructed in *opposition* to received religious authority but rather in *symbiosis* with such authority. In other words, the authority of these scholars was rooted in their deep and broad knowledge of canonical scripture. However, in order to maintain the accuracy and authority of canonical texts, these scholars had to develop methods to correct previous mistakes in these texts—methods that were necessarily *extra-canonical*.

The system of emendating described by both Būton and Situ Panchen brings a range of techniques and methods to bear in order to be as sure as possible about a potential emendation. These techniques range from comparative bibliography (consulting and comparing as many previous editions of the text as possible), grammatical analysis, and philosophical-doctrinal consistency. Thus a successful editor must possess a wide range of knowledge and skills, which he would use in combination in order to “triangulate” whether the text is “correct.”

Of these various methods, it is clear that for Situ Panchen, the literary arts—grammar, poetics, lexicography, and so forth—were of primary importance. A quick perusal of Situ Panchen’s collected works shows just how important grammar and other language arts were to him. Of the fourteen volumes of the most complete extant edition of Situ Panchen’s *Collected Works*,<sup>974</sup> six are given completely to treatises on grammar,

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<sup>974</sup> *Collected Works of the Great Ta’i si tu pa Kun mkhyen chos kyi byun [sic] gnas bstan pa’i nyin byed* (Tai Situpa Künkhyen Chökyi Jungné Tenpé Nyinjekyi Kambum). 14 volumes. Sansal, HP, India: Sherab Gyaltzen, 1990.

poetics, and lexicography, with further texts on grammar sprinkled throughout the other volumes. In contrast to this profusion of treatises on grammar and lexicography, Situ's *Collected Works* contain very little in the way of *philosophical* commentary. Indeed, Situ Panchen's *Collected Works* contain no treatises whatsoever on Valid Cognition (*tshad ma*, Skt. *pramāṇa*), Mādhyamaka, Yogācāra, or the Perfection of Wisdom, nor does it contain any major tantric exegetical treatises.<sup>975</sup> Kurtis Schaeffer sums up Situ's particular scholastic orientation thus:

For Situ philology trumps philosophy, for philology is the science by which the classical Buddhist texts, upon which philosophy is based, are maintained. Texts should not be altered based upon the whims of philosophical positions. Rather, textual readings should be based upon principles of textual criticism of Indian texts. And this text-critical scrutiny constitutes a major – one might argue the major – task to which the traditional scholar of Buddhism should be committed.<sup>976</sup>

As Martin Irvine has argued in the case of the development of literacy and textual culture in early medieval Europe, grammar—or, more specifically, *grammatica* (works on grammar)—far from being simply arcane “rules of language” are, in fact, critical *constitutive sub-texts* that act to “organize the entire field of literacy by ensuring the continuity of an endless chain of textual production and by conditioning the various processes of production, distribution and comprehension of written messages.”<sup>977</sup> Jann Ronis echoes this sentiment when he states that,

A large part of the appeal of Situ Panchen and Zhuchen to the Degé court was that they were masters of the literary arts with skills of translation and composition

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<sup>975</sup> Kurtis R. Schaeffer, “Si tu paṅ chen on Scholarship,” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*, no. 7, 2013, pp. 302-315, 306.

<sup>976</sup> Schaeffer, “Si tu paṅ chen on Scholarship,” 306-307.

<sup>977</sup> Martin Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture: Grammatica and Literary Theory, 350-1100*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

that could rival those of the great paṇḍitas of the Tibetan Renaissance and beyond. Getsé inherited this mantle and gained great prestige in Degé for his skill in grammar and editing, as witnessed by his work with the Degé Printing House. Expertise in the literary arts was a key component of socially valued learning and prestige in Degé and this was doubtlessly an important reason why Getsé taught Sanskrit grammar and poetics at Katok.<sup>978</sup>

In this way, we can see that status and influence enjoyed by Situ Panchen and other scholar-monks associated with editing and publishing the Buddhist canons at Dergé in the early to mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century was a major factor in the subsequent expansion of classical learning, philological studies, and the literary arts (both in terms of patronage and prestige and influence) in the region.<sup>979</sup> This increasing focus on the literary arts across Tibet during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries—and the prestige and patronage that such facility attracted—led to a profound reorientation in non-Geluk Tibetan monastic institutions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as these institutions sought ways to carve out spaces within their institutions for high-level study of the classical Buddhist textual tradition in ways that privileged the development of *comprehension* and *composition* over the prevailing focus on formulaic debate practices.

### Celibacy and Reform

Until quite recently, Nyingma “monasteries” or *gönpa* tended to be made up of *mixed* communities containing both celibate and non-celibate “monks” (*drapa*; *grwa pa*). Jann Ronis details such a situation that prevailed at the Monastery of Püntsok Dargyé Ling in the Yushül region of northern Kham in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>980</sup> Ronis analyzes the

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<sup>978</sup> Ronis, “Celibacy, Revelations, and Reincarnated Lamas,” 241.

<sup>979</sup> Ronis, “Celibacy, Revelations, and Reincarnated Lamas,” 161.

<sup>980</sup> Ronis, “Celibacy, Revelations, and Reincarnated Lamas,” 157–161.



regulations (*chayik; bca' yig*) that Situ Panchen composed for the monastery, which show that a group of celibate monks were attempting to reestablish the rule of celibate monasticism at the monastery after generations of decline. Situ chides the non-celibate monks, suggesting that their way of living is a “wrong path” (*log lam*).<sup>981</sup> In spite of their lapses, Situ recommends that the existing non-celibate “monks” be allowed to remain in the monastery and even participate in the monastic assemblies as long as they take and maintain lay-person (*upāsaka*) vows and subordinate themselves to the rule of the fully ordained celibate monks.<sup>982</sup>

Closer to our narrative is a story about Dza Patrül, who had become the head teacher at Śrī Siṃha likely sometime in the 1870s. Even though Dza Patrül was not a fully ordained monk himself, he—like his teacher, Shenpen Tayé—emphasized the importance of honoring and keeping one’s vows. Matthieu Ricard’s *Enlightened Vagabond* relates the story:

Having stayed in the area for some time, Patrul grew tired of the poor behavior of monks at Dzogchen Monastery. Many of the monks, although they were fully ordained, nonetheless drank alcohol and secretly kept wives. Eventually, Patrul went to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dzogchen Pönlop, the abbot, to complain about this widespread failure of the monks to keep their monastic vows. However, since one of the dissolute monks was the monastery’s very powerful treasurer-administrator, Dzogchen Pönlop told Patrul there was nothing to be done and instead offered him some dried persimmons.

“Nope,” replied Patrul. “I don’t care for your dried persimmons!”  
Patrul got up. “I’ll be off,” he said. “Stay well.”<sup>983</sup>

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<sup>981</sup> Ronis, “Celibacy, Revelations, and Reincarnated Lamas,” 160–161.

<sup>982</sup> Ronis, “Celibacy, Revelations, and Reincarnated Lamas,” 159–161.

<sup>983</sup> *Enlightened Vagabond*, 107.

The story continues to relate how Patrül left Dzokchen but agreed to go no further than Dzachukha at the pleading of Pema Vajra, who invoked their shared bond of both having been close students of Shenpen Tayé.

A few decades after this incident, the Nyingma monastery of Katok was the site of a similar confrontation that ended very differently. After the death of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Katok Situ Chökyi Gyatso<sup>984</sup> in 1925, his student Jamyang Khyentsé Chökyi Lodrö became the regent of Katok. The following story is recorded in the reminiscences and oral histories of Chökyi Lodrö contained in the recently published translation of his biography:<sup>985</sup>

During Katok Situ's time, the Katok Monastery monks were little more than laymen in monks' clothing and their quarters teemed with women. Katok Situ had wanted to forbid all women from living within the monastery walls but was thwarted by those who insisted that doing so would enrage the monastery's main protectress, Lhamo. After Chökyi Lodrö took over, an old lama who lived in Gophuk cave urgently petitioned him to make and enforce a rule barring women from Katok altogether—the old lama turned out to be Khenpo Kunpal. But although he spoke eloquently about the importance and necessity of this expulsion, he was unwilling to help implement it. So it was Khenpo Nüden, Khenpo Jorden, Chökyi Lodrö, and the previous incarnation of Getse (Getse Mahapandita) who met to discuss how such a rule could be enforced. To his dismay, Chökyi Lodrö quickly realized that none of the other three were prepared to do anything more than ask him to banish the women. Tsejor [Chökyi Lodrö's personal assistant] was not at all happy.

'All will be well if these so-called monks obey Rinpoche's command,' he said at the time. 'But Horpo people are so hard-headed, we can't be sure what they'll do. If they flout Rinpoche's authority altogether by openly disobeying him, things will only go from bad to worse. Lhamo herself could turn on Rinpoche! She might make him ill or even threaten his very life!'

A few days later, the monastery's ordained monks and lay practitioners were summoned to a meeting in the courtyard. Three chairs had been set out:

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<sup>984</sup> *kaH thog sit u chos kyi rgya mtsho*; 1880–1925.

<sup>985</sup> Drubgyud Tenzin Rinpoche and Khenpo Sonam Phuntsok, trans. *The Life and Times of Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö*, 39–40.

Chökyi Lodrö sat in the middle, Khenpo Jorden sat on his right, and Katok Getse Tulku sat on his left. Khenpo Jorden spoke first, but so obscurely that his audience could barely understand a word. Next came Getse Tulku, but he was equally abstruse. Finally, Chökyi Lodrö addressed the gathering.

‘Katok Situ enthroned me as a lineage holder of Katok Monastery,’ he said. ‘As he is no longer alive, I am his regent. I therefore own Katok Monastery and everything in it, from the golden throne to the stone slabs and pots and pans in the kitchen. I have absolute authority here.’

‘Tomorrow at sunrise, there will be a thorough inspection of every inch of the monastery. If any women are found, even if they are themselves high lamas or leaders of the community, we will have no option but to flog them. So today, all the women must leave this monastery—for good!’

No one had the power or authority to contradict him, and so the meeting broke up with the unspoken understanding that Chökyi Lodrö must be obeyed.

That night Tsejor could not sleep. ‘If they leave, all will be well,’ he kept repeating to himself. ‘But if they don’t, what can Rinpoche do about it? There are so many of them! Rinpoche’s position would be weakened, he would be embarrassed—and Lhamo might even strike him down!’

Before sunrise the next morning, Tsejor rose as usual to circumambulate the monastery. To his enormous relief, he saw a long line of women filing out of the monastery gates. Some were wearing yellow hats, and the wealthy were leading long caravans of oxen, dzos, horses, and mules piled high with their belongings.

As the sun edged above the horizon, Chökyi Lodrö, Getse Tulku, and Khenpo Jorden inspected every inch of the monastery, including the inner passages and the monks’ quarters; they didn’t find a single woman anywhere. Tsejor was amazed. He felt that Rinpoche’s accomplishment was nothing less than heroic. And in the process, Rinpoche hadn’t even caught cold—which proved just how wrong it had been to imagine that kicking the women out would enrage Lhamo Gönlek.<sup>986</sup>

These episodes evoke some of what was at stake in trying to impose monastic reforms on a major monastic center. In the episodes at Dzokchen at Katok, we see that internal politics often made it extremely difficult—even physically dangerous—to

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<sup>986</sup> 39–40.

impose reforms on a “monastic” population that had become accustomed to a particular way of living.

We may also note the very interesting assertions about *who* the female residents of Katok may have been. The most obvious assumption based on the contextual evidence provided is that the women in question were mostly the sexual partners of some of the male residents. There may also have been women who lived there primarily as domestic workers, performing the cleaning, cooking, and laundering duties for the “monks.” A number of things that are said, however, suggest another radically different interpretation. Chökyi Lodrö is reported as saying: “Tomorrow at sunrise, there will be a thorough inspection of every inch of the monastery. If any women are found, *even if they are themselves high lamas or leaders of the community*, we will have no option but to flog them.”<sup>987</sup> The next morning when the women are leaving the monastery, Chökyi Lodrö’s attendant says that he saw “a long line of women filing out of the monastery gates. Some were wearing yellow hats, and the wealthy were leading long caravans of oxen, dzos, horses, and mules piled high with their belongings.”<sup>988</sup> These descriptions suggest that at least some of the women living at Katok were there in a leadership capacity and many were wealthy in their own right.

There passage also suggests the possibility that some—or many—of these “women” at Katok were not living there as women, but as *men*. Chökyi Lodrö’s statement that there would be “a thorough inspection of every inch of the monastery,”

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<sup>987</sup> Drubgyud Tenzin Rinpoche and Khenpo Sonam Phuntsok, trans. *The Life and Times of Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö*, 40. Emphasis mine.

<sup>988</sup> *ibid.*

and that any women that are found would be flogged, “*even if they are themselves high lamas or leaders of the community,*” suggests that the expulsion initiated by Chökyi Lodrö involved not simply expelling women who were living there, but required the administration to determine *which of the residents was a woman*. Considering the extremely limited options that women in Tibet had during this period for pursuing religious practice, it would not be at all surprising if many religiously minded women chose to present as male in order to access the training and institutional support afforded only men. Without more specific evidence, however, we can only speculate about whether and to what degree such a situation existed at Katok and other Nyingma institutions.

We will now turn our attention to Shenpen Tayé and his efforts to bolster and expand Buddhist monasticism among the Nyingma, beginning with an analysis of the monastic influences on Shenpen Tayé.

## 6.2 Monastic Influences on Shenpen Tayé

As we saw in chapter two, Shenpen Tayé’s education and religious training involved receiving teachings and transmissions in and around his home region of Dzachukha with a number of revered lamas such as Jikmé Gyelwé Nyugu and Jikmé Kelsang. These teachings seemed to have taken the form of personal instruction, probably within a small group of local trainees and practitioners.<sup>989</sup> None of these teachings took

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<sup>989</sup> Jikmé Nyugu’s autobiography describes many teachings that he gave in and around Dzachukha to individual people or small groups of adherents (typically five to twenty people) and it is likely that the teachings that Shenpen Tayé describes receiving from Jikmé Nyugu and others were in such a setting. See *jigs med rgyal ba’i myu gu’i rnam thar: ‘gro mgon bla ma rje’i gsang gsum rnam thar rgya mtsho las thun*

place in a formal monastic setting and Shenpen Tayé’s early teachers were generally not fully ordained monks.<sup>990</sup> The one instance of Shenpen Tayé studying with a monastic teacher is when he received the transmission of Je Tsongkhapa’s *Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path (lam rim chen mo)* from Gemang Rabjam Gelek Yarphel (*dge man grab ‘byams dge legs yar ‘phel*, d.u.), who was a Gelukpa scholar, and, thus, almost certainly fully ordained. Around the same time as he received these teachings from Gelek Yarphel, Shenpen Tayé took the vows of a Buddhist layman (*dge snyen*; Skt. *upāsaka*) from the 1<sup>st</sup> Lingla (*gling bla*) Tulku Sonam Jinpa,<sup>991</sup> thus initiating his formal entry into the *prātimokṣa* vows.

Although Shenpen Tayé’s education and training took place almost entirely in non-monastic settings with non-monastic masters and teachers, his biography shows that the *content* of his education was actually quite close to what a monastic student would be exposed to at one of today’s Nyingma shedras. He began with the formal study of grammar and literary arts, studying Thonmi Sambhota’s grammar treatises, Daṇḍin’s *Mirror of Poetics*, and texts on astrology with Lama Monlam Dargyé. Shenpen Tayé’s *Verse Autobiography* also says that he studied Jikmé Lingpa’s *Precious Treasury of Good Qualities* and works on the three vows with Monlam Dargyé. He also mentions studying with Jikmé Ngotsar, from whom he received the *Collected Tantras of the*

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*mong phyi’i mngon rtogs rgyal sras lam bzang (the Biography of Jikmé Gyelwé Nyugu)*. Bodhgaya, India: Shechen Publications, 2004. BDRC W27884.

<sup>990</sup> For example, I have been able to find no sources on Jikmé Gyelwé Nyugu, the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen, or Jikmé Kelsang that say that any of them had full monastic ordination.

<sup>991</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> Lingla (*gling bla*) tulku Sonam Jinpa ([ToL page](#); [BDRC P8701](#))—whom Shenpen Tayé refers to as “Ling Drupchen” (*gling grub chen*), *Verse Autobiography*, 2b. Lingla Sonam Jinpa was born in 1761 in Dzagyü Troshül (*rdza rgyud khro shul*), which is near Shenpen Tayé’s natal home.

*Ancients*, and who “repeatedly explained the efficacious way for unmistakably progressing from earlier to later [practices] in the proper sequence.”<sup>992</sup> Such an education, beginning with formal study of grammar and the literary arts and then moving through literature on the Buddhist path and *three vow* theory—all governed by a gradualist paradigm emphasizing the “proper” order of studies—is reminiscent of the shedra curriculum that Shenpen Tayé would develop many years later.

And if Shenpen Tayé did not *go forth* and *formally* renounce the world by taking monastic vows until he was in his late twenties, his biographies emphasize that he had *internally* renounced the world from a young age. His biography in the *Trinchok Catalog* says that:

there awoke in him the mind of enlightenment, cultivated over countless eons, and he became helplessly preoccupied with a strong tremor of compassion for all beings and the intention to renounce samsara. Because of this he completely let go of any clinging to the enchantments of the mundane world and left behind his worldly duties and relationships.<sup>993</sup>

There is no record of Shenpen Tayé taking novice monastic vows (*dge tshul*) but his **full monastic ordination** was granted by the hermit monk Sengdruk Pema Tashi during Shenpen Tayé’s first stay at Dzokchen Monastery sometime in the late 1820s, and was given the name Thubten Pema Gyepé Nyinché Pelzangpo (thub bstan pad+ma rgyas pa’i nyin byed dpal bzang po).<sup>994</sup> As we saw in chapter two, Pema Tashi spent a least a

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<sup>992</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 3a: gdams khrid kyi lag len de dag kyang // gong 'og gi go rim ma 'khrul bar// gnad smin gyi tshul du lan 'ga' bskyar// mtshams bcad kyi gzungs brnyan 'ga' yang byas//.

<sup>993</sup> *Trinchok Catalog* 37b: bskal ba du mar byang chub kyi sems la goms pa'i rigs sad de/ 'khor ba las nges par 'byung ba'i blo dang / sems can la brtse ba'i shugs drag po gnyis phan tshun 'gran pa lta bus rgyud dbang med du 'khrul te/ 'jig rten srid pa'i phun tshogs rnams la thugs zhen gting nas log cing 'dir snang mthun 'jug gi bya ba thams cad rgyab tu dor te/.

<sup>994</sup> This name bestowal is explicitly noted in: o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po. “rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha' yas kyi gsan yig gi mgo rgyan/,” in *gsung 'bum/\_o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po*, vol. 1: 337–

decade studying and receiving lineage transmissions at Mindröling Monastery where he took his vows of full ordination with the 6<sup>th</sup> Minling Khenchen Rikdzin Zangpo (smin gling mkhan chen rig 'dzin bzang po; d.u.), who was the abbot and head monastic preceptor at Mindröling.<sup>995</sup> Here we can see that Shenpen Tayé's vows of full ordination can be traced to the Mindröling lineage of the Lower Vinaya (*smad 'dul*), for which Mindröling was widely revered for propagating and preserving. A few years after he was fully ordained, Shenpen Tayé took at least two trips to Central Tibet, during which time he visited Mindröling and made strong personal connections with many of its leading figures.<sup>996</sup>

During one of these visits to Central Tibet, Shenpen Tayé studied at the Gelukpa Upper Tantric College (rgyud stod grwa tshang) with the abbot, Gendün Dargyé (dge 'dun dar rgyas; 1786–c.1850s/60s).<sup>997</sup> While there, Shenpen Tayé is reported to have “thoroughly studied the *Five Treatises of Maitreya*, the collection of [Nāgārjuna's] six texts on reasoning, and all of the extant systems of scholarly texts from India.”<sup>998</sup> As I argued in chapter four, these studies with Gendün Dargye are significant in that they represent the only specific mention of Shenpen Tayé studying or receiving the

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342 (Chengdu: si khron dpe skrun tshogs pa/ si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2009). BDRC W1PD107142.

<sup>995</sup> Andreas Kretschmar estimates that Pema Tashi spent 15–20 years at Mindröling. See *Drops of Nectar: Khenpo Kunpal's Commentary on Śāntideva's Bodhisattva-aāvātāra*. 2003, 28, note 177.

<sup>996</sup> These interactions were discussed in detail in chapter five above.

<sup>997</sup> BDRC [P3577](https://www.BDRC.org/#!rid=P3577). A major Gelukpa scholastic figure, who taught extensively at the tantric college of the Gelukpa monastery of Labrang (*bla brang*), eventually acting as the college's throne holder (*khri pa*). In 1848, he ascended to become to the 43<sup>rd</sup> throne holder of Labrang (*bla brang*) itself and was known for founding both philosophical colleges (*mtshan nyid grwa tshang*) and tantric colleges (*rgyud pa grwa tshang*) at various Gelugpa Monasteries (<https://www.BDRC.org/#!rid=P3577>).

<sup>998</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 40b: de nas dbus phyogs su yang deng sngon lan gnyis tsam rim par phebs shing / der rgyud stod mkhan po dge 'dun dar rgyas las/\_byams chos sde lnga dang / dbu ma rig pa'i tshogs drug sogs 'phags yul mkhas pa'i gzhung lugs kyi rgyun yod do cog thams cad.



transmissions for specific Indian Buddhist philosophical treatises. Shenpen Tayé's studies at the Upper Tantric College are also significant so far as they represent one of the only instances in Shenpen Tayé's biography that describes him studying with a monastic scholar within a strictly monastic setting. Indeed, these studies with a famous Gelukpa scholar-monk—one who rose to become the 43rd throne holder of Labrang Monastery in Amdo and not only taught at, but *founded*, philosophical colleges (*mtshan nyid grwa tshang*) and higher tantric colleges (*rgyud pa grwa tshang*) at various Gelukpa Monasteries<sup>999</sup>—demonstrate the influence of Geluk figures and institutions on Shenpen Tayé. However, as I argued in chapter four, Shenpen Tayé's personal interactions with Geluk figures and institutions seem to have been, at most, a matter of elective affinity, in which Shenpen Tayé became interested in studying classical Indian treatises, and so sought out figures and institutions that were particularly renowned in this regard—i.e., those of the Gelukpas.

In short, although Shenpen Tayé spent little or no time in monastic settings and had very little exposure at all to Buddhist monasticism *per se* during his formative years, he nevertheless imbibed a good deal of the *spirit* of monasticism through study of three-vow theory and the emphasis that many of his teachers placed on developing a genuine spirit of *renunciation*, a message that the young Shenpen Tayé seems to have taken to heart. We will now turn to an investigation of the different ways that Shenpen Tayé created tangible textual, institutional, and discursive supports for monastic practice, and how these activities served to support his vision of an ethically oriented Buddhist society.

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<sup>999</sup> See the BDRC page on Gendün Dargyé: <https://www.BDRC.org/#!rid=P3577>.

### 6.3 “Exemplifying the Teachings:” Shenpen Tayé’s Promotion of Buddhist Monasticism

Shenpen Tayé, in his *Verse Autobiography*, summarizes his contributions to supporting institutional monasticism thusly:

I did whatever was appropriate to help the residents and the infrastructure of Dzokchen Monastery. Although I was previously not focused on providing assistance for the maintenance of the monastery and its associated sites, I built some retreat sites and smaller monasteries in order to establish a system for teaching [Buddhist] exegesis and practice. I established a system for explaining the tantras and the sūtra systems, which are exemplified through the practice of the three foundational Vinaya rituals.<sup>1000</sup>

He goes on to say:

The system of study and practice at some Nyingma gompas in Central and Eastern Tibet had degenerated, and I restored the necessary sustenance to institutions that had been cut off. I also maintained all of my monastic and tantric vows and commitments as well I possibly could. Based on that, [I] also urged others [to properly hold] the three vows.<sup>1001</sup>

In this section, I investigate the myriad tangible ways that Shenpen Tayé actively worked to propagate and support the practice of Buddhist monasticism among his fellow Nyingmapas. These activities included ordaining others as a monastic preceptor, editing and publishing core Vinaya treatises and monastic liturgies, and authoring works himself on monastic practice. I conclude with some examples from his own writings that provide

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<sup>1000</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 5a: dgos ru dam bsam gtan chos gling gi// rten brten pa'i mthun grogs gang 'os bsgrubs// dgon gnas dang grwa sa'i 'dzin skyong la// rang sngon nas spro ba ma lags kyang // bshad sgrub kyi bstan pa'i srol 'dzin pa'i// dgon chung dang ri khrod 'ga' yang chags// gzhi gsum gyis lag len gyis mtshon pa'i// mdo phyogs dang rgyud kyi bshad srol btsugs/.

<sup>1001</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 5b: khams dbus kyi dgon mnying 'ga' zhid gi// bshad sgrub kyi srol kha nyams pa dang // longs spyod kyi gtong sgo chad pa'ang gsos// so byang dang sngags kyi dam sdom kun// rang gang nus srung ba gzhi bzhag nas// gzhan rnams kyang sdom pa gsum la bskul//.

a glimpse of Shenpen Tayé’s thoughts and attitudes towards monastic practice and its place within the wider Nyingma world.

### 6.3.1. Shenpen Tayé’s Role as a Monastic Preceptor

Perhaps the most direct way to promote Buddhist monasticism is to ordain others as a monastic preceptor. Although Shenpen Tayé does not seem to have engaged in mass ordinations of the kind that Situ Panchen was famous for performing, Shenpen Tayé is known to have given full monastic ordination to a number of individuals. Some of these include:

- the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lingla, Thubten Nyinche Gyeltsen (gling bla thub bstan nyin byed rgyal mtshan; d.u.). The 2<sup>nd</sup> Lingla was the reincarnation of Sönam Jinpa, who had previously given Shenpen Tayé the vows of a Buddhist layperson. The name, Thubten Nyinche Gyeltsen was the ordination name given to him by Shenpen Tayé, who also later enthroned the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lingla as the head Khenpo of Śrī Siṃha.
- Nyoshül Lungtok Tenpé Nyima (smyo shul lung rtogs bstan pa’i nyi ma; 1829–1901) received this name from Shenpen Tayé upon being ordained.<sup>1002</sup>
- Orgyen Tendzin Norbu (o rgyan bstan ‘dzin nor bu; 1841–1900/1): was the son of Shenpen Tayé’s nephew, Sonam Dargye, and was born in the same village as Shenpen Tayé. (Shenpen Tayé must have given him his ordination right before he died in 1855, as it is not common to receive full ordination before the age of 18).
- Rikdzin Zangpo (rig ‘dzin bzang po; b. early-19<sup>th</sup> cent.). The third head Khenpo of Śrī Siṃha.

This is, admittedly, a rather short list, especially compared to the hundreds of ordinations that other figures such as Lochen Dharmaśrī and Situ Panchen were said to have performed. One possible reason that Shenpen Tayé is not known to have ordained more people—particularly at Dzokchen and its new shedra that he founded—is that Sengdruk Pema Tashi, who had ordained Shenpen Tayé, resided near the monastery and so, as the

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<sup>1002</sup> Nyoshul Khenpo, *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems*, 239.

senior monk, would have been the one to act as monastic preceptor rather than Shenpen Tayé. The recognition of Pema Tashi as the senior monk at Dzokchen—and thus, the proper person to act as the monastic preceptor—is also reflected in the fact that Pema Tashi is listed as the first *khenpo* (*mkhan po*) of Śrī Siṃha and was often referred to as *khenchen* “great scholar-preceptor.” The fact that Shenpen Tayé does not seem to have ordained hundreds of people or performed mass-ordinations in the mode of Situ Panchen in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, suggests that Shenpen Tayé was not particularly concerned with increasing the *quantity* of ordained Nyingmapas. What Shenpen Tayé *was* clearly interested in doing, was providing the requisite *supports*—textual and institutional—to increase the *quality* of Nyingma monastic practice. It is to his construction of these supports that we shall now turn.

### 6.3.2 Editing and Publishing Canonical Vinaya Texts and Monastic Liturgies

One of the key sets of supports that Shenpen Tayé created to enable and support monastic practice among his fellow Nyingmapas was his editing and publishing a number of foundational Vinaya texts as part of his nine-volume *Trinchok Collection* of Nyingma *kama* texts. As we saw in the last chapter, Shenpen Tayé’s *Trinchok Collection* represented the first instance in which a comprehensive collection of texts was published under the rubric of *kama*. With his *Collection*, Shenpen Tayé deftly redefined and expanded the common understandings of *kama*, which had previously referred almost exclusively to the non-*terma* lineages of the *three inner Nyingma tantras*, but now comprised the *lower six Nyingma vehicles* as well. The most well-represented of these

*lower vehicles* in Shenpen Tayé's *Collection* was the vehicle of the *Hearers* (*nyan thos*; Skt., *śrāvaka*), and, specifically, monastic Vinaya texts, which comprise the first seven texts of volume one. The section below details the seven Vinaya works included in the *Trinchok Collection* in the order in which they appear:<sup>1003</sup>

***Supplication to the Lineage Holders of the Vows of Individual Liberation*** (*so thar sdom brgyud kyi gsol 'debs*). Vol. 1, text 1 (3 folios). Written by the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama with supplemental material by Lochen Dharmasrī and Shenpen Tayé.

***Clarifying the Path of Liberation: The Individual Liberation Ritual for Becoming a Householder Disciple*** (*khyim pa rjes su 'dzin pa so sor thar pa'i cho ga thar lam rab gsal*). Vol. 1, text 2 (11 folios). Written by Terdak Lingpa.

***Illuminating the Fundamental Meaning: The Ritual for Taking the Temporary Precepts*** (*bsnyen gnas kyi cho ga mdo don gsal ba*). Vol. 1, text 3 (3 folios). Written by Shenpen Tayé.

***A Precious Stairway: The Ritual of the Foundation of Renunciation*** (*rab byung gi gzhi'i cho ga rin chen them skas*). Vol. 1, text 4 (42 folios). Written by Lochen Dharmasrī with supplemental material by Shenpen Tayé.<sup>1004</sup>

***A Great Boat to Convey One to the Land of Liberation: The Ritual of the Three Grounds that Thoroughly Purifies Trainees*** (*bslab pa yongs su sbyong ba gzhi gsum gyi cho ga thar gling du bgrod pa'i gru chen*). Vol. 1, text 5 (27 folios). Written by Lochen Dharmasrī with supplemental material by Shenpen Tayé.<sup>1005</sup>

***Calendrical Tables for Scheduling the Mending-Purifying Monastic Ritual*** [*gso sbyong*] (*'di dag mar ngo'i gso sbyong bcu bzhi pa'i dus so*). Vol. 1, text 6 (1 folio side). Written by Shenpen Tayé.

***Prātimokṣa-sūtra*** (*dge slong pha'i so sor thar pa'i mdo*). Vol. 1, text 7 (33 folios). Canonical (*Kangyur*).

Shenpen Tayé's editor's colophon to this recension of the *Prātimokṣa-sūtra* states:

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<sup>1003</sup> For bibliographical details of these works, see my catalog to the *Trinchok Collection* in Appendix 3 below.

<sup>1004</sup> Shenpen Tayé's supplement to this text includes a set of calendrical charts for comparing and converting dates between different calendar systems for scheduling the ritual.

<sup>1005</sup> Contains a single calendrical table at the end of the work.

Because of the general requirement that the *Prātimokṣa-sūtra* be memorized by all fully ordained monks, [publishing this text] is not only very important and necessary, but is required here for the *sojong* ceremony—one of the three foundational rituals of the Vehicle of the Hearers—where it is indispensable when reciting the *four residuals*. Therefore, attending to the auxiliary sections of that [main text], the monk who proclaims the Dharma, Shenpen Tayé-pa, compiled the various ritual systems of the nine vehicles of the Nyingma Kama into a single collection, and while preparing the printing blocks, compared the “mother” text and the commentaries, editing and making corrections, from which a final, clean edition was produced.<sup>1006</sup>

### 6.3.3 Other Works on Monasticism Written by Shenpen Tayé

*Clarifying the Nyingma Tradition of Monastic Ordination* (*snga 'gyur ring lugs kyi rab byung gi gzhi chog lung don rab tu gsal ba*)<sup>1007</sup>

This text contains the full liturgies for (male) ordination into the vows of a householder, novice, and full ordination. These are divided into the *earlier vows* (*snga ma'i sdom*) of the householder and novice ordination, and the *later vows* (*phyi ma'i sdom*) of full ordination. The liturgies are each prefaced by a sort of short introductory essay that contextualizes the vows and provides supporting canonical passages for these explanations, and the liturgies themselves are punctuated with explanatory annotations to guide the preceptor in performing the rituals. In short, the text provides a single-source

<sup>1006</sup> dbang phyug dam pa'i mnga' bdag dpal lha btsan po'i bka' lung gis 'phags pa gzhi thams cad yod par smra ba'i 'dul ba 'dzin pa slob dpon dzi na mi tra dang / zhus chen gyi lo tsA ba ban+de cog ro klu'i rgyal mtshan gyis bsgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa'o/ /so sor thar ba'i mdo 'di nyid spyir btang dge slong thams cad kyis blo la gzung dgos pa'i phyir mkho gal che ba tsam du ma zad/ skabs 'dir yang nyan thos kyi theg pa'i yan lag gzhi gsum gyi cho ga las/ gso sbyong gi gzhi'i skabs kyi mdo 'don pa lhag ma bzhi po'i dus su med du mi rung ba yin pa'i phyir/ de nyid kyi cha lag tu dmigs te chos smra ba'i btsun pa gzhan phan mtha' yas pas snga 'gyur bka' ma theg rim dgu'i yan lag gi cho ga mtha' dag phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs nas spar du nye bar sgrub skabs su gzhung phyi mo 'grel pa dang bcas pa la gtugs nas zhus shing dag par byas te legs par gtan la phab pa'o//

<sup>1007</sup> *DzCW*: 1. 105–154; *XyIKB*: 2. 257a–301a; *PCW*: 3. 365–433.

text for understanding the nature of these vows and performing their associated ordination rituals according to the prescribed canonical liturgies.

The liturgies themselves seem to be drawn verbatim from the “ordination chapter” (*rab tu 'byung ba'i gzhi*) of the *Vinayavastu* (*'dul ba gzhi*), the root Vinaya text of the Mūlasarāstivāda Vinaya.<sup>1008</sup> As we noted in chapter three, the liturgy for full monastic ordination in the *Vinayavastu* that is reproduced in Shenpen Tayé’s text, contains the *locus classicus* of the “six topics of scholarship” (*mkhas bya'i gnas drug*) in the part of the liturgy in which the preceptor instructs the ordinand that,

Henceforth, you shall receive instruction in the scriptures; you shall read them; you shall recite them. You shall become knowledgeable in the aggregates (*phung po*), the constituents (*kham*s), the sense fields (*skye mched*), dependent arising, what is correct, and what is not.<sup>1009</sup>

***Response to the Questions of Kongpo Drogön*** (*kong po 'gro mgon gyis dris lan yod lags*)<sup>1010</sup>

The colophon states that the text is “a response to the questions of Kong po Gyurmé Drogön, a monk of Mindröling (*grwa rigs*), given at Ogmin Mindröling by a monk from Dokham, the spiritual son of Dzokchen Drupwang, Shenpen Tayé Özer.”<sup>1011</sup>

<sup>1008</sup> *Dergé Kangyur*, vol. 1, text 1.

<sup>1009</sup> deng phyin chad khyod kyis lung mnod par bya/ bklag par bya/ kha ton du bya'o// phung po la/ mkhas pa dang / kham la mkhas pa dang / skye mched la mkhas pa dang / rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba la mkhas pa dang / gnas dang gnas ma yin pa la mkhas par bya'o// ma thob pa thob par bya ba dang / ma rtogs pa rtogs par bya ba dang / mngon du ma bya pa mngon du bya ba'i phyr khyod kyis brtson pa mi 'dor bar bya'o//. *Vinayavastu*, *Dergé Kangyur*, vol. 1, 63b.

<sup>1010</sup> *DzCW*: 2. 118–132; *XyKB*: 2.265a–273b; *PCW*: 3. 507–528.

<sup>1011</sup> ces pa 'di yang shes bya'i gnas la dpyod pa'i blo gros kyi sryan dkyus rnam par yangs pa u rgyan smin grol gling gi grwa rigs 'gyur med 'gro mgon nas dri ba ji ltar phebs bzhin/ 7 grub dbang rdzogs chen pa yab sras kyi zhabs pad gtsug tu 'dzin pa'i mdo kham kyi ban+de gzhan phan mtha' yas 'od zer du 'bod pas/ gzhungs lugs legs bshad rgya mtsho'i 'byung gnas 'og min o rgyan smin grol gling gi bla brang chos 'khor lhun po nas shar mar spel ba mang+ga lam//.

The text contains a very interesting extended section in which Shenpen Tayé elaborates on the “sixteen serious faults” (*lci ba bcu drug*).<sup>1012</sup> There are some particularly interesting discussions about scholarship and monasticism in this work. In particular, the section that deals with the fault of, “sitting on a higher seat than a learned scholar” (*mkhas pa'i gong lci*) includes an extended explanation of what it means to be a “learned scholar,” detailing the specific areas of study and methods of formal training. This discussion is followed by a section on the “fault of accepting prostrations from a fully ordained monk,” (*dge slong gi phyag gi log pa'i lci*), in which Shenpen Tayé discusses the differences in rank and relative deference between various degrees of ordination.

### ***Exhortation to the Assembly at Dzagyel Monastery***

One place where Shenpen Tayé makes his views on normative monastic practice clear is in a speech given at Dzagyel Göñ, entitled *Banging the Divine Drum: An*

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<sup>1012</sup> These sixteen are split into four groups of four: **Four serious wrong actions** (Wyl. *log pa'i lci ba bzhi*): to sit in a higher seat than a learned scholar (*mkhas pa'i gong lci*); to accept prostrations from a fully ordained monk or a great meditator (*sgom chen gyi phyag lci*); to steal the provisions of a meditator (*sgom sgrub mkhan gyi zas lci*); to steal the ritual objects or wealth of a tantric practitioner (*sngags pa'i nor lci*). **Four serious impairments** (Wyl. *nyams pa'i lci ba bzhi*): As an ordinary person, to swear using the name of the Three Jewels (*mi chos la mna' zos nyams pa lci*); to impair the shravaka precepts of the Vinaya (*nyan po la 'dul khrims nyams pa lci*); to impair the precepts of the bodhisattva trainings (*byang chub sems dpa' la bslab khrims nyams pa lci*); as a mantrayana practitioner, to impair the samayas (*gsang sngags la dam tshig nyams pa lci*). **Four serious disrespectful actions** (Wyl. *smod pa'i lci ba bzhi*): Out of ignorance, to have contempt for the Buddha's physical form (*gti mug dbang gis 'phags pa'i sku la smod pa lci*); out of pride, to have contempt for the truth (*nga rgyal dbang gis bden pa'i tshig la smod pa lci*); out of jealousy, to have contempt for the qualities of friends (*phrag dog dbang gis grogs kyi yon tan la smod pa lci*); out of partiality, to discriminate between deities (*phyogs ris dbang gis lha la blang dor byas pa lci*). **Four serious denigrating actions** (Wyl. *bskur ba'i lci ba bzhi*): To make distinctions within perfect equality (*mnyam nyid don la khyad 'don lci*); to hold to distinctions of relative importance among samadhis (*ting 'dzin dag la gal 'dzugs lci*); to shed a buddha's blood, the most serious of the five crimes with immediate retribution (*mtshams med lnga la khrag phyung lci*); to hold wrong views, the most serious of the ten unwholesome actions (*mi dge bcu la log lta lci*). See *dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo* (*Great Dunkhar Dictionary*) (Beijing: *krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang*, 2002). [https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Sixteen\\_serious\\_faults](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Sixteen_serious_faults).



