Illuminating the Goal

rDzogs chen and Doxography in 14th-century Tibet

Albion M. Butters

Finnish Oriental Society

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Cover Photo
Taken by a *kalyāṇamitra* from Pema Osel Ling (Santa Cruz, California) who wishes to remain anonymous: The view from Klong chen pa's retreat hermitage on Gangs ri thod dkar (White Skull Snow Mountain) in Central Tibet.

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PREFACE

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Richard Barron (Lama Chökyi Nyima) and the Padma Translation Committee were both an inspiration and helpful resource.

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This work would not have been possible without the President's Fellowship provided by Columbia University and a subsequent Mellon Research Grant. My study abroad at CIHTS was also furthered by a Fulbright grant. For that assistance, I am most grateful.

Finally, it is my pleasure to thank my dear wife, Maija Kristiina Khandro, for her constant and enthusiastic support of my academic work. As an activity-*ḍākinī* and scholar of Buddhism in her own right, she provided me along the way with invaluable advice, both theoretical and applied.

Ultimately it is my sincere hope that instead of simply adding to the vast ocean of polemics so endemic to modern scholarship, the moonlight reflection of this work may shed at least a tiny glimmer of the actual brilliance of Klong chen pa himself and yield in its readers some benefit and realization beyond mere intellectual discourse.

TECHNICAL NOTES

This present study follows the commonly held belief that Klong chen pa was one of the most dynamic and pioneering spirits in the history of Tibetan Buddhism. Unlike previous studies which have primarily focused on the topic of rDzogs chen, this work addresses a much broader range of Klong chen pa's thought. Methodologically speaking, it does not attempt to prove or disprove any specific aspect or position. Its goal is rather to provide a larger context in which to appreciate Klong chen pa's contributions, considering both scope and the level of detail he was able to attend to. In many regards, the core text reviewed here, the doxographic overview of the Buddhist tradition and its various paths, reflects the range of the overall thesis; like a fractal, the bigger picture is mirrored in the detail and the detail mirrors the bigger picture. In this way, one is faced with the paradox of Klong chen pa's comprehension of complexity and appreciation of simplicity.

Most of the material in this study is drawn from a single text, the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, which fills very large lacunae in the scholarship of Klong chen pa, Tibet in the fourteenth century and rNying ma studies in general. A complete translation of this work allowed for exegesis on specific areas of interest, such as philosophy and religious praxis. Due to simple considerations of time and space, a systematic and comprehensive treatment of the doxography was not possible. Attempting that would have resulted in no less than an encyclopedia.

Authors often tend to cast dubious glances at their work, wondering about things they could have said or things that would have been better left unsaid. I must confess the same. Yet there also comes a time when it is necessary to find satisfaction with the choices one has made and put down the pen (or power down the box). This is a moment of faith, of surrendering agency to the reader with only one hope: that the words will speak true and intelligibly. Nevertheless, some words on the rationale behind my style of writing are in order. For fear of prolixity and obvious practical exigencies, the work was not written with a lay audience in mind. Thus, it assumes on the part of its readers a fairly solid grasp of Buddhist figures and terminology.

For my transcription of Tibetan terms, I have used the Wylie system throughout, except when referring to certain contemporary Tibetan figures. In such instances, I follow how they themselves spell their names. While strict adherence to Wylie benefits those with some grasp of the Tibetan language, it has a clear disadvantage for non-specialists. Because of the scholarly nature of this work, however, it seemed proper to make the greatest effort towards an academically advanced system of transliteration.

Stylistically speaking, I have chosen to capitalize the closest thing to Buddhist proper nouns: codified systems (i.e., the various vehicles and philosophical schools) are capitalized, as are extremely important titles (e.g., Buddha), but all other Sanskrit and Tibetan terms are left in lower-case and italicized. The only words which are not italicized are those which have come into parlance of everyday language: karma, sūtra, and so forth.

Those seeking glossary context and further explication would do well to refer to H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History*, translated and edited by Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein.

This volume also includes several appendices, added to provide additional data on Klong chen pa and the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. First, a broad range of bibliographic information in Appendix A locates Klong chen pa in relation to his various names and titles (along with where they appear), as well as his prior and subsequent incarnations. Also included are the key monasteries started, repaired or taken over by Klong chen pa, and an overview of his lineage.

Appendix B adds a chronological overview of the Tibetan doxographical tradition, identifying the most important texts in relation to their date and provenance, namely, the school of Buddhism behind their authorship. As many of these have been translated, the scholars responsible for this work are listed along with the English titles.

Appendix C offers a brief schemata of how the rNying ma tradition presents the Buddhist vehicles as ninefold, with accompanying subdivisions, and the lineage affliations of those vehicles when originally introduced to Tibet. This is supplemented by 'Jig med gling pa's representation of the ninefold scheme, as published in the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*.

Regarding the text itself, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* can be found as part of the *mDzod bdun* (or so-called *Seven Treasures*), which itself is comprised of seven separate texts written by Klong chen pa and published together as a set. Numerous editions survive today: a xylographic edition from the sDe dge Publishing House in East Tibet, published by Sherab Gyaltsen and Khyentse Labrang; the Do drup edition (originally printed at A 'dzom chos sgar in eastern Tibet and published in 1969 or so in Gangtok, Sikkim by Do drup chen Rinpoche) and a subsequent edition in six volumes (based on the original Do drup text), published in 1983 in Gangtok, Sikkim);[1] and a fourth edition from the Tango Monastic Community at Tango Monastery in Thimphu, Bhutan (and printed in Delhi in 1982). My

1 In his translation, Richard Barron follows this edition, acquired by H.E. Chagdüd Tulku Rinpoche when in Tibet in 1987, referring to it as the "revised Adzom Chögar edition" (Barron 1998: xxxiii).

translation of the *Grub mtha mdzod* primarily cites the second and fourth editions: page numbers refer to the original Do drup publication and the Tango version. The Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC) online database further lists the various texts of the *mDzod bdun* as included in the Potala edition of Klong chen pa's *gSung 'bum*. Finally, for corroborative purposes I also used one additional edition, an old woodblock print on rice paper discovered with some excitement at the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS) in Sarnath, India.[2] Because having a fifth version of the text allowed for analysis of discrepancies between the other editions, it allowed for a more critical reading of the *Grub mtha mdzod* than would have been otherwise possible.[3]

2 The librarians at CIHTS and I were unfortunately unable to identify the provenance of this edition of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. The accession number had no information whatsoever on where the text was purchased even. There is no doubt that this is a separate edition. Not only are the illustrations and calligraphy quite different from those of the other editions, in more cases than not it offered correct spellings when the other versions were in disagreement. This edition (henceforth referred to as the CIHTS edition) even contained a few stanzas missing from the Do drup chen and Tango editions.

3 Great effort was made to annotate all such discrepancies, but by no means should it be assumed that the list is exhaustive. While spelling mistakes abound in all three versions, the CIHTS edition is the most accurate.

1. INTRODUCTION

Midway between the classical dynastic era (*c.*650–850 CE) and the celebrated non-sectarian (*ris med*) movement of the nineteenth century, on the heels of the gSar ma wave of translation and just prior to the monastic explosion of the dGe lugs pa order, the fourteenth century stands as a pivotal point in the history of Tibet. Most importantly, the country would regain its independence from remote Mongol rule and form its own Buddhist canon. Yet it was not a peaceful time.

Between its need to find legitimation through tradition and the natural restlessness of a mature culture, Tibet found itself embroiled in civil war and competing religious discourses. Out of this tension, made stronger by the struggle, bright spirits emerged. These *dramatis personae*, driven to innovation by the fierceness of the Zeitgeist, would make for a level of creative development not seen in centuries. Their ideas flowed quick like fire, casting old traditions in a new light and contributing to the full-blown renaissance of the fifteenth century.

This study focuses on one of these luminaries, Klong chen rab 'byams pa (1308–1363), and his own unique contributions. The aim of this study is threefold: to provide Klong chen pa's perspective on a number of especially sensitive Buddhist points, to illuminate how his doxography fills certain lacunae in the current domain of rNying ma scholarship, and to provide a pithy treatment of how both of these contributions relate to the larger context of Buddhism's evolution in Tibet.

Specifically, it investigates how Klong chen pa sought to distinguish the textual and religious tradition of the rNying ma school from the rapidly concretizing positions of the other Tibetan Buddhist orders. It explores his relationship with the other major figures of the period, assesses his seminal role in the creation of a rNying ma canon, examines his precise philosophical stance in relation to the nature of truth, and exposes the special hermeneutic behind his teachings of the Great Perfection (rDzogs chen). All of these separate facets reflect cutting-edge concerns of the fourteenth century. As illuminated by Klong chen pa's doxographic masterpiece, *The Precious Treasury of Spiritual Systems* (*Grub mtha' mdzod*), they also reveal a drive behind his life's work towards the greater integration of all Buddhist spiritual systems.

Klong chen pa's success at syncretism was due to his ability to move between sectarian divides and different modalities of expression. Commonly regarded as one of the greatest figures in the rNying ma tradition, he was a peerless scholar, an indefatigable yogin, and an extraordinarily blessed treasure-revealer of the highest order. History suggests that Klong chen pa often navigated outside main-

stream monasticratic circles, yet his innovations were always framed within the rNying ma tradition which he so deeply respected.

In many ways, Klong chen pa is a study in paradoxes. He was a reinventer of tradition and a fierce traditionalist, a classificatory genius as well as a lover of spontaneity and freedom from classification, a poet and a logician, an apologist for his tradition and a renowned proponent of anti-sectarianism. He made a series of inspired *sNying thig* revelations into a new platform for rDzogs chen, but without the same type of eschatological fervor or philosophical departures that one finds in his well-known contemporary, Dol po pa (1292–1361). More specific to our present study, he would attempt a seemingly incongruous marriage of doxography (*grub mtha'*) and rDzogs chen.

Outline

In terms of the structure of this work, Chapter Two provides a historical overview of the fourteenth century. Delving into the political and religious dynamics which shaped the intellectual climate in which Klong chen pa lived, one finds a number of important figures. Perhaps the one who affected Klong chen pa the most (i.e., by forcing him into exile) was Byang chub rgyal mtshan (1302–1364), himself a study in contrasts. Eschewing the prophecies of treasure-texts (*gter ma*) which augured his rise to power, he nonetheless accepted their data when it served to inform his post-Mongol nationalistic agenda with historical details of Tibet's dynastic era.

Chapter Two also avails itself of the rich biographical tradition surrounding Klong chen pa, providing many details about his life, religious teachers, courses of study and extraordinary accomplishments. An elaboration of Klong chen pa's previous and subsequent incarnations, which helps fill in the larger hagiographical picture, fits together with a brief survey of the rNying ma tradition and how his literary corpus was perpetuated after his passing.

By no means was Klong chen pa the first scholar in the rNying ma tradition to write a doxography. Nor was he the first to use the genre to discuss rDzogs chen. Chapter Three provides a historical overview and detailed definition of this type of literature in Tibet, as well as its antecedents in India. It also attempts to answer how Klong chen pa's oeuvre differs from doxographies before and after him. Working with an unprecedented level of resources, as well as the fourteenth century's academically sophisticated and inclusivistic perspective, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* was able to transcend previous works written in the same genre. Its attention to rNying ma concerns and the various tantric soteriological models would set it apart from the largely philosophical doxographies of later dGe lugs pa intellectuals.

Chapter Three also engages the subject of doxography as it has been taken up by modern scholars of Tibet. After showing the limits of doxography in relation to certain dimensions of Buddhism claimed to be ineffable, this chapter also illustrates how Klong chen pa's text deconstructs itself at these precise junctures.

Chapter Four takes up an extremely important concern of the fourteenth century: the creation of a Tibetan canon. Most famous in this area was Bu ston rin chen grub (1290–1364), whose largely successful canonical endeavor was also not without contradiction. For example, by denying certain rNying ma (i.e., "older") tantras entry in his canon, he accepted more recent translations of Sanskrit tantras because they were supposedly more likely to be authentic and part of the "ancient" Indian textual tradition.

Over and against this type of canonical closure, this study notes the sociopolitical ramifications for the fourteenth century of an alternative method of delivering "old" teachings: the primarily rNying ma genre of treasure-texts (*gter ma*). It touches on how the great treasure-discover O rgyan gling pa (1329–1367/1323–1360) contributed to the redefinition of Tibet at the close of the Yüan dynasty, raising questions about religious narratives of power despite the tensions surrounding the rNying ma order to which he belonged. The secular upheavals of the fourteenth century fostered new possibilities for marginalized religious schools. The rNying ma school was working to cast itself anew in the wave of nationalist nostalgia, if not to gain actual power then at least to help prevent the further erosion of intellectual marketshare in the face of rising gSar ma traditions. It would find a champion in Klong chen pa, whose extensive overview of tantra in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* can be seen as an explicit response to Bu ston's censure.

Chapter Five explores the importance of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* as a philosophical text. Through Klong chen pa's understanding of the respective Buddhist (and heterodox) *darśana*s, set forth in a hierarchical way, one arrives at the conclusion that he supported Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka as the highest modality of the dialectical vehicle. It is also in this section that we learn that he held the third turning of the wheel to be definitive. There is a need to reconcile these seemingly contradictory positions.

The chapter then moves into a more detailed exploration of Klong chen pa's understanding of the two realities (relative and ultimate). Our close attention to this subject mirrors that of Klong chen pa in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*; clearly he thought it to be one of the most critical aspects of Buddhist philosophy. The first step involves an exploration of the stance of "extrinsic emptiness" (*gzhan stong*) propagated by his Jo nang pa contemporary, Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1292–1361). By comparing it with Klong chen pa's presentation of ultimate reality, we can conclude that Klong chen pa did not share in the view of that

heterodox doctrine. In the process of delving the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, however, certain unique tenets do come to light. In particular, it appears that Klong chen pa believed that ultimate reality can withstand analysis. The discussion largely revolves around how this and other of his idiosyncratic interpretations correspond to the philosophical systems presented by Tibetan Buddhist orders before and after him.

In that rDzogs chen is such a "rNying ma thing," Chapter Six may be linked somewhat to Chapter Four. It also resembles that chapter in its discussion of how Klong chen pa's doxography contributed to the overall systemization of rDzogs chen and, in a sense, responded to some of the major criticisms leveled against rDzogs chen. This section will also attempt to unravel the complex skein of Klong chen pa's integration and differentiation of rDzogs chen and the other vehicles, endeavors which on the surface may seem to be at cross-purposes. Critical to this study, then, is an exploration of the various ways in which rDzogs chen uses a different hermeneutic than the rest of Buddhism.

The lion's share of Klong chen pa's corpus that to date has been translated into English is on the subject of rDzogs chen. This reflects both the Western fascination with rDzogs chen and a recognition of Klong chen pa's clear preeminence in that field. But it also raises the question, what does the *Grub mtha' mdzod* have to offer on that subject? Can it be considered a rDzogs chen text on the sheer basis of its discussion of rDzogs chen?

Unlike the majority of Klong chen pa's surviving works which specifically address rDzogs chen practice and view, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* speaks *about* rDzogs chen. This is to say, rDzogs chen is contrasted and compared with the other vehicles, outlined in terms of the different emphases of its different classes (i.e., mind, expanse and personal instruction), and described through an index of the tantras which present it. This is what makes it particularly unique.

Purpose of the Study

Upon opening this dissertating tome one may ask, why is it relevant to translate and discuss a doxography dating back over six hundred and fifty years?

To begin with, the fundamental premise of doxographical texts like the *Grub mtha' mdzod* is that textual and spiritual traditions have continuity and that their meta-level of meaning can be harvested by means of diachronic analysis. Now that the *Grub mtha' mdzod* has moved outside the domain of Tibet and into the historo-critical light of Western scholarship, it itself is exposed to an exponential level of diachronic investigation. For many reasons, it is meaningful to cast the

interpretative filters and objective foci of a fourteenth-century doxography in terms of twentieth-century concerns.

The continual creation of doxographies over the centuries, from the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet until the present day, has stemmed from many different factors. New texts have been needed not because the tenet systems themselves changed that much (with the exception of relatively minor technical tweaks in the Buddhist philosophical topography), but because scholars feel inspired, believe that they can improve on the work of their predecessors (through either clarification or abridgement), or seek to counterpose and correct positions privileged by another author or school. Most of early doxographies fall into the first or second category. Depending on how one looks at it, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* could also be considered as a combination of inspired innovation and renegotiation of "doxographical components" in common parlance before the fourteenth century. Though fully pertinent to current Buddhist inquiry, a great deal of his subject matter can be found in other doxographies. It is the uniqueness of how Klong chen pa approached this subject matter that makes this text so important. Specifically, its true brilliance rests in the way in which Klong chen pa synthesized these elements in a single document, employing conventions used by previous authors of *grub mtha'* but with a degree of overarching organization and comprehensiveness that had previously been unseen.

From the rich trove of scriptures and treatises collected in Tibet, Klong chen pa had sufficient bibliographic capital to construct an elaborate architecture of Buddhist and heterodox spiritual systems. The extent of this endeavor was twofold. To give an idea of the full scope of Buddhism, he would need to comprehensively frame all of its various traditions in relation to one another. To help his readers really understand them, however, Klong chen pa would have to devote an incredible amount of energy detailing their philosophical and soteriological tenets.

In all likelihood, Klong chen pa's motivations must have involved a wish to improve on the *grub mtha'* texts already in existence. Certainly the renaissance of fourteenth-century Tibet afforded scholars the opportunity to do so. Indeed, Klong chen pa's doxographical success with the *Grub mtha' mdzod* was in no small part due to the favorable vantage afforded him by his position in history, not to mention his unfettered access to bSam yas university (with the exception of his time in exile, of course). Considering how much he had valued scholarship during his matriculation, and the resources he had at his disposal even following this period, it should come as no surprise that he would engage in the same type of doxographical enterprise as his enlightened predecessors.

The era in which Klong chen pa lived might also have contributed to his wish to shed light on the Buddhism tradition as a whole. As previously mentioned, the

Zeitgeist of the first half of the fourteenth century tended towards nationalism and a romantic view of Tibet's dynastic era. Politically speaking, the rNying ma school had been marginalized with the collaborative power-sharing of the Mongols and Sa skya myriarchs. But with that reign coming to an end, the time was ripe for another perspective. There was a danger in rNying ma pa lamas making political commentary, as O rgyan gling pa and Klong chen pa experienced firsthand, but *grub mtha'* texts could provide a skillful means of invoking the rich heritage of their tradition. Instead of merely glamorizing the past, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* provided Klong chen pa with a way of countering the canonical revisionism of contemporaries like Bu ston.

For example, Klong chen pa's innovative decision to present the gSar ma fourfold method of dividing tantras side by side with the rNying ma nine-vehicle approach reflects an important facet of his apologetic intent with the text. By thus situating the rNying ma tradition in relation to the *mode de jour*, not only could he demonstrate the school's continued relevance but also its superiority. As well, the very mechanics of the *grub mtha'* genre would allow him to masterfully encompass the gSar ma model in a hierarchical way without explicitly making remarks about hierarchy. The *Grub mtha' mdzod* reflects a realistic attitude on the part of Klong chen pa: namely that the gSar ma tradition was not going anywhere and that people could best be served by an inclusivistic overview of its similarities and differences with the rNying ma approach.

Klong chen pa goes beyond the conventional framework of the *grub mtha'* genre in other ways. Instead of limiting himself to a discussion of the tenet systems of the various philosophical schools, heterodox or Buddhist, he uses the *Grub mtha' mdzod* to contextualize those within a much larger overview of Buddhist belief systems. He integrates different literary genres under the common aegis of *grub mtha'*: a biography of the Buddha in relation to his role as founder (or not!) of Buddhism, a history of the promulgation of Buddhist teachings through the different councils (complete with a detailed description of the different Nikāya schools), an exploration of the various cosmological systems of Buddhism (as they relate to different realms and the multiple embodiment of the Buddha himself), a hermeneutical discussion of the various turnings of the wheel, a detailed definition of the different tantric levels (in accord with the tradition of the rNying ma and newcomer schools), and a canonical enumeration of the various tantric texts (locating them according to thematic content and soteriological import). One also finds an explanation of general Buddhist categories, including the difference between the *arhat*s and *bodhisattva*s (epistemologically as well as practically, where praxis is differentiated in terms of the five paths). In addition to these, Klong chen pa embellishes the text with his own poetic flair and overwhelming

erudition; each chapter is full to overflowing with citations from a wide range of texts, drawing from the three baskets of Buddhism as well as a rich reservoir of tantric literature.

Perhaps the biggest danger of *grub mtha'* is getting so bogged down in detail that one loses sight of the overall scheme of how everything fits together and, more specifically, how it all personally relates to one's own advancement on the path. For the author of such works, the mistake involves turning *grub mtha'* into a mere regurgitation of staid philosophical positions. For the reader, there is a risk of missing the soteriological point, intellectually digesting data without applying it or making it one's own. Klong chen pa's text differs from many doxographies, however, extending beyond philosophy and even remarking on how praxis-oriented texts are more potent. Indeed, the work contextualizes the various frames of Buddhism, with every chapter expanding into new ways of looking at the material: Klong chen pa's history of the Buddha sows the image of a completely cosmic field of enlightened manifestations appearing outside of time. His presentation of the four Buddhist philosophical schools pushes the cutting edge of Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka, but then suggests a migration to the hyper-speed approach of mantra. For *vajra*-psychonauts more versed in the tantras of the gSar ma tradition, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* opens to exploration the expanded horizon of inner tantra as elaborated by the rNying ma system. For rNying ma practitioners, it provides a theoretical context by means of which they might ground their understanding of the other vehicles in terms of the rDzogs chen view.

Another facet of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, previously unexplored, is its relation to the rNying ma canon. The rNying ma school puts store in a broad range of writing. At the core is the Word of the Buddha himself (*buddhavacana*). After the initial wave of translations in Tibet, many brave Tibetans made the difficult trip south across the Himalayas for additional texts and commentaries by Indian masters. Although these scriptures would largely be subsumed within the category of newer translations, they were also received within the rNying ma school as *buddhavacana* (*bka' ma*). As such, they are to be distinguished from the revelatory tradition of treasure-texts (*gter ma*) hidden by Indian masters (such as Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Śrī Siṃha) and Tibetan students (including Vairocana and Ye shes mtsho rgyal), and discovered only much later by a series of treasure-revealers.[1] These two strains constitute the main body of the rNying ma literary legacy, counterpoised by the nascent textual traditions of the Bon po on one side and the other Buddhist schools on the other.

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1 Over the centuries, there have been at least a hundred major treasure-revealers in Tibet.

The rNying ma tradition lays claim to a number of great minds prior to Klong chen pa. In the centuries following the dynastic period, for example, gNubs sangs rgyas ye shes (9th c.) would introduce the Anuyoga tradition to Tibet (though he also wrote commentaries on Mahāyoga and Atiyoga) and A ro ye shes 'byung gnas (10th c.) would teach a synthesis of the Chinese and Indian lineages of rDzogs chen mind-class.[2] The renowned scholar Rong zom chos kyi bzang po composed extensive commentaries on both the exoteric and esoteric traditions in the eleventh century. Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer (12th c.) helped initiate the *gter ma* tradition, drew connections between the *bodhisattva* status of the dynastic rulers (defining them as incarnations of Avalokiteśvara), and contributed to the Mahāyoga and Atiyoga traditions. The writing of all these individuals (*gsung 'bum*) came to form part of the rNying ma corpus.

It is really in this larger context of the rNying ma tradition that the full scope of Klong chen pa's achievements can be appreciated. His contributions inform the subsequent efforts of rNying ma scholars. Not only is his collection of writings much larger than those of his predecessors, it crosses a number of different genres ranging from commentaries on tantra to revealed treasure-texts, from dialectical discussion to inspired poetry. Often overlooked, however, are Klong chen pa's efforts towards a systemization of the rNying ma school's *bka' ma* and *gter ma* traditions. Later systemization efforts, such as the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum* and *Rin chen gter mdzod*, would come about through the intense collaboration of many scholars. In the fourteenth century, Klong chen pa attempted it on his own. In so many ways, he was a pioneer.

Methodology

As a matter of introduction, it is also fitting here to explore some of the methodologies employed in this study and some of the presumptions behind such methodological constructs. For while they are clearly of use, they can also present certain dangers as end-all definitions which limit the very discourse they are intended to support.

It is a given in the academic study of religion today that a scholar possess a detached perspective, a keen discriminatory faculty for winnowing fact from fiction, the ability to separate history from hagiography, and, overall, a hermeneutic of suspicion. But things are never so simple. While mere objectivism is in itself

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2 Rong zom's hagiography reports that the great scholar received these two strands—respectively connected with Vairocana and Hva shang—as a single system (known as the Khams lineage of rDzogs chen) from Ta zi bon ston and Cog ro zangs dkar mdzod khur, both of whom had received teachings from A ro ye shes 'byung gnas (Barber 1990: 310).

problematic, too much attention to methodology can entail a corresponding attrition in actual content, if not total distraction in the mire of methodological debate.

Perhaps the most helpful way to enter this subject and frame the stance of this own paper is to give a brief overview of methodological concerns that have arisen in the study of the history of religion and, more specifically, Tibetology today.

In America, religion only became a field of study in its own right after considerable academic contention. From its genesis in the seminary, it was fraught with tensions within and without. This skein of conflicted agendas, which crossed religious affiliations as well as entire oceans, would end up in a tangle of European versus American academic models, Western versus Asian philosophical attitudes, theological versus scientific paradigms, Biblical versus comparative curricula, phenomenological versus empiricist approaches, divinity school versus university graduate programs, et cetera, et cetera.

Historically, the first major divide was a separation between the faculties of theological institutions (i.e., Protestant, Catholic and Rabbinical seminaries) and college professors of religion. Tensions could be outlined in terms of territorial arrogance on the part of the former and some resentment on the part of the latter. The majority of graduate programs in religion, after all, trained clergy. Some institutions—such as Chicago, Union Theological Seminary and Yale, to name a few—endeavored to train scholars who could themselves teach religion in the academy, but the shift away from a vocational model to independent graduate programs would not take place until after the arrival of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) in 1963.

Prior to this, tensions had already been brewing. In 1957, the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) released what came to be known as "the Niebuhr Study." It was an extremely comprehensive overview of the types of theological education offered at thirty-six different institutions in the United States and Canada.[3] Not only did it find that theological schools had lower standards for admission than university programs, it also noted that they suffered from a degree of isolation from actual societal forces.[4] As the format of Biblical study came under review, other types of questions arose as well. Methodological assumptions about truth-statements were challenged, for example, even as privileging of the Bible was criticized by scholars who insisted that that sacred text also originated within a phenomenological milieu.

These kinds of questions had been circulating in Europe for some time. Decades earlier, in the formative years of at least one leading scholar's thought,

3 Hart 1991: 717.
4 Holbrook 1963: 192.

theology and phenomenology were not held to be separate at all. Indeed, van der Leeuw had argued that comparative study *required* a solid understanding of Christian theology. Later, criticism that his phenomenological approach (which drew on Otto's idea of the holy) was not totally divorced from theology might have led to his differentiation between them on the grounds that God can never be adequately explained to the satisfaction of the former.[5] But warning against making truth-claims about data which have not been *given*, one of his major tenets—*epochê*, the bracketing of one's own beliefs in order to fully observe a phenomenon—would serve to skirt the issue during a series of discussions which took place in international, strictly academic circles in the years leading up to the formation of the American Academy of Religion.

At the first convocation of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) in 1950 (presided over by van der Leeuw himself before his death in the same year), there was a real sense that Religionswissenschaft 'the science of religion' depended on hard facts, interpreted according to specific empirical methods: historical, philological, and phenomenological. The secular bent of these specialists was no secret. Sharpe interprets the IAHR's mission statement to promote "the academic study of the history of religions" in the following way, "The word 'academic' in particular implied, though it did not say, that only certain standards of scholarship were acceptable in IAHR circles."[6]

The ninth conference of the IAHR, held in Tokyo in 1958, was significant for its conscious recognition of another methodological perspective. Perhaps because it was held outside of Europe (for the first time, it might be added), the dominant Western scholarly model of Religionswissenschaft was unable to escape the challenge of a very different paradigm of knowledge, the Eastern quest for reality through experience. There is no denying that the conference resurrected a serious division within the ranks, for although the "subjectivism" of the Romantics had long since been discredited by the "objective" study of religion, the spectre had been raised again.

The next conference, held in Marburg in 1960, saw the further crystallization of the schism along either side of the Atlantic. Bleeker stressed the need to remain separate from the transcendent, refuting the advice of William Cantwell Smith and Ramsdell Goodenough, who had redefined science at the inauguration of the American Society for the Study of Religion (ASSR) as "a religious exercise, a new religion."[7] Wach's "integral" definition of a scholar as someone who must

5 Sharpe [1975] 1986: 232–233.
6 Sharpe [1975] 1986: 270.
7 Sharpe [1975] 1986: 274.

also address material with his or her emotions was rejected around this same time by Werblowsky's insistence that the scholar must eschew any religious leaning before engaging in actual study.

The two major divisions, that of the theological institutions and universities and that of the latter's divergent methodologies, came to head in Chicago in 1961. Mircea Eliade, who subscribed simultaneously to the practice of *epochê* and an essentialist definition of religion as hierophany, offered up the bitter antidote (to European sentiments, at least) of his predecessor, Joachim Wach: the language of hermeneutics. His "new humanism" was a compromise which both encouraged the secularist historians of religion to engage a bit more with their objects of study and provided religiously motivated scholars with a politically correct language for their continued discussion of the sacred (under the rubric of comparativism).

Between the years 1965–1975, Western universities saw the formation of many new Religious Studies departments. These new departments did not presume a unified methodological approach—no more than the AAR forced a secular *lingua franca*—but rather "they gave highly diverse companies of scholars an *organisational* canopy under which to shelter."[8] The AAR provided a similar function, but direction as well. It continued to provide a forum for Biblical scholarship and pedagogical advice, but its main priority became the production of knowledge with an emphasis on research.

The founders of the AAR were excited about expanding the range of the field for generalists. They noted, for example, that specialists in religion also require breadth. Indeed, they were aware that the academy for too many years had "continued to treat Orientalia as a step-child of Western history, economics, government, philosophy, and religion."[9] With the AAR shift from a Eurocentric bent of theological seminarians who downplayed world religions, there came an increased willingness to take comparative study (which had already established strongholds at Chicago and Harvard) within the fold of the academy itself.

In Europe, there remained a tension between "lived" and "objective" paradigms of religious study (to some extent reflecting the similar methodological debate around anthropological fieldwork). But in North America, the line had moved. As Martin Marty points out, the prevailing attitude of the AAR is that the "objectivist" model is nothing more than a "culturally laggish regress."[10] For although 1970 marked a bellwether in almost ten years of "either-or" mentality, primarily though an increased acceptance of the polymethodological approach (what

8 Sharpe [1975] 1986: 298.
9 Holbrook 1963: 154.
10 Marty 1998: 172.

Doniger has called "polymethodoodling") whereby different approaches were seen as complementary rather than competing with one another, W.C. Smith argued that methodological arguments remained an obstacle and distraction, "the massive red herring of modern scholarship."[11]

It has gotten to the point that "[r]eligion has no independent existence apart from the academy,"[12] but if Jonathan Z. Smith's definition is accused of being *sui generis* and ultimately tautological, the same logical problem has also unfortunately extended to experiential descriptions of religion (e.g., if pressed to explain precisely why the experience of sacred is beyond words, the answer that it is sacred simply *because it is sacred* is accorded no validity). At the time of the formation of the AAR, positivists argued against the validity of religious assertions. But postmodernism has gone further, "reshaping language in ways that make it difficult to consider the possibility of ontological transcendence without being charged with speaking ineptly."[13]

In as much as it represents an empty faith, the AAR may be compared to the church of academia whose ethic is postmodernism. Martin Marty provides an example of those faithful when he compares the AAR to an ideal religious organization, "catholic, cosmopolitan, and many-mansioned," yet he also notes the "more-secular-than-thou" embarrassment of scholars at the AAR when they are called religious, at which point they insist that they *study* religion![14]

Within the field of Tibetology, scholars have also become more and more divided as to their relationship with the material. During the formative years of the study of Orientalism, which were strongly flavored by Victorian mores, Tibetan Buddhism was either demonized (Waddell) or romanticized (Blavatsky). By the time of the formation of the AAR, Tibetan Buddhism had been framed in a more respectable light. Historians such as Hugh Richardson and Giuseppe Tucci provided some context to the religious richness of Tibet, lamenting how Tibetan history had been largely disregarded by scholars "except in so far as they might relate it to Buddhist themes."[15] Slowly then, a new generation of scholars would attempt to forge a nascent field from the pseudo-Buddhica and pseudo-Tibetica which had obscured the true picture of Tibet.

Old habits die hard, however, and the text is the new battleground.

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11 Smith 1975: 2.
12 Smith 1982: xi.
13 Smith, J.Z. 1990: 662.
14 Marty 1998: 152.
15 Snellgrove & Richardson 1986: 17.

According to Gregory Schopen, the prevailing attitude of ascribing primacy to texts is decidedly archaic.[16] He explains,

> The methodological position frequently taken by modern Buddhist scholars, archaeologists, and historians of religion looks, in fact, uncannily like the position taken by a variety of early Protestant "reformers" who were attempting to define and establish the locus of "true religion."[17]

The Biblical "reformers" of the sixteenth century did indeed seek to place the holy book (i.e., the New Testament) beyond the scope of historical investigation. But although modern Biblical studies have come a long way since then, and the historical-critical paradigm is well recognized today in the study of the Gospels (alongside text-critical or redaction-critical analysis), Schopen points out that the originally "Protestant polemical conception of where 'true religion' is located" has "determined the history of the study of Indian Buddhism and that—as a consequence—our picture of Indian Buddhism may reflect more of our own religious history and values than the history and values of Indian Buddhism."[18] Clearly, the situation extends to Tibetan Buddhism as well. That much is evident in Jeffrey Hopkins's challenge to Alex Wayman whether or not he really believed that "a preferable translation would be done without awareness of the text as it is understood in the tradition of its origin."[19]

At times the academy does presume much, employing historical-critical methodologies to the exclusion of the spirit of the teachings themselves. Just as some scholars may pontificate that such-and-such a saint did not really live at a certain time, much less perform any miracles, the grand tradition of painting indigenous Tibetan lore as fictive and fanciful has received new inspiration from postmodern, deconstructionist attitudes which themselves appear gun-shy about primary research. As Christopher Beckwith notes, "In any case, it is obvious that much of the current output of books on Tibet—scholarly and otherwise—is feeding upon itself. Few writers bother to glance at the vast amount of primary source material available today..."[20] For lack of anything better to do, the same biting talons of historical "pessimism" which focused in Biblical studies on the parting of the Red Sea or the historicity of Jesus, are now poised to apprehend

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16 In line with the position held by the founders of Indian Buddhism in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Indian Buddhist scholar J.W. de Jong stressed a need for concentration on the sources: "The study of Buddhism needs first of all to be concentrated on the texts" (de Jong 1975: 14).

17 Schopen 1991: 19.

18 Schopen 1991: 22–23.

19 Hopkins 1985: 80.

20 Beckwith 1987: 236.

how Tibetan belief in the Dalai Lama as an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara, for instance, was merely born of an exercise in nationalism.

To be precise, it is not academia's attention to historical detail that is being faulted here, but rather the reductionistic and myopic overlay that academia *sans foi ni loi* affords a more definitive view of reality.[21] Paradoxically, those scholars of Buddhism who are foolish enough to profess personal leanings towards the Buddhist faith are expected to leave them at the door of the academy. These are worlds apart, with experience of the Buddhist tradition from the inside (*nang pa*) serving to invalidate or taint research as much as enhance it. And only a minority of Tibetans have gained entrance to the hallowed halls. The rest—including those who have mastered the highest degrees of learning within their tradition, not to mention those who were purported to have attained a non-quantifiable realization—continue to stand in some liminal space, respected on one level but simultaneously stripped of authority in the larger production of knowledge and meaning in the West.

Shining light on the nature of the variant worldviews which underlie this rupture between academic theory and more direct knowledge, one might note how the value of experience—not just in the individual, subjective sense but also as a concept or story which entails an entire group of similar experiences—is actually weighted differently in the East and the West. As Herbert Guenther explains, "The West uses the concept for arriving at formally and doctrinally expressed, logically developed, and deductively formulated treatises of a scientific or philosophical character. The East uses the concept as a stimulus to retrieve the experience from which it has been abstracted."[22] In other words, the very *modus operandi* of the quest for knowledge (and, it should be implied, truth itself) differs enormously.

Saïd famously writes that the "determining impingement on most knowledge produced in the contemporary West [...] is that it be nonpolitical, scholarly, academic, impartial, above partisan or small-minded doctrinal belief."[23] Yet he would also remind us that political actualities are nearly impossible to separate completely from the academic arena.[24] The same might be said of cultural mores, such as the tenor of nihilism which has become but all too pervasive in the modern Western world.

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21 Here "law" being synonymous with the Dharma (or, more accurately, experience in the teachings of the Buddhadharma).

22 Guenther 1986: 127–128.

23 Saïd 1978: 10.

24 Saïd 1978: 10.

Needless to say, these are all issues which extend beyond the scope of the present work. Of most dire import, though, is the recognition that even the best methodological tools possess geneologies which, surreptiously or not, risk extending extremes of groupieism or cynicism. Even walking too close to the middle of these extremes carries a danger. Excessive wishy-washiness and ambivalence of tone also leaves doubt in the mind of the reader as to the degree of critical awareness employed in the overall treatise.

It is a narrow path indeed. As a case in point, this work seeks to historically qualify the life of Klong chen pa in the fourteenth century, but it also looks to inform that critical perspective with the richness of the hagiographical tradition. Though I have tried to avoid slippage between hagiography and biography, giving them distinct voices in a discussion of subject matter they share in common, critics may conclude that the lines still end up being too blurred. They might also contend that I give too much credit to Klong chen pa and highlight the Buddhist tradition in general, implicitly taking their tenets at face value.

As much as possible, I have been attentive to the concerns of the academic community. I have documented my sources as accurately as possible and indicated lacunae and inconsistencies wherever they may occur. In the end, however, I must confess that my objective with this work has also been to be true to the spirit of Klong chen pa and and the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. If I was able to successfully walk a balance between academic rigeur and the insider tradition, both of which I would hope to include as audience, only the reader will decide.

2. THE LIFE AND TIMES OF KLONG CHEN PA

The Life of Klong chen pa—The Early Years

Klong chen pa was born in 1308 in the Earth Monkey year in the village of sTod grong, which is located in the Grva valley of the g.Yo ru region of central Tibet.[25] As is often the case with future saints, his birth was attended with certain strange events. When he was conceived, it is said that his mother, 'Brom gza' mo bso nams rgyan, dreamed of a sun (sometimes two suns) blazing on the head of a lion, lighting up the entire world. When he was born, the Dharmapāla Nam gru Re ma ti appeared in the guise of a black woman with a sword, promising Klong chen pa's mother that she would always protect the boy.[26] Not long thereafter, when he was still an infant, his mother left him in a field while she went about other business. She remembered him when it started to hail and ran to fetch the infant, but when she reached him, she found him cradled in the arms of the black protectress.[27]

Klong chen pa also enjoyed a certain amount of prestige from his religious heritage. His father, bsTan bsrungs, was a tantric yogin who belonged to the Rog shes rab 'od lineage, which in turn traced its origins back to the nephew of rGyal ba mchog dbyangs[28] and the family of Ye shes sbang po srung (one of the seven monks ordained by Śāntarakṣita). On his mother's side, Klong chen pa was related to 'Brom ston pa (1005–1064), the foremost disciple of Atiśa.[29]

Klong chen pa learned how to read and write by the age of five. When he was seven, his father initiated him into various rNying ma tantras and *gter ma*, including the *bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa*. Because of his father's Rog affiliation, it is likely that this tantric study heavily favored the Mahāyoga (*sGyu 'phrul*) and Anuyoga (*mDo*) traditions as preserved by that lineage at Dag nag near 'Bras spungs. As for the version of the *Guhyamūlagarbha-tantra* that Klong chen pa

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25 Like that of most important religious figures in Tibet, Klong chen pa's life story has been extensively detailed in a number of biographic sources. However, the biography of Klong chen pa written by his disciple, Bya bral pa bzod pa, is generally regarded as being the most authoritative. For a more detailed bibliography of Klong chen pa's biographies, see Tulku Thondup 1996b. One would also be advised to examine the biographies presented in translation in Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, Tarthang Tulku 1995, Guenther 1975, Dowman 1988, and, most extensively and with a devotional tone, Stewart 2013.