*Exhortation to the Assembly at Dzagyel Monastery.*<sup>1013</sup> We looked at the first section of this text in chapter three above and we shall now return to analyze the balance of the text, in which Shenpen Tayé explicitly discusses the place and value of Buddhist renunciation (*rab byung*) in the religious life. The text comprises just over five folio sides in the *Xylograph Kabum* (*XylKB*) edition of Shenpen Tayé’s collected works and is labeled as a “chayik” (*bca’ yig*)—meaning, “institutional regulations”—in the left margin of the *XylKB*.<sup>1014</sup>

The discourse that this document records is comprised of injunctions given to the assembled residents of Dzagyel Göñ. “Dzagyel” refers to the holy mountain Dzagyel [Dorjé] Phenchuk (*rdza rgyal ‘phan phyug*), in the Gemang (*dge mang*) area of the region of Dzachukha (*rdza chu kha*). As noted in chapter two, Shenpen Tayé was born and raised in the Dzagyel area and so had many lines of connection to the area and to Jikmé Nyugu and his students, including Dza Patrül, who spent many of his later years in the Dzagyel area. Dzagyel Göñ had its beginning in an isolated mountain retreat founded by Jikmé Gyelwé Nyugu, known as Dzagyel Tramo Lung (*rda rgyal khra ma lung*). After Jikmé Nyugu’s death in 1842, his students decided to decamp for a spot down in the valley below, where the climate was less harsh, and founded what came to be known as Dzagyel Göñ.<sup>1015</sup>

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<sup>1013</sup> *rdza rgyal dgon gyi ‘dus par ‘bel gam du bgyis pa lha yi rnga sgra*, *DzCW*: 2. 166–174; *XylKB*: 1. 363a–369a; *PCW*: 2. 109–124. Page numbers given in the footnotes below are the work-level folio numbers from the *XylKB* edition.

<sup>1014</sup> I discussed the *chayik* genre in depth in chapter four above.

<sup>1015</sup> Dza Patrül is said to have lamented this move due to the auspiciousness of the original site. See Matthieu Ricard, *Enlightened Vagabond*, 125.

As we saw in chapter three above, the *Exhortation* begins with Shenpen Tayé urging his audience to “bring the teachings into your own experience.” He then introduces the rubric of the “three trainings” as the means to actualize the Buddhist teachings in one’s own life. The three trainings are a foundational Buddhist rubric comprising *higher ethics*, *higher meditation*, and *higher discriminative wisdom*. Shenpen Tayé emphasizes that the training in higher ethics is the foundational practice that supports the other two trainings.

Shenpen Tayé then explains that the *vows of individual liberation* (*so sor thar ba'i sdom pa*; Skt., *prātimokṣasaṃvara*) are the “root,” and “essence of ethical training, which restrains negative actions.”<sup>1016</sup> These vows of individual liberation are of three levels: those of a *householder* (*khyim pa*), of a *novice renunciate* (*dge tshul*; Skt., *śrāmaṇera/ śrāmaṇerikā*), and of a *fully ordained renunciate* (*dge slong*; *bhikṣu/bhikṣuṇī*). Using quotes from the *Prātimokṣa-sūtra* and other canonical sources, Shenpen Tayé explains that of these three levels, the vows of the fully ordained monastic are the best, the novice vows are middling, and the householder vows are the lowest in terms of their efficacy in disciplining the mind and preparing it for training in meditation and wisdom. He concludes:

So, in general, those who desire liberation should strive as fully ordained renunciate monks, and, having become a renunciate, they should hold pure ethical conduct, and, associating with pure dharma friends, engage in the trainings of individual liberation.<sup>1017</sup>

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<sup>1016</sup> 3b. de ltar ni tshul khriṃs ni/ rnam par grol pa'i lam gyi rten gzhi yin zhing de'i gtso bo yang nyes spyod sdom pa'i tshul khriṃs kyi ngo bo so sor thar ba'i sdom pa nyid yin te/.

<sup>1017</sup> 5a: de ltar na thar 'dod rnam kyis spyir rab tu 'byung ba la brtson par byed cing / rab tu byung nas kyang tshul khriṃs rnam par dag pa bsrung ba dang / chos dang mthun pa tshangs spyod kyi grogs dang 'grogs nas so sor thar ba'i sde snod la bslab par byed dgos pa yin te.

Such a marked and unequivocal focus on full monastic ordination as the best and most efficacious mode of spiritual practice goes distinctly against the grain of the long-standing Nyingma privileging of non-monastic tantric practice as the best and most efficacious path to awakening. However, Shenpen Tayé is not pulling his monastic-centric formula, out of thin air. There are clear precedents for such a view in core Nyingma scriptures and treatises. For example, Ngari Panchen Wangyel's *Ascertainment of the Three Vows* (*sdom gsum rnam nges*), makes a similar distinction between the three levels of vows in relation to their role in preparing the practitioner for tantric practice, saying:

Upholders of full, novice, and lay ordination qualify as superior (*rab*), average (*'bring*), and common (*tha*) vajra-holders respectively. This is taught in the *Vajrakālaya* and *Kālacakra-tantras*.<sup>1018</sup>

Unlike Shenpen Tayé, however, Ngari Panchen, immediately follows this statement up with the following qualification:

However, those who possess primordial wisdom (*ye shes*) are held as foremost (*gtso bo*).<sup>1019</sup>

Düdjom Jikdrel Yeshé Dorjé, in his commentary on Ngari Panchen's texts, clarifies this distinction, saying,

The basis for entering the mantra path is *prātimokṣa*. This means that *prātimokṣa* precepts of either lay, novice, or full ordination must be embraced. Then, according to these three levels of precepts, an individual will qualify as a common

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<sup>1018</sup> dge slong dge tshul dge bsnyen sdom ldan de// rdo rje 'dzin pa'i rab 'bring tha yin zhes// phur pa'i rgyud dang dus 'khor las gsungs shing // 'on kyang ye shes ldan pa gtso bor bzung //. English translation in Ngari Panchen Wangyi Gyalpo, *Perfect Conduct: Ascertainning the Three Vows*, translated by Khenpo Gyurme Samdrub and Sangye Khandro. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1996, 12.

<sup>1019</sup> Ngari Panchen Wangyi Gyalpo, *Perfect Conduct: Ascertainning the Three Vows*, 12.

(*tha*), average (*'bring*), or superior (*rab*) vajra-holder upon entering mantra. The lay vajra-holder is inferior, the novice is mediocre, and the fully ordained is superior. This point is agreed upon in both the *Vajrakīlaya* and *Kālacakra-tantras*. However, there is one exception. Even if an individual is a lay vajra-holder but has realized the primordial wisdom of the level of the *path of seeing*, he qualifies as 'absolute fully ordained' and is respected as 'foremost.'<sup>1020</sup>

Düdjom is basically saying here that although a full ordination is considered the superior form of preparation for higher tantric practice, what *really* matters is the level of deeper wisdom (*ye shes*) that a person has realized. This is an important addendum, and one that Shenpen Tayé does not raise in this particular context, being concerned as he is here with promoting rigorous monastic practice.

Having asserted that *going forth* and taking some level of renunciate vows is the best way of engaging in Buddhist training, Shenpen Tayé then provides some specific advice about what the lifestyle of an ordained renunciate requires. He organizes this advice under the rubric of the *three changes* (*brje ba rnam pa gsum*): changing one's *outer appearance, name, and mindset*. Shenpen Tayé's advice is full of local color and is worth quoting in full:

When you first take the vows of a renunciate (*rab byung*), you need to perform the *three changes*, in which you change your outer appearance, your name, and your mindset. Indeed, once you make these three changes, you should not give them up. Because this is absolutely crucial, I will say a bit more about it.

Regarding changing your appearance, we know that the laypeople of various regions each have their own distinctive kind clothing, such as the white woolen leggings and knife tied to the waist worn by the Horpas, and so forth. These various items of clothing and accessories must be abandoned and the two

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<sup>1020</sup> Ngari Panchen Wangyi Gyalpo, *Perfect Conduct: Ascertaining the Three Vows*, 12.

or three pieces of religious clothing adopted in their stead, along with the accessories of a practitioner—begging bowl, strainer, and so forth.<sup>1021</sup>

With regards to your name, the name that you were called by your parents at home should be given up and a new name bestowed at the time of renunciation by the preceptor.

With regards to your mindset, you need to abandon the attitudes and behavior of a layperson—viz., commerce, farming, subduing enemies and protecting one's own people, and so forth, which are all concerned with the desire to accomplish the aims of this lifetime. In their place you should adopt the attitudes and behavior of a spiritual renunciate—one who strives to accomplish the state of omniscience and liberation in this and all future lives.

Once the three changes have been adopted they need to be absolutely maintained from then on. If you abandon your life as a householder to become a monk and then abandon the trappings of a monk there will be the downfall of initially abandoning the trappings of family life; the downfall of abandoning the trappings of a monk; and a downfall for the preceptor who ordained you. So because the downfall is three-fold, you need to hold fast to your vows once you have taken them and maintain the trappings of a monk, otherwise it will be like dumping over a pot of water after it has been filled!

In general, renunciates should not be without their religious clothing for even a single day. You need to wear your religious clothing at all times without fail, and wearing less than the complete outfit at gatherings such as the monastic line-up is not acceptable. Fully ordained monks in particular need to take care not to be without their robes, as this is seen as a downfall worse even than killing another living being!

Because of this, you should never be without your religious clothing and, in particular, you should take care to pay proper respect to the supports of the Three Jewels and the lama, listen to Dharma teachings, and arrange yourself in the proper order according to seniority in religious gatherings.<sup>1022</sup>

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<sup>1021</sup> There is a parallel to these injunctions in a *bca' yig* written by Situ Panchen (1700–1774) for Püntsok Dargyé Ling (phun tshogs dar rgyas gling) monastery, which is probably in yul shul (in northern Kham; present-day Qinghai): “Because during the assemblies ( tshogs) the married lamas may not transgress even the layperson's vows, they should not wear the accessories or clothes of an ordinary householder, such as pants, swords around their waists (rkad gri), and long hair (rbad mgo).” See Ronis, “Celibacy, Revelations, and Reincarnated Lamas,” 160.

<sup>1022</sup> 5b–6b: de yang rab byung thog mar bsgrub pa'i dus su/ rtags dang / ming dang / bsam pa brje ba ste/ brje ba rnam pa gsum byas pa nyid slar mi 'dor ba zhig ni lhag par yang gal che ba'i phyir/ de'i tshul cung zad smros na/ dang po rtags brje ba ni/ yul gru so so'i khyim pa'i cha lugs su grags pa hor chas dang / sogs chas zer ba lta bus mtshon tha dad pa dang / phal cher la yongs su grags pa lpags rtsag dang / rkang snam dang / sked gri dang / gos skya sogs khyim pa'i rtags rnam spangs nas rab tu byung ba'i rtags chos gos gnyis sam gsum dang / lhung bzed dang / gding ba dang chu tshags la sogs pa dang du blang nas mi 'dor

Likewise, those who have taken tantric vows, need to be constant in holding these prior tantric commitments. You should properly consider that there is a downfall from inconstantly held vows and bear in mind the explanations from the tantra regarding not holding these constantly. [. . .] Whatever vows you hold—individual, bodhisattva, or tantric—the three trainings as explained in their respective texts make known the essence of the path, and you should exemplify [those teachings] by holding to this path and maintaining the appearance of one who is on this path.

There is a lot to unpack in this advice, but perhaps the most notable thing about these comments is their strong focus on renunciates maintaining not only their vows, but also the *appearance (rtags)* of their vows. The strong injunctions regarding never being without one's religious robes (it's worse than killing a human being!) suggest that such laxity was a common occurrence and, as such, was seen as a potential threat to the reputation of the monastery and the reverence generally shown to Buddhist monks who maintained proper behavior and comportment.

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ba'o// gnyis pa ming brje ba ni/ khyim na gnas dus kyi ming pha mas btags pa de spangs nas rab tu byung dus kyi ming mkhan slob kyis btags pa de nas 'bod pa'o// gsum pa bsam pa brje ba ni/ khyim pa'i bsam sbyor tshong dang so nam dgra 'dul gnyen skyong la sogs pa tshe 'di sgrub 'dod kyi bsam pa mtha' dag spangs nas/ tshe phyi ma phan chad thar ba dang thams cad mkhyen pa'i go 'phang 'thob pa'i thabs la 'bad pa rab tu byung ba'i bsam sbyor la gnas pa'o// de ltar brje ba gsum byas nas de phan chod de las mi ldog pa gcig dgos kyi/ gal te de las log nas/ khyim pa'i rtags spangs pa nyams pa/ rab tu byung ba'i rtags blang ba nyams pa / brnyas pas mkhan po la nyams pa ste/ de 'dra'i nyams pa gsum po byung na sngar blang ba'i rab tu byung ba'i sdom pa nyid dper na bum pa chus bkang ba slar pho ba bzhin du gtong bar 'gyur ba'i phyir/ spyir chos gos rnam dang zhag gcig tu'ang ma bral bar byed pa dang / ma zad rtag tu lus kyi pags pa bzhin 'bral med du bgo bar gsungs pa'i phyir/ dus rtag tu ma gyon na/ 'tshogs gral lta bur nyi tsher gyon pas kyang 'ong ba ma yin no//bye brag dge slong rnam la chos gos dang 'bral ba'i ltung ba byung na ni srog chags bsad pa sogs las kyang nyes pa lci ba'i spang ltung phog pa yin pas lhag par gzab dgos/ des na rtag tu'ang lus gzan shams dang ma bral ba byed cing / khyad par bla ma dang dkon mchog gi rten la phyag 'tshal ba dang / chos 'chad nyan byed pa dang / 'tshogs gral rnam su ni chos gos rnam ci nas kyang bgo dgos pa yin no//. de bzhin du sngags sdom rgyud ldan gyi gang zag rnam kyis kyang sngags kyi dam tshig gi rdzas rnam 'bral med du 'chang dgos pa dang / de dag bcang bar ma bgyis na rgyud nas bshad pa'i bcang ba dang / mi 'bral ba'i dam tshig dag las nyams pa yin pa'i tshul dag legs par bsam dgos/ [. . .] de ltar so byang sngags gsum gang la zhugs kyang rang gzhung nas bshad pa'i bsalab pa gsum nyid lam gyi ngo bo yin par shes par byas nas/ de dang de'i rtags dang cha lugs 'dzin pas mtshon/.

Shenpen Tayé’s exhortations to the monks of Dzagyel reflect the difficulties inherent in socializing boys and young men to adopt the restrained behavior and dignified comportment that monastic life requires. The difficulty of effecting such *taming* (*‘dul ba*) was especially marked for monastic communities—such as Dzokchen and Dzagyel—that drew many, if not most, of their initiates from the rough, nomadic populations of Dzachukha and Golok to the northeast and Hor to the northwest. Tibetan sources are full of stories relating the dangers of traveling in these areas, due to the many bandits that roamed their high pastures and mountain passes. Many of these works describe the people of these regions as being both unusually generous and religiously minded, *and* unusually quick to take offence and resort to violence to defend their honor. Essentially, what the sources describe sounds very much like the classic “shame and honor” societies that have historically developed in agriculturally marginal and politically fragmented regions.<sup>1023</sup> It is interesting that Shenpen Tayé uses the specific example of Horpo clothing—woolen leggings and a large knife worn at the belt—when admonishing the monastic residents to give up their prior mode of dress. We have evidence that people from the Hor region tended to make up a significant portion of the recruits to Nyingma monasteries in Kham such as Katok. In the episode, described above, in which Khyentsé Chökyi Lodrö expelled women from Katok Monastery, his personal assitant, Tsejor, is reported to have been afraid that the unilateral decision to evict the women might cause serious violence from a particular demographic of Katok’s residents, saying:

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<sup>1023</sup> Classic examples of such regions include Mycenaean Greece, the hill county of Sicily, and the icy mountains and fiords of the Viking homelands of Scandinavia.

All will be well if these so-called monks obey Rinpoche’s command [. . .]. But Horpo people are so hard-headed, we can’t be sure what they’ll do. If they flout Rinpoche’s authority altogether by openly disobeying him, things will only go from bad to worse.<sup>1024</sup>

These examples demonstrate the urgent need to properly socialize and “tame” (*dul ba*) the boys and young men who comprised these monastic populations. Domonique Townsend discusses how this taming imperative played out in the early years of Mindröling Monastery, arguing that “the general orientation of the Mindröling curriculum was geared towards training monks to conduct rituals and cultivating cultured people who were learned, skillful, and steeped in a Buddhist sensibility and worldview.”<sup>1025</sup> To this end, Terdak Lingpa provided initiates with introductory instructions on proper physical comportment, intended to instill in Mindröling’s students a *habitus* of “dignity, awareness, and self control.”

## 6.4 Conclusions

### 6.4.1 Cultivating Respect and Performing Authority

We can see in Shenpen Tayé’s *Exhortation to the Assembly at Dzagyel Monastery* a distinct concern with the outward behavior of the monastic residents. Shenpen Tayé spends a good deal of his exhortation stating and restating the importance of wearing one’s religious robes at all times, and, in general, of maintaining the *appearance* and the *bearing* appropriate to an upstanding Buddhist monk. In other words, Shenpen Tayé is emphasizing the way that becoming a monk requires the cultivation of

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<sup>1024</sup> *The Life and Times of Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö*, 40.

<sup>1025</sup> Townsend, “Materials of Buddhist Culture,” 204.



an entirely different *habitus*. Dominique Townsend describes a similar concern at Mindröling Monastery under its founders Lochen Dharmaśrī and Terdak Lingpa:

The general orientation of the Mindroling curriculum was geared towards training monks to conduct rituals and cultivating cultured people who were learned, skillful, and steeped in a Buddhist sensibility and worldview. To address [. . .] this goal, Terdak Lingpa provided introductory instructions on conscientious physical comportment. This point reveals an attention to what Bourdieu terms *habitus*. Students at Mindroling were trained to carry themselves with dignity, awareness, and self control.<sup>1026</sup>

It is possible to read Terdak Lingpa and Shenpen Tayé’s emphasis on appearance and comportment as an example of how elite educational institutions engage in practices of ritual exclusion as a means to consecrate their graduates as natural and proper candidates to hold dominant positions in society.<sup>1027</sup> Bourdieu makes such an argument in relation to France’s elite preparatory schools, saying that:

The process of transformation accomplished at ‘elite schools,’ through the magical operations of *segregation* and *aggregation* [. . .] tends to produce a *consecrated* elite [. . .] that is not only distinct and separate, but also recognized by others and by itself as worthy of being so. [. . .] The action performed on the novice, modifying his own idea of himself and his function, as well as on the others, transforming their idea of him, changes this ‘ordinary being’ into ‘something he formerly was not.’ He has ‘purified and sanctified himself by the very act of detaching himself from the base and trivial matters that debased his nature.’ [. . .] Becoming educated is in this sense a rite of mourning; the old (in this case, young) man, with his passions, his desires, in a word, his nature, must die.<sup>1028</sup>

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<sup>1026</sup> Townsend, “Materials of Buddhist Culture,” 204.

<sup>1027</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*, trans. Laretta C. Clough (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1996), 73.

<sup>1028</sup> Bourdieu, *State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*, 102.

Using Bourdieu’s framework, we can see in Shenpen Tayé’s exhortations to the monks of Dzagyel a program of segregation, aggregation, and personal transformation effected through one’s own efforts to discipline one’s body, speech, and mind. In the above *Exhortation*, as well as in the works of personal advice that we looked at in chapter three, Shenpen Tayé emphasizes the need to effect *both* a deep, *internal* transformation through personal resolution and effort, *and* to develop and maintain the *external* behaviors, bearing, and appearance consistent with one’s particular level of *prātimokṣa* vows—in other words to maintain a “dignified habitus.”<sup>1029</sup> This is Shenpen Tayé’s “system of study and practice” in a nutshell; it is a rigorous process of “taming” one’s baser instincts and habits. The way that the *Exhortation* makes clear how important it is to maintain the external “signs” appropriate to a Buddhist monastic underlines the social value placed on rigorous monasticism and the need for a tradition that was known far more for their non-monastic tantric practices, to perform and project a monastic practice that was beyond reproach.

#### 6.4.2 Monasticism as Social Reform

The standard trope of the *three changes* deployed by Shenpen Tayé in the *Exhortation* and elsewhere, emphasizes the multiple fields of transformation involved in following his gradual Buddhist path. Changing one’s external appearance and comportment clearly communicates one’s status as a spiritual renunciate to all whom one encounters, realigning how one moves through social and political fields of activity. Changing one’s name aims to shift and disrupt the deep associations regarding social and

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<sup>1029</sup> Townsend, “Materials of Buddhist Culture,” 204.

familial roles that have accrued around that name, thus fundamentally altering core parts of one's personal identity. Changing one's mindset is perhaps the trickiest of the three. What Shenpen Tayé describes is nothing less than a radical reprogramming of one's entire orientation to life—turning away from deeply ingrained goals, such as attaining wealth and security, helping one's family, and so forth.

In sum, the path that Shenpen Tayé consistently presents to his students and interlocutors is a profoundly difficult path that involves strict, sustained personal discipline over a long period of time. Shenpen Tayé's gradualist path prescriptions seem rather dour and claustrophobic next to the Great Perfection discourses of spontaneity and naturalness, which fill the writings and teachings of many Nyingma figures. Indeed, as we saw in chapter three, Shenpen Tayé, himself, composed many a *paean* to the Great Perfection and its ethic of ease, naturalness, and openness. However, as our analysis of Shenpen Tayé's synthetic treatises and path instructions demonstrated, the naturalness of the Great Perfection was, for Shenpen Tayé, a *result, not a method of practice*, and it is to Shenpen Tayé's credit that he always seems to have been honest with his students about the inherent and unavoidable difficulty of seriously pursuing the Buddhist path of liberation. For Shenpen Tayé, it appears that there were no shortcuts to Enlightenment, just a lot of hard work and discipline.

In more recent times, we see a reflection of Shenpen Tayé's approach to monasticism and rigorous practice in the life and works of the great late 20<sup>th</sup>-century Nyingma reformer Jikmé Phuntsok ('jigs med phun tshog; 1933–2004), who founded the massive Nyingma center of Larung Gar. Jikmé Phuntsok—like Shenpen Tayé—was an

outlier in the Nyingma tradition in being a *tertön* (treasure revealer) who took vows of full ordination and held them rigorously throughout his life.<sup>1030</sup> David Germano explains how Jikmé Phuntsok’s dedication to a life of celibate monasticism stemmed from a conviction that he needed to provide “strict ethical examples during a time of moral decay.”<sup>1031</sup> In the wake of the Cultural Revolution and the accompanying decimation of Tibetan religious and cultural life, Jikmé Phuntsok began to “express the need for a thorough purification and ethical reform of Buddhism in Tibet as a corrective to the many corruptions he felt developed during the preceding three decades.”<sup>1032</sup> As part of this program of ethical reform, Jikmé Phuntsok, “in line with a resolute belief in ethical discipline as the foundation of all positive qualities, [. . .] emphasized the need for dedicated practitioners to become monks and nuns, [. . .] and disseminated a widely read circular advising that Tibetan monks and nuns in particular needed to act in strict accordance with the Buddha’s ethical teachings on monastic discipline and the tantric corpus.”<sup>1033</sup> Germano describes how Jikmé Phuntsok’s strong emphasis on monasticism raised the hackles of many Nyingma non-monastic tantrikas who saw him as “strong[ly] privileging celibate clergy as the paramount ideal to which all Buddhists should aspire, with the clear implication that material and social resources should be channeled to the support of celibate monastic institutions.”<sup>1034</sup>

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<sup>1030</sup> *Tertöns* rely on sexual yoga practice with female consorts as a kind of muse for their revelations and so it is extremely unusual for a prolific treasure revealer to be a celibate monastic. As we saw above, Shenpen Tayé’s choice to become fully ordained seemed to cut short his treasure-revealing abilities, which began manifesting during his childhood.

<sup>1031</sup> Germano, “Re-membering the Dismembered Body of Tibet,” 69.

<sup>1032</sup> Germano, “Re-membering the Dismembered Body of Tibet,” 69.

<sup>1033</sup> Germano, “Re-membering the Dismembered Body of Tibet,” 69–70.

<sup>1034</sup> Germano, “Re-membering the Dismembered Body of Tibet,” 72.

All of this sounds very close to Shenpen Tayé’s orientation towards celibate monasticism. As we saw above in his *Banging the Divine Drum: An Exhortation to the Assembly at Dzagyel Monastery*, Shenpen Tayé explicitly positions the vows of full ordination as the best of all the possible orientations, saying, “in general, those who desire liberation should strive as fully ordained renunciate monks, and, having become a renunciate, they should hold pure ethical conduct, and, associating with pure dharma friends, engage in the trainings of individual liberation.<sup>1035</sup> Unfortunately, the historical record of Shenpen Tayé’s life—and particularly his last years—is extremely sparse, and we don’t have any explicit mentions in the extant sources of the kind of animosity from tantric practitioners that Jikmé Phuntsok faced in effecting his similarly monastic-centric reforms at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It would, however, be difficult to imagine that a figure such as Shenpen Tayé, who was so focused on supporting Nyingma monastic practice, wouldn’t have faced pushback from individuals and communities whose prestige and livelihood depended on the high status accorded to them as non-monastic *ngakpa/mas*. Shenpen Tayé’s arrival and sudden rise up the ladder of leadership at Dzokchen would almost certainly have caused jealousy and alarm among the large number of tantric practitioners based at and around Dzokchen and its many satellite institutions. We must imagine the reaction of tantrikas who had formed the majority of Dzokchen’s residents and practitioners since its founding in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when this young monk who only recently showed up in the area for the first time is asked to

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<sup>1035</sup> 5a: de ltar na thar 'dod rnams kyis spyir rab tu 'byung ba la brtson par byed cing / rab tu byung nas kyang tshul khriims rnam par dag pa bsrung ba dang / chos dang mthun pa tshangs spyod kyi grogs dang 'grogs nas so sor thar ba'i sde snod la bslab par byed dgos pa yin te.

redesign the institution's study and practice curriculum, given a residence and income (*labrang*), and proceeds to edit and publish a collection of *kama* rituals and monastic liturgies that are diametrically opposed to the *terma* texts of *ngakpa* ritual specialists. The fact that Shenpen Tayé seems to have been very careful to not explicitly speak ill of *terma* or *ngakpas* as such is perhaps less a sign of Shenpen Tayé's personal thoughts on these orientations than it is a sign that Shenpen Tayé knew that such discourse would have been poorly received and perhaps even put him in danger. The episode, related above, of Chökyi Lodrö expelling women from Katok monastery as part of his monastic reforms, explicitly mentions the possibility that such actions risked bringing down the wrath of Katok's female protector deity, Lhamo Gönlek (*lha mo mgon po legs ldan*).<sup>1036</sup> His assistant specifically mentions his fear that Lhamo would "stike down" Chökyi Lodrö for his actions but laughs at his fears afterwards, saying that "Rinpoche hadn't even caught cold—which proved just how wrong it had been to imagine that kicking the women out would enrage Lhamo Gönlek." The fact that even Chökyi Lodrö's assistant was worried that monastic reforms of this sort may trigger divine tantric retribution in the form of sudden illness or death, demonstrates the wide currency that such beliefs had well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mipham's claim, repeated by most later biographies, that Shenpen Tayé died prematurely because he wouldn't engage in (certain kinds of) tantric practice may very well be a polite way of communicating that Shenpen Tayé is thought to have suffered such tantric retribution as a consequence not only of his own strict monastic orientation but of his energetic promotion of monasticism at an institution that had long

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<sup>1036</sup> I am assuming that "Gönlek" is a contraction of Gönpö Lekden

been primarily dedicated to non-celibate tantric practice. Indeed, Mipham's account of the circumstances surrounding Shenpen Tayé's death hints that there were many at Dzokchen who may have viewed Shenpen Tayé's sudden illness and death with a self-satisfied, "I told you so" attitude. Of course, discourses about sexual yoga as an effective means of prolonging one's life are extremely common in Tibetan literature, and the idea that there may have been a simmering conflict between Shenpen Tayé and some elements among the non-celibate ritual specialists of Dzokchen (or elsewhere) must remain purely speculative.

One thing that is not speculative, however, is Shenpen Tayé's numerous efforts to promote and provide the necessary support for the rigorous practice of celibate monasticism at Nyingma institutions, efforts that continue to bear fruit in the form of successive waves of Nyingma monastic reformers such as Jikmé Phuntsok and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Drupwang, Pema Norbu (pad+ma nor bu; 1932–2009) of Pelyul, who founded Namdroling Monastery in South India in the late 1970s, which has since become a major monastic center and home of perhaps the most influential Nyingma shedra in the world.<sup>1037</sup> In a very real way, these recent figures and their activities have used the foundational supports laid by Shenpen Tayé to build and promote a vision of the Nyingma tradition that, for better or for worse, centers Buddhist monasticism as the normative core of that tradition.

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<sup>1037</sup> The Ngagyur Nyingma Institute (NNI).

# Conclusion: Shenpen Tayé and the Making of the Modern Nyingma Tradition

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## **Nonsectarianism and Other-Emptiness in Shenpen Tayé’s Works**

One issue that we have not yet addressed is the question of how, or if, Shenpen Tayé participated in the so-called *nonsectarian* (*rimé*; *ris med*) “movement” that swept through Eastern Tibet in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I will leave aside questions about whether or not this nonsectarian movement or zeitgeist actually constituted a “movement,” properly speaking,<sup>1038</sup> and simply ask whether Shenpen Tayé exhibited any of the most commonly cited characteristics associated with 19<sup>th</sup>-century nonsectarianism. Alexander Gardner lists two major and four minor characteristics typically ascribed to the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Tibetan nonsectarian movement by Western authors. The two major characteristics are: 1) being “consciously and decidedly nonsectarian,” and, 2) being “non-partial in regards to doctrinal positions, or even syncretic.”<sup>1039</sup> The four minor characteristics are: 1) embracing the doctrinal position of *other-emptiness* (*gzhan stong*); 2) favoring “practice”

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<sup>1038</sup> On the appropriateness of calling the rise in ecumenical activity amongst the non-Geluk traditions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century a “movement,” see Alexander Gardner, “The Twenty-Five Great Sites of Khams: Religious Geography, Revelation, and Nonsectarianism in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Tibet,” Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2006, 112–118.

<sup>1039</sup> Gardner, “The Twenty-Five Great Sites of Khams,” 117.



over “institutions”; 3) endeavoring to “collect and preserve texts and teaching lineages”; and 4) advocating a “return to fundamentals.”<sup>1040</sup>

With regard to the major characteristic of “being decidedly and consciously non-sectarian,” we can look to the life and works of Jamgön Kongtrül and Khyentsé Wangpo—the principal figures associated with the 19<sup>th</sup>-century nonsectarian “movement”—as exemplars. Both of these figures routinely interacted with people, institutions, and lineages from outside their home traditions of Kagyü and Sayka respectively.<sup>1041</sup> In the case of Shenpen Tayé, however, we have already noted that—with a few exceptions during his trips to Central Tibet when he is reported to have studied with or received transmissions from Geluk and Sakya teachers—Shenpen Tayé studied, taught, and otherwise acted almost entirely within the boundaries of the Nyingma tradition, and so cannot be said to have been nonsectarian on the basis of the first major criteria.

The second major characteristic of nonsectarianism listed by Gardner is being “non-partial in regards to doctrinal positions, or even syncretic.” Again, this does not seem to describe Shenpen Tayé’s approach to Buddhist doctrine, which, as we saw in chapter three, was characterized by its distinctive gradualist orientation and a concomitant focus on rigorous doctrinal study as a prerequisite for the higher tantric practices.

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<sup>1040</sup> Gardner, “The Twenty-Five Great Sites of Khams,” 117.

<sup>1041</sup> Based on the tradition of the institution to which each of these figures was primarily affiliated, Jamgön Kongtrül (Pelpung Monastery) was a Kagyüpa and Khyentsé Wangpo (Dzongsar Monastery) was a Sakyapa.

The question of doctrine also arises in Gardner’s “minor” characteristics, in the embrace of the doctrine of *other-emptiness* (*gzhan stong*) by many of the leading 19<sup>th</sup>-century nonsectarian figures. Many scholarly treatments of the nonsectarian movement, including that of E. Gene Smith, have noted that many 19<sup>th</sup>-century nonsectarian figures were known to have adhered to the doctrine of *other-emptiness* as opposed to self-emptiness (*rang stong*). The doctrine of other-emptiness basically presents the signature Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine of *emptiness* (*stong pa*; Skt., *śūnyatā*) in positive terms; as being defined not by *absence*—as in, “everything is empty of *intrinsic nature* (*rang stong*)”—but instead by the *presence* of an enlightened awareness, which is itself empty of *other* relative phenomena, but not of its own intrinsically liberated Buddha-nature. The doctrine of other-emptiness seems to have come down from the writings of the great Jonanpa scholar Taranatha (1575–1634), and was taken up and transmitted by Katok Tsewang Norbu (kaH thog tshe dbang nor bu; 1698–1755) down to Situ Panchen (1700–1774), eventually being embraced by 19<sup>th</sup>-century figures such as Jamgön Kongtrül, Khyentsé Wangpo, and Mipham Gyatso. Because the doctrine of other-emptiness provides a positive framework for understanding emptiness, it “provides an easy hermeneutical link between sūtra and tantra,” by linking together the sūtric teachings on Buddha-nature with tantric practices that construct visual and physiological experiences of this enlightened nature.<sup>1042</sup> John Pettit characterizes the doctrine of other-emptiness as

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<sup>1042</sup> John Whitney Pettit, *Mipham’s Beacon of Certainty: Illuminating the View of Dzogchen, the Great Perfection* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1999), 112.

being “both a product of and a catalyst for ecumenism,”<sup>1043</sup> and, E. Gene Smith characterizes it as “the mortar that held [Jamgön Kongtrül’s] eclectic structure together.”<sup>1044</sup> Where did Shenpen Tayé stand on this key doctrinal distinction? My analysis of his writings and a text search of his *Dzokchen Collected Works* have revealed no discernable engagement with the doctrine of other-emptiness on the part of Shenpen Tayé.<sup>1045</sup> Much like Dza Patrül and Khenpo Shenga,<sup>1046</sup> Shenpen Tayé *did not seem to subscribe to the doctrine of other-emptiness*, nor did he have much to say about it one way or the other.

Another of Gardner’s “minor” characteristics of Western descriptions of the nonsectarian movement is the tendency to favor “practice” over “institutions.” As Gardner notes, this is a false dichotomy that has arisen largely from the Western (post)protestant tendency to locate “authentic” spiritual practice in personal experience and the corollary belief that institutionalized religious practice is inherently stilted and corrupt. In Shenpen Tayé’s case, we see no real evidence of such a dichotomy; he

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<sup>1043</sup> Pettit, *Mipham’s Beacon of Certainty*,” 112. Some scholars have expressed doubt about the role of other-emptiness in the rise of nonsectarianism. For example, see Gardner, “The Twenty-Five Great Sites of Khams,” 141–145.

<sup>1044</sup> Smith, “Jam mgon Kong sprul and the Nonsectarian Movement,” 237.

<sup>1045</sup> There is a text attributed to Shenpen Tayé in the *DzCW*: *phyi nang gi grub mtha’ mdor nsdus su bkod pa ’jam mgon zhal lung* (1. 99–102) that discusses other-emptiness briefly. However, as I explain in a footnote to that text’s entry in my catalog to the *DzCW* (Appendix 2), the colophon to this text identifies its author as “*jam dbyang blo gros gzhan phan mtha’ yas*” and I have found a reference to this text by this author published in 1983, and it seems to be of much more recent provenance, and not actually written by our Shenpen Tayé.

<sup>1046</sup> Khenpo Shenga is known to have fallen out with other figures at Pelpung—where he was teaching—for his rejection of other-emptiness—causing Shenga to leave Pelpung, which had been a center of the other-emptiness doctrine since the time of Situ Panchen. See Bayer, “The Life and Works of mkhan-po gZhan-dga’,” 97–103.

developed and promoted a system of study *and* practice, which he institutionalized in the shedra and various practice communities that he founded.

Another “minor” characteristic of Tibetan nonsectarianism is the noted trend among nonsectarian figures to collect and preserve texts and teaching lineages. Scholars have previously posited—and disputed—the 19<sup>th</sup>-century impulse towards preservation and eclectic anthologizing as representing one of the key features of the nonsectarian “movement” of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>-centuries.<sup>1047</sup> What is not generally disputed, however, is that the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw increased efforts among the non-Geluk traditions in Eastern Tibet to collect, preserve, and transmit the vast and diverse body of Buddhist tantric practice lineages, many of which were thought to be in danger of dying out.<sup>1048</sup> During Shenpen Tayé’s lifetime, and in the decades that followed, figures such as Jamgön Kongtrül<sup>1049</sup> and Khyentsé Wangpo<sup>1050</sup> published massive anthologies containing myriad practice lineages from the Nyingma, Kagyü, Sakya, Jonang, and Bön traditions. This trend towards anthologizing and preservation continued through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and continues to this day, with organizations such as the Buddhist Digital Resource Center aiding Tibetan figures and institutions to publish and make available hundreds of

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<sup>1047</sup> For a discussion of how the 19<sup>th</sup>-century trend towards lineage preservation came to be seen as an intrinsic feature of the nonsectarian movement, see Gardner, “The Twenty-Five Great Sites of Khams,” 139–141. Also see Ronald Davidson, “Tibet,” in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Robert E. Buswell, vol. 2, 851–859, (New York: Macmillan, 2004).

<sup>1048</sup> As, for example in the influential essay by E. Gene Smith: “Jam mgon Kong sprul and the Nonsectarian Movement,” in *Among Tibetan Texts*, edited by Kurtis Schaeffer. (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001).

<sup>1049</sup> For a discussion of Jamgön Kongtrül’s collections and their role in lineage preservation, see Smith, “Jam mgon Kong sprul and the Nonsectarian Movement,”; and Gardner, “The Twenty-Five Great Sites of Khams,” esp. appendix 5 (pp. 251–262).