26 Tulku Thondup 1996a: 109.

27 Tulku Thondup 1996b: 146.

28 This member of Padmasambhava's inner circle of twenty-five disciples was so successful at the Hayagrīva *sādhana* that he allegedly had a horse's head spring from his crown.

29 Tarthang Tulku 1977: 254–255.

studied, it belonged to Rong zom's lineage.[30] He also learned astrology and medicine from his father. At the age of nine, it is said that he memorized both the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā* and the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā* after having read them one hundred times. From this, it is apparent that the child both had a preternatural predisposition for study and was being groomed for the religious life. Both of his parents died when he was young, his mother when he was only nine years old and his father when he was eleven. Directly thereafter, he took the first set of vows of monastic renunciation.

Klong chen pa received his ordination in 1319 from the scholar (*slob spon*) Kun dga' 'od zer and bSam grub rin chen, the preceptor (*mkhan po*) at bSam yas. This monastery *cum* university was where Klong chen pa would begin his formal studies. At this time, he was given the refuge-name Tshul khrims blo gros ("Moral Intellect"). Mastering the regulations of the Vinaya by the age of fourteen, he pursued general studies for two more years. When sixteen, he began his tutelage in tantra with bKra shis rin chen. He was provided with the requisite initiations to engage in such esoteric systems of practice, but even more importantly, he was given instruction in their complex symbolism and deeper meaning. The bSam yas grounds must have been an exciting place, with the most promising young men of all the land sharing classes in ancient and secret lore. As the nexus of religious training in Tibet, bSam yas had the responsibility of educating its charges in many systems of practice, including the *Lam 'bras* of the Sa skya tradition, the *Chos drug gnyis* of the bKa' brgyud pa, *Zhi byed*, *Kālacakra*, and *gCod*.[31]

At nineteen years of age, Klong chen pa graduated, as it were, to gSang phu ne'u thog.[32] Since its founding in 1073 by rNgog Legs pa'i shes rab, this had been a bKa' gdams pa seminary, based on India's academy and renowned for its ecumenical attitude. According to Dowman, it was Tibet's only non-sectarian university.[33] Klong chen pa found himself fully engaged in an intensively intellectual curriculum of logic, philosophy and debate. In addition to taking electives in "ordinary" topics, such as grammar and poetics and so forth, he followed convention in also studying the five treatises of Maitreya (*Byams chos sde lnga*), the *Tshad ma sde bdun* of Dharmakīrti, the *Prajñāpāramitā*, and Madhyamaka

30 Note that later in life, Klong chen pa would write two texts on this tantra: the *sPyi'i khog dbub pa* and the *rGyud kyi rnam bshad*, also known as Klong chen pa's *gSang snying 'grel ba*.

31 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 556.

32 Though it is sometimes claimed that Klong chen pa was abbot of bSam yas early in his life, this is hard to believe.

33 Dowman 1988: 140.

philosophy.[34] His success at this institution was marked by the addition of his most famous moniker, Klong chen rab 'byams pa ("Infinite Great Expanse").

Klong chen pa had the fortune of being able to receive teachings from the greatest scholars of his day. He learned of the "six yogas of Nāropa" from the 3rd Karma pa, Rang 'byung rdo rje (1284–1339), and the facets of the Sa skya tradition from the esteemed historian and philosopher, Dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan.[35] If anything, Klong chen pa's education clearly demonstrates the ideal of academia placed at a remove from the extremes of sectarian strife that threatened to engulf other spheres, monastic and political.[36] This ideal was not shared, however, by certain of his colleagues. In fact, Klong chen pa was apparently so dismayed by "the partisan behavior and misconduct" of visiting Khams pa scholars that he resigned from academia with a brief poem of disparagement. In his late twenties, after seven years at gSang phu, he would depart for solitary religious practice.

After five months of dark retreat in a cave at lCog la, he experienced powerful visions of both Padmasambhava and Ye shes mtsho rgyal. This primary couple, who perhaps symbolize the union of Indian and Tibetan religious experience,[37] had been the concealers of the *mKha' 'gro snying thig*. From them, he received the name Dri med 'od zer "Stainless Beam of Light". With these visions fresh in his mind, between the age of twenty-seven and twenty-nine Klong chen pa returned to the uplands of bSam yas. He passed up an audience with the Karma pa on the way, driven apparently by a sense of urgency to reach his goal. Indeed, his future guru was already waiting.

Having received a prophecy by Tārā, as well as a prescient dream of a "wonderful heavenly bird" which carried his books in all directions,[38] Kumārarāja (1266–1343) predicted that the new student would be the foremost of all his disciples.[39] Along with seventy others, Klong chen pa would endure great hardships during his time with this master. Moving between uninhabited valleys, relocating before it was possible to replenish supplies, Klong chen pa was obliged to subsist for two months on only three quart-measures (*bre*) of flour and twenty-one quicksilver pills (*dngul chu*). At night he slept in the same woolen sack that he wore during the day. This severe ascetic lifestyle did not, however, prevent

34 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 577.

35 A surviving personal letter attests to the profound respect that Klong chen pa had for the latter.

36 Klong chen pa still identified himself as a rNying ma pa on the basis of his family heritage and most early training.

37 Though rarely explained explicitly, their positioning in Klong chen pa's life provides a powerful narrative for his own legitimation in the early stage of his career and the advancement of the rNying ma tradition after he had become widely celebrated.

38 Tarthang Tulku 1977: 256.

39 Tulku Thondup 1996b: 150.

Klong chen pa from continuing his scholarly work. As Tarthang Tulku notes, "In the presence of his teacher, he unerringly revised and synthesized the precepts and exhibited an unsullied lucidity in the three disciplines of teaching, debating and writing; he authored a number of translations, commentaries and original treatises."[40] For three years, Klong chen pa received transmissions in all three classes of rDzogs chen and the Dharmapāla rites. At the end of that time, he left his teacher, vowing to go practice for six more years.[41]

Klong chen pa's Root Guru—Kumārarāja

At this major juncture in Klong chen pa's life, it is fitting to turn briefly to the teacher who would make such an impact on the young scholar, Kumārarāja. The esoteric instruction (*man ngag*) chapter of the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*) states that Kumārarāja (Rig 'dzin gzhon nu rgyal po) was born in 1266 at Bar gsar rdzing kha. He focused from a young age on the *sadhāna*s of Hevajra and Saṃvara, as well as Nāropa's six teachings. Kumārarāja received teachings from the famous yogin U rgyan pa, the rNying ma tantric lineage from Khyung ma shak dar, and when at mTshur phu, the *gSang ba gnad kyi me long* and the *Vima sNying thig* from gNyan ras.[42] Even after attaining renown as an artist, however, he remained poor. He became a disciple of Me long rdo rje (1243–1303), but because he had nothing to offer in exchange for receiving the *sNying thig* teachings, he worked as a painter and performed austerities. This was apparently a crucial time for his spiritual development. After contracting an extremely bad case of head lice, it is said that "a special mind concentration was born in him."[43]

Directly after this experience, he received initiation (with full-blown visions of Ekajāṭī, standing thirty feet tall, and Karmamāṭṛkā, drinking blood from her cupped hands) as well as permission from Me long rdo rje to go teach. He set forth, continuing to have many visions, seeking solitude in mountain retreats, but also receiving more teachings. From sGom pa (of the lineage of lCe sgom nag po) he learned the *gSang skor* and, significantly, the *bSam gtan mig gi sgron me*. It is clear that his status had changed by this point. For example, he would instruct the 3rd Karma pa Rang 'byung rdo rje in the *sNying thig* precepts, not only when visiting mTshur phu, but on many later occasions. On a practical level,

40 Tarthang Tulku 1977: 256.
41 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 580.
42 Which *sNying thig* is not ordinarily specified, but the autobiography of Padma gling pa states that Kumārarāja was responsible for passing on the system of Vimalamitra.
43 Roerich 1996: 199.

he founded the "new Tsa ri" and worked to prevent trapping and the use of nets to catch fish. In 1342 or 1343, he passed away at the age of seventy-eight.

Aside from some useful chronological and genealogical facts, though, what does all this say about the person represented as being so important for Klong chen pa? First and foremost, Kumārarāja was a master of rDzogs chen, a high-tech and esoteric branch of learning into which Klong chen pa had not previously been introduced. Furthermore, Kumārarāja had been the teacher of some of his instructors at school (the 3rd Karma pa, for example). The artist/yogi's own non-sectarian education must have synched well with Klong chen pa's syncretic tastes. Perhaps most importantly, however, the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ter sngon po*) not only mentions Kumārarāja's philosophical appreciation of the *sNying thig*, the doctrinal currency of the rNying ma order at that time, but also his skill in teaching it "with the help of terminology peculiar to that system" rather than by means of the gradual[44] stages of tantra.[45]

The Life of Klong chen pa—The Later Years

According to an autobiographical piece by Klong chen pa, entitled *mThong snang rin po che 'od kyi drva ba* and included in his *sNying thig ya bzhi*,[46] after leaving Kumārarāja in the spring of 1339 he secluded himself with eight other students in a well-known area above bSam yas known as mChims phu. He had previously received formal transmission of the *mKha' 'gro snying thig* when at sNye phu Shug gseb from 'Od zer Go cha, but while he was in this place, he received a direct download from Guru Rinpoche himself. Here he moved formally into the role of teacher, transmitting the initiations of that cycle for the first time. It was by all accounts a very wild semester, "Against the backdrop of these rituals, transmissions and celebrations, Longchenpa and his disciples enter a spiritually excited state, which gives rise to a stream of visions and states of possession in the group."[47] This was an extremely productive time for Klong chen pa. Not only was he constantly receiving "mind-treasures" and transcribing them, he was able to immediately entrust them to his party and put them into practice.

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44 Note how this remark raises the question whether 'Gos lo tsā ba gzhon nu dpal (1392–1481), the author of the *Deb ter sngon po*, associated the *sNying thig* cycles with the "sudden enlightenment" school of thought. The connection between rDzogs chen and subitism will be taken up in Chapter 6.

45 Roerich 1996: 200.

46 This text has been translated as *The Luminous Web of Precious Visions* (Germano & Gyatso 2000).

47 Germano & Gyatso 2000: 245.

At this time, Klong chen pa received both confirmation and criticism from such terrific Dharmapālas as the rDzogs chen protectress herself, Ekajaṭī. She announced that he was indeed ready to teach the cycle, but took him to task for seemingly minor details, including mispronunciation (particularly disturbing to her was his vocalic omission of the final sibilant in the word *rigs*).[48] This was only one of many occasions when his pure perception of the enlightened beings in attendance during ritual proceedings was so strong that others, such as his disciples, could also clearly discern their presence. Later in life, for example, when he was recomposing his *Seven Treasuries* (*mDzod bdun*), the cosmic protector Rāhula[49] and others could be seen preparing his writing supplies.[50]

As he matured, Klong chen pa turned his energies to restoring such Tibetan holy places as Lha ring brag and Zhva'i lha khang (founded by Myang ting nge 'dzin in the 9th century). Primarily, however, he focused on bSam yas. In particular, Klong chen pa is remembered for his work in repairing the ancient *stūpa*s there. He moved to a cave hermitage known as White Skull Mountain (Gangs ri thod dkar).[51] Also known as O rgyan rdzong, this was a power-site on top of a ridge at the heart of a topographical representation of rDo rje phag mo.[52] At this sacred place, Klong chen pa would have his experience of "optimal knowledge" in a *thod rgal* vision.[53] Over his life, it would also be the place where he was respected as abbot and allowed the privacy to compose many of his commentarial works, including the *bLa ma yang tik*.[54]

It is unclear exactly at what point Klong chen pa's activities were interrupted by the political upheavals then taking place in Tibet. According to one biography, he decided to leave the country before the conflagration fully erupted between Byang chub rgyal mtshan and the 'Bri gung pa.[55] Others say that Klong chen pa was forced to leave Tibet as a result of a failed attempt to mediate between these two parties. In this version, Klong chen pa's direct relationship with the 'Bri

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48 Germano & Gyatso 2000: 252.

49 This fierce protector ranks among the highest class of *dregs pa* Dharmapālas. With his nine heads, four hands, thousand eyes and serpentine lower torso, he stirs the depths of space. An association with the Indian demon Rāhu is confirmed by the Tibetans' belief that the giant face in Rāhula's belly is responsible for swallowing the sun and moon during times of eclipse.

50 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 591.

51 To this day, certain geographical features mentioned in his biography are still visible. Looking today out of the primary cave, one finds a juniper similar to the one in which the resident Dharma-protectors resided. A large slab further below the cave indicates where the Dharma-protectors ground his ink.

52 Dowman 1988: 232.

53 Dowman 1988: 145.

54 Dowman 1988: 139–144.

55 Samuel 1993: 492; Tulku Thondup 1996b: 160–161.

gung order was forced upon him by one of its hierarchs, sGom pa kun rin, who had identified a sword-shaped birthmark on his back with a prophecy made by Padmasambhava about a son of the devil Māra. This poor fellow, hoping for a way to escape the flames of hell, sought Klong chen pa because he was an emanation of Mañjuśrī,[56] the only person who could supposedly save him.[57] He was successful in finding Klong chen pa and taking refuge with him, but in so doing roused the ire of Byang chub rgyal mtshan, who in turn forced the rNying ma lama to leave Tibet at the age of forty-two.

Whatever the precise reasons for Klong chen pa's ten-year sojourn in Bhutan,[58] the time was ripe for the propagation of rDzogs chen there. The country had first been introduced to Buddhism in the seventh century when Srong brtsan sgam po built two temples there. By the time of Klong chen pa's arrival, it was a place where political power was subordinate to religious power.[59] In contrast to the civil war he had left behind in Tibet, Bhutan must have provided Klong chen pa with considerable peace and quiet for continued composition. It is believed that this is the period when he wrote many of his *mDzod bdun* and, in particular, the *Grub mtha' mdzod*.

Klong chen pa's time in Bhutan was also occupied with other concerns. Not one for building religious centers in Tibet, in Bhutan he founded no less than eight monasteries (some of which remain active today, including Thar pa gling (near Bum thang), Shar mkho thing rin chen gling and bSam gtan gling (in sPa gro)). From there, his teachings were able to spread westwards to Nepal.[60] He fathered at least two children there with a former nun, the sister of his patron. Their secret union was discovered after the birth of the second child, a son named Grags pa 'od zer (the first had been passed off as the daughter of the nun's mother). Klong chen pa's consort, sKyid pa lags, was forced to leave for Tibet, and while it is not clear from the biographies if she was ever reunited with Klong chen pa, the children remained in Bum thang.[61] In time, Grags pa 'od zer would be recognized as an incarnation of Hayagrīva and a great scholar in his

56 It is noteworthy that Klong chen pa by the age of forty or so had already come to be widely recognized as an incarnation of this *bodhisattva*.

57 Guenther 1976: xv.

58 Note that the country now known as Bhutan had not been nationalized under this name by the 14th century. Buddhism reports a historical relationship with this land dating back to the 8th century, with Padmasambhava's terrific manifestation of rDo rje drod lo flying there on the back of a pregnant tigress.

59 Aris 1979: 262.

60 Tarthang Tulku 1977: 257.

61 Aris 1988: 30.

own right.[62] The biographical sources conflict as to whether Klong chen pa had another son in Bhutan, Zla ba grags pa, or if this young man was the son of Grags pa 'od zer.[63] There are also occasional references to another possible son of Klong chen pa, Ngags dbang grags pa, who was an important treasure-revealer (*gter ton*) in the Bhutanese rNying ma tradition.

When Klong chen pa finally returned to Tibet, he was reconciled with the victorious Byang chub rgyal mtshan by Sangs rgyas dpal rin. According to the *Blue Annals*, Klong chen pa even became Byang chub rgyal mtshan's teacher.[64] His reputation had apparently grown so much by this time that he was followed constantly or forced to debate to prove his knowledge. The latter years of his life, then, were divided between giving public teachings, writing and practicing in solitude or semi-retreat conditions. According to the biography written in 1725 by Lha lung Kun bzang 'gyur med mchog grub, this was the period when Byang chub rgyal mtshan gave the yogi his most common name, Klong chen pa.[65]

The core of Klong chen pa's curriculum at this time continued to be the *mKha' 'gro snying thig*, open to all to might wish to come (including Byang chub rgyal mtshan). He also openly taught the "highest hidden" instructions of rDzogs chen (i.e., *khregs chod* and *thod rgal*) to the masses, either on the riverbanks of sKyi chu in upper dbU ru or at various monasteries. In itself, this signals his leanings towards a public accessibility of what was ordinarily held to be esoteric. To some degree, that perspective may have been due to his own relatively open exposure to such teachings (i.e., tantras that had been taught by his father or in the university) at a young age.

At the age of fifty-six, Klong chen pa prepared his affairs and composed his last testament.[66] His disciples pleaded for him to remain, but discoursing on the transient nature of things, he traveled to the forest of mChims phu, high up to a cave on the east side of the valley "the closest he could come to the Bodh Gaya Siwaitsel (Sitavana) charnel ground," and passed away with numerous miraculous signs.[67] Although it was winter, the snow melted, flowers came into bloom, and music spontaneously played in stereo inside and outside the cave. His relics

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62 Tulku Thondup 1996b: 161.
63 Tulku Thondup 1996b: 202.
64 Roerich 1996: 200–202.
65 The origin of this name is in doubt. It has alternatively been suggested that he received it from Kumārarāja or when at bSam yas. Kapstein is of the opinion that this name was derived from a group of rDzogs chen tantras entitled the *kLong chen rab 'byams kyi rgyud* (Kapstein 2000: 245, n. 90).
66 Klong chen pa's passing is sometimes given as 1364. For a precise explanation of the different methods of dating his death (e.g., December 23, 1363; December 24, 1363; December 25, 1363; or January 22, 1364), see Goodman & Davidson 1992: 190, n. 6.
67 Goodman & Davidson 1992: 232.

included "substances of the five rainbow colors which were as hard as diamonds." Klong chen pa's reliquary can be found in the seed-syllable HUṂ which spontaneously appeared as a rock formation in a gully nearby.[68]

While readers accustomed to the biographies (*rnam thar*) of Tibetan saints may find even some of the most fantastic elements described above to be commonplace, Klong chen pa's life constitutes a very special place within the entire hagiographic tradition of that country. He has variously been recognized as one of the three famous incarnations of Mañjuśrī, an emanation of Vimalamitra (like Kumārarāja), a second Jina (*rGyal ba gnyis pa*),[69] the "second dGa' rab rdo rje" prophesied by Śākyamuni Buddha as well as Padmasambhava,[70] and the second Samantabhadra.[71] Needless to say, these titles are not given lightly.

Two Brief Former Lives of Klong chen pa

The rNying ma tradition has recognized a few subsequent incarnations of Klong chen pa, but these do not belong to a regular *sprul sku* lineage. This is perhaps due to the sheer magnitude of numinous presence which such a person must possess, or the political ramifications involved. Looking at the lack of direct reincarnation in the case of the other two Mañjuśrī figures (namely, Sa skya Paṇḍita and Tsong kha pa), these kinds of questions cannot help but arise. Yet, from a purely historical point of view, one must remember that Klong chen pa's contemporary, the 3rd Karma pa, was one of the first recognized reincarnate lamas in all of Tibet.[72] The rNying ma tradition clearly marks a pair of incarnations prior to Klong chen pa, however.

The first commonly recognized human incarnation of Klong chen pa was the daughter of King Khri srong lde btsan. The story of Lha lcam Padma gsal is found in both the *mKha' 'gro snying thig*,[73] cited in Bya bral pa bzod pa's biography of Klong chen pa[74] and O rgyan gling pa's hagiography of Padmasambhava, the *Padma bka' thang*.[75] Though these contemporaneous accounts agree that the princess died when only eight years old, they differ on other important points.[76]

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68 Goodman & Davidson 1992: 228.
69 According to Tarthang Tulku.
70 According to Khenpo Palden Sherab.
71 According to H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche.
72 The first recognized *sprul sku* in Tibet was the 2nd Karma pa, Karma Pakṣi (1204–1283).
73 Kapstein 2000: 226, n. 64 (cit. *mKha' 'gro sNying thig*, III: ff. 377–390).
74 Kapstein 2000: 226, n. 64 (cit. *mKha' 'gro sNying thig*, III: ff. 491–497).
75 Kapstein 2000: 226, n. 71 (cit. *Padma bka' thang*: ff. 535–547).
76 Both texts were hidden in the 8th century and discovered in the 14th century.

In the former version, Padmasambhava used the girl's death as a means of explaining to the king the nature of karma. He took pity on the child, shamanically retrieving her spirit through the inscription with vermilion of a sacred syllable (NṚ) on her chest. She was revived from the "between" (*bar do*), at least sufficiently so for Guru Rinpoche to give her the full transmission of the *mKha' 'gro snying thig*. The latter version lacks any such resurrection story, as well as any mention of the *sNying thig*. It does, however, expand upon Padmasambhava's lesson on karma. After explaining that the girl had taken birth as the king's daughter so that he could repay a karmic debt to her, the guru clairvoyantly predicted her fortunate rebirth as a certain Dri med 'od zer.

According to a rDo rje phag mo augury given at mChims phu in the mid-fourteenth century, the incarnation immediately prior to Klong chen pa was a certain rNying ma pa *gter ton* named Padma las 'brel rtsal. The dates of his life are rather mysterious (to say the least!), but it is safe to say that he lived at the turn of the fourteenth century.[77] This would make him the first incarnation of princess Padma gsal in six centuries. True to Padmasambhava's prophecy, he proved himself a treasure-revealer by discovering a two-volume set of the *mKha' 'gro snying thig* at the young age of twenty-three.[78]

For details on the life of this figure, one may turn to the autobiographical memory of Padma gling pa (as he, too, claimed Padma las 'brel rtsal as a past life). It is a colorful tale which paints the *gter ton* as a destitute fool, born of the incestuous union of a yogi and his sister, who at some point was given a scrap of yellow paper with directions on how to find a number of treasure-texts. After finding these, he met the Karma pa Rang 'byung rdo rje and blessed him with the transmission of the newly discovered *mKha' 'gro snying thig* before he could even interpret it himself. After a month-long tryst in lower gNyal with a woman he had met on his wanderings, Padma las 'brel rtsal dreamed that she was a demoness. But while still attempting to plumb the truth of this, he was set upon by the woman's husband and family. Following a long chase, he was mortally wounded.[79]

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77 Seemingly unconcerned about the fact that Klong chen pa himself was born in 1308, his biography places Padma las 'brel rtsal's dates as 1291–1315/1317. The rDo rje phag mo prophecy is more sympathetic to the plight of later historians, with that deity clarifying that Padma las 'brel rtsal actually died in 1307 (Germano & Gyatso 2000: 247). According to Tarthang Tulku, Padma las 'brel rtsal could have been born in 1231 instead of 1291 (Tarthang Tulku 1984: 160). The BDRC database places the *gter ton*'s birth in 1248 (cit. *Bod rig pa'i tshig mdzod chen mo shes bya rab gsal*: p. 2288).

78 Padma las 'brel rtsal supposedly discovered eighty-eight texts in all, six of which are found in the *Rin chen gter mdzod*.

79 Aris 1988: 27–28.

It is generally intimated that the death of this *gter ton* was premature, a result of his having shown the text too soon or having been unable to find an appropriate consort. Given his "ill-fated liason [*sic*] with a woman," the latter is more likely.[80] As Tulku Thondup notes, "Since the functioning of all existent phenomena depends on their positive causes and conditions, if the right consort cannot support the Terton, the discovery might become impossible or very difficult, like growing flowers without heat. Then even the Terton's life is threatened."[81] One would imagine this to be even more the case when cuckoldry is involved.

Nor is the reincarnation succession from Padma las 'brel rtsal to Klong chen pa entirely without complications. The *mKha' 'gro snying thig* clearly states that the one who discovered it would reincarnate in Bhutan. This would seem to indicate Padma gling pa, leaving Klong chen pa altogether out of Padmasambhava's prophecy. Fortunately the rDo rje phag mo prophecy, which accompanied Klong chen pa's discovery of the *mKha' 'gro snying thig* in mChims phu, would reconcile this awkward situation. According to her, Klong chen pa's life (being so contemplative) should be considered a "pure land" hiatus between the other two incarnations.[82]

Klong chen pa's Reincarnations

The traditional rNying ma succession of rebirths after Klong chen pa involves quite a jump forward through the centuries to O rgyan gter bdag gling pa (1646–1714), 'Jigs med gling pa (1730–1798), and mKhan po Ngag chung (1879–1941), also known as Ngag dbang dpal bzang.[83] In this century, the most commonly recognized current incarnation of Klong chen pa is Kyabje Thinley Norbu Rinpoche. Others include H.E. Namkha Drimed Rinpoche (b.1938 in Eastern Tibet), Lingtrul Rinpoche (b.1955 in mGo log) and Gangteng Tulku (b.1955, Bhutan).

Given that Klong chen pa is commonly understood to have been an emanation of Vimalamitra, who promised to reincarnate every century, one might be tempted to also draw a line between him and others who share that distinction. These include Chos kyi rdo rje (18th c.), bSam gtan rgya mtsho (early 20th c.,

80 Germano & Gyatso 2000: 245.
81 Tulku Thondup & Talbott 1986: 83.
82 Germano & Gyatso 2000: 247.
83 The last reincarnation, a student of sMyo shul Lung rtogs bstan pa'i nyi ma of Kaḥ thog, was predicted by rDza dpal sprul (1808–1887). See Nyoshul & Das 1995: 161, 170.

the root guru of Tulku Urgyen), H.H. Penor Rinpoche, Dangma Lhungyel Gyeltsen, and all of the Khyentse incarnations.[84]

Michael Aris was critical of the authenticity of the *gter ma* of Padma gling pa (1445–1521), the patron-saint of Bhutan, not only because he had evidence of fallacious data included within it, but also because he felt an academic responsibility towards such rigeur. Putting aside the question of how one is supposed to interpret Padma gling pa's claim to princess Padma gsal, one finds in his autobiography an odd bit of information about two brief reincarnations between him and Klong chen pa: one was a young boy, killed while stealing peas, and the other was an enigmatic figure "who died at the age of twenty-five after a visit to the heavenly palace of Padmasambhava."[85] These persons are not mentioned elsewhere in the Klong chen pa corpus of literature.

With the proper amount of time and patience, one could surely find other teachers throughout the centuries who have themselves claimed or been accorded some extraordinary connection with Klong chen pa, Vimalamitra and Padma gling pa. In all likelihood, like all the figures listed above, these would be found in the rNying ma order. Outside this fold, there has been reported only a single possible exception. In conversation one day with one of his dGe lugs pa teachers, Jeffrey Hopkins was surprised to hear that mKhas grub rje dGe legs dpal bzang (1385–1438) was himself a reincarnation of Klong chen pa.[86] The potential political and spiritual ramifications of this statement are quite large, yet in all of the centuries spanning the fourteenth century and today, they have never been exploited. Surely this reincarnation strand stands at the limit of the hypothetical.

The Cataclysmic Fourteenth Century

The fourteenth century proved to be a difficult time for many regions around the globe. To begin with, it marked a shift from several centuries of warmer-than-normal temperatures (the "medieval climate optimum") to the "Little Ice Age." The slowing of the gulf stream led to massive drought and bouts of famine. It is believed that the Americas were hit particularly hard. The Anasazi Indians disappeared off the face of the Earth. Western history likes to focus on another disaster, the Black Plague, which peaked in Europe around 1348 and

84 The connection between Klong chen pa, Vimalamitra, Padma gling pa and certain of the other figures who are currently alive and teaching was garnered relatively easily by searching the Internet for their websites. Clearly, it is a great legitimation to be known as a spiritual descendent of such past masters.

85 Aris 1988: 30.

86 Hopkins 1999: 15.

killed between a third and half of its population. In fact, this pox had likely been brought by the Mongols. Large swathes of Asia under their control were also terribly ravaged. These environmental and epidemiological disasters resulted in widespread economic collapse and superstitious panic. The Muslim world fragmented into numerous belligerent states. Isolated as it is, Tibet escaped many of these horrors.

Yet the world in which Klong chen pa lived was also made tumultuous through human machinations, primarily a civil war caused by the decline of the Sa skya hegemony and the ambitions of a nationalistic warrior. The Phag mo gru pa bKa' brgyud order had been granted a large land-grant by Möngke Khan in 1254, named the Ilkhanid appanage because of its connection with Hülegü.[87] It had two seats of power, both linked with the rLangs family, for its religious and political operations. The former was its monastic seat at sDam sa thal, the abbot of which, Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1293–1360), did a remarkable job of distancing himself from the political imbroglios of his day. The latter was the sNe'u gdong fortress, strategically located at the head of the Yar lung valley. Absorbed by the Sa skya school as well as the 'Bri gung pa and g.Ya' bzangs myriarchies over the thirteenth century, the order's holdings had been reduced from their former grandeur.[88] Tensions flared, but there was little recourse for the Phag mo gru pa. With a series of events that culminated during Klong chen pa's adult years, this explosive situation would lead to full-blown civil war in central Tibet.

In 1322, when scandal arose within the Phag mo gru pa myriarchal center itself, the local governor (*Khri dpon*) was exiled and the position offered to his nephew, Grags pa rgyal mtshan. Uninterested in secular rule, the kindly abbot deferred to his younger brother, who had also been born in the same valley as Klong chen pa.[89] So it came to pass that a young man of the rLangs clan named Byang chub rgyal mtshan (1302–1364), who had shown much more talent at administration than religious devotion during his studies at Sa skya, was thrust at the age of twenty into one of the most powerful political offices in Tibet. The task to which

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87 Möngke was a grandson of Ghengis Khan, made into a Great Khan but succeeded by his brother Khubilai upon his death in 1259. Their common brother, Hülegü, controlled the conquests to the West, but had designs on Tibet for two possible reasons: either because his faith in Buddhism had connected him to the 'Bri gung pa or, as Turrell Wylie has suggested, he wanted to ally himself with them as a result of their allegiance with Khaidu Khan (a perennial foe of his brother and rival, Khubilai). For more information, see Stein 1972: 78; Wylie 1984: 131.

88 Central Tibet at this time was divided into thirteen separate districts called myriarchies. According to Tucci's analysis of Sarat Chandra Das and Klong rdol ma, one census taken during the Yüan dynasty reported between 27,369 and 32,401 families living in central Tibet. This number did not include monks or scattered areas outside the thirteen myriarchies (Tucci 1949: 252, n. 40).

89 Dowman 1988: 170.

he immediately set himself was the restitution of his ancestral estate, an action which would eventually have profound effects. This marked the beginning of a shift from what had been a "stagnant situation" in Tibet.[90]

Choosing to avoid direct engagement with the powerful Mongol-backed Sa skya order, Byang chub rgyal mtshan turned his sights towards the properties that the g.Ya' bzangs myriarchy had appropriated. His heavy-handed and violent land-grab methods failed miserably. They also provoked a simmering conflict which would last between these two neighboring counties for the next twenty-odd years. During this time, the persistent appeals of the Phag mo gru pa school to the Sa skya power were definitively denied. Even worse for the young *Khri dpon*, the recently appointed imperial preceptor of Tibet (*Ti shih*), Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1310–1358), set his sights on giving the Phag mo gru pa seat to the nephew of one of his personal friends. In 1336, Byang chub rgyal mtshan was arrested by the Sa skya bishop (*dPon chen*), dBang brtson, who ordered him to surrender his position as *Khri dpon*. He stubbornly refused. Byang chub rgyal mtshan was barely released, after three months of imprisonment, after the situation had caused such an unwelcome controversy that the *dPon chen* wanted nothing more to do with him.

Ten years later, the g.Ya' bzangs clans attacked the Phag mo gru pa again. The Sa skya school was called in to mediate. In retrospect, it seems that their ulterior motive was to actually seize sNe'u gdong fortress as their own. Once again, under duplicitous circumstances, Byang chub rgyal mtshan was arrested by the next Sa skya *dPon chen*, rGyal ba bzang po. Again, he fared badly. He suffered floggings, ridicule and exposure to the elements, but somehow managed to burn his official sandalwood seal (which, if confiscated, would have effectively granted the Sa skya power-of-attorney). Meanwhile, his astute and faithful steward had prepared the sNe'u gdong defenses, preventing seizure of the coveted fortress.

It was only through the good fortune of internal Sa skya powers struggles that Byang chub rgyal mtshan was finally released, but only on good faith that he would present himself for a final trial. He never did. One might wonder if his decision to openly defy the Sa skya order, which signaled the escalation of a regional conflict into all-out civil war, was due to his own ambition or the difficult position into which he had been forced. His biography does not paint him as the aggressor in the battles that followed. Instead, his victories seem to have been based on a series of defensive stances in various fortress strongholds,

90 Petech 1990: 86.

resisting the sieges of his enemies until their own supplies were exhausted, and routing them with his elite cavalry (*bu rta*).[91]

In 1350, Lha sa itself was conquered by the Phag mo gru pa. At this point, the 'Bri gung pa entered the fray. The war threatened to become even bigger, such that "the foremost leaders of the Tibetan clergy met at Rab btsun to discuss the possibility of a general pacification."[92] It is tempting to think that this was the occasion when Klong chen pa's attempt at diplomacy supposedly failed.[93] Chos grags bzang po, one of Klong chen pa's immediate disciples, reports that his master met with Byang chub rgyal mtshan for the first time in Gangs dkar around 1350.[94] In any case, at least the great redactor Bu ston was there. However, the meeting had no success. Tensions continued to mount. Further negotiations towards reconciliation were attempted by bSod nams blo gros rgyal mtshan and dBang phyug dpal,[95] but they also failed. Byang chub rgyal mtshan would not rest until the 'Bri gung pa were destroyed.

One possible reason for Byang chub rgyal mtshan's particular rancor against this school could be its history of dissension through steppe alliances. Indeed, the rebellion of the 'Bri gung pa was one of the bloodiest events of the thirteenth century. After fighting sporadically with the Sa skya myriarchy for three years, allying themselves with a rogue Mongol tribe and cutting the transnational mail-route, they were violently suppressed in 1290. Mongols led by the temporal administrator (*dPon chen*) of Tibet, Ag len bkra shis, laid waste to their monastery, burning it to the ground and massacring most of its monks. Their base of operations would be rebuilt over the next decade, but they did not really assert themselves again until 1350, when they made the fatal mistake of trying to contain the Phag mo gru pa rise to power.[96] Even as the abbots of the two schools

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91 Petech 1990: 107.

92 Petech 1990: 110.

93 The dates match up to suggest that Klong chen pa made a quick departure. Klong chen pa's daughter in Bhutan was supposedly born in 1351, but he was in dbU ru province, Tibet as late as 1350, restoring the dilapidated temple of Zhwa'i lha khang (which had been erected in the 9th century by Myang ting nge 'dzin).

94 See van der Kuijp 2003 (cit. *Kun mkhyen chos kyi rgyal po rig 'dzin klong chen rab 'byams kyi rnam thar dad pa gsum gyi 'jug ngogs, Kun mkhyen klong chen rab 'byams kyi rnam thar*, ed. bKra shis (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1994): ff. 41–42)).

95 The former figure is likely a Sa skya hierarch who lived between 1312–1375. Interestingly, he is mentioned in one of Klong chen pa's biographies as venerating the rNying ma lama upon his return from Bhutan (Tulku Thondup 1996b: 161). The latter figure is listed by BDRC as a *mkhan po* of Kaḥ thog monastery who lived from 1332–1384. This would mean that he was only eighteen years old at the time of this meeting. While hardly making him a senior diplomat, it certainly confirms his affiliation with the rNying ma school.

96 Tulku Thondup 1996b: 55.

struggled for reconciliation, their local armies insisted on war. In 1353, Byang chub rgyal mtshan's troops finally achieved victory. After years of internecine trauma, Tibet was finally allowed to begin to heal.

It had been very ugly war, not only in terms of lost human lives but also terrible vengeance exacted on the landscape itself. Houses and temples (including bSam yas) had routinely been burned as warring forces retreated. The practice of razing entire forests to the ground during periods of siege must have dramatically transformed the face of central Tibet.[97] Yet Tibet was in much better shape than her Mongol-ruled neighbor to the East. China had been suffering a cataclysmic series of rebel uprisings, floods, famine and plague. Dynamics of power were shifting with the dissolution of the Yüan dynasty. Tibet had been subordinate to remote rule for more than one hundred years.[98] With the departure of the Mongols, there was a natural power-vacuum. Byang chub rgyal mtshan barely needed to wait for the Mongols to abandon the capital of Dadu on their way back to the steppe before instituting his nationalistic campaign.

By 1354, Byang chub rgyal mtshan's political grasp on Tibet was assured. In 1357, the Mongol emperor officially recognized this fact by conferring upon Byang chub rgyal mtshan the title of *T'ai situ*, thereby replacing the title of *Ti shih* which had formally belonged to Sa skya hierarchs. For his part, Byang chub rgyal mtshan took upon himself the dynastic era title of *sDe srid*. This was not merely a token semantic gesture, but part of a concerted effort to invoke nationalist sentiment through memories of a glorious past of Tibet. As Tucci would put it,

> At that time historiography took on a different character; it was no longer a bare chronological record of facts, it became a historical evocation; past events took precedence of the present. This insistence on ancient times, the glorification of the old dynasties and the delight in ancient glories, appeared, as we have already said, in the times of Byaṅ c'ub rgyal mts'an, when national consciousness was awakened.[99]

Archaic customs and traditional dress were again required of ministers at the reestablished New Year festivals, taxes were restructured, the law-codes (*hor khrims*) which had been perceived as a means of Mongol domination were replaced with the ancient law codes of Srong brtsan sgam po, and the thirteen myriarchies were reorganized into new districts. The last of these changes was

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97 Tulku Thondup 1996b: 116.

98 According to Tibetan sources, Genghis Khan arrived in Tibet in 1206 or 1207. In actuality, Genghis Khan never went to Tibet. Ködan, the son of Ögödei Khan, sent 30,000 troops to Tibet in 1239. Sa skya Paṇḍita was appointed regent of the Tibetan regions of dBus and gTsang in 1249.

99 Tucci 1949: 140.

significant in its shift of "galactic polity" (to use Tambiah's term) to a more autonomous center under Byang chub rgyal mtshan's control.

Byang chub rgyal mtshan also made great improvements in transportation and built new military posts to deter roving bandits. This move alone apparently improved the internal security of Tibet to such a degree that this era came to be known as that of the "Old Woman Carrying Gold" (*rgan mo gser 'khur*), suggesting that such a person could walk safely from one end of Tibet to the other.[100] The mail-service was maintained at least until Byang chub rgyal mtshan's death. Despite its financial burden on the local population (even when it was not being abused by aristocrats), no one could deny its strategic importance.[101]

Overall, the rise and fall of Buddhist orders in the fourteenth century was integrally linked to the fortunes of the secular rulers with whom they were allied. The patron-priest relationship (*yon mchod*),[102] established first between Sa skya Paṇḍita and Köden and further deepened with 'Phags pa (1235–1290) and Khubilai, continued into Ming dynasty China with the bKa' brgyud school.[103] The relationship was not without its tensions, however. To use Weber's term, it was a hierocratic relationship with secular and religious interests in subtle competition. The monastic institutions exerted pressure by threatening to revoke their religious blessings. Byang chub rgyal mtshan's ascendancy over rival religious groups involved the loss of real estate, not credibility. He did not lose respect for the Sa skya lamas just because he had been besieged by their order. Nor did Byang chub rgyal mtshan dismantle their institution when he came to power. Within a generation or two of his death, perhaps because they were more interested in political rather than religious agendas, the Phag mo gru pa would themselves begin to fade from importance, leaving a power-vacuum which would respectively be filled by the bKa' brgyud pa in gTsang and the nascent dGe lugs order in dBus. The rNying ma school did not enjoy that kind of bloc. Its growth would be largely sidelined for several centuries.

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100 Shakabpa 1984: 82.

101 Shakabpa 1984: 67.

102 Interestingly, this term is only documented for the first time in the *Red Annals* (*Deb ther mar po*) in 1346.

103 The 3rd Karma pa, who for years had been traveling back and forth between Tibet and China, died in the Mongol capitol in 1239 without securing religious or political appointments for friends in the bKa' brgyud order (Petech 1990: 87). At the turn of the 15th century, the Ming emperor Yong Le had grown so enamored of the 5th Karma pa that he proposed for all of Tibet to be converted to the bKa' brgyud order.

The rNying ma School after Klong chen pa

After Klong chen pa's passing, the rNying ma school continued on in much the same way as it had survived before. In other words, it mainly existed as a religious fringe consisting of lay families in rural townships, monks and priests in village temples, visiting scholars accepted into bSam yas and universities of other orders, and yogis in remote hermitages. That the rNying ma order was not monastically oriented certainly helps explain its relatively small size. Other schools had greater concentrations of wealth, which in turn promoted monastic development, land to support the monasteries and resources, and a dedicated population base from which to draw new monks. Before they had even come by their name,[104] the rNying ma order did not fit into the "elite" ideal of Tibetan Buddhism (admitting that such a tradition of Buddhism defined by monasticism had even come to exist in Tibet in the same way as it had existed in India). Klong chen pa had done the school a great service by synthesizing its texts and the rDzogs chen system, but there is little evidence to suppose that it had previously had any sort of inferiority complex.

There are differing opinions about the reason why the rNying ma pa (as well as Klong chen pa, as an exemplary of that school) were more than willing to refrain from large-scale institutionalization. Tarthang Tulku suggests that rNying ma teachers chose their way of life for two specific reasons. First, remote areas were often believed to be more conducive to practice than bustling monasteries and the distractions of regional political powers. Second, many lamas found relevance in ministering to small lay communities.[105] Without a doubt, that sense of relevance was linked to local connections with family and patrons. Dowman continues this line of thought by connecting the *gter ma* tradition, which tended to promote smaller self-sufficient religious communities, with a rNying ma disdain for political involvement.[106] To some extent, this connects with Tucci's view that the *gter ma* tradition was responsible for saving the rNying ma school from complete obsolescence, giving it a dogmatic base and independence after the fall of the dynastic era when the other schools were rising in power.[107]

Against this position, Gene Smith has argued that the concentration of rNying ma practitioners in geographically remote areas was not actually out of choice, but due to regional differences of opinion. With sectarian conflict in dbUs-gTsang,

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104 One must remember that the rNying ma pa, or "Old School," would only have meaning in contradistinction to a bunch of newcomers (which is to say, the gSar ma tradition, dating from the 11th century in Tibet).

105 Tarthang Tulku 1984: 159.

106 Dowman 1988: 27.

107 Tucci 1949: 108–109.

an area of political centralization, he claims that the rNying ma pa became a target of the "puritanical intellectuals of the New Tantric transmissions."[108] The extent to which the rNying ma order was persecuted is a sensitive issue, but also a complex one. There is no arguing that for centuries they had had to defend themselves against charges of moral degeneration and misuse of the tantras, overemphasis of ritual over erudition, and canonical innovation. Apologists might argue that these various factors did not constitute a radically polarized and sectarian-based persecution against the rNying ma school overall, but it is still fair to conclude that they took a toll. As Kapstein conservatively writes, "None the less, the Nyingmapa did suffer in the temporal sphere owing to their determined aloofness from the political scene."[109]

The rNying ma school as such did not really achieve the same kind of institutional momentum as the other orders until much later. During the medieval era of the twelft to fifteenth centuries, it is fair to say that rNying ma fortunes were on the wane. That period saw the dominance of the Sa skya pa under the Mongols, the Phags mo gru pa with Byang chub rgyal mtshan, and the Karma bKa' brgyud pa with their gTsang patrons. It was only with the "settlement of 1642" that their fortunes changed, along with those of the dGe lugs pa order, with the allegiance of the 5th Dalai Lama (1617–1682) to the Northern Treasure tradition (*byang gter*) of the rNying ma school (which had connections with his family). This school, a minor order based on the *gter ma* of dNgos grub rgyal mtshan (also known as Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can (1337–1408)), was centered south of Lha sa at the rDo rje brag monastery.

In 1676, a "new" sMin grol gling monastery replaced "old sMin grol gling" in upper dGra bzhi, with Pema Gar dbang 'gyur med rdo rje (1646–1714) being named as sMin gling gter chen. A prodigy who had been personally ordained by the Great Fifth, he was responsible for compiling the rNying ma *bka' ma* (the thirteen collected volumes of Padmasambhava's teachings) and establishing the Southern Treasure tradition, which mirrored the Northern Treasure tradition at rDo rje brag. Both sMin grol gling monasteries were tragically destroyed by rogue Mongols of the Dzungar tribe in the early part of the next century, but the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw a blossoming of rNying ma institutions. By the first half of the twentieth century, claiming more than a thousand monasteries in Tibet, the rNying ma pa had definitively joined the so-called "elite" tradition.[110]

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108 Aris 1979: 154.
109 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 396.
110 Tulku Thondup 1987: 46.

To some degree, the success of the rNying ma school can be attributed to Klong chen pa himself. Over the centuries, interest in his achievements never waned. Perhaps most critical to their survival in posterity was the dedication of Klong chen pa's direct disciples. These numbered in the thousands, but his closest students were Chos grags bzang po Bya bral pa bzod pa (his primary biographer),[111] Khyab brdal lhun grub and bDe legs rgya mtsho.[112] Others included Grags pa Seng ge, g.Yag sde Paṇ chen, and Shes rab mgon po. Kapstein sees literary parallels in "unusual clarity and precision of diction" that lead him to think that Rig 'dzin rgod ldem may have drawn on Klong chen pa for inspiration.[113] In Bhutan, Klong chen pa's chief disciple was dPal 'byor rgyal mtshan, who expanded the order by building more monasteries (to the east of sPa gro) and beginning a lineage of incarnations (*sprul sku*) which still survives today.[114] His son, Ngags dbang grags pa was also very important in the Bhutanese rNying ma tradition as a *gter ton*.

Why Klong chen pa's contributions did not provoke more of a blossoming of the rNying ma academia is somewhat of a mystery. As Germano puts it, Klong chen pa's work would have a relatively limited circulation for the next four centuries "despite, or perhaps because of, the immensity of his accomplishment."[115] Or maybe it was due to the inherently dispersed membership of the rNying ma school, which lacked a centralized scholastic environment after his death. In either case, attention to Klong chen pa's lineage only began to pick up in the seventeenth century.

The founder of sMin sgrol gling monastery, gTer bdag gling pa (1646–1719), wrote a series of biographies of the eleven lamas who had lived between him and Klong chen pa. This can be interpreted as a savvy business move as much as a sign of devotion. Tracing a line back to an important master was a standard way of certifying the legitimacy of one's religious credentials. Showing historical continuity also served to locate this new monastic institution in the greater context of the rNying ma tradition. Following a time of great socio-political uncertainty for this school, the 1600s marked a watershed. Kaḥ thog monastery, for example, was founded in Eastern Tibet in the mid-twelft century but had been allowed to

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111 Klong chen pa's other main biography, by Kun bzang 'gyur med mchog grub dpal 'bar, is dated to 1725. See Lha lung Kun bzang 'gyur med mchog grub's *Kun mkhyen chos kyi rgyal po gter chen dri med 'od zer gyi rnam par thar pa cung zad spros pa ngo mtshar skal bzang mchog gi dga' ston* (New Delhi, 1984).

112 Tarthang Tulku 1995: 167.

113 Kapstein 2000: 179.

114 Aris 1979: 155.

115 Germano 1994: 275.

fall apart in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[116] In the seventeenth century, with renewed focus on the *sNying thig* cycles, it was given a new lease on life. This century also saw the construction of the Ru dam rDzogs chen and dPal yul monasteries; with sMin grol gling, these would become renowned as institutions of higher learning. To some extent, the rising political fortunes of the rNying ma school were directly related to the decline of the Kar ma bKa' brgyud order and their gTsang patrons.[117] But they were also linked to the leanings of the 5th Dalai Lama, whose tutor was none other than gTer bdag gling pa.

In the eighteenth century, the greatest proponent of Klong chen pa was 'Jigs med gling pa (1730–1798). His list of received teachings (*thob yig*) describes two separate lineages from which he received a transmission of the *mDzod bdun*.[118] The *Grub mtha' mdzod* in particular would be a seminal text for him, seeing that his *Yon tan mdzod* and its autocommentary, the *Shing rta rnam gnyis*, are largely a "continuation and restatement" of Klong chen pa's survey of Buddhism from the perspective of rDzogs chen.[119] Much ado is made about 'Jigs med gling pa's three visionary experiences of Klong chen pa, the mystical encounters at mChims phu that heralded his discovery of the *Klong chen snying thig* mind-treasure, but what Gene Smith calls the "brilliant organization and style" of Klong chen pa's *sNying thig ya bzhi* must have also played into its composition.[120] (Ordinarily, of course, *gter ma* are not thought to have been composed by those who discover them, but in this rare case of ethereal *dārśan*, Klong chen pa is commonly understood as being the "author" of the *Klong chen snying thig*.[121])

On a side note, a few words on the formative relationship between Klong chen pa and Tsong kha pa are in order here. As Kennard Lipman puts it, "to study kLong-chen-pa is to forever change one's understanding of Tsong-kha-pa, and vice versa."[122] From this statement one would assume that Klong chen pa's work is integrally linked with that of Tsong kha pa, or at least informs Tsong kha pa's reading of things. Yet Tsong kha pa does not ever mention Klong chen pa by

116 Smith 2001: 18.
117 Smith 2001: 17.
118 One line of transmission passed from Kun khyab chen po to Khyab gdal lhun grub, Grags pa 'od zer, Sangs rgyas dbon po, Shes rab rgya mtsho, Zla ba grags pa, Kun bzang rdo rje, rGyal mtshan dpal bzang, sNa tshogs rang grol, bsTan 'dzin grags pa, mDo sngags bstan 'dzin, Dam chos bzang po, gNyos ston phrin las, Badzakṣara, and Samantabhadra before finally coming to 'Jigs med gling pa. The other lineage passed to sMan rtse, rDzogs chen pa sod names rin chen, Ngag dbang padma, rGyal dbang bstan 'dzin, O rgyan dpal 'byor, Kun bzang rnam rgyal, both the Phrin las father and son, and Rin chen thang 'brog pa before 'Jigs med gling pa (van Schaik 2000: 14–15).
119 van Schaik 2000: 275, n. 25.
120 van Schaik 2000: 21.
121 Germano 1992: 28.
122 Lipman 1992: 26.

name.[123] In fact, Tsong kha pa's connection with Klong chen pa is rather oblique. In his *Supreme Medicinal Ambrosia of Excellent Medicine* (*Zhan lan bdud rtsi sman mchog*), Tsong kha pa makes reference to the rNying ma lama lHo brag grub chen Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan (1326–1401), whom he revered as one of his four "incomparable teachers."[124] Ehrhard has found that sections of this work match word for word the *Zhu len bdud rtsi gser phreng*, a treasure-text included in the *mKha' 'gro snying thig*. Where they differ, aside from the introduction and certain prophecies, is in Tsong kha pa's mention of lHo brag and Vajrapāṇi rather than Padmasambhava and Ye shes mTsho rgyal.[125]

As mentioned earlier, the *gSer phreng* prophecy elides over Klong chen pa, predicting that the next incarnation after Padma las 'brel rtsal would be born in Bum thang, Bhutan. According to a nineteenth-century account of Klong chen pa's incarnations, tradition interprets this incarnation as his son, Grags pa 'od zer (1356–1409), "The Dharmarāja, the great All-knowing One, wandered around in the Saṃbhogakāya realm [...] and then rose forth from out of this (dimension) in the fashion of a son, an incarnation, who schools all beings."[126] Next in the line of incarnations given in the *gSer phreng* is Zla ba grags pa. Although it remains unclear whether this figure was the grandson or son of Klong chen pa, he did study under Tsong kha pa.[127]

In brief, other than the later inclusion of Klong chen pa's work in the curriculum of sMin grol gling and the effect of that curriculum on the 5th Dalai Lama, it does not appear that Klong chen pa had any direct impact on Tsong kha pa and the dGe lugs pa school per se.

The Works of Klong chen pa in Posterity

In the vast ocean of Tibetan writers, Klong chen pa remains largely in a class of his own. His contributions are appreciated by all of the various orders of Buddhism there, but the rNying ma school has recognized them the most. His style has an incredible range, from simple and plain language to breathtaking and seemingly modern metaphors to profound and erudite philosophical analysis.

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123 According to Robert Thurman, Tsong kha pa did have a critical view of Klong chen pa's understanding of the two truths (Thurman 1984: 290, 295–296).

124 Thurman 1982: 213–230.

125 Ehrhard 1992: 53.

126 Ehrhard 1992: 55, n. 16 (cit. *sNga 'gyur chos 'byung ngo mtshar gtam gyi rol mtsho*, II, ed. Lama Ngodrup & Sherab Drimed, Delhi, 1986: ff. 79–80).

127 Aris 1979: 155; Aris 1988: 30.

A preliminary list of Klong chen pa's works was drafted when he was still alive, during his exile at Bum thang thar pa gling in Bhutan.[128] Perhaps due to this reason, it suffers from gross omissions. The fact that some of his more important works are missing is usually taken as an indication that they were written towards the end of his life. A second summation of Klong chen pa's work was made by one of his main disciples, Chos grags bzang po.[129] The next recorded list was done several centuries later by 'Jigs med gling pa.[130] The cataloguing continues even today.

Though there is no doubt that Klong chen pa was prolific, because many works are not extant it is hard to know exactly how much he wrote. Ten years ago, Dharma Publishing's *Great Treasures* series listed 177 distinct works by Klong chen pa (equalling a total of 5,058 pages).[131] Tulku Thondup puts the number closer to 270.[132] This large discrepancy is most likely a result of redactors using different sources, not an artificial inflation of the number over time. The most up-to-date catalogue is that of the online Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center, which lists over 200 titles in Klong chen pa's *gSung 'bum*. Included there are two recently discovered works, one on logic and a tantric commentary.

Though Leonard van der Kuijp has just called into question the authorship of the former (the *Tshad ma'i de kho na nyid bsdus pa*, edited by Thub bstan nyi ma Rin po che), in general there has been minimal controversy surrounding Klong chen pa's work.[133] The only other suspect document is a historical work, the *Klong chen chos 'byung*, which was penned under the unfamiliar name rGyal sras thugs mchog rtsal. On the basis of internal dating, Karmay concludes that this text was not written by Klong chen pa.[134] It is not clear if Klong chen pa's *Chos 'byung* might still survive, but dGe 'dun chos 'phel's *White Annals* (*Deb ther dkar po*) cites it as late as circa 1940.[135]

The survival of Klong chen pa's works was ensured by the value put on them by his students. Over time, as individual copies were preserved on woodblocks, the chances of loss became less and less. As was the case with religious writings in Tibet (and continues to be the case in Vajrayāna Buddhism in the West),

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128 This is the *bsTan bcos kyi dkar chag rin po che'i mdzod khang*, found in the *gSung thor bu*.

129 See Klong chen pa's biography, the *Kun mkhyen dri med 'od zer gyi rnam thar mthong ba don ldan* (*Vima snying thig ya bzhi*): f. 46.

130 *rNying rgyud dkar chag*: ff. 95a; 108a (*rNying ma rGyud 'bum*, XXXIV: f. 270).

131 Tarthang Tulku 1995: 165.

132 Tulku Thondup 1996b: 154.

133 van der Kuijp 2003.

134 Karmay 1998: 83.

135 Specifically, dGe 'dun chos 'phel used this work to identify lChang ra smug po (Khotan), which had once been under Tibetan jurisdiction as a Mongolian province.

authorization is necessary before one can simply engage in study. Most often, permission is given via a verbal transmission (*lung*), in which a lama who himself has received the *lung* reads the text aloud at high-speed. With the purely phonic qualities of the words setting up a resonant field in the mindstream of the disciple (it is not necessary for him or her to comprehend the words as they are being read), authorization to peruse that specific text is granted.[136] To date, this method of transmission has been maintained for Klong chen pa's *gSung 'bum*, assuring a transtemporal as well as translocal spread of his work.[137]

Klong chen pa's corpus consists of a wide variety of works, including liturgies for rituals, poems of realization and poems dedicated to enlightenment heroes, work on Tibetan poetics, devotional hymns for practice, didactic stories in verse, and a history of Buddhism. His work in history may seem a peculiar diversion from primarily religious topics, but from the overall context of the fourteenth century, it fits well with the emerging scholarly interests of that time. The *Red Annals* (*Deb ther dmar po*) of Tshal pa kun dga' rdo rje were composed, for example, in 1346.

Most revered among Klong chen pa's oeuvres are those which treat the subtleties of the rDzogs chen tradition. He wrote in different ways on this subject, sometimes in commentarial style, sometimes by means of extremely pith direct instruction about either meditation (*yig sna*) or the way in which reality naturally manifests (such as the *gNas lugs mdzod* or *Chos dbyings mdzod*), and sometimes in a doxographical overview of its different modalities of instruction.

On rDzogs chen, his shorter works include the *Ngal bso skor gsum*, the *Rang grol skor gsum* and the *Mun sel skor gsum*, summarized well by Tarthang Tulku as emphasizing "the intrinsic freedom underlying all spiritual growth and the release and relief discovered in the proper concentration of one's being through meditation."[138] Klong chen pa's most elaborate set of writings on rDzogs chen is the *sNying thig ya bzhi*, a unique and groundbreaking synthesis of *sNying thig* transmissions and treasure-texts (*gter ma*) in thirty-five volumes. Specifically, he expounded upon the *Bi ma snying thig* in his *bLa ma yang tig*, but also blended it with the *mKha' 'gro yang tig* in the *Zab mo yang tig*. Perhaps most impressive

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136 To provide an example of the speed with which texts can be read, the entire set of 111 volumes of the *Rin chen gter mdzod* ordinarily takes five months to recite, yet it is reported that at the age of thirteen H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche gave the reading transmission in only one month.

137 Though the reading transmission is the most common example, granting permission can take different forms. For example, I was authorized to work with the *Grub mtha' mdzod* in two separate ceremonies (*dbang*): a Klong chen pa empowerment with the mKhan po dPal ldan shes rab and mKhan po Tshe bdang don rgyal and the more extensive empowerment of the entire rNying ma canon and Klong chen pa *gsung 'bum* with Kyabje Thinley Norbu Rinpoche.

138 Tarthang Tulku 1977: 257.

about this brief summary of his work is the fact that these represent only a fraction of what he actually wrote.[139]

The *mDzod bdun* are perhaps the most well-known of Klong chen pa's work. Aside from the *Treasury of Spiritual Systems* (*Grub mtha' mdzod*), this collected body of seven texts includes the *Treasury of Direct Instructions* (*Man ngag mdzod*), the *Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle* (*Theg mchog mdzod*), the *Wish-fulfilling Treasury* (*Yid bzhin mdzod*), the *Treasury of Words and Meanings* (*Tshig don mdzod*), the *Treasury of the Expanse of Reality* (*Chos dbyings mdzod*), and the *Treasury of the Way of Being* (*gNas lugs mdzod*).[140] According to Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche, these all share a dual purpose: to shed illumination on the profound meaning of the seventeen rDzogs chen tantras and to expound on the teachings of all the nine vehicles.[141] That said, these seven texts cover a diverse range of subjects in a variety of literary styles. In his recent dissertation on Klong chen pa's *gNas lugs mdzod* and its use of rhetoric, Gregory Hillis divides the *mDzod bdun* into three separate categories: the *Man ngag mdzod* is "practical" in its summary of Buddhist practice, the *Chos dbyings mdzo*d and *gNas lugs mdzod* are "poetic" in their presentation of rDzogs chen through the author's experience and recommendations, and the rest are "encyclopedic" in their treatment of Buddhist cosmology, philosophy, tantra, and rDzogs chen.[142] In fact, it turns out that the grouping of all these texts under the name *mDzod bdun* is an artificial development. The name as such does not appear to have been used by Klong chen pa himself. The *mDzod bdun* have also been considered as *gter ma*; H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche states that they were "composed after prophetic declarations had been obtained from the meditational deities."[143]

There are many different theories regarding when these different texts were composed. The Bhutanese catalog of Klong chen pa's works lists them all, with the exception of the *gNas lugs mdzod*. According to one Tibetan tradition recounted by Urgyen Tulku, Klong chen pa wrote the *mDzod bdun* when in Bhutan, but after losing them on his way back to Tibet, recomposed them at Gangs ri thod

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139 Other than a single commentary on the *Uttaraśāstra* (whose authorship is somewhat dubious), none of his commentaries on philosophical writings have survived.

140 Nearly all of the seven volumes of the *mDzod bdun* have been translated. Germano includes the first five chapters of the *Tshig don mdzod* in his dissertation (1992), Hillis provides a complete translation of the *gNas lugs mdzod* in his dissertation (2003), and the Padma Translation Committee headed by Richard Barron (Lama Chökyi Nyima) has published translations of the *gNas lugs mdzod*, the *Chos dbyings mdzod* (and its autocommentary), the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, and the *Man ngag mdzod*. In addition, Keith Dowman also translated the *gNas lugs mdzod* (2010) and *Chos dbyings mdzod* (2013), while the latter was additionally rendered by Shyalpa Tenzin Rinpoche (2015). The *Tshig don mdzod* was translated by Lama Chonam and Sangye Khandro (2015).

141 Sogyal Rinpoche 1989: 85.

142 Hillis 2003: 146–147.

143 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 91.

dkar.[144] Smith has also found evidence that the *gNas lugs mdzod* was written by this time that Klong chen pa was in exile.[145] Tulku Thondup believes that Klong chen pa wrote the *Theg mchog mdzod* near the time of Kumārarāja's death (which is to say, in his thirties).[146] And Germano argues strongly that this text, as well as the *Tshig don mdzod*, clearly follow the composition of the *Yid bzhin mdzod*. Furthermore, he contends, the *Chos dbyings mdzod* and *gNas lugs mdzod* belong to the last works of the series.[147]

All of this would seem to suggest that the *Grub mtha' mdzod* was written in the mid-part of Klong chen pa's life. Because its subject matter is so technical and involves such an extensive number of citations, it is hard to believe that Klong chen pa wrote it in isolation, away from a working library. But then, this presupposition is based on ordinary perception and a limited view of his mnemonic potential. Given Klong chen pa's reputation for extreme erudition, there is no real reason why the text could not have been written during his time in Bhutan. For it to have been written sooner, he would have had to be engaging in scholarly composition at the same time as his *sNying thig* revelations. A later date is also supported by his apparent response to Bu ston and the formation of a Tibetan canon around the middle part of the century.

Within the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, one also finds reference to the historical Buddha's having passed away 3516 years ago.[148] Using this number and additional data provided by Klong chen pa that the *parinirvāṇa* occurred in a fire-horse year, one can calculate that this text was written 58.6 sixty-year cycles later (or 14 years after a fire-horse year). Because Klong chen pa was born in 1308 in an earth-monkey year (two years after a fire-horse year) and died in a water-rabbit year (three years before the next fire-horse year), it would mean that he wrote the *Grub mtha' mdzod* when he was only fourteen years old! Obviously, his dating was based on an alternative version of the *byung rtsis* system of computation. For now, the exact date of the composition of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* remains in question.[149]

As for the exact location of its composition, the Bhutan hypothesis is supported by a set of dedicatory verses found in the text's ninth and final chapter. Here

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144 Germano 1992: 23.

145 Smith 2001: 280, n. 94.

146 Tulku Thondup 1996b: 156.

147 For further information on dating of the individual texts of the *mDzod bdun*, see Germano 1992: 13–14.

148 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 50–53.

149 It is worth noting that Bu ston follows Atiśa in dating the Buddha's death in a wood-monkey year and Sa skya Paṇḍita in dating his death in a fire-pig year (Obermiller 1999: 105–106). Following the Kālacakra *skar rtsis* system, H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche says that the Buddha passed in an iron-dragon year (Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 946).

Klong chen pa clearly states that he wrote the *Grub mtha' mdzod* at the request of two "fortunate ones" named gZhon nu sangs rgyas and Nyi zer at a place simply called Rang byung padma.[150] Preliminary research has been unable to come up with any information on this location or these disciples, ruling out the likelihood of their existence in central Tibet.

The penchant for collecting the *mDzod bdun* together gained currency with the spread of Klong chen pa's *gSung 'bum* and the printing of woodblocks. For example, the sDe dge edition of the *mDzod bdun* was first carved during the regency of queen Tshe dbang lha mo (1770–1778).[151] This decision was perhaps inspired by the index (*dkar chag*) written on the texts by the 2nd Zhe chen rab 'byams pa, 'Gyur med kun bzang rnam rgyal (1713–1763). It would not be long thereafter when 'Jigs med gling pa also made reference to them as a unit.[152] Besides the obvious rationale behind creating an anthology of texts which all share the word *Treasury* (*mDzod*) in their title, having them collected and printed together must have also facilitated their spread throughout the country. As Smith notes, there is evidence that the *mDzod bdun* woodblocks were stored in a number of places (including the nunnery of sBrags tsha seb, bsTan rgyas gling, and the Zur khang *gzim shag* in Lha sa).[153]

As already mentioned in the introduction, today one can find at least four extant editions of the *mDzod bdun*. Being such a popular collection, it enjoys widespread circulation. In particular, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* remains part of different rNying ma curricula around the world. In India, the text has been included as an advanced elective at universities such as the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath and rNying ma monasteries such as Namdroling in Bylakuppe, India. Professor Klaus-Dieter Mathes of the University of Hamburg, Germany taught an advanced Tibetan course focusing on the connection between the third and eighth chapters of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* (respectively, the Buddhist philosophical vehicles and rDzogs chen), as well as an investigation of the way in which the citations from specific Mahāyāna texts in chapter four (*Ratnagotravibhāga*, *Mahāyānasūtrālaṁkāra*, etc.) can be interpreted in terms of the rDzogs chen

150 The full name of the latter disciple may have been Ngam ston nyi ma 'od zer. See BDRC database.

151 Smith 2001: 24–25.

152 Specifically, 'Jigs med gling pa mentions by name the *mDzod bdun* and *Shing rta rnam gsum*, referring to Klong chen pa by his ordination name, Ngag gi dbang po.

153 Smith 2001: 280, n. 92.

hermeneutic.[154] Jeffrey Hopkins also presented parts of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* in his courses at UVa when Khetsun Sangpo was visiting there in 1974.

In America, the well-known and respected "mKhan po brothers" Palden Sherab and Tsewang Dongyal created a traditional rNying ma teaching center (*bshad grva*) in upstate New York, where for approximately a week each year they would expound to Western Dharma students on the different philosophical sections of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*.[155] When asked about his choice of texts, Khenchen Palden Sherab replied that when he first learned to read, he would devour anything he could get his hands on. One of the first things that he came across was the biography of Klong chen pa, which made such a profound impression on him that great devotion for Klong chen pa was born even before he really understood any of his writings. Personally, he first read and came to understand the *mDzod bdun* when he was enrolled in courses at Ri bo che monastery in Tibet.[156] The fact that he is still teaching the *Grub mtha' mdzod* is an obvious indication of how highly he regards it.[157]

Being such an Ur-text, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* is often cited by rNying ma scholars and Western Tibetologists alike. Most noticeably, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* forms the backbone of H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche's extensive *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* (*rNying bstan rnam gzhag*), with entire passages quoted word for word. According to Herbert Guenther, the doxographies of the rNying ma school owe much to Klong chen pa's *Grub mtha' mdzod* for their inspiration. In his analysis of Mi pham's work, for example, he ends up citing the *Grub mtha' mdzod* throughout.[158] His *From Reductionism to rDzogs chen* also draws extensively

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154 Prof. Mathes's class description read: "Klong chen rab 'byams pa's (1308–1363) *Grub mtha' mdzod* gehört mit zu den am häufigsten studierten Werken der Nyingmapa-Schule. Von Interesse sind nicht nur die Darstellungen der Cittamātra- und Madhyamaka-Lehrsysteme, sondern auch deren Verknüpfung mit dem *rdzogs chen*. Zunächste wollen wir die im letzten Kapitel des *Grub mtha' mdzod* dargelegte *rdzogs chen* Sichtweise kennenlernen, und dann der Frage nachgehen, inwieweit die bei der Darstellung niedriger Lehrsysteme angeführten Zitate (wie etwa aus dem *Ratnagotravibhāga oder Mahāyānasūtrālankāra*) im vierten Kapitel des *Grub mtha' mdzod* wirklich im Sinne des rdzogs chen gedeutet werden können. Das Seminar eignet sich für Studenten der Tibetologie ab dem 5. Semester. Sanskrit-Kenntnisse sind nicht Voraussetzung, aber hilfreich." Note that this syllabus was previously accessible online at <uni-hamburg.de/Wiss/FB/10/IndienS/KVVSS2004.pdf>, but it is no longer available there.

155 The teachings were held in 2004–2006. The first year treated the Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika schools. The second year of teaching dealt with Cittamātra and the third with Madhyamaka.

156 Pers. comm., Sarnath, India (Fall 2002).

157 Nonetheless, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* does not occupy the same status as some of his other texts. The *Chos dbyings mdzod*, for example, is commonly read as a funeral liturgy for rNying ma lamas.

158 Guenther 1972: 217–218 (cit. Mi pham Rinpoche's *Yid bzhin mdzod kyi grub mtha' bsdus pa*: ff. 37a, 37b, 37a, 37b, 38, 40b, 159b sqq., 168b sqq). Compare this to the *Chos dbyings mdzod*: ff. 63b; 163a.

on the Abhidharma and philosophical sections of Klong chen pa's doxography. Too numerous to mention are the other contemporary writers that have drawn upon this text, but one may still recognize its particular importance for such eminent scholars as Tulku Thondup, Tarthang Tulku, Samten Karmay, Matthew Kapstein and Gyurme Dorje.

It is the hope of this chapter that a historic overview of Klong chen pa's world in the fourteenth century might help the reader appreciate the continued meaning of his writing, specifically the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. Textual continuity was a personal concern for Klong chen pa, as was the question of how to elucidate the matrix of Buddhist spiritual systems in relation to the personal evolution of people at any point in history. Keeping in mind these two factors—continuity and timelessness—one would imagine that if Klong chen pa were alive in the twenty-first century, he would be gratified to see the healthy lineage enjoyed by the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. After all, in almost every way, the text is just as relevant today as it was six hundred and fifty years ago: it still very much informs the rNying ma canon, elucidates the nature of truth, and provides esoteric data on tantric practice. These aspects will be included in the diachronic analysis of the following chapters.

3. *SIDDHĀNTA* AND SYSTEMIZATION

Trained as a Dharma craftsman in the best universities of his day, comfortable working with the different materials of the major schools, Klong chen pa also enjoyed the vantage point of wisdom cultivated through periods of intense meditative practice. He had discovered treasure-texts and synthesized transmission-lines. He had written poetry and treatises on logic, held forth on the problems of academia, and given personal rDzogs chen pointing-out instructions on the nature of mind. In addition to all these, Klong chen pa would go on to write a Buddhist doxography. This work would be entitled the *Theg pa mtha' dag gi don gsal bar byed pa grub pa'i mtha' rin po che'i mdzod*, translated as *The Precious Treasury of Spiritual Systems Elucidating the Meaning of the Vehicles in their Entirety*.

While the great majority of Klong chen pa's other oeuvres have received acclaim from Western researchers and practitioners, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* represents a serious lacuna of translation and critical analysis in his corpus. One possible explanation is that this text, of all of Klong chen pa's works, is one of the most lengthy and technical. Another is that the genre of Tibetan doxography (*grub mtha'*) has, on the whole, received relatively little academic attention. By no means is this to ignore the important translations that have been done to date. It is rather an indictment of the dearth of commentary on the genre itself.

The aim of this chapter is to engage some of the larger questions surrounding the doxographic enterprise. It is rather straightforward to present different definitions of the genre or give background information on its use in India and Tibet. But doxographies themselves are not always straightforward. Written for the most part by intellectual magnates, they not only represent massive summaries of entire traditions but also powerful instruments for polemic. This study will address those issues, as well as more theoretical lines of thought. To answer the question of what causes humans to classify in the first place, one may turn to the bourgeoning field of cognitive science. And to assay the religious or philosophical content of classification schemes through history, it is fruitful to briefly review the epistemological lineages in the West.

Definition of the Genre

Although the genre of doxography dates back more than two thousand years in India, the English word came into circulation in the late nineteenth century when a British classicist named Hermann Diels invented the Latin neologism in

order to describe a specific type of Greek literature.[159] Since that time, the term "doxography" has grown dramatically in both usage and meaning. Today it is used by Tibetan Buddhist librarians to demark a distinct genre of texts known as *grub mtha'* (literally 'accomplishment limits').[160]

While the *grub mtha'* project is often described as involving mere description of philosophical tenets,[161] technically it involves a practical classification of some belief systems on the basis of their limitations in relation to other belief systems, detailing how far their logic extends and how effective they are, relatively speaking.[162] For this reason, *grub mtha'* could also be translated as 'soteriological framework.'

The Tibetan Buddhist commentarial tradition offers an alternative definition of *grub mtha'* that captures the dimensions of both philosophical reasoning (Skt. *yuktī*) and those spiritual approaches which utilize scripture (Skt. *āgama*). In the eighteenth century, the great doxographer dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po explained the meaning of the two morphemes in terms of an "established conclusion." He writes, "The etymology for 'tenet' (*grub mtha', siddhānta*) is: a thesis decided upon and established in reliance on scripture and/or reasoning, and which, from the perspective of one's mind, will not be forsaken for something else..."[163] And, "'Established conclusion' (*grub mtha'*) signifies one's own established assertion which is thoroughly borne out by scripture and reasoning. Because one will not pass beyond this assertion, it is a conclusion."[164]

Yet another understanding of the term *grub mtha'* can be gained by comparing the doxographical enterprise with modern Western scientific method. In that these both share the goal of teasing out the flaws in constructed models of reality, one might translate *grub mtha'* as a study of Buddhist "theories" (viz., how various schools of thought describe the behavior of existence). Furthermore, as a description of Buddhist attitudes towards truth, "theory" is technically more accurate than "proof," a term that science also disfavors (i.e., proving something does not necessarily make it true). For example, some tenet systems that stand quite well on their own will experience challenges when a different hermeneutic is applied to them, much in the same way that classical models of physics break down in the face of quantum mechanics.

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159 This was Diels's *Doxographi Graeci* (1879).

160 For example, the National Library of Bhutan defines Tibetan *grub mtha'* as "thematically related indigenous doxography."

161 It is helpful to note that *grub mtha'* has a dual meaning; on one hand it refers to a tenet-system and on the other it refers to the type of literature which speaks about tenet systems.

162 For further discussion of this word, see Hopkins 2003: 65.

163 Sopa & Hopkins 1976: 150 (cit. *Grub mtha'i mtha'i rnam par bzhag pa rin po che'i phreng ba*: ff. 3–4).

164 Sopa & Hopkins 1976: 53–54.

The analogy between doxography and science no longer applies when it comes to functionality. While it is true that scientific method will stick with a theory that is known to be flawed (at least until it can come up with a better theory), science has much less use for outdated theories than doxographies have for older tenet systems. This is likely because Buddhist systems are not theoretical descriptions of reality or empirical models driven by material application.[165] Instead, their function is a metaphysical one of leading people to the enlightenment experience through an epistemological examination of the nature of selflessness. Furthermore, because Buddhism is soteriologically driven, validity is still accorded to vehicles which are effective in the aim of realization (even if they appear to the author as being somewhat limited or outmoded).

That is to say, while a Tibetan *grub mtha'* text may present the Vaibhāṣika school as less philosophically advanced than Madhyamaka or the Hīnayāna approach as less efficacious than that of the Mahāyāna, it does not dispute their role in the awakening process of different types of people on the spiritual path. Instead of reading *grub mtha'* as 'limited accomplishment,' then, it may make more sense to frame the limitation in terms of the individual practitioner's ability (or lack of it) to tread a more rapid path or deeper philosophical waters.[166] In this way, doxographies can be said to track the exact point where people may achieve a "breakthrough."

When asked about what definition he would choose for the term, Geshe Ngawang Samten (Director of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath, India) answered that the best translation of *grub mtha'* is 'philosophy.' To the challenge that Klong chen pa's doxography includes a discussion of the different levels of tantra, Samten rebutted that emptiness (*stong nyid*) and luminosity (*'od zer*) both fall within the domain of philosophy. Therefore, tantra is subsumed within that definition.[167] This interpretation is supported by Tulku Thondup's description of Klong chen pa's doxography as an "exposition of the various philosophical standpoints of all the *yāna*s of *sūtric* and *tantric* Buddhism."[168] However,

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165 Even though there is some resemblance between Dharmakīrti and the British empiricists in that the perception of objects results in an understanding of reality, Dreyfus clarifies that for the Buddhist, "perception does not provide any cognitive content by itself but merely induces conceptual activities through which content is constructed" (Dreyfus 1997: 219). If anything, this is just the tip of the iceberg of what kind of difficulties one can run into in a comparison of science and philosophy. As Husserl noted, the difference between science's "natural thinking" and "philosophical thinking" is whether the role of cognition itself is taken into consideration. quantum physics observer effect and cognitive science

166 This is how Klong chen pa defines the various vehicles in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*.

167 Pers. comm. 18 Mar. 2002.

168 Thondhup 1996b: 155.

it is worth noting that the *Grub mtha' mdzod* itself differentiates between discussion of philosophical subject matter and the clear-light *vajra*-essence, and in the text philosophy is found in a different frame than tantra.[169]

One finds many other definitions for the title of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. Khenpos Palden Sherab and Tsewang Dongyal have referred to it as *The Detailed Rich Treasures of the Different Schools*. Hopkins translates it as *Precious Treasury of Tenets: Illuminating the Meaning of All Vehicles*.[170] Dorje and Kapstein offer *Treasury of* (*Spiritual and*) *Philosophical Systems*,[171] which Germano simplifies into *The Treasury of Spiritual Systems*.[172] If one were to be literal-minded, it could be argued that this last translation is problematic as regards those Buddhist philosophical systems which deny the existence of "spirit." The soteriological function of Buddhist philosophy *is* spiritual, however, in much the same way that the Sanskrit term *bodhicitta* can be translated as 'spirit of enlightenment.' The obvious advantage of this variant is its accessibility to the reader who may not associate philosophy with the practice of Vajrayāna.[173]

Examples of siddhānta in India and grub mtha' in Tibet

A better understanding of Klong chen pa's *Grub mtha' mdzod* can be had by placing it within the context of centuries of doxographical literature in India and Tibet. Some of the earliest Indian works of *siddhānta* in India may be found in early Buddhist classification sets.[174] During the period when Buddhism was still in its nascence, these sets helped it establish an identity for itself by creating a relief against the other Indian religious traditions. Explicating in detail what Buddhism was *not*, Śākyamuni was able to provide a context for his own unique approach. This approach can be seen, for example, in the list of sixty-two heterodox views presented in the *Brahmajala-sutta* (and cited by Klong chen pa).[175] In addition to this very early text, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* also draws on similar presentations in the *Jñānavaipūlya* and [*Dharma*]*saṃgīti*.[176] In his discussion of the Sāṃkhya

169 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 8; TANGO ed.: f. 3b.
170 Hopkins 2003: 1071.
171 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, II: 281.
172 Germano 1992: 15.
173 Despite Klong chen pa's clear differentiation between the "causal vehicle of dialectics" and the "resultant vehicle of mantra," it remains for the final chapter of our study to determine the exact nature of his interpretation of the relationship between philosophy and rDzogs chen. Cf. *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 74; TANGO ed.: f. 27b.
174 In particular, see Halbfass 1988.
175 *Brahmajala-sutta*, vv. 31–34.
176 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 71; TANGO ed.: f. 26b (cit. Toh. 99 and 238).

school, Klong chen pa also quotes from Āryadeva's *Jñānasāra-samuccaya* (circa 3rd c. CE).[177]

Later Indian Buddhist doxographies would tend more to the task of organizing *buddhavacana*. Prime examples include Bhāvaviveka's *Tarkajvālā* (6th c.), Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasaṃgraha* (8th c.) and Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanākrama* and *Tattvasaṃgraha-pañjikā* (8th c.).[178] Meanwhile, non-Buddhist doxographers were turning the keen edge of *siddhānta* against Buddhism, a tradition that they presumed to be second only to Cārvāka nihilism in errancy. A strong critique of this period can be found in Śaṅkarācārya's *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya* (8th c.), even though that author has himself been accused of being a crypto-Buddhist.[179] The use of doxographies by Vedāntins would continue into Klong chen pa's time, with Mādhavācārya's *Sarva-darśana-saṃgraha* (14th c.) helping to perpetuate the anti-Buddhist trend in India.