<sup>1050</sup> For Khyentsé Wangpo’s collections and their role in lineage preservation, see Gardner, “The Twenty-Five Great Sites of Khams.”

volumes of rare texts each year. We can certainly find examples of Shenpen Tayé engaging in the preservation of texts and lineages—most obviously in his collecting, editing, and publishing of the *Trinchok Collection*. However, although the *Trinchok Collection* did involve recovering and preserving the *kama* texts and their lineages, it really cannot be compared to the broad and eclectic approach to preservation that was evident, for example, in Jamgön Kongtrül’s massive *Five Treasuries*,<sup>1051</sup> which contained a vast range of—mostly esoteric—texts and cycles from a range of traditions, and included a large number of the extant Nyingma lineages. In contrast, Shenpen Tayé’s *Trinchok Collection* was comprised primarily of a sub-set of ritual texts from a particular ritual cycle from a single Nyingma institution (Mindröling), with the major additions being, not rare Nyingma esoteric lineages, but foundational monastic ritual liturgies and canonical Indian scriptures—all part of the common, *shared* Buddhist tradition.<sup>1052</sup> Such an anthology can hardly be characterized as ecumenical or “nonsectarian.”

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<sup>1051</sup> These five are: *Treasury of Knowledge* (*shes bya kun la khyab pa'i mdzod*), summarizing the entire sūtric and tantric paths; *Treasury of Precious Instructions* (*gdams ngag rin po che'i mdzod*), a compendium of empowerments and oral instructions of what he formulated as the “Eight Great Chariots” of the instruction lineages in Tibet; *Treasury of Kagyü Mantras* (*bka' brgyud sngags kyi mdzod*), a compendium of rituals, empowerments and oral instructions for the Yangdak, Vajrakilaya and Yamantaka deities of the Nyingma kama tradition, and the tantra cycles from the Sarma lineages of Marpa and Ngok; *Treasury of Precious Termas* (*rin chen gter mdzod*), a massive compilation of termas; *The Uncommon Treasury* (*thun mong ma yin pa'i mdzod*), which contains Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye’s own profound terma revelations; *Treasury of Extensive Teachings* (*rgya chen bka' mdzod*), which includes various related works, such as praises and advice, as well as compositions on medicine, science and so forth. [https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=The\\_Five\\_Great\\_Treasures](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=The_Five_Great_Treasures) , accessed March 25, 2022.

<sup>1052</sup> Although Shenpen Tayé says that the monastic ritual liturgies were “compiled by relying on our own textual tradition,” he also says that these were then checked against a slate of canonical sources, making it clear that these monastic liturgies were grounded in the shared canonical textual tradition. *Trinchok Catalog*, 48a: rab byung gzhi chog sogs so thar gyi skor nams rang gzhung gi bka' dang bstun cing / tshig don cung zad mi gsal ba yod rigs/ 'dul ba mdo rtsa dang / gzhi 'grel chen po sogs la gtugs shing gtan la phabs/.

This brings us to the last “minor” characteristic: advocating a “return to fundamentals.” This characteristic is clearly evident in Shenpen Tayé’s project to more firmly anchor the Nyingma in the foundational Buddhist practices and categories, shared by all Tibet’s Buddhist traditions. We have seen this impulse in his works of personal advice, in the inclusion of core Buddhist texts and practices in his *Trinchok Collection*; and in the focus on the study of foundational Indian Buddhist treatises in the exoteric portion of his mature shedra curriculum. We also have noted the way that Shenpen Tayé’s various curricular writings—such as his *Magical Key* grammar commentaries and his textbooks on the *six topics of scholarship*—were formulated to provide word-for-word glosses (in the case of the former) or basic introductions (in the case of the latter) to their respective texts and topics, while avoiding contentious, sectarian interpretations of the materials. This approach was famously taken up by Khenpo Shenga in his annotation commentaries, which function as the basic commentarial texts of today’s shedra curriculum.

However, as we have noted, Shenpen Tayé seems to have promoted this Buddhist core exclusively to Nyingmapas and within Nyingma institutional settings, making any “nonsectarian” aspects of these projects rather less pronounced than if he were promoting these common practices more widely or if he had been propounding such common practices as way to promote unity or common ground between Tibet’s various traditions—which does not seem to have been the case. At the very least, however, we should see Shenpen Tayé as an important forerunner and influence on subsequent

Nyingma reformers, such as Khenpo Shenga, who combined a similar focus on the *shared* Buddhist tradition with sustained cross-sectarian engagement.<sup>1053</sup>

In short, although some of Shenpen Tayé’s projects—such as the shedra model that he developed—would eventually generate interest across sectarian lines, and notwithstanding his efforts to promote a common core of Buddhist practices among Nyingmapas, there is little basis to characterize either Shenpen Tayé himself—or his major projects—as being substantially “nonsectarian,” although his approach was to inspire later persons and projects who/which were more clearly nonsectarian.

## **Shenpen Tayé and the Modern Nyingma Tradition**

Although this dissertation is an historical study that has focused on events that occurred during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is important to remember that the Nyingma tradition is a *living tradition*. Nyingma lamas are among the most popular and influential religious leaders in the world today, with networks of devotees spread across Tibet, Asia, and the world. On a trip through Kham (modern-day western Sichuan) in October and November 2017, I was stunned at the size and opulence of Nyingma monasteries such as Dzokchen, Pelyul, and Katok. These three institutions, like most Tibetan religious sites, were destroyed or repurposed in the wake of the Communist Chinese invasion in the 1950s. Under the post-Mao liberalizations of the 1980s, Tibetans began to rebuild or refurbish these formerly great monastic seats. Today, the lamas and

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<sup>1053</sup> Khenpo Shenga was an exemplar of such an approach, teaching at the Nyingma institutions of Gemang (dge mang, c. 1900–1902) and Śrī Simha (c. 1902–1909); The Kagyü monastic center of Pelpung (dpal spungs. c. 1910–1918); and Sakya institutions, including Dzongsar (rdzong gsar, c. 1918–1920) and Jyeku Dondrubling (skye dgu don grub gling; c. 1920). See, Bayer, *The Life and Works of mKhan-po gZhan-dga’*.

reincarnated leaders (*tulku*; *sprul sku*) from many of these Nyingma institutions have built robust patronage networks, tapping into the devotion and financial support of a large and growing global audience of wealthy devotees. Many Nyingma institutions—such as Dzokchen and Katok—have seen such phenomenal growth in patronage over the past ten to twenty years that their complexes have been repeatedly updated and expanded with ever-more opulent temples and monumental stupas.<sup>1054</sup>

Even more stunning is the size of some of the Nyingma *gars* (“encampments”), with the Nyingma centers of Larung Gar and Yarchen Gar each hosting well over 10,000 semi-permanent residents each—this despite government crackdowns and forced reductions in their populations over the past decade. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the Nyingma tradition is more robust and influential now than at any point in their history.

One of the defining features of the Nyingma tradition has always been its eclecticism. Comprising myriad and diverse practice lineages, exegetical traditions, and institutional models, and embracing a decentered and diffuse political model comprised of multiple *centers*—independent “mother” monasteries, each with their own history, leadership, and practice traditions—the Nyingma tradition is not so much *a* tradition as *a family* of traditions.

In this dissertation, I have presented evidence to support the argument that, in very real ways, Shenpen Tayé’s projects and activities formed the foundation for many of

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<sup>1054</sup> When I was at Dzokchen in 2017, there were three iterations of Śrī Siṃha in close proximity to each other—one a rebuilding of the original walled enclosure, another updated enclosure next to it, and about 100 meters away, a huge new building that was essentially a three-story walled enclosure with a roof over the entire central yard, turning what is usually an outdoor space into a huge indoor common space.



the core pillars of today's Nyingma traditions. We looked, in particular, at three of his most impactful and long-lasting projects: the founding of the first modern Nyingma shedra at Dzokchen and the novel curriculum that he developed there; the collecting and printing of the first comprehensive collection of Nyingma *kama* texts; and Shenpen Tayé's promotion of and support for Buddhist monasticism as a core Nyingma practice. One thing all of these projects have in common is that they all produced real, tangible, and durable *supports* for Buddhist practice among Nyingmapas. The shedra that Shenpen Tayé founded continued to flourish and thrive, and although its curriculum was remade in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by figures including Khenpo Shenga and Mipham Gyatso, the general shape of the curriculum and its focus on explanation as its primary pedagogy remained intact—and *remain* intact to this day, as do the commentaries and introductions that Shenpen Tayé wrote to help students approach and understand the material.

With the *Trinchok Collection*, Shenpen Tayé produced an enduring set of volumes, containing everything from the core monastic rituals to the Indian philosophical treatise *Way of the Bodhisattva*, to the myriad levels of tantric initiations drawn from Mindröling's *Sūtra* initiation system. This collection provided a set of tangible textual supports for the many practice lineages that the *Collection* contained. The fact that editions of the *Collection's* texts from the original blocks carved by Shenpen Tayé's team have been found in the libraries and archives of numerous institutions—even those of other traditions such as the Kagyü monastery of Pelpung and Sakya center of Dzongsar—speaks to the lasting impact of the *Collection*. Perhaps even more enduring is the *kama*

rubric that Shenpen Tayé brought into being with the publication of his *Collection*. As we saw, Shenpen Tayé's *Trinchok Collection* expanded the rubric of *kama*, opening it up to explicitly include monastic rituals and *shared* exoteric Indian philosophical treatises. This *Collection* also represented the first time that a comprehensive set of core *kama* texts had been published together in a single collection, and it formed the basis for successive expanded collections that have transformed *kama* into *The Kama*, one of the core Nyingma canons.

The last 50 years or so have also seen the rise of both Buddhist monasticism and an interest in a more socially engaged Buddhism among Nyingmapas in Tibet and in the diaspora. The shedra at Namdröling Monastery in South India is now a major center of high-level Nyingma study and a space wholly dedicated to celibate monasticism—a situation that would not have been likely at any Nyingma institution during Shenpen Tayé's time.

We also see a reflection of Shenpen Tayé in the life and works of the great late-20<sup>th</sup>-century Nyingma monastic reformer Jikmé Phuntsok, who founded the massive Nyingma center of Larung Gar. As we discussed at the end of the last chapter, Jikmé Phuntsok's centering and privileging of monastic practice, and his strategy of using Buddhist monasticism to anchor a program of social renewal and reform, closely paralleled Shenpen Tayé's similar efforts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Shenpen Tayé also explicitly located Buddhist monasticism as the normative core of Nyingma religious practice, and to support this vision, he edited and published the core monastic liturgies as

part of his *Trinchok Collection*, creating the necessary textual supports for the spread and practice of Buddhist monasticism among Nyingmapas.

Shenpen Tayé’s emphasis on ethical teachings and lay ministry also has echoes in the recent spread of the *ten virtues*<sup>1055</sup> in Eastern Tibet by Jikmé Phuntsok and his successors, such as Khenpo Tsultrim Lodrö.<sup>1056</sup> This movement—which is not without its critics<sup>1057</sup>—encourages lay people to commit to abandoning a set of proscribed behaviors that are positioned as a source of suffering, discord, and loss of religious merit. Although Shenpen Tayé’s efforts did not go nearly as far as this more recent “ten virtues” movement, teachings such as those contained in his *Correcting Wrong Livelihood: Why It Is Wrong for Renunciates to Deal in Tobacco*,<sup>1058</sup> provide an early example of a Tibetan religious teacher using religious categories and discourses to try to reform and correct a set of social ills. Indeed, Shenpen Tayé’s noted skill at giving clear, simple Buddhist teachings to lay people, and his focus on training effective teachers at his new shedra, show a similar set of concerns to those of the recent figures from Larung: viz., a concern

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<sup>1055</sup> The *ten virtues* are: 1) not to sell animals for slaughter; 2) not to steal or rob; 3) not to fight with weapons; 4) not to consort with prostitutes; 5) not to sell guns or opium; 6) not to smoke opium or cigarettes; 7) not to drink alcohol; 8) not to gamble; 9) not to hunt; and 10) not to wear animal fur. Gaerrang Kabzung, “Development as Entangled Knot: The Case of the Slaughter Renunciation Movement in Tibet, China,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 74, no. 4 (November 2015), 935, note 6.

<sup>1056</sup> This movement towards the laity taking up the *ten virtues* was initiated by the founder of Larung Gar, Khenpo Jikmé Phuntsok. See Holly Gayley, “Reimagining Buddhist Ethics on the Tibetan Plateau,” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 20 (2013), 247–286; and David Germano, “Re-membering the Dismembered Body of Tibet: Contemporary Tibetan Visionary Movements in the People’s Republic of China,” in *Buddhism in Contemporary Tibet*, edited by M. Goldstein and M. Kapstein, 53–94. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

<sup>1057</sup> See Gaerrang Kabzung, “Development as Entangled Knot.”

<sup>1058</sup> *rab byung gi tha ma kha la spyod pa'i nyes pa la dpyad pa log 'tsho'i gnyen po*, DzCW: 1. 171–180; XylKB: 2. 70a–77b; PCW: 3. 561–576.

for both the wellbeing of the wider society, and the belief that basic Buddhist teachings on karma and personal morality provide an ideal framework for effecting social reform.

But for all of this very real influence and impact, one cannot help but notice that although Shenpen Tayé initiated and/or provided the necessary supports for many of today's Nyingma programs and institutions, most of Shenpen Tayé's projects did not actually become highly influential until they were taken up and transformed by others at some later point. While it is true that the basic shedra curriculum that Shenpen Tayé set up<sup>1059</sup> is largely still the basis of today's Nyingma shedra curricula, it also seems to have been the case that the shedra that Shenpen Tayé founded at Dzokchen didn't take off until its curriculum was significantly amended and augmented during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Mipham Gyatso and Khenpo Shenga.<sup>1060</sup>

Similarly, Shenpen Tayé *Trinchok Collection*, although it represented the first published *kama* collection, was soon superseded by Pema Dongak's collection, which expanded Shenpen Tayé's nine volumes to twenty-five, adding the root Indian texts (such as the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*), Indian commentarial treatises, a large body of Tibetan commentarial literature, and four volumes of hagiographical literature on the lineage

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<sup>1059</sup> That is, using explanation to engage with: Indian philosophical treatises, synthetic treatises on the Nyingma path and the three vows, and exegesis on the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*, and culminating in Great Perfection instruction and practice.

<sup>1060</sup> Mipham Gyatso and Khenpo Shenga both served as head Khenpo at Śrī Siṃha during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, their influence lasting well beyond their respective tenures in the form of numerous commentaries on the core curricular texts. Mipham's commentaries generally provide "Nyingma" readings on these core texts, and Shenga's annotation commentaries—which seem to have been largely based on canonical Indian "word commentaries" (*tshig 'grel*), such as those by Sthirmati—provide authoritative glosses that elucidate the basic meaning of these texts' passages.

lamas. With these additions, it was Pema Dongak’s collection that established the basic shape and character of *the Kama* qua canon.<sup>1061</sup>

With regard to Shenpen Tayé’s efforts to bolster and expand the practice of celibate monasticism in Nyingma institutions, as our sources quoted in chapter six attest, the issue of what place celibate monasticism should have in the major Nyingma seats remained highly contested well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We raised the likelihood, based on the most recent example of Jikmé Phuntsok, that Shenpen Tayé likely attracted a good deal of approbation and hostility from some Nyingma quarters for his dogged support for and promotion of monasticism, and his positioning of it as the normative center of Nyingma thought and practice. It is fairly clear based on the available historical sources that this vision of a monastic-centered Nyingma tradition remained unrealized at any major Nyingma institution until perhaps as late as the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1062</sup>

In short, we see a similar trend to that noted above, in which, although Shenpen Tayé’s projects were influential and consequential for the future direction of Nyingma tradition, most of these projects and activities didn’t become widely accepted and adopted until they were taken up and—to some degree—transformed and reworked by other figures. Our study of Shenpen Tayé’s life and works reveals a picture of a Buddhist

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<sup>1061</sup> As we saw in chapter five, although the recent “extremely expansive kama collections” (*bka’ ma shin tu rgyas pa*) have added hundreds of new texts in dozens of volumes, the basic *type* of texts contained in them (“root” texts, Indian commentaries, Tibetan commentaries, and ritual manuals) remains largely the same as that of Pema Dongak’s collection.

<sup>1062</sup> That is, with the founding of Namdröling Monastery in South India. Of course, there were numerous examples of fully ordained Nyingmapas living at and administering Nyingma institutions, but no examples as far as I am aware of strictly held celibate monasticism being the *dominant* form of practice at any Nyingma institution during or after Shenpen Tayé’s lifetime until the founding of Namdröling Monastery in South India in the 1970s. Although, the story related in sec. 6.1.3.4 above, of the expulsion of women from Katok by Khyentsé Chökyi Lodrö in the 1920s, suggests a possible earlier example of such “reform.”

reformer who wouldn't at all be out of place in today's Nyingma tradition. Indeed, Shenpen Tayé's focus on monasticism, ethical reform, lay ministry, and the systemization, simplification, and re-presentation of the massive and eclectic Nyingma tradition in a form that can be taught and transmitted in a single institution—if not a single curriculum—shares close similarities with contemporary Nyingma “modernist” approaches, such as that of Jikmé Phuntsok and his successors at Larung Gar, and of Pema Norbu et al. at Namdröling Monastery. Considering these similarities and affinities between Shenpen Tayé and more recent modernist reformers, it is no wonder that Shenpen Tayé is today remembered as one of the founding figures of the modern Nyingma tradition.

But these contemporary affinities and near-universal respect for Shenpen Tayé among today's Nyingmapas risk obscuring the radical nature of Shenpen Tayé's vision of the Nyingma tradition, and the degree to which it was out of step with much of the religious zeitgeist of his time. As we have demonstrated and argued in the chapters above, Shenpen Tayé presented a distinctively stripped-down and truncated version of the Nyingma tradition—one that imagined the Nyingma Buddhist path to be like a pyramid, with a large base of shared Buddhist practices acting as the foundation for the upper, Nyingma-specific tantric practices of Mahāyoga, all leading to the Great Perfection, the pinnacle and final result of Buddhist practice. Shenpen Tayé's marked focus on the base of shared Buddhist categories and practices and his lack of engagement with the myriad Nyingma tantric practice lineages—particularly the Nyingma *terma* lineages—presented a radically different vision of the Buddhist tradition than the broad encyclopedic

approach adopted by many of his 19<sup>th</sup>-century contemporaries. As we discussed above, the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw an increasing interest among many non-Geluk lamas in Eastern Tibet towards compiling and preserving expansive and eclectic collections of Buddhist texts and lineages. Such expansiveness went beyond the academic and archival practices of collecting and anthologizing. In the various study and practice curricula from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, we also tend to see a similarly broad set of texts and lineages being learned and practiced within a single institution. We can see clear examples of this breadth and diversity in the published curriculum of Jamgön Kongtrül's retreat center, which contains almost one hundred separate texts drawn from the Kagyü, Nyingma, Sakya, Jonang, and Kadam traditions, and includes everything from canonical philosophical treatises to obscure *terma* cycles.<sup>1063</sup> For an example a bit closer to home, the Nyingma master Ngawang Pelzang (1879–1941) left a detailed record in his autobiography of his one and a half years of study at Śrī Siṃha Shedra sometime around 1900–1902. His record lists that he studied or received the transmission for over 125 separate texts, including over twenty different exoteric Indian philosophical treatises; synthetic treatises by Nyingma authors such as Jikmé Lingpa, Longchenpa, Rongzom, and Mipham Gyatso; and numerous *terma* texts and cycles. Ngawang Pelzang's list of studies at Śrī Siṃha reads like a sprawling all-you-can-eat buffet of texts and practice cycles. In contradistinction to such examples, Shenpen Tayé's system of study and practice, as we have encountered it in his shedra curriculum and his path instructions,

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<sup>1063</sup> See Jamgon Kongtrul, *Jamgon Kontrul's Retreat Manual*, translated by Ngawang Zangpo (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1994), 187–197.

presents a far more pared-down vision of what is truly necessary for practicing the Buddhist path. Shenpen Tayé's curricula and practice instructions often evince a kind of beautiful simplicity—an economy of form and function—that belies both the profundity of his doctrinal formulations and the difficulty involved in actually practicing the path that he taught. And it is, perhaps, in these seemingly simple and cogent solutions to the ever-encroaching problem of complexity, that Shenpen Tayé continues to inspire, frustrate, and influence the trajectory of the Nyingma tradition.

## Suggestions for Further Research

The last ten years or so have seen an acceleration of scholarship on Nyingma figures and institutions, and I could not have completed this study without the context and insights contained in the recent dissertations and/or monographs by Dominique Townsend, Jann Ronis, Jake Dalton, Alison Melnick, Alexander Gardner, Nathaniel Rich, Adam Pearcey, Douglas Duckworth, Achim Bayer, Marc-Henri Deroche, and many, many more.

Some areas that are still ripe for study are the life and works of two of Shenpen Tayé's main teachers: the 1<sup>st</sup> Dodrupchen and Gyelwé Jikmé Nyugu. Both of these figures, in their own ways, had a huge impacts on the development of the Nyingma tradition and on the culture, politics, and institutions of northern Kham during the late-18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Unlike the paucity of primary sources that I encountered with Shenpen Tayé, each of these figures wrote detailed, expansive autobiographies<sup>1064</sup>

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<sup>1064</sup>*rdo grub chen kun bzang gzhan phan gyi rang rnam (Autobiography of [1st] Dodrupchen)*. In *gsung 'bum/ 'jigs med phrin las 'od zer*. Vol. 1: 1–366. Chengdu: bla ma bsod dar, 2014. BDRC W4PD1630.



that were then edited and expanded upon by their respective students. Jikmé Nyugu's (auto)biography<sup>1065</sup> is particularly interesting for its consistently meticulous attention to the minutia of his interactions and exchanges with other figures and institutions, providing, for example, a veritable ledger of all the gifts and monies that he received and dispersed in the course of each interaction. Translations of either or both of these biographies would be extremely beneficial resources for studying and understanding both their respective subjects, and the details of life in Tibet during this period at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Another figure that deserves more study and for which we also have a detailed autobiography<sup>1066</sup> is the controversial warlord-siddha Do Khyentsé Yeshé Dorjé (*mdo mkhyen brtse ye shes rdo rje*, 1800–1866), who was a highly revered Nyingma master who also roamed the steppes and valleys of Kham between Dartsedo and Golok with a band of warriors, and appears to have been both a consequential military and political figure as well as a highly influential Nyingma *tertön* who moved in much the same circles as Shenpen Tayé, Dza Patrül, and the 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> Dodrupchens.

With regard to the study of the development of Nyingma shedras, there is still much work to be done to tell the story of how Śrī Siṃha developed after the 1850s–60s (when the *chayik* described in chapter four was written). Achim Bayer's excellent recent

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<sup>1065</sup> *jigs med rgyal ba'i myu gu'i rnam thar: 'gro mgon bla ma rje'i gsang gsum rnam thar rgya mtsho las thun mong phyi'i mngon rtogs rgyal sras lam bzang (the Biography of Jikmé Gyelwé Nyugu)*. Bodhgaya, India: Shechen Publications, 2004. BDRC W27884.

<sup>1066</sup> *rig 'dzin 'jigs med gling pa'i yang srid sngags 'chang 'ja' lus rdo rje'i rnam thar mkha' 'gro'i zhal lung (The Autobiography of Do Khyentsé Yeshé Dorjé)* Title Page Title: *mdo mkhyen brtse ye shes rdo rje'i rnam thar*. Chengdu: si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1997. BDRC: W21847.

monograph on Khenpo Shenga has gone a long way to illuminating the activities of this important architect of the modern Nyingma shedra curriculum, and this would be augmented by further study into the details of his Thirteen Great Texts curriculum and how Śrī Siṃha subsequently developed from the 1910s–1950s. Another project that would help us understand the early development of Nyingma shedras would be to make a study of one or more of the shedras or *chödras* of adjacent institutions such as Shechen, Pelpung, Dzongsar, Katok, Pelpung, or Dergé Gonchen—all of which had large, thriving shedras by the 1950s, but about whose development we know very little.

There is also still much to study about the development of the various *kama* collections that followed and built on Shenpen Tayé's *Trinchok Collection*. This study, in addition to its thorough treatment of Shenpen Tayé's *Collection*, also made a brief study of Pema Dongak's subsequent expanded collection in the hope that this might begin to lay the groundwork for further study into the recent development of this important rubric and how it functions in Nyingma institutional settings.



## Appendices

## Appendix 1: Catalog of the Early Xylograph Edition of Shenpen Tayé’s “Collected Teachings” (bKa’ ‘bum)

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The following catalog details all the texts that are known to have been contained in the *xylograph collection of Shenpen Tayé’s “Collected Teachings” (XylKB)*, published by his student the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lingla Thubten Nyinche Gyeltsen. The catalog is based on the set of scanned prints of this *xylograph bka’ ‘bum (XylKB)* made available by the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (BDRC) under the collection number W3CN18521. The folio numbers given for this *XylKB* correspond to the folio numbers added by hand in Arabic numerals at the bottom of each recto folio. The catalog also provides cross references for the locations of these texts in the other major anthologies of Shenpen Tayé’s works. For ease of reference, I have given each text a number based on its order in the *XylKB* scans. Many of the shorter texts were not given titles in the *XylKB*, *PCW*, and *BhCW* collections. The editors of the *DzCW*, however, used the author’s colophons at the end of these works to give them descriptive titles and I have included and noted these new titles where needed. I have also tried to note cases where the same work has been given different titles in the various collections. For a more detailed discussion of this collection see chapter 3, sec. 1.2.1 above.

### Abbreviations:

- XylKB*** *Xylograph Kabum*: A set of scanned prints from an early xylograph edition of Shenpen Tayé’s “Collected Teachings” (*bKa’ ‘bum*). BDRC W3CN18521 (2 vols.)
- PCW*** *Pelpung Collected Works*: An edition of Shenpen Tayé’s collected works published by Pelpung Monastery in India in 2005., containing reproductions of early xylograph prints, including many texts from the early xylograph *bka’ ‘bum*. BDRC W3CN12691 (3 vols.)

**DzCW** *Dzokchen Collected Works*: An edition of Shenpen Tayé’s collected works published in 2011 by the head of Dzokchen Monastery, Tendzin Lungtok Nyima: rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha’ yas kyi gsung ‘bum, 2 vols., Lhasa: bod ljong bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2011. (Not on BDRC as of December, 2021.)

E-text:

<http://nitarthadigitalibrary.org/xtf/view?docId=tei/SPT001/SPT001.xml;brand=default;#1>

**BhCW** *Bhutan Collected Works*: An edition of Shenpen Tayé’s collected works, published by the National Library of Bhutan in 1984. BDRC W20338 (2 vols.)

Text No.	Text Title	No of Folios	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i> <sup>1067</sup>
1	rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po sgyu 'phrul drwa ba'i rtsa rgyud lung gi spyi gsang ba'i snying po'i 'grel ba kun bzang thugs kyi ti ka	73ff.	1. 1a–73a	3. 1–145	1. 345–447	-
2	dpal ldan gsang ba snying po'i khog 'bub sa bcad kyi rim pa nyung du 'khor 'das bar gyi lo tsa	9ff.	1. 74a–82b	2. 215–232	1. 332–344	-
3	rgyal sras rin po che gzhan phan mtha' yas kyi rnam thar gsol 'debs smon lam dang bcas pa byin brlabs bdud rtsi'i snang ster <b>[authored by Khyentsé Wangpo]</b>	6ff.	1. 83a–89a	-	2. 1–7	-
4	zab lam na ro chos drug gi bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs kyi kha skong [rje btsun bzang po rdo rje'i gsol 'debs sho lo ka mjug] (no title page)	1f.	1. 90a–90b	2. 105–106	2. 423	-
5	zab las bde gshegs kun 'dus kyi bla brgyud gsol 'debs la skor (no title page)	1f.	1. 91a	2. 107	2. 424	-
6	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: yang srid myur 'byon gsol 'debs	1f.	1. 91b	2. 108	2. 460	-
7	gangs ri'i khrod tsam na phul du byung ba'i mahA paN+Dita chos kyi bzang po la gsol 'debs pa dad pa'i rba rlabs mngon par g.yo ba * <b>[Not labelled as “ka’ ‘bum”]</b> <sup>1068</sup>	5ff.	1. 92a–96a	3. 675–683	N/A	-
8	g.yu thog snying thig las/ rtsa ba gsum gyi mngon rtogs rnam grol myur lam	5ff.	1. 97a–101a	2. 277–285	2. 567–571	-
9	zab chos rig 'dzin bder 'dus kyi lam khrid skal ldan 'jug ngogs	64ff.	1. 102a–165b	3. 189–316	1. 198–288	2. 343–553
10	'og min gnyis pa o rgyan smin grol gling nas dri ba ji ltar phebs pa rnam kyi dris lan skor	17ff.	1. 166a–182b	2. 17–50	2. 59–80	-
11	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: rdzogs chen klong chen snying thig gi sgo nas skal ldan ji ltar bkri ba'i tshul	14ff.	1. 183b–197a	3. 147–175	1. 289–305	-
12	bskyed rdzogs kyi spyi don thabs lam snying po	25ff.	1. 198a–222b	2. 137–186	-	-

<sup>1067</sup> The *BhCW* reproduces many of the shorter, untitled works, often having the same work in both vol. 1 and vol. 2.

<sup>1068</sup> Text No. 7: labelled "rong zom paN chen/" in left margin of verso folio rather than "bka' 'bum."

Text No.	Text Title	No of Folios	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i> <sup>1067</sup>
13	yul lha chen po rdo rje g.yung drung rtsal gyi bsangs mchod 'dod dgu'i re bskongs	2ff.	1. 223a–225a	3. 341–350	2. 579–581	-
14	sku lha zil khrom rdo rje g.yung drung gi gsol mchod 'dod don myur 'grub (no title page)	2ff.	1. 225a–227b	-	2. 585–587	-
15	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: zhal 'don nyes ltung bshags sdom	3ff.	1. 228a–231a	3. 489–495	2. 572–576	-
16	Untitled text <sup>1069</sup>	2ff.	1. 232a–233b	3. 685–688	1. 182–193(b)	-
17	bka' bsgo byed tshul khrag 'thung rol pa'i gad rgyangs	5ff.	1. 234a–238b	3. 711–720	1. 471–476	-
18	sngags rgod log tri pA la'i bsnyen sgrub ji ltar bya ba'i man ngag gi yi ge gnam lcags zhun ma'i mtshon 'khor	17ff.	1. 239a–255a	3. 455–487	1. 448–470	-
19	rje btsun rdo rje phag mo'i zhabs brtan gsol 'debs (no title page)	2ff.	1. 256a–257a	2. 101–104	2. 452–453	-
20	khri chen rig 'dzin sangs rgyas kun dga'i zhabs brtan gsol 'debs lha yi rda sgra	2ff.	1. 258a–259b	3. 497–500	2. 448	-
21	gar dbang tshe sgrub kyi dogs gnas la dpyad pa'i dris lan <sup>1070</sup>	5ff.	1. 260a–264b	2. 267–276	2. 53–58	-
22	skong po 'gro mgon gyis dris lan yod lags <sup>1071</sup>	9ff.	1. 265a–273b	3. 507–528	2. 118–132	-
23	bla ma'i rgyangs 'bod lam gnad kun tshang (no title page)	1f.	1. 274a–275b	-	2. 446–447	2. 61–65
24	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> Dzokchen title]: slob bu 'jam dpal gsang 'dus la gnang ba'i gsol 'debs zhal gdams	1f.	1. 276a–276b	3. 529–530	2. 315–316	-
25	lus sbyin bsdus pa (no title page)	1f.	1. 277a–277b	2. 125–126	2. 578	-

<sup>1069</sup> Text 16: the *DzCW* simply adds this text to the end of Shenpen Tayé's commentary on the Bodhisattvacaryāvātara entitled byang chub spyod pa'i smon lam phan bde'i ljon pa'i 'grel ba rgyal sras lam gyi shing rta'i bsdus don (*DzCW*: 1. 182–193). This latter text appears in *XylKB*: 2. 230a–238b; and *BhCW*: 1. 575–601 without this appended portion.

<sup>1070</sup> Text 21: Text no. marking: ༄ (top left margin rf.).

<sup>1071</sup> Text 22: Text no. marking: ༅ (top left margin rf.).



Text No.	Text Title	No of Folios	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i> <sup>1067</sup>
26	'phags pa spyang ras gzigs dbang phyug la gdung shugs drag po'i gsol ba 'debs pa thugs rje'i 'dren pa'i lcags kyu	3ff.	1. 278a–280b	3. 555–560	2. 427–428	-
27	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: sde ba blo bzang dpal 'byor la zhal gdams	2ff.	1. 281a–282a	-	2. 343–344	-
28	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: mtsho sngon po'i dad ldan a bu tshe ring la gdams pa	2ff.	1. 282a–283b	-	2. 336–337	-
29	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: rje dbon tshul khriims chos 'phel la gdams pa	1f.	1. 283b–284b	-	2. 288–289	-
30	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: bzo rig 'dzin pa blo bzang dar rgyas la gdams pa	1f.	1. 284b–285a	-	2. 335	2. 703–705
31	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: slob bu 'jam dpal yongs 'dus la gdams pa	1f.	1. 285b	-	2. 313	-
32	rtags gsal 'god tshul gyi rnam bzhag nyung ngu	7ff.	1. 286a–292a	2. 287–299	1. 88–95	-
33	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: sde snod gsum zhwa'i bshad pa	1f.	1. 293a–293b	-	1. 170	-
34	bsangs kyi don bshad phan bde'i gru cher	14ff.	1. 294a–307a	2. 187–213	1. 477–494	-
35	bsnyen gnas kyi cho ga mdo don gsal ba (no title page) <sup>1072</sup>	2ff.	1. 308a–309b	1. 175–179 3. 577–580	1. 103–104	-
36	zhe chen gdan tshabs gnyis pa'i gsung lan pad+ma dkar po'i phreng ba <sup>1073</sup>	8ff.	1. 310a–317a	2. 1–16	2. 102–111	-
37	'bras mo sde pa phrin las rab las rab rgyas kyi dris lan <sup>1074</sup>	4ff.	1. 318a–321b	3. 667–674	2. 148– 153 <sup>1075</sup>	-
38	'jam pa'i dbyangs la bstod pa tshigs su bcad pa bcu gnyis pa	2ff.	1. 322a–323b	3. 361–364	2. 470–471	-
39	bla ma 'jam pa'i[dpal] dbyangs kyi rnam par bsgrub pa'i thabs shes rab kyi rnal 'byor la 'jug pa	2ff.	1. 324a–325b	-	2. 467–468	1. 213–219

<sup>1072</sup> Text 35: The version in *XylKB* has no title page and is labelled "bka' bum" in the left margin of the verso folio. The *PCW* contains two xylograph versions of this text: The version in vol. 3 is the same as the one in *XylKB* (no title page and is labelled "bka' bum"), while the version in *PCW* vol. 1 is the version from the *Trinchok Collection* (which has a title page and is labelled "bka' ma." In the left margin).

<sup>1073</sup> Text 36: Text no. marking: ཨ (top left margin rf).

<sup>1074</sup> Text 37: Text no. marking: ཨ (top left margin rf).

<sup>1075</sup> Text 37: *DzCW* title: sngon 'gro dang dngos gzhi'i lam gyi sbyor tshul mdor bsdu 'bras mo sde ba'i phrin las rab rgyas la gnang ba.

Text No.	Text Title	No of Folios	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i> <sup>1067</sup>
40	smra ba'i dbang phyug sgrub pa'i gsang lam (no title page)	1f.	1. 326a–326b	3. 553–554	2. 469	2. 67–70
41	zhe chen dbon sprul rin po ches dris lan drang po'i sa bon <sup>1076</sup>	11f.	1. 327a–337b	3. 689–710	2. 87–101 <sup>1077</sup>	2. 271–309
42	dpal yul dbon sprul rin po che'i dris lan zla zhun snang ba <sup>1078</sup>	9ff.	1. 338a–346a	3. 317–328	2. 81–86	1. 524–543
43	bla ma dam pa dam chos lhun grub kyi dris lan bsnyen pa'i gsal byed	10ff.	1. 347a–356a	-	2. 137–147	1. 545–573
44	rgyal ba'i sras po gzhan phan mtha' yas 'od zer du 'bod pa'i spyod tshul mdor bsdu tshig bead ma <sup>1079</sup>	5ff.	1. 357a–362a	2. 81–91	2. 157–163	-
45	rdza rgyal dgon gyi 'dus par 'phel gtam du bgyis pa lha yi rda sgra	7ff.	1. 363a–369a	2. 109–124	2. 166–174	-
46	zhi khro na rag dong spug kyi rgyun cher ngag 'don du bkod pa don bsdu snying po	3ff.	1. 370a–373a	2. 301–307	2. 558–561	-
47	sman sgom chos dbyings dpal ldan gdams pa bdud rtsi'i snying po (no title page)	3ff.	1. 374a–376b	3. 661–666	2. 232–236 <sup>1080</sup>	-
48	srin rdzong dge slong pad+ma blo gsal gyi dris lan snying por dril ba <sup>1081</sup>	5ff.	1. 377a–382b	3. 329–340	2. 112–117	-
49	gling rje drung rin po che'i yang srid myur 'byon gyi gsol 'debs drang srong bden tshig (no title page)	1f.	1. 383a–383b	-	2. 458	2. 109–111
50	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: g.yag ze mchog sprul myur 'byon gsol 'debs	1f.	1. 383b–384a	-	2. 459	2. 111–112
51	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: sa skyong sde dge'i chos rgyal zhabs brtan ngag 'don	2ff.	1. 384a–385a	-	2. 455–456	2. 112–115
52	bla ma'i rnal 'byor 'og min gsang lam	4ff.	1. 386a–389b	2. 127–133	2. 465–466	2. 259–270

<sup>1076</sup> Text 41: Text no. marking: འ (top left margin rf).

<sup>1077</sup> Text 41: *DzCW* title: zhe chen ma hA paN chen dbon sprul mthu stobs rnam par rgyal bas dris pa'i lan.

<sup>1078</sup> Text 42: Text no. marking: ར (top left margin rf).

<sup>1079</sup> Text 44: Text no. marking: ཇ (top left margin rf).

<sup>1080</sup> Text 47: *DzCW* title: sbas pa'i rnal 'byor ba sman sgom chos dbyings dpal ldan gdams pa bdud rtsi'i snying po.

<sup>1081</sup> Text 48: Text no. marking: འ (top left margin rf).