Before the wane of Buddhism in the subcontinent, however, the doxographical genre was introduced into Tibet. Although the habitual need to locate the "other" would be imported as well, Tibetan *grub mtha'* authors mainly occupied themselves with tenet systems internal to Buddhism (or Bon, as the case may be). This is not to say that early *grub mtha'* texts were uniform. In fact, it is somewhat difficult to maintain that there was any standardization of this incredibly rich literary tradition until nearly a thousand years after its inception.

One of the first *grub mtha'* texts in Tibet, the eight-century *Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba*, is attributed to none other than Padmasambhava. Said to have been composed by the famous wizard just before he left Tibet, it largely follows the thirteenth chapter of the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*. With a comparison of Buddhist and non-Buddhist philosophical systems, it successively treats the exoteric vehicles and the three modalities of esoteric yogic practice: creation, perfection and great perfection. It should be noted that this last triad refers to facets of practice belonging to Mahāyoga, not the final three vehicles of the ninefold rNying ma system as presented in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. In Germano's estimation, this is because Padmasambhava was much more occupied with Mahāyoga than rDzogs chen.[180]

That is to say, despite the title of this text, there is a question of whether Padmasambhava was even familiar with a so-called personal instruction-class of rDzogs chen (*man ngag*) or if teachings belonging to this style were [post] humously attributed to him by Tibetan historians prior to the fifteenth-century.

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177 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 61; TANGO ed.: f. 22b.
178 Hopkins 1996: 171–173.
179 *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya*, II: 2.
180 Germano 2002: 234.

Text-critical analysis reveals that the personal instruction-class as a distinct rDzogs chen genre did not appear until several centuries after Padmasambhava's departure from the Tibetan scene, at which point mind-class and expanse-class teachings appeared to be on the wane.[181] However that may be, all three were germane topics of discussion at the time that Klong chen pa wrote the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. Clearly, they were also quite distinct in the mind of fourteenth-century academia The degree of detail which Klong chen pa dedicates to the three classes of rDzogs chen teaching, delineating methods of practice as well as in which texts they can be found, is indicative of how strong doxographical conventions had grown by his time.

Mañjuśrimītra's *Byang chub sems bsgom pa* was interpreted in Vairocana's eight-century commentary, the *Theg pa gcod pa'i 'khor lo*, as a doxography which provides an analysis and critique of philosophical systems ranging from the Śrāvakayāna to rDzogs chen.[182] Much more of a doxography is Vairocana's own commentary, which in itself is notable for its lack of discussion of Anuyoga within the context of the Buddhist vehicles. Here again is an indication of how the nine-vehicle schema had not been rigidly codified in the early dynastic period.

Several centuries later, Rong zom Paṇḍita Chos kyi bzang po showed himself to be a champion of the doxographical approach.[183] The sDe dge edition of his works includes both a commentary to Padmasambhava's *Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba* and a comparison of the vehicles of sūtra and tantra, entitled *lTa ba'i brjed byang chen mo*. Outside this collection but mentioned by Mi pham are a number of other specifically doxographical works by Rong zom, such as the *Grub mtha'i brjed byang* (said to include a survey of the different philosophical systems of the Pāramitāyāna) and smaller oeuvres found in his *gSung mthor bu*: the *Grub mtha' so so'i bden gnyis kyi 'jog tshul* (which presents the two realities according to different philosophical systems), the *rGyu 'bras kyi theg pa'i bye brag chen mo* (an overview of the causal and fruitional vehicles), and the *mDo sngags kyi grub mtha' mthun mi mthun mdor bsdus kyi bsdud byang* (a discussion of the similarity and difference of Sūtrayāna and Tantrayāna).[184] Rong zom's lengthy *Theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa'i bstan bcos* might also be mentioned here, but with its defense against critics of rDzogs chen, it is technically a more polemic work than a doxography per se.

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181 Germano 2002: 234.

182 The former text, included in the five early translations of Vairocana, has been translated by Namkhai Norbu and Kennard Lipman. This work also provides a topical outline of Vairocana's text (Lipman & Norbu 1983: 128–131).

183 The impressive lifespan of this great scholar—119 years!—spanned the 11th and 12th centuries.

184 This is found in a 20-ff. introduction to the *dkar chag* of the incomplete works of Rong zom, collected at the turn of the century by mKhan po gzhan dga'.

Rong zom Paṇḍita represents an important shift in the content of Tibetan doxography. Instead of attempting to define the larger issue of the various Buddhist vehicles, his works reflect more of a concern about the hermeneutical differences between sūtra and tantra. This is the beginning of what might be seen as a move from spiritual systems to tenet systems or, more specifically, issues pertaining to the four Buddhist philosophical traditions. Aside from the apologetic use of doxographies, which is seen to some extent in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*'s canonical section and the contemporaneous *Bon sgo gsal byed* of Tre ston rgyal mtshan dpal,[185] nearly all subsequent Tibetan authors writing in this genre would tend in that direction. In other words, doxography would begin to approach the definition given by Matthew Kapstein, that "it refers to writings on philosophical doctrines and systems, for example, in standard histories of philosophy that summarize the key ideas of a succession of teachers."[186]

Commonly regarded as an incarnation of Mañjuśrī, Tsong kha pa provides another example of a doxographical master who took the *grub mtha'* genre to an entirely new level.[187] Despite the fact that none of his extant texts explicitly use *grub mtha'* in the title, the subject was obviously of concern. Evidence of this can be found in his focus in a number of texts on eight Madhyamaka extraordinary points (*thun mong ma yin pa'i grub mtha'*), or "unique tenets," associated with Nāgārjuna himself. Cozort points out that this list goes unmentioned in the *Grub pa' mtha' rnam par bshad pa'i mdzod* of dbUs pa blo gsal (14th c.), as well as other doxographies prior to the formation of a specifically dGe lugs pa orientation towards Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka, making it very likely that Tsong kha pa was the first Tibetan to formally address these tenets.[188] Certainly in this he appears to be operating out of pure inspiration, rather than a wish to improve on or dispute with other doxographies.

By categorizing Tsong kha pa's *Legs bshad snying po* as a *grub mtha'*, Hopkins explodes the definition of the genre as set by earlier authors, including Klong chen pa. To be sure, this exquisitely complex work treats the positions of the Buddhist philosophical schools, but in a very different manner than other doxographies. Primarily concerned in this text with truth itself, Tsong kha pa's agenda here involves a hermeneutic correction of interpretable and definitive meaning in response to the philosophical positioning of one specific person in particular, Dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan.

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185 For further information on this important Bon po *grub mtha'* text, see Mimaki 1994.

186 Kapstein 2000: 246, n. 110.

187 For an analysis of a doxography by the first Tibetan scholar believed to be Mañjuśrī, Sa skya Paṇḍita, see Jackson 1985a.

188 Cozort 1998: 58, n. 55.

Or perhaps not. Some have argued that Tsong kha pa's polemic was directed towards Klong chen pa as well. In the introduction to his voluminous translation of 'Jam yangs bzhad pa's *Grub mtha' rnam bshad chen mo*, Hopkins writes, "It appears that Dzong-ka-ba's *The Essence of Eloquence*, which is the mother of presentations of tenets in the Ge-luk-pa order, was written in reaction to presentations like those of Long-chen-ba."[189] Despite the fact that the text never mentions Klong chen pa by name, a simple fact which makes it very difficult to identify what the offending "presentation" might have been, Thurman concurs.[190]

With the exception of the *Grub mtha' kun shes nas mtha' bral grub pa* (written in the 15th century by the Sa skya pa scholar Stag tshang lo tsa ba shes rab rin chen, largely in response to Tsong kha pa's Mādhyamika explication of the unique tenets), the most well-known doxographies subsequent to Tsong kha pa belong to the dGe lugs pa school. Of these, the first worth noting is Paṇ chen bsod names grags pa's (1478–1554) *rGyud sde spyi'i rnam par bzhag pa*, which stands out for its presentation of the different classes of tantra.[191] It would also be unforgivable not to mention what may be the three most important, if not most detailed, doxographies in Tibetan history—the *Grub mtha' chen mo*, the *Grub mtha' chen mo'i mchan 'grel*, and the *Grub mtha'i rnam par bzhag pa*—written respectively by 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa (1648–1721), Ngag dbang dpal ldan (b.1797) and lCang skya rol ba'i rdo rje (1717–1786).[192] After spending any time with these tomes, one can completely understand Huntington's supposition that Madhyamaka, particularly discussion regarding the different stances of Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika, "is the central preoccupation of virtually all doxographic literature written in Tibet."[193]

That said, the doxographical genre continues to be written and not always in ways that conform to earlier models. Two of the rebel scholar dGe 'dun chos 'phel's twentieth-century treatises, the *Sems tsam pa'i grub mtha'i rnam bzhag* and the *Phyi rol pa'i grub mtha'i rnam bzhag*, provide clear departures from

189 Hopkins 2003: 4.

190 This conclusion is based on the advice of dPal 'byor lhun grub and the attribution to Klong chen pa of holding a Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka stance. Yet Klong chen pa clearly dismisses this position in his treatment of Madhyamaka; see *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 115; TANGO ed.: f. 42a. If Tsong kha pa had wanted to redress Klong chen pa in the *Legs bshad snying po*, one would expect to find criticism on the *Grub mtha' mdzod*'s assertion that the definitive cycle of the Buddha's teachings belongs to the third turning of the wheel, not the second.

191 This is translated in Boord & Tsonawa 1996.

192 These three works have informed Hopkins's *Meditations on Emptiness* (1983), Hopkins & Wilson's *Emptiness Yoga* (1987), and Hopkins's *Maps of the Profound* (2003), as well as the work of other scholars from UVa, most notable being Lopez's *A Study of Svātantrika* (1987), Klein's *Knowing, Naming and Negation* (1991) and *Knowledge and Liberation* (1986), and Cozort's *Unique Tenets* (1998).

193 Huntington 2002: 67.

Madhyamaka in their discussion of Cittamātra and the heterodox schools.[194] Furthermore, large sections of H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche's massive *rNying bstan rnam gzhag* resemble the *Grub mtha' mdzod* in their classification and explication of the nine vehicles, especially rDzogs chen.[195]

To be precise, this latter work borders on the Tibetan genre of *bshad mdzod*, the encyclopedic scope of which includes historical data, religious and secular lineages, royal lines of succession, synopses of important texts, and so forth. Because doxographical concerns are often included in this wide scope of topics, such texts are often confused with *grub mtha'*. Examples include Bo dong Paṇ chen's *De nyid 'dus pa* (14th c.) and the *bShad mdzod yid bzhin nor bu* (15th c.), whose thirteen chapters cover Mantrayāna and Bon po tenets as well as cosmology, zoology, geography, astrology, medicine, linguistics, rhetoric and song.[196] As Smith makes clear, *grub mtha'* texts are a subset of the larger *bshad mdzod* type of literature.

The Grub mtha' mdzod

Of all the Tibetan doxographies mentioned above, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* stands out for its sheer breadth of focus. Like earlier rNying ma works, it attempts to codify the ninefold structure of the different vehicles. And like later dGe lugs pa doxographies, it delves the various Buddhist philosophical systems. Instead of limiting itself to the dialectical vehicles (*grub mtha' smra ba bzhi*), it dedicates more than a hundred pages to the different soteriological modalities of the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna. It reflects the historical interest of the fourteenth century with its biographical introduction of Śākyamuni Buddha and the Dharma councils in India. And the contemporary period's canonical concerns are also represented with a treatment of the rNying ma and gSar ma textual traditions. In sum, all of these topics constitute an incredible range of subject matter. Adding to this Klong chen pa's detailed description of the different types of Atiyoga or rDzogs chen, there can be little doubt that the *Grub mtha' mdzod* is a unique piece of literature.

The structure of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* is straightforward in most respects. Aside from the dedicatory verses of the final chapter, its eight main chapters are principally divided into a discussion of the "ordinary" Buddhist teachings and the "extraordinary clear-light *vajra*-essence." Accordingly, the former section gives a general history on the Buddhadharma, a specific explanation of philosophical theories, how *bodhisattva*s traverse the path differently from *śrāvaka*s

194 Mengele 1999: 107.
195 See Dudjom Rinpoche 1991.
196 Smith 2001: 319, n. 669.

and *pratyekabuddha*s, and why Mantrayāna is superior to the vehicle of dialectics. The second half respectively details the four tantric classes of the gSar ma tradition, the six tantric classes of the rNying ma, and the superiority of rDzogs chen over the lower vehicles.

While a comprehensive exegesis of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* is beyond the scope of this present study, three specific dimensions of the text—canonicity, Madhyamaka philosophy, and the rDzogs chen hermeneutic—are especially provocative. Accordingly, the remaining chapters are dedicated to their discussion. It would nonetheless be remiss not to briefly expose some secondary points relevant to the construction of content in Klong chen pa's *grub mtha'*.

To begin with, as much as the *Grub mtha' mdzod* is clearly a product of the fourteenth century in terms of its treatment of Buddhist history and canon, it often departs from a standard interpretation of these topics. Even though he largely uses the same source, Klong chen pa treads further in his arrangement of the differing accounts of Śākyamuni Buddha's lifespan (viz., being eighty or eighty-two years) than the standard account presented in Bu ston's conservative *Chos 'byung*.[197] In this sense, the doxography reveals Klong chen pa's overall Buddhalogical attitude. By framing Śākyamuni in terms of a historical figure belonging to a succession of Buddhas, Klong chen pa adheres to the Mahāyāna trope. That he is comfortable working at this level of interpretation is made evident at numerous junctures throughout the *Grub mtha' mdzod* (perhaps most obviously in his enumeration of the major and minor marks in Chapter 5). That his own interests, however, tend towards the extraordinary interpretation of Buddhahood—timeless and perfect—is supported by his prefacing remarks on Samantabhadra and subsequent explication of Buddhas never wavering from the *dharmakāya*.[198] This interpretation does more than illuminate Klong chen pa's rDzogs chen hermeneutic. It also bears on his attitude towards canon.[199] In other words, one can consider the more eclectic aspects of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*'s introductory chapters of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* as establishing a platform for some of the more controversial topics picked up later in the text.

Another noteworthy point is Klong chen pa's fealty to the Indian doxographical convention of describing non-Buddhist schools. Specifically, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* prefaces its exhaustive discussion of the nine vehicles of Buddhism with an overview of five heterodox schools. Of these, four—the Sāṃkhyas,

197 For their primary source, they both use the *Vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu*. See *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 24; TANGO ed.: f. 9a; Obermiller 1999: 66.

198 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 14; TANGO ed.: f. 5b.

199 These connections will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

Aiśvaras,[200] Vaiṣṇavas, and Jainas—are described as adherents to an eternalist view; the Bārhaspatya were generally regarded as nihilists before their movement went extinct. Treatment of these spiritual systems is somewhat cursory, but this does not appear to be a result of Klong chen pa's lack of knowledge on the subject. On the contrary, he lists important subdivisions within these schools, gives the titles of their major texts, and even provides quotes from their primary sources. His decision not to engage in a systematic refutation of their tenets (like later Tibetan doxographers, such as 'Jam dbyangs bshad pa) was only based on a concern for space. He clarifies,

> Here the division of those [schools] has been explained. Having reflected on the negative paths out there, I thought to refute them with facts so that people would not enter them. For fear of prolixity, however, I did not elaborate.[201]

In comparison with later Tibetan doxographies, the *Grub mtha' mdzod*'s overall discussion of the philosophical tenets of Buddhism is rather abbreviated. In Klong chen pa's discussion of the promulgation of the Dharma, he identifies the most important Indian commentators.[202] In the philosophical section, however, he does not align them with their respective dialectical positions. Nor does he provide any historical overview of these traditions' development.[203] Instead, as the various philosophical stances are treated through the lens of the Indian commentarial tradition, they are simply "univeralized" into "transhistorical" memes.[204]

One might extend this critique to his treatment of the specific traditions, arguing that it is not entirely comprehensive and even somewhat haphazard. For example, Klong chen pa makes only the smallest differentiation between the

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200 The followers of Īśvara (Śiva).

201 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 71–72; TANGO ed.: f. 26b: *'dir de dag gi dbye ba bshad pas, lam ngan phar rtogs nas mi 'jug pa'i phyir, dgag pa yang don gyis byas par bsam ste, yi ges 'jigs nas ma spros so*.

202 According to Klong chen pa, the "six ornaments" include Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and Guṇaprabha. For the "eight excellent ones," he says, take out Dignāga and add Āryadeva, Candragomin and Āśvaghoṣa (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 41; TANGO ed.: f. 15a). According to Khenpo Dorjee Tsering, Klong chen pa includes Guṇaprabha instead of Āryadeva in his list of the "six ornaments" because his classification is based on the Vinaya (of which Guṇaprabha was a master). Āryadeva is found in classifications based on accomplishment. If one classifies the masters according to the grammatical tradition, Āryasura or Asvaghoṣa are included. Although Candragomin is usually not found in any of these lists, H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche follows Klong chen pa in including him instead of Dignāga, but then cites Śākyaprabha instead of Āśvaghoṣa (Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 441).

203 That is to say, he does not locate the "Ornaments" of Buddhism within the philosophical schools (i.e., Vasubandhu as he moved from the view of Sautrāntika to Cittamātra or the intricacies of Madhyamaka via Buddhapālita, Bhāvaviveka and Candrakīrti).

204 Ruegg 2004: 336.

Sautrāntika-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka and Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka schools. Furthermore, Klong chen pa discusses the consequentialist method of Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka, even touching on how it refutes the Sāṃkhya theory of production, but does not explain the Svātantrika-Madhyamaka method of syllogisms. Significantly, he also never quotes Dignāga or Dharmakīrti.[205]

Considering the overall size of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, these relatively minor omissions can certainly be forgiven. In truth, the text drills down to an incredibly detailed degree of classification: an index (*dkar chag*) constructed on the basis of its definitional divisions goes nearly twenty levels deep. This level of granularity reflects both the keenness of Klong chen pa's mind and the *abhidharmic* style of the doxographical genre. Accordingly, throughout the entire *Grub mtha' mdzod* there appear countless lists, many of which mushroom into further enumerations. For example, the fact that the three causal vehicles use the five paths in different ways, depending on their philosophical leanings, leads to a particularly complex set of variables.[206]

The number and breadth of Klong chen pa's citations in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* are also quite staggering. However, it is not uncommon for passages in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* to differ slightly from the original. This tendency of Klong chen pa towards loosely quoting sources has elsewhere been the cause of criticism and praise (the latter because of his ability to give the precise sense of the original passage even though the words may not be exactly the same). Instead of condemning him, Herbert Guenther (one of the Western scholars most familiar with our author) explains the reason for this phenomenon: "The frequent discrepancies between Klong chen rab 'byams pa's quotations and the corresponding passages in the *rNying rgyud* as well as in other quoted texts would

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205 Although one might be tempted to conclude from this that logic was not a great concern of Klong chen pa, especially in consideration of its importance to the scholastic tradition of the dGe lugs school, it should be remembered that Klong chen pa is said to have written a number of texts on this subject: including the *Compendium of the Reality of Validating Cognition* (*Tshad ma'i de kho na nyid bsdus pa*), whose title is an obvious riff on Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* (*Tshad ma kun las btus pa*); still missing is Klong chen pa's *Summary of the Three Eastern Svātantrikas* (*Rang rgyud shar gsum*). According to Kapstein, this last text, listed in the *bsTan bcos kyi dkar chag rin po che'i mdzod khang* as the *Rang rgyud shes gsum*, treats the "three Easterners" Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśila and Jñānagarbha (Pettit 1999: 486, n. 327).

206 To give some idea of how complex it can get, when the first vehicle (i.e., *śrāvaka*s) engages the third path (i.e., the path of seeing) with the sixteen aspects of the four truths in three realms of existence on the three poisons, there are eighty-eight psychological aspects to be abandoned according to the Vaibhāṣika school and ninety-four according to the Sautrāntikas (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 147–148; TANGO ed.: f. 53b–54a). For the *bodhisattva*, of course, the calculation is completely different: there are 112 emotional addictions to be abandoned (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 218; TANGO ed.: f. 79b).

seem to be due to his habit, not uncommon in the Tibetan tradition, to quote from memory without recourse to printed texts."[207]

Guenther's hypothesis is supported by two compelling factors. To begin with, there were no printed texts in Tibet by the fourteenth century. Given the time and effort needed to create facsimiles, it is extremely unlikely that Klong chen pa owned copies of many of the texts quoted in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. He would have had access to university libraries when in central Tibet, but even their collections may not have included rare rNying ma tantras. Moreover, if the doxography was indeed written during Klong chen pa's exile in Bhutan, the chances of him having access to original source materials would be even more slim.

Stylistically, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* marks somewhat of a departure from the rDzogs chen tenor of Klong chen pa's other works. While this is not to say that one does not find dialectical discussion or lists of tantras in other works (e.g., the *Yid bzhin mdzod*, *Chos dbyings mdzod* and *Shing rta chen mo*), the *Grub mtha' mdzod* dedicates nearly ninety percent of its time discussing topics other than rDzogs chen. Klong chen pa does not use the remaining bit to illuminate rDzogs chen practices, meditation or ritual. Neither does he use an evocative *mahāvākya* tone to hammer home the natural state of perfection.[208] No matter. If only because it takes the stand that rDzogs chen represents the definitive apex of all Buddhist teachings, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* can be considered a rDzogs chen text.

In a sense, doxography and rDzogs chen stand at cross-purposes. Persons who emphasize practice over scholarship may even remark on the absurdity of "doing research on rDzogs chen," as if these things operate on different principles or by means of separate mental faculties. To argue that rDzogs chen cannot encompass the intellectual pursuit of doxography, however, entails reductionism of its view as regards an inclusivism of the other vehicles. If anyone could be expected to integrate these divergent approaches, there would be no better candidate than Klong chen pa, considering both his personal experience in synthesizing education and his meditative *élan*. Klong chen pa does admit that doxography breaks down ultimately. But clearly he also understood that there was benefit in writing a text that—instead of sounding the "tone" of the great perfection—might nonetheless serve to tie that experience into the greater symphonic structure of Buddhism and its wider audience. In effect, this is the profound achievement of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, that it is able to conventionally trace evolution of thought

207 Guenther 1984: 238, n. 24.

208 The *gNas lugs mdzod*, for example, addresses the rDzogs chen platitudes in a powerful, if repetitive, fashion.

and present a context by means of which rDzogs chen might be made more intellectually accessible to other Buddhist circles.

Light on Doxography in the West

To date, the various *grub mtha'* texts currenly published in translation have principally been dGe lugs pa treatments of the four major philosophical schools. However, surprisingly little has been written on the genre itself. Mimaki initiated the discussion, albeit in French and on the subject of Bon, in the early eighties.[209] In this work, he would provide a very helpful overview of how different Tibetan doxographers (mostly Sa skya pa and dGe lugs pa) situated the scholarly commentators in India.[210] Jeffrey Hopkins and Daniel Cozort have added several other important articles and introductions to serve their extensive *grub mtha'* translation projects.[211] Paul Hackett weighed in on the subject in a paean to Hopkins's contributions to the field of Tibetology.[212] Other pundits include Gene Smith and David Ruegg.[213]

Nor was the *grub mtha'* genre ignored by the early Tibetologists. Scholars from Giuseppe Tucci to Rolf Stein availed themselves of the ready mine of information that doxographies provide. Sarat Candra Das's translation of a portion of Thu'u bkwan chos kyi nyi ma's (1737–1802) *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long* proved a pivotal source text for the nascent field.[214] As Helmut Hoffmann put it, "A review such as that provided by Chos-kyi nyi-ma in his book *The Crystal of Doctrinal Systems* has the great advantage that summed up in a few pages we seem to have what we would otherwise have to pick out from mounds of ancient folios."[215]

It is actually very important to expose the various levels of sophistication with which Western scholars have approached the *grub mtha'* genre. Hoffman's honest assessment about its convenience only hints at a full appreciation of the function of doxography. Mimaki supposes that Tibetan doxographers were primarily interested in "a synthetic understanding" of philosophical positions, but he also admits that they intended other functions for *grub mtha'* texts: they are crucial for the establishment of doctrinal positions; they maintain information in codes, indices and appropriate systems for the long-term preservation of data; and they

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209 See Katsumi Mimaki's work on the *Blo gsal grub mtha'* (1982).
210 Mimaki 1982: 27–28.
211 In particular, see Cabezón & Jackson 1996.
212 See Hackett 2001.
213 See Smith 2001; Ihara & Yamaguchi 1992.
214 Unfortunately, as we have seen, portions of Thu'u bkwan chos kyi nyi ma's oeuvre were incorrect.
215 Tucci 1980: 16.

are corrective, putting texts in a proper context. Furthermore, they are useful for decoding Indian texts which have no commentaries and inventing new terms which can clarify doctrinal positions.[216]

For even more nuance on the mechanics of *grub mtha'*, one can point to Hopkins's suggestion that all doxographies boil down to three main factors: praxis, contextualization and capital. He explains,

> The systemization of the Buddhist path that this [dGe lugs pa] school presents performs many functions: it provides a basic handbook for practitioners; it explicates spiritual experience by providing a map of its levels; it provides a structure for theoretic discourse the impetus for which comes from actual experience but also from demands of coherence, elegance of system, and an overriding agenda of providing a comprehensive worldview; and it also serves socio-economic purposes of providing favored group identification, isolating the "ins" from the "outs."[217]

Hackett expands on this set, providing three additional dimensions served by the study of *grub mtha'*: "to delineate coherent and consistent systems from the disparate Buddhist teachings"; "to serve as a framework in which to present the system of Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka in contrast to other ('lower') tenet systems"; and, according to dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po, "ultimately, to understand the correct view of selflessness."[218] This final definition, above and beyond any epistemological concerns, strikes at the heart of Buddhist soteriology. More than anything else, preeminent practicality has driven the continued relevance of *grub mtha'* over the centuries and into the present day. After a certain point, all of the other aspects are purely academic.

It is impossible to discount the fact that the extremely technical and sometimes forced nature of *grub mtha'* has also led to a number of detractors. For some, the classificatory enterprise is terribly off-putting. The greater purpose of "just a series of lists" is completely lost on them. For others, the problem is more a question of literary aesthetic: doxography is "way too dry" and "simply unreadable." In his appendix to H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche's doxography, for example, Gyurme Dorje admits, "The *Fundamentals* is written in the terse, highly structured style of the *grub-mtha'* genre, and is by no means an easy text to comprehend."[219] Richard Rorty is far less forgiving. He includes doxography in his fourfold schema of writing on the history of philosophy, but ever critical of the way in which it all

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216 Mimaki 1982: 4–5, 38.
217 Hopkins 1992: 230.
218 Hackett 2001: 298–299 (cit. Sopa & Hopkins 1976: 147).
219 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: xxx.

too often occludes data with any historical context, he carps, "It is this genre which inspires boredom and despair."[220]

Doxographies are largely constrained by their subject matter. If they appear overly rigid, it is because many of the systems that they present have themselves been tightly bound by socio-cultural circumstances and the reductionistic corset of dogmatism. Indeed, the real grace of *grub mtha'* is found in its ability to extract and synthesize meaning for the sake of a more synergistic understanding of entire religious and philosophical traditions. As Mimaki writes,

> Tenets are not fluid lines of thought that change and develop, nor are they merely a style of conversation, like Socratic dialogue. They are, in effect, timeless atomic units of meaning ("resolved, established, fixed"), and the schools that take shape around them stand outside of history in a timeless realm created by the doxographers' imagination and presented as explanation or exegesis.[221]

Unfortunately, Mimaki's statement ignores the creative tension that binds data points and their interpretation. Even fixed units of meaning can create different kinds of tableaus, depending on how they are presented. Added to this is the fact that dialectical privileging of the author's own doctrinal position is central to the *grub mtha'* enterprise. This dynamic is made somewhat unavoidable by texts' implicitly comparative analysis of views, which to some extent follows the structure of *abhidharma* literature.[222]

According to doxographical conventions established in India, the approach believed to be most inferior is the first discussed in any *grub mtha'*. For example, in its discussion of the Buddhist major philosophical movements, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* expounds on the tenets held by the Vaibhāṣika school and then proceeds to refute them from the Sautrāntika point of view. From there, the text moves to the next approach in the hierarchy of philosophical refinement—Yogācāra or Cittamātra—and then, finally, to Madhyamaka. Klong chen pa follows this same procedure with the various soteriological approaches, presenting tantra as a further evolution of functionality from the dialectical vehicle. Thus, only after a succession of approaches does the reader finally arrive at the position which is held by the author to be the most authoritative (in this case, rDzogs chen). Doxographically speaking, being in last place is a very good thing.

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220 Rorty et al. 1984: 82.

221 Mimaki 1982: 70.

222 That the *Grub mtha' mdzod* considers itself part of this branch is made evident in its opening paean to Mañjuśrī-kumāra-bhūta.

The extent to which one finds the deliberate use of *grub mtha'* as a platform for polemics differs from text to text. In rare cases, the subject matter is treated objectively and without editorial commentary. However, most authors (including Klong chen pa) go beyond ordinary refutation to nuance various points or insert philosophical commentary. At times, these interpretative remarks offer a welcome break from an otherwise staid presentation of tenets. The problem is when doxographers cross the line of partisanship. Unfortunately, the *grub mtha'* genre can lend itself to the disparagement and delegitimization of specific persons or traditions. Furthermore, because hierarchical presentation is built into the very structure of the text, one may not always be aware of the author's tendentious machinations. The various reasons behind this include internecine rivalries, canonical disapproval of other traditions' texts, and a simple misunderstanding of those traditions.

Examples of clearly polemic doxographies may be found in the well-known *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long* (18th c.), which treats the Bon treasure-text tradition as a complete fabrication. This could be understood in the context of competing canons in Tibet, when the authenticity of all *gter ma* was being called into question, except for the fact that the author also took it upon himself to fallaciously outline Bon po tenets in seeming disregard for how they are treated in Bon histories themselves. Whether Thu'u bkwan chos kyi nyi ma had an agenda or not, his omissions and misrepresentations reflect two of the most egregious pitfalls of doxography.[223]

Another danger of the *grub mtha'* genre is the reductionistic aggregation and confusion of earlier authors or traditions under a single tenet system. As Gene Smith notes, "Shared heresies often became grounds for synthesis."[224] Because value structures in Tibet were also inextricably linked with religious concerns, the role of *grub mtha'* in that country's larger socio-political power dynamic must not be disregarded. Being classified together with other heterodox views at times led to serious repercussions in the socio-political sphere. For instance, when later dGe lugs pa scholars came to confuse the views of Bo dong Paṇ chen with those of Jo nang phyogs las rnam rgyal, an adherent to the philosophical—and at that point, heretical—position of extrinsic emptiness (*gzhan stong*), the entire Bo dong pa school suffered near-complete extinction.[225]

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223 Remember that this is the same text that made such a great impression on the early Tibetologists.

224 Smith 2001: 239.

225 Smith 2001: 180.

One might argue that, by default, all doxographies achieve their ends by means of a violent or "tyrannical" appropriation of the systems that they treat. Lopez specifically cites Yogācārins concretizing the earlier schools into a scheme of three vehicles or Mādhyamikas subsuming them under a single vehicle.[226] But the criticism extends to epistemological systems as a whole. As Wilfred Cantwell Smith notes, "Every comprehensive Weltanschauung, insofar as it achieves the coherence at which it aims, therein reduces every alternative one: misunderstanding, distorting, its neighbors' world-view."[227] According to a popular rubric of social anthropology, power is derived from the reinterpretation of different types of values—be they cultural, social or economic. As Bourdieu put it,

> What is at stake in the struggles about the meaning of the social world is power over the classificatory schemes and systems which are the basis of the representations of the groups and therefore of their mobilization and demobilization: the evocative power of an utterance which puts things in a different light.[228]

To a great extent, doxographies are metanarratives. Involving critical analysis of belief systems, doxographies are supposed to be unbiased and accurate. Like metanarratives, they also both work with determinate facts at an unequivocal limit of meaning where it is assumed that objective readers will come to the same conclusion as the author. Yet, the critique of metanarratives in art history—that the text unavoidably mediates the material, making objectivity impossible—can be applied to doxographies as well.[229]

While *grub mtha'* can certainly be used as an antagonistic engine for intellectual hegemony, its inherent dialecticism actually serves to preclude inclusivism. Klong chen pa's own doxography balances the hegemonic apparatus with an awareness that the "inferior" views have their own role to play in the spiritual development of people on the path.[230] In general, the Buddhist evolutionary perspective maintains that people are directed towards different levels of teaching depending on their personal acumen and habitual predisposition.[231] By presenting in suffi-

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226 Lopez 1992: 168.
227 Smith, W.C. 1984: 6.
228 Bourdieu 1984: 479.
229 Heidegger was the first to introduce the problem of the "hermeneutical circle," whereby it is impossible to have an unbiased opinion by sheer virtue of possessing enough knowledge to interpret the text. Gadamer (1975: 236, 267) extended this line of thought, positing that any attempt to understand a text involves "projecting."
230 In the face of textual deconstruction and fundamentalism, the question might be raised whether contemporary Western religious scholarship could take a lesson from this inclusivistic ideal.
231 This point is taken up in great detail in Klong chen pa's doxography (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 16, 33, 56, 152–154, 158–159, 261, 275, 291, 311–313).

cient detail the greater scope of Buddhist philosophical thought, *grub mtha'* texts provide practitioners with an opportunity to reference their current position against an entire series of views. It is at this level of reading doxography that personal evolution is possible.[232]

At a teaching in New York City on 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa's *Grub mtha' chen mo*, the Dalai Lama pointed out how Buddhism finds strength in dialogue with other belief systems.[233] It is almost a certainty that his motivation for emphasizing this was not merely based on an ecumenicism in vogue among many of today's religious leaders, but rather that Buddhist doxography only increases in value with the inclusion of more spiritual systems. As he put it, by Christians learning about Buddhism and Buddhists learning about Christianity, both parties respectively become better Christians and better Buddhists.

An important point of debate in the comparative study of religion in the West is how to classify the various modes of religious expression by different kinds of people.[234] One of the field's biggest bones of contention involves the extent of these differences. On one hand, those who subscribe to Perennial Philosophy (Aldous Huxley, Ken Wilber, et al.) or the Primordial Tradition (Huston Smith) argue for a shared "core experience" of Absolute Reality across religious traditions. In what Robert Forman has called a Pure Consciousness Event (PCE), "completely perception and thought-free," cognitive dispositions are erased.[235]

Alternatively, those who belong to the postmodern camp of "constructivist-deconstructivists" maintain that all experience is mediated completely by personal psychology and cultural programming. By devaluing mysticism, doxography is privileged (i.e., belief systems are held to shape reality). This position may present a bitter pill for those types of people who would just as soon eschew classification, but no matter. As Robert Gimello insists, a bit of intellectual distraction may not be such a bad thing: doxographic categories (i.e., "-ologies") serve

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232 In spite of a difference of hermeneutics, it is possible to suggest a comparison between the resultant vehicle of tantra and the doxographical overview of philosophy: both systems aim to "bootstrap" the mind by providing a pinnacle of view. That is to say, just as the practitioner of tantra achieves realization by means of projecting him or herself into a virtually enlightened environment which over time becomes more and more manifest, the reader of *grub mtha'* is expected to actually entertain—through introduction, study and meditation—the culminating rarification of successive expositions of reality.

233 Beacon Theatre, September 17–20, 2003.

234 According to Joachim Wach, these can be divided into three distinct categories: theoretical/hermeneutical (doctrines, ethics, etc.), practical (religious experience and meditation), and sociological (religious groupings, ecclesiastical forms, etc.). See Wach 1958.

235 Forman 1999: 185–186.

the noble purpose of a "scholarly suppressant" against excessive zeal towards mystical experience (the very existence of which, in his opinion, is arguable).[236]

The roots in this divide may be traced back to traditional philosophical epistemologies in the West, which have been heavily influenced by the construction of categories and the assignation of predicates to objects. Starting with Aristotle's ten types of logical predicates, for example, Emmanuel Kant came to question how synthetic *a priori* knowledge is itself mediated by so-called "categories of understanding." Finding himself in the straits of Cartesian mind-matter duality, Kant concluded that rational categories apply only to phenomena and not the unknowable noumena of the thing in itself (*Ding an sich*).[237] This assertion that the ultimate can not be directly experienced would have profound consequences. In one direction lay the hopelessness of Nietzsche and the *cul-de-sac* of postmodern deconstructivism. In the other was the forging of classification into a handmaiden of relativism, a tool to be hallowed by structuralists and scorned by pragmatists (e.g., Rorty).

Buddhism differs from these traditions, both philosophically and practically. Simply put, this is because its epistemology favors non-duality over duality. Klong chen pa repeatedly makes this point in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, specifically in his discussion of what he considers to be the two respective culminating viewpoints of Buddhist philosophy and praxis. The Madhyamaka school takes great pains to clarify the relationship between the two realities, not just as an intellectual exercise but with the experience of the practitioner in mind.[238] rDzogs chen also emphasizes direct experience within a context of unity (using such technical terms as *gcig pa* or *ro gcig*) and subject/object coalescence.

Given Buddhism's emphasis on experience, one could argue that it is more theoretically aligned with phenomenology.[239] By extension, the fact that many of the tenet systems referenced by doxography are directly grounded in experience means that this genre also shares a number of phenomenological concerns. Although making this connection is somewhat precarious because of phenomenology's genealogy of meaning in Western philosophy, if one were to attempt a

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236 Gimello 1983: 178.

237 Smith, H. 1984: 237.

238 The next chapter will discuss how this point is presented in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*.

239 In his defense of Yogācāra as a non-Idealist system, Dan Lusthaus has made a daring foray into this subject. See Lusthaus, *Buddhist Phenomenology: A Philosophical Investigation of Yogācāra Buddhism and the Ch'eng Wei-Shih Lun* (2002). Klong chen pa's treatment of Buddhism's analysis of experience is not limited to discussion of the "five paths," but it does occupy a good portion of Chapter Four of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*.

comparison, Buddhism tends more along the lines of perception (Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty) than personal reductionism (Husserl).

Our aim here is certainly not to establish watertight equivalencies between Buddhist classification and the Western philosophical traditions. The real question is whether or not Buddhism offers an alternative epistemology or must be reduced to the paradigms which have already been set forth.[240] In order to argue the former, in all likelihood one would turn to a doxography in order to help define their differences. For it is only by understanding the full range of Buddhist philosophical schools that one will begin to be able to understand which Buddhist epistemological models (viz. relative and ultimate) are non-reductionistic.

Really *there is no real alternative* but to follow the doxography's presentation of various tenet systems. To some extent, religions are akin to role-playing games in their expectations of conformity to their tenets. In the case of Buddhism, however, the doctrine of emptiness is invoked as an antidote to such fundamentalism. When even ultimate truth is understood not to withstand analysis, it should not come as a surprise that Buddhist doxography also collapses at a certain point. As Klong chen pa explains,

> The characteristic of ultimate reality is the actuality of being free from the formulations of subject and object. That is to say, in that it is not understood in terms of substantial entities such as words, syllables and so forth, it is not understood from something else. The perturbation of mind and mental events is pacified in the *dharmadhātu*. It transcends conceptualization. It is free from all fabrications. It is not touched by tenet systems (*grub mtha'*).[241]

Specifically, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* breaks down at three distinct points: in its discussion of philosophy, the experiential modality of Buddhas, and rDzogs chen.

Doxography works by setting up dialectical systems, only to knock them down one by one. According to most *grub mtha'* presentations, in the end only Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka is left standing. The fact that Prāsaṅgikas refute all tenet systems by means of absurd consequences does not, however, mean that they themselves have a position. To illustrate this point, Klong chen pa quotes Nāgārjuna's *Vigrahavyāvartaṇi*: "If I had some kind of thesis, then I would

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240 This question was taken up in Susan Mattis's course on postmodernism at Boston College; see Mattis 2000: 141–152.

241 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 126; TANGO ed.: f. 46a: *don dam pa'i bden pa'i mtshan nyid ni gzung 'dzin spros pa dang bral ba'i ngo bo ste, de'ang sgra tshig la sogs pas dngos su mi rtogs pa'i cha nas gzhan las shes pa ma yin pa, sems sems byung gi rnyog pa chos kyi dbyings su zhi brnam rtog las 'das pa, spros pa thams cad dang bral ba, grub pa'i mthas ma reg pa ste...*

have this fault [that you attribute to me]. Not having a thesis, I have no fault whatsoever."[242]

Such a statement is clearly at cross-purposes with the doxographical agenda of assigning value to philosophical systems. Certain scholars have noted that the very creation of a Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka school contradicts its primary message. As Huntington observes,

> And so—in what amounts to a deeply ironic twist of fate—Candrakīrti was posthumously awarded highest honors from an orthodox scholarly tradition that could sustain its authority only by refusing to take seriously what he had himself insisted upon: Nāgārjuna is not in the business of providing rational arguments designed to substantiate, prove, establish, or make certain anything.[243]

Thus, at the conclusion of his presentation of Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka, Klong chen pa takes great care to dismantle *grub mtha'*.[244] By no means does he presume to reify a Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka position. Instead he writes,

> If one asks how the [Prāsaṅgika school] arranges the two realities and so forth, they are designated as mere reifications by worldly people. It is not as if one adheres to tenet systems (*grub mtha'*) as being real.[245]

The fact that Klong chen pa follows up this statement with Candrakīrti's famous quote, "In the way that you claim that a dependent nature is real, I do even not accept superficial reality,"[246] further supports his final deconstruction of doxography. Yet one could also infer from the implied second stanza of this double-sided quote that, just as Candrakīrti submits to worldly convention in order for

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242 *Vigrahavyāvartaṇi*, v. 29.

243 Huntington 2002: 84.

244 Quoting the *Padma dkar po*, Mi pham defends Klong chen pa in regard to the doxographical endeavor: "For the reason stated above, in Klong chen pa's interpretation, emptiness and dependent origination are in a state of equality, and when one determines the nature of things that is free of all extremes of elaboration, none of the four extremes is established in any way whatsoever. So how could one hold any position about that nature of things vis-à-vis the two truths? It would be unreasonable. Therefore, a 'philosophical system' [*grub mtha'*] is a way of determining just how things exist in reality, because it posits or maintains a system [that describes] that [reality]. Moreover, when debating the establishment of the view as a basis, and so forth, on that second occasion there is no position [of nonposition] maintained when it is said that 'In the nature of things, there is no position whatsoever'" (Pettit 1999: 372).

245 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 126; TANGO ed.: f. 50a: *'o na bden pa gnyis la sogs pa'i rnam gzhag kyan ji ltar bya zhe na, 'jig rten pas sgro btags pa tsam du 'dogs par byed kyi, grub mtha' bden par zhen pa ltar ma yin te*.

246 *Madhyamakāvatāra* VI, 81: *ji ltar khyod kyis gzhan dbang dngos 'dod ltar, kun rdzob kyang ni bdag gis khas ma blangs*.

people to "gain the fruit," Klong chen pa is quite conscious of his use of *grub mtha'* as a heuristic device.

The *Grub mtha' mdzod* walks a fine line along Nāgārjuna's rejection of mere words, wherein resides the emptiness in which language has been extinguished. As Klong chen pa has already made clear, ultimate truth is not understood "in terms of words" or "touched by tenet systems." Saying that truth transcends linguistic or epistemological categories does not mean, however, that *grub mtha'*, in its fundamental concern for liberation, should not follow philosophy in pushing the limits of ineffability. As Thurman explains,

> although word, concept and intellect cannot encompass the ultimate, as the well-known epithets, "inexpressible," and so on indicate, that does not mean that they cannot reach the ultimate, bring the philosopher to the point of nonconceptual realization, as it were.[247]

The *Grub mtha' mdzod*'s self-implosion in the face of ultimate truth must not be interpreted as an indication of unimportance. That Klong chen pa dedicated so much energy to his doxographical venture is *ipso facto* a sign of its perceived merit. It is also evidence of his respect of Nāgārjuna's "critique of pure reason," which illuminates the relationship between the two realities.[248] Along these lines, he concludes his philosophical presentation with another quote from the *Vigrahavyāvartaṇi*: "Without relying on convention, ultimate reality cannot be taught. Without ultimate reality being taught, *nirvāṇa* cannot be attained."[249]

Up to a point in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, Klong chen pa's method of classification conforms to what Nathan Katz calls a "text-based" hermeneutic.[250] That is to say, it employs interpretive categories grounded in different types of texts: Indian commentaries flesh out the various philosophical views, different types of tantras lead to a differentiation of tantric levels, and so forth. After the doxographical breakdown in terms of philosophy, Klong chen pa moves on to a similarly text-based (scil. *abhidharma*) set of categories involving different dimensions of practice (i.e., the paths of accumulation, application, seeing, meditation and no more learning). The final path signals a long-awaited consummation of Buddhahood for the practitioner.

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247 Thurman 1984: 55.
248 Thurman 1984: 31.
249 *Vigrahavyāvartaṇi*, v. 28. Note that Klong chen pa's citation differs slightly from the sDe dge version of the original text (ff. 128ab): *tha snyad la ni ma brten par dam pa'i don la mi ston la, dam pa'i don la ma brten par, mya ngan 'das pa mi rtogs so*.
250 Katz 1983: 111.

This is the point at which one might expect doxographic classification to cease. Instead, Klong chen pa continues with a full enumeration of what it means to be a Buddha: multiple enlightened bodies,[251] the five types of wisdom, sixty-four enlightened aspects (ten strengths, four fearlessnesses, eighteen unique qualities, and thirty-two major marks), and so on. It is only in its discussion of how Buddhas perceive reality that the *Grub mtha' mdzod* acknowledges—for the second time—a break in classification: the two realities are undifferentiated for the enlightened mind, all objects of knowledge are apprehended instantly and without a frame of reference, and all experience is meditative equipoise.[252] As Klong chen pa puts it, citing Rāhulabhadra's well-known liturgy, "The perfection of transcendent knowledge is beyond words, thought and description."[253]

There is a difference between the lack of doxographic categories in a Buddha's awareness and the philosophical deconstruction of tenet systems in the face of ultimate truth. This juncture can be said to mark a shift in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*'s method of classification (or lack of it). According to Katz, Klong chen pa's real interests lay in an "adept-based" system of differentiating between various experiential modalities (e.g., a practitioner's psychological disposition, archetypal proclivities, and so forth) which accord with four degrees of practice: renunciation of *saṃsāra* and striving for *nirvāṇa*, cultivation of merit, cultivation of wisdom and, finally, the actual transformation of defilements into wisdom itself.[254] At each of these levels, a different hermeneutic is practiced.[255] Katz writes,

> Once hermeneutical problems become problems of levels of spiritual practice, as Klong chen pa suggests, then the road is paved—conceptually if not historically—for a hermeneutic based not on textuality but on the mind of the adept.[256]

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251 Following the simple *trikāya* schema, Buddhas possess a truth-body, rapture-body and emanation-body. Whereas the last of these is commonly understood in terms of three types—artistic, natal and sublime—the truth-body is sometimes differentiated in terms of a beingness-body and a wisdom-truth-body (which itself is characterized by thirty-seven aspects of enlightenment). See *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 229–239; TANGO ed.: ff. 83a–87a.

252 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 246–251; TANGO ed.: ff. 89b–91b.

253 According to H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche (and the Tohoku catalogue), this text (*Yum la bstod pa*) often attributed to Rāhulabhadra (sGra gcan 'dzin) was actually written by Nāgārjuna (Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 185.

254 In this type of classification can be noted a tension between solipsistic descriptions of specific states of consciousness and the use of public language to delineate which processes are conducive to evolution.

255 This hermeneutical architecture is reminiscent of the four stages put forth by sGam po pa (i.e., turning the mind to the Dharma, practicing Dharma as the path, removing confusion while on the path, and purifying delusion into wisdom).

256 Katz 1984: 121.

It is according to this typology, in relation to the rDzogs chen view, that the *Grub mtha' mdzod* marks its final example of doxographic collapse. According to rDzogs chen's most fundamental suppositions, the naturally enlightened actuality of mind-itself (as opposed to ordinary mind) is primally pure. Direct recognition of this ground leads to Buddhahood and the awareness of all things being pure; a lack of recognition engenders suffering. This simple pivot point marks a departure from the categorization of symbolic systems (i.e., dialectics and tantra).

In the *Tshig don mdzod*, Klong chen pa differentiates between "those who adhere to the tenet systems and those who adhere to the spiritual path."[257] This statement is made in the context of correctly recognizing the ground, rather than intellectualizing about it.[258] A similar criticism can be found in Rong zom Paṇḍita's *Theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa* about different tenet systems up to rDzogs chen confusing the appearances of characteristics of the ground.[259] Such critiques are not simply examples of the standard doxographical methodology of presuming an interpretative error on the part of other vehicles (though rDzogs chen also employs that tack).[260] Instead, they imply that adhering to tenet systems and, by extension, the doxographic enterprise is fundamentally errant. In the *gNas lugs mdzod*, Klong chen pa makes the case even more strongly,[261]

> Naïve persons, misled by [things that] don't exist, are like thirsty deer chasing after the water of a mirage. They place their hopes in confused technical language and their respective tenet systems tether them with labels for things. By not avoiding the intellectual pitfalls of the eight stages, they do not see the peaceful heart of reality.[262]

For Gregory Hillis, this passage represents a prime example of rDzogs chen polemical rhetoric claiming experiential immediacy over and against the other schools' scholastic tendencies. Of course, nowhere in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* is

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257 Germano 1992: 145 (cit. *Tshig don mdzod*: f. 163).

258 At this point in the text, he critiques six specific faulty philosophical views regarding the ground.

259 *Theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa*: ff. 50ab.

260 The introduction of Atiyoga in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* begins with a description of its superiority to the other vehicles. For this section, Klong chen pa quotes extensively from the *Kun byed rgyal po* (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 325–331; TANGO ed.: ff. 117a–119b). Rong zom also privileges rDzogs chen's ability to accurately demonstrate the tenets of all the vehicles, as well as topple them (*Theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa*: f. 65a).

261 For alternate translations of this passage, see Barron 1998: 9–11; Hillis 2003: 154.

262 *gNas lugs mdzod*: f. 48: *med pas bslus pa'i byis pa ri dwags bzhin, smig rgyu'i chu la skom pas snyegs par byed, tha snyad 'khrul pa'i tshig la don re bas, so so'i grub mtha' chos kyi bdag tu bcings, rim brgyad blo yi gol sa ma chod pas, don gyi snying po rnal ma mthong ba med.*

there found such an attack on the dialectical traditions. It uses an entirely different method to indicate the difference between rDzogs chen and the other vehicles.

Chapter Seven of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* concludes its presentation of the rNying ma tantras with a reconciliation of all previous eight vehicles into Atiyoga. The reader thus reaches full closure with the seemingly countless classificatory divisions and subdivisions and sub-subdivisions that have been opened throughout the text. By all rights, the doxography should end. But Klong chen pa has not finished explaining the distinction of the vehicle of the clear-light essence (i.e., rDzogs chen). Chapter Eight appears to be a sort of a bonus track at the end of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. It does not appear in the index of the original cut, perhaps because it was unforeseen at the outset of the project. Or perhaps because the artist perceived it to be a separate kind of oeuvre.

In other words, at the conclusion of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* Klong chen pa drops the doxographical format *in order to better differentiate* rDzogs chen as a non-dual system in which the other vehicles—"which have confidence in a discriminative and verbal view"—are simply subsumed.[263] In this final presentation, which promotes the direct experience of reality, there is no longer a need for effortful explanation, classification or enumeration. Yet neither is there any problem with them. As Klong chen pa's autocommentary to the *Chos dbyings mdzod* points out, quoting from the *Klong drug pa* rDzogs chen tantra in its revelation of how original wisdom rises from within, "Within mind itself, in which things appear as existent or nonexistent, spiritual systems (*grub mtha'*) are pure in their own place."[264]

263 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 361; TANGO ed.: f. 130b.
264 *Lung gi gter mdzod*: f. 78a (tr. Barron 2001b: 166).

4. CANON CREATION IN THE 14TH CENTURY

In the centuries preceding Klong chen pa, Tibet had acted like a great lodestone for Buddhist wisdom. In the dynastic era, the Buddhadharma seemed to arrive from all directions. From Dun huang in the north, Zhang zhung in the west and China in the east, Tibet received tributes of sacred scriptures, princesses and speaking statues. From India came an especially rich collection of the Three Baskets, filled to overflowing with Vinaya, Sūtra, and Abhidharma texts. These were all brought to the crucible of the royal court and cast into the flames of intense Bon po scrutiny. Proven to be as indestructible as diamond and meteoric adamantine, the Buddhist teachings were sown throughout the land and the minds of the people. Some were buried even deeper, beyond the reach of physical danger and deterioration. Under the protection of fierce guardians and ethereal cosmonauts (*mkha' 'gro ma*), these would have to wait any number of centuries to be drawn forth from the stone by treasure-discovers both worthy and prophesied. In the meantime, Tibet continued accumulating precious teachings, trading Himalayan gold for Indian tantras and *śāstra*s. By the fourteenth century, its hoard would be immense. Establishing a canon-based currency of the *buddhavacana* would further drive the intellectual economy of Tibet.

The Closed Canon

The impetus to create a Tibetan canon was driven by a number of different factors. To begin with, canonization served a very practical purpose of organizing the sheer amount of Buddhist literature which had been imported into Tibet over the past six centuries. With the translation project largely complete, scholars could now turn to classifying texts. Through the creation of artificial categories, they hoped to resolve into an integrated corpus the very different types of writing which claimed to be the Word of the Buddha.[265] Canonization was also an important part of library-building. After the earlier decline of Buddhism in Tibet and the rampant destruction of monastic centers in India, naturally there were concerns to preserve a wide swath of literature which had previously only existed in the form of handwritten copies.[266] After organizing these great collections, the need to define which texts were authentic was the next logical step.

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265 Smith 2001: 209.

266 Woodblock printing would not truly begin in Tibet until the 15th century.

The first real attempt to classify all of the scriptures translated into Tibetan was carried out in the thirteenth century by bCom ldan Rig pa'i ral gri (1227–1305). That outline, the *bKa' bstan dkar chag bstan pa rgyas pa*, has not been recovered.[267] His brethren at sNar thang monastery in gTsang would follow in his footsteps, codifying the collection in terms of formal canonical structure and a rigorous testing of comparative morphology.[268] The methodology of this redaction involved dramatic changes to the texts themselves: dialects were toned down, colloquialisms and slang were excised, and in accord with the convention of earlier Tibetan grammarians and translators, archaic words were replaced by more current versions.[269] These changes also provided a basis for the exclusion of texts which were not deemed authentic. As Gene Smith observes, "These purists devised formal criteria that enabled them to exclude even sacred texts for which there was some evidence of Indic originals by exacting linguistic and stylistic considerations."[270]

Later scholars would further the sNar thang mission with redactions of their own. The sūtra section of the Li thang edition of the *bKa' 'gyur*, for example, is based on a compilation of texts organized between 1347 and 1351 at Tshal gung thang monastery under the supervision of Thang po che'i btsun pa kun dga' 'bum.[271] Regarding the *bsTan 'gyur*, nearly all the xylographic editions that one can find today—specifically, the sDe dge edition and the Peking edition sponsored in the eighteenth century by the Ch'ien lung Emperor—are filtered through Bu ston rin chen grub (1290–1364). After taking the sNar thang *bsTan 'gyur* to Zhwa lu, Bu ston further edited it, removing other questionable texts and duplicates. To some contemporary scholars, critical of the restrictive attitude so endemic to the fourteenth-century canonization process, these additional redactions represent nothing less than a contamination.[272]

Bu ston's formation of the *bKa' 'gyur* (1,046 texts in 104 volumes) and the *bsTan 'gyur* (3,786 separate texts in 185 volumes) is a monumental accomplishment that continues to provide definition for Buddhist scholarship today.[273] Most Tibetan scholars do not question Bu ston's canon, but accept it as the benchmark of authority over later works, including the *rGyud sde spyi rnam* by mKhas grub

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267 Neither has the catalog for the *bKa' 'gyur* compiled in rGyal rtse in 1431 by Thugs rje dpal.
268 Ruegg 1966: 25.
269 Shastri 1987: 22.
270 Smith 2001: 238.
271 The tantra section was based on the sNar thang *bKa' 'gyur*, copied by a monk who went simply by the name 'Jam dbyangs.
272 Smith notes here the rancorous perspective of Claus Vogel (Smith 2001: 182).
273 Tulku Thondup 1987: 76.

rje (1385–1438). Yet it is also important to note that Bu ston did omit a great deal of material, the majority being rNying ma tantras. In this sense, his work reflects a diametric opposition to Klong chen pa's textually inclusivistic and non-sectarian attitude in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. For this precise reason, any discussion of Klong chen pa's treatment of tantric literature would be seriously lacking without a closer look at some of the complex factors behind the decisions of his contemporary.

Bu ston was a controversial figure even in his own day. During his lifetime, his teachings were criticized for being superficial and ambiguous.[274] His biographies, however, record him as a great scholar and practitioner, achieving the level of mastery over the *Prajñāpāramitā* that one might expect of a Buddhist intellectual. While Bu ston seems to have followed Sa skya Paṇḍita and Rong zom Paṇḍita in their Svātantrika interpretation of Madhyamaka, one could argue that he was only following the convention of his time. After all, Red mda' ba (1349–1412) had not yet delineated the Madhyamaka approach in terms of Prāsaṅgika method.[275]

Bu ston was known for having a solid understanding of tantra, including the *Guhyasamāja* but more specifically the *Kālacakra*. After a series of visionary encounters with Bu ston, Tsong kha pa would come to revere him as one of his *Kālacakra* teachers. But the history of Tibet written by Padma dkar po (1527–1592) describes Bu ston as being "unable" in 1360 to come out and debate with Dol po pa, the greatest *Kālacakra* teacher of their day.[276] Bu ston's resistance may have come from his view that debate was not entirely useful, in that validating cognition (*tshad ma*) was a "profane science" lacking salvific value. Leonard van der Kuijp helps contextualize Bu ston's view on this,

> Generally, [...] the status of *tshad ma* qua "the science of the logical argument" (*hetuvidyā*, *gtan tshigs kyi rigs pa*) in Tibet was one of a non-Buddhist, secular science on a par with linguistics, technology and medicine. This opinion was shared by virtually all the pre- and post-Tsong kha pa scholars of the Sa skya pa. As far as pre-Tsong kha pa Tibet is concerned, it finds its corroboration in the *tshad ma* writings of Sa skya Paṇḍita, his student 'U yug pa Rigs pa'i seng ge, and Bu ston, all of which conspicuously lack any form of an appraisal of the soteriological possibilities of the *Pramāṇavārttika*.[277]

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274 Ruegg 1966: 127.

275 It is worth noting that other 14th-century scholars prior to Red mda' ba—most notably, Klong chen pa—clearly favored Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka as the most superior philosophical system.

276 This story is corroborated by Tāranātha (1575–1634). When Bu ston refused to come out and debate, and Dol po pa's own obesity made it too difficult to climb up and challenge the scholar, it is reported that Dol po pa's response was so energetic that the side of Bu ston's residence cracked open.

277 van der Kuijp 1979: 57 ff.

More importantly, Bu ston's lack of interest in debate was mirrored in his approach towards textual analysis. Methodologically speaking, Bu ston used an "objective criterion of authenticity" to decide which texts made the grade for inclusion in his canon, rather than a subjective consideration of what would bring enlightenment. Unlike other redactors (such as Padma dkar po, for example), Bu ston's primary agenda was to establish a given text's link to a Sanskrit original. This becomes all the more obvious in light of Bu ston's historical work and the degree to which his *Chos 'byung* is devoted to detailing the resources Tibet spent on importing the spiritual treasures of India and the successes of their translation in the gSar ma period.

The texts excluded by Bu ston, which in their entirety add up to three full volumes, tended to be rDzogs chen tantras belonging to the rNying ma school.[278] Suspected of being authored in Tibet because there was neither a record of them in India nor any evidence of their translation during the dynastic period, these texts were simply omitted from his version of the canon.[279] Other texts that were excluded were rDzogs chen texts belonging to the Zhang zhung transmission line, held by the Bon po to have been revealed prehistorically by Tapihṛtsa and subsequently inscribed in the eight century by sNang bzhar lod po.[280] Clearly Bu ston had reason to reject some texts, yet it is necessary to at least attempt to untangle the full skein of motivations leading him to restrict so many.

The most common argument for Bu ston's canonical truncation is that, like the sNar thang editors, he was concerned with trying to "stem somewhat a tide of sometimes apocryphal works."[281] As Kapstein points out, one of the driving forces in Buddhism behind the critical polemic of determining texts to be false is the merit which accrues from that service.[282] This would explain why Bu ston was even more zealous in this task than the sNar thang clique.

On the other hand, it is possible that certain tantric texts were not included in the canon because Bu ston and others were simply unaware of them. Mayer hypothesizes that many of the Sanskrit Mahāyoga tantras may have actually been kept from Bu ston and out of public view by "zealously secretive rNying ma pa proprie-

278 Different editions include or exclude rNying ma texts with no apparent rhyme or reason, indicating that Bu ston's choices were not always accepted as definitive by subsequent redactors.
279 It is clearly unlikely that the 14th-century redactors had access to the rDzogs chen texts (the *Rig pa'i khu byug, sBas pa'i rgum chung* and so forth) buried at Tun huang. These would only be discovered in 1907 by Sir Aurel Stein.
280 According to Namkhai Norbu, these two strands of rDzogs chen have a common origin in the mysterious country of Oḍḍiyāna (O rgyan), whose adjacence to northwest India and western Tibet has led to its identification with eastern Afghanistan (Reynolds 1996: 340–341, n. 43).
281 Ruegg 1966: 27.
282 Kapstein 2000: 127.

tors in Tibet."[283] After all, not all rNying ma tantras were rejected; those which had also been translated in the gSar ma diffusion were accepted into the canon.[284] This theory does not, however, explain why Bu ston chose to purposefully exclude texts which had been documented and approved by scholars before him.

It is doubtful that Bu ston was unaware of the opinions of his predecessors. Indeed, a favored contention of rNying ma scholars is that much of his criticism of the older translations follows Sa skya Paṇḍita's *sDom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i bstan bcos*.[285] This makes it all the more curious that he would elsewhere choose to ignore the sage conclusions drawn by this and other masters. To begin with, several centuries before, Atiśa had been sufficiently impressed by the library collection at bSam yas not to entertain any doubts about the authenticity of its holdings.[286] Later, after a Sanskrit version of the *Guhyamūlagarbha-tantra* supposedly bearing the personal annotations of Padmasambhava was discovered in a pillar at bSam yas monastery, it was authenticated by both bCom ldan Rig pa'i ral gri and Sa skya Paṇḍita.[287] One has to wonder why Bu ston chose not to accept this tantra as an authentic Indian text.[288] And again, even though Sa skya Paṇḍita copied and translated the Vajrakīla tantras (a cycle which even to this day remains important for the Sa skya school, not just the rNying ma pa), and Bu ston's own guru Nyi ma rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po verified that he himself had seen a Sanskrit version of the *Vajrakīla-tantra* during his fourteen-year sojourn in Nepal, like other tantras with Sanskrit originals documented at bSam yas by Rig ral and sMra ba nyi ma'i tshan can, Bu ston chose not to include it.[289] Interestingly, Bu ston would admit later in his life that he had been wrong to deny authenticity to the rNying ma tantras of which his teachers had seen Sanskrit originals.[290]

It is Per Kvaerne's assessment that the rNying ma tradition was at this point in history a "religious underground" whose scriptures were "rejected en bloc by all the other schools."[291] This may have felt like the case, both during the fourteenth century and the succeeding centuries, suggesting the kind of paranoia that can be

283 Mayer 1991: 184.
284 Note entries 828–844 in the Tohoku catalogue.
285 Neumaier-Dargyay 1992: 25.
286 Tarthang Tulku 1984: 163.
287 Tarthang Tulku 1984: 154.
288 To be fair, his biography paints him as, after weighing both the textual criticism of his predecessors (such as Rin chen bzang po, Ye shes 'od, Pho brang Zhi ba 'od and so forth) and his teachers, deciding that it was "better to leave them out, without expressing an opinion" (Roerich 1996: 102).
289 Roerich 1996: 102, n. 1.
290 Bu ston rin grub's *Chos 'byung chen mo*: 990.
291 Kvaerne 1984: 262.

endemic to minority groups in general.[292] It is also important to underline that the rNying ma pa at this point were still a relatively amorphous aggregation, not an established institutional bloc like the Sa skya order. To say that they were the target of ubiquitous censure runs the risk of exaggerating how large of a target they really were, but to deny that they did suffer some serious upsets—from the exile of individuals such as Klong chen pa and O rgyan gling pa to the generally negative light in which their textual tradition was received—would be to ignore the dynamics of the fourteenth century in which Bu ston was operating.[293] To better understand Bu ston's relationship with the rNying ma tradition, it is worth looking a bit closer at some of the complex circumstances in central Tibet which may have defined his position.

By the time Bu ston began reshaping the sNar thang canon, he was already leading a busy life as statesman and priest. Aside from allegiance to his Zhva lu patrons, he also maintained close relations with other secular leaders. For example, his attempts to serve as a power broker in the reconciliation of Phag mo gru pa and rival forces were one reason why he was accorded high status by Byang chub rgyal mtshan. In particular, Petech interprets one of Byang chub rgyal mtshan's letters as placing a disputed fief in gTsang under the "judicial custody" (*khrims bdag*) of Bu ston.[294] Furthermore, because Bu ston was a famous lama who had come to the attention of the Mongol government, he was compelled to adjust his behavior to meet expectations. Ordinarily, this meant an obligatory visit to the Chinese capital. Like other religious figures of his day such as Dol po pa, bLa ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1312–1375) and bSod nams blo gros rgyal mtshan (1332–1362), he was successful in declining an invitation from the last Yüan emperor, Toγon Tämör (Tho gon thu mur gan), to come to Ta tu and teach.[295] Bu ston's excuse was that he was in retreat or, as his biography suggests, because his dream premonition of the invitation had been followed by an augury which suggested that the trip would have negligible positive effect.[296] It is also worth noting that, unlike many of the well-known lamas, Bu ston also received an invitation from the king of Nepal, Puṇyamalla.

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292 Minority paranoia is a very sensitive topic in current racial discourse, primarily because it suggests that individuals belonging to minority groups are prone to asserting the existence of discrimination even when they themselves have not suffered it.

293 This attitude would continue into the 15th century and beyond. By 1400, for example, Bri gung dpal 'dzin would write an open letter further criticizing the rNying ma pa and the authenticity of their tantras.

294 Petech 1990: 127.

295 Ruegg 1995: 84, n. 182.

296 Ruegg 1966: 122.

It is remarkable that Bu ston was able to successfully maintain so many political affiliations, especially considering his relationship with the factious Byang chub rgyal mtshan. One wonders what sacrifices he was required to make. Clearly, his high social status helped him speak across party lines. Towards the ends of his life, Bu ston declared that he did not belong to any one school. But during the earlier and more contentious years, he must have been obliged to take a definite stance vis-à-vis the different religious orders, seeing that they were so closely tied with the political sphere.

Bu ston's loyalty to his patrons came first and foremost: he worked to build monasteries, albeit after his own fashion, in the Sa skya stronghold of Zhva lu. Yet he also served as diplomat for their enemy, Byang chub rgyal mtshan (representing the Phag mo gru pa). His relationship with the Jo nang pa school is disputed: on the basis that he and Dol po pa had at least one student in common (namely g.Yag sde Paṇ chen, the latter's disciple who came to Bu ston to learn the *Grub pa sde bdun*), some have claimed that Bu ston respected Dol po pa.[297] Others are less sure. As noted above, Bu ston refused to debate with Dol po pa. And their approach may have differed in other ways as well. Samuel, for instance, argues that Bu ston's clerical mindset would have led him to refute the more magically oriented Jo nang pa. In Samuel's opinion, Bu ston was actually an important predecessor of Tsong kha pa in his support of "the rationalized approach of the Madhyamaka against the Jonangpa lamas' attempts to use the Sūtras to express the shamanic insight."[298] Even if one does not accept Samuel's reductionist thesis that Buddhism is divided into two approaches—clerical and shamanic—the point that he makes about Bu ston's rationalism does speak to that lama's possible attitudes towards the rNying ma pa.

According to Hopkins, Bu ston began his religious life as a rNying ma pa who only later gained renown as "a scholar of literally all orders and systems of tenets."[299] This affiliation is supported to some degree by Bu ston's biography, where it is stated that he received rDzogs chen teachings (both *sems sde* and *klong sde*) from Tshad ma'i skyes bu. With that same teacher, he also deepened his knowledge of the *Kun byed rgyal po'i mdo*, a text which he had supposedly studied with his grandfather.[300]

In fact, this rDzogs chen tantra helps to clarify Bu ston's conflicted relationship with the rNying ma tradition. Certainly it was not unknown to him (though

297 Tarthang Tulku 1984: 444.
298 Samuel 1993: 491–492.
299 Hopkins 1983: 535.
300 Neumaier-Dargyay 1992: 25.

he did classify it erroneously, on the basis of its title, as a sūtra instead of a tantra belonging to rDzogs chen mind-class). On the surface, it is easy enough to accept Dargyay's hypothesis that Bu ston omitted the *Kun byed rgyal po* and other rNying ma tantras from the canon because of political pressures.[301] This is a familiar argument, that Bu ston deferred to the position of his Zhva lu patrons out of respect for the Sa skya hierarchs, who were in turn following the position of Sa skya Paṇḍita that certain of the older tantras were bunk. And certainly it did not help matters that the *Kun byed*'s provenance hails back to dGa' rab rdo rje, Mañjuśrimītra and so forth.

Another possibility is that Bu ston objected to the overall tenor of the *Kun byed rgyal po*, a text which is explicitly theistic and rife with undertones of Cittamātra idealism. Not only does its cataphatic philosophical bent explicitly contradict the Madhyamaka position, it also positions rDzogs chen radically against the Bodhisattvayāna by claiming to offer the only means to liberation. The text quite clearly states that "outside of the Great Perfection is sheer error and defilement, as the Vehicle of Causality is wrong in its soteriology."[302]

This sort of dogmatic assertion is exactly the sort of thing that tends to raise the hackles of even the most ecumenical of Buddhists, not to mention philosophers. No wonder that other critics have denounced the text as being non-Buddhist even.[303] In a sense, Bu ston's canonical decisions against texts favored by the rNying ma pa may have been based on his lack of patience with some of the ideas expressed therein. Finally, it is not out of the question that personal reasons could have been somehow responsible for his censure of rNying ma texts. One does have to wonder why Bu ston turned so forcefully from his rNying ma heritage.

The Open Canon

Only after this introduction to Bu ston and normative canonical formation in the fourteenth century is it really possible to appreciate the significance of Klong chen pa's contributions towards an alternative canon. Despite the fact that the two figures were both celebrated intellectuals operating at the same point in history, by the end of their lives they had very different worldviews. That much is clear.

Canonization was generally *à la mode* in fourteenth-century Tibet, but via two contrasting models. Though Bu ston claimed an "objective" standard, it appears likely that personal and political criteria still influenced his decisions. On the other

301 Neumaier-Dargyay 1992: 25.
302 *Kun byed rgyal po'i mdo*, ff. 30.5–31.1 (tr. Neumaier-Dargyay 1992: 292).
303 Among others, Samten Karmay accuses the *Kun byed rgyal po* of drawing on the *prakṛti* doctrine of the Sāṃkhya school.

hand, Klong chen pa largely based his canonical summary on conclusions drawn much earlier by the tradition to which he belonged. In most cases of canonization, one finds that the "objective" stance of the newcomer seeks to explode canon and the latter, traditionalist modality is concerned more about maintaining closure.[304] But here it is the other way around. In Bu ston, one encounters a fundamentalist attitude even regarding texts that had been in Tibet for a long time. Klong chen pa, on the other hand, is more than willing to ecumenically include in his discussion tantras imported later on, during the gSar ma period.

By definition, canon demands closure. Yet rarely is it as simple as all that. Since its inception, the Buddhist tradition has struggled with new interpretations of *buddhavacana* and the upwelling of fresh texts. Jonathan Smith has defined the canonization process as twofold, requiring an explicit means of application (*parole*) as well as a public lexicon (*langue*), an interpreter as well as a tradition.[305] It is the task of the former to overcome the limitations of the latter with "exegetical ingenuity," working "continually to extend the domain of the closed canon over everything that is known or everything that exists *without* altering the canon in the process."[306] That this can even be done is debatable, of course. To paraphrase Derrida, any new interpretation automatically displaces earlier interpretations. In either case, however, canons and meanings are expanded over time.

In the fifth century, with the exact composition of the Pāli canon still in question, Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* set a "unitary standard of doctrinal orthodoxy for all Theravāda Buddhists."[307] One reason for this was the insistence that the Buddha's original teachings were recorded "in his own dialect" (*sakāya niruttiyā*), which Buddhaghosa interpreted to mean Māgadhī. Hundreds of years had passed since the first introduction of Mahāyāna scriptures, yet it still took someone with the "necessary obsession with exegetical totalization"[308] before the *Tipiṭaka* was fully codified.[309] The result was the formal and final separation of two versions of the Buddhist canon: one that chose to exclude texts on the basis of suspect provenance and one that inclusively subsumed everything before it.

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304 Despite the best efforts of some, the Buddhist canon has grown dramatically over time: the Pāli canon (as preserved in Siam) contains 45 volumes, the Chinese canon has 100 volumes, and the Peking edition of the Tibetan canon includes no less than 326 sūtras.

305 In this he follows a distinction made by de Saussure at the beginning of the 20th century.

306 Smith 2001: 48.

307 Gombrich 1996: 51.

308 Smith 2001: 48.

309 To be fair, the Sarvāstivādins were far more fundamental than the Theravādins. Not only did they assert that they were the only authentic one of the eighteen Nikāya schools, they also made the most vigorous objections to the emerging *Prajñāpāramitā* literature of the Mahāyāna.

Tibet in the fourteenth century witnessed a similar phenomenon of retro-canonization. By following the sNar thang clique in their expectation of Sanskrit originals, Bu ston exhibited the same type of linguistic rigor as Buddhaghosa. Slamming shut the essentially open character of the Buddhist canon, denying entry to scriptures revealed centuries before, he displayed a near-totalitarian attitude. In effect, he was responsible for the divergence of two canons in Tibet: his own exclusive one and an informal, inclusive version forwarded by Klong chen pa (much of which would become established within a hundred years as a separate catalogue, the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*). The efforts of both Bu ston and Klong chen pa involved the correction of literary categories, but with very different results. In the end, it is Bu ston's work (despite, or perhaps because of, his ambiguous religious affiliation) which represents *the* canon of Tibetan Buddhism today. On the surface, it would seem to hold true that if winners write history, the same can be said of canons.

The greatest theoretical divide in all of Buddhism is found between the megalithic structures of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna. Differences are found in canon, philosophy, soteriology, praxis and so on. The Vajrayāna, as an organic outgrowth of the Mahāyāna worldview, did not provoke nearly the same degree of canonical rupture with its predecessor.[310] Indeed, being completely woven together, both traditions were flourishing when Klong chen pa wrote the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. It is ironic, then, that he and other rNying ma pa were forced to contend with a Vajrayāna parallel of what the Mahāyāna faithful had faced in first-century India: charges of textual misinterpretation and invention, ethical degeneration, the favoring of mysticism and ritual over philosophy, and so forth.

Trevor Ling cites two prominent motifs in Buddhism: "proper moral conduct and moral attitudes on the part of the individual" and a "transcendental dimension which invests the life of the human individual with a significance it would not otherwise have."[311] Unfortunately, he draws a dangerous historical conclusion from this classification. He suggests that while the first motif (which obviously finds expression in the Vinaya) constitutes the core of the Theravāda tradition, it was because of overemphasis on the latter (particularly its view of emptiness to the exclusion of "socially-structured" Buddhism) that the Mahāyāna school "ran into the shifting sands of Indian polytheism" and was eventually exterminated.[312]

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310 In terms of popularity in India, Mahāyāna preceded Vajrayāna by hundreds of years. In the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, however, Klong chen pa follows the Vajrayāna tradition that tantra was taught by Śākyamuni Buddha contemporaneously with Mahāyāna (cf. *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 21–22; TANGO ed.: ff. 8ab).

311 Ling 1973: 21.

312 Ling 1973: 200–201.

Aside from the outdated trope of painting Mahāyāna as a degeneration, found in the attempts of early Orientalist scholars such as Rhys-Davids to retrieve in the Pāli canon an "original" and rational Buddhism, such a radical differentiation between morality and transcendence is confused in its unbalanced presentation of early Buddhist ideas.

Early Buddhism offered potential followers at least two ways of engagement: as a religious cult initiated by a charismatic (if not divine) individual or as a pragmatic system introduced by a no-nonsense kind of guy who converted people to the order (not a "religion" even) by the sheer power of his logic and conduct. India in the fifth century BCE had any number of people predisposed to either of these two modalities. The Buddha's teachings had resonance for the religious-minded because they emphasized the advice of a *transcendent* person on how to live in the world. For the pragmatists seeking an alternative to the ritualism of the Vedas, the attractive aspect of Buddhism must have been its presentation that the awakened state begins with the *immanence* of an ordinary human living in the world.

For the Nikāya schools, *both* the transcendence and immanence of Śākyamuni were important (Table 1). It would be very wrong to say that the pragmatists were only interested in the Vinaya and the devotees in *nirvāṇa*. Indeed, the success of Buddhism hinged on how transcendence and immanence work in different ways for both of these two groups: the pragmatists appreciate how an immanent person (Śākyamuni) can achieve a transcendent ideal (*nirvāṇa*) and the devout are guided to follow an immanent ideal (the Vinaya) taught by a transcendent person (the *cakravartin* of this age, fourth in line after the Buddhas Vipaśyin, Dīpaṅkara and Ratnaśikhin).

Table 1 Inverse relationship of Nikāya immanent and transcendent ideals

Nikāya (rationalist)	immanent person (Śākyamuni) →	transcendent ideal (*nirvāṇa*)
Nikāya (devout)	transcendent person (Buddha) →	immanent ideal (in the Vinaya)

At the risk of overgeneralization, one can further delineate the two camps in terms of emphasis on either philosophy or ethics. As Klong chen pa himself points out, reception of the Buddha's teaching has largely depended on the predisposition of the individual and their perception of who the Buddha was.

Even during Śākyamuni's life there was a marked difference between those who memorized the Suttas and the "rationalist theoreticians" who memorized texts of the Vinaya. Their exegetical emphases also differed: the former showed more "concern for edification," in contrast to the latter's propensity for "tech-

nical details."[313] From Buddhism's outset, different aspects of the *Tipiṭaka* canon reflected the different mindsets of followers. These differences did not breed contention, though; both Upāli and Ānanda were unanimously praised for their contributions at the First Council. Even at the time of the alleged Third Council,[314] Bu ston reports that the different approaches of the eighteen various orders "were all of them the Word of Buddha."[315]

However this may be—Lamotte claims that the schools differed "with regard to the distribution of the sūtras in the Āgamas, the place of the Āgamas in the Sūtra-piṭakas, the extent of the Vinaya and the presence or absence of an Abhidharma"[316]—the Nikāya schools were in near-complete agreement when it came to privileging the Vinaya's depiction of the Buddha over the Suttas' references to marvels and other deities. The exception was the Mahāsāṃghika school, often discounted because of its "pre-Mahāyāna tendencies" to "accept wonders without too much evidence."[317] It is to be wondered if Nikāya criticism did not also extend to the Mahāyāna's acceptance of texts as *buddhavacana* without much evidence. After all, the canonical shift of the Nikāya schools to Mahāyāna was directly linked to a very profound change in attitude and narratives surrounding the Buddha himself.

As emphasis on the historical Buddha was dislocated, Śākyamuni himself came to be understood very differently. One view was that, having already attained enlightenment in the Akaniṣṭha realm of Ghanavyūha, a mere emanation of the Buddha carried out the *Passionspiel* of the twelve deeds while he himself did not waver from the Dharmakāya.[318] Another view held that he never even taught a single word, with people simply hearing what they needed to hear.[319] And yet another would claim that he was but a vessel for the Dharma, the "mother of all Buddhas," ultimately empty of intrinsic existence.