Text No.	Text Title	No of Folios	<i>XyIKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i> <sup>1067</sup>
53	maN+Da la'i rnam bshad nyung ngu tshogs gnyis gter bum	10ff.	2. 1–10a	3. 435–453	1. 500–?	2. 29–59
54	rten 'brel gyi bsdus don stong nyid la 'jug pa'i sgo (no title page)	2ff.	2. 11a–13b	3. 183–188	1. 194–197	-
55	brog lung chos mdzad la gdams pa'i tshig 'grel	8ff.	2. 14a–21a	2. 51–65	2. 259–268	2. 714–718 <sup>1082</sup>
56	snga 'gyur rnying lugs theg dgu'i lam khrid kyi sa bcad nyung ngu dam pa'i zhal lung	14ff.	2. 22a–36b	2. 233–262	1. 313–331	-
57	No title [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: drug ldan brgyud pa'i bla mar gsol ba 'debs pa	2ff.	2. 37a–37b	2. 453–455	2. 419–420	-
58	sku zhabs rdo rje phag mo'i 'khrungs rabs gsol 'debs byin rlabs char rgyun	4ff.	2. 39a–42b	-	2. 435–438	2. 191–202
59	rdo grubs chen rnam thar mdor bsdus ba	3ff.	2. 43a–45b	2. 93–98	2. 154–156	-
60	rdo grub dbang rin po che'i nye gnas d+ha r+ma ki+rti'i rnam thar mdor bsdus (no title page)	1f.	2. 45b–46b	2. 98–100	2. 164–165	-
61	rdzogs pa chen po'i spyi chings	4ff.	2. 47a–50a	2. 73–79	1. 309–312	2. 121–131
62	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: zhal brtan gsol 'debs zhal gsum ma <sup>1083</sup>	1f.	2. 51a	2. 263	2. 451	2. 253–254
63	No title [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: gling sprul rin po che mkhan khir phebs skabs zhabs brtan du phul ba	1f.	2. 51a–51b	2. 263–264	2. 449	2. 254–256
64	zhabs brtan smon tshig (no title page)	1f.	2. 51b.–52a	2. 264–265	2. 450	2. 256–257
65	smon 'jug sems bskyed kyi rgyud 'debs	2ff.	2. 53a–55a	1. 669–673 <sup>1084</sup>	2. 409–411	2. 237–244
66	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: sde gsum brgyud pa'i bla ma la gsol 'debs	2ff.	2. 56a–57b	3. 549–552	2. 415–418	2. 245–251
67	phung lnga'i rab dbye bsdus pa	2ff.	2. 58a–60b	3. 177–182	1. 96–98	-
68	[Untitled work] <sup>1085</sup>	1f.	2. 61a–62a	-	-	-

<sup>1082</sup> Text 55: The *BhCW* version has the root verses only.

<sup>1083</sup> Text 62: Part of a series of short devotional liturgies composed for the enthronement of Thubten Gyeltsen as Khenpo of Dzokchen.

<sup>1084</sup> Text 65: *PCW* and *Trinchok Collection* title: smon 'jug sems bskyed kyi brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs.

<sup>1085</sup> Text 68: On the visualization and recitation of Vajrasattva (*rdo rje sems dpa'*).

Text No.	Text Title	No of Folios	<i>XyIKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i> <sup>1067</sup>
69	bla ma'i rnal 'byor dngos grub mchog gi nye rgyu	3ff.	2. 63a–66a	2. 445–451	2. 461–464	2. 133–143
70	klong chen snying thig gi gtum mo'i me'i bogs dbyung gi dmigs pa gab pa mngon phyung	3ff.	2. 67a–69b	2. 67–72	1. 306–308	2. 145–152
71	tha ma kha'i nyes pa la dpyad pa log 'tsho'i gnyen bo	7ff.	2. 70a–77b	3. 561–576	1. 171–180 <sup>1086</sup>	-
72	<b>rje bla ma dam pa'i nyams mgur thol byung dang slob ma rnam la phan par gdams pa'i rab tu byed pa mgur du gsungs pa rnam</b> <b>*(collection of individual works listed below)</b>	60ff.	2. 78a–136b	-	[See locations of ind. works below.]	1. 221–394
72.1	bla ma dran pa'i rgyangs 'bod ring mo (no title page)		2. 78b–82b	-	2. 191–196	1. 222–236
72.2	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: rnal 'byor ba dbang drag lags la gegs sel lam khyer gyi gsal 'debs		2. 82b–83b	-	2. 361–362	1. 236–241 2. 706–710
72.3	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: sgrub brtson bsod nams rin chen la gdams pa		2. 83b–84b	-	2. 352	1. 241–244
72.4	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: togs pa'i nyams glu		2. 84b–85b	-	2. 200	1. 244–247
72.5	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: rnam mkha' rdo rje tshig		2. 85b–86a	-	2. 221	2. 21–23 1. 247–249
72.6	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: rdzogs chen nyams kyi spro glu		2. 86a–b	-	2. 198–199	1. 249–251
72.7	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: yul drug phyag rgyar rtogs pa'i glu chung		2. 86b–87b	-	2. 201–202	1. 251–255 2. 2–6
72.8	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: btsun pa pad+ma dar rgyas la gdams pa		2. 87b–89b	-	2. 353–355	1. 255–261
72.9	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: rgya rong dbon sprul rin po cher gdams pa		2. 89b–91a	-	2. 254–256	1. 261–266
72.10	lta sgom spyod 'bras kyi mgur ma; ( <i>DzCW</i> title: lta sgom spyod 'bras ston pa'i mgur ma) (no title page)		2. 91a–92b	-	2. 184–185	1. 266–273
72.11	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: mi rtag pa ston pa'i glu		2. 92b–93b	-	2. 219–220	1. 273–276 2. 745–748

<sup>1086</sup> Text 71: *DzCW* title: rab byung gi tha ma kha la spyod pa'i nyes pa la dpyad pa log 'tsho'i gnyen po.

<b>Text No.</b>	<b>Text Title</b>	<b>No of Folios</b>	<b><i>XyIKB</i></b>	<b><i>PCW</i></b>	<b><i>DzCW</i></b>	<b><i>BhCW</i><sup>1067</sup></b>
72.12	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: slob bu rig 'dzin sogs la gdams pa		2. 93b–95a	-	2. 356–357	1. 277–281
72.13	lta sgom spyod 'bras dang 'brel ba'i gtam rig 'dzin snyan brgyud (no title page)		2. 95a–97b	-	2. 176–179	1. 281–291
72.14	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: grub rje bla ma rjes dran gdung dbyangs gsol 'debs		2. 97b–99a	-	2. 433–434	1. 291–296
72.15	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: tshogs glu bde stong rol mo		2. 99a–100b <sup>1087</sup>	-	2. 206–208	1. 296–303
72.16	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: shugs 'byung nyams kyi skyo glu		2. 100b–102a	-	2. 203–204	1. 303–307
72.17	khrag 'thung rig pa'i rdo rje'i nyams mgur (no title page)		2. 102a–103a	-	2. 189–190	1. 307–312
72.18	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: tshul khirms mthar phyin la nyams len skyongs tshul gyi gdams pa		2. 103a–104b	-	2. 358–360	1. 312–318
72.19	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: slob bu rab gsal zla ba'i 'od zer la gdams pa		2. 105a–106a	-	2. 364–365	1. 318–322
72.20	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: kong po seng+ge'i yang dgon du mgur		2. 106a–107a	-	2. 186–187	1. 322–326
72.21	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: sgrub brtson mthu stobs rdo rje la gdams pa		2. 107a–b	-	2. 366–367	1. 326–329
72.22	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: rdzogs chen lta ba'i nyams mgur ka rtsom ma		2. 107b–108b; 136a–136b	-	2. 181	1. 329–332 2. 7–9
72.23	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: sgrubs pa'i gnas la bstod pa'i mgur		2. 108b–109b	-	2. 212–213	1. 332–335
72.24	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: bde skyid ri khrod ma'i mgur		2. 109b–111a	-	2. 214–215	1. 335–341 2. 695–699
72.25	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: gsung mgur legs pa drug gi glu chung /		2. 112a–b	-	2. 180	1. 343–345
72.26	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: nyams mgur rtogs pa'i bogs 'don		2. 112b–113b	-	2. 188	1. 345–348
72.27	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: nyams dang rmi lam 'dres ma'i ngor sngon 'das kyi skye ba dran pa'i mgur ma		2. 113b–114a	-	2. 175	1. 348–350
72.28	No title; [2011 title]: gnas lugs la yid ches kyi glu		2. 114a– 115a <sup>1088</sup>	-	2. 218	1. 350–353

<sup>1087</sup> Text 72.15: Folio sides 99b and 100a missing from the scanned file.

<sup>1088</sup> Text 72.28: Folio side 114b missing from the scan.

<b>Text No.</b>	<b>Text Title</b>	<b>No of Folios</b>	<i>XyIKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i> <sup>1067</sup>
72.29	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: slob bu sangs rgyas yon tan la gdams pa		2. 115a–116a	-	2. 363	1. 353–356
72.30	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: nyams mgur kun khyab chos sku		2. 116a	-	2. 205	1. 356–358
72.31	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: btsun ma ye shes sgron ma la gdams pa		2. 116b	-	2. 368	1. 359–360
72.32	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: rang slob dam pa pad+ma badz+ra la gdams pa		2. 117a–120a	-	2. 251–253	1. 361–368
72.33	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: dad ldan sangs rgyas tshe ring la gdams pa		2. 120a–121b	-	2. 369–371	1. 368–375 2. 714–718
72.34	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: dad brtson nor ldan 'jigs med bsam gtan la gdams pa		2. 121b–123b	-	2. 384–385	1. 376–380
72.35	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: nyon mong lnga ye shes lngar lam du byed tshul la gdams pa		2. 123b–124b	-	2. 372–373	1. 381–384
72.36	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: slob bu pad+ma bzod pa la gdams pa		2. 124b–125a	-	2. 375	1. 384–386
72.37	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: rdo rje 'dzin pa bla ma byang chub brtson 'grus la gdams pa dbyangs gsal ma		2. 125a–126a	-	2. 374	1. 387–390
72.38	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: ka rtsom gros 'debs bslab bya		2. 126b–127a	-	2. 182–183	1. 391–394
72.39	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: sbyin bdag lcam rdo rje g.yu sgron la gdams pa/		2. 128a–129a	-	2. 383	2. 311–314
72.40	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: rje btsun ma ye shes sgron ma la gdams pa		2. 129a–130b	-	2. 257–258	2. 314–318
72.41	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: khang dmar dgon du tshes bcu'i dus skabs su mgur		2. 130b–131b	-	2. 216–217	2. 319–322
72.42	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: g.yag ze ba 'jam dpal lung rtogs la gdams pa		2. 131b–132a	-	2. 312	2. 322–324
72.43	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: 'bar chung nam mkha' lhun grub la gdams pa		2. 132a–132b	--	2. 314	2. 324–326
72.44	dus gnas dang mthun pa'i zhal gdams mgur ma (no title page)		2. 132b–135a		2. 209–211	2. 326–333
<b>73</b>	<b>rje btsun bla ma mchog gis skal ldan slob tshogs la zhal gdams gnang ba rnam phyogs gcig tu bkod pa legs bshad nor bu'i bang mdzod *(collection of individual works listed below)</b>	69ff.	2. 137a–205a	2. 309–409	[See locations of ind. works below]	1. 1–213
73.1	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: rdo rje brag zhabs drung sprul ba'i skur gdams pa		2. 137b–142b	2. 311–322	2. 226–231	1. 1–19 2. 728–741
73.2	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: dwags po dge slong thub bstan yongs 'dzin la gdams pa		2. 142b–146a	2. 322–329	2. 280–282	1. 19–29

Text No.	Text Title	No of Folios	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i> <sup>1067</sup>
						2. 718–728
73.3	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: mchims phu'i sku gnyer pa gzhan phan blo gros la gdams pa		2. 146a–148b	2. 329–334	2. 278–279	1. 29–37
73.4	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: o rgyan smin grol gling gi grwa rigs 'gyur med pad+ma la gdams pa		2. 148b–150a	2. 334–337	2. 269–270	1. 37–41
73.5	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: mchims phu nas zhal slob pad+ma 'phel rgyas la gdams pa		2. 150a–151b	2. 337–340	2. 292–294	1. 41–46
73.6	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: sgrub brtson ma ye shes dbang mo la gdams pa		2. 151b–153a	2. 340–343	2. 317–318	1. 46–51
73.7	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: bsam yas sgrub brtson gzhan phan bshes gnyen la gdams pa		2. 153a–156a	2. 343–349	2. 283–287	1. 51–61
73.8	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: dge slong blo bzang bsam gtan la gdams pa		2. 156a–157b	2. 349–352	2. 319–321	1. 61–66
73.9	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: mchims phu'i sgom brtson pa tshul khirms nam dag la gdams pa		2. 157b–159a	2. 352–355	2. 271–277	1. 66–72
73.10	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: kong nga phod pho brang du o rgyan theg mchog la gdams pa		2. 159a–160a	2. 355–357	2. 303–304	1. 72–75
73.11	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: sgrub brtson pad+ma nam rgyal la gdams pa		2. 160a–161b	2. 357–360	2. 322–323	1. 75–79
73.12	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: tshul khirms mthar phyin la bshis len du spring ba		2. 161b–162a	2. 360–361	2. 334	1. 80–81
73.13	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: g.yu ba sangs rgyas dpal ldan la gdams pa		2. 162a	2. 361	2. 338	1. 81–82
73.14	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: rgya skor ngag dbang la gdams pa		2. 162a–b	2. 361–362	2. 324	1. 82–83
73.15	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: rig 'dzin rgya mtsho la gdams pa		2. 162b–163a; 177b–178a	2. 362–363 2. 392–393	2. 339	1. 83–84; 131–132
73.16	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: khrom za bla ma chos skyong la gdams pa		2. 163a–164b	2. 363–366	2. 310–311	1. 85–90
73.17	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: ru dam yang dben nas dam chos lhun grub la gdams pa		2. 164b–167a	2. 366–371	2. 297–300	1. 90–98
73.18	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: yer ba ri'i mgul nas dge slong kun dga' tshul khirms la gdams pa		2. 167a–168b	2. 371–374	2. 295–296	1. 98–103 2. 688– 693 <sup>1089</sup>

<sup>1089</sup> Text 73.18: The two versions in the *BhCW* have slight differences. For example, the version in vol. 1 has “gang gi drin gyis nye bar rtogs pa **yi**s” (99:1), while that same line in vol. 2 ends with the genitive “yi” (the *XylKB/PCW* and the *DzCW* have “yis”).

Text No.	Text Title	No of Folios	<i>XyIKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i> <sup>1067</sup>
73.19	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: bsam yas rta mgrin gling nas slob bu gzhan phan nyi mar gdams pa		2. 168b–170a	2. 374–377	2. 301–302	1. 103–107 2. 741–745
73.20	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: lhun grub rtse ba kun bzang ye shes rgyal mtshan la gdams pa		2. 170a–171a	2. 377–379	2. 305–306	1. 107–111 2. 748–752
73.21	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: rnal 'byor pa klong gsal rdo rje la gdams pa		2. 171a–171b	2. 379–380	2. 325	1. 111–113 2. 705–706
73.22	slob bur spring pa'i gtam mdo sngags zung 'jug (no title page)		2. 172a–175b	2. 381–388	2. 328–333 <sup>1090</sup>	1. 113–125
73.23	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: 'jigs med rdo rje la gdams pa		2. 175b–177b	2. 388–392	2. 326–327	1. 125–131
73.24	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: lta sgom spyod pa'i tshul mdor bsdu pa'i zhal gdams		2. 178a–179b	2. 393–395	2. 340–341	1. 132–135
73.25	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: bskyed rdzogs zung 'jug gi gnad ston pa'i gdams pa		2. 179a–180a	2. 395–397	2. 342	1. 135–138
73.26	skyes bu dam pa la snying gtam du gsol ba mdza' bos brda ston (no title page)		2. 180a–182a	2. 397–401	2. 223–225	1. 138–143
73.27	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: gling tshang mi rje'i mdun na 'don karma chos 'dzin la gdams pa		2. 182a–b	2. 401–402	2. 381–382	1. 143–146
73.28	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: sa skyong bla ma la gtam du bya ba pad+ma'i phreng ba		2. 182b–186a	2. 402–409	2. 376–380	1. 146–157
73.29	rdzogs chen dpon slob rin po cher gdams pa lugs zung kun gsal (no title page)		2. 187a–192a	2. 411–421	2. 237–243	1. 159–175
73.30	legs par spring ba'i yi ge dam pa dgyes bskyed (no title page)		2. 192a–196b	2. 421–430	2. 244–250 <sup>1091</sup>	1. 175–190
73.31	slob bu 'od gsal rig grol la spring ba'i yi ge dpyed kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs (no title page)		2. 196b–198a	2. 430–433	2. 345–347	1. 191–195
73.32	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: rdza rgyal lcogs sgar du sgrub brtson mang dge pad+ma la gdams pa		2. 198b–199b	2. 434–436	2. 308–309	1. 195–199; 752–755
73.33	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: pad+ma don ldan bzang po la gdams pa		2. 199b–200a	2. 436–437	2. 348	1. 199–200 2. 710–712

<sup>1090</sup> Text 73.22: *DzCW* title: zhal slob kun bzang rang gsal la gdams pa.

<sup>1091</sup> Text 73.30: *DzCW* title: grub chen sprul ba'i skur gdams pa'i yi ge dam pa dgyes bskyed.



Text No.	Text Title	No of Folios	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i> <sup>1067</sup>
73.34	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: dge rgyal smon lam la gdams pa		2. 200a–b	2. 437–438	2. 307	1. 200–202 2. 712–713
73.35	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: slob bu byang chub rdo rje la gdams pa		2. 200b–201a	2. 438–439	2. 349	1. 202–203 2. 713–714
73.36	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: snyan grags rgya mtsho sogs la gdams pa		2. 201a–202a	2. 439–441	2. 350	1. 203–206 2. 701–703
73.37	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: nag phran sangs rgyas la gdams pa		2. 202a–b	2. 441–442	2. 351	1. 206–207
73.38	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: thub bstan rdo rje brag tu sum ldan rdo rje 'dzin pa o rgyan 'gro 'dul la gdams pa		2. 202b–203b	2. 442–444	2. 290–291	1. 207–211
73.39	rig 'dzin 'jigs med gling pa la bstod pa dam pa'i rang bzhin mthong ba'i me long (no title page)		2. 204a–205a	-	2. 429–430	2. 335–341
74	yang dag lam gyi rten 'brel theg dgu'i don ston <sup>1092</sup> *[Does not contain the " <i>bka' 'bum</i> " designation in the left margin]	17ff.	2. 206a–221b	-	-	-
75	kar gling zhi khro'i gnas 'dren gyi mtshams sbyor snying por dril ba	5ff.	2. 222a–226a	3. 539–547	2. 562–566	1. 511–524
76	byang chub spyod pa'i smon lam phan bde'i ljon pa'i 'grel ba rgyal sras lam gyi shing rta'i bsdus don	9ff.	2. 230a–238b	-	1. 182–193(a)	1. 575–601
77	bla na med pa'i theg pa dang 'brel ba'i gtam sngags 'chang mgul rgyan	5ff.	2. 239a–243a	3. 351–359	1. 495–499	2. 159–172
78	rdo rje chos skyongs ba'i srung ma rnams la mngon par bstod pa tshang pa'i glu dbyangs	5ff.	2. 244a–248b	-	2. 590–591	-
79	rgyal ba'i sras po gzhan phan mtha' yas 'od zer gyi skye 'phreng gsol 'debs thar pa'i 'khri shing (no title page)	2ff.	2. 249a–250b	-	2. 439–440	2. 153–157
80	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: bde smon bsdus pa	0.5f.	2. 251a	-	2. 577	-

<sup>1092</sup> Text 74: A version of this text was published under the title, phung po rab dbye bcas kyi mkhas bya'i gnas drug in the large anthology, dkar nying gi skyes chen du ma'i phyag rdzogs kyi gdams ngag gnad bsdus nyer mkho rin po che'i gter mdzod/ (rtsibs ri'i par ma/) (BDRC W20749), vol 27, 95–143. See chapter 3, section 3 for a detailed discussion of this work.

<b>Text No.</b>	<b>Text Title</b>	<b>No of Folios</b>	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i> <sup>1067</sup>
81	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: gsol 'debs tshigs bcaḁ	1f.	2. 251a–b	-	2. 443	-
82	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: gsol 'debs tshigs bcaḁ zhal gsungs ma	0.5f.	2. 251b	-	2. 444	-
83	bla ma gsol ba 'debs pa'i smon tshig rkang ba so gnyis pa	2ff.	2. 252a–253b	-	2. 431–432	2. 219–223
84	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: bla ma rnams la gsol ' debs kha ton byas chog	2ff.	2. 253b–255a	-	2. 412–414	2. 223–232
85	No title; [ <i>DzCW</i> title]: o rgyan chen po la gsol ba 'debs pa	2ff.	2. 255a–256a	-	2. 425–426	2. 232–235
86	snga 'gyur ring(snying) lugs kyi rab byung gi gzhi chog lung don rab tu gsal	34ff.	2. 257a–301a	3. 365–433	1. 105–154	-
87	kar gling zhi khro'i dka' gnas la dpyad pa'i gsal byed skya rengs dang po	30ff.	2. 302a–331a	-	2. 8–49	1. 395–510
88	byA ka ra na sum cu ba dang rtags kyi 'jug pa	6ff.	2. 332a–337a	-	1. 24–30	-
89	sum cu pa dang rtags kyi 'jug pa'i 'bru 'grel 'phrul gyi lde mig	38ff.	2. 338a–375b	3. 581–658	1. 31–87	2. 555–685
90	snga 'gyur mnying lugs kyi bla ma rgyud pa'i gsol 'debs gzhan phan mtha' yas	5ff.	2. 376a–380a	-	2. 387–391	2. 203–217
91	rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po sgyu 'phrul drwa ba ji ltar brgyud pa'i srol 'dzin gyi dge ba'i bshes gnyen chen po rnams la gsol ba 'debs pa'i tshigs su bcaḁ pa skal ldan thar par 'gro ba'i sa mkhan	4ff.	2. 381a–384b	3. 531–538	2. 392–396	2. 173–185
92	dbon sangs rgyas chos 'phel gyi dris lan <sup>1093</sup>	5ff.		3. 501–505	2. 133–136	2. 89–97
93	No title (devotional verses to Dīpaḁkara)	1f.		2. 135–136	-	-

<sup>1093</sup> Text 92: Text no. marking: ३ (top left margin rf).

Appendix 2: Catalog of Texts in the 2011 *Dzokchen*  
*Collected Works (DzCW)*<sup>1094</sup>

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<sup>1094</sup> *rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha' yas kyi gsung 'bum*, edited by Tendzin Lungtok Nyima (bstan 'dzin lung rtogs nyi ma; b. 1974). 2 volumes. Lhasa: bod ljong bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2011.

Text No. <sup>1095</sup> and Text Title [* untitled texts for which the DzCW has given a descriptive title]	DzCW	XylKB	PCW	BhCW
<b>Volume I</b>				
<u>Textual Commentaries (<i>legs bshad gzhung 'grel</i>)</u>				
1. byA ka ra na sum cu ba dang rtags kyi 'jug pa [not authored by Shenpen Tayé] <sup>1096</sup>	1. 24–30	2. 332a–337a	-	-
2. sum cu pa dang rtags kyi 'jug pa'i 'bru 'grel 'phrul gyi lde mig	1. 31–87	2. 338a–375b	3. 581–658	2. 555–685
3. rtags gsal 'god tshul gyi rnam bzhag nyung ngu	1. 88–95	1. 286a–292a	2. 287–299	-
4. phung lnga'i rab dbye bsdu pa	1. 96–98	2. 58a–60b	3. 177–182	-
5. phyi nang gi grub mtha' mdor nsdus su bkod pa 'jam mgon zhal lung [This text was likely NOT authored by Shenpen Tayé <sup>1097</sup> ]	1. 99–102	-	-	-
6. bsnyen gnas kyi cho ga mdo don gsal ba <sup>1098</sup>	1. 103–104	1. 308a–309b	1. 175–179 3. 577–580	-
7. snga 'gyur ring lugs kyi rab byung gi gzhi chog lung don rab tu gsal	1. 105–154	2. 257a–301a	3. 365–433	-
8. rgyun gyi chos spyod sems bskyed kyi cho ga phan bde'i nyin byed	1. 155–169	-	-	-

<sup>1095</sup> These are numbers that I have given the texts based on their order in the collection.

<sup>1096</sup> The two classic grammar treatises written by Thonmi Sambhota, which form the basis of Shenpen Tayé's commentary that follows.

<sup>1097</sup> This text was likely not authored by Shenpen Tayé. The author's colophon identifies the author as *'jam dbyang blo gros gzhan phan mtha' yas*, a name that Shenpen Tayé uses in none of his other colophons. Additionally, the place of composition listed in the colophon—*rdo g.yu tho'i dgon*—is not mentioned in any other colophon or source in connection to Shenpen Tayé. In fact, other sources identify this work as being written by a much latter Tibetan scholar named *'jam dbyang blo gros gzhan phan mtha' yas*, who published this work in 1983 in New Delhi under the imprint “Sherab Gyaltzen Lama.” See José Cabézon, *A Dose of Emptiness: An Annotated Translation of the sTong thun chen mo of mKhas grub legs dpal bzang* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1992), 439, note 271.

<sup>1098</sup> *Trinchok Collection*, text no. 3.

<b>Text No.<sup>1095</sup> and Text Title</b> [* untitled texts for which the <i>DzCW</i> has given a descriptive title]	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i>
9. * sde snod gsum zhwa'i bshad pa	1. 170	1. 293a–293b	-	-
10. rab byung gi tha ma kha la spyod pa'i nyes pa la dpyad pa log 'tsho'i gnyen po	1. 171–180	2. 70a–77b	3. 561–576	-
11. byang chub spyod pa'i smon lam phan bde'i ljon pa'i 'grel ba rgyal sras lam gyi shing rta'i bsdus don <sup>1099</sup>	1. 182–193	2. 230a–238b	3. 685–688	1. 575–601
12. rten 'brel gyi bsdus don stong nyid la 'jug pa'i sgo	1. 194–197	2. 11a–13b	3. 183–188	
13. zab chos rig 'dzin bder 'dus kyi lam khrid skal ldan 'jug ngogs	1. 198–288	1. 102a–165b	3. 189–316	2. 343–553
14. * rdzogs chen klong chen snying thig gi sgo nas skal ldan ji ltar bkri ba'i tshul	1. 289–305	1. 183b–197a	3. 147–175	
15. klong chen snying thig gi gtum mo'i me'i bogs dbyung gi dmigs pa gab pa mngon phyung	1. 306–308	2. 67a–69b	2. 67–72	2. 145–152
16. rdzogs pa chen po'i spyi chings	1. 309–312	2. 47a–50a	2. 73–79	2. 121–131
17. snga 'gyur rnying lugs theg dgu'i lam khrid kyi sa bcad nyung ngu dam pa'i zhal lung	1. 313–331	2. 22a–36b	2. 233–262	-
18. dpal ldan gsang ba snying po'i khog 'bub sa bcad kyi rim pa nyung du 'khor 'das bar gyi lo tsA	1. 332–344	1. 74a–82b	2. 215–232	-
19. rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po sgyu 'phrul drwa ba'i rtsa rgyud lung gi spyi gsang ba'i snying po'i 'grel ba kun bzang thugs kyi ti ka	1. 345–447	1. 1a–73a	3. 1–145	-
20. sngags rgod log tri pA la'i bsnyen sgrub ji ltar bya ba'i man ngag gi yi ge gnam lcags zhun ma'i mtshon 'khor	1. 448–470	1. 239a–255a	3. 455–487	-
21. bka' bsgo byed tshul khrag 'thung rol pa'i gad rgyangs	1. 471–476	1. 234a–238b	3. 711–720	-

<sup>1099</sup> See the note on this text in Appendix 1 above (text 16 of the *XylKB*). This is a commentary on the first of two works that together are known as *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra* (*mdo sngags smon lam*) by Sherab Özer.

<b>Text No.<sup>1095</sup> and Text Title</b> [* untitled texts for which the DzCW has given a descriptive title]	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i>
22. bsangs kyi don bshad phan bde'i gru cher	1. 477–494	1. 294a–307a	2. 187–213	-
23. bla na med pa'i theg pa dang 'brel ba'i gnam sngags 'chang mgul rgyan	1. 495–499	2. 239a–243a	3. 351–359	2. 159–172
24. maN+Da la'i rnam bshad nyung ngu tshogs gnyis gter bum	1. 500–510	2. 1–10a	3. 435–453	2. 29–59
<b>Volume II</b>				
25. rgyal sras rin po che gzhan phan mtha' yas kyi rnam thar gsol 'debs smon lam dang bcas pa byin brlabs bdud rtsi'i snang ster ( <b>authored by Khyentsé Wangpo</b> ).	2. 1–7	1. 83a–89a	-	-
<u>Essential Instructions in Response to Queries (<i>dris lan stong thun</i>)</u>				
26. kar gling zhi khro'i dka' gnas la dpyad pa'i gsal byed skya rengs dang po	2. 8–49	2. 302a–331a	-	1. 395–510
27. zhi khro'i gnas 'dren las mi dge bcu dang pha rol khyad gsod zhes pa'i dogs gnas dris lan	2. 50–52	-	-	-
28. gar dbang tshe sgrub kyi dogs gnas la dpyad pa'i dris lan	2. 53–58	1. 260a–264b	2. 267–276	-
29. 'og min gnyis pa o rgyan smin grol gling nas dri ba ji ltar phebs pa rnams kyi dris lan skor	2. 59–80	1. 166a–182b	2. 17–50	-
30. dpal yul dbon sprul rin po che'i dris lan zla zhun snang ba	2. 81–86	1. 338a–346a	3. 317–328	1. 524–543
31. zhe chen ma hA paN chen dbon sprul mthu stobs rnam par rgyal bas dris pa'i lan	2. 87–101	1. 327a–337b	3. 689–710	2. 271–309
32. zhe chen gdan tshabs gnyis pa'i gsung lan pad+ma dkar po'i phreng ba	2. 102–111	1. 310a–317a	2. 1–16	-
33. srin rdzong dge slong pad+ma blo gsal gyi dris lan snying por dril ba	2. 112–117	1. 377a–382b	3. 329–340	-

<b>Text No.<sup>1095</sup> and Text Title</b> [* untitled texts for which the DzCW has given a descriptive title]	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i>
34. skong po 'gro mgon gyis dris lan yod lags	2. 118–132	1. 265a–273b	3. 507–528	-
35. dbon sangs rgyas chos 'phel gyi dris lan	2. 133–136	-	3. 501–505	2. 89–97
36. bla ma dam pa dam chos lhun grub kyi dris lan bsnyen pa'i gsal byed	2. 137–147	1. 347a–356a	-	1. 545–573
37. sngon 'gro dang dngos gzhi'i lam gyi sbyor tshul mdor bsdu 'bras mo sde ba'i phrin las rab rgyas la gnang ba	2. 148–153	1. 318a–321b	3. 667–674	

Biography and Narrative (*rnam thar 'bel gtam*)

38. rdo grubs chen rnam thar mdor bsdu ba	2. 154–156	2. 43a–45b	2. 93–98	-
39. rgyal ba'i sras po gzhan phan mtha' yas 'od zer du 'bod pa'i spyod tshul mdor bsdu tshig bcaid ma	2. 157–163	1. 357a–362a	2. 81–91	-
40. rdo grub dbang rin po che'i nye gnas d+ha r+ma ki+rti'i rnam thar mdor bsdu	2. 164–165	2. 45b–46b	2. 98–100	-
41. rdza rgyal dgon gyi 'dus par 'phel gtam du bgyis pa lha yi rda sgra	2. 166–174	1. 363a–369a	2. 109–124	-

Songs of Realization (*rtogs nyams gsung mgur*)

42. * nyams dang rmi lam 'dres ma'i ngor sngon 'das kyi skye ba dran pa'i mgur ma	2. 175	2. 113b–114a	-	1. 348–350
43. Ita sgom spyod 'bras dang 'brel ba'i gtam rig 'dzin snyan brgyud	2. 176–179	2. 95a–97b	-	1. 281–291
44. * gsung mgur legs pa drug gi glu chung	2. 180	2. 112a–b	-	1. 343–345
45. * rdzogs chen lta ba'i nyams mgur ka rtsom ma	2. 181	2. 107b–108b 136a–136b	-	1. 329–332 2. 7–9

<b>Text No.<sup>1095</sup> and Text Title</b> [* untitled texts for which the <i>DzCW</i> has given a descriptive title]	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i>
46. *ka rtsom gros 'debs bslab bya	2. 182–183	2. 126b–127a	-	1. 391–394
47. Ita sgom spyod 'bras ston pa'i mgur ma	2. 184–185	2. 91a–92b	-	1. 266–273
48. *kong po seng+ge'i yang dgon du mgur	2. 186–187	2. 106a–107a	-	1. 322–326
49. *nyams mgur rtogs pa'i bogs 'don	2. 188	2. 112b–113b	-	1. 345–348
50. khrag 'thung rig pa'i rdo rje'i nyams mgur	2. 189–190	2. 102a–103a	-	1. 307–312
51. bla ma dran pa'i rgyangs 'bod ring mo	2. 191–196	2. 78b–82b	-	1. 222–236
52. sku rdo rjes su dran pa'i glu	2. 197	-	-	-
53. * rdzogs chen nyams kyi spro glu	2. 198–199	2. 86a–b	-	1. 249–251
54. * togs pa'i nyams glu	2. 200	2. 84b–85b	-	1. 244–247
55. * yul drug phyag rgyar rtogs pa'i glu chung	2. 201–202	2. 86b–87b	-	1. 251–255 2. 2–6
56. * shugs 'byung nyams kyi skyo glu	2. 203–204	2. 100b–102a	-	1. 303–307
57. * nyams mgur kun khyab chos sku	2. 205	2. 116a	-	1. 356–358
58. * tshogs glu bde stong rol mo	2. 206–208	2. 99a–100b	-	1. 296–303
59. dus gnas dang mthun pa'i zhal gdams mgur ma	2. 209–211	2. 132b–135a	-	2. 326–333
60. *sgrubs pa'i gnas la bstod pa'i mgur	2. 212–213	2. 108b–109b	-	1. 332–335
61. *bde skyid ri khrod ma'i mgur	2. 214–215	2. 109b–111a	-	1. 335–341 2. 695–699
62. * khang dmar dgon du tshes bcu'i dus skabs su mgur	2. 216–217	2. 130b–131b	-	2. 319–322



<b>Text No.<sup>1095</sup> and Text Title</b> [* untitled texts for which the <i>DzCW</i> has given a descriptive title]	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i>
63. * gnas lugs la yid ches kyi glu	2. 218	2. 114a–115a	-	1. 350–353
64. * mi rtag pa ston pa'i glu	2. 219–220	2. 92b–93b	-	1. 273–276 2. 745–748
65. * rnam mkha' rdo rje tshig	2. 221	2. 85b–86a	-	2. 21–23 1. 247–249

Personal Instruction (*zhal gdams man ngag*)

66. skyes bu dam pa la snying gtam du gsol ba mdza' bos brda ston	2. 223–225	2. 180a–182a	2. 397–401	1. 138–143
67. * rdo rje brag zhabs drung sprul ba'i skur gdam pa	2. 226–231	2. 137b–142b	2. 311–322	1. 1–19 2. 728–741
68. sbas pa'i rnal 'byor ba sman sgom chos dbyings dpal ldan gdams pa bdud rtsi'i snying po	2. 232–236	1. 374a–376b	3. 661–666	-
69. rdzogs chen dpon slob rin po cher gdams pa lugs zung kun gsal	2. 237–243	2. 187a–192a	2. 411–421	1. 159–175
70. grub chen sprul ba'i skur gdams pa'i yi ge dam pa dgyes bskyed	2. 244–250	2. 192a–196b	2. 421–430	1. 175–190
71. * rang slob dam pa pad+ma badz+ra la gdams pa	2. 251–253	2. 117a–120a	-	1. 361–368
72. rgya rong dbon sprul rin po cher gdams pa	2. 254–256	2. 89b–91a	-	1. 261–266
73. * rje btsun ma ye shes sgrol ma la gdams pa	2. 257–258	2. 129a–130b	-	2. 314–318
74. brog lung chos mdzad la gdams pa'i tshig 'grel	2. 259–268	2. 14a–21a	2. 51–65	2. 714–718 <sup>1100</sup>
75. * o rgyan smin grol gling gi grwa rigs 'gyur med pad+ma la gdams pa	2. 269–270	2. 148b–150a	2. 334–337	1. 37–41

<sup>1100</sup> Root verses only in the *BhCW*.