With the highly elevated status of the *Prajñāpāramitā* suggesting that revealed texts could be considered at least as liberative as a religious figurehead departed for half a millennium, Buddhism also experienced a tremendous shift in sote-

313 Lamotte 1967: 136.
314 The historicity of this council is in question. Klong chen pa and Bu ston cite the sponsor as King Kaniṣka, but the *Mahāvaṃsa* reports that it was convened by Aśoka. There is no mention whatsoever of this event in the *Aśokāvadāna*. See *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 29; TANGO ed.: f. 11a; Obermiller 1999: 87.
315 Obermiller 1999: 97.
316 Lamotte 1967: 129.
317 Lamotte 1967: 136.
318 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 11–15; TANGO ed.: ff. 4b–6a cit. *Laṅkāvatāra,* X: 774).
319 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 20–21; TANGO ed.: f. 8a (cit. Ratnakūṭa); although the exact source of this quote remains to be found, it closely mirrors *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* III: 144.

riology. Introducing *bodhisattva*s as enlightenment heroes, teasing non-duality from long established ideals, pushing the relevance of form in the pervasion of emptiness (and vice versa), Mahāyāna simultaneously deconstructed and evoked new dimensions of Buddhism. Even *nirvāṇa*, the ultimate goal, was described as being "like a magical illusion, like a dream."[320]

Despite the extent of the changes wrought by the Mahāyāna, it was able to coexist peaceably with the monks and nuns of the surviving Nikāya schools. Though employing a number of hermeneutic strategies to subsume the previous generation's teachings—Klong chen pa notes that these included the three turnings of the wheel of Dharma, the three levels of acumen of the audience, the different dominant conditions behind the Buddha's teaching (i.e., teachings that he personally spoke as opposed to teachings that others taught with his blessing or authorization), and so forth—for the most part the Mahāyāna shared common values with the Nikāya schools.[321]

As outlined above, one of the main reasons for the success of early Buddhism was its appeal to both rationalists and devout followers via a multivalent model of transcendence and immanence. The Mahāyāna school replicated this formula, but with different variables. The existence of multiple Mahāyāna cosmologies and philosophical approaches makes a simplified schematic slightly more difficult, and the differentiation between rationalist and devout falls away with newly pronounced emphasis on both wisdom and skillful means as necessary ingredients to Buddhahood, but it is still possible to summarize three distinct modalities.

First, the prioritization of an immanent text over the historical Buddha would have important ramifications, not only canonically but soteriologically as well. With the second turning of the wheel, no longer was personal *nirvāṇa* understood to be the transcendent ideal; in its place, Buddhist philosophers posited a nuanced and non-dual definition of emptiness (i.e., emptiness of emptiness). Being non-dual, and thus fused integrally with relativity and form, this emptiness did not represent the end of the road for the meditator. Instead of remaining in a *samādhi* dissolution of selfhood, one is ideally expected to integrate the experience with the post-meditative state. In other words, the transcendent ideal feeds back into day-to-day life and a commitment to helping other people wake up to the dreamlike nature of reality.

Second, a slightly later form of Mahāyāna—representing the turning of the third wheel of the Dharma—proposed that each person possesses an immanent, albeit latent, Buddha-nature (*tathāgātagarbha*) or seed of enlightenment (*gotra*)

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320 *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā,* X: 40.

321 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 32–37; TANGO ed.: ff. 12a–14a.

within them.[322] No longer was it taught that those practitioners who adhered to the Nikāya methods were limited in their success to the level of an *arhat*. Instead, if properly nurtured through practice over many lifetimes, this seed held the promise to blossom all people into fully awakened Buddhas. The new transcendent ideal entailed nothing less than bringing all beings to the cosmic state of a Tathāgāta. Again, the result of attainment was not dissolution but ever greater compassionate engagement in the inconceivably interconnected sphere of reality.

While both of these first two modalities essentially require a practitioner to bootstrap him or herself out of a morass of karmic baggage and delusion, the third alternative supposes the possibility of greater salvific assistance than mere blessings on the part of Tathāgātas belonging to this planet or distant purelands: the transcendent truth-body (*dharmakāya*) of the Buddha manifests in form (*rūpakāya*) in order to actually assist beings in the six realms of existence. In the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*, one learns of the importance of developing salvific faith in the Buddha Amitābha, who vowed during his life as the *bodhisattva* Dharmākara not to attain perfect enlightenment before the attainment of those who had entrusted themselves in him.[323] To put it succinctly, the immanent ideal to which future Buddhas should aspire is not mere observance of the Vinaya but the enlightened activity of a *bodhisattva*. The more quickly that that fact is realized, the better for everyone.

In the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, Klong chen pa provides general linkage points between the different evolutionary models of Buddhahood and the texts connected with them.

Klong chen pa's willingness to see all of these positions as valid necessitated his acceptance of all of the Buddha's teachings in their own right. This canonical flexibility was made possible by Klong chen pa's multi-faceted accordance of reality as occurring on different levels for different people. For example, admitting that some people require a historical context in their awakening process, he outlined Śākyamuni as the perfect teacher who taught the perfect teaching to the perfect audience in accordance with the perfect time and place. In accord with this convention, he cites a genealogy similar to that of Bu ston, including a historical account of the four councils.[324] Conversely, for those able to follow the vehicle of

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322 See the *Tathāgātagarbha-sūtra*, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, the *Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra* and so forth.

323 This famous vow (though only one of 48) would inspire in Japan the creation of Pureland Buddhism. According to Shinran (1173–1262), faith provides the hook for the "other power" (*tariki*) of Amitābha to take hold. The fact that Dharmākara has already attained perfect enlightenment as Amitābha raises a temporal paradox here. It is reconciled by Śākyamuni Buddha's explanation that the salvation of those who have faith in Amitābha is already cinched (cf. *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra*, XI: 270).

324 When it comes to their historical work on early Buddhism, Klong chen pa and Bu ston primarily drew on the same source (the *Vinayakṣudraka*). See *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 27–31; TANGO ed.: f. 10a–11b.

extraordinary Mahāyāna (the vehicle with which he himself was aligned), Klong chen pa taught a much broader definition of the Buddhadharma (Table 2). This method employed an ahistorical narrative of many Buddhas, cosmic and sublime, teaching any number of different types of texts above and beyond human limitations and conceptions of canon.

Table 2 Inverse relationship of Mahāyāna immanent and transcendent ideals

Nikāya (rationalist)	immanent person (Śākyamuni) →	transcendent ideal (*nirvāṇa*)
Nikāya (devout)	transcendent person (Buddha) →	immanent ideal (presented in the Vinaya)
Mahāyāna	immanent text (*Prajñāpāramitā*) →	transcendent ideal (non–duality) →
Mahāyāna	immanent ideal (*tathāgātagarbha*) →	transcendent person (Tathāgāta) →
Mahāyāna	transcendent person (*dharmakāya*) →	immanent ideal (*rūpakāya/ bodhisattva*) →

A clear example of Klong chen pa's willingness to grant authorial license to a plethora of Buddhas is found early in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, in the second chapter:

> Those of lesser attainment [think] here that there are no other secret-mantra tantras than that which was taught by the image of a *vajra*-holder looking like Śākyamuni himself in the time of hundred-year life-spans. That is illogical. [It is said,] "In the first Perfection Eon, the Kriyātantra and so forth was explained." In this very age, the great Vajradhara—arising since time immemorial—has successively taught countless tantras in Akaniṣṭha, great secret charnel-grounds and places where *ḍākinī*s gather. Even now he teaches, and he will teach in the future.[325]

325 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 26; TANGO ed.: ff. 9b–10a: *'dir thos pa chung ba dag ni, shaa kya thub pa nyid nang ltar rdo rje 'chang du bzhengs pa des tshe lo brgya pa'i dus su gsungs pa las gzhan du gsang sngags kyi rgyud med par 'dzin to, de ni mi rigs te, rdzogs ldan dang po bya ba'i rgyud, ces bya ba la sogs pa 'chad par 'gyur zhing, bskal pa 'di nyid la'ang rdo rje 'chang chen po bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i dus su byung ba des, bskal pa dang po nas da lta'i bar du 'og min dang, gsang ba chen po'i dur khrod dang, mkha' 'gro ma rnam par 'du ba'i gnas su, rgyud sde grangs med pa sngar yang rim pas gsungs shing, da lta'ang gsungs la, ma 'ongs pa na'ang gsung bar 'gyur te*.

This position in itself would not have been an unusual one for scholars of his day to hold,[326] but it is indicative of his perspective on the timeliness (or timelessness) with which scriptures can ahistorically manifest. As his allusion to *ḍākinī*s makes clear,[327] Klong chen pa was unwilling to be limited by conventional notions of history, time or place. When addressing the issue of treasure-texts and the aspersions cast on them due to their relative obscurity, he reminds that some of the most deserving and advanced practitioners in the history of Tibet did not receive the unabridged collection of teachings. For this reason, he explains, it would be folly to try and second-guess what scriptures remain undiscovered. As an example, he cites an occasion when the great master Padmasambhava chose to hide the four volumes of the *Yig can lnga* instead of giving them to the king, ministers or disciples.[328]

One of the great paradoxes in Buddhism is how so many different Buddhisms—the Pāli canon teaches that there are 84,000 different *dhamma*s—can all be reconciled within a single tradition (especially a tradition with cosmic *ḍākinī*s floating around, dropping apocrypha here and there).[329] By quoting scriptures to the effect that the Buddha's teaching is but an echo of the aspiration of the disciple, Klong chen pa reconciles this problem. In other words, there exist countless modalities of one enlightened speech.[330] It is a clever response. Not only does it serve Klong chen pa's doxographic purposes of outlining the various conventions that describe the nature of *buddhavacana*, it also lays an important foundation for his subsequent discussion about the difficulties of canonization in general.

The very idea of "one Buddhism" can be problematic. Ruegg notes this in his use of the term "polythetic" to describe the notion of "a very large number of strands held together by family resemblances."[331] For an example of family resemblances treated by Klong chen pa, one need only turn to canon, the "textual pericopes and units of tradition identifiable in the literature of Buddhism."[332] Jonathan

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326 Klong chen pa was almost certainly aware of the currency enjoyed in the 14th century by such tantras as the *Kālacakra*, which (he notes) was taught at Śrī Dhānyakaṭaka by the Buddha in the form of Vajradhara (*Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 277; TANGO ed.: f. 100b).

327 These mystical females are renowned in Tibet for sharing treasure-texts with deserving practitioners.

328 This fivefold collection of personal instructions includes the *g.Yu cig can, gSer yig can, Dung yig can, Zangs yig can* and *'Phra yig can*. The latter two are subsumed in a single volume (*Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 409; TANGO ed.: f. 146a).

329 The number 84,000 comes from one of the earliest texts, the *Theragāthā*. By the time of Vasubandhu, the number had changed to 80,000 in order to mirror the number of antidotes provided by *buddhavacana* against human emotional addictions. Cf. *Abhidharmakośa-bhaśya,* I: 26.

330 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 20–21; TANGO ed.: f. 8ab (cit. *Uttaratantra* IV: 75).

331 See Ruegg 1989: 3 (cit. R. Needham's term, which debuted in *Man* (1975)).

332 Ruegg 1989: 9.

Smith has explained that polythetic classification requires that the "essence" of any religious tradition must consist of at least one "taxic indicator that appears to function within the tradition as an internal agent of discrimination."[333] The canon provides the "limited body of material" whereby such indicators can be mapped. By defining these indicators—prime examples being different meditation practices or adherence to the monastic ideal—one ends up with a spectrum of family resemblances. The more that different schools share taxic indicators, the more closely they are related. Yet all the schools, even the cousins furthest removed, are considered to be "Buddhist" on the basis of having in common at least one taxic indicator.

As the *Grub mtha' mdzod* demonstrates in extensive detail, Klong chen pa considered all of the various strata of Buddhism to be authentic, despite their differences. Indeed, it is precisely because the differences were important to him that he went into such detail. His inclusiveness is not surprising; ecumenicism within the tradition was (and remains) the general attitude of Tibetan Buddhism. More extraordinary is the subtlety with which Klong chen pa sought to describe Buddhism's polythetic nature—it is hard to imagine a more fitting vehicle of taxic indicators than doxography—during a period in which his own school was being confronted with canonical criticism.

The story of Buddhism's competing strands in India helps to illustrate how fundamental differences in worldview are reflected in canonical choices. In the case of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, canonical closure led to an almost terminal division of traditions. If not for Klong chen pa, and the subsequent ordering of his work into the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, it is possible that the same degree of schism might have occurred in Tibet between the rNying ma and other schools. The significance of Klong chen pa's redaction should not be overlooked, therefore, especially when the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* itself would come to be celebrated by other people than the rNying ma pa.[334] One might very well ask if, without Klong chen pa, the rNying ma school would have gained the status that it enjoys today.

As discussed above, the fourteenth century was a time of great flux. Most of the schools found themselves jockeying for position in relation to shifts of power between the various political parties with which they were affiliated. Because it was such a formative period, it was an ideal time for constructions of religious

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333 Smith 1982: 9.

334 There are many examples of Tibetan scholars from other schools taking initiations and so forth from the rNying ma cycle. A majority of these belong to the bKa' brgyud school, but also included are dGe lugs pa hierarchs, those whose personal family lineage included crossover with the rNying ma (such as the 5th and 6th Dalai Lamas) as well as those who have integrated rNying ma tantras into their personal practice (such as the 14th Dalai Lama).

self-definition and the resolution of internecine polemics by means of canonical decisions. As Klong chen pa himself recognized, canon-building not only provides distinct religious parties with a means to express themselves but, in combination with political interests, actual power as well. The rNying ma scholar saw a great danger in mundane motivations playing a role in the acceptance and rejection of different texts. For as much as the invention of texts may have been a reality in his era, there was also an incentive—apart from the generation of merit—to discredit certain texts.

In an admonition found in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* (within the context of a discussion of textual criticism leveled against the Mahāyāna), Klong chen pa's concern with sectarianism and its influence on canonical decisions is quite clearly expressed:

> That is to say, lacking intellectual vision (*blo mig*) that accurately sees, one puts faith in words of interpretable meaning or the words of those who jealously denigrate [teachings] due to sectarian attachment. By not examining the nature [of the teachings], [cultivating] wrong views or jealously denigrating [teachings] for mere [worldly] gain, one further [encounters] countless obscurations. Those who are naturally learned and honest do not commit these types of sins even for the sake of wealth or to save their life, because one is [thereby] reborn in the Avīcī [hell].[335]

Between the extremes of canonical rigidity or laxness, Klong chen pa was much more concerned with the former.[336] Directly following the passage above, it is notable that he quotes the *Uttaratantra* several times.[337] As a scripture which was itself only revealed by Maitreya several centuries into the Common Era, it represents a prime example of Mahāyāna apologetics. Being a definitive source for Klong chen pa, it also serves a purpose in his effort to define *buddhavacana* against canonical closure. He explains,

> In brief, everything that turns out to be a method of the path which causes the abandoning of *saṃsāra* and total focus on *nirvāṇa* is the teaching of the Buddha. Because they have this in common, despite whatever words or names are connected with them, I advise that they not be reviled or abandoned.[338]

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335 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 48; TANGO ed.: f. 18a: *de'ang legs par mthong ba'i blo mig med pa zhin du, drang don gyi tshig dang, phyogs zhen phrag dog cad dag gis skur ba btab pa'i tshig la yid ches su bzung nas, rang bzhin la mi spyod pas, log par bltas ba'am, rnyed pa tsam gyis phrag dog gis smad pa ni lhag par yang sgrib pa tshad med pas, rang bzhin mkhas shing gzu bor gnas pa de dag gis tshe 'di'i srog dang nor gyi ched du'ang sdig pa de lta by mi bya te, mnar med par skye ba'i phyir ro.*

336 Considering that the unlimited pains of Avīcī are described as being the worst of anywhere in all Buddhist cosmology, this is somewhat understandable.

337 *Uttaratantra,* V: 18–24.

338 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 49; TANGO ed.: f. 18b: *mdor na 'khor ba spong bar byed cing mya ngan las 'das par gzhol ba'i lam gyi tshul 'dug pa de thams cad sang rgyas kyi chos te, ming tshig*

One might ask if Klong chen pa's organization of rNying ma scriptures in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* was done independently or in response to Bu ston. There is very good reason to believe the latter (i.e., that Klong chen pa was not only aware of his colleagues, but concerned about the repercussions of their actions). At several junctures in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, when he defends tantras against what he sees as overly restrictive condemnation, one can catch an explicit message and warning.

> Those of lesser intellect, not comprehending enumerations such as this and speaking with exaggeration and denigration, [say] "They are not authentic tantras because they were not famous in India," or "They were made by Tibetans." Denigrating authentic tantras, scriptures and sūtras merely amasses the cause of remaining for a very long time in bad migrations. That is to say, great *mahāsiddha*s also brought the tantras of India from such places as Oḍḍiyāna, Śambhala and Malaya. Furthermore, not all tantras were kept in India. And if, according to you [only tantras] kept [in India] are allowed, it would not be possible to see them all by only going once.[339] Just because one has collected many titles and outlines (*ming byad*) of sūtras and tantras kept in some minor temples, it does not follow that others didn't exist. Therefore, one shouldn't denigrate great teachings on the path [that came] earlier. Many sūtras and tantras here in Tibet may or may not have existed in India. Many tantras [only] appeared after early teachers such as Padma[sambhava] brought them from *ḍākinī*-realms such as Oḍḍiyāna. Also in terms of sūtra, of the sūtras that were translated in China before [the original Sanskrit manuscripts] were burned by Nyi ma dNgos grub in a fire, translations of many—the *Avataṃsaka*, the *Nirvāṇa*, the *Vinayavastu* and so forth—were reconstructed by the translators Vairocana and 'Ba' Sangs shi from the memory of the Chinese paṇḍit, Ha shang Mahāyāna.[340]

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gang du btags kyang 'dra bas sdang zhing spang bar mi bya ba la gdams te.

339 That this may be a direct dig at Bu ston, or some other potential reader of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, is supported by the following usage of the word 'you.'

340 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 278–279; TANGO ed.: ff. 101ab: *rnam gzhag 'di ltar khong du ma chud pa'i blo chung sgro skur du smra ba dag rgya gar du ma grags pas rgyud yang dag pa ma yin te, bod kyis byas pa'o zhes yang dag pa'i rgyud lung dang mdo mang po la skur ba, 'debs pa ni ngan 'gror yun ring du gnas pa'i rgyu sog pa kho na'o, de'ang rgya gar gyi rgyud rnams kyang u rgyan dang, sha mbha la dang, ma la ya la sogs pa'i yul nas grub thob chen po rnams kyis spyan drangs te, rgyud thams cad ni rgya gar na'ang bzhugs pa ma yin te, gal te bzhugs su bcug kyang khyed kyis lan re tsam phyin pas de thams cad mthong bar mi nus la, gtsug lag khang chung re na bzhugs pa'i mdo rgyud kyi ming byad du ma 'dus pas gzhan rnams len par mi 'gyur ba'i phyir sngon gyi lam ston chen po rnams la smad par mi bya'o, bod 'dir rgya gar na yod pa dang, med pa'i mdo dang rgyud mang po bzhugs te, sngon gyi slob dpon padma la sogs pas u rgyan la sogs pa mkha' 'gro'i gling rnams nas byon te bsgyur zhing, mdo yang nyi dngos grub kyis mes tshig gong du rgya nag la 'gyur ba'i mdo rnams las, phal po che dang, mya ngan las 'das pa dang, 'dul ba lung la sogs pa mang po zhig rgya nag gi paṇḍi ta ha shang ma hā yā na'i blo nas bai ro tsa na dang 'ba' sangs shis lo tsā byas te bsgyur ba yin no*.

This quote is historically significant because it shows Klong chen pa's knowledge of the process by means of which texts were collected, catalogued and subjected to critical analysis. In effect, it is possible to argue that Klong chen pa's decision to dedicate several chapters to an enumeration of tantras in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* came as a direct response to the abridged redactions of the sNar thang monks and Bu ston.

Klong chen pa was among the most preeminent scholars of his time. In rNying ma lore, he was even more of an authority. By the conclusion of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, his patience with critics appears to have worn thin. When explaining, for example, how certain scholars came to doubt the authenticity of tantras hidden in the Zangs yag cave in dbUs, he would simply conclude that they were idiots. Others, he would exclaim, must have gotten their sources wrong by myopically looking in the wrong places.

> Without receiving the *sNying tig*, [people] will repudiate these. It may be that they've been staring too long at related arrangements [found] in the colophons of ordinary books.[341]

Klong chen pa and the gter ma Tradition

Despite the fact that they did not enjoy canonical status in the gSar ma tradition, alternative types of texts were gaining more and more acceptance by the rNying ma pa in the fourteenth century. As authoritative teaching lineages began wearing thin after being passed down over the centuries, the discovery of other "ancient" texts breathed new life into the rNying ma school. By nature, such apocrypha undermined the rigidity required of a canon.[342] By definition, these new texts were composed hundreds of years earlier and spirited away, on the foresight of great masters like Padmasambhava, to be discovered when the time was ripe. From one perspective, to question the authenticity of the texts was to admit to doubt in these masters' prescience and ability. To accept them, however, was to enter into near-direct contact with the wisdom of a bygone age. The boundaries of textual location were opened in a transtemporal as well as translocal dimension.

By no means was the *gter ma* tradition a Tibetan invention. In India, there were at least two antecedent types of treasure-texts. The first included prophecies such

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341 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 404; TANGO ed.: f. 146a: *snying tig ma thob na de dgag la'ong, yi ge rnams phal gyi mjug na 'di ltar bkod pa la ce re long du song ba yin mod*.

342 The celebrated Indian visitor to Tibet, Atiśa, has also been considered to display *gter ton* activity in his discovery of the *Lha sa'i dkar chag* (Kapstein 2000: 133).

as that found in the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhi-sūtra*, an early Mahāyāna text which details Śākyamuni's explanation to the layman Bhadrapāla that he and his companions should seal his teachings in caskets and hide them, so that when they took later rebirth in a degenerate age of declining Dharma they could reclaim them from the celestial *deva*s and chthonian *nāga*s.[343] The second type belonged to the *nidhi* genre,[344] a sub-category of early Kriyātantra, referring more to hidden power-objects than texts.[345]

At the same time that other newly emerging Buddhist orders in Tibet were gaining legitimacy through fresh translations of scriptures directly brought from India, the *gter ma* tradition served multiple functions for the rNying ma school. By strongly underlining that school's unique historical connection with Padmasambhava, it furthered the "intellectual ownership" of the rNying ma pa. By still keeping the ball in Tibet's court, so to speak, the *gter ma* tradition helped fill an important need for that country's Buddhist self-definition.[346]

The danger with this, as we have just seen, was that the other schools tended to be suspicious of teachings contained in books that were not found in India. This was even more the case if the slightest hint of Bon doctrines was found in them, something that was not uncommon in the fourteenth century. With the "new" Bon po recasting themselves as an amalgam of the Zhang zhung tradition and Indian Buddhism, in the process they discovered a *gter ma* corpus of their own.[347] Between these two diametrically opposed poles, the hermeneutical extremes of authenticity and historical reinvention, the rNying ma school needed to maintain a balance.

Klong chen pa entered into this literary minefield of *gter ma*, carrying the "quintessentially dear" *sNying thig* cycle as his standard. By the time he was done, both the *bka' ma* and *gter ma* traditions would be transmuted into an amalgamated redaction of rNying ma practices. Specifically, his synthesis involved two separate cycles of rDzogs chen literature: the *Bi ma snying thig* (also known as the "old *sNying thig*," due to having been passed on from person to person since the initial promulgation by Vimalamitra in the 8th century) and the *mKha' 'gro snying thig*. Allegedly hidden by Padmasambhava and discovered by Padma las 'brel rtsal, this latter cycle is known as the "new *sNying thig*."[348]

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343 This 2nd-century text is mentioned in Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanākrama*.

344 The Sanskrit word *nidhi* is the basis for the Tibetan *gter ma*.

345 Mayer 1994: 538.

346 In much the same way, the attainment of Milarepa marked the possibility of enlightenment for Tibetans also.

347 Tucci 1949: 109.

348 The 3rd Karma pa, a fellow student of Klong chen pa under Kumārarāja, revealed the *Karma snying thig* around the same time. This lesser known *sNying thig* cycle would introduce rDzogs chen practices to the Karma bKa' brgyud school.

One might ask what gave Klong chen pa the authority to blend these traditions. To begin with, he was a lineage-holder. He held an uncorrupted transmission of the *Bi ma snying thig* that spanned over ten lamas and six centuries. In terms of the *mKha' 'gro snying thig*, Klong chen pa had been personally blessed with a series of direct visions of Padmasambhava. He did not rely entirely on these for legitimation, however. He followed protocol, looking for someone who had received the *sNying thig* directly from Padma las 'brel rtsal. As Tarthang Tulku explains, "Although Klong chen pa's understanding was already complete, this great one approached rGyal-sras Legs-pa in order to demonstrate the proper way of relying on a spiritual master to receive Mantrayāna teachings."[349]

On the *Bi ma snying thig* cycle, Klong chen pa wrote a fifty-one section commentary entitled the *bLa ma yang tig*. It is largely based on one of the seventeen rDzogs chen tantras, the *Mu tig phreng ba*. His commentary on the *mKha' 'gro snying thig* is known as the *mKha' 'gro yang thig*. Together with his supplementary work, the *Zab mo tang thig*, Klong chen pa gathered these two sets together in the thirteen-volume *sNying thig ya bzhi*, explaining details related to their practice on the basis of his own experience and realization.

Following Tucci, one might interpret Klong chen pa's efforts in rDzogs chen as strategically geared towards "school-building." Indeed, it is arguable that his fusion and clarification of these various practice lineages greatly furthered the rNying ma tradition. Unlike political maneuvering or polemic, however—something many of the other schools of Klong chen pa's day were involved in—the effect of the *sNying thig* was not particularly dramatic in the public arena. If anything, it resulted in an increased sense of self-identity and coherence *within* those who already perceived themselves as rNying ma pa. It is for this reason that few have accused Klong chen pa of conscious machination towards religious hegemony or ideological capitalism.[350] A historical view of Klong chen pa simply does not reveal this dimension of secular motivation. Instead, it appears that his heart was purely in presenting what he thought to be an extremely effective system of practice.

The *gter ma* tradition overall had a powerful impact on fourteenth-century Tibet, both canonically and historically. To begin with, there was no shortage of treasure-revealers then. In his short life, Padma las 'brel rtsal discovered no less than 88 texts (six of which are included in the *Rin chen gter mdzod* collection

349 Tarthang Tulku 1995: 161.

350 Many Tibetologists have questioned the motivations of treasure-revealers. For a damning critique of Padma gling pa, for example, see Aris 1988.

of treasure-texts compiled in the 19th century by 'Jam mgon kong sprul).[351] At mChims phu, a place revered for its association with Guru Rinpoche's enlightened speech, the 3rd Karma pa Rang 'byung rdo rje discovered an immortality potion.[352] And at least a dozen more *gter ton*s lived at the same time as Klong chen pa. Of these, perhaps the most important was O rgyan gling pa.

O rgyan gling pa (1329–1367/1323–1360) was a generation younger than Klong chen pa, but the fact that they were born in the same valley and shared the same rNying ma lineages makes it very probable that they had at least some interaction.[353] O rgyan gling pa was also exiled by Byang chub rgyal mtshan at around the same time as Klong chen pa. While this may have come about as a result of the *gter ton*'s affiliation with the 'Bri gung pa,[354] H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche identifies the cause in relation to an offending passage of O rgyan gling pa's *gter ma*, the *Padma bka' thang*. That text's statement that "[t]he pig will uproot the soil" was interpreted by Byang chub rgyal mtshan (or one of his close religious advisors) to mean the uprooting of the Sa skya by the Phag mo gru pa.[355] To pronounce such unfavorable auguries for the ruling class was not especially prudent, and O rgyan gling pa would unfortunately die soon after being exiled to the E yul region of southwest Khams.

What makes O rgyan gling pa an especially interesting case is that he (or his texts, particularly the *bKa' thang sde lnga*) had previously found favor in Byang chub rgyal mtshan's eyes. With his discovery of over a hundred volumes, O rgyan gling pa was considered to be a major *gter ton*.[356] His account of Padmasambhava's life was not the only one, but it would come to represent a point of focus for the rNying ma school and Byang chub rgyal mtshan's revisioning of the dynastic era.[357] In other words, O rgyan gling pa's texts provided crucial data for the nationalistic enterprise of the mid-fourteenth century. Kapstein has written extensively on how the *gter ma* tradition at this time was used to support a mythic reconstruction of Tibet: "The phenomenon that we see at work here drew its

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351 Aris 1988: 160.

352 Aris 1988: 152–153.

353 That Byang chub rgyal mtshan was also born in this same valley raises interesting questions about local power-dynamics and familial associations.

354 Dowman 1988: 170.

355 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, II: 73, n. 1035 (cit. *Padma bka' thang*, ch. 92, 564 ff).

356 Only eight treasure-discoverers were understood as being this prolific. His discoveries were collected in twenty-eight troves; of these, the best known are six historical pieces, a long biography of Padmasambhava which became indispensable for the rNying ma order, and five shorter texts reviewing that epic from different perspectives.

357 The first hagiographic *gter ma* had been discovered by Nyang ral nyi ma 'od gzer two hundred years earlier. Another version of the life of Padmasambhava was revealed during Klong chen pa's life, the *gSer phreng* of Sangs rgyas gling pa (1340–1367).

strength in large measure from the persisting presence of the old empire and from the continuing felt allegiance to it, rather than to the new and strictly local hegemons who rarely commanded much loyalty outside of their own narrow domains."[358] While true for the most part, this statement does not reflect the full status that Byang chub rgyal mtshan gained—not only across Tibet but within Mongol China—in large measure as a result of O rgyan gling pa's *gter ma*.

It is important to differentiate between two models of authority provided by treasure-texts. The unifying nationalistic agenda of Byang chub rgyal mtshan was served by a quasi-historical, hagiographic *gter ma*. The 5th Dalai Lama used treasure-texts in another way. Cast as an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara, the Great Fifth captured the religious imagination of the people through a "conversion narrative" of the *Maṇi bka' 'bum* national cult, with the office of the Dalai Lama mirroring the incarnation of Avalokiteśvara in the same way as King Srong brtsan sgam po (who had also been an incarnation of this *bodhisattva*). With the precedent of Buddhism incarnate in the imperial rulers of Tibet, the dGe lugs pa unification project had a strong claim to power, "ensuring that the Buddhist conquest of Tibet would endure long after the conquered empire had vanished."[359] The difference between the two models—O rgyan gling pa's and the Great Fifth's—is clear, however. In the former case, *gter ma* were employed in a secular fashion. In the latter, they added religious meaning to the office of the Dalai Lama.

O rgyan gling pa's discoveries are also related to the legitimation of Klong chen pa's *sNying thig* efforts, albeit via a circuitous route. As mentioned earlier, Klong chen pa's previous life as the princess Padma gsal was detailed in O rgyan gling pa's *Padma bka' thang* as well as the *mKha' 'gro snying thig*. These two texts differ on certain points, but the reason for their discrepancy remains a question. Following Kapstein's discussion of another early Tibetan historical text with a very similar story,[360] they may represent a contest between competing discourses of power: soteriological in the case of the *mKha' 'gro snying thig* (i.e., the princess is revived in order to continue the transmission of the *sNying thig*) or karmalogical in the case of the *Padma bka' thang* (i.e., she will attain better rebirth as a result of her karmic connection with Padmasambhava, having met him just before her death).[361] For the *mKha' 'gro snying thig*, Klong chen pa becomes the prophesied recoverer of Guru Rinpoche's teachings and his role is secondary to the impor-

358 Kapstein 2000: 162.
359 Kapstein 2000: 65.
360 The *sBa bzhed* is dated to the late eighth or early ninth century. See Kapstein 2000: 214, n. 11.
361 Kapstein 2000: 225, n. 61. These terms were inititally introduced by Spiro 1982 and expanded by Samuel 1993.

tance of the text itself. But in the *Padma bka' thang*, he is mentioned by name: Dri med 'od zer. Considering his fame, it is likely that the majority of those who came into contact with O rgyan gling pa's *gter ma* knew who this was. The *Padma bka' thang* not only came to invoke a connection with Padmasambhava, then, but by locating the master in relation to an eminent master of the fourteenth century, also served to lend even greater legitimation to Klong chen pa. As a modern scholar, one might view the connection as too coincidental and even suspect that O rgyan gling pa deliberately inserted into the *gter ma* the name of his rNying ma colleague. But whatever the case, there is no question about the impact that this type of explicit connection between Klong chen pa and Padmasambhava would have made on fourteenth-century Tibetans. If nothing else, it provided Klong chen pa with an even stronger credential for his work on the *sNying thig* cycle.

Klong chen pa came to be revered as a *gter ton* extraordinaire in his own right. Under the name Dri med 'od zer, Klong chen pa is included in a list of treasure-revealers that was drafted as early as 1400,[362] and today he is known as the progenitor of the Southern Treasure Tradition (*lho gter*).[363] Ten of Klong chen pa's works are included in the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, but Klong chen pa is known as a treasure-revealer of the most rare type.[364] Instead of physically extracting yellow parchment scrolls or other ritual objects (i.e., *phur ba* daggers, *vajra*-wands, statuettes, etc.) from the earth, he drew mind-treasures (*dgongs gter*) from thin air. He is even reported to have said, "I am opening the door of Dharma Treasures of the inner clarity, there is no need of Dharma Treasure from the cracks of rocks."[365]

The Grub mtha' mdzod as Canonical Statement

Of all Klong chen pa's extant works, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* dedicates the most time to the rNying ma tantric literary tradition.[366] Because many of the texts listed in it are missing from Bu ston's canon, this opus fills an important gap in our knowledge about rNying ma scholars' attitudes towards the tantras prior to

362 Tucci found this mention of Klong chen pa in a translation of the *Padma thang yig*, a biography of Padmasambhava (Tucci 1949: 258–259, n. 203 (cit. Toussaint 1933: 385)).

363 By contrast, the Northern Treasure Tradition (*byang gter*) was initiated by Rig 'dzin rGod ldem rJe dngos grub rgyal mtshan in the second half of the 14th century at rDo rje brag monastery in south-central Tibet. Around the same time, the treasure-texts of the Bon po were also codified along three geographic lineages: northern, southern and central.

364 Tarthang Tulku 1995: 165.

365 Tulku Thondup 1996b: 154.

366 It is not the only one of his works to do so. In the autocommentary to his *Chos dbyings mdzod*, for example, one finds a parallel list of texts belonging to the rDzogs chen category (Barron 2001b: 432–434 (cit. *Lung gi gter mdzod*, Dodrup ed.: f. 206b)).

the creation of their own formal canon, the *rGyud 'bum*, in the fifteenth century. If the *Grub mtha' mdzod* is any indication, there was already a move to position their scriptures in relation to the more "mainstream" tantras. For this reason, prior to his discussion of the Old Translation tradition (rNying ma), Klong chen pa dedicates an entire chapter to presenting the New Translation (gSar ma) tradition.[367] While the Old Translation tradition includes those texts which were imported before the end of the dynastic era in the ninth century, the New Translation tradition effectively began around the turn of the eleventh century. By the fourteenth century, the diffusion from scriptures from India had dwindled to the point that Klong chen pa could attempt a complete categorization of both traditions.

It is clear that Klong chen pa was not involved in the same type of project as Bu ston. For example, he never explicitly states in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* that he is attempting to create a canon. To do so would contradict many of his other statements which take a position against the kind of restrictions that canons impose. Neither does Klong chen pa enter into an actual comparison between the gSar ma and rNying ma tantras themselves; for example, he does not remark on the fact that some of the same texts appear in both traditions.[368] Nor does he mention the fact that certain of the tantras in the rNying ma list, which are not found in the gSar ma tradition, *were* regarded as authentic and included in Bu ston's canon.[369]

Although Klong chen pa's discussion of the gSar ma and rNying ma tantric traditions fills two entire chapters of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, it does not appear to have meant as an exhaustive treatment of the subject. The actual cataloguing of tantras only takes up about a dozen pages, while Klong chen pa's lists of titles often trail off with a simple and open-ended "[...]and so forth." Furthermore, these titles are not always standardized in the text: at some points they may appear in Sanskrit and at other times in Tibetan. For instance, the *Cakrasaṃvaraguhyācintya-tantra-rāja* is alternately called the *Saṃvara* (*bDe mchog*), the *Guhyācintya-tantra* (*bSam gyis mi khyab pa'i rgyud*), or by its Sanskrit name *Ra li*. Some titles are also

367 An entire chapter is dedicated to the gSar ma tradition, making it an obvious concern of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. According to Klong chen pa, the tantras translated after Rin chen bzang po in the 11th century belong to the gSar ma tradition (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 281; TANGO ed.: f. 102a).

368 A comparison of the tantras belonging to the two traditions reveals that most of the Kriyā tantras, one Caryā/Upa tantra, and four Yoga tantras are held in common.

369 For example, nearly all of the Kriyā tantras in the rNying ma section can be found in the canon.

at variance with those found in the later *rGyud 'bum*.[370] For all of these reasons, technically speaking it may be somewhat of a misnomer to label the *Grub mtha' mdzod* a "canon-building" treatise.

That said, it would also be incorrect to conclude that the *Grub mtha' mdzod* does not serve the canonical function of identifying tantric scriptures. Structurally it accomplishes this in a very straightforward way: Chapter Six is devoted to an overview of the four classes of tantra belonging to the gSar ma tradition; concluding with the note that it "completely establishes the teachings,"[371] Chapter Seven treats the six classes of rNying ma tantras; and Chapter Eight explores in greater detail the "children" of the rDzogs chen "literary tantras" and personal instructions (*man ngag*). There is also a full enumeration of the latter, totaling one hundred and nineteen personal instructions which were discovered as *gter ma*. The *Grub mtha' mdzod* does more than provide a mere list of these scriptures. Klong chen pa situates the various classes of tantra in relation to one another, enumerates the individual names of the tantras belonging to each class, and goes into extensive detail describing the differences between them. In short, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* offers both descriptive analysis and multi-layered data sets.[372]

For the tantras of the gSar ma tradition, Klong chen pa follows conventional explanations for their division into four separate classes (Kriyā, Caryā,[373] Yoga and Anuttarayoga): they are fourfold because different types of tantra are appropriate for the four different castes of people, different degrees of intellectual acumen, different ages in which people live, different ways in which lust is integrated into the path, and personality archetypes which incline differently towards the four main Hindu deities.[374] The *Grub mtha' mdzod* attains even greater granularity in its description of the differences between the various levels. The outer three tantras put varying degrees of emphasis on external ritual over inner visualization

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370 To explain why Klong chen pa's quotes occasionally differ from the originals, some have suggested that Klong chen pa recalled citations from memory rather than going to the actual texts themselves to check for the precise wording. It would be a prodigious feat if he were doing the same thing here, reciting off the cuff the names of so many different tantras.

371 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 361; TANGO ed.: f. 130b.

372 For each of the tantric levels, Klong chen pa identifies by name which texts are located there, as well as whether they should be appropriately classified as root tantras, explanatory tantras, auxiliary tantras and so forth.

373 When it comes to the detailed discussion of Caryā ('performance') tantra in this section, Klong chen pa changes its name to Upatantra ('approach'). In the rNying ma section, he calls it Upāya ('skillful means'). At first glance, this appears to be a typographical or Sanskrit mistake for *ubhaya* ('both'), but an early Tun huang text also lists this class as Upāyatantra.

374 This was likely a condensation of the system given in the final chapter of Atiśa's *Bodhipathapradīpa* (*Byang chub lam gyi sgron ma*), whose seven classes included tantras of Action, Practice, Skill, Combined, Union, Great Union and Anuttarayoga (Sherburne 1983: 167–169).

(e.g., Kriyātantra performs rituals with the physical body, Yogatantra primarily involves mental activity, and the middle level of Upatantra utilizes a combination of both these aspects). For the gSar ma inner tantra, Anuttarayogatantra, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* gives a threefold division: father tantras emphasizing liberative technique, mother tantras emphasizing wisdom, and non-dual tantras.