<b>Text No.<sup>1095</sup> and Text Title</b> [* untitled texts for which the <i>DzCW</i> has given a descriptive title]	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i>
76. * mchims phu'i sgom brtson pa tshul khirms rnam dag la gdams pa	2. 271–277	2. 157b–159a	2. 352–355	1. 66–72
77. * mchims phu'i sku gnyer pa gzhan phan blo gros la gdams pa	2. 278–279	2. 146a–148b	2. 329–334	1. 29–37
78. * dwags po dge slong thub bstan yongs 'dzin la gdams pa	2. 280–282	2. 142b–146a	2. 322–329	1. 19–29 2. 718–728
79. * bsam yas sgrub brtson gzhan phan bshes gnyen la gdams pa	2. 283–287	2. 153a–156a	2. 343–349	1. 51–61
80. * rje dbon tshul khirms chos 'phel la gdams pa	2. 288–289	1. 283b–284b	-	-
81. * thub bstan rdo rje brag tu sum ldan rdo rje 'dzin pa o rgyan 'gro 'dul la gdams pa	2. 290–291	2. 202b–203b	2. 442–444	1. 207–211
82. * mchims phu nas zhal slob pad+ma 'phel rgyas la gdams pa	2. 292–294	2. 150a–151b	2. 337–340	1. 41–46
83. * yer ba ri'i mgul nas dge slong kun dga' tshul khirms la gdams pa	2. 295–296	2. 167a–168b	2. 371–374	1. 98–103 2. 688–693
84. * ru dam yang dben nas dam chos lhun grub la gdams pa	2. 297–300	2. 164b–167a	2. 366–371	1. 90–98
85. * bsam yas rta mgrin gling nas slob bu gzhan phan nyi mar gdams pa	2. 301–302	2. 168b–170a	2. 374–377	1. 103–107 2. 741–745
86. * kong nga phod pho brang du o rgyan theg mchog la gdams pa	2. 303–304	2. 159a–160a	2. 355–357	1. 72–75
87. * lhun grub rtse ba kun bzang ye shes rgyal mtshan la gdams pa	2. 305–306	2. 170a–171a	2. 377–379	1. 107–111 2. 748–752
88. * dge rgyal smon lam la gdams pa	2. 307	2. 200a–b	2. 437–438	1. 200–202 2. 712–713
89. * rdza rgyal lcogs sgar du sgrub brtson mang dge pad+ma la gdams pa	2. 308–309	2. 198b–199b	2. 434–436	1. 195–199 752–755
90. * khrom za bla ma chos skyong la gdams pa	2. 310–311	2. 163a–164b	2. 363–366	1. 85–90
91. * g.yag ze ba 'jam dpal lung rtogs la gdams pa	2. 312	2. 131b–132a	-	2. 322–324

<b>Text No.<sup>1095</sup> and Text Title</b> [* untitled texts for which the <i>DzCW</i> has given a descriptive title]	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i>
92. * slob bu 'jam dpal yongs 'dus la gdams pa	2. 313	1. 285b	-	-
93. * 'bar chung nam mkha' lhun grub la gdams pa	2. 314	2. 132a–132b	-	2. 324–326
94. * slob bu 'jam dpal gsang 'dus la gnang ba'i gsol 'debs zhal gdams	2. 315–316	1. 276a–276b	3. 529–530	-
95. * sgrub brtson ma ye shes dbang mo la gdams pa	2. 317–318	2. 151b–153a	2. 340–343	1. 46–51
96. * dge slong blo bzang bsam gtan la gdams pa	2. 319–321	2. 156a–157b	2. 349–352	1. 61–66
97. * sgrub brtson pad+ma rnam rgyal la gdams pa	2. 322–323	2. 160a–161b	2. 357–360	1. 75–79
98. * rgya skor ngag dbang la gdams pa	2. 324	2. 162a–b	2. 361–362	1. 82–83
99. * rnal 'byor pa klong gsal rdo rje la gdams pa	2. 325	2. 171a–171b	2. 379–380	1. 111–113 2. 705–706
100. * 'jigs med rdo rje la gdams pa	2. 326–327	2. 175b–177b	2. 388–392	1. 125–131
101. zhal slob kun bzang rang gsal la gdams pa	2. 328–333	2. 172a–175b	2. 381–388	1. 113–125
102. * tshul khriims mthar phyin la bshis len du spring ba	2. 334	2. 161b–162a	2. 360–361	1. 80–81
103. * bzo rig 'dzin pa blo bzang dar rgyas la gdams pa	2. 335	1. 284b–285a	-	2. 703–705
104. * mtsho sngon po'i dad ldan a bu tshe ring la gdams pa	2. 336–337	1. 282a–283b	-	-
105. * g.yu ba sangs rgyas dpal ldan la gdams pa	2. 338	2. 162a	2. 361	1. 81–82
106. * rig 'dzin rgya mtsho la gdams pa	2. 339	2. 162b–163a 177b–178a	2. 362–363 2. 392–393	1. 83–84 131–132
107. * lta sgom spyod pa'i tshul mdor bsdu pa'i zhal gdams	2. 340–341	2. 178a–179b	2. 393–395	1. 132–135
108. * bskyed rdzogs zung 'jug gi gnad ston pa'i gdams pa	2. 342	2. 179a–180a	2. 395–397	1. 135–138

<b>Text No.<sup>1095</sup> and Text Title</b> [* untitled texts for which the <i>DzCW</i> has given a descriptive title]	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i>
109. * sde ba blo bzang dpal 'byor la zhal gdams	2. 343–344	1. 281a–282a	-	-
110. slob bu 'od gsal rig grol la spring ba'i yi ge dpyed kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs	2. 345–347	2. 196b–198a	2. 430–433	1. 191–195
111. * pad+ma don ldan bzang po la gdams pa	2. 348	2. 199b–200a	2. 436–437	1. 199–200 2. 710–712
112. * slob bu byang chub rdo rje la gdams pa	2. 349	2. 200b–201a	2. 438–439	1. 202–203 2. 713–714
113. * snyan grags rgya mtsho sogs la gdams pa	2. 350	2. 201a–202a	2. 439–441	1. 203–206 2. 701–703
114. * nag phran sangs rgyas la gdams pa	2. 351	2. 202a–b	2. 441–442	1. 206–207
115. * sgrub brtson bsod nams rin chen la gdams pa	2. 352	2. 83b–84b	-	1. 241–244
116. *btsun pa pad+ma dar rgyas la gdams pa	2. 353–355	2. 87b–89b	-	1. 255–261
117. *slob bu rig 'dzin sogs la gdams pa	2. 356–357	2. 93b–95a	-	1. 277–281
118. *tshul khriims mthar phyin la nyams len skyongs tshul gyi gdams pa	2. 358–360	2. 103a–104b	-	1. 312–318
119. *rnal 'byor ba dbang drag lags la gegs sel lam khyer gyi gsal 'debs	2. 361–362	2. 82b–83b	-	1. 236–241 2. 706–710
120. *slob bu sangs rgyas yon tan la gdams pa	2. 363	2. 115a–116a	-	1. 353–356
121. *slob bu rab gsal zla ba'i 'od zer la gdams pa	2. 364–365	2. 105a–106a	-	1. 318–322
122. *sgrub brtson mthu stobs rdo rje la gdams pa	2. 366–367	2. 107a–b	-	1. 326–329
123. *btsun ma ye shes sgron ma la gdams pa	2. 368	2. 116b	-	1. 359–360
124. *dad ldan sangs rgyas tshe ring la gdams pa	2. 369–371	2. 120a–121b	-	1. 368–375 2. 714–718

<b>Text No.<sup>1095</sup> and Text Title</b> [* untitled texts for which the <i>DzCW</i> has given a descriptive title]	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i>
125. *nyon mong lnga ye shes lngar lam du byed tshul la gdams pa	2. 372–373	2. 123b–124b	-	1. 381–384
126. *rdo rje 'dzin pa bla ma byang chub brtson 'grus la gdams pa dbyangs gsal ma	2. 374	2. 125a–126a	-	1. 387–390
127. *slob bu pad+ma bzod pa la gdams pa	2. 375	2. 124b–125a	-	1. 384–386
128. * sa skyong bla ma la gtam du bya ba pad+ma'i phreng ba	2. 376–380	2. 182b–186a	2. 402–409	1. 146–157
129. * gling tshang mi rje'i mdun na 'don karma chos 'dzin la gdams pa	2. 381–382	2. 182a–b	2. 401–402	1. 143–146
130. * sbyin bdag lcam rdo rje g.yu sgron la gdams pa	2. 383	2. 128a–129a	-	2. 311–314
131. * dad brtson nor ldan 'jigs med bsam gtan la gdams pa	2. 384–385	2. 121b–123b	-	1. 376–380
<u>Devotional and Propitiatory Works (<i>gsol 'debs zhabs brtan</i>)</u>				
132. snga 'gyur rnying lugs kyi bla ma rgyud pa'i gsol 'debs gzhan phan mtha' yas	2. 387–391	2. 376a–380a	-	2. 203–217
133. rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po sgyu 'phrul drwa ba ji ltar brgyud pa'i srol 'dzin gyi dge ba'i bshes gnyen chen po rnams la gsol ba 'debs pa'i tshigs su bcad pa skal ldan thar par 'gro ba'i sa mkhan	2. 392–396	2. 381a–384b	3. 531–538	2. 173–185
134. 'dus pa mdo'i dbang gi brgyud 'debs <sup>1101</sup>	2. 397	-	-	-
135. sangs rgyas mnyam sbyor gyi bla brgyud gsol 'debs	2. 398–399	-	-	-
136. dpal yang dag he ru ka'i bla brgyud gsol 'debs <sup>1102</sup>	2. 400	-	-	2. 117–119

<sup>1101</sup> *Trinchok Collection*, text no. 73.

<sup>1102</sup> *Trinchok Collection*, text no. 29.

<b>Text No.<sup>1095</sup> and Text Title</b> [* untitled texts for which the <i>DzCW</i> has given a descriptive title]	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i>
137. 'jam dpal gshin rje gshed kha thun gyi dbang brgyud bla ma'i gsol 'debs <sup>1103</sup>	2. 401–402	-	-	-
138. 'jam dpal gshin rje gshed dmar po'i dbang gi brgyud 'debs	2. 403–404	-	-	-
139. rong phur bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs <sup>1104</sup>	2. 405	-	-	-
134. tshe dpag med lung lugs kyi brgyud 'debs	2. 406–407	-	-	-
136. man ngag rdzong 'phrang srog gsum gyi bla brgyud gsol 'debs <sup>1105</sup>	2. 408	-	-	-
137. smon 'jug sems bskyed kyi rgyud 'debs	2. 409–411	2. 53a–55a	1. 669–673	2. 237–244
138. *bla ma rnams la gsol 'debs kha ton byas chog	2. 412–414	2. 253b–255a		2. 223–232
139. *sde gsum brgyud pa'i bla ma la gsol 'debs	2. 415–418	2. 56a–57b	3. 549–552	2. 245–251
140. *drug ldan brgyud pa'i bla mar gsol ba 'debs pa	2. 419–420	2. 37a–37b	2. 453–455	
141. gsar rnying ris med kyi skyes chen dam pa rnams la gsol ba 'debs pa'i tshigs su bcad pa gzhan la phan pa'i sgra dbyangs	2. 421–422	-	-	2. 71–74 2. 99–108
142. zab lam na ro chos drug gi bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs kyi kha skong rje btsun bzang po rdo rje'i gsol 'debs sho lo ka mjug	2. 423	1. 90a–90b	2. 105–106	-
143. zab las bde gshegs kun 'dus kyi bla brgyud gsol 'debs la skor	2. 424	1. 91a	2. 107	-
144. *o rgyan chen po la gsol ba 'debs pa	2. 425–426	2. 255a–256a	-	2. 232–235
145. 'phags pa spyen ras gzigs dbang phyug la gdung shugs drag po'i gsol ba 'debs pa thugs rje'i 'dren pa'i lcags kyu	2. 427–428	1. 278a–280b	3. 555–560	-

<sup>1103</sup> *Trinchok Collection*, text no. 20.

<sup>1104</sup> *Trinchok Collection*, text no. 33.

<sup>1105</sup> *Trinchok Collection*, text no. 80.

<b>Text No.<sup>1095</sup> and Text Title</b> [* untitled texts for which the <i>DzCW</i> has given a descriptive title]	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i>
146. rig 'dzin 'jigs med gling pa la bstod pa dam pa'i rang bzhin mthong ba'i me long	2. 429–430	2. 204a–205a	-	2. 335–341
147. bla ma gsol ba 'debs pa'i smon tshig rkang ba so gnyis pa	2. 431–432	2. 252a–253b	-	2. 219–223
148. *grub rje bla ma rjes dran gdung dbyangs gsol 'debs	2. 433–434	2. 97b–99a	-	1. 291–296
149. sku zhabs rdo rje phag mo'i 'khrungs rabs gsol 'debs byin rlabs char rgyun	2. 435–438	2. 39a–42b	-	2. 191–202
150. rgyal ba'i sras po gzhan phan mtha' yas 'od zer gyi skye 'phreng gsol 'debs thar pa'i 'khri shing	2. 439–440	2. 249a–250b	-	2. 153–157
151. skye phreng gsol 'debs brda' grol ma	2. 441–442	-	-	-
152. *gsol 'debs tshigs bcad	2. 443	2. 251a–b	-	-
153. *gsol 'debs tshigs bcad zhal gsungs ma	2. 444	2. 251b	-	-
154. gsol 'debs zhal gsungs ma	2. 445	-	-	-
155. bla ma'i rgyangs 'bod lam gnad kun tshang	2. 446–447	1. 274a–275b	-	2. 61–65
156. khri chen rig 'dzin sangs rgyas kun dga'i zhabs brtan gsol 'debs lha yi rda sgra	2. 448	1. 258a–259b	3. 497–500	
157. *gling sprul rin po che mkhan khrir phebs skabs zhabs brtan du phul ba	2. 449	2. 51a–51b	2. 263–264	2. 254–256
158. zhabs brtan smon tshig	2. 450	2. 51b.–52a	2. 264–265	2. 256–257
159. * zhal brtan gsol 'debs zhal gsum ma	2. 451	2. 51a	2. 263	2. 253–254
160. rje btsun rdo rje phag mo'i zhabs brtan gsol 'debs	2. 452–453	1. 256a–257a	2. 101–104	-
161. rdo rje 'dzin pa byang chub brtson 'grus kyi zhabs brtan smon tshig	2. 454	-	-	-
162. rgyal sras bzang po'i zhabs brtan	2. 455	-	-	-

<b>Text No.<sup>1095</sup> and Text Title</b> [* untitled texts for which the <i>DzCW</i> has given a descriptive title]	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i>
163. * sa skyong sde dge'i chos rgyal zhabs brtan ngag 'don	2. 455–456	1. 384a–385a	-	2. 112–115
164. zhabs brtan mi 'gyur mchog gi bde chen	2. 457		-	
165. gling rje drung rin po che'i yang srid myur 'byon gyi gsol 'debs drang srong bden tshig	2. 458	1. 383a–383b	-	2. 109–111
166. * g.yag ze mchog sprul myur 'byon gsol 'debs	2. 459	1. 383b–384a	-	2. 111–112
167. *yang srid myur 'byon gsol 'debs	2. 460	1. 91b	2. 108	-
168. yang srid myur 'byon gsol 'debs	2. 460	-	-	-

Rituals and Offering Liturgies (*sgrub chog bsang gsol*)

169. bla ma'i rnal 'byor dngos grub mchog gi nye rgyu	2. 461–464	2. 63a–66a	2. 445–451	2. 133–143
170. bla ma'i rnal 'byor 'og min gsang lam	2. 465–466	1. 386a–389b	2. 127–133	2. 259–270
171. bla ma 'jam pa'i[dpal] dbyangs kyi rnam par bsgrub pa'i thabs shes rab kyi rnal 'byor la 'jug pa	2. 467–468	1. 324a–325b	-	1. 213–219
172. smra ba'i dbang phyug sgrub pa'i gsang lam	2. 469	1. 326a–326b	3. 553–554	2. 67–70
173. 'jam pa'i dbyangs la bstod pa tshigs su bcad pa bcu gnyis pa	2. 470–471	1. 322a–323b	3. 361–364	-
174. ma hA yo ga'i dbang thams cad kyi thog mthar 'gro ba'i rgyug byang lhan thabs <sup>1106</sup>	2. 472–504	-	-	-
175. na rag dong sprugs kyi dbang gi cho ga mtshams sbyor gyis brgyan pa bde chen lam bzang <sup>1107</sup>	2. 505–557	-	-	-

<sup>1106</sup> *Trinchok Collection*, text no. 58.

<sup>1107</sup> *Trinchok Collection*, text no. 57.



<b>Text No.<sup>1095</sup> and Text Title</b> [* untitled texts for which the <i>DzCW</i> has given a descriptive title]	<i>DzCW</i>	<i>XylKB</i>	<i>PCW</i>	<i>BhCW</i>
176. zhi khro na rag dong spug kyi rgyun cher ngag 'don du bkod pa don bsdus snying po	2. 558–561	1. 370a–373a	2. 301–307	-
177. kar gling zhi khro'i gnas 'dren gyi mtshams sbyor snying por dril ba	2. 562–566	2. 222a–226a	3. 539–547	1. 511–524
178. g.yu thog snying thig las rtsa ba gsum gyi mngon rtogs rnam grol myur lam	2. 567–571	1. 97a–101a	2. 277–285	-
179. * zhal 'don nyes ltung bshags sdom	2. 572–576	1. 228a–231a	3. 489–495	-
180. *bde smon bsdus pa	2. 577	2. 251a	-	-
181. lus sbyin bsdus pa	2. 578	1. 277a–277b	2. 125–126	-
182. yul lha chen po rdo rje g.yung drung rtsal gyi bsangs mchod 'dod dgu'i re bskongs	2. 579–581	1. 223a–225a	3. 341–350	-
183. sman btsun g.yu sgron mched lnga la gsol mchod	2. 582	-	-	-
184. sman btsun mched lnga'i bskang bshags rgyun khyer 'dod pa'i re skongs	2. 583–584	-	-	-
185. sku lha zil khrom rdo rje g.yung drung gi gsol mchod 'dod don myur 'grub	2. 585–587	1. 225a–227b	-	-
186. chos skyong gnam lha'i mchod 'phrin bsam don myur 'grub	2. 588–589	-	-	-
187. rdo rje chos skyongs ba'i srung ma rnam la mngon par bstod pa tshang pa'i glu dbyangs	2. 590–591	2. 244a–248b	-	-

## Appendix 3: Catalog of Texts in Shenpen Tayé's nine-volume *Trinchok Kama Collection*<sup>1108</sup>

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This catalog follows the list of texts as presented in the *dkar chag* to the collection (text 86). I have numbered the texts based on their order in the *dkar chag*. The folio range given (ff.) matches that given in the original blocks in the left margin of each verso side. See chapter five, section 2 for a detailed discussion of the bibliographical details of the *Trinchok Collection*.

### Volume 1 (ka)

#### Summary of Contents:

- **Vinaya**
  - Prātimokṣa vows (*so thar sdom*): **Texts 1, 7.**
  - Temporary precepts (*bsnyen gnas*): **Texts 2, 3.**
  - The three foundations (*gzhi gsum*): **Text 5.**
  - Mending-purifying ritual (*gso sbyong*): **Text 6.**
- **Mahāyāna mind generation** (*theg chen sems bskyed*): **Texts 8–10.**
- **Kriyā-tantra**
  - Atisha's system of the retinue of Bhaiṣajyaguru (*sangs rgyas sman bla mched bdun jo bo rje'i lugs*): **Text 11.**

#### 1. so thar sdom brgyud kyi gsol 'debs

Vol. 1, text 1; 3 folios

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<sup>1108</sup> Gyelsé Shenpen Tayé (rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha' yas), ed. bka' ma theg pa rim dgu'i phrin chog mtha' dag phyogs gcig tu bsdu pa. 9 volumes. Facsimile of original xylograph, rdzogs chen dgon gyi par khang, 1841–1845. (BDRC W4PD1990)

- **Xylograph Marginalia:**<sup>1109</sup> Vol.: *ka*; Text no.<sup>1110</sup>: *ka*(1); ff. 1–3.
- **Available Printings of Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 1. 3–7.<sup>1111</sup>
- **Author(s):** The 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (*ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho*; 1617–1682); Supplemental material by Lochen Dharmasrī and Shenpen Tayé.
- **Type of Text:** Lineage supplication (*brgyud 'debs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section**<sup>1112</sup>: 1. The “gradual vehicle of Vinaya and Prātimokṣa”<sup>1113</sup>
- **Topic/Subject:** Prātimokṣa vows (*so thar sdom*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*<sup>1114</sup>: vol. 1. 175–180; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009)<sup>1115</sup>: vol. 1. 201–206.

## 2. khyim pa rjes su 'dzin pa so sor thar pa'i cho ga thar lam rab gsal

Vol. 1, text 2; 11 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ka*; Text no.: *kha*(2); ff. 4–15.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 1. 9–32; *Pelpung Collected Works (PCW)*: 1. 151–174.<sup>1116</sup>
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje<sup>1117</sup>
- **Type of Text:** Vow liturgy (*'bogs chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 1. The “gradual vehicle of Vinaya and Prātimokṣa”
- **Topic/Subject:** Temporary precepts (*bsnyen gnas*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 1. 229–252; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 1. 213–236.

<sup>1109</sup> This refers to the information provided in the left margins of the original xylographs. See chapter 5, sec. 2 for an in-depth discussion and images of these xylograph marginalia.

<sup>1110</sup> These are given in the left margin of the recto folios and mark the relative order of each text within the entire collection.

<sup>1111</sup> Page numbers for BDRC W4PD1990 refer to: volume. PDF page range.

<sup>1112</sup> Based on how the texts are classified in the *Trinchok Catalog* 49b–56b.

<sup>1113</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*: 49b: bstan pa'i gzhi ma 'dul ba so thar gyi mam ni rim bzhin.

<sup>1114</sup> Dūdjom Jikdrel Yeshé Dorjé, *rnying ma bka' ma rgyas pa (Extensive Nyingma Kama Collection)*, 58 vols. Kalimpong, India: Dupjung Lama, 1982–1987.

<sup>1115</sup> This is the 133-volume edition of the *shin tu rgyas pa bka' ma* edited by Tsering Gyatso (Chengdu: si khron dpe skrun tshogs pa/ si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2009) BDRC W1PD100944.

<sup>1116</sup> The *Pelpung Collected Works* reproduces a number of the original xylograph prints from the collection in a much more high-quality format than in the two prints of *Trinchok Collection* available on BDRC (W4PD1990 and W3CN3427).

<sup>1117</sup> gter dag gling pa 'gyur med rdo rje; 1646–1714.

### 3. bsnyen gnas kyi cho ga mdo don gsal ba

Vol. 1, text 3; 3 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ka*; Text no.: *ga(3)*; ff. 16–18.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 1. 33–37; PCW: 1. 175–179.
- **Author(s):** Shenpen Tayé
- **Type of Text:** Clarifying the ritual (*cho ga'i don gsal*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 1. The “gradual vehicle of Vinaya and Prātimokṣa”
- **Topic/Subject:** Temporary precepts (*bsnyen gnas*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** N/A

### 4. rab byung gi gzhi'i cho ga rin chen them skas<sup>1118</sup>

Vol. 1, text 4; 42 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ka*; Text no.: *nga(4)*; ff. 19–60.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: No; PCW 1. 467–550.
- **Note:** This text is **elided from both versions of the *Trinchok Collection*** held by BDRC (W3CN3427 and W4PD1990).<sup>1119</sup>
- **Author(s):** Lochen Dharmasrī; Supplemental material by Shenpen Tayé.<sup>1120</sup>
- **Type of Text:** Ritual liturgy (*cho ga*).
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 1. The “gradual vehicle of Vinaya and Prātimokṣa”
- **Topic/Subject:** Vinaya (*'dul ba*); “Ground of Renunciation” (*rab byung gi gzhi*).
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 1. 29–96; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009) vol. 1. 321–406.

<sup>1118</sup> This text has been elided from both versions of the *Trinchok Collection* listed on BDRC [W4PD1990 and W3CN3427]. The exact version of the text from the original blocks can be found in Shenpen Tayé’s *Palpung Collected Works* [BDRC W3CN12691], vol. 1, pdf pp. 467–550.

<sup>1119</sup> The reasons for this elision are not clear. The mention of both texts in the list of contents in the *Catalog* and the sequential folio numbering in the left margin of the reverse side of each folio present in the original wood blocks, makes it clear that these texts were part of the *Collection*.

<sup>1120</sup> This material includes a set of calendrical charts for comparing and converting dates between different calendar systems scheduling the ritual.

5. bslab pa yongs su sbyong ba gzhi gsum gyi cho ga thar gling du bgrod  
pa'i gru chen

Vol. 1, text 5; 27 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ka*; Text no.: *ca(5)*; ff. 61–87a.
- **Original Xylograph: BDRC W4PD1990: No; PCW:** 1. 551–603.
- **Note:** This text is **elided from both versions of the *Trinchok Collection*** held by BDRC (W3CN3427 and W4PD1990).
- **Author(s):** Lochen Dharmaśrī; Supplemental material by Shenpen Tayé.
- **Type of Text:** Ritual liturgy (*cho ga*).
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 1. The “gradual vehicle of Vinaya and Prātimokṣa”
- **Topic/Subject:** Vinaya (*'dul ba*); The three foundations (*gzhi gsum*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 1. 29–96; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 1. 413–474.

6. 'di dag mar ngo'i gso sbyong bcu bzhi pa'i dus so

Vol. 1, text 6; .5 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ka*; Text no.: *cha(6)*; f. 87b [presumed].
- **Original Xylograph: BDRC W4PD1990: No; PCW:** 1. 604
- **Author(s):** Shenpen Tayé.
- **Type of Text:** Monastic calendar (*dus tshigs*).
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 1. The “gradual vehicle of Vinaya and Prātimokṣa”
- **Topic/Subject:** Mending-purifying ritual (*gso sbyong*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** N/A

7. dge slong pha'i so sor thar pa'i mdo

Vol. 1, text 7; 33 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ka*; Text no.: *ja(7)*; ff. 89–120.
- **Original Xylograph: BDRC W4PD1990:** 1. 39–102; *PCW:* 1. 605–668
- **Author(s):** Canonical (*bka' 'gyur*)
- **Type of Text:** Sūtra (*mdo*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 1. The “gradual vehicle of Vinaya and Prātimokṣa”

- **Topic/Subject:** Ordination vows for [male] monastics.
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 1. 029–96; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 1. 249–320.

### 8. smon 'jug sems bskyed kyi rgyud pa'i gsol 'debs

Vol. 1, text 8; 3 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ka*; Text no.: *nya*(8); ff. 121–123.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 1. 103–107; PCW: 1. 669–673.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje; Supplemental material by Shenpen Tayé.
- **Type of Text:** Lineage supplication (*brgyud 'debs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 3. Mahāyāna: mind generation (*theg chen sems bskyed*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Bodhisattva conduct (*byang chub sems dpa'*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** modified version contained in “byang chub sems bskyed kyi sdom pa'i *brgyud 'debs*”: *Dudjom*: vol. 1. 477–480; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 1. 683–685.

### 9. theg pa chen po dbu ma lugs kyi sems bskyed kyi cho ga rgyal sras lam bzang

Vol. 1, text 9; 19 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ka*; Text no.: *ta*(9); ff. 124–142.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 1. 109–147; PCW: 1. 675–713.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Ritual liturgy (*cho ga*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 3. Mahāyāna: mind generation (*theg chen sems bskyed*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Mind generation (*sems bskyed*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 1. 481–522; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 1. 687–728.

### 10. byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa

Vol. 1, text 10; 66 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ka*; Text no.: *tha*(10); ff. 155–210.

- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 1. 149–284; *PCW*: 1. 181–314.
- **Author(s):** Canonical (*bstan 'gyur*); Śāntideva (*zhi ba lha*)
- **Type of Text:** Canonical treatise (*bstan bcos*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 3. Mahāyāna: mind generation (*theg chen sems bskyed*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Bodhisattva conduct (*byang chub sems dpa'*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: No; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 1. 553–682.

### 11. bder gshegs bdun gyi mchod pa'i chog bsgrigs yid bzhin dbang rgyal

Vol. 1, text 11; 76 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ka*; Text no.: *da*(11); ff. 211–286.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 1. 285–435; *PCW*: 1. 315–461.
- **Author(s):** The 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso
- **Type of Text:** Ritual arrangement (*chog bsgrigs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 4. Kriyā-tantra (*bya ba 'i rgyud*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Atisha's system of the retinue of Bhaiṣajyaguru (*sangs rgyas sman bla mched bdun jo bo rje'i lugs*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 1. 523–674; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 2. 145–304.

### Vol 1 Addenda:

There are two miscellaneous 1-folio works placed at the end of volume 1, whose topics are given as:<sup>1121</sup>

### *bde gshegs brgyad sogs la re re bzhin mchod pa 'bul ba'i 'gre byang*<sup>1122</sup>

Vol. 1; f. 287 (1 folio)

<sup>1121</sup> I am not officially listing these two short works as numbered “texts” in this catalog because they have neither formal titles—other than a topical sentence listed at the top of the recto folio—nor colophons of any sort; they share the same “text number” (*da*) in the left margin verso folio as text 11; and they are not mentioned in the listing of texts in the *Catalog*.

<sup>1122</sup> Although the topic here seems to relate directly to the previous text (no. 11), it occurs after text 11 has concluded with the author's colophon and a dedicatory verse by Shenpen Tayé and starts on a new recto folio. Furthermore, other editions of text no. 11 published outside of this collection do not include this additional topical material [for example, in: *ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho. bde gshegs bdun gyi mchod*

- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 1. 437–438; PCW: 1. 463–464.

*gzhung gi mtshams rnams su so so'i ming bsgyur ba'i dper mtshon*

Vol. 1, f. 288 (1 folio)

- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 1. 439–440; PCW: 1. 465–466.

## Volume 2 (kha)

### Summary of Contents:

- **Kriyā-tantra**
  - Raśmivimāla ('od zer dri med): **Texts 12–14.**
    - Vimaloṣṇīṣa; Ngor 5-deities tradition (*gtsug tor dri med lha 5 ngor lugs*): **Text 15.**
- **Mahāyoga**
  - *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* (*sku'i rgyud dpal sangs rgyas thams cad mnyam sbyor*): **Texts 16–19.**
  - *Tantra of the Display of Compassion* (*snying rje rol pa'i rgyud*):
    - Mañjuśrī as Black Yamāntaka (*'jam dpal kha thun nag po*): **Texts 20–24.**
    - Mañjuśrī as Red Yamāri (*'jam dpal gshed dmar po*): **Texts 25–28.**

12. 'phags pa 'od zer dri ma med pa rnam par dag pa'i 'od ces bya ba'i 'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga 'chi med 'byung ba

Vol. 2, text 1; 39 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *kha*; Text no.: *na*(12)<sup>1123</sup>; ff. 1–39; Descriptor:
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 1. 3–80; W3CN12210<sup>1124</sup>: 14. 1–78.
- **Author(s):** Butön Rinchen Drup (*bu ston rin chen grub*; 1290–1364).
- **Type of Text:** Mandala ritual (*dkyil chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 4. Kriyā-tantra (*bya ba'i rgyud*)

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*pa'i chog bsgrigs yid bzhin dbang rgyal*/. Lhasa: zhol par khang dga' ldan phun tshogs gling /, [n.d.]. BDRC W00KG04005.].

<sup>1123</sup> Texts 12, 13, and 14 are all labelled in the left margin of the verso folio as text number 12 (*na*).

<sup>1124</sup> *dpal spungs dpe rnying gsar bsgrigs las dkyil chog phyogs bsgrigs/* (gnyis pa/). 19 vols. Upper Bhattu, Distt. Kangra, HP, India: dpal spungs gsung rab nyams gso khang /, 2005. BDRC W3CN12210.



- **Topic/Subject:** Raśmivimala (*'od zer dri med*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 2. 5–70; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 3. 39–104.

13. 'od zer dri med kyi dkyil chog gi lhan thabs dbang chog dang bcas pa  
mun sel nyin byed snang ba

Vol. 2, text 2; 46 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *kha*; Text no.: *na*(12)<sup>1125</sup>; **ff. 40–85**.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 2. 81–172; W3CN12210: 14. 79–169.<sup>1126</sup>
- **Author(s):** Shalu Rinchen Sönam Chokdrup (*zha lu ba rin chen bsod nams mchog grub*; 1603–1659; P3256).
- **Type of Text:** Ancillary manual (*lhan thabs*) for performing the mandala ritual (*dkyil chog*) and initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 4. Kriyā-tantra (*bya ba'i rgyud*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Raśmivimala (*'od zer dri med*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 2. 71–142; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 3. 105–176.

14. 'od zer dri med kyi dkyil chog gi kha skong dbang chog bdud rtsi'i chu  
rgyun

Vol. 2, text 3; 12 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *kha*; Text no.: *na*(12)<sup>1127</sup>; **ff. 86–97**.<sup>1128</sup>
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 2. 173–196; W3CN12210: 14. 171–193.
- **Author(s):** Shalu Rinchen Sönam Chokdrup
- **Type of Text:** Mandala ritual (*dkyil chog*); Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 4. Kriyā-tantra (*bya ba'i rgyud*)

<sup>1125</sup> Texts 12, 13, and 14 are all labelled in the left margin of the verso folio as text number 12 (*na*).

<sup>1126</sup> The original folio numbers for texts 12 and 13 seem to create a parallel branch of folio numbers to texts 14 (ff. 40–70) and 15 (ff. 72–109). The folio numbers of texts 14 and 15 fit perfectly between texts 11 (ff. 1–39) and 16 (ff. 110–125), making it likely that texts 12 and 13 were either added after the blocks for vol. 2 were already carved or that they were carved by another carver and there was a miscommunication between the editors and carvers.

<sup>1127</sup> Texts 12, 13, and 14 are all labelled in the left margin of the verso folio as text number 12 (*na*).

<sup>1128</sup> See note from the previous text on the folio numbers.

- **Topic/Subject:** Raśmivimala (*'od zer dri med*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 2. 143–164; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 3. 177–196.

15. gtsug tor dri ma med lha lnga'i cho ga khrigs chags rin chen bsam 'phel

Vol. 2, text 4; 31 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *kha*; Text no.: *pa*(13); ff. 40–70.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 2. 197–260; W3CN12210: 14. 195–260.
- **Author(s):** Shalu Rinchen Sönam Chokdrup
- **Type of Text:** Ritual liturgy (*cho ga*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 4. Kriyā-tantra (*bya ba'i rgyud*)
- **Topic/Subject:** vimaloṣṇīṣa; the Ngor 5-deities tradition (*gtsug tor dri med lha 5 ngor lugs*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 2. 281–340; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 3. 357–416.

16. sangs rgyas mnyam sbyor gyi bla brgyud gsol 'debs [no title page]

Vol. 2, text 5; 1 folio

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *kha*; Text no.: *pha*(14); f. 72; Descriptor: *mnyam - sbyor*.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: No; W3CN12210: 15. 1–2.
- **Author(s):** Shenpen Tayé
- **Type of Text:** Lineage supplication (*brgyud 'debs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra (sku'i rgyud dpal sangs rgyas thams cad mnyam sbyor)*
- **Topic/Subject:** *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 3. 61–62; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 5. 55–56.

17. dpal sangs rgyas thams cad mnyam par sbyor ba rigs bsdus pa'i sgrub  
thabs bde chen 'dod 'jo

Vol. 2, text 5; 37 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *kha*; Text no.: *ba*(15); ff. 73–109; Descriptor: *mnyam - sbyor*.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 2. 261–334; W3CN12210: 15. 3–75.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Invocation ritual (*sgrub thabs*; Skt. *sādhana*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra (sku'i rgyud dpal sangs rgyas thams cad mnyam sbyor)*
- **Topic/Subject:** *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 3. 63–140; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 5. 57–130.

18. sangs rgyas thams cad mnyam par sbyor ba'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga kun  
tu bzang po'i zhal lung

Vol. 2, text 6; 16 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *kha*; Text no.: *ma*(16); ff. 110–125; Descriptor: *mnyam - dkyil*.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 2. 335–366; W3CN12210: 15. 77–107.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Mandala ritual (*dkyil chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra (sku'i rgyud dpal sangs rgyas thams cad mnyam sbyor)*
- **Topic/Subject:** *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 3. 141–170; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 5. 131–160.

19. dpal sangs rgyas thams cad mnyam par sbyor ba'i dbang gi cho ga byin  
rlabs char 'bebs

Vol. 2, text 7; 34 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *kha*; Text no.: *tsha*(17); ff. 126–159; Descriptor: *mnyam - sbyor*.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 2. 367–433. W3CN12210: 15. 109–175.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra (sku'i rgyud dpal sangs rgyas thams cad mnyam sbyor)*
- **Topic/Subject:** *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 3. 171–230; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 5. 181–240.

20. 'jam dpal gshin rje gshed kha thun gyi dbang brgyud bla ma'i gsol 'debs

[no title page]

Vol. 2, text 8; 1 folio

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *kha*; Text no.: None; ff. 160.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 2. 435–436.
- **Author(s):** Shenpen Tayé
- **Type of Text:** Lineage supplication (*brgyud 'debs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of Compassionate Display (snying rje rol pa'i rgyud)*
- **Topic/Subject:** Mañjuśrī as Black Yamāntaka (*'jam dpal kha thun nag po*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 4. 657–660; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 6. 817–820.

21. 'jam dpal gshin rje kha thun nag po'i sgrub thabs bklag pas don 'grub

Vol. 2, text 9; 30 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *kha*; Text no.: *tsha*(18); ff. 161–190.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 2. 437–495; W3CN12210: 16. 1–60.
- **Author(s):** Gyurmé Rinchen Namgyel<sup>1129</sup>
- **Type of Text:** Invocation ritual (*sgrub thabs*; Skt. *sādhana*)

<sup>1129</sup> 'gyur med rin chen rnam rgyal; 1694–1758; P674.

- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of Compassionate Display (snying rje rol pa'i rgyud)*
- **Topic/Subject:** Mañjuśrī as Black Yamāntaka (*'jam dpal kha thun nag po*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 4. 661–732; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 6. 821–886.

## 22. gshin rje kha thun gyi dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga

Vol. 2, text 10; 6 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *kha*; Text no.: *dza*(19); ff. 191–196.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 2. 497–507; W3CN12210: 16. 61–71.
- **Author(s):** Gyurmé Rinchen Namgyel
- **Type of Text:** Mandala ritual (*dkyil chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of Compassionate Display (snying rje rol pa'i rgyud)*
- **Topic/Subject:** Mañjuśrī as Black Yamāntaka (*'jam dpal kha thun nag po*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 4. 733–744; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 6. 887–896.

## 23. kha thun gyi dbang chu bka' ma/ rgya gzhung ngo

Vol. 2, text 11; 8 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *kha*; Text no.: *wa*(20); ff. 197–204.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 2. 509–523; W3CN12210: 16. 73–87.
- **Author(s):** Padmasambhava; ritual arrangement by Gyurmé Rinchen Namgyel
- **Type of Text:** Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of Compassionate Display (snying rje rol pa'i rgyud)*
- **Topic/Subject:** Mañjuśrī as Black Yamāntaka (*'jam dpal kha thun nag po*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 4. 745–760; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 6. 897–910.

## 24. kha thun rdo rje'i dbang chu bzhugs pa'i dbu

Vol. 2, text 12; 6 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *kha*; Text no.: *zha*(21); ff. 205–210.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 2. 525–536; W3CN12210: 16. 89–100.
- **Author(s):** Ngawang Drakpa (*ngag dbang grags pa*; d.u.).<sup>1130</sup>
- **Type of Text:** Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of Compassionate Display* (*snying rje rol pa'i rgyud*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Mañjuśrī as Black Yamāntaka (*'jam dpal kha thun nag po*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 4. 761–775; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 6. 911–920.

25. 'jam dpal gshin rje gshed dmar po'i dbang gi brgyud 'debs [no title page]

Vol. 2, text 13; 1 folio

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *kha*; Text no.: *za*(22)<sup>1131</sup>; f. 210.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 2. 537–538; W3CN12210: 16. 101–102, 105–106.<sup>1132</sup>
- **Author(s):** Shenpen Tayé
- **Type of Text:** Lineage supplication (*brgyud 'debs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of Compassionate Display* (*snying rje rol pa'i rgyud*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Mañjuśrī as Red Yamāri (*'jam dpal gshed dmar po*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 6. 317–320; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 8. 301–304.

26. gshin rje gshed dmar po'i las byang bdud dpung mthar byed

Vol. 2, text 14; 25 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *kha*; Text no.: *za*(22)<sup>1133</sup>; ff. 211–235.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 2. 539–588; W3CN12210: 16. 107–152.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje

<sup>1130</sup> Perhaps this is BDRC P7502?

<sup>1131</sup> It is unclear why this *brgyud 'debs* text by Shenpen Tayé is given the same text no. (*za*) as the related *cog khrigs* text that follows (text 26), both of which are listed as distinct texts with different authors in the *Catalog* (52b).

<sup>1132</sup> The text was mistakenly doubled up in the published volume.

<sup>1133</sup> This text given the same text “number” (*za*) as the previous text for unknown reasons.

- **Type of Text:** Ritual arrangement (*chog khrigs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of Compassionate Display* (*snying rje rol pa'i rgyud*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Mañjuśrī as Red Yamāri (*'jam dpal gshed dmar po*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 6. 321–368; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 8. 305–350.