By presenting non-dual tantra as a third separate class in Anuttarayogatantra, Klong chen pa assumes a stance that differs from what Tsong kha pa would take. He takes care to qualify his position, however, by stating that non-dual Anuttarayogatantra is not operative outside of the two modalities of mother and father tantra. By using wisdom and liberative technique in equal measure, it is actually subsumed under their approach. Hence, he concludes, inner tantra should really be described as twofold.[375]

When differentiating between the inner and outer tantras, Klong chen pa provides two reasons for the division. At the level of the path, the outer and inner vehicles employ different attitudes of purity, places of practice, and ritual substances and implements. Through the use of especially efficacious methods, the accomplishments of inner tantra are cited by the *Grub mtha' mdzod* as being superior in terms of eight specific masteries (which relate to the realization of the three doors of enlightened body, speech and mind). According to Klong chen pa, the other major difference between Anuttarayogatantra is the distinctiveness of its view towards realization (*rtogs pa lta ba'i khyad par*).[376] He writes,

> If in recognizing that all things have achieved Buddhahood as a threefold *maṇḍala*[377] from the beginningless beginning one uses as the ground the expanse of realizing equality and purity without acceptance or rejection, it is inner [tantra]. If one does not do [that], it is outer.[378]

It appears that Klong chen pa's inclusivistic intent in providing an overview of gSar ma texts in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* was based on two things: his early scholastic training in a non-sectarian environment and an understanding of the comprehensiveness expected of a doxographic treatise. On the basis of this ecumenicism, it is tempting to paint Klong chen pa as a precursor to the non-sectarian (*ris med*) movement popularized in nineteenth-century Tibet by 'Jam

375 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 303; TANGO ed.: f. 110a.

376 In his discussion of the rNying ma system, Klong chen pa places the division of outer and inner tantra along similar lines of view, meditation and conduct.

377 That is, enlightened body, speech and mind.

378 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 302; TANGO ed.: f. 109b: *chos thams cad ye nas sangs rgyas pa dkyil 'khor gsum du shes pas dag mnyam blang dor med par rtog pa'i dbyings gzhir byed na nang pa, mi byed na phyi pa'o.*

dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po and 'Jam mgon kong sprul. To do so would be misleading, however. Whereas the primary goal of the *ris med* movement was to initiate teachers in a wide array of practice lineages in order to check the decline of certain lineages, the greatest contribution of Klong chen pa's tantric categorization was harmonization without homogenization.[379]

When it came to outlining the tantras belonging to his own tradition, Klong chen pa enumerated six separate classes (Kriyā, Upa, Yoga, Mahāyoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga). Combining these with the three levels of attainment based on the sūtras (*śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, and the unexcelled *bodhisattva*), he followed the rNying ma system of nine Buddhist vehicles.[380] Before Atiśa's visit to Tibet and the subsequent introduction of the gSar ma fourfold scheme, a ninefold system was in place on the plateau. Kapstein goes so far as to suggest that it was a Tibetan innovation, making the connection that the Bon po had their own ninefold system,[381] basing this conclusion on Karmay's dating of the *Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba* to the tenth century.[382] If, however, one accepts that Padmasambhava was indeed the author of that earliest doxography, the ninefold system was clearly Indian in origin.[383] More relevant to our present discussion, however, is how these nine categories shifted between the dynastic era and Klong chen pa.

It took some time before a definitive version of the nine categories could be reached. In an early Buddhist text discovered at Tun huang, one finds a mishmash set of nine vehicles ranked in terms of men, gods, *śrāvaka*s, *pratyekabuddha*s, sūtras, *bodhisattva*s, Yoga, Kriyā and Upāya.[384] The *Man ngag phreng ba* has a closer match to the enumeration found in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, differing only in its presentation of the final three vehicles: the method of creation (*bskyed pa'i*

379 Klong chen pa's tendency to see harmony in canonical strife is also visible in the second chapter of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, during his discussion of the Buddhist councils in India. His claim that unanimous agreement was reached on points of contention differs from other historical accounts (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 28; TANGO ed.: f. 10b).

380 Chapter Three of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* opens with an overview of the many different ways of enumerating the Buddhist vehicles. Klong chen pa begins with the ultimate perspective of *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* that there is really no limit to the number of vehicles, but then progresses through the ways in which Buddhism consists of two, three, four, six, and nine vehicles (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 56–57; TANGO ed.: ff. 20b–21a).

381 These are delineated in terms of four causal vehicles (*rgyu'i theg pa*), four resultant vehicles (*'bras bu'i theg pa*), and great perfection (*rdzogs chen*). On the basis of the *lTa ba'i rim pa bshad pa*, authored by the translator sKa ba dPal brtsegs (8th c.), Karmay himself believes that the Bon po got the ninefold system from the Buddhists (Karmay 1998: 112).

382 Kapstein 2000: 13: 209, n. 61 (cit. Karmay 1988: 142–144).

383 The confusion engendered by these various presentations endured into the 15th century, when sPyan snga bLo gros rgyal mtshan (1390–1448) conflated the rNying ma and Bon systems "because the ninefold path is found in both" (Smith 2001: 148).

384 Smith 2001: 13.

tshul), method of completion (*rdzogs pa'i tshul*), and method of the great perfection (*rdzogs pa chen po'i tshul*). Other interpretations can be found in the work of Rong zom Paṇḍita and the 2nd Karma pa, Karma Pakṣi (1204–1283). This latter figure, who was ordained at Kaḥ thog and subscribed to its rNying ma teachings of nine vehicles, followed Rong zom and the *Guhyagarbha* in classifying the outer tantras (i.e., Kriyā, Caryā and Yogatantra) in terms of intentionality, discipline and esotericism. The 2nd Karma pa furthermore used an Anuyoga text, the *mDo dgongs pa 'dus pa*, to differentiate between the various vehicles on the basis of progressive initiations. Before Klong chen pa, according to Kapstein, Karma Pakṣi's *rGya mtsho mtha' yas skor* represents "the greatest attempt [...] to elaborate a syncretic approach to the Buddhist traditions of Tibet, one based upon the peculiar traditions of the Nyingmapa school."[385]

It is the version of the ninefold schema appearing in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, however, that would become the rNying ma standard.[386] In the final ratification advanced by Klong chen pa, the final six tantric classes primarily represent literary categories, not various types of beings or methods of practice. Departing from previous doxographies' emphasis on the cosmological or soteriological dimensions of the various vehicles, the rNying ma classification would come to reflect the gSar ma methodology of forming different vehicles on the basis of different kinds of texts. In fact, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* makes an implicit connection between the two systems, showcasing them side by side.

In light of the delicate political and religious atmosphere in which he lived, one might expect that Klong chen pa would have wanted to be especially sensitive about making comparisons between these two traditions. Many doxographers allowed the *grub mtha'* structure itself to speak for the superiority of the rNying ma tradition (by presenting the gSar ma tradition before the privileged final place). Klong chen pa, on the other hand, was not afraid to make a series of striking comments on how the two traditions actually differ in terms of translation quality, with the older ones being better.

> These two [translation traditions] are respectively more easy and more difficult to understand; they are also more or less effective in their assessment of the expanse. Because the earlier translators were emanations of the Buddha, their ability to translate with sovereignty and effectiveness is evident. The translators of the later era were learned in the methods of ordinary people, but their style is cramped and difficult to understand. It is like that because they were

385 Importantly, Kapstein shows that Karma Pakṣi is the author of this text, not the 3rd Karma pa as previously believed (Kapstein 2000: 105).

386 Karmay cites the *Grub mtha' mdzod*'s configuration of the nine vehicles. For a detailed overview of different configurations of this scheme, see Karmay 1988: 173–174.

> incapable of translating the meaning of the Indian texts, other than the mere order of words.[387]

By making a target of translators, this passage also allows Klong chen pa to vaunt the rNying ma tantras without denigrating the gSar ma tantras themselves. After all, to do that would be at cross-purposes with what he had previously written about the deprecation of scriptures. It would also go against the *Grub mtha' mdzod*'s strategy of juxtaposing the tantric traditions in relation to each other in order to better buttress the rNying ma system's canonically shaky foundation. Klong chen pa writes,

> If [the tantras that] came at an earlier time were fabricated, what was their composition based on? [And if] that were the case, it follows that [the tantras that] came later were fabricated. This is because [the gSar ma tantras] do not go beyond the meaning of the earlier [tantras] and there is nothing but a slight dissimilarity of wording and length. Therefore, in relation to these great tantras belonging to the gSar and rNying [traditions], because many *mahāsiddha ācāryas* appeared and the initiations and blessings remain uninterrupted, they are completely authentic. Because those *ācāryas* composed many commentaries and personal instructions [for these tantras], keep the faith.[388]

It is likely that Klong chen pa wrote the tantra sections of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* with two purposes in mind: to edify his rNying ma fellows and to reply to the redaction of tantras by his contemporaries, particularly Bu ston. Klong chen pa's wish to serve as an apologist for the rNying ma school should not come as a surprise, particularly in light of the exclusory canonical moves of his time. The overall tenor of the work makes it obvious that it was intended for an academic audience. The way in which the tantric sections comfortably expose esoteric information also suggests that its intended readers were advanced practitioners

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387 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 281; TANGO ed.: ff. 102ab: *'di gnyis la go dka' sla dang, dbyings 'jal brlabs che chung ltar 'dug pa ni, sngon gyi lo tsaa ba rnams sangs rgyas gyi sprul pa yin pas rang dbang bsgyur nus pa'i phyir rlabs che bar mngon no, dus phyis kyi lo tsaa ba rnams gang zag phal pa'i lugs kyi mkhas pa rnams byon bas, tshig grims la go par dka' ba ste, rgya dpe'i tshig gi rim pa tsam las ngon 'gyur ma nus pas de ltar byung ba'o*.

388 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 280–281; TANGO ed.: f. 102a: *sngon gyi dus su byung ba dag bcos ma yin na, rtso ma gzhi gang la byas, de ltar na phyis 'byung ba rnams bcos mar 'gyur te, don sngon bas lhag tu ma byung, tshig cung zad mi 'dra ba dang, mang nyung byung ba las med pa'i phyir ro, des na gsar rnying gi rgyud chen po 'di dag la slob dpon grub chen mang du byon zhing, dbang dang byin rlabs zam ma chad par 'dug pas yang dag pa 'ba' zhig ste, slob dpon de dag gis 'grel pa dang man ngag mang du mdzad pas yid ches par gzung do*.

rather than complete novices.[389] Precisely how much of an audience the text enjoyed outside the universities or the rNying ma fold is unclear, however. Proselytization and growing intellectual marketshare in the rNying ma tantras was not part of Klong chen pa's agenda.

The cataloging of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* obviously had the greatest importance for the rNying ma pa themselves. Much more than a milestone in the formation of their tantric tradition, it stands as a cornerstone. Yet Klong chen pa was working on precedent, of course. He was not the first to attempt a doxographical organization of tantras. It is even debatable if he was familiar with all of his predecessors' efforts in this arena, but considering Klong chen pa's level of education, it is certainly possible.

The first recognized overview of tantras was a brief outline of an open letter (*bka' shog*) written in the eleventh century by Pho brang zhi ba 'od. Extant now, it has been discussed in some detail by Samten Karmay. This three-part document specifically names tantras belonging to the rNying ma school, tantras belonging to the more recent translation tradition (oddly enough, this section also includes rDzogs chen texts), and texts of which the author does not approve.[390] Belonging to the latter category are a list of eighteen mind-class tantras. According to tradition, five of these were translated early on by Vairocana and thirteen were translated later by Vimalamitra and others. The author of the letter debates this, pointing instead to their composition by a mysterious Tibetan named Drang nga shag tshul.[391]

Janet Gyatso further notes that an early version of the *rGyud 'bum* may have been written during the intense transitions of the twelft century. The author of this mysterious catalog was supposedly 'Gro ba mgon po nam mkha' dpal, a son of Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer, the same rNying ma lama who had made a tentative grouping of mind-class texts in his *Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud*.[392] Just prior to Klong chen pa, Padma las 'brel rtsal also provided a tentative list of tantras accepted by the rNying ma school.[393]

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389 Aside from occasional detailed descriptions of rDzogs chen practice and subtle-body physiology, support for this hypothesis can be found in Klong chen pa's disregard for couched sexual metaphors and tantric twilight language. Getting right to the nitty-gritty of how Anuttarayogatantra uses desire as a liberative technique, for example, he quotes the *Guhyasamāja* (*gSang 'dus*) at its most explicit, "The joining of the two organs is the model of how all things should be imagined," and the *Cakrasaṃvara-mūlatantra* where it explains, "Having recited mantra over [their] two organs, the *māntrika* (*sngags pa*) unites with the *ḍākinī*" (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 294; TANGO ed.: f. 106b).

390 Karmay 1998: 29.

391 Karmay 1988: 151.

392 Gyatso 1996: 162, n. 7.

393 *rDzogs pa chen po bla ma yang tig las, gnyis ka'i yang yig nam mkha' klong chen gyi rnam par bshad pa nyi ma'i snang ba*, publisher unknown, f. 8.

Despite all this, Klong chen pa's role in codifying the rNying ma tantras should not be underestimated. The *Grub mtha' mdzod* helped define the ninefold scheme of vehicles for the rNying ma tradition,[394] contextualizing their tantras in relation to the gSar ma tradition and explaining inner tantra in terms of three separate types. It also explains Atiyoga's division into three different classes: mind-class (*sems sde*), expanse-class (*klong sde*) and personal instruction-class (*man ngag gi sde*).

Over time, there have been different interpretations of the grounds of division between these different classes of rDzogs chen. Tucci had the idea that they corresponded with the three levels of rNying ma inner tantra; today this notion has been refuted by Samten Karmay.[395] In the *Deb ter sngon po*, Gos lo tsa ba gZhon nu dpal (1392–1481) defines them in terms of their different emphases: followers of mind-class stress "the Noumenal Aspect (of Existence)," followers of personal instruction-class stress "the Phenomenal Aspect," and followers of expanse-class recognize "the equal importance of the Noumenal and Phenomenal Aspects (of Existence)."[396] This presentation differs from how H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama defines them, "Although each transmits the full dzogchen teachings, the mind division emphasizes primal purity, the open expanse stresses spontaneously establishing; while the oral guideline underscores the unity of the two."[397]

If one follows the rNying ma position, these three divisions were already in place when rDzogs chen and the tantras were introduced to Tibet in the eighth century. According to the current of scholarship today, however, these categories were "adapted, manipulated and transformed" for their "legitimizing potency with little regard for their original references."[398] That is to say, Klong chen pa was directly engaged in a corrective management of the rNying ma literary tradition. Of all his works, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* would be most responsible for presenting what he thought to be a definitive taxonomy and bibliography.[399]

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394 One might assume that Klong chen pa's doxographical structure of nine vehicles reflected its definitive status in his mind, but he is careful to point out that it is impossible to put an unequivocal number to the different spiritual systems. Because there have existed countless realized beings, he notes, there also exist incalculable ways of summarizing teachings, dividing modalities of practice, resting in *samādhi*, and so forth. Cf. *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 59; TANGO ed.: f. 22a.

395 Karmay 1988: 214.

396 Roerich 1996: 169–170.

397 Gyatso & Berzin 1997: 271.

398 Germano 1994: 284–285.

399 This is not to say that other of his works lack doxographic analysis. For instance, the *Theg mchog mdzod* dedicates one chapter to the structure of the nine vehicles with emphasis on the inner tantras. The *Chos dbyings mdzod* similarly treats the various vehicles in order to contrast them with rDzogs chen. Germano points out that Klong chen pa's doxographies operate differently, in relation to the overall agenda of the text in question (Germano 1994: 250).

Some scholars have questioned the viability of the doxographical genre to make canonical changes. This is because it has traditionally been used to replicate the viewpoints of earlier scholars, not insert fresh material. As Rorty critiqued,

> So the real trouble with doxography is that it is a *half-hearted* attempt to tell a new story of intellectual progress by describing all texts in the light of recent discoveries. It is half-hearted because it lacks the courage to readjust the canon to suit the new discoveries.[400]

For several reasons, this criticism does not apply to the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. While it may be true Klong chen pa was less willing—or less daring—than Bu ston to submit his own canon to the text-critical methods of the day (viz., he was very cautious about the dangers of readjusting the Buddhist canon), he was certainly interested in *integrating* the scriptures that had come on the scene with the gSar ma tradition. Even though his primary project was to establish how the tantras fit within tradition, his overall project depended very much on new discoveries. Klong chen pa's strong response to Bu ston's restrictive canonization, for instance, can be linked to his synthesis of the *sNying thig* traditions, both of which extensively quote the texts denied by Bu ston and find legitimation in the idea of continuity with the rDzogs chen tradition of dynastic era Tibet. And if one follows Germano's hypothesis that the rDzogs chen vehicle is an entirely Tibetan creation, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* is not afraid to shift the Buddhist canon to match "new discoveries."[401]

A prime example of Klong chen pa's inclination towards an open canon can be seen in his presentation of rDzogs chen mind-class tantras.[402] In addition to its standard set of eighteen translations, Klong chen pa followed the letter of Zhi ba 'od by including three additional texts translated by Vairocana: the *rMad byung rgyal po*,[403] the *mDo bcu gsang ba*[404] and the perennially controversial *Kun byed rgyal po*.[405] Although these three do not appear in the collection of all

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400 Kapstein 2000: 118 (cit. Rorty et al. 1984: 62–63).

401 Germano presented a paper at the 2003 conference of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) entitled "The Construction of Lineages and Cosmological Narratives in Early Medieval Tibet: The rNying ma Creation of a Buddhist Vehicle Termed rDzog Chen [*sic*]."

402 This genre does not consist of merely one lineage. See A ro ye shes 'byung gnas (10th–11th c.) as someone who held both the Indian and Chinese rDzogs chen lineages, and taught a form of *sems sde* which would come to be known as *A ro thun bdun* or *A ro khrid lugs*. See Roerich 1996: 167; Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, II: 46, n. 608; Karmay 1988: 93, n. 42.

403 Zhi ba 'od's presentation differs slightly from the *Grub mtha' mdzod* in locating the *rMad byung* within the corpus of Vimalamitra's thirteen later translations.

404 This is the *mDo bcu gsang ba* (which otherwise goes under the name *Chos thams cad rdzogs pa chen po byang chub kyi sems su 'dus pa'i mdo*), not the *mDo bcu gsum*. See Karmay 1998: 34, n. 97.

405 Germano notes that many of the individual *sems sde* texts came to be integrated within this

doxographers,[406] the greater list presented in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* came to be accepted by the rNying ma majority.[407] His reasons for wanting to include the *Kun byed rgyal po* are clear: it forms the backbone of his *gNas lugs mdzod* and its autocommentary.[408] Moreover, Germano presents a very compelling argument that Klong chen pa was interested in a much larger mobilization of mind-class texts. By presenting aspects of its contemplative and non-ritualistic approach in his *Rang grol skor gsum*, but doing so from the perspective of personal instruction-class (something that 14th-century rDzogs chen practitioners were much more familiar with), he was able to springboard to teachings on the larger and more technical *sNying thig* cycles that he had revealed.[409]

Not all of Klong chen pa's textual concerns were based on simple questions of authenticity. There is no doubt that Klong chen pa understood various specific tensions surrounding rDzogs chen and that certain of his interpretative moves were made accordingly. For instance, mind-class had often been criticized for being so apophatic (to the point of eschewing formal practice and such a thing as "path" even). It may not be coincidence that Klong chen pa, while styling his *Ngal gso skor gsum* in the contemplative mode of mind-class, would also integrate with it a set of "preliminary" practices.[410] Klong chen pa was likewise willing to accept the *Kun byed rgyal po* as a tantra, but not without slightly tempering its rhetoric towards a more inclusivistic soteriology. In the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, for example, the *Kun byed rgyal po* is cited at length in order to support the superiority of rDzogs chen.[411] But in a major departure from the rhetoric used in the tantra, Klong chen pa denies that rDzogs chen is the *only* means to enlighten-

text, which he sees as a later Tibetan composition "functioning to integrate previous canonical works" (Germano 1994: 235).

406 The first English translation of this list, done by Sarat Chandra Das on the basis of Thu'u bkwan chos kyi nyi ma's 18th-century *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long*, would differ substantially, combining several texts and omitting the *mDo bcu* for a total of only sixteen mind-class texts (Das 1984: 209). Sogs zlog pa Blos gros rgyal mtshan (1552–1624) also debated the inclusion of the additional texts.

407 Lipman & Norbu 1983: 7.

408 According to a line of transmission outlined by 'Jam mgon Kong sprul, which began with dGa' rab rdo rje and moved into Tibet with Vairocana, Klong chen pa was the thirteenth person (after a series of *sambhogakāya* lineage-holders) licensed to teach this tantra. See Neumaier-Dargyay 1992: 288 (cit. Kong sprul, ed. *gDams ngag mdzod*, I, Delhi (1971: 165)).

409 Germano 1994: 261.

410 Germano 1994: 251 ff.

411 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 328–331.

ment. Instead, he significantly qualifies this statement by saying that it is the only approach that is free from effort, accepting and rejecting.[412]

From mind-class tantra, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* moves on to the penultimate category of teaching in the rNying ma system, expanse-class tantra, of which few texts are extant.[413] Practically speaking, it is the next step for those interested in evolving beyond the mental focus of mind-class. It is divided into any number of experiential zones (e.g., black, stippled, white and infinite), which themselves are subdivided into further categories (e.g., oceanic, space-like, solar and lunar). Klong chen pa has clearly moved beyond the domain of textual classification here. Particularly in this section, some of the doxographical divisions within Atiyoga appear to be more reflective of "contemplative themes" than actual bodies of literature.[414]

Rather than merely citing endless lists of texts, Klong chen pa uses the *Grub mtha' mdzod* to situate the different classes and individual tantras within an experiential matrix. For gSar ma inner tantra, his explanation follows the standard categories of father, mother and non-dual as energetic modalities. For rDzogs chen, he is free to use more metaphorical imagery. For the seven points of mind-class or the various "zones" of expanse-class noted directly above, it may very well be the case that these specific experiential states are divorced from literary categories. But that is not always the case. In his presentation of the eighteen mind-class and twenty-five general rDzogs chen tantras, Klong chen pa gives a topical outline of their relative emphases of practice.[415] For instance, according to the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, the *Vast Space King* (*Nam mkha' che rgyal po*) teaches that mind itself (*sems nyid*) is perfected in all vehicles, the *Spontaneously Arisen Summit* (*rTse mo byung rgyal*) teaches mind itself to be the pinnacle of everything, and so forth.

Finally arriving at personal instruction-class teachings, taken by Klong chen pa to be the most advanced technology in the Buddhist arsenal, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* provides many valuable details on its seventeen literary tantras (appended to which is a so-called "guardian" tantra, the *Nag mo khros ma*). Following doxographical convention of priority, one would expect that Klong chen pa considered

412 There are other examples of Klong chen pa's differences of opinion on technical rDzogs chen points: Klong chen pa's presentation of awareness (*rig pa*) differs from that of the *Kun byed rgyal po* by stressing recognition of its actuality (*ngo bo*) rather than its nature (*rang bzhin*). See Neumaier-Dargyay 1992: 31. Further technical discussion on Klong chen pa's relationship with the *Kun byed rgyal po* (viz., which aspects inform his *gNas lugs mdzod*) can be found in Hillis 2003: 142 ff.

413 The *Grub mtha' mdzod* mentions only four expanse-class tantras by name, yet one might note that it includes the *Rin po che gsang ba'i rgyud* (which is missing in Thu'u bkwan chos kyi nyi ma's list).

414 Germano 1994: 285.

415 Some of the twenty-five tantras listed by Klong chen pa as "general" can be found within the other classes (e.g., *Ye shes dam pa'i rgyud* also belongs to the eighteen mind-class tantras).

these texts to be the pinnacle of rDzogs chen and, correspondingly, the apotheosis of Buddhism as a whole. Indeed, these eighteen tantras (along with the *Bi ma sNying tig*) represent the primary source material for his other rDzogs chen works.[416] Again, after providing an enumeration of their titles and a complete list of all the tantras associated with them,[417] Klong chen pa provides a topical outline of their different methodologies. He also presents an etymological cipher for their titles, illustrating how the individual tantras liberate peoples' mind-streams by means of their morphological structure.[418] For example, the *Mu tig phreng ba* literally works like a string of pearls, while the *Rig pa rang shar* works like the ocean.[419] Finally, in addition to the formal literary tantras of personal instruction-class, Klong chen pa provides a list of one hundred and eight additional "secret" personal instructions.[420]

Further canonical formation in the rNying ma school would have to wait another hundred years. Approximately a century after the *Grub mtha' mdzod* published its comprehensive exposition of tantras, Ratna gling pa (1403–1478) would compile the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*. This *gter ton* gathered his sources from Zur 'ug pa lung (among other places) with the matching aim of including tantras (e.g., the Vajrakīla cycle) that had been disregarded by the sNar thang team.[421] Indeed, the very same text-critical contentions that Klong chen pa had tried to address were still plaguing this rNying ma redactor; for example, Ratna gling pa felt it necessary to provide an explanation why rDzogs chen texts had been unknown in India before Vairocana brought them to Tibet (viz. they had been hidden under a vase-pillar at the *bodhi*-tree because the time was not ripe for the Indian pandits to reveal them).[422] Significantly, however, at no point in the *rGyud 'bum* does Ratna gling pa make mention of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*.

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416 Germano 1992: 51.

417 Of so-called "offspring" tantras, apparently only one—the *Rin chen phreng ba*, supposedly authored by Vimalamitra as commentary to the *kLong drug pa*—is extant; see Germano 1992: 39–40.

418 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 390; TANGO ed.: f. 141a.

419 This classification system is admittedly enigmatic. For a more extensive commentary on this set of tantras, see Klong chen pa's *Tshig don mdzod* (a partial translation of which can be found in Germano 1992).

420 Although Klong chen pa's summation of these is 106 (which, when added to thirteen not included in the list, make a grand total of 119), the list of 108 found in all three editions of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* as it stands today matches the enumeration given in the *Man ngag nges pa'i kha byang ming rnam par bkod pa* (*Bi ma snying thig*, III: 1–9). In his dissertation, Germano notes that 'Jam mgon kong sprul also remarked on the confusion surrounding this list (*Rin chen gter mdzod chen po*, 1976 reprint, I: f. 45a; see Germano 1992: 33).

421 Roughly fifty years later, Padma dkar po (1478–1523) would systematize the teachings of the 'Brug pa bKa' brgyu order.

422 rDzogs chen texts were certainly in Tibet by the mid-8th century, as this is the point at which Tibet exerted domination over Tun huang (whose troves would be sealed in the mid-11th century).

In the eighteenth century, the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum* was reedited by the great follower of Klong chen pa, 'Jigs med gling pa (1729–1798), and finally carved onto woodblocks. Though initially published at sDe dge, other editions would also come to light, each of them with varying degrees of doxographic attention. For example, the Rig 'dzin tshe dbang nor bu edition of the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum* resembles the Nu bri and mTshams brag editions in its lack of doxographical detail. The sDe dge and gTing skyes editions, on the other hand, provide a great deal of doxographical data (the former in the aspect of an accompanying table of contents written by 'Jigs med gling pa and the latter in chapter headers at the beginning of the various volumes).

The *Grub mtha' mdzod* exposed a larger set of rNying ma tantras to more people than any of the catalogs that had come before it, but it does not appear to have moved into widespread circulation. There may be several reasons for this. Klong chen pa had not created a strong institutional base for the diffusion of his work, the survival of his corpus was dependent on a relatively small group of followers, an important portion of the text's subject matter had been written for full initiates in the tantric tradition, and the immediate period after his death still saw texts being copied by hand rather than carved into woodblocks. With the overwhelming acceptance of Bu ston's canon, even the massive collection of the *rGyud 'bum* found it hard to gain a foothold. No wonder, then, that the *Grub mtha' mdzod*—being but a single text—did not make a greater impact on the face of the Tibetan canon overall.

In the end, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* made its apologetic influence felt most among those who were already receptive to its message. Not only did it prompt an alternative canon for the rNying ma pa, in all likelihood it also served as a partial bibliography for the *rGyud 'bum*. But the *Grub mtha' mdzod* does more than offer a skeletal enumeration of the tantras, it fleshes them out with poetic analogy and commentary on the emphasis of their subject matter. The doxography's further codification of the nine-vehicle scheme and the subdivisions of Atiyoga would also help facilitate rNying ma self-identity in relation to the other schools. In light of all these contributions, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* should be seen as a critically important, if somewhat unrecognized, facet in the jewel of the rNying ma canonical tradition.

5. KLONG CHEN PA'S PHILOSOPHY

The value of Klong chen pa's contributions to the philosophical tradition of Tibet should not be underestimated. Even hundreds of years after the composition of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* and other of his philosophically minded writings, rNying ma scholars have continued to turn to these older texts for clarification. Through the work done by these scholars—who have garnered significant respect and influence in their own right—Klong chen pa's philosophical outlook has been furthered even more. For example, because Mi pham based his interpretation of the differences between Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika on Klong chen pa, the modern curriculum of the rNying ma school includes a significant amount of content from the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, *Yid bzhin mdzod* and *Shing rta chen po*, and so forth.[423] In addition, as more and more was written on Klong chen pa by contemporary rNying ma luminaries such as Dudjom Rinpoche and Tulku Thondup, not to mention Western Tibetologists, the window into his thought has grown ever larger. By focusing on certain aspects of Klong chen pa's philosophical stance, especially those which stand out as unusual and even provocative, this chapter attempts to open that aperture even further.

This chapter begins with a brief overview of Klong chen pa's claim that the viewpoint of Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka is the most compelling of all the various modalities of the Buddhist dialectical vehicle and that the third promulgation of the Buddhadharma is definitive. This position necessitates an explanation of how Klong chen pa's view differed from that of one of the fourteenth century's most prominent and controversial figures, Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan. Finally, addressing a major concern of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, it examines Klong chen pa's interpretation of the two truths in terms of ultimacy-seeking analysis, emptiness and wisdom.

Klong chen pa as Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika

Like other authors of the doxographical genre, Klong chen pa's method of presenting the philosophical vehicles consisted of setting up the dialectical position of a specific school of thought and then knocking it down.[424] In the *Grub*

423 Pettit 1999: 389.

424 This method is based on the idea that one must fully understand the opponent's position in order to deconstruct it. This clearly antagonistic model of dialectical engagement traces its origins back to India, reaching a peak of fervor in the Gupta period of the 4th and 5th centuries. According to tradition, the loser of philosophical debate was expected to convert to the winner's system or have his head explode.

mtha' mdzod, he does this repeatedly, moving up the ladder from one tradition to the next, until the most robust tenet-system remains. Traditionally, the philosophical school occupying the final position is the one held to be definitive by the doxography's author—here that system is Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka—and Klong chen pa leaves no doubt of this when he writes, "This method is the absolute pinnacle of the view of all the causal philosophical vehicles."[425] Other works by Klong chen pa confirm his stance. In the *Theg mchog mdzod*, Klong chen pa states that Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka is the superior view of dialectics,[426] and the *Shing rta chen po* presents Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka as the last in a series of philosophical interpretations of the two truths.[427] In other words, Klong chen pa considered himself to be a Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika.

By no means, however, was Klong chen pa the first Tibetan to define himself as a Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika. Kapstein suggests that the term was originally used in a commentary on the *Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra* by Wŏnchŭk, a Korean Buddhist who lived in the seventh century.[428] But according to Hopkins, although Wŏnchŭk's commentary had been translated into Tibetan in the early eighth century, it really only became well known when Tsong kha pa referred to it in the *Legs bshad snying po*.[429] In 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa's more historically oriented doxography, the origin of the differentiation in Tibet between Svātantrika-Madhyamaka (*dbu ma rang rgyud pa*) and Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka (*dbu ma thal 'gyur pa*) can be traced back to Pa tshab nyi ma grags (b.1055) and his Kāśmīri colleague, Jayānanda.[430] The terms were taken up again in the twelfth century with bSod nams rtse mo's commentary on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, but apparently they were only codified into two distinct schools at a later date by that scholar's celebrated nephew, Sa skya Paṇḍita.[431]

It has been advanced elsewhere that Klong chen pa was a Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika.[432] Yet, closer investigation reveals that Klong chen pa did not subscribe to the Svātantrika-Madhyamaka point of view which was so widespread in his day. More specifically, he did not follow the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-

425 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 137; TANGO ed.: f. 50b: *tshul 'di ni rgyu mtshan nyid kyi theg pa kun gyi lta ba' rtse mo mthar thug pa yin no*.
426 *Theg mchog mdzod*: f. 91.
427 *Shing rta chen po*: ch. 8.
428 Kapstein 2000: 80.
429 Hopkins 1999: 44.
430 The term *rang rgyud pa* appears in his commentary to the *Madhyamakāvatāra.* Note that Candrakīrti's writings were only translated into Tibetan in the 11th century.
431 Jackson 1985b: 5, 32, n. 38 (cit. Sa skya pa *bKa' 'bum*, Tokyo (1968), II: ff. 495–496).
432 Thurman 1984: 62.

Madhyamaka position of Śāntarakṣita.[433] To begin with, at no point in his philosophical writings does he propound that as the definitive view. Furthermore, he demonstrates how this view is faulty. According to the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka is defined as accepting validating cognition at the conventional level, denying the existence of external objects but accepting entities of consciousness.[434] Klong chen pa critiques this view by comparing it with the Sākārajñāna Cittamātrins' assertion that objects possess sense-data.[435]

On a separate point, one might ask if Klong chen pa held that, when it comes to ultimate reality, there is no difference between the Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika points of view.[436] According to Mi pham and other more contemporary scholars (such as among the modern Sa skya pa), for example, the only difference between these schools is "the method (i.e. the form of argumentation) used for establishing that theory in the minds of others, viz. in the minds of opponents from other philosophical schools."[437] In the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, Klong chen pa does define the respective systems in terms of method, but he does not differentiate them in terms of view.[438] Moreover, Klong chen pa does not compare and contrast Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika over and against one another. Here his presentation is sequential and definitional, not polemic. Doxographically speaking, one could find it somewhat of a disappointment that Klong chen pa does not go into more detail on the fine points and differences within Madhyamaka. For that, one has to read between the lines in his discussion of the two truths.

Rather than taking the hermeneutical tack of Tsong kha pa's later *Legs bshad snying po*, Klong chen pa's presentation of Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka mainly follows the *Madhyamakāvatāra* in a refutation of the heterodox philosophies (e.g., those of the Sāṃkhyas and Cārvākas). Klong chen pa's other philosophically oriented works, such as the *Yid bzhin mdzod* and *Shing rta chen po*, also elide specifically Madhyamaka polemics to focus on the two truths. Clearly he saw this subject to be the most important facet of the dialectical tradition.

Furthermore, it is important to note that Klong chen pa was very aware of the paradox of calling oneself a Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika or reifying its view (seeing that its ultimate position is predicated on non-predication). As already noted in

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433 Though Śāntarakṣita is said to have been largely ignored by Tibetan scholarship, it does appear that Klong chen pa was aware of him. However, unlike Tsong kha pa in the *Legs bshad snying po*, he does not identify him by name (Thurman 1984: 273).

434 Note that Klong chen pa does not otherwise differentiate in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* between the Sautrāntika-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka and Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka schools.

435 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 115; TANGO ed.: f. 42a.

436 Tsong kha pa was the first to make this division (Newland 1992: 90).

437 Jackson 1985b: 33, n. 41.

438 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 137; TANGO ed.: f. 50b.

the previous chapter on doxography, Klong chen pa dismantled the classificatory enterprise by saying that ultimately no such position as Prāsaṅgika exists.[439] At the conventional level, it works extremely well to facilitate an understanding of the two truths. But in the end, philosophy is still merely a conventional tool.[440] This idea led Klong chen pa to a very unusual position. Despite the fact that Klong chen pa understood Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka to be the apotheosis of the dialectical approach, he did not hold the dialectical view—with its emphasis on emptiness, specifically vis-à-vis the works of Candrakīrti and Nāgārjuna[441]—to be definitive in meaning.[442]

Contextualized in the Buddhist hermeneutical arrangement of linking the categories of definitive and interpretable with the three promulgations of the Buddhadharma, Klong chen pa clarifies his position early on in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*:[443]

> If one divides from the point of view of time, the Word [involves] three successive turnings of the wheel. Of these, the initial [turning of the wheel] is an enumeration of teachings on the Four Noble Truths, which primarily teach the process of using antidotes, accepting and rejecting, in order to safeguard the mind against emotional addictions that shackle the mindstream with subject and object [distinctions]. The middle [turning of the wheel emphasizes] signlessness in order to counteract fixation on antidotes. The final [turning of the wheel] is the third enumeration of teachings, which teaches the nature as it really is and is definitive in terms of ultimate reality.[444]

This juxtaposition is interesting for several reasons. First, it shows that Klong chen pa, unlike Tsong kha pa, did not link the third turning of the wheel to a specific philosophical school (i.e., the Cittamātra school).[445] In the *Grub mtha'*

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439 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 136; TANGO ed.: f. 50a.

440 Even Klong chen pa's presentation of rDzogs chen is informed by the understanding that it ultimately does not exist. A more detailed analysis of its similarity to Madhyamaka and how it deconstructs itself can be found in the following chapter.

441 Klong chen pa cites their *śāstra*s more than any other writings in his discussion of Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka.

442 This stance matched that of Dol po pa and contrasted with that of Bu ston (as well as later scholars, such as Tsong kha pa).

443 This is not the only place in Klong chen pa's writings where one finds him speaking about the definitiveness of the third promulgation (cf. *Tshig don mdzod*: f. 40a).

444 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 33; TANGO ed.: f. 12b: *dus kyi sgo nas dbye na bka' 'khor lo rim pa gsum du bskor ba rnams so, de la'ang las dang po'i tshe gzung 'dzin rang rgyud pas bcings pa'i nyon mongs ba las sems bsrung ba'i phyir spang gnyen blang dor byed pa'i rim pa gtso bor ston pas bden pa bzhi'i chos kyi rnam grangs dang, bar ba gnyen po la mngon par zhen pa dgag pa'i phyir mtshan nyid med pa dang, tha ma gzhis ji lta gnas bstan ba don dam rnam par nges pa'i chos kyi rnam grangs gzum du byung ba yin no*.

445 Thurman 1984: 353.

mdzod, Klong chen pa uses scriptures from the second and third promulgations to inform his presentation of Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka. For example, to help elucidate the two truths he cites the *Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra* side by side with the *Prajñāpāramitā*.[446] Reading this section, one does not get the impression that he is necessarily favoring one over the other.

Second, it means that he was willing to depart from Candrakīrti's view. The *Grub mtha' mdzod* leaves no doubt that Klong chen pa comprehended that master's hermeneutical position on this point. For example, he writes,

> Those excellent disciples such as Candrakīrti and so forth, who hold that the definitive meaning [was presented by] the *ācārya* Nāgārjuna, claim that [non-erroneous intellect] is like this.[447]

In addition, Klong chen pa's ambivalent attitude towards Candrakīrti and those who followed him is expressed elsewhere in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. Despite the fact that Klong chen pa often quotes from Candrakīrti in the philosophical section of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, and in the passage above refers to him as an "excellent disciple," in the doxography's enumeration of the "six Ornaments" and "eight Excellent Ones" of Buddhism, Candrakīrti is notably absent from the list. In his omission of Buddhapālita, Bhāvaviveka, Candrakīrti and Sthiramati, Klong chen pa differs significantly from Tsong kha pa's subsequent enumeration of the "two champions" and "eight masters."[448]

There are several possible explanations for Klong chen pa's opinion that the second promulgation was provisional and the third promulgation was definitive. One possibility is that he simply took the latter set of scriptures at face value in their own self-definition of definitiveness. The problem here is the logical circularity involved with a text constructing a hermeneutic in which it itself is included.[449] Furthermore, unlike Tsong kha pa, Klong chen pa does not speak to hermeneutical strategy per se.

Another possibility is that Klong chen pa interpreted the dialectical vehicle, associated with the second promulgation, to be a radically different modality than that of the third promulgation. This is supported by the structure of the *Grub mtha' mzod*, which presents a radical soteriological divide between philosophical

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446 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 129; TANGO ed.: f. 47a (cit. *Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra*, sDe dge, ca: f. 14b).

447 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 123; TANGO ed.: f. 45a: *slob dpon klu sgrub kyis nges pa don gyi lta ba 'dzin pa'i slob ma'i mtshog zla ba grags pa la sogs pa rnams ni 'di ltar 'dod de*.

448 See Thurman 1984: 33.

449 Thurman notes a number of hermeneutical problems with this approach, which is perhaps best exemplified in the *Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra* (Thurman 1984: 119).

analytical reasoning and the more evocative presentation of the Buddha-nature (*tathāgatagarbha*). If one accepts Klong chen pa's hermeneutical division as following this doxographical separation, it would mean that the whole dialectical vehicle is interpretable. In other words, even though Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka works better than any other dialectical approach, it is still a provisional modality—soteriologically speaking—while the third promulgation, with its teachings on the potentiality of perfection (e.g., the *gotra*, or enlightenment gene), is definitive.