27. bcom ldan 'das 'jam dpal gshin rje dmar po'i dkyil 'khor gyi chog dang /  
dngos grub len chog

Vol. 2, text 15; 7 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *kha*; Text no.: 'a(23); ff. 236–242.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 2. 589–602; W3CN12210: 16. 153–166.
- **Author(s):** Gyurmé Rinchen Namgyel
- **Type of Text:** Mandala ritual (*dkyil chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of Compassionate Display* (*snying rje rol pa'i rgyud*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Mañjuśrī as Red Yamāri (*'jam dpal gshed dmar po*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 6. 369–382; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 8. 351–362.

28. 'jam dpal gshin rje gshed dmar po'i phrin las rdo rje rtse brgya pa log  
rtog bdud dpung pham byed

Vol. 2, text 16; 39 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *kha*; Text no.: ya(24); ff. 243–280.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 2. 603–677; W3CN12210: 16. 167–241.
- **Author(s):** Orgyen Tendzin Dorjé (*o rgyan bstan 'dzin rdo rje*; 1742–c.1789; P683)
- **Type of Text:** Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of Compassionate Display* (*snying rje rol pa'i rgyud*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Mañjuśrī as Red Yamāri (*'jam dpal gshed dmar po*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 6. 383–452; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 8. 363–426.

## Volume 3 (ga)

### Summary of Contents:

- **Mahāyoga (cont.)**
  - *Tantra of the Display of Heruka (he ru ka rol pa'i rgyud)*
    - Viśuddhaheruka (*yang dag he ru ka*): **Texts 29–32.**
  - *Tantra of the Display of the Twelve Vajrakīlayas (phur pa bcu gnyis rol pa'i rgyud)*
    - Vajrakīlaya (*rdo rje phur pa*) in the tradition of Rog Sherab Lama (*rog lugs*):<sup>1134</sup> **Texts: 33–37**
    - Vajrakīlaya (*phur pa*) in the tradition of Rongzom (*rong lugs*): **Texts 38–41.**

### 29. dpal yang dag he ru ka'i bla brgyud gsol 'debs

Vol. 3, text 1; 1 folio

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ga*; Text no.: *ra(25)*; f. 1.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 3. 3–4.
- **Author(s):** Shenpen Tayé
- **Type of Text:** Lineage supplication (*brgyud 'debs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of Heruka's Display (he ru ka rol pa'i rgyud)*
- **Topic/Subject:** Viśuddhaheruka (*yang dag he ru ka*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 3. 257–258; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 5. 266–268.

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<sup>1134</sup> The *rog* system of Dorjé Phurba is so named because it was propagated by Rog Sherab Lama (*rog shes rab bla ma*; 1090–1173) and his descendants—largely within the *zhi byed* school. See see Mengyan Li, “Origination, Transmission, and Reception of the Phur-pa Cycle: A Study of the rDo-rje-phur-pa Cycle of Tantric Teachings in Tibet with Special Reference to Sog-bzlog-pa Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan's (1552-1624) Phur pa'i lo rgyus,” Ph.D. diss., University of Hamburg, 2019, 139–142.



30. dpal yang dag he ru ka'i sgrub thabs bde chen thig le

Vol. 3, text 2; 27 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ga*; Text no.: *la*(26); ff. 2–28.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 3. 5–55.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Invocation ritual (*sgrub thabs*; Skt. *sādhana*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of Heruka's Display (he ru ka rol pa'i rgyud)*
- **Topic/Subject:** Viśuddhaheruka (*yang dag he ru ka*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 3. 259–316; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 5. 269–322.

31. dpal yang dag gi dkyil 'khor gyi chog bdud rtsi'i nying khu

Vol. 3, text 3; 13 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ga*; Text no.: *sha*(27); ff. 29–41.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 3. 57–81.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Mandala ritual (*dkyil chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of Heruka's Display (he ru ka rol pa'i rgyud)*
- **Topic/Subject:** Viśuddhaheruka (*yang dag he ru ka*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 3. 317–338; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 5. 323–344.

32. dpal chen yang dag lha dgu'i dbang gi cho ga bde chen 'jug ngogs

Vol. 3, text 4; 28 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ga*; Text no.: *sa*(28); ff. 42–69.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 3. 83–140.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of Heruka's Display (he ru ka rol pa'i rgyud)*

- **Topic/Subject:** Viśuddhaheruka (*yang dag he ru ka*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 3. 339–392; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 5. 345–398.

### 33. rog lugs kyī phur pa'i brgyud 'debs<sup>1135</sup>

Vol. 3, text 5; 2 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ga*; Text no.: *ha*(29); ff. 70–71.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 3. 141–144.
- **Author(s):** Lochen Dharmasrī; Supplemental material by Shenpen Tayé
- **Type of Text:** Lineage supplication (*brgyud 'debs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of the Display of the Twelve Vajrakīlayas (phur pa bcu gnyis rol pa'i rgyud)*
- **Topic/Subject:** Vajrakīlaya (*phur pa*) in the tradition of Rog Sherab Lama (*rog lugs*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 9. 453–456; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 12. 401–404.

### 34. rdo rje phur pa rog lugs kyī sgrub thabs las byang dngos dngos grub char 'bebs

Vol. 3, text 6; 37 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ga*; Text no.: *a*(30); ff. 72–108.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 3. 145–218.
- **Author(s):** Lochen Dharmasrī
- **Type of Text:** Invocation ritual (*sgrub thabs*; Skt. *sādhana*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of the Display of the Twelve Vajrakīlayas (phur pa bcu gnyis rol pa'i rgyud)*
- **Topic/Subject:** Vajrakīlaya (*phur pa*) in the tradition of Rog Sherab Lama (*rog lugs*)

<sup>1135</sup> The *rog* system of Dorjé Phurba is so named because it was propagated by Rog Sherab Lama (*rog shes rab bla ma*; 1090–1173) and his descendants—largely within the *zhi byed* school. See Mengyan Li, “Origination, Transmission, and Reception of the Phur-pa Cycle: A Study of the rDo-rje-phur-pa Cycle of Tantric Teachings in Tibet with Special Reference to Sog-bzlog-pa Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan's (1552-1624) Phur pa'i lo rgyus,” Ph.D. diss., University of Hamburg, 2019, 139–142.

- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 9. 457–538; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 12. 405–476.

35. rog phur stod las kyi sgrub khog bde chen bdud rtsi'i bcud len

Vol. 3, text 7; 31 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ga*; Text no.: *ki*(30); ff. 109–139.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 3. 219–280.
- **Author(s):** Lochen Dharmasrī
- **Type of Text:** Invocation framework (*sgrub khog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of the Display of the Twelve Vajrakīlayas (phur pa bcu gnyis rol pa'i rgyud)*
- **Topic/Subject:** Vajrakīlaya (*phur pa*) in the tradition of Rog Sherab Lama (*rog lugs*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 9. 539–596; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 12. 477–526.

36. rog phur gyi dbang chog bde chen mchog ster

Vol. 3, text 8; 14 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ga*; Text no.: *khu*(32); ff. 140–153.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 3. 281–308.
- **Author(s):** Lochen Dharmasrī
- **Type of Text:** Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of the Display of the Twelve Vajrakīlayas (phur pa bcu gnyis rol pa'i rgyud)*
- **Topic/Subject:** Vajrakīlaya (*phur pa*) in the tradition of Rog Sherab Lama (*rog lugs*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 9. 641–668; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 12. 565–588.

37. rog phur smad las kyi sgrub khog gdug can mthar byed rdo rje 'bar ba'i 'khrul 'khor

Vol. 3, text 9; 24 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ga*; Text no.: *ge*(33); ff. 154–177.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 3. 309–356.
- **Author(s):** Lochen Dharmasrī
- **Type of Text:** "Lower activity" (*smad las*)<sup>1136</sup>
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of the Display of the Twelve Vajrakīlayas (phur pa bcu gnyis rol pa'i rgyud)*
- **Topic/Subject:** Vajrakīlaya (*phur pa*) in the tradition of Rog Sherab Lama (*rog lugs*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 9. 597–640; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 12. 527–564.

### 38. rong phur bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs [no title page]<sup>1137</sup>

Vol. 3, text 10; 1 folio

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ga*; Text no.: *ngo*(34); f. 178.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 3. 357–358.
- **Author(s):** Shenpen Tayé
- **Type of Text:** Lineage supplication (*brgyud 'debs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of the Display of the Twelve Vajrakīlayas (phur pa bcu gnyis rol pa'i rgyud)*
- **Topic/Subject:** Vajrakīlaya (*phur pa*) in the tradition of Rongzom (*rong lugs*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 8. 555–556; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 11. 545–546.

### 39. rdo rje phur pa rong lugs kyi las byang dngos grub rgya mtsho'i snying po

Vol. 3, text 11; 44 folios

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<sup>1136</sup> Cathy Cantwell characterizes *smad las* thus: In vajrayāna yi-dam practice, there are two main sections: the “stod-las” (“upper activity”) and the “smad-las” (“lower activity”). The aim of the “stod-las” section, which encompasses all the basic meditation texts, is the realization of Enlightenment. The “smad-las” section, which is, employed in the “zlog-pa,” has the purpose of, killing and liberating all the hostile forces and obstacles. See Cathy Cantwell, “A Tibetan Buddhist Ritual in a Refugee Monastery,” in *Tibet Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Autumn 1985), pp. 14-29.

<sup>1137</sup> The *rong lugs* system of Dorjé Phurba is so named because it was propagated by Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo (*rong zom chos kyi bzang po*, 1042-1136). See Mengyan Li, “Origination, Transmission, and Reception of the Phur-pa Cycle,” 65–68.

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ga*; Text no.: *ci(35)*; ff. 180–223.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 3. 359–444.
- **Author(s):** Gyurmé Rinchen Namgyel
- **Type of Text:** Invocation ritual (*sgrub thabs*; Skt. *sādhana*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of the Display of the Twelve Vajrakīlayas (phur pa bcu gnyis rol pa'i rgyud)*
- **Topic/Subject:** Vajrakīlaya (*phur pa*) in the tradition of Rongzom (*rong lugs*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 8. 557–636; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 11. 547–626.

#### 40. phur pa rong lugs kyil dkyil 'khor cho ga

Vol. 3, text 12; 8 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ga*; Text no.: *chu(36)*; ff. 224–231.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 3. 445–459.
- **Author(s):** Gyurmé Rinchen Namgyel
- **Type of Text:** Mandala ritual (*dkyil chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of the Display of the Twelve Vajrakīlayas (phur pa bcu gnyis rol pa'i rgyud)*
- **Topic/Subject:** Vajrakīlaya (*phur pa*) in the tradition of Rongzom (*rong lugs*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 8. 637–650; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 11. 627–640.

#### 41. dpal rdo rje phur pa'i dbang gi cho ga jo bo lang lab kyil lugs

Vol. 3, text 13; 13 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ga*; Text no.: *je(37)*; ff. 232–245.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 3. 461–487.
- **Author(s):** Gyurmé Rinchen Namgyel
- **Type of Text:** Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): *Tantra of the Display of the Twelve Vajrakīlayas (phur pa bcu gnyis rol pa'i rgyud)*
- **Topic/Subject:** Vajrakīlaya (*phur pa*) in the tradition of Rongzom (*rong lugs*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 8. 651–676; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 11. 641–666

## Volume 4 (nga)

### Summary of Contents:

- **Mahāyoga (cont.)**
  - *Tantras of the Magical Net* (*rgyud sgyu 'phrul drwa pa*)
    - Peaceful Vajrasattva deities (*rdo rje sems dpa' sgyu 'phrul zhi ba*): **Texts 42–45.**
    - Wrathful deities of the *Magical Net* (*sgyu 'phrul khro bo*): **Texts 46–48.**
    - Peaceful and wrathful deities (*zhi khro*): **Texts: 49, 50.**
  - *The System of Buddhaghya* (*sangs rgyas gsang ba'i lugs*)
    - Amitayus (*tshe dpag tu med pa*): **Texts 51, 52.**

### 42. rdor sems sgyu drwa'i dbang gi brgyud 'debs [no title page]

Vol. 4, text 1; 1 folio

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *nga*; Text no.: *nyo*(38); f. 1.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 4. 3–4.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje; Supplemental material by Shenpen Tayé
- **Type of Text:** Lineage supplication (*brgyud 'debs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): The *Tantras of the Magical Net* (*rgyud sgyu 'phrul drwa pa*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Peaceful Vajrasattva deities of the *Magical Net* (*rdo rje sems dpa' sgyu 'phrul zhi ba*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 11. 115–116; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 13. 103–104.

### 43. rdo rje sems dpa' sgyu 'phrul drwa ba zhi ba 'bring po'i sgrub thabs ye shes char 'bebs

Vol. 4, text 2; 39 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *nga*; Text no.: *ti*(39); ff. 2–40.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 4. 5–81.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje

- **Type of Text:** Invocation ritual (*sgrub thabs*; Skt. *sādhana*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): The *Tantras of the Magical Net* (*rgyud sgyu 'phrul drwa pa*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Peaceful Vajrasattva deities of the *Magical Net* (*rdo rje sems dpa' sgyu 'phrul zhi ba*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 11. 117–196; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 13. 105–184.

44. sgyu 'phrul drwa ba zhi ba'i dkyil 'khor kyi cho ga rin chen phreng

Vol. 4, text 3; 21 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *nga*; Text no.: *thu*(40); ff. 41–61.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 4. 83–124
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Mandala ritual (*dkyil chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): The *Tantras of the Magical Net* (*rgyud sgyu 'phrul drwa pa*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Peaceful Vajrasattva deities of the *Magical Net* (*rdo rje sems dpa' sgyu 'phrul zhi ba*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 11. 247–288; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 13. 233–272.

45. sgyu 'phrul drwa ba zhi ba 'bring po'i dbang gi cho ga dkyil 'khor rgya mtshor 'jug pa'i gru chen

Vol. 4, text 4; 63 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *nga*; Text no.: *de*(41); ff. 62–124.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 4. 125–249.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): The *Tantras of the Magical Net* (*rgyud sgyu 'phrul drwa pa*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Peaceful Vajrasattva deities of the *Magical Net* (*rdo rje sems dpa' sgyu 'phrul zhi ba*)

- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 11. 291–394; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 13. 345–450.

46. sgyu 'phrul drwa ba khro bo he ru ka'i dkyil 'khor bsdus pa'i sgrub thabs  
bde chen char 'bebs

Vol. 4, text 5; 45 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *nga*; Text no.: *no*(42); ff. 125–169.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 4. 251–339.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Invocation ritual (*sgrub thabs*; Skt. *sādhana*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): The *Tantras of the Magical Net* (*rgyud sgyu 'phrul drwa pa*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Wrathful deities of the *Magical Net* (*sgyu 'phrul khro bo*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 12. 7–106; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 14. 3–100.

47. sgyu 'phrul drwa ba khro bo'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga rdo rje'i phreng

Vol. 4, text 6; 25 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *nga*; Text no.: *pi*(43); ff. 170–194.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 4. 341–390.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje; “written down” by Lochen Dharmasrī
- **Type of Text:** Mandala ritual (*dkyil chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): The *Tantras of the Magical Net* (*rgyud sgyu 'phrul drwa pa*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Wrathful deities of the *Magical Net* (*sgyu 'phrul khro bo*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 12. 161–206; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 14. 221–262.

48. sgyu 'phrul drwa ba khro bo'i dbang gi cho ga khrag 'thung rdo rje'i gad  
rgyangs

Vol. 4, text 7; 65 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *nga*; Text no.: *phu*(44); ff. 195–259.



- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 4. 391–521.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): The *Tantras of the Magical Net* (*rgyud sgyu 'phrul drwa pa*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Wrathful deities of the *Magical Net* (*sgyu 'phrul khro bo*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 12. 207–346; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 14. 263–398.

49. zhi khro'i dbang gi bskur brlab sogs kyī rgyug byang [no title page]

Vol. 4, text 8; 1 folio

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *nga*; Text no.: *be*(45); f. 260
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 4. 523–524.
- **Author(s):** Shenpen Tayé [presumed]
- **Type of Text:** Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): The *Tantras of the Magical Net* (*rgyud sgyu 'phrul drwa pa*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Peaceful and wrathful deities (*zhi khro*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: No; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): No

50. tshe dpag med lung lugs kyī brgyud 'debs [no title page]

Vol. 4, text 9; 1 folio

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *nga*; Text no.: *mo*(46); f. 261.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 4. 525–526.
- **Author(s):** Shenpen Tayé
- **Type of Text:** Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/ Section(s):** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantra section (*rgyud sde*): The *Tantras of the Magical Net* (*rgyud sgyu 'phrul drwa pa*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Peaceful and wrathful deities (*zhi khro*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: No; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): 15. 1–2.

51. bcom ldan 'das tshe dpag tu med pa'i sgrub thabs 'chi med mchog ster

Vol. 4, text 10; 16 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *nga*; Text no.: *tsi*(47); ff. 262–277.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 4. 527–557.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Longevity ritual (*tshe sgrub*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: The system of Buddhaghuhya (*sangs rgyas gsang ba'i lugs*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Amitayus (*tshe dpag tu med pa*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 11. 411–444; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 15. 3–32.

52. tshe dpag med lung lugs kyi dbang

Vol. 4, text 11; 10 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *nga*; Text no.: *tshu*(48); ff. 278–287.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 4. 559–577.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: The system of Buddhaghuhya (*sangs rgyas gsang ba'i lugs*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Amitayus (*tshe dpag tu med pa*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 11. 445–466; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 15. 33–52.

**Volume 5 (ca)**Summary of Contents:

- **Mahāyoga (cont.)**
  - Rituals for purifying the five heinous acts (*khrus mtshams med lnga sbyong*)
    - The confessional practice, “Dredging the depths of hell” (*na rag[raka] dong sprungs*): **Texts 53–57.**

- Subsidiary and concluding rituals (*rjes 'brel du 'gro ba'i phrin las*): **Texts 58–62.**
- Tantric Guardians (*rgyud kyi bka' srung*)
  - Bhagavān Mahākāla (*mgon po legs ldan tshogs kyi bdag po*): **Texts 63, 64, 67.**
  - The Obran system (*'o bran lugs*) of Red Wrathful Guru Rinpoché (*gu ru drag dmar*):<sup>1138</sup> **Texts 65, 66.**
  - Vyāghravāhana Mahākāla (*mgon po stag zhon ma*): **Text 68.**
  - Dandadhāra Mahākāla (*mgon po beng gter ma*): **Text 69.**
  - Mahākālī Rematī (*dpal ldan lha mo re ma tI*): **Text 70.**
  - Vaiśravaṇa Nīlāśva Raktasūla (*rnam sras mdung dmar rta sngon can*): **Text 71.**

53. rnal 'byor spyi khrus dong sprugs kyi brgyud 'debs [no title page]

Vol. 5, text 1; 1 folio

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ca*; Text no.: *dze(49)*; f. 1.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 3–4.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje; Supplemental material by Shenpen Tayé
- **Type of Text:** Lineage supplication (*brgyud 'debs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Rituals for purifying the five heinous acts (*khrus mtshams med lnga sbyong*)
- **Topic/Subject:** The confessional practice, “dredging the depths of hell” (*na rag dong sprungs*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 13. 127–128; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 16. 287–288.

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<sup>1138</sup> For a discussion of the 'o bran lugs see Mengyan Li, "Origination, Transmission, and Reception of the Phur-pa Cycle A Study of the rDo-rje-phur-pa Cycle of Tantric Teachings in Tibet with Special Reference to Sog-bzlog-pa Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan's (1552-1624) Phur pa lo rgyus," Ph.D. diss., University of Hamburg, 2018, 78–79, 232.

54. na rag dong sprugs kyi cho ga 'khor ba kun sgröl<sup>1139</sup>

Vol. 5, text 2; 51 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ca*; Text no.: *wo*(50); ff. 2–52.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 6–106.<sup>1140</sup>
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Mandala ritual (*dkyil chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Rituals for purifying the five heinous acts (*khros mtshams med lnga sbyong*)
- **Topic/Subject:** The confessional practice, “Dredging the depths of hell” (*na rag dong sprungs*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 13. 129–242; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 16. 289–394.

55. na rag dong sprugs kyi dbang gi cho ga bde chen lam bzang

Vol. 5, text 3; 67 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ca*; Text no.: *zhi*(51); ff. 53–119.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 107–239.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Rituals for purifying the five heinous acts (*khros mtshams med lnga sbyong*)
- **Topic/Subject:** The confessional practice, “Dredging the depths of hell” (*na rag dong sprungs*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 13. 259–384; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 16. 409–528.

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<sup>1139</sup> In early South Asian Buddhist mythology, *Naraka* is a hell realm that is ruled by *Yama*, the lord of death. The name “naraka” is usually transliterated in Tibetan as ན་ར་ཀ། (wylie: *na raka*) but is sometimes rendered as ན་ར་ག། (*na rag*).

<sup>1140</sup> Prints of this and the previous text from the original blocks are also in the huge collection of texts from Dzongsar: vol. 213. 519–608. BDRC W3PD988 (khams sde dge rdzong gsar bla ma lha khang du bzhugs pa'i dpe mnying).

56. na rag dong sprugs las phyag gi bkol byang

Vol. 5, text 4; 10 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ca*; Text no.: *zu*(52); ff. 120–129.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 241–261.
- **Author(s):** N/A
- **Type of Text:** Invocation ritual (*sgrub thabs*; Skt. *sādhana*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Rituals for purifying the five heinous acts (*khros mtshams med lnga sbyong*)
- **Topic/Subject:** The confessional practice, “Dredging the depths of hell” (*na rag dong sprungs*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 13. 385–408; *snga ‘gyur bka’ ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 16. 529–550.

57. na rag dong sprugs kyi dbang gi cho ga mtshams sbyor gyis brgyan pa bde chen lam bzang

Vol. 5, text 5; 40 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ca*; Text no.: ‘*e*(53); ff. 131–170.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 263–341.
- **Author(s):** Mingyur Peldron; Supplemental material by Shenpen Tayé
- **Type of Text:** Linear notes (*mtshams sbyor*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Rituals for purifying the five heinous acts (*khros mtshams med lnga sbyong*)
- **Topic/Subject:** The Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*) for “Dredging the depths of hell” (*na rag dong sprungs*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 13. 461–538; *snga ‘gyur bka’ ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 16. 611–688.

58. ma hA yo ga'i dbang thams cad kyi thog mthar 'gro ba'i rgyug byang lhan thabs

Vol. 5, text 6; 27 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ca*; Text no.: *yo*(54); ff. 171–197.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 343–396.

- **Author(s):** Shenpen Tayé
- **Type of Text:** Ancillary manual (*lhan thabs*) for the initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Subsidiary and concluding rituals (*rjes 'brel du 'gro ba'i phrin las*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 12. 593–644; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 14. 683–740.

### 59. gshin po rjes 'dzin gyi cho ga thar pa'i myur lam

Vol. 5, text 7; 6 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ca*; Text no.: *ri*(55); ff. 198–203.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 397–408.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Funerary rite (*gnas lung*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Subsidiary and concluding rituals (*rjes 'brel du 'gro ba'i phrin las*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Funeral rites (*gshin po rjes 'dzin*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 13. 559–572; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 16. 697–708.

### 60. gtor ma cha gsum gyi cho ga

Vol. 5, text 8; 5 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ca*; Text no.: *lu*(56); ff. 204–208.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 409–417.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Torma ritual (*gtor ma'i cho ga*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Subsidiary and concluding rituals (*rjes 'brel du 'gro ba'i phrin las*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Three-part torma ritual (*cha gsum gtor ma*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 21. 225–236; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 41. 371–380.

61. rgyud lung la brten pa'i las bzhi'i sbyin sreg ngag 'don klag chog mar  
byas pa 'dod ster dbang gi rgyal po<sup>1141</sup>

Vol. 5, text 9; 25 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ca*; Text no.: *she*(57); ff. 209–233.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 419–467.
- **Author(s):** Lochen Dharmasrī
- **Type of Text:** Ritual liturgy (*klag chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Subsidiary and concluding rituals (*rjes 'brel du 'gro ba'i phrin las*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Fire offering [homa] (*sbyin sreg*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 15. 641–686; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 20. 561–600.

62. rten gsum rab tu gnas pa'i cho ga dge legs 'dod 'jo

Vol. 5, text 10; 30 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ca*; Text no.: *so*(58); ff. 234–265.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 469–531.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Blessing bestowing objects (*sku gsung thugs rten*); consecration (*rab gnas*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Subsidiary and concluding rituals (*rjes 'brel du 'gro ba'i phrin las*)
- **Topic/Subject:** The three supports of body, speech, and mind (*sku gsung thugs rten gsum*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 21. 61–124; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 41. 97–158.

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<sup>1141</sup> This text is divided up into five main sections in the original xylograph with each section starting at the beginning of a new folio: 1. *zhi ba'i sbyin sreg* (ff. 209[1]–214[6]); 2. *brgyas pa'i sbyin sreg* (ff. 215[7]–219[11]); 3. *dbang gi sbyin sreg* (ff. 220[12]–224[14]); 4. *drag po'i sbyin sreg* (ff. 225[17]–231[23]); and *slar yang 'phros don 'ga' zhig brjod* (ff. 232[24]–233[25]). However, since there is a single title page and a single author's colophon at the end of the work, I have counted it as a single work.

63. legs ldan brgyud ‘debs mu tig phreng ba [no title page]<sup>1142</sup> \*Likely apocryphal<sup>1143</sup>

Vol. 5, text 11; 1 folio

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Text no., volume no., and volume-level folio numbers not present or illegible.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 551–552.
- **Author(s):** Pema Vajra
- **Type of Text:** Lineage supplication (*brgyud ‘debs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantric Guardians (*rgyud kyi bka’ srung*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Bhagavān Mahākāla (*mgon po legs ldan tshogs kyi bdag po*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: No; *snga ‘gyur bka’ ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): No.

64. legs ldan tshogs kyi bdag po'i sgrub thabs las bzhi'i rnam rol

Vol. 5, text 12; 24 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ca*; Text no.: *hi*(59); ff. 266–289.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 553–599.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Invocation ritual (*sgrub thabs*; Skt. *sādhana*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantric Guardians (*rgyud kyi bka’ srung*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Bhagavān Mahākāla (*mgon po legs ldan tshogs kyi bdag po*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 20. 283–334; *snga ‘gyur bka’ ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 37. 1–48.

<sup>1142</sup> I have put this text in this order (different from its order in the W4PD1990 version of the collection) because it very obviously goes with the following text (*legs ldan tshogs kyi bdag po'i sgrub thabs las bzhi'i rnam rol*). That text is also out of order in W4PD1990—a fact that the volume-level folio numbers (266–289) make clear.

<sup>1143</sup> The verso folio does not appear to be numbered with the volume-level folio number as are the other texts (as with other single-folio works in the collection, the recto folio's left margin reads *gcig pu'o* “sole,” or “single”) and there is not a gap in the original volume-level folio numbers between any of the texts in this section. We also have the fact that, unlike most of the lineage supplication texts in the collection, this was written not by Shenpen Tayé but by his student Pema Vajra (who also wrote the *Catalog* to the collection). Pema Vajra's authorship of this text—as attested in the author's colophon at the end—contradicts the listing in the *Catalog*, which states that it was written by Shenpen Tayé—the “Lord Lama.”: *dpal legs ldan nag po'i brgyud 'debs rje bla mas mdzad pa/*. (54b) It is also interesting to note that neither the *Dudjom bka' ma* nor the *shin tu rgyas pa bka' ma* (2009) collections include this work.



65. drag dmar bka' ma 'o bran lugs kyi brgyud 'debs byin blab char rgyun[no title page] \*Likely apocryphal<sup>1144</sup>

Vol. 5(ca), text 13; 1 folio

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Text no., volume no., and volume-level folio numbers not present or illegible.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 533–534.
- **Author(s):** Pema Vajra<sup>1145</sup>
- **Type of Text:** Lineage supplication (*brgyud 'debs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantric Guardians (*rgyud kyi bka' srung*)
- **Topic/Subject:** The Obran system ('*o bran lugs*) of Red Wrathful Guru Rinpoche (*gu ru drag dmar*)<sup>1146</sup>
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: No; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): No
- **Colophon:** /ces pa 'di yang dkyil 'khor 'di nyid kyi chog grwa pa rnam kyis don gnyer chen po sa yang yang bskul ba/ mkhan ming 'dzin pa pad+ma badz+ra pas o rgyan bsam bstan chos gling gi chos grwar sbyar ba dge/

66. 'o bran drag dmar gyi sgrub thabs dbang chog dang bcas pa

Vol. 5, text 14; 8 folios;

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ca*; ff. 290–297; **Text no. illegible.**
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 535–550.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Invocation ritual (*sgrub thabs*; Skt. *sādhana*); Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantric Guardians (*rgyud kyi bka' srung*)

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<sup>1144</sup> See note on text 62 above.

<sup>1145</sup> As in text 62, The author's colophon for this work states that it was written by Pema Vajra. However, the *Catalog* (also written by Pema Vajra) states that the "lineages supplication for the *drag dmar o bran lugs* was written by the "Lord Lama" [i.e., Shenpen Tayé]: *drag dmar o bran lugs kyi skor la/ de'i brgyud 'debs rje bla mas mdzad pa/* (54b).

<sup>1146</sup> For a discussion of the '*o bran lugs* see Mengyan Li, "Origination, Transmission, and Reception of the Phur-pa Cycle A Study of the rDo-rje-phur-pa Cycle of Tantric Teachings in Tibet with Special Reference to Sog-bzlog-pa Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan's (1552-1624) Phur pa lo rgyus," Ph.D. diss., University of Hamburg, 2018, 78–79, 232.

- **Topic/Subject:** The Obran system (*'o bran lugs*) of Red Wrathful Guru Rinpoché

- (*gu ru drag dmar*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 13. 573–590; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 16. 709–724.

67. legs ldan tshogs kyi bdag po'i sgrub thabs dbang chog dang bcas

Vol. 5, text 15; 19 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ca*; ff. 298–316; **Text no. illegible.**
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 601–637.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Invocation ritual (*sgrub thabs*; Skt. *sādhana*); Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantric Guardians (*rgyud kyi bka' srung*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Bhagavān Mahākāla (*mgon po legs ldan tshogs kyi bdag po*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 20. 355–390; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 37. 67–100.

68. stag zhon dbang chog dang bcas

Vol. 5, text 16; 7 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ca*; Text no.: *gi*(63); ff. 317–323.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 639–651.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Invocation ritual (*sgrub thabs*; Skt. *sādhana*); Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantric Guardians (*rgyud kyi bka' srung*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Vyāghravāhana Mahākāla (*mgon po stag zhon ma*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 20. 563–578; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 37. 257–270.

69. mgon po beng ma'i sgrub thabs [no title page]

Vol. 5, text 17; 3 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ca*; ff. 324–326; **Text no. illegible.**
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 653–657.

- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Invocation ritual (*sgrub thabs*; Skt. *sādhana*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantric Guardians (*rgyud kyi bka' srung*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Dandadhāra Mahākāla (*mgon po beng gter ma*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 20. 579–584; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 37. 271–276.

70. re tI rang byung rgyal mo'i sgrub thabs dbang chog dang bcas pa

Vol. 5, text 18; 8 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ca*; ff. 327–334; **Text no. illegible.**
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 659–674.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Invocation ritual (*sgrub thabs*; Skt. *sādhana*); Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantric Guardians (*rgyud kyi bka' srung*)
- **Topic/Subject:** *re ma tI*
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 20. 611–626; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 37. 301–314.

71. rnam sras drag po rta sngon can gyi sgrub thabs dbang chog dang bcas pa

Vol. 5, text 19; 8 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ca*; Text no.: *ce*(65); ff. 335–342.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 5. 675–689.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Invocation ritual (*sgrub thabs*; Skt. *sādhana*); Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 7. Mahāyoga: Tantric Guardians (*rgyud kyi bka' srung*)
- **Topic/Subject:** Vaiśravaṇa nīlāsva raktasūla (*rnam sras mdung dmar rta sngon can*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 20. 657–670; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 37. 343–354.

## Volume 6 (cha)

Summary of Contents:

- **Anuyoga: *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions (mdo dgongs 'dus)*: Texts: 72–75.**

### 72. 'dus pa mdo'i dbang gi spyi don rgyud lung man ngag gi gnad gsal byed sgron me

Vol. 6, text 1; 139 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *cha*; Text no.: *hu*<sup>1147</sup>; ff. 1–139.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 6. 3–278.
- **Author(s):** Lochen Dharmasrī
- **Type of Text:** Analytical overview (spyi don)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 8. Aunuyoga
- **Topic/Subject:** *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions (mdo dgongs 'dus)*
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 14. 4–346; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 19. 1–38.

### 73. 'dus pa mdo'i dbang gi brgyud 'debs [no title page]

Vol. 6, text 2; 1 folio

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *cha*; Text no.: *he*; ff. 140.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 6. 279–280.
- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje; Supplemental material by Shenpen Tayé
- **Type of Text:** Lineage supplication (*brgyud 'debs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 8. Aunuyoga
- **Topic/Subject:** *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions (mdo dgongs 'dus)*
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 14. 347–348; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 19. 329–330.

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<sup>1147</sup> The system of syllable-numbering shifts forward here to the letter *h* but retains the previous pattern of moving through the vowels in order.

74. tshogs chen 'dus pa'i sgrub thabs dngos grub char 'bebs

Vol. 6, text 3; 42 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *cha*; Text no.: *ho*; ff. 141–182.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 6. 281–364.
- **Author(s):** Lochen Dharmasrī
- **Type of Text:** Invocation ritual (*sgrub thabs*; Skt. *sādhana*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 8. Aunyoga
- **Topic/Subject:** *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions (mdo dgongs 'dus)*
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 14. 349–444; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 19. 335–422.

75. 'dus pa mdo'i sgrub khog rin chen 'od kyi snang ba

Vol. 6, text 4; 61 folios.

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *cha*; Text no.: *i*; ff. 183–243.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 6. 365–485.
- **Author(s):** Lochen Dharmasrī
- **Type of Text:** Invocation framework (*sgrub khog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 8. Aunyoga
- **Topic/Subject:** *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions (mdo dgongs 'dus)*
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 14. 507–658; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 19. 477–616.

## Volume 7 (ja)

Summary of Contents:

- **Anuyoga:** *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions (mdo dgongs 'dus)*: **Texts: 76–78.**

76. tshogs chen 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi gyi cho ga dri med 'od kyi 'phreng

Vol. 7, text 1; 22 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ja*; Text no.: *u*; ff. 1–22.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 7. 3–45.

- **Author(s):** Terdak Lingpa Gyurme Dorje
- **Type of Text:** Mandala ritual (*dkyil chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 8. Aunyoga
- **Topic/Subject:** *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions (mdo dgongs 'dus)*
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 14. 459–506; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 19. 435–476.

77. mdo'i yan lag gi dkyil 'khor rnams kyi sgrub dkyil dngos grub 'dod 'jo

Vol. 7, text 2; 159 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ja*; Text no.: *e*<sup>1148</sup>; ff. 23–181.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 7. 47–364.
- **Author(s):** Lochen Dharmasrī
- **Type of Text:** Mandala ritual (*dkyil chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 8. Aunyoga
- **Topic/Subject:** *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions (mdo dgongs 'dus)*
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 15. 5–368; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 20. 1–314.

78. 'dus pa mdo'i cho ga'i zur 'debs dpag bsam snye ma

Vol. 7, text 3; 84 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ja*; Text no.: *o*; ff. 182–265.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 7. 365–527.
- **Author(s):** Lochen Dharmasrī
- **Type of Text:** Ritual supplement (*cho ga'i zur 'debs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 8. Aunyoga
- **Topic/Subject:** *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions (mdo dgongs 'dus)*
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 15. 427–640; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 20. 365–552.

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<sup>1148</sup> This is the same text no. as text 85.

## Volume 8 (nya)

### Summary of Contents:

- **Anuyoga:** *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions (mdo dgongs 'dus)*: **Text 79.**

### 79. 'dus pa chen po mdo'i dbang gi cho ga rdo rje'i them skas

Vol. 8, text 1; 288 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *nya*; Text no.: *oM*; ff. 1–288.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 8. 3–577.
- **Author(s):** Lochen Dharmaśrī
- **Type of Text:** Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 8. Aunyoga
- **Topic/Subject:** *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions (mdo dgongs 'dus)*
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 16. 5–686; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 21. 1–622.

## Volume 9 (ta/a)<sup>1149</sup>

### Summary of Contents:

- **Atiyoga**<sup>1150</sup>
  - mind class (*sems sde*): **Texts 80–84.**
  - expanse class (*klong sde*): **Text 85.**
- **Catalog** (*dkar chag*): **Text 86.**

<sup>1149</sup> The first text in the volume is labelled as volume *ta* (9), while the rest of the texts are labelled as volume *a*. *a* is the 30<sup>th</sup> and last letter of the Tibetan alphabet, so perhaps its place as the final letter of the alphabet combined with its use as a “seed syllable” in Great Perfection practice made the editors use it to designate this ninth and final volume (largely comprised of Great Perfection texts) rather than the ninth letter (*ta*).

<sup>1150</sup> The *Catalog* states at the end of these contents that, “Those Trinchok texts of the practice instruction class (*man ngag sde*), the *Seventeen Tantras*, and so forth, still need to be arranged going forward. (*man ngag sde rgyud bcu bdun sogs kyi phrin chog rnams kyang slad nas 'god dgos pa yin no/*), 115.



80. man ngag rdzong 'phrang srog gsum gyi bla brgyud gsol 'debs

Vol. 9, text 1; 2 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *ta*; Text no.: *a*; ff. 1–2.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 9. 3–5; W3CN12210: 7. 1–3
- **Author(s):** Shenpen Tayé
- **Type of Text:** Lineage supplication (*brgyud 'debs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 9, Atiyoga: *mind class (sems sde)*, *rdzong 'phrang srog gsum*
- **Topic/Subject:** Kagyé Kama (*bka' brgyad bka' ma*); Breach of the Citadel (*rdzong 'phrang*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 13. 591–592; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 17. 1–2.

81. mkhas pa mi bzhi'i thugs bcud bka' brgyad bka' ma'i bskyed rim gyi phrin las chog khriḡs he ru ka'i dgongs pa'i rgyan

Vol. 9, text 2; 13 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *a*; Text no.: *aH*<sup>1151</sup>; ff. 4–16.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 9. 7–34; W3CN12210: 7. 5–32.
- **Author(s):** Katok Gyurmé Tshewang Chokdrup (kaH thog pa 'gyur med tshe dbang mchog grub; 1761–1829)
- **Type of Text:** Ritual arrangement (*chog khriḡs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 9, Atiyoga: *mind class (sems sde)*; *mkhas pa mi bzhi'i thugs bcud bka' brgyad bka' ma*<sup>1152</sup>
- **Topic/Subject:** Kagyé Kama (*bka' brgyad bka' ma*); Breach of the Citadel (*rdzong 'phrang*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 13. 593–624; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 17. 3–30.