Klong chen pa goes to great lengths in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* to expose the importance of this view in relation to actual method.

> It should be understood that this presentation of the *gotra* is accepted as being exclusively definitive in meaning, not a conventional view. Because this state is extremely important for the method of the Mahāyāna and difficult to understand, it has been extensively discussed here.[450]

Centuries later, Mi pham would react to a dGe lugs pa definition of the Buddha-nature as being devoid of qualities.[451] Already in Klong chen pa's writings, however, one finds sensitivity on this issue. Klong chen pa is very careful to qualify what it means for the Buddha-nature to be empty.[452]

> In reply to those with inferior intellect who need a summary, this essence is empty because it is empty of flaws and being compounded and so forth. It is not empty in the sense that the property of natural enlightened qualities are abandoned. As [the *Uttaratantra*] also stated previously, "The *dhātu* is devoid of adventitious factors, which are characterized by being different. It is not devoid of unexcelled properties, which are characterized by not being different."[453]

Though there are certain similarities between the enlightened qualities referenced in the *Uttaratantra* and those presented in rDzogs chen (e.g., luminosity, purity, the universal ground), there is nothing to suggest that Klong chen pa's decision

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450 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 190; TANGO ed.: f. 69b: *rigs kyi rnam par gzhag pa 'di ni drang don du mi lta bar, nges pa'i don 'ba' zhig tu bzung ste shes par bya'o, gnas 'di theg pa chen po'i tshul rab tu gces shing rtogs par dka' ba'i phyir 'dir rgyas par bshad pa'ang de yin no.*

451 Klein 1992: 272.

452 Klong chen pa's willingness to accept that the qualities of enlightenment exist at the ultimate level not only reflects his overall philosophical attitude as defined by the third promulgation, but also accords with his presumption that ultimate level can withstand analysis.

453 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 187; TANGO ed.: f. 68b: *blo dman rnams kyi dgos pa bsdu ba'i lan du, snying po 'di'ang skyon dang 'dus byas pa la sogs pas stong pa'i phyir stong pa yin gyis, rang gi yon tan gyi chos 'dor ba'i stong pa ma yin te, rnam dbye bcas pa'i mtshan nyid can, glo bur dag gis khams stong gis, rnam dbye med pa'i mtshan nyid can, bla med chos kyis stong ma yin, ces sngar yang brjod zin to.*

about the third promulgation being definitive was based on his personal appreciation of Mantrayāna.[454] Instead, it appears that his differentiation between the second and third promulgations was primarily based on functionality.

Dol po pa and Extrinsic Emptiness

After contextualizing Klong chen pa's place in the 14th century's political atmosphere in relation to Byang chub rgyal mtshan and his literary production as a response to the canonical mood of Bu ston, here it makes sense to compare and contrast his philosophical position with that of another important figure of central Tibet, the rebel philosopher and renowned tantric practitioner, Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1292–1361). Indeed, both of them held the third promulgation to be definitive, both of them innovatively worked to synthesize different threads of Buddhist thought, and both of them helped shape their respective religious orders for years to come. What remains to be seen is how similar their ideas *really* were.

As the third abbot of the Jo nang seat, Dol po pa's lofty religious office brought him into close contact with the other great thinkers of his day. There is no doubt that Bu ston and Dol po pa knew each other. Their rivalry is well documented. Despite the fact that they both shared strong ties with the Sa skya order and a profound connection with the *Kālacakra-tantra*,[455] Bu ston strongly rejected Dol po pa's theories on the *tathāgatagarbha* as being absolutist.[456] Nevertheless, they did share some common students, and one of them, 'Ba' ra ba rgyal mtshan dpal bzang (1310–1391), would dedicate much of his life to this problematic subject.[457] Dol po pa also had a clear connection with the bKa' brgyud school, although the nature of the relationship is slightly less clear. For example, Stearns refutes Hookham's assertion that Dol po pa taught the 3rd Karma pa, arguing that the dynamic was the other way around.[458] One could go on and on citing which important Tibetan teachers of the fourteenth century had links with Dol po pa,[459] yet there is essentially no real data in the historical or hagiographical traditions to suggest that Dol po pa and Klong chen pa had any traffic together.

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454 The same cannot be said of H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche when he writes that the intention of the third promulgation is "without contradiction" when one compares those authors who have achieved the tenth *bhūmi* (e.g., Maitreya) and the scriptures of Mantrayāna (Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 186).

455 In this regard, at least, Dol po pa had the respect of Tsong kha pa. See Thurman 1984: 61.

456 Ruegg 1969: 122 ff.

457 Stearns 1999: 175, n. 2.

458 Stearns 1999: 201, n. 21.

459 The extent to which Dol po pa had direct influence on his contemporaries has been discussed by Stearns 1999: 30–31.

This is not to say that they have not been compared with one another. At first glance, Dol po pa and Klong chen pa can be said to share a similar interpretative platform. They both held the third promulgation of the Dharma to be definitive (*nītthārtha*) and the second turning to be provisional (*neyārtha*). They both taught the superiority of Mantrayāna over Sūtrayāna. And they both sought a synthetic revisioning of Madhyamaka in terms of tantra, leading 'Jam mgon kong sprul in the nineteenth century to group them together with the 3rd Karma pa[460] as "the first to promulgate the long tradition (*ring lugs*) of the Great Madhyamaka."[461] Closer investigation, however, reveals that Dol po pa and Klong chen pa drew very different conclusions from what common ground they may have shared. In practice, their operative strategies were poles apart.

In his invention of a syncretic Madhyamaka tradition, Dol po pa deployed his own version of Buddhist history. In order to make a correction of previous scholars' misreading of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu as idealists, Dol po pa insisted that these Buddhist luminaries belonged to a tradition of "Great Madhyamaka" (*dbu ma chen po*) underpinned by the Cittamātra theory of the three natures.[462] In line with this integrative move, Dol po pa also sought to show that, although the third promulgation was definitive (viz. the *tathāgatagarbha*), it did not contradict the Buddha's second promulgation introduced by Nāgārjuna.

Dol po pa based this supposition on several different points. To begin with, he argued, the Buddhist literary tradition shows both Candrakīrti and Śāntideva quoting from texts belonging to the third promulgation.[463] Furthermore, he adopted the famous Mahāyāna standard of the "Four Reliances" (*rton pa bzhi*) and its allowance of hermeneutical restructuring on the basis of privileging teachings over the teacher, meaning over the literal letter, definitive meaning over interpretable meaning, and wisdom over dualistic cognition.[464] In this regard, his credentials for deciding what was definitive was predicated on his realization of the *Kālacakra-tantra*, for Dol po pa saw himself as nothing less than an incarnation of Kalkī Puṇḍarīka. By setting the record straight on texts that had been

460 Note that all three of these figures were given the uncommon epithet of "Omniscient One" (*kun mkhyen*).

461 Hookham 1991: 136.

462 Dol po pa did not invent this term, which had been in use for several centuries before him, but merely co-opted it. A more extensive discussion of Great Madhyamaka is found in the next section.

463 Kapstein 2000: 111.

464 Dol po pa even went so far as to sign some of his works with the pen-name rTon pa bzhi ldan (Stearns 1999: 86). For an in-depth discussion of this hermeneutical strategy, see Thurman 1984: 113–130.

introduced a thousand years before, a time which he identified with the *kṛtayuga*, he hoped to usher in a new golden age.[465]

With this evangelical approach, Dol po pa differed from Klong chen pa. For the most part, when he was not in exile, Klong chen pa was often cloistered in semi-retreat. Neither is there any indication that he saw himself as living in a golden age. On the contrary, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* explains that the Buddhadharma is in decline.[466] Furthermore, the common rNying ma perception of the fourteenth century was that it was a degenerate time compared to the dynastic era of Tibet. It could be argued that Klong chen pa's promulgation of the *sNying thig* literature sought a return to those glory days, but Klong chen pa pointed out that ultimately there is no such thing as a decline, since cosmic Buddhas manifest extemporaneously and cannot ultimately even be said to exist.[467] Comparing rDzogs chen's immediate promise of liberation to the *Kālacakra-tantra*'s apocalyptic timetable, it is clear that Klong chen pa and Dol po pa valued very different soteriologies.

When it came to bridging the gap between the two promulgations, however, Dol po pa used an innovative new approach. Instead of following the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka method of determining definitive and provisional status on the basis of relative and ultimate, rather than emptiness, he allowed a multivalent interpretation of a single sūtra (such as the *Saṃdhinirmocana*, for example). By focusing on specific passages rather than passing judgment on the entire text, Dol po pa was able to radically redefine the meaning of emptiness itself, positing an absolute and radiant extrinsic emptiness (*gzhan gyis stong pa*) outside of relative reality and its perceived impurities. Thus, he not only collapsed the differences between the second and third promulgations, but sūtra and tantra as well.[468] In this way, Dol po pa followed the 'Bri gung pa sKyobs pa 'jig rten mgon po (1143–1217),[469] who wrote that "according to vajra-speech, the very same promulgations that teach Mind Only teach Madhyamaka."[470]

Unlike Dol po pa, Klong chen pa appears to have been quite content to take the Buddhist scriptures of the third promulgation at face value and accept them as definitive. As mentioned above, he saw no contradiction between doing this and aligning himself with Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka. Unlike Dol po pa, he was not interested in making grand hermeneutical moves. The *Grub mtha' mdzod* maintains strict doxographical boundaries between Madhyamaka and Cittamātra (i.e.,

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465 Thurman 1984: 106.
466 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 50–53; TANGO ed.: ff. 18b–19b.
467 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 55; TANGO ed.: f. 50a.
468 The definitive Jo nang work on this topic was Dol po pa's *Ri chos nges don rgya mtsho*.
469 In fact, Dol po pa is said to have been the reincarnation of this teacher.
470 Kapstein 2000: 248, n. 131.

one does not find the three-nature theory exported outside of the Cittamātra system).[471] Klong chen pa does not lose himself in the complexity of the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka position, nor does he make any mention of a Great Madhyamaka tradition. Instead, in his examination of Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka, he cites Candrakīrti's refutation of superficial reality as it is presented by Cittamātrins in terms of a dependent nature (*gzhan dbang*) really existing.[472]

Klong chen pa's use of Dol po pa's term for extrinsic emptiness (*gzhan stong*) appears limited only to this context, namely, in his discussion of the dependent nature (*paratantra*) being empty of self, empty of other, and empty of both.[473] Simply put, Klong chen pa does not seem to have taken much interest in the subject of extrinsic emptiness,[474] and his own writings on the two truths do not suggest that he shared in Dol po pa's view.

The fact that Klong chen pa did not refute Dol po pa directly, however, may have contributed to the varied ways in which that view was received by the rNying ma school over the centuries. For Tsong kha pa, Dol po pa's tenet of extrinsic emptiness was such a gross misinterpretation of the two truths that it inspired a large section of his magnum opus, the *Legs bshad snying po*. By the mid-fifteenth century, when 'Gos lo tsā ba was writing the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*), the sentiment against this Jo nang pa doctrine had grown so strong that it was forbidden for any of Dol po pa's works to be brought within the precincts of a dGe lugs pa monastery.[475] After a penultimate flourish in the figure of Tāranātha (1575–1634), the Jo nang school came to an end during the reign of the 5th Dalai Lama. Not only did the Great Fifth seal all Jo nang pa writings, he appropriated their monasteries for the dGe lugs pa. It was only as a result of the non-sectariant *ris med* movement that Jo nang pa texts would again come to light in the nineteenth century, inspiring 'Jam mgon kong sprul and 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po in a new appraisal of extrinsic emptiness.

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471 For this reason in particular, responding to allegations that Klong chen pa was an Idealist, Guenther cautions reducing rNying ma "statements to pre-existing philosophical systems and then proceeding to show that they have mixed their categories" (Guenther 1977: 113).

472 This famous verse reads, "While you maintain *paratantra* to be real, I do not proclaim the relative" (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 136; TANGO ed.: f. 50a, cit. *Madhyamakāvatāra*, VI: 81). If Klong chen pa's own position matched this quote of Candrakīrti (which its place in the text would seem to support), he did not accept the three-nature epistemological scheme as definitive. This raises the question of how he could then hold the third promulgation to be definitive.

473 Stearns 1999: 51, citing the *rDzogs pa chen po sems nyid ngal gso'i 'grel pa shing rta chen po* in the *Ngal gso skor gsum*.

474 The *gzhan stong* interpretation of Great Madhyamaka was developed by Dol po pa towards the end of Klong chen pa's life, while the polemic around that interpretation only really blossomed with Tsong kha pa in the early part of the 15th century.

475 Roerich 1996: 535.

Thus, it was only many centuries after Klong chen pa that extrinsic emptiness would become popular with a segment of the rNying ma school. Most famously, Mi pham has been charged with adhering to this position (viz. his *gZhan stong khas len seng ge'i nga ro*), even though he also criticizes it in the *Nges shes sgron me*.[476] And by no means was extrinsic emptiness adopted by all rNying ma pa. For example, Mi pham's teacher rDza dpal sprul did not accept it. In the last century, it was H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche who advocated an interpretation of second promulgation teachings in terms of extrinsic emptiness, citing the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā* to support this position.[477] Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche also expressed support for extrinsic emptiness, although he differentiated between an interpretation that was valid and one that was not.[478] On the basis of revered rNying ma teachers holding this view, one might assume that there has been an overall increase in the number of contemporary adherents to extrinsic emptiness. Yet, as Stearns reports, today there remains a complete dearth of verbal transmissions (*lung*) of Dol po pa's work.[479] The modern understanding of extrinsic emptiness is based instead primarily on the writing of Mi pham and Kong sprul.[480]

If Dol po pa and Mi pham can be seen as engaged in reconciliatory maneuvers, respectively using the rubric of Great Madhyamaka to bridge the hermeneutical divide between the two promulgations or to integrate extrinsic emptiness with mainstream Madhyamaka,[481] Klong chen pa stood at a remove from their agenda. Though his comparative ventures were dedicated to the integration of rDzogs chen with the other vehicles, they maintained the boundaries between sūtra and tantra.[482]

If anything, Klong chen pa's appreciation and prioritization of rDzogs chen put him at philosophical loggerheads with Dol po pa. It has been noted that the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, suggesting that the mere recognition of flawed conceptions inherently being the *dharmakāya* can bring about enlightenment, draws the very sort of equivalency between mind itself (*sems nyid*) and *dharmakāya* or "self-arisen

476 For a compelling argument that Mi pham was not a *gzhan stong pa*, see Pettit 1999: 112–117.
477 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991: I: 172.
478 Gyatso 2000: 143.
479 Stearns 1999: 77.
480 The exception to this is H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche, who appears to have based his interpretation on the early 19th-century Kaḥ thog master dGe rtse Paṇḍita 'Gyur med tshe dbang mchog sgrub (Stearns 1999: 215, n. 137 (cit. Kapstein, n.d.)).
481 This would be by means of reading extrinsic emptiness not as an ontological statement but a phenomenological understanding of wisdom being pure from false appearance in its perception of emptiness. See Pettit 1999: 116–117.
482 In this, he weaves a much more complex web than the type of privileging of tantra over sūtra seen with Dol po pa (e.g., the *Kālacakra* over the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*).

pristine awareness" that made Dol po pa so upset.[483] For example, in a rDzogs chen-style explanation of why tantra is superior to sūtra, Klong chen pa explains that the emotional addictions (*kleśa*s) are purified not through renunciation but by their very nature.[484] He does not mean this ontologically, but epistemologically.

> Enlightened mind in the dialectical tradition is generalized in terms of thought-processes lacking intrinsic identity and accomplishing *śamatha* and *vipāśyanā*, [meditations] which hinder and intentionally block the wandering thoughts of ordinary mentality. In the tradition of mantra, the secret of enlightened mind involves thought-processes as the arising play of the *dharmatā*. [Mantra] is superior because mentality arises as naturally lucid and naturally arising wisdom, because *samādhi* is accomplished as the channeling of a flowing river, and because enlightened mind is spontaneously accomplished as a non-conceptually arising *maṇḍala*.[485]

According to Hopkins, Dol po pa was loathe to admit that realization depends only on a "reduction of the final path to self-recognition of basic mind."[486] Such a presentation of the unitary nature of things (e.g., the collapsing of *saṃsāra* or *nirvāṇa*) not only goes against his division of the two truths, but actually damages the fundamental premise of an "ultimately pure" ground. Simply put, impure things cannot be synonymous with wisdom (or a "taintless" ninth consciousness). As Stearns explains,

> For Dolpopa appearances cannot be the manifestation or self-presencing of gnosis (*ye shes rang snang*), or the Buddha-body, because ordinary appearances are completely fictitious, imaginary (*parikalpita*) and dependent (*paratantra*) phenomena, which are both actually non-existent.[487]

Nor did Dol po pa accept that mere recognition of the true nature of reality had any practical effect at the relative level. He compared it to the illogicalness of fire ceasing to be hot once it is recognized or poison ceasing to be lethal on

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483 Hopkins 1999: 53 (cit. *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 260).

484 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 266; TANGO ed.: f. 96b.

485 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 267; TANGO ed.: f. 97a: *mtshan nyid du thugs dran rtog rang bzhin med par rgyas 'debs pa dang, yid tha ma la gyi rnam rtog 'phro 'du log nas ched du bkag pa'i zhi lhag bsgrubs pa las, sngags su thugs kyi gsang ba dran rtog chos nyid kyi rol par shar pa las, yid rang gsal rang byung gi ye shes su shar bas, ting nge 'dzin chu bo rgyun gyi rnal 'byor du grub pa'i phyir, thugs mi rtog par 'char ba'i dkyil 'khor du lhun gyis grub pas 'phags so.*

486 Hopkins 1999: 53.

487 Stearns 1999: 104.

the mere basis of its identification.[488] It is very likely that this skepticism was also grounded in his views on tantric practice (i.e., the *Kālacakra-tantra*), which diverges significantly from rDzogs chen in its method. Technically speaking, while the former system involves yogically bringing the subtle energies together and purifying them in the central channel, in the latter they are purified in their own place.[489] This last point was particularly important in Klong chen pa's presentation of rDzogs chen.

From this exploration of Dol po pa's thought, one can conclude that he and Klong chen pa had very different opinions about the dialectical and resultant vehicles. They differed in their attitude towards the two truths, their interpretation of the ground, and their application of the technologies of Mantrayāna. In other words, the only thing that they really had in common was their position on the definitiveness of the third turning of the wheel of the Dharma.

The Two Truths

That Klong chen pa himself did not subscribe to the doctrine of extrinsic emptiness is made clear in his discussion of the two truths. In his understanding of how they differ, he strictly follows Candrakīrti. On multiple occasions, he quotes one important passage from the *Madhyamakāvatāra*:

> Through true and false perceptions of all things, they are held as having two realities. The object of true perception is thatness, while that of false perception is said to be superficial reality.[490]

In his interpretation of the unitary nature of things, however, Klong chen pa also tends to fuse the two truths. Ultimately, he points out, they are not different. This is found in a number of his texts, from the *Yid bzhin mdzod* (where he states that *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are indivisible) to the *Shing rta chen po*,[491] which explains:

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488 Note that these metaphors are used as examples of actual transformation in the Mantrayāna tradition, as evidenced by the stories of the *mahasiddha*s (e.g., Virūpa safely drinking poison or Ḍombī and his consort emerging unharmed after seven days in a bonfire). Interestingly, Klong chen pa quotes Ḍombī Heruka in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* directly after the passage cited just above.

489 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 375–376; TANGO ed.: f. 135b.

490 This passage (*Madhyamakāvatāra*, VI: 23) is quoted twice in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, initially to define reality as being two-faceted and then in regard to the intellectual faculty being twofold (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 127, 129; TANGO ed.: ff. 46b, 47b). While Klong chen pa does rule out the possibility of a third alternative (i.e., something outside of liberation or a lack of liberation), he does not use the citation in the same way as Tsong kha pa to push Candrakīrti's argument against private dogmaticism. See Thurman 1984: 340–341.

491 *Yid bzhin mdzod*, f. 25b.

> The two truths are not different like two horns; in the conventionally real phase, when one sees the reflection of the moon in water, insofar as there is the reflection, this is the conventionally real; insofar as this reflection is not the moon, this is the absolutely real. The fact that both represent one fact insofar as there is the presence of the moon in the water of the well without existing there, is the indivisibility or unity of the two truths. About the intellect that understands it in this way, it is said that it understands the two truths.[492]

Klong chen pa's preference for ultimate integration is further evidenced in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*,[493] which provides great granularity vis-à-vis Klong chen pa's understanding of the two truths, which in turn bears on his interpretation of a number of other points. In this text's explanation of the various Buddhist philosophical schools' presentations of the relationship between ultimate and relative reality (i.e., whether they should be understood as being the same or different or a gradient between the two), he uses the common philosophical technique of "reverse-opposites"—or differentials (*ldog pa*)—to help show what they respectively *are not*. In Klong chen pa's opinion, because the Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas accept distinct differentials in a single entity, they fall to the error of accepting illusion as an ultimate reality. No matter that this is the exact position held by later scholars of Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika, from the dGe lugs pa to the rNying ma pa.[494] For Klong chen pa, meditative equipoise involves an actual perception of emptiness, not the illusory nature of things. If there were no appearance of emptiness, he argues, it would be impossible to show how things are ultimately empty.[495] If one admits that the two truths possess differentials, it would suggest that what they are not could not be perceived simultaneously.

In all likelihood, Klong chen pa was not trying here to make a significant point about emptiness per se, but rather a refutation of an "illusion-like Madhyamaka,"

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492 Guenther 1975, I: 290, n. 2 (cit. *Shing rta chen po*: 887 ff.).

493 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 110–111; TANGO ed.: ff. 40ab.

494 On the basis of Tsong kha pa's *Lam rim chen mo* as well as Kamalaśīla's *Madhyamakāloka*, one finds 'Jam yangs bzhad pa stating that a sameness of entity is not contradictory even when one or more things are non-effective. See Hopkins 2003: 898–899. Even Mi pham seems to agree, "The two truths are two distinct isolates (*ldog pa*) of a single reality. Their one shared nature resides in the inseparability of appearance and emptiness. This is validly ascertained by the analysis of the two truths. What appears is empty. If emptiness were different from appearance, phenomena would not be empty. Consequently the two are not separate. This nature, which is established as the indivisibility of appearance and emptiness, is the ultimate truth in itself (*rnam grangs min pa'i don dam*); it cannot in any way be described and is the object of individual self-reflexive awareness. This ultimate truth is referred to as the *dharmadhātu*, the *tathāgatagarbha*, and so on. (Pettit 1999: 192). See also Hopkins 1983: 414; Newland 1984: 66–70.

495 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 110; TANGO ed.: f. 40b: *bden pas stong pa'i snang ba'ang ma yin te*.

which existed prior to the division of Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika.[496] Interestingly, several centuries later, lCang skya rol ba'i rdo rje's *Grub mtha'i rnam par bzhag pa* would appear to deny that such a Madhyamaka tradition ever even existed, "However, merely because of that [claim that the object of meditative equipoise is a combination of emptiness and appearance], the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika system does not come to assert that a Superior's non-contaminated exalted wisdom of meditative equipoise has illusion-like appearance, etc."[497]

When Klong chen pa stresses the need for emptiness even at the risk of suggesting that it is ultimately real (i.e., non-illusory), it does not necessarily mean that he favored the doctrine of extrinsic emptiness. Instead, he may have simply been doubting the relevancy of separating the two truths as differentials (since such a differentiation itself is a conceptual construction). For instance, the fact that he was more interested in using an entirely different level of discourse is supported by his citation from the *Prajñāpāramitā* cycle that for the perfect Buddha, "there exists neither truth nor falsehood."[498] Slightly further into the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, he also writes,

> Whether the truths are the same or different belongs to the tenet systems of realists. Not only is that a misunderstanding, it is also not proven in the statement that "Madhyamaka is free from fabrications.[499]

Of course, Klong chen pa's criticism is not without certain dangers. If by removing the differentials he privileged the wisdom of meditative equipoise which "knows all things to be like the sphere of space" over the aftermath wisdom which "knows all things to be like illusion,"[500] he opened himself up to a charge of reifying the sphere of space into some kind of "pure zone." However, if by implying that superficial reality exists because it is functional yet is illusion-like under analysis, but that ultimate reality is not like an illusion, Klong chen pa seemed to be suggesting that ultimate reality itself can withstand analysis.

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496 Mi pham's *Yid bzhin mdzod kyi grub mtha' bsdus pa* also identifies the position of apprehending appearance and emptiness as separate entities in terms of the early Svātantrika school, and Śrīgupta in particular. See Guenther 1972: 138.

497 Lopez 1987: 381.

498 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 110; TANGO ed.: f. 40a (most likely citing the *Vajracchedikā* (*rDo rje gcod pa*): ch. 15).

499 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 126; TANGO ed.: f. 46b: *de'ang don gcig pa dang tha dad la sogs pa ni dngos po smra ba dag gi grub mtha' yin pas ma rig pa tsam du ma zad, spros pa dang bral ba dbu ma pa'o zhes par yang ma grub pa yin.*

500 Newland explains, "Likewise, when one emerges from meditation on the emptiness of a table, and a table reappears, one readily understands that this appearance is a conventionality, an illusion-like concealer-truth" (Newland 1992: 72).

The idea of ultimacy-seeking analysis harks back to Bhāvaviveka's *Tarkajvālā*, where the definition of ultimate existence is predicated on an awareness which realizes emptiness. As Newland points out, for the dGe lugs pa Mādhyamikas there is a complication with this definition, namely "that emptiness exists for the perspective of a consciousness realizing emptiness because emptiness is the object found or realized in the perspective of that awareness."[501] Existing "for the perspective of a consciousness" is taken to be synonymous with being able to withstand analysis.

Tsong kha pa accepted this definition.[502] But because it was also important for Tsong kha pa to differentiate between something being an ultimate (*don dam yin*) and ultimate existence itself (*don dam du yod*), he assigned different ontological weight to ultimacy-seeking analysis and ultimate reality withstanding such analysis.[503] Over time, the great dGe lugs pa doxographers such as lCang skya rol ba'i rdo rje and Ngag dbang dpal ldan would highlight the difference even more, extending it to explain that Tsong kha pa in his acceptance of emptiness existing "for the perspective of a consciousness" meant this in terms of emptiness "being an object found or realized by consciousness."[504] Their approach would echo 'Jam yangs bzhad pa's rebuttal of rNgog blo ldan shes rab, an eleventh-century translator who, on the basis of this complication, argued that emptiness was not an object of knowledge.[505]

In other words, within the context of Madhyamaka philosophy as defined by Tsong kha pa, ultimate truth *cannot* withstand analysis.[506] Simply put, it is by means of analysis that the intrinsic reality of objects is recognized not to exist. Through such analysis, one can gain an understanding of ultimate reality. But as soon as one extends the analysis to ultimate reality itself, even intrinsic realitylessness is shown not to have intrinsic reality.

Yet, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* suggests that ultimate reality does withstand analysis. This first appears in the section reviewing the philosophical position of Svātantrika-Madhyamaka. Interpretation is made somewhat difficult due to the Tibetan syntax of the phrase in question, as it depends on whether one reads *mthar thug* adverbially or as a synonym for ultimate reality (*don dam pa'i bden pa*).

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501 Newland 1992: 277–278, n. 46.
502 Newland 1992: 277 (cit. *dbU ma la 'jug pa'i rgya bshad dgongs pa rab gsal*).
503 Newland 1992: 93–94.
504 Newland 1992: 277–278, n. 46.
505 Hopkins 1983: 406.
506 Tsong kha pa asserts that the ignorance of asserting that something ultimately withstands analysis is not innate, but artificially derived from subscribing to faulty philosophical views. See Newland 1992: 91.

In the former case, one can read the passage as follows:

> In terms of the validating cognition which ascertains ultimate reality, even though—after mastering the validating cognition which ascertains the epistemological object of reasoning which *conclusively analyzes immunity to analysis*—[ultimate reality] can be realized by means of the non-conceptual wisdom of individual reflexive awareness, ordinary beings ascertain [ultimate reality] by means of inferential reasoning that follows syllogisms.[507]

Alternatively, however, one can read it as "reasoning that analyzes *the ultimate which withstands analysis*."

Based on the usage of the phrase *mthar thug dpyod pa'i rig pa* elsewhere in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* specifically as a technical term for a type of reasoning which applies to ultimacy-seeking analysis, one can argue for the former case. Klong chen pa may have been saying something other than ultimate reality being able to withstand analysis.[508] But other passages in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* suggest that this was not the case. For example, in reference to objects of knowledge, Klong chen pa writes, "That is to say, because space and the two cessations—being negations which require neganda—do not withstand analysis, they are not suitable as ultimate reality, which is merely suchness."[509]

More explicitly, he appears to describe the relationship between ultimacy-seeking analysis and ultimate reality's ability to withstand analysis.

> First, the characteristic of mere reality is any given thing that lacks inherent existence. The characteristic of superficial reality is any subject which does not

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507 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 116–117; TANGO ed.: f. 42b: *don dam pa'i bden pa nges par byed pa'i tshad ma ni dpyad bzod mthar thug dpyod pa'i rig pa'i gzhal bya nges par byed pa'i tshad ma thob nas so so rang gi rig pa'i rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes kyis rtogs na'ang, so so skye bo de dag gis gtan tshigs kyi rjes su 'brang ba'i rigs shes rjes dpag gis nges par byed do*.

508 This thorny issue prompted extensive discussion during the translation process of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* with Robert Thurman and others. The question of whether Klong chen pa intepreted things, even emptiness, to be able to withstand analysis also provoked objections by Dorji Wangchuk, first at the International Association of Buddhist Studies meeting in Atlanta, GA in 2008 and then in further correspondence (pers. comm. Sept. 3, 2017); indeed, as his presentation of the rNying ma school's philosophical understanding of emptiness helpfully points out, this would not be acceptable: "For them, a given 'x' (no matter what) is said to be *raṅ stoṅ* if it cannot withstand (*bzod pa*) the logical analysis of Madhyamaka reasoning. A given 'x' that can withstand such a scrutiny, which is for them an impossibility, would imply its 'true or hypostatic existence' (*bden par grub pa*)" (Wangchuk 2004: 173, n. 3). The question deserves further attention, in particular a diachronic review of this specific point in relation to the historical evolution of rNying ma philosophical thought.

509 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 114; TANGO ed.: f. 42a: *de'ang 'gog pa gnyis dang nam mkha' ni dgag bya la ltos pa'i bkag pa yin pas dbyad mi bzod pa'i phyir don dam pa'i bden par mi rung ste de bzhin nyid kho na yin la*.

> withstand rational analysis. The characteristic of ultimate reality is anything which does withstand rational analysis. That is to say, the proper essence which is empty in reality lacks inherent existence. What can be refuted by ultimacy-seeking analytic reasoning is said not to withstand analysis. What cannot be refuted by [such] reasoning is said to withstand analysis.[510]

There are at least three ways of reading this important passage. The first is simply to discount it as presenting a tenet-system belonging to Svātantrika-Madhyamaka and not reflecting the position of Klong chen pa himself. After all, this position was fundamentally Svātantrika-Madhyamaka.[511] The doxographical genre is infamously tricky when it comes to precisely discerning authorial opinion, and the reader needs to be especially cautious about ascribing philosophical stances to the writer of the text. However, given Klong chen pa's other statements regarding this point, this option is unlikely.

The second alternative is to take the statement at face value and conclude that Klong chen pa did mean to assert that ultimate reality is able to withstand rational analysis. While this position diverges radically from the predominant position of later Tibetan Madhyamaka, it is worth repeating that the distinction between ultimacy-seeking analysis and being able to withstand analysis was in large measure a later development within the dGe lugs pa school.

The third alternative is to understand the passage in terms of differing hermeneutic frames. This is to say, it is possible that Klong chen pa's strong interpretation of emptiness and ultimate reality withstanding analysis was based on something other than what one usually finds in the dialectical tradition. An understanding of ultimate reality drawn from the context of the third promulgation, or rDzogs chen even, may have influenced his philosophical thought. This is not as far-fetched as it first may sound.

Centuries later, H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche would contrast the dialectical tradition of Madhyamaka with a so-called "Great Madhyamaka" (*dbu ma chen po*) tradition.[512] Otherwise known as Yogācāra-Madhyamaka (not to be confused with Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka), it is said to have been taught by the Buddha in the third turning of the wheel. This tradition does not debate the relevance

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510 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 113; TANGO ed.: 41b: *dang po ni bden pa tsam gyi mtshan nyid ni chos gang zhig rang gzhin med pa, kun rdzob kyi bden pa'i mtshan nyid ni chos can gang zhig rig pas dpyad mi bzod pa, don dam bden pa'i mtshan nyid gang zhig rig pas dpyad bzod pa'o, de'ang rang gi ngo bo bden pas stong pa ni rang bzhin med pa yin la, mthar thug dpyod pa'i rig pas dgag par nus pa la dpyad mi bzod pa zer zhing, rig pa gang zhig gis kyang dgag pa mi nus pa la dpyad bzod pa zhes bya'o.*

511 Tsong kha pa refers to this mistaken view in his discussion of Svātantrika-Madhyamaka. See Newland 1992: 91.

512 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 185.

of the second turning. Nor does it deny that both Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka, by means of reasoning that harms conceptual elaboration, effect a realization of emptiness. Instead, Great Madhyamaka argues that the successful accomplishment of a meditative experience of emptiness is only one step leading up to the full experience of ultimate reality by means of naturally arising wisdom.

Yet, the idea of a Great Madhyamaka was actually in play as early as the eleventh century. One can point to the teachings of the bKa' gdams pa master, Zla ba rgyal mtshan, and their subsequent transmission from sPyi ba lhas pa to Sa skya Paṇḍita.[513] The latter's *Thub pa'i dgongs gsal* describes Great Madhyamaka as something beyond Svātantrika-Madhyamaka and Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka, albeit with a further differentiation between an outer, coarse Madhyamaka and an inner, subtle Madhyamaka. According to gLo bo mkhan chen, this schema was based on a specific meditation described in the *Pañcakrama*, a tantric work associated with the *Guhyasamāja* and attributed to Nāgārjuna.[514] In David Jackson's opinion, therefore, it is not accurate to identify Sa skya Paṇḍita as a Svātantrika-Mādhyamika or Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika, but rather as a tantric Mādhyamika.[515]

Along similar lines, Mi pham would define Great Madhyamaka as "resultant Madhyamaka." The rationale here is that Great Madhyamaka *cum* Mantrayāna offers a more fused interpretation of appearance and emptiness.[516] As a means of bridging the philosophical gap between the causal and resultant vehicles, Great Madhyamaka offers a certain amount of appeal. At the level of language, its emphasis on naturally present wisdom over analysis born of rational cognition bridges the hermeneutical gap between dialectics and tantric vocabulary. For example, when H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche writes that "absolute reality is the pristine cognition of the non-dual nature of just what is,"[517] he is employing a level of discourse appropriate to inner Mantrayāna.[518]

Dol po pa had employed the strong Yogācāra leanings of Great Madhyamaka in his larger platform of extrinsic emptiness (*gzhan stong*), and Mi pham built on this interpretation, using the Great Madhyamaka rubric to integrate Dol po pa's doctrine of extrinsic emptiness with the mainstream position of intrinsic empti-

513 Jackson 1985b: 26.
514 Jackson 1985b: 28.
515 Jackson 1985b: 28.
516 Pettit 1999: 402 (cit. *Nges shes sgron me*: ch. 7).
517 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 185.
518 Specifically, in the gSar ma tradition, it relates to the language of the fourth tantric initiation (i.e., the "word-empowerment").

ness (*rang stong*).[519] This furthered Mi pham's greater agenda of a philosophical reconciliation between entire religious orders as well as schools of thought within these religious orders.[520] Thus, one can find differing degrees of association of extrinsic emptiness with Great Madhyamaka.

Even in the fourteenth century, the term had a much broader usage. Evidence of this can be found in Tsong kha pa's *dGongs pa rab gsal*, a commentary on the *Madhyamakāvatāra*. In the colophon of this text, Tsong kha pa refers to himself as "a yogi of the Great Madhyamaka."[521] Because it would be patently false to assume that the epithet here has any secondary meaning of *gzhan stong pa*, one can similarly conclude that Klong chen pa himself may have employed a type of Great Madkyamaka that lacked the gist of extrinsic emptiness and had a more tantric interpretation. This ties back to Klong chen pa's emphasis on the two truths not being different (as Dol po pa suggested)[522] and the need to ultimately understand emptiness in conjunction with appearance.[523]

The way that Klong chen pa refutes differentials in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* strongly suggests that his interpretation of the two truths as indivisible and non-dual extended to a definition of emptiness based on some kind of unified meditative perception. That is to say, though the ordinary person's validating cognition relates to conventional reality and not ultimate reality, the meditative equipoise of an actually realized Buddha is able to penetrate to the nature of ultimate reality (i.e., merged appearance and emptiness). For that Buddha, the state of meditative equipoise and the aftermath of that state have become one. Or, as Klong chen pa later explains, because the Buddha perceives everything non-dually without wavering from the state of meditative equipoise, and distracting instincts have been abandoned, other than as enlightened activity for other beings the aftermath state per se no longer exists.[524]

In this way, the difference between the Buddha and practitioners of the causal vehicle is that, for the latter, meditative absorption and the aftermath wisdom

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519 H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche explains, "It integrates the view that all things of samsara are intrinsically empty (*rang-stong*) of their own inherent substantiality with the view that all enlightened attributes are empty of those extraneous phenomena (*gzhan-stong*)" (Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, II: 14, n. 169).

520 Pettit 1999: 116.

521 See Tsong kha pa's *gSung 'bum*, I (ma): f. 267a.

522 H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche takes the *Yid bzhin mdzod*'s fusion of the two truths as a support for his argument for a Great Madhyamaka (Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 209–210 (cit. *Yid bzhin mdzod*: ff. 25a–26b)).

523 Albeit in rDzogs chen parlance, H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche is reported to have said that it is crucial to understand the difference between the actuality and the display. Simply put, even in the experience of enlightenment, appearances are said not to disappear.

524 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 250–251; TANGO ed.: ff. 91.

are not fused.[525] For the person working within the dialectical paradigm, meditative analysis yields an understanding of ultimate reality. This understanding is then applied in the aftermath state.[526] In both cases (i.e., for the Buddha and the ordinary person on the path), the object of analysis is emptiness. Unique to the Buddha, however, is the ability to simultaneously retain non-dual focus on both emptiness and appearance.[527]

Such discussion about the coalescence of emptiness and appearance is found more often in the context of Mantrayāna.[528] Klong chen pa is not blind to this fact. In the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, for example, he succinctly differentiates between the meditative practices of the respective vehicles:

> In terms of union, in the dialectical [tradition] one cultivates in meditative equipoise the emptiness that is non-referential, like space; in the aftermath one uses the union of [things being like] illusion as the path. Mantra is superior because it uses the union of inconceivable inseparability as the path.[529]

It is important to note that Klong chen pa is not making the same type of integrative move as Mi pham's Great Madhyamaka, in which Madhyamaka contains both approaches and is simply divided into two aspects: causal and resultant. The former aspect is understood to involve the application of distinct analysis of the two realities. The result of this is said to be an experience of non-duality. Mi pham explains, "And the certainty in the expanse of the equality of coalescence

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525 According to 'Jam yangs bzhad pa, the general definition of ultimate reality as an object found by rational cognition applies to those on the path who have not yet integrated the state of meditative equipoise and the aftermath state. See Hopkins 2003: 902 (cit. *Grub mtha' rnam bshad chen mo*: f. 570).

526 Powers notes the importance of carrying realization over into the aftermath state, "For Buddhist meditators, the experience of meditative states are if anything more valid than ordinary experiences, and they commonly extend the insights of meditation to ordinary experience. Indeed, if meditative experience were only valid in the meditative situation, there would be little point in engaging in meditation in the first place, since one's experiences would only be meaningful in a limited situation that would be irrelevant to most of the experiences of oneself and others" (Powers 1992: 7).

527 According to Khenpo Dorjee Tsering, it is only when one reaches the path of seeing that there is a perception of the inseparability of both emptiness and appearance. Consciousness does not oscillate between the two.

528 At the esoteric level, the subjectivity that perceives emptiness is said to be different. In Mantrayāna, one develops a subtle non-conceptual awareness which perceives the union of emptiness and appearance in terms of bliss and clarity