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<sup>1151</sup> Both this text and the next are labelled aH (ཨ).

<sup>1152</sup> These “four scholars (*mkhas pa mi bzhi*) were Imperial-Era figures associated with the development of Bönpo philosophical studies (*mtshan nyid*). Their names were Tong-gyung Thuchen (*stong rgyung mthu chen*); Sebön Shari Uchen (*se bon sha ri dbu chen*); Debön Gyimtsa Machung (*lde bon gyim tsha rma chung*); and Menyak Chetsa Kharbu (*me nyak ce tsha mkhar bu*). Krystyna Cech, “The History, Teaching and Practice of Dialectics According to the Bon Tradition,” *The Tibet Journal*, vol. 11, no. 2 (Summer 1986), 3–28; 5–6.

82. rdzong 'phrang las/ dbang bskur rdo rje'i phreng ba

Vol. 9, text 3; 29 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *a*; Text no.: *aH*<sup>1153</sup>; ff. 17–45.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 9. 35–92; W3CN12210: 7. 33–89.
- **Author(s):** Padmasambhava
- **Type of Text:** Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 9, Atiyoga: *mind class (sems sde)*, *mkhas pa mi bzhi'i thugs bcud bka' brgyad bka' ma*.
- **Topic/Subject:** Kagy  Kama (*bka' brgyad bka' ma*); Breach of the Citadel (*rdzong 'phrang*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 13. 625–686; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 17. 31–84.

83. rdzogs chen sems sde brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs phyin rlabs gyi dga' ston

Vol. 9, text 4; 6 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *a*; Text no.: *shri*; ff. 46–51.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 9. 93–104; W3CN12210: 7. 91–102.
- **Author(s):** Lodr  Gyeltsen Pelzangpo (*blo gros rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po*; 1552–1624; P645); Supplemental material by Shenpen Tay 
- **Type of Text:** Lineage supplication (*brgyud 'debs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 9. Atiyoga: *mind class (sems sde)*
- **Topic/Subject:** *mind class (sems sde)*
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 17. 519–532; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 31. 611–624.

84. sems sde ma bu bco brgyad kyidgongs pa ngo sprod pa'i thabs/ rig pa rtsal gyidbang bco brgyad bskur ba'i chog khrigs bla ma'i zhal gdams<sup>1154</sup>

Vol. 9, text 5; 43 folios

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<sup>1153</sup> Both this text and the previous text are labelled *aH* (ཨ).

<sup>1154</sup> This text includes a short concluding prayer (*rjes smon lam gdab pa*) that starts at the top of the last folio side (94b) that is mentioned in the *Catalog* (*mas sde ma bu bco brgyad kyidgongs pa ngo sprod pa'i thabs rig pa rtsal gyidbang bco brgyad bskur ba'i chog khrigs bla ma'i zhal gdams zhes bya ba rgyug byung smon lam dang bcas pa g.yung ston rdo rje dpal bzang pos mdzad pa rnams so/*. 56a). However, since this

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *a*; Text no.: *shri*; ff. 52–94.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 9. 106–187; W3CN12210: 7. 103–187.<sup>1155</sup>
- **Author(s):** Yungtön Dorjé Pelzangpo (*g.yung ston rdo rje dpal bzang po*; d.u.)<sup>1156</sup>
- **Type of Text:** Initiation ritual (*dbang chog*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 9. Atiyoga: *mind class (sems sde)*; 18 Mother and Son Tantras
- **Topic/Subject:** *mind class (sems sde)*
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 17. 533–622; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 31. 761–847.

85. klong sde rdo rje zam pa'i byin rlabs kyi cho ga rgyas pa khrigs su bkod pa

Vol. 9, text 6; 33 folios

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *a*; Text no.: *e*<sup>1157</sup>; ff. 95–127.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 9. 189–253; W3CN12210: 7. 189–255.
- **Author(s):** Katok Gyurmé Tshewang Chokdrup
- **Type of Text:** Blessing (*byin rlabs*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** 9. Atiyoga (*klong sde*), *rdo rje zam pa*
- **Topic/Subject:** Vajra Bridge (*rdo rje zam pa*)
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: vol. 19. 477–544; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 33. 419–478.

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concluding prayer is written as part of the main text by the original author, I am not counting it as a separate work.

<sup>1155</sup> A partial print of this text from the original blocks was published from a collection of texts from Dzongsar. See: BDRC W3PD988:kham sde dge rdzong gsar bla ma lha khang du bzhugs pa'i dpe rnying, vol 195, text 1.

<sup>1156</sup> The BDRC listings for this text in the more recent *bka' ma* collections attribute it to *rmog ston rdo rje dpal* (d.u.; P7682), who was a 15<sup>th</sup>-century figure associated with Katok. Another possibility is *g.yung ston rdo rje dpal* (1284–1365; [BDRC P1454](#)).

<sup>1157</sup> This is the same text no. as text 77.

Vol 9 Addenda:*dbang chog che ba'i dkyil 'khor tshon tho[b]*<sup>1158</sup>

1 folio side, f. 128.

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** Vol.: *a*; Text no.: *e*; f. 128.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 9. 255.
- **Author(s):** N/A
- **Type of Text:** Color manual (*tshon tho*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** N/A
- **Topic/Subject:** The colors of the mandala of the “great empowerment.”
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: No; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 80. 353–354.

*rjes smon lam gdab pa (final prayers of aspiration)*<sup>1159</sup>

Vol. 9; no volume-level folio numbers (1 folio); **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 9. 257.

86. *bka' ma theg pa rim dgu'i phrin chog mtha' dag phyogs gcig tu bsdus pa'i dkar chag yid bzhin dbang gi rgyal po'i bang mdzod*

72 folios Vol. 9<sup>1160</sup>

- **Xylograph Marginalia:** No text nos., vol. nos., or volume-level folio nos.
- **Original Xylograph:** BDRC W4PD1990: 9. 259–401; *PCW*: 1. 1–143.
- **Author(s):** Pema Vajra
- **Type of Text:** Descriptive catalog (*dkar chag*)
- **Kama Vehicle/Section:** N/A; **Topic/Subject:** N/A
- **Other Kama Collections:** *Dudjom*: N/A; *snga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (2009): vol. 133. 13–144.

<sup>1158</sup> No title page; text not mentioned in the Catalog. The left margin of folio side designates it as a single-folio text (*gcig pu*) and it occurs on a new folio after the concluding colophon and dedicatory verses of text 85. It is also included as a separate text in the later *shin tu rgyas pa* collection. However, since it carries the same text no. (*e*) as text 85 and is not listed in the *Catalog*, I have not listed it as a “text” in the *Collection*.

<sup>1159</sup> No title page; text not mentioned in the Catalog.

<sup>1160</sup> This *dkar chag* is included as the final text in vol. 9 in the BDRC W4PD1990 printing of the original xylograph but, as is normal, is not listed in the listing of texts that it contains.

## Appendix 4: Listing of Texts and Lineages Received by Shenpen Tayé

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The following is a listing of the recorded texts, teachings, and lineages received by Shenpen Tayé. I have organized the list by person, each of whom is presented in rough chronological order as they appear in the two main biographical sources.<sup>1161</sup> Organizing the entries for each person in true chronological order is often impossible because some of the listings appear in some sources but not others and few of the sources that describe these transmissions mention even the year—much less the specific date(s) of the transmission. As such, I have ordered them in *rough* chronological order based on the order that they appear in their respective sources, and using my best estimate on their relative order for those that appear across various sources.

Regarding the formatting of the entries, I have reproduced the titles/names of the transmitted text, cycle, etc. verbatim as these appear in the source(s). I have also noted the specific type or mode of transmission as described in the source passage(s) [e.g., *dbang*, *zhul*, *phul*, *gsan*, etc.] in brackets at the end of the entry. The source passage(s) that attest to each transmission are given in footnotes to each entry. Where a footnote cites two or more sources for an entry, I have placed the source upon which I have primarily drawn to create the entry first, followed by other sources.

### **Lama Mönlam Dargyé (*bla ma smon lam dar rgyas*; d.u.)**

- The root text and commentaries of Thonmi Sambhota’s *Thirty Verses on Grammar* and *Guide to Signs* (*sum cu pa dang rtags kyi ‘jug pa rtsa ‘grel*).<sup>1162</sup> [*gsan/bshad pa*]<sup>1163</sup>
- “Worldly topics”, including Dandin’s *Mirror of Poetics*, astrology, and so forth. [*gsan/bshad pa*]<sup>1164</sup>

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<sup>1161</sup> Shenpen Tayé’s *Verse Autobiography* and the brief hagiography provided in the *Trinchok Catalog*.

<sup>1162</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 37a: mkhas pa chen po bla ma smon lam dar rgyas pa’i drung nas/ bod kyi brda’ dag thams cad kyi phyi mor gyur pa sum cu pa dang rtags kyi ‘jug pa rtsa ‘grel . . . gsan.

<sup>1163</sup> For these following entries, the hagiography in the *Trinchok Catalog* (37a) characterizes these teachings as *gsan* and the *Verse Autobiography* (3b) characterizes them as *bshad pa*.

<sup>1164</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 37a: snyan ngag me long dang dkar rtsis sogs thun mong gi rig gnas [. . .] sogs mang du gsan. Also see *Verse Autobiography*, 3b.

- The root text and commentaries of [Jikmé Lingpa's] *Treasury of Precious Qualities* (*yon tan mdzod*).<sup>1165</sup> [*gsan/bshad pa*]
- “Many other teachings on the various texts and systems of sutra and mantra.”<sup>1166</sup> [*gsan*]
- Teachings on the *three vows* (*sdom gsum*).<sup>1167</sup> [*bshad pa*]

### **Jikmé Gyelwé Nyugu (‘jigs med rgyal ba’i myu gu; 1765–1842)**

- “Oral instructions on the general stages of both the ordinary and extraordinary paths, and, specifically, on cycles of mind training for individuals of great capacity.”<sup>1168</sup> [*zhal khrid du gsan pa*]

### **Ling Drupchen Sonam Chinpa (gling grub chen bsod nams spyin pa; b. 1761)<sup>1169</sup>**

- Took Buddhist layman vows (*genyen; dge bsnyen*).<sup>1170</sup> [*khriims gsan*]
- “Many pith instructions on ripening and empowerment.”<sup>1171</sup> [*nos*]

### **Jikmé Kelsang (‘jig med skal bzang; b. 1789)<sup>1172</sup>**

- Recognizes and enthrones Shenpen Tayé as a tulku of Tashi Gyatso (*bkra shis rgya mtsho*; b. 1714).<sup>1173</sup>

<sup>1165</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 37a: *yon tan mdzod rtsa 'grel sogs mang du gsan*.

<sup>1166</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 37a: *mdo sngags spyi'i gzhung lugs legs par ston pa [...]*mang du gsan.

<sup>1167</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 3b.

<sup>1168</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 37a–b: *thun mong dang thun mong ma yin pa'i lam gyi rim pa spyi dang / khyad par skyes bu chen po'i blo sbyong gi skor rnams zhal khrid du gsan pa*

<sup>1169</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> gling bla, bsod nams spyin pa ([ToL page](#)) [TBRC P8701](#) (b. 1761). He was born in rdza rgyud khro shul, which may have been near Shenpen Tayé's natal home. Shenpen Tayé later gave vows of full ordination to the reincarnation of bsod nams spyin pa, whose main name was the ordination name given him by Shenpen Tayé: *thub bstan nyin byed rgyal mtshan*. This reincarnation was known as the gling bla (Lama from Ling) and so bsod nams spyin pa was retroactively known as the first Lingpa.

<sup>1170</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 37b.

<sup>1171</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 37b: *smin grol gyi gdams pa mang du nos*.

<sup>1172</sup> Often referred to as *Dola* (*rdo la*) Jikmé Kelsang ([ToL page](#); [TBRC 5221](#)).

<sup>1173</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 38a. *mkhas grub bkra shis rgya mtsho'i yang srid du ngos bzung nas khri 'don dang mnga' gsol sogs mdzad*. Tashi Gyatso was considered as an emanation of the great founder of Mindröling, Terdak Lingpa Gyurmé Dorjé (*gter dag gling pa 'gyur med rdo rje*; 1646–1714) and was renowned as a great scholar-practitioner of the *Translated Words of the Buddha* (*Kangyur, bka' 'gyur*). For a brief biography of Tashi Gyatso, see Nyoshul Khenpo's *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems*, 390–391.

### **Jikmé Ngostar (*'jigs med ngo mtshar*, b. 1730)**

- *Collected Tantras of the Ancients (Nyingma Gyübum; rnying ma rgyud 'bum)*.<sup>1174</sup> [gsan]
- the transmission of the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*.<sup>1175</sup>

### **Gemang Rabjam Gelek Yarphel (dge man grab 'byams dge legs yar 'phel, d.u.)**

- [Tsongkhapa's] *Lam Rim Chenmo (lam rim chen mo)*.<sup>1176</sup> [gsan]

### **1st Dodrupchen Jikmé Trinle Özer (rdo grub chen 'jigs med 'phrin las 'od zer; 1745–1821)**

- “the skillful path of the profound teachings of secret mantra and absorbed the key points of the practice of yogic winds, channels, and essences.”<sup>1177</sup>
- The *Six Dharmas of Naropa (na ro chos drug)* and “some cycles on the channels and winds of *inner heat (gtum mo)* from “the principle students of the master.”<sup>1178</sup> [gsan]

### **Jikmé Kelsang (*'jig med skal bzang*; b. 1789)**

- Many transmissions, including an exposition on the glorious *Guhyagarbha* and the empowerment and personal guidance on the *Magical Display of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities (sgyu 'phrul zhi khro; Skt: śāntikrodhamāyājāla)*.<sup>1179</sup> [gsan]

<sup>1174</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 38a.

<sup>1175</sup> See, *Key to the Precious Treasury*, trans. Lama Chönam and Sangye Khandro, (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2010), 29. This account of the lineage transmission from Jikmé Ngotsar and Shenpen Tayé to Dza Patrül is also related in Patrül's namthar. See, thub bstan kun bzang chos grags (1862–1943). *o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po'i rnam thar dad pa'i gsos sman bdud rtsi 'i bum bcud*, in, *gsung 'bum/\_o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po*, vol. 6, 794 (Lhasa: Zhol par khang, n.d.). BDRC W5832.

<sup>1176</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 38a.

<sup>1177</sup> *Verse Autobiography*, 4a: dus de nas nyin mtshan g.yel med par// pha rdo rje 'chang de'i zhabs bsten nas// chos zab mo gsang sngags thabs lam zhus// lam rtsa thig rlung la gnad du bsun/.

<sup>1178</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 38b: gzhan yang thugs sras kyi bu chen rnam las/ gtum mo rtsa rlung gi skor 'ga' zhig dang / na ro chos drug.

<sup>1179</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 38b: dpal gsang ba'i snying po'i bshad pa dang/ sgyu 'phrul zhi khro'i dbang dang gdams khrid kyi skor sogs mang du gsan.

## Mingyur Namkahi Dorjé (rdzogs chen grub dbang mi ‘gyur nam mkha’i rdo rje; 1793–1870)

Received “profound and extensive transmissions,” (*zhib rgyas gsan*) including:

- The “grand empowerment” (*dbang chen mo*) for the *Sutra that Gathers All Intentions* (*‘dus pa mdo*). [*gsan*]
- The empowerments, reading transmissions, and guidance (*dbang lung khrid*) for the *Khandro Nyingtik* (*mkha’gro snying thig*).<sup>1180</sup> [*gsan*]

## Sengdruk Pema Tashi (seng phrug pad+ma bkra shis; b. 1798)

- Śāntideva’s *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* (*byang chub sems dpa’i spyod pa la ‘jug pa*).<sup>1181</sup>

During Shenpen Tayé’s first visit to Dzokchen in the late 1820s, he is recorded as receiving [*gsan*] from Pema Tashi.<sup>1182</sup>

- Vows of full monastic ordination (*bsnyen par rdzogs pa dge slong*) taken with Pema Tashi in the main temple of Dzokchen Monastery.<sup>1183</sup>
- Bodhisattva vows.<sup>1184</sup>
- *Magical Display of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities* (*‘sgyu ‘phrul zhi khro*).
- *Yangdak Heruka* (*yang dag he ru ka*).
- Red and Black Bhairava (*gshin rje gzhed dmar nag*).
- Rongzom’s system of *Phurba* (*kilaya rong lugs*).
- The commentaries on difficult points of Vajrakīlaya practice called *Black Myriad* (*‘bum nag*).<sup>1185</sup>
- The “early and later systems” of the *Sūtra That Gathers All Intentions* (*dgongs pa ‘dus pa’i mdo*).
- The *mind, expanse, and practice instruction* classes [of Great Perfection teachings] (*sems klong man ngag gi sde gsum*).

<sup>1180</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 39b–40a.

<sup>1181</sup> Dza Patrul’s *Supplication to the Lineage Masters of the Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* (*spyod ‘jug brgyud pa’i gsol ‘debs*), lists Shenpen Tayé immediately after Pema Tashi in the lineage supplication. *Collected Works of Orgyen Chökyi Wangpo*, vol. 8, 45.

<sup>1182</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 40b.

<sup>1183</sup> Patrul Orgyen Chökyi Wangpo. “rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha’ yas kyi gsan yig gi mgo rgyan (*Transmission Record of Gyelsé Shenpen Tayé*),” 199.

<sup>1184</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 40a–b: dben pa’i ri la gcig tu dgyes shing sbas pa’i tshul du bzhugs pa’i rdo rje ‘dzin pa chen po pad+ma mang+ga la shrl b+ha dra’i zhal snga nas/ bstan pa’i gzhi ma ‘dul ba so thar gyi rab byung gzhi chog la brten nas bsnyen par rdzogs pa dge slong gi dngos par bsgrub.

<sup>1185</sup> This is likely the pair of commentaries on the practice of Vajrakīlaya attributed to Padmasambhava entitled *phur pa’i ‘grel chen bdud rtsi dri med* ([BDRC W27485](#)).



- *Gathering of the Sugatas (bde gshegs ‘dus pa)* from the *Kagyé*.<sup>1186</sup>
- *United Intent of the Gurus (bla ma dgongs ‘dus)*.<sup>1187</sup>
- *Excellent Vase of the Wish-fulfilling Tree (‘dod ‘jo bum bzang)*.<sup>1188</sup>

The Catalog to Pema Dongak Tendzin’s 1875 *kama* collection also describes Pema Tashi as transmitting the following to Shenpen Tayé:

- The Early Translation lineage of the vows of *individual liberation*.
- The ritual system of the Eight Medicine Deity Sugatas (*bder gshegs sman lha brgyad*).
- Mañjuśrī as Black Yamāntaka (*‘jam dpal kha thun nag po*).
- The explanatory lineage of Longchenpa and the empowerment lineages for the *General Tantras of the Magical Net (spyi rgyud sgyu ‘phrul drwa ba)*.
- The *Eighteen Thoughts of the mind class (sems sde bco brgyad kyi dgongs)* by Mokton Dorjé Pelzang.<sup>1189</sup>
- The “close lineage” (*nye brgyud*) of the A-ro system of the *mind class*.
- the *Vajra Bridge (rdo rje zam pa)* system.
- Longchenpa’s *Lama Yangtik* guidance on the *Vimala Nyingtik*.

The following transmissions are recorded to have taken place during a series of trips that Shenpen Tayé took to Central Tibet during the 1830s). The mode of transmission is characterized in this source as “boundlessly listened and contemplated” (*gsan bsam mtha’ yas par mdzad*).

### **Gendün Dargyé (*dge ‘dun dar rgyas*; 1786–c.1850s/60s)<sup>1190</sup>**

- The *Five Treatises of Maitreya*.

<sup>1186</sup> This is the early anthology of *Kagyé* termas compiled by Nyangrel Nyima Özer (*nyang ral nyi ma ‘od zer*; 1124–1192).

<sup>1187</sup> A *terma* cycle by Sangyé Lingpa (*sangs rgyas gling pa*; 1340–1396).

<sup>1188</sup> An encyclopedic collection of *terma* texts compiled by Terdak Lingpa (*gter dag gling pa*; 1646–1714) and his brother Lochen Dharmasīrī (*lo chen d+harma shrī*; 1654–1718) of Mindröling.

<sup>1189</sup> The text associated with this entry (*sems sde ma bu bco brgyad kyi dgongs pa ngo sprod pa’i thabs/ rig pa rtsal gyi dbang bco brgyad bskur ba’i chog khrigs bla ma’i zhal gdams*; *Trinchok Collection* text no. 84) is listed on BDRC.org as being authored by rmog ston rdo rje dpal (d.u.; P7682), who was a 15<sup>th</sup>-century figure associated with Katok. Another possibility is g.yung ston rdo rje dpal (1284–1365; [BDRC P1454](#)).

<sup>1190</sup> BDRC [P3577](#). A major Gelukpa scholastic figure, who taught extensively at the tantric college of the Gelukpa monastery of Labrang (*bla brang*), eventually acting as the college’s throne holder (*khri pa*). In 1848, he ascended to become to the 43<sup>rd</sup> throne holder of Labrang (*bla brang*) itself and was known for founding both philosophical colleges (*mtshan nyid grwa tshang*) and tantric colleges (*rgyud pa grwa tshang*) at various Gelugpa Monasteries (<https://www.BDRC.org/#!rid=P3577>).

- Nāgārjuna’s *Six Texts on Reasoning* (*rig pa’i tshogs drug*).<sup>1191</sup>
- “Various works on Madhyamaka.”
- “All of the extant systems of scholarly texts from India.”<sup>1192</sup>

### **Gyurmé Mipam Pelzangpo<sup>1193</sup> (‘gyur med mi pham dpal bzang po, d.u.), a “Dordzin of Mindröling”**

- “The great collection of the words of the Buddha in translation (*Kangyur*; *bka’ gyur*) in its entirety.”<sup>1194</sup>

### **The 8<sup>th</sup> Peling Tukse Kunzang Zinnon Shepa Tsel (pad gling thugs sras kun bzang zil gnon bzhad pa rtsal, birth: c.1825) of Lhalung Monastery<sup>1195</sup>**

- *Black Yamari Six-Faced Tantra* (*gshin rje gdong drug*).
- *Mitra Gyatsa* (*mi tra brgya rtsa*).<sup>1196</sup>

<sup>1191</sup> Karma Phuntsok gives the following Summary of these texts by Nāgārjuna: “Traditional historians credited Nāgārjuna with three classes of writings: the scholastic (*rigs tshogs*), hymnic (*bstod tshogs*) and homiletic (*gtam tshogs*) corpuses, to use Seyfort Ruegg’s translation. The scholastic *rigs tshogs* or *Yukti* corpus includes the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, *Yuktiṣaṣṭika*, *Śūnyatāsaptati*, *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, *Vaidalyasūtra* and certain lost \**Vyavahārasiddhi* according to Butön, Longchenpa, Maja Jangchub Tsöndrū, Jigme Lingpa among many others. Tsongkhapa and his followers enumerated six in this corpus but substituted *Vyavahārasiddhi* by *Ratnāvalī*.” In, *Mipham’s Dialectics and the Debates on Emptiness* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 235, n. 23.

<sup>1192</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 40b: de nas dbus phyogs su yang deng sngon lan gnyis tsam rim par phebs shing / der rgyud stod mkhan po dge ‘dun dar rgyas las/ byams chos sde lnga dang / dbu ma rig pa’i tshogs drug sogs ‘phags yul mkhas pa’i gzhung lugs kyi rgyun yod do cog thams cad dang /.

<sup>1193</sup> I have not been able to find any specific information on this figure.

<sup>1194</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 40b–41a: o rgyan smin grol gling gi rdor ‘dzin mkhan po ‘gyur med mi pham dpal bzang po las rgyal ba’i bka’ ‘gyur chen mo yongs rdzogs/.

<sup>1195</sup> This probably refers to the 8<sup>th</sup> Peling Tukse Kunzang Zinnon Shepa Tsel (pad gling thugs sras kun bzang zil gnon bzhad pa rtsal, birth: c.1825) of Lhalung Monastery ([BDRC G389](#)), a branch monastery of Mindröling.

<sup>1196</sup> A collection of 100+ initiations originating with the siddha mitrayogin ([BDRC T1774](#)).

**7<sup>th</sup> Minling Trichen Gyurmé Sangyé Kunga ('gyur med sangs rgyas kun dga', d.u.)<sup>1197</sup>**

- The entire *Terchen Kabum* (*gter chen bka' 'bum*).<sup>1198</sup>

**The 14<sup>th</sup> Chojé Trichen Tenpé Wangchuk Gyurmé Chokdrup (*bco brgyad khri chen bstan pa'i dbang phyug 'gyur med mchog grub*; b. 18<sup>th</sup> cent.)**

“From the Tülku of Nelendra<sup>1199</sup> who passed away soon after,”<sup>1200</sup> he received:

- Bari [Lotsawa's] *One Hundred Sādhanas* (*ba ri brgya rtsa*).<sup>1201</sup>
- *Ocean of Sādhanas* (*sgrub thabs rgya mtsho*).<sup>1202</sup>

**Yongdzin Damjampa Trinlé Yönten (yong 'dzin dam byams pa 'phrin las yon tan; b. 18<sup>th</sup> cent.)<sup>1203</sup>**

- “the *Hevjra Tantra* empowerment, the *Lamdre* cycle and so forth.”<sup>1204</sup>

<sup>1197</sup> The account in the *Trinchok Catalog* simply says, “from the Minling Trichen” here. Shenpen Tayé is described as meeting with the 7<sup>th</sup> Minling Trichen Gyurmé Sangyé Kunga ('gyur med sangs rgyas kun dga', d.u.) so I am assuming that this passage refers to this 7<sup>th</sup> Trichen.

<sup>1198</sup> This likely refers to Terdak Lingpa's *gter chen bka' 'bum*. BDRC has the [dkar chag](#) (W20425) but not the collection itself, it seems.

<sup>1199</sup> na len dra; a major Sakya Monastery north of Lhasa renowned for its long history of scholastic learning.

<sup>1200</sup> This was likely the 14<sup>th</sup> Chojé Trichen (*bco brgyad khri chen*) of Nalendra, Tenpé Wangchuk Gyurmé Chokdrup (bstan pa'i dbang phyug 'gyur med mchog grub; b. 18<sup>th</sup> cent.; [BDRC P8447](#)).

<sup>1201</sup> [BDRC W4CZ307390](#).

<sup>1202</sup> [BDRC W27253](#). A collection of sādhana texts written and compiled by the Sakya master from Ngor Monastery, Jampa Namkha Chimé (*byams pa nam mkha' 'chi med*; 176–1820; [BDRC P2526](#)).

<sup>1203</sup> [BDRC P7036](#), a major figure from Nalendra Monastery.

<sup>1204</sup> *Trinchok Catalog*, 41a: yongs 'dzin dam byams pa 'phrin las yon tan las/ kyai rdor rgyud dbang dang / lam 'bras kyi skor sogs.

## Appendix 5: Texts

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***Verse Autobiography***: rgyal ba'i sras po gzhan phan mtha' yas 'od zer du 'bod pa'i spyod tshul mdor bsdus tshig bcad ma.

The text below reproduces the *Verse Autobiography* as it appears in the early xylograph edition (*XylKB*: 1. 357a–362a; *PCW*: 2. 81–91<sup>1205</sup>). Instances where there seem to have been orthographic errors in the original which were corrected in the *DzCW* edition are footnoted.

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[1a] //rgyas ba'i sras po gzhan phan mtha' yas 'od zer du 'bod pa'i spyod tshul mdor bsdus tshigs bcad ma bzhugs//

[1b] na mo gu ru b+h+yaH/ mi dug lnga'i nad kyis gdung ba la/ /chos bdud rtsi'i sman mchog s+col mdzad pa'i/ /rje sman pa'i rgyal po bla ma rnams/ /deng bde **ten**<sup>1206</sup> 'khor lo'i rgyan du bzhugs/ /mi bdag 'dra'i sgo gsum 'du byed la/ /rnam thar du sgro 'dogs bgyis na yang / /don ldan gyi dgos pa ma mthong phyir/ /sngar brjod 'dod yid la ma mchis mod/ /da 'on kyang rnga la dbyug gu bzhin/ /khyed don gnyer chen pos bskul lags na/ /sba gsang yang bya don ma mchis pas/ /'dzem med du brjod la snyan gson cig /bdag thog med dus nas da bar du/ /las nyon gyi grogs ngan gyis bslus nas/ /srid 'khor ba

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<sup>1205</sup> Please take note that the folios of this work are out of order and mixed in with folios from another work in the edition of the *PCW* that is available BDRC.org (BDRC W3CN12691).

<sup>1206</sup> *DzCW*: *chen*.

'di ru 'khyams pa la/ /grangs bsgrang bas zad pa ma mchis kyang / /dus da lta'i skye ba'i  
srid pa 'di/ /yul gang du bzung ba'i tshul smos na/ /shar mdo khams 'dzin ma'i lte ba na/  
/mi chos ldan rgyal pos bsrung ba'i phyogs/ /lha rnams mang thos pa'i sras po yi/ [2a]  
/gnas lhun sdug rdza ri mthon po yod/ /ri'i nye 'khor spangs ljong mdzes pa la/ /sman me  
tog tshal gyis bkra ba de'i/ /ming brjod na zla rgyal 'phan phyug ces/ /chab chu klung  
g.yon nas 'bab pa yod/ /de'i shar nas shar du sa 'dzin gyi/ /rgyun dar yol bres 'dra gsum  
gyi sna/ /klung nyal 'gro'i bu mos bzung 'dra'i mdun/ /thang rin chen bye ma brdal 'dra  
yod/ /de'i g.yas lung lam gsum chu bo yi/ /rgyun skams pa'i ming gi btags pa'i sa/  
/skams che chung zhes bya'i phyi ma ru/ /lo drag po lcags spre'u shar ba'i tshe/ /bod mi  
bu rus drug zhes bya'i grang / /sdong smug po'i rigs las btsan kha bzhir/ /yongs gyes pa'i  
bye brag gi rtse la/ /ming dge rtser chags pa'i mi rgyud las/ /sde dge mang a don zhes  
bya bar/ /mi 'byor ldan chos bzang [2b] bya ba byung / /de'i tsha bo tshe dbang nor bu  
dang / /ma karma sgron gyi bu ru skyes/ /rten dal ba'i myu gu gsar ba dang / /mkhar  
dbang bo'i gzhu ris lhan cig mthong / /rje dge ba'i bshes gnyen 'ga' zhig gis/ /'di sprul  
pa'i sku zhig yin zhes bsgrags/ /gtams rgyu mtshan med pa'i 'ud gog des/ /mi kun gyis  
sprul skur sgro 'dogs byas/ /de'i rkyen gyis dam pa 'ga' zhig gi /skye srid du thob sha  
byed pa byung/ /de yin kyang sngon smon dge ba'i mthus/ /chung skyes nas chos kyis  
bsrung mdzad cing / /lo gsum nas dge ba'i bshes dang mjal/ /sngon brten gyi srung ma  
'ga' yang mthong/ /sngon sbyang gi bag chags **ra ri**<sup>1207</sup> dang / /lkogs gyur gyi gtam 'ga'  
'brel med smras/ /rje 'jigs bral rgyal ba'i myu gu dang / /gling grub chen sogs kyis rjes su  
bzung / /skabs de tshe ar jag ma rungs pas/ /rta 'ga' zhig brkus pa'i ram zla la/ /pha de

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<sup>1207</sup> DzCW: *rab rib*.

nyid brgyugs pa lnga lam btang / /nor 'byor pa rnam kyang rim bzhin **bri**<sup>1208</sup>/ /tshul de  
'dra'i rang bzhin mthong tsa na/ /nor bsags pa srog gi gshed mar gyur/ /dpal 'byor pa  
dbyar chu skam pa 'dra/ /tshe rtsa rtse zil pa ltar mthong nas/ [3a] /nga bsam zhing  
mtshan ldan bla ma dran/ /gnas dben pa zhig tu nam sleb snyams/ /mgon dam pa gong  
ma'i rnam thar la/ /nyin mtshan du yid smon byed skabs der/ /rje gzhon nu chos kyi blo  
gros de/ /chos sgo skyel tshul du yul der phebs/ /mi bdag la dmigs kyis bkar nas su/  
/khyed grub dbang bla ma mjal dgos dang / /gnas rdzogs chen dgon du 'gro dgos sogs/  
/gsungs bdud rtsis dbugs dbyung gzeng bstod nas/ /mi khyod kyi bdag po nged yin zhes/  
/khri mthon por mnga' gsol dang bcas mdzad/ /gzhan rtsod pa byed pa'i mi kun kyang/  
/gtams brjod pa zad pa'i ngang tshul bzungs/ /dus 'di nas mtshungs bral dge ba'i bshes/  
/rje 'jigs med ngo mtshar rgya mtsho dang / /khongs rje dbon bstan 'dzin nor bu sogs/  
/mgon dam pa du ma'i zhal snga nas/ /chos bdud rtsi'i zil mngar mang du myang /  
/nyams len kyang ci nus byed khul bgyis/ /gdams khrid kyi lag len de dag kyang / /gong  
'og gi go rim ma 'khrul bar/ /gnad smin gyi tshul du lan 'gar bskyar/ /mtshams bcad kyi  
gzugs brnyan 'ga' yang byas/ [3b] /khyad par du rje btsun bla ma mchog/ /gcen sngags  
ram smon lam dar rgyas las/ /yig rtsis dang yi ge'i brda' sprod sogs/ /thun mong gi rigs  
gnas 'ga' zhig dang / /sdom gsum dang mdzod kyi bshad pa sogs/ /rje kun mkhyen bla  
ma yab sras kyi/ /gzhung bzang gi chu bo kun 'thungs pas/ /blo chos kyi mu ge'i 'phrang  
las grol/ /rang bsgrang bya bcu dgur sleb tsa na/ /dus tshe rab gtan gyi skyabs mgon  
mchog /pha grub dbang chos kyi rgyal po de'i/ /mtshan grags snyan thos nas tshugs  
thabs med/ /nyin 'jig rten bya bas mi g.yeng zhing / /mtshan gti mug gnyid las bshol

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<sup>1208</sup> *DzCW: mdzad*

btab<sup>s</sup> te/ /rje gang dang nam zhig mjal 'gyur zhes/ /yid dad pa'i me lces bsregs bzhin  
 mchis/ /dus de tshe don mthun grogs 'ga' dang / /lhan gcig tu phyi bshol med par theg/  
 /lam bshul thag ring pa'i rkang tshegs dang / /rlung lhags pa'i ngal ba khyad du bsad/  
 /dgra 'jigs pa'i 'phrang las thar dka' yang / /rje nyin byed dbang po dran bzhin du/ /shar  
 nyin byed dbang po thod du bcing / /lus g.yo ba'i brtson pa dang du blang / /dus nam  
 zhig shar ri'i phrag pa nas/ /skyabs chos rje'i gdan sa mthong ba'i mod/ [4a] /grogs gzhan  
 dag phyag 'tshal gsol ba 'debs/ /ngas dbang bzhi blangs nas thugs yid bsres/ /sems  
 gnyugs ma'i ngang la bzhag tsa na/ /mgon gsang bdag dpa' bo'i snang brnyan mjal/ /slar  
 rje btsun dngos dang mjal ba'i tshe/ /sku dmar smug brjid pa'i phyag g.yas kyis/ /shing  
 rba lcags ring mo bsnam<sup>s</sup> pa'i rtser/ /mgon rdo rje 'dzin pa'i gzugs sku zhig/ /dar sngon  
 mo'i cod paN gyis bsdam<sup>s</sup> nas/ /nged skal ba ldan pa'i spyi bor bstsal/ /thugs g.yo med  
 dgongs pa gtad bzhin du/ /spyan hu re gzigs nas 'di skad du/ /khyod rigs bzang yin pa'i  
 sgro 'dogs la/ /mi kho bo **g.rtogs**<sup>1209</sup> pa shes sam gsungs/ /nga yid la med pa'i rgyu  
 mtshan des/ /lus 'jigs pas spu long g.yo ba dang/ /yid lkog gyur mngon du mkhyen pa yi/  
 /gtam don ldan snyam pa lhan cig byung / /dus de nas nyin mtshan g.yel med par/ /pha  
 rdo rje 'chang de'i zhabs bsten nas/ /chos zab mo gsang sngags thabs lam zhus/ /lam rtsa  
 thig rlung la gnad du bsnun/ /nor rin thang che ba ma mchis kyang / /sems dag pas  
 spong dag lan lnga phul/ /rje ci tsam bzhugs bar bsten [4b] 'dod kyang / /sprang bsod  
 nams dman pas lo gsum na/ /pha 'od gsal chos skur gzim pa yi/ /dus tha ma'i mdzad pa  
 mjal ba byung/ /sems skyo ba la tshad bzung ma mchis kyang / /gnas dben par sgrub pa'i  
 dam bca' bzungs/ /rje nyid kyi lung bstan gnang don ltar/ /sngon paN chen bai ros byin

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<sup>1209</sup> DzCW: rtogs.

rlabs pa'i/ /gnas rgyal mo rong gi sa phyogs sogs/ /yul nges med kun tu 'khyams shing  
 bsgom/ /skabs la lar dad ldan 'dus tshogs la/ /chos zab mo'i 'brel 'jog nyid kyang bgyis/  
 /spyir bod ljong dum bu gsum gyi cha'i/ /mtha' dkar nag rgya la thugs pa tshun/ /sngon  
 las dbang btsan pos yang yang bskor/ /mi dad ldan kun la ci phan byas/ /khyad par du ru  
 dam dben gnas su/ /mgon grub pa'i dbang phyug rdzogs chen pa'i/ /sku'i skye srid bzhi  
 pa'i zhabs rdul dang / /rje mkhan chen pang+ma mang+ga la/ /khong gling sras gter chen  
 'gro 'dul rtsal/ /mgon de sogs dam pa du ma'i zhabs/ /gnas bde chen 'khor lor bsten byas  
 nas/ /chos bka' gter gdams pa'i mdzod kun blang / /yul dbus gtsang phyogs na grags che  
 ba'i/ /dga' ldan dang sa rnying bka' brgyud kyi/ [5a] /khong mkhas grub du ma'i zhabs la  
 gtugs/ /bka' bstan 'gyur gyis mtshon chos mang zhus/ /de kun kyang zhus lo tsam min  
 par/ /dbus gtsang dang khams phyogs kun tu spel/ /spyir deng sngon gtsang dbus lan  
 gsum bskor/ /gnas khyad 'phags rnam su sgrub pa byas/ /rten khyad 'phags rnam la  
 khri mchod sogs/ /phyag bskor dang sgrub sbyong gang nus bgyis/ /mgon rgyal ba'i sku  
 gsungs thugs kyi rten/ /spyir khams dbus kun tu ci rigs spel/ /dgos ru dam bsam bstan  
 chos gling gi/ /**sten bsten**<sup>1210</sup> pa'i mthun grogs gang 'os bsgrubs/ /dgon gnas dang grwa  
 sa'i 'dzin skyong la/ /rang sngon nas spro ba ma mchis kyang/ /bshad sgrub kyi bstan pa'i  
 srol 'dzin pa'i/ /dgon chung dang ri khrod 'ga' yang chags/ /gzhi gsum gyi lag len gyis  
 mtshon pa'i/ /mdo phyogs dang rgyud kyi bshad srol btsug/ /gnas mkha' spyod dpal gyi  
 tsa ri dang / /ri'i rgyal po gangs dkar ti se sogs/ /ma mkha' 'gro 'du ba'i gnas rnam su/  
 /tshogs me mchod 'bum phrag 'ga' yang bsags/ /gnas bskor ba'i dad ldan pho mo la/  
 /rtsam tshul dad ja tshul gyis mtshon pa'i/ [5b] /bza' btung dang gos kyi sbyin gtong sogs/

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<sup>1210</sup> DzCW: rten brten.



/yul gang la gang 'os kyis phan pa bsgrubs/ /khams dbus kyis dgon rnying 'ga' zhig gi/  
 /bshad sgrub kyis srol kha nyams pa dang / /longs spyod kyis gtong sgo chad pa'ang gsos/  
 /so byang dang sngags kyis dam sdom kun/ /rang gang nus srung ba gzhir bzhag nas/  
 /gzhan rnams kyang sdom pa gsum la bskul/ /khong pad sprul pang+ma dbang rgyal  
 dang / /rje khri chen sangs rgyas kun dga' sogs/ /bstan 'gro la phan bzhed che rnams kyis/  
 /bkas bskul don ji bzhin snga 'gyur gyi/ /gzhung phrin chog rgyun bzang bzhugs so  
 'tshal/ /phyogs gcig tu bsdus nas spar du bsgrubs/ /spyir sgo gsum bya ba che phra kun/  
 /bstan 'gro la phan pa'i rgyur bsngos nas/ /gzhan byas pa drin du mi gzo ba'i/ /mi de dag  
 rnams la'ang khro spangs te/ /bzod pa dang snying rjes rjes su bzung/ /ma 'gro la phan  
 pa'i lhag bsam gyis/ /chos byang chub sems gnyis legs bsgoms te/ /khong rgyal ba'i sras  
 kyis 'jug ngogs mchog /lam phyin drug bslab pa rnams gsum du/ /yongs bsdus nas nyams  
 su gang long bgyis/ /spyir dge ba spyoms par mi bya [6a]zhing / /sdig pa rnams bcab par  
 mi bya zhes/ /mgon thub pa'i dbang pos gsungs lags kyang / /'dir mos ldan dge la bskul  
 phyir bris/ /gzhan 'gro ba'i las la zad med phyir/ /phyi gnas yul 'grim pa'i lam yig dang /  
 /nang byang sems bskyed pa'i blo sbyong dang / /gsang rim gnyis bsgoms pa'i rtogs  
 brjod sogs/ /tshig mang po'i spros pa ma byas par/ /don snying por dril te brjod pa yin/  
 /'di rang lo bcu phrag lnga yan gyi/ /legs spyod kyis ngos nas smros pa las/ /mi bdag 'dra  
 skyon gyi gong bu yi/ /skyon brjod na zad mtha' ma mchis mod/ /gtam sgro skur spangs  
 nas brjod pa 'di/ /khong chags sdang gdon gyis myos pa 'ga'i/ /sems phrag dog rgyu ru  
 mi 'gyur bar/ /yid chos la bskul ba'i rgyur gyur cig /ces pa'ang dad dam la gces nor du  
 'dzin pa'i bla ma dam pa shes rab rgya mtsho nas don gnyer chen pos bskul ba'i bzhed  
 skong du btsun pa rang nyid kyis yer ba lha ri snying po'i mgul nas spring pa'i yi ge pa ni  
 rang slob bla ma theg mchog bstan 'dzin no/ /mang+galaM// //

**Śrī Siṃha's *Chayik: Regulations of Daily Conduct at Pel Seng-ge* [Śrī Siṃha] Ri Thubten Nyinche Ling<sup>1211</sup>**

Tibetan Text

(191[1a]) //dpal seng ge ri thub bstan nyin byed gling gi rgyun ja'i bca' yig bzhugs//  
 (192[1b]) /oM sba sti/ lhar bcas 'gro ba'i ston pa mchog/ shAkya seng ger phyag 'tshal  
 te// rnam dag bstan pa'i ring lugs dang // mthun pa'i gtam gyi sbyor ba gleng // de la  
 'dir snga 'gyur rdo rje theg pa'i ring lugs dri ma med pa 'dzin pa'i gdan sa chen po o rgyan  
 bsam gtan chos gling gi bshad grwa ba / dpal seng ge ri'i chos grwa chen po thub bstan  
 nyin byed gling 'dir bzhugs pa'i gzhi byes grwa tshang spyi nas thugs nges gnang rgyur/  
 spyir gling 'di bshad sgrub kho na'i ched du bskrun pa yin pas/ 'dir bzhugs thams cad  
 yang na klog pa thos bsam dang / yang na spong ba bsam gtan gyi bya ba kho nas dus  
 'da' dgos pas/ de lugs kyis rgyun jar mi sdod mkhan dmigs bsal yod tshe/ bla brang  
 dang / 'di ga'i mkhan chos bcas la dgongs pa zhus nas/ gnang ba yod thog thun bzhi  
 chag med kyi mtshams kho nar sdod dgos rgyu dang / de min thams cad rgyun ja la  
 zhugs nas bslab spyod kho na mdzad dgos pa las/ rang bab gu yangs byas nas drag zhan  
 su yang sdod mi chog cing / gal srid de 'dra byung tshe yas mas nas zhib brtags kyis/  
 dgon chen kyis las sna gang 'os su 'ded pa las bzhag mi 'os pa (193[2a]) dang / rgyun ja  
 la gsar du zhugs tshe/ yas man la snyan sgron zhus thog /dge 'dun la mang ja dang /  
 mkhan chos la mjal dar phul nas zhugs dgos shing / rgyun ja la bsdad nas tha na yang lo  
 gcig ma song bar dgongs zhus byed mi chog cing / sdod pa'i ring la yang tshogs kyis 'don

<sup>1211</sup> In *gsung 'bum/ rdzogs chen mkhan po pad+ma ba dz+ra* (*The Collected Works of Dzokchen Khenpo Pema Vajra*), rdzogs chen dgon: [s.n.], 199-?, 191–197. BDRC W20319.

cha rnams dang / sum rtags/ mdo sngags smon lam/ sdom gsum/ yid bzhin mdzod  
 bcas 'dzin grwa bzhi'i rtsa ba blo thog nas tshogs rgyug 'bul dgos rgyu dang / de nas 'dul  
 mngon sher phyin dbu ma sogs dang / gsang snying gi rgyud bshad la 'jug pa rnams nas  
 thog mar rtsa ba blo thog nas rgyug sprod nas slob dgos/ rgyun tshogs la yang 'don pa'i  
 dbu ma tshugs gong tshun dang / mang 'tshogs la dung gsum pa ma rdzogs gong tshun la  
 thams cad 'tshogs thub pa dgos shing / de las phyi byung na phyag brgya sogs kyi chad  
 pa skabs dang sbyor/ tshogs la yang bslab gral gyi go rim ltar las rang dbang gis sdod mi  
 chog tshogs la ngag bcad mi byed pa byung tshe phyag brgya sogs kyi chad pa sbyor/  
 dus rgyun gling nang du gzan shams mi byed par 'gro ba dang / ku co 'ur zing phan  
 tshun 'bod shar byed pa dang / phyi nang gi 'grul 'grims [(194[2b])]su yang gling nas rta  
 zhon nas 'gro ba dang / gling nang du rta khal mang po zhag tu bzhag pa dang / mang  
 ja gra gshag tu len pa dang / tshogs bral nas dgongs zhus mi byed par 'gro ba rnams gtan  
 nas byed mi chog /de 'dra byung tshe phyag dang mchod me sogs kyi chad pa sbyor/  
 khyad par mkhan chos sogs la brtsi med kyi kha len lag len byed pa dang / gling nang  
 nas 'dzing rtsod rgyab res byed pa bcas drag zhan su thad nas byung yang / mang ja  
 dang / brgya mchod ma phul gyi bar du/ dar chen la bcing pa'i chad pa la sbyor/ dge  
 bskos dpon g.yogs nas gzigs te nang dus rgyal sgo ma phyas gong dang / nub dus rgyal  
 sgo rgyab nas gling rgyab tu 'grims 'grul byed mi chog pa dang / dge bskos gnyer pa  
 bcas nas 'gan khur gyis bla brang / spar khang / gtsug lag khang / bcas la wa kha thig  
 tshag slod med kyi zhig 'thor mi 'gro nges can dang / gra gshag rnams kyang7chos rje  
 rin po che'i zhal bkod ltar/ rang rang 'dug ring la sdod cing 'gro dus/ mkhan chos la  
 rtsis sprod ba las phan tshun nyo btsong byed mi chog pa dang / gra gshag yan pa  
 byung tshe mkhan chos nas brtags te thob rims su bzhag pa las/ dbang che ngan btsun

gyis 'then 'khyer byed mi [(195[3a])]chog pa dang / gra gshag so sor sdod mi gzhi byas  
 kyi grwa pa su yin kyang / nyar tshag tshul bzhin byed pa ma gtogs zhe med chog bsam  
 gyis 'thor zhig su gtong mi chog cing / zhig ral byung na de nyid nas gso dgos pa dang /  
 gzhan yang rgyun du gling nang gi bca' bkod rnams tshul bzhin byed min/ dge bskos kyi  
 zhabs phyi dge tshul dang chab ril pa sogs gyis byas te gling nyin re bzhin nyul dgos  
 shing // de yang gong bzhugs mkhan chos dang bslab pa rgan gras rnams nas kyang  
 bstan pa'i spyi chos su dgongs nas bca' bkod tshul bzhin byed pa ma gtogs/ khog yangs  
 bzang bdzus/ mi ngo 'tsho thabs kyis bstan chus ma shor ba mdzad dgos/ gling 'dir  
 gtogs pa'i bla sgrub grwa tshang mchog dman thams cas nas kyang/ mkhan chos dang  
 bslab pa rgan rim rnams kyi zhal bkod ji ltar gnang ba ltar/ mgo 'og lus chud/ dpon  
 zhabs g.yogs 'dus kya lugs ka'i/ zhe sems bsam pa gcig bsgril gyis tshul bzhin sgrub  
 dgos pa ma gtogs/ mi mthun pa'i log sbyor bstan pa'i zhabs 'dren du 'gro ba su thad nas  
 shor tshe7skyabs rje zhi bar gshegs po de nyid dang [(196[3b])]nged sprul sku gnyis bcas  
 . . .gzhan phan mtha' yas/ rdzogs chen bzhi pa dang dpon bzhi pa<sup>1212</sup>. . . . kyi chos dang dam tshig  
 la 'gal ba 'gro nges yin par ma zad/ bstan skyongs srung ma'i tshogs la yang / dam tshig  
 can la sdong grogs byed cing 'phrin las bsgrub pa dang / dam nyams rnams la bka' chad  
 'bebs pa'i phrin bcol sngar nas byas shing da lta yang byed bzhin pas/ de lugs kyis blang  
 dor tshul bzhin byed pa gal che/ bslab grwa pa rnams nas kyang / thog mar sum rtags/  
 de nas sdom gsum/ mdo sngags smon lam/ yid bzhin mdzod/ mngon pa/ 'dul ba mdo  
 rtsa ba/ dbu ma sher phyin/ byams chos/ rgyud kyi rgyal mo dpal ldan gsang ba'i  
 snying po sogs kyi bar snga ma snga ma sngon du ma song bar phyi ma phyi ma la mtho

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<sup>1212</sup> Annotation added in the original wood block.

snyegs kyis mi slob par go rim bzhin 'jug dgos pa dang / nam gyi cha stod dang cha  
 smad sogs la brtson 'grus kyis bslab sbyong dang / dgongs tshogs grol ba dang rang  
 gshag steng nas 'dzin grwa so so'i dpe cha skyor ba sogs bslab don ltar bya/ 'di nas  
 gzhung tshan rdzogs pa rnams kyis gzhung de dang de'i bshad pa/ dgon chen gyi mdo  
 sngags smon lam dang / dbyar gnas sgrub mchod sogs kyis skabs [(197[4a])] tshogs  
 bshad kyis rgyug 'bul byed dgos shing / de ltar slob gnyer rdzogs pa dang / gsang ba bla  
 na med pa sems klong man ngag sde so so dang / chos dbyings rin po che'i mdzod dang  
 / theg mchog rin po che'i mdzod sogs kyis nyams khrid legs par nos te/ dben pa'i ri  
 khrod rnams su song nas zab don snying po'i sgrub pa la rtse gcig tu gzhol ba'i sgo nas  
 grub 'bras mngon sum du mdzad de/ rgyal dbang pad+ma sam b+ha wa dang / mkhan  
 chen zhi ba 'tsho/ chos kyis rgyal po khri srong lde'u btsan gsum kyis rjes su 'brangs pa'i  
 snga 'gyur rdo rje theg pa'i ring lugs dri ma med pa'i grub mtha' slong nus pa zhig dgos pa  
 lags so// //dge legs ngo mtshar bye ba 'byung ba'i gzhi// thub bstan yongs rdzogs pa  
 pad+mo dgyes pa'i gnyen// smra ba'i nyin byed grub dbang rdzogs chen pa'i// thugs  
 bskyed bstan pa mtha' rgyas bkra shis shog/ //ces pa 'di'ang 7rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha'  
 yas kyis bka' bkod ltar mkhan pad+ma dz+ra nas bri gnang mdzad pa'o//

### English Translation

*Regulations of Daily Conduct at Pel Seng-ge [Śrī Siṃha] Ri Thubten Nyinche Ling*

#### **[Dedication]**

**(p.192)** Om Svasti

Bowing to the Lion of the Shakyas, the supreme teacher of beings, including the gods,

I will now discuss the lineage of the pure teachings and the practice of proper speech.

**[1. Introduction]**

Now then, you, the general assembly of domestic and visiting “monks” (*grwa tshang*) residing here at the great Dharma center of Glorious Lion Mountain (Sengé ri) Thubten Nyinchéling, the shedra folks (*bshad grwa ba*) of Orgyen Samten Chöling [Dzokchen Monastery], that great establishment that adheres to the stainless tradition of the old translations of the Vajrayāna—need to take the following to heart.

**[2. Rules and Regulations]**

Generally speaking, because this institution was founded for the sole purpose of study and practice, all those who reside here need to dedicate their time exclusively to hearing and contemplating the recited [Buddhist teachings] (*klog pa thos bsam*) and the practice of contemplative renunciation (*spong ba bsam gtan*). Under this system, everyone must attend the daily morning liturgy and engage solely in study. The only exception is for those who have asked and received permission from the lama’s office (*bla brang*) as well as from the abbot and head disciplinarian (*mkhan chos*)<sup>1213</sup> to be in retreat, and who are strictly and unfailingly adhering to their daily retreat schedule.

**[2.1 Entering the Monastery]**

No one, regardless of rank or station, is allowed to stay [in the monastery] acting according to their own whims. If this happens, it should be thoroughly investigated by those around them, upon which the main monastery should not neglect to impose a punishment appropriate to the degree of the offense. **(193)**

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<sup>1213</sup> *mkhan chos* is a contraction of two words: *mkhan po* (abbot/head teacher) and *chos khrims pa* (the head proctor or disciplinarian).

Furthermore, when attending the morning tea/liturgy for the first time, it is necessary to first inform those of high and low rank, offer tea to the assembled monks and a kata to the abbot, and then take one's seat. Having joined the monastery thus, taking a leave of absence is not allowed during the first year.

During this first year, the liturgies for the assemblies together with the root texts of the four classes—*Thirty Verses on Grammar*, *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra*, *Ascertainment of the Three Vows*; and the *Wish-Fulfilling Treasury*—should be memorized and then recited in front of the assembly. Following that, the root texts relating to Vinaya, Abhidharma, Perfection of Wisdom, Madhyamaka, and so forth, as well as the introductory explanations on the Guhyagarbha tantra should be memorized, after which an exam must be taken before engaging in further study.

### [2.2 Behavior and Decorum]

Before beginning the prayers in the assembly hall, the conch will be blown three times. Those who are not present and seated by the third sounding of the conch, shall be punished by doing 100 prostrations and so forth. In the assembly hall, the monks shall sit in their assigned seat and not in any old seat they want. If silence is not kept in the assembly hall, a punishment of 100 prostrations or some such shall be levied on the offender.

The following are absolutely prohibited at all times:

- Not wearing one's monastic robes within the monastery grounds
- Shouting, clamor, and other unnecessary noise
- Coming and going from the monastery grounds on a horse **(194)**
- Keeping many horses and pack animals within the monastery grounds

- Taking tea served at assembly to one's room
- Leaving the assembly hall without first asking for permission

When infractions of this sort occur, punishments of lighting butter lamps, doing prostrations, and so forth shall be levied. In particular, anyone actively showing disrespect to, not obeying, or assaulting the head abbot or other monastic officials or disputing, fighting with, or spreading rumors about, someone else from the monastery, shall be bound to the flagpole until they have offered both 100 butter lamps and the tea service for the main assembly.

### [2.3 Rules Regarding Monastic Grounds and Property]

The head disciplinarian shall close and check the main gate in the evening, and no one shall be permitted to enter or leave the compound after the gate is closed. The monastic disciplinarian(s) and the steward are responsible for checking the spouts and channels for water drainage in the lama's residence, the printing house, the main temple, and even in the monk's cells to make sure the water is not leaking in and causing damage.

In accordance with the orders of the precious Lord of Dharma (Shenpen Tayé), However long one resides in monastery, upon leaving, the monastery's property must be left and not bought or sold, but rather, should be turned in to the office of the abbot and disciplinarian. Upon receiving such property, this office will investigate and return the items to their rightful place. In these cases, these investigations should be fair and should not discriminate based on the status of the monk. **(195)** Those staying in the monastic residential complex need to respect the common property and should take care not to damage this property due to carelessness. If damage does occur, those responsible will be



personally responsible for replacing the damaged property. Again, you need to follow the established order of the monastery. Those such as the deputies of the disciplinarian and the water inspector need to patrol and check the monastic compound daily.

[2.4 General Advice on Leadership and Administration]

The Abbot and senior monks should properly carry out their responsibilities magnanimously and according to Buddhist principles. Simply pretending to be tolerant and wise while actually being shallow, will destroy the teachings like a rushing river. This applies to everyone who resides at this place, yogis, lamas, and monks, regardless of rank or position.

In accordance with the directives of the abbot and disciplinarian and senior trainees, it should be recognized that a harmonious system requires those in charge and those under them to act as one towards a common goal. If instead, the community is in discord, the foundation of the teachings will be disgraced and destroyed. Such discord would be against not only the teaching and the personal commitments of the Refuge Lord himself—Shenpen Tayé—who has already passed away, **(196)** and our [present] two tulkus—the 4<sup>th</sup> Dzokchen and 4<sup>th</sup> Pönlop—but would also be against the host of guardian deities who uphold the teachings. Since before [Buddhism came to Tibet], we [Tibetans] have been propitiating these guardian deities, who grant their blessings and help those who keep their spiritual commitments and punish those who break such commitments, and we are still doing such today. As such, it is essential to properly engage in adopting [good behavior] and discarding [bad behavior] in accordance with this system.

### [3. *Shedra Curriculum*]

Those engaged in study should begin with the *Thirty Verses on Grammar*, after which they should study, *Ascertainment of the Three Vows*, *Aspiration Prayers of Sūtra and Mantra*; and the *Wish-Fulfilling Treasury*, Abhidharma, the “root” *Vinaya-sūtra*, Madhyamaka and Perfection of Wisdom, the *Five Treatises of Maitreya*, and the Queen of Tantras—the glorious *Guhyagarbha*, and so on. One should study these texts in the proper order, not putting the intermediate texts before the earlier ones or after the later ones.

Students should study diligently during the first and third watches of the night. After finishing the daily evening puja, the students of the various classes should memorize and recite their assigned texts on the roof of the residence buildings.

After finishing the study of a section of a text, the student will need to recite and provide an explanation of the text and will be required to be examined by offering an explanation [on the text] to the monastic assembly during the time of the intensive summer sadhana retreat and the main monastery’s *Dongak Mönlam*. (197)

Once such study has been completed, the practical guidance for the unsurpassable secret, the Mind, Space, and Secret Instruction classes [of the Great Perfection], as well as on the *Precious Treasury of Phenomena’s Expanse*, the *Precious Treasury of the Great Vehicle*, and so forth can be properly received.

Thereupon, one should go to solitary mountain retreats and act to directly realize the fruit of accomplishment by remaining fixed one-pointedly on the heart-essence of the profound meaning. With such training, one should be able to raise up the tenets of the stainless tradition of the Vajrayana—the early translations, which were previously set

down by Padmasambhava, Śāntarakṣita, and the Dharma king Trisong Detsen. May it be so!

**[Dedication]**

The Buddha's teachings are the basis for the arising of billions of wondrous virtues, the joyful friend of Padma, the completion of all the Buddha's teachings, the kindness of the Dzokchen Drupwang, the Sun of Speech. May these extend and pervade the universe and may it be auspicious!

**[Colophon]**

The preceding text was written by Khen Pema Vajra in accordance with the instructions of Gyelsé Shenpen Tayé.

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# Glossaries

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## Technical Terms Translated into English

[approximate phonetic renderings given in italics]

<b>annotation commentary:</b>	<i>chendrel</i> ; mchan 'grel.
<b>aspiration:</b>	<i>mönlam</i> ; smon lam; Skt. pranidhana.
<b>autobiography:</b>	<i>rangthar/rangnam</i> ; rang thar/rang nam.
<b>belles-lettres or poetics:</b>	<i>nyengak</i> ; snyan ngag; Skt. kāvya.
<b>collected topics:</b>	<i>düdra</i> ; bsdus grwa.
<b>collected works:</b>	<i>sungbum</i> ; gsung 'bum.
<b>common preliminaries:</b>	<i>thünmong gi ngöndro</i> ; thun mong gi sngon 'gro.
<b>completion stage:</b>	<i>dzokrim</i> ; rdzogs rim.
<b>composition:</b>	<i>tsompa</i> ; rtsom pa.
<b>conduct:</b>	<i>chöpa</i> ; spyod pa.
<b>debate:</b>	<i>tsöpa</i> ; rtsod pa.
<b>defeating offenses:</b>	<i>pepampa</i> ; phas pham pa; Skt. pārājika.
<b>descriptive catalog:</b>	<i>karchak</i> ; dkar chag.
<b>Dharma college:</b>	<i>chödra</i> ; chos grwa.
<b>discriminative wisdom:</b>	<i>sherab</i> ; shes rab; Skt. prajñā.
<b>doxography:</b>	<i>drupta</i> ; grub mtha'; Skt. siddhānta.
<b>early transmission:</b>	<i>ngadar</i> ; snga dar.

<b>Eight Proclamation Deities:</b>	<i>Kagyé</i> ; bka' brgyad.
<b>emptiness:</b>	<i>tongpa</i> ; stong pa; Skt. śūnyatā.
<b>encampment:</b>	<i>gar</i> ; sgar.
<b>expanse class:</b>	<i>longdé</i> ; klong sde.
<b>exposition:</b>	<i>chépa</i> ; 'chad pa.
<b>extracting the essence:</b>	<i>chülen</i> ; bcud len.
<b>field of merit:</b>	<i>sönám</i> ; bsod nams kyi zhing; Skt. puṇyakṣetra.
<b>five sciences:</b>	<i>rigné chenpo nga</i> ; rig gnas chen po lnga; Skt. pañcavidyāsthāna.
<b>generation stage:</b>	<i>kyerim</i> ; bskyed rim.
<b>gone forth:</b>	<i>rabtu chungwa</i> ; rab tu byung ba; Skt. pravrajita.
<b>Great Perfection:</b>	<i>Dzokchen</i> ; rdzogs chen.
<b><i>Guhyagarbha-tantra</i>:</b>	<i>Sangwé Nyingpo</i> ; gsang ba'i snying po.
<b>higher discriminative wisdom:</b>	<i>lhakpa sherab</i> ; lhag pa shes rab; Skt. adhiprajñā.
<b>higher ethics:</b>	<i>lhakpa tsultrim</i> ; lhag pa tshul 'khrims; Skt. adhiśīla.
<b>higher meditation:</b>	<i>lhakpa ting ngédzin</i> ; lhag pa ting nge 'dzin; Skt. adhisamādhi.
<b>inner heat:</b>	<i>tumo</i> ; gtum mo.
<b>lama estate:</b>	<i>labrang</i> ; bla brang.
<b>later transmission:</b>	<i>chīdar</i> ; phyi dar.
<b>listening:</b>	<i>tö</i> ; thos; Skt. śruta.
<b>meaning commentary:</b>	<i>döndrel</i> ; don 'grel.
<b>meditative cultivation:</b>	<i>gom</i> ; sgom; Skt. bhāvanā.
<b>merit:</b>	<i>sönám</i> ; bsod nams; Skt. puṇya.

<b>mind class:</b>	<i>semdé</i> ; sems sde.
<b>nonsectarian:</b>	<i>rimé</i> ; ris med.
<b>other-emptiness:</b>	<i>shentong</i> ; gzhan stong.
<b>probational offences:</b>	<i>gendiin lhakma</i> ; dge ‘dun lhag ma; Skt. saṃghāvaśeṣa.
<b>practical instruction:</b>	<i>tripa</i> ; khrid pa.
<b>practice instruction class:</b>	<i>men-ngakdé</i> ; man ngag sde.
<b>rains retreat:</b>	<i>yarné</i> ; dbyar gnas; Skt. varṣā.
<b>rebuttal:</b>	<i>gaklen</i> ; dgag lan.
<b>release from the rains retreat:</b>	<i>gakché</i> ; dgag dbye; Skt. pravāraṇa.
<b>response to queries:</b>	<i>dri-len</i> ; dris lan
<b>root lama:</b>	<i>tsawé lama</i> ; rtsa ba’i bla ma.
<b>scholar-adept:</b>	<i>khedrup</i> ; mkhas grub.
<b>self-emptiness:</b>	<i>rangtong</i> ; rang stong.
<b>shared:</b>	<i>thünmong</i> ; thun mong.
<b>spirit of awakening:</b>	<i>changjub kyisem</i> ; byang chub kyi sems; Skt. bodhicitta.
<b>tantra section:</b>	<i>gyüdé</i> ; rgyud sde.
<b>tantrikas:</b>	<i>ngakpa</i> ; sngags pa.
<b>thinking:</b>	<i>sam</i> ; bsam; Skt. cintā.
<b>three changes:</b>	<i>jewa nampa sum</i> ; brje ba rnam pa gsum.
<b>three trainings:</b>	<i>labpa sum</i> ; bslab pa gsum; Skt. trīśikṣā.
<b>three vows:</b>	<i>domsum</i> ; sdom gsum.
<b>treasure-revealer:</b>	<i>tertön</i> ; gter ston.

<b>typologies of evidence:</b>	<i>takrik</i> ; rtags rigs.
<b>typologies of mind:</b>	<i>lorik</i> ; blo rigs.
<b>unique:</b>	<i>thünmong ma yinpa</i> ; thun mong ma yin pa.
<b>Vajra Bridge:</b>	<i>Dorjé Zampa</i> ; rdo rje zam pa.
<b>view:</b>	<i>tawa</i> ; lta ba.
<b>vow-mending ceremony:</b>	<i>sojong</i> ; gso sbyong; Skt. poṣadha.
<b>word commentary:</b>	<i>tsikdrel</i> ; tshig ‘grel.

## Technical Terms Rendered in Phonetic Tibetan

**chöde** (*chos sde*) religious enclave or unit.

**chödra** (*chos grwa*), place of religious study.

**chögar** (*chos sgar*), religious encampment.

**densa** (*gdan sa*), religious seat.

**drasa** (*grwa sa*), monks' residences

**dratsang** (*grwa tshang*), college of monastic residents

**drupdra** (*sgrub grwa*), place of practice (ritual and/or meditative).

**drupdé** (*sgrub sde*), place of practice (ritual and/or meditative).

**druptab** (*sgrub thabs*; Skt., *sādhana*), a ritual of “accomplishing the deity.”

**gelong** (*dge slong*; *bhikṣu/bhikṣuṇī*): vows of full monastic ordination

**Geluk** (*dge lugs*), one of the major “schools” or “traditions” of Tibetan Buddhism.

**genyen** (*dge bsnyen*; Skt. *upāsaka*), vows of a Buddhist layperson

**gömpa** (*dgon pa*; Skt. *araṇya*), “remote place,” often translated as “monastery.”

**getsül** (*dge tshul*; Skt., *śrāmaṇera/ śrāmaṇerikā*), vows of a monastic novice.

**Jonang** (*jo nang*), one of the major “schools” or “traditions” of Tibetan Buddhism

**kabum** (*bka' 'bum*), selected works of a single figure.

**Kadam** (*bka' gdams*), one of the major “schools” or “traditions” of Tibetan Buddhism, absorbed into the Geluk.

**Kagyü** (*bka' brgyud*), one of the major “schools” or “traditions” of Tibetan Buddhism.

**kama** (*bka' ma*), the transmitted teachings of the Nyingma that are not *terma* (revealed treasure texts).



***Khandro Nyingtik*** (*mkha''gro snying thig*), cycle of Great Perfection teachings and practices

***Kangyur*** (*bka' gyur*), canonical collection of the words of the Buddha in translation.

***khedrup*** (*mkhas grub*) scholar-adept.

***labrang*** (*bla brang*), lama's residence and estate.

***namtar*** (*rnam thar*), hagiography.

***ngakpa/ngakma*** (*sngag pa / ma*), non-celibate tantric ritual specialists.

***Nyingma***: (*rnying ma*). the “Ancients.”

***Sakya*** (*sa skya*), one of the major “schools” or “traditions” of Tibetan Buddhism.

***shedra*** (*bshad grwa*), commentarial college.

***terma*** (*gter ma*), treasure texts.

***tertön*** (*gter ston*), one who reveals *terma* (treasure texts).

***tülku*** (*sprul sku*), reincarnation, emanation.

## Transliterations of Personal and Place Names

### Personal Names:

**Butön Rinchen Drup** (1290–1364): bu ston rin chen grub.

**Chojé Trichen, 14<sup>th</sup>, Tenpé Wangchuk Gyurmé Chokdrup** (born 18<sup>th</sup> cent.): bco bryad khri chen bstan pa'i dbang phyug 'gyur med mchog grub.

**Chokgyur Lingpa** (1829–1870): mchog gyur gling pa.

**Dalai Lama, 1<sup>st</sup>, Gedün Drubpa** (1391–1474): dge 'dun grub pa.

**Dodrupchen, 1<sup>st</sup>, Jikmé Trinle Özer** (1745–1821): rdo grub chen 'jigs med 'phrin las 'od zer.

**Dodrupchen, 3<sup>rd</sup>, Jikmé Tenpé Nyima** (1865–1926): rdo grub chen, 3<sup>rd</sup> 'jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma.

**Düdjom Lingpa** (1835–1904): bdud 'joms gling pa.

**Dza Patrül Orgyen Chökyi Wangpo** (1808–1887): rdza dpal sprul o rgyan chos kyi dbang po.

**Dzokchen Drupwang, 3<sup>rd</sup>, Ngedon Tendzin Zangpo** (1759–1792): nges don bstan 'dzin bzung po.

**Dzokchen Drupwang, 4<sup>th</sup>, Mingyur Namkahi Dorjé** (1793–1870): rdzogs chen grub dbang mi 'gyur nam mkha'i rdo rje.

**Dzongsar Khyentsé Chökyi Lodrö** (1893–1959): rdzong gsar mkhyen brtse chos kyi blo gros.

**Gemang Rabjam Gelek Yarphe** (dates unknown): dge man grab 'byams dge legs yar 'phel.

**Gö Lotsawa Zhönupel** (1392–1481): 'go lo tsA ba gzhon nu dpal.

**Gyelsé Shenpen Tayé Özer** (1800–circa 1855): rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha' yas 'od zer.

**Gyelsé Tenpé Nyima** (1648–1674): rgyal sras bstan pa'i nyi ma.

- Gyurmé Mipam Pelzangpo** (dates unknown): ‘gyur med mi pham dpal bzang po.
- Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Tayé** (1813–1899): ‘jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha’ yas.
- Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo** (1820–1892): ‘jam dbang mkhyen brtse’i dbang po.
- Jikmé Gyelwé Nyugu** (1765–1842): ‘jigs med rgyal ba’i myu gu.
- Jikmé Kelsang** (born 1789): ‘jig med skal bzang.
- Jikmé Lingpa** (1730–1798): ‘jigs med gling pa.
- Jikmé Ngotsar** (dates unknown): ‘jigs med ngo mtshar.
- Jikmé Phuntsok** (1933–2004): ‘jigs med phun tshog.
- Katok Tsewang Norbu** (1698–1755): kaH thog tshe dbang nor bu.
- Kharab Shelngane Konchok Tendzin** (dates unknown): Kha rab zhal snga nas dkon mchok bstan ‘dzin.
- Khenpo Münsel** (1916–1993): mkhan po mun sel.
- Khenpo Shenga** (1871–1927): mkhan po gzhan dga’- gzhan phan chos kyi snang ba.
- Khyentsé Chökyi Lodrö** (1893–1959): mkhyen brtse chos kyi blo gros.
- Lachen Gongpa Rabsel** (circa 832–915): bla chen dgong pa rab gsal.
- Ling Drupchen Sonam Jinpa** (born 1761): gling grub chen bsod nams spyin pa.
- Lingla, 2<sup>nd</sup>, Thubten Gyeltsen Pelzang** (dates unknown): gling bla, thub bstan rgyal mtshan dpal bzang.
- Lochen Dharmaśrī** (1654-1718): lo chen d+harma shrI.
- Mingyur Peldrön** (1699-1769): mi ‘gyur dpal sgron.
- Minling Khenchen, 6<sup>th</sup>, Rikdzin Zangpo** (dates unknown): smin gling mkhan chen rig ‘dzin bzang po.

**Minling Trichen, 7<sup>th</sup>, Minling Trichen Gyurmé Sangyé Kunga** (dates unknown):  
'gyur med sangs rgyas kun dga'.

**Mipham Gyatso** (1846–1912): mi pham rgya mtsho.

**Monlam Dargyé** (dates unknown): bla ma smon lam dar rgyas.

**Ngari Panchen Pema Wangyal** (1487-1542): mnga' ris paN chen pad+ma dbang rgyal.

**Nyoshül Lungtok Tenpé Nyima** (1829–1901): smyo shul lung rtogs bstan pa'i nyi ma.

**Orgyen Lingpa** (born 1323): o rgyan gling pa.

**Orgyen Tendzin Norbu** (1841–1900/1): o rgyan bstan 'dzin nor bu.

**Peling Tukse, 8<sup>th</sup>, Peling Tukse Kunzang Zinnon Shepa Tsel** (birth, circa. 1825): pad  
gling thugs sras kun bzang zil gnon bzhad pa rtsal.

**Pema Dongak Tendzin** (1830–1893): pad+ma mdo sngags bstan 'dzin.

**Pema Rikdzin** (1625–1697): pad+ma rig 'dzin.

**Pema Vajra** (1807–1884): pad+ma badz+ra.

**Pema Wangyel Dorjé** (1779–1841): pad+ma dbang rgyal rdo rje.

**Rinchen Namgyel** (1694–1758): rin chen rnam rgyal.

**Rikdzin Zangpo** (born early-19<sup>th</sup> cent.): rig 'dzin bzang po.

**Sakya Paṇḍita Kunga Gyeltsen** (1182–1251): sa skya paN+Dita kun dga' rgyal mtshan.

**Sengdruk Pema Tashi** (born 1798): seng phrug pad+ma bkra shis.

**Sera Khandro** (1892–1940): se ra mkha' 'gro.

**Sherab Özer** (1518–1584): shes rab 'od zer.

**Situ Panchen Chökyi Jungné** (1700-1774): si tu paN chen chos kyi 'byung gnas.

**Tashi Gyatso** (born 1714): bkra shis rgya mtsho.

**Terdak Lingpa Gyurmé Dorjé** (1646–1714): gter dag gling pa ‘gyur med rdo rje.

**Thubten Pema Gyepé Nyinché Pelzangpo** (Shenpen Tayé’s ordination name): thub  
bstan pad+ma rgyas pa’i nyin byed dpal bzang po.

**Yeshé Ö** (959-1040, reigned 967-975): ye shes ‘od.

**Yongdzin Damjampa Trinlé Yönten** (born 18<sup>th</sup> cent.): yong ‘dzin dam byams pa ‘phrin  
las yon tan.

**Zurchung Sherapdrak** (1014–1074): zur chung shes rab grags.

**Zurpoché Shakya Jungné** (1002–1062): zur po che shakya 'byung gnas.

**Zur Shakya Sengé** (1074–1134): zur shakya seng ge.

### Place Names

**Chaktsa Monastery**: phyag tshwa dgon.

**Drakyang Dzong**: sgrags kyi yangs rdzong.

**Drepung**: ‘bras spungs.

**Dzagyel Monastery**: rdza rgyal dgon.

**Dzagyel Phenchuk**: rdza rgyal ‘phan phyug.

**Dzagyel Tramo Lung**: rda rgyal khra ma lung.

**Dzokchen Monastery Orgyen Sampten Chöling**: rdzogs chen dgon o rgyan bsam gten  
chos gling.

**Ganden**: dga’ ldan.

**Gemang**: dge mang.

**Gurchu Nyida Cave**: mgur chu nyi zla phug.

**Katishel Cave**: ka ti shel phug pa.

**Langchen Gyngri in China:** rgyan nag glang chen ‘gying ri.

**Mindröling Monastery:** smin grol gling dgon.

**Ogmin Khachö Dechen Ling:** ‘og min mkha’ spyod bde chen gling (also called Sangchen Ngedön Ling: gsang chen nges don gling).

**Pelri Thekchen Ling:** dpal ri theg chen gling.

**Rimo Dentik:** ri mo dan tig.

**Rimo Yangtik:** yang tik.

**Samyé Chimpu:** bsam yas mchims phu.

**Sera:** se ra.

**Tsaritra:** rtswa ri tra.

**Tsasum Khandro Duweling:** rtsa gsum mkha’ ‘gro ‘du ba’i gling.

**Upper Sengé Hermitage:** ga gon seng ge yang dgon.

**Yarlung Pemakö:** yar lung pad+ma bkod.

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<sup>1214</sup> Appendices 1 and 2 contain detailed comparative catalogs of the early xylograph edition of his collected works (*XylKB*) and a recent edition published at Dzokchen Monastery in Tibet (*DzCW*).

<sup>1215</sup> The various recensions of Shenpen Tayé's collected works are treated in detail in sec. 1.1.3 (ch.1) above.

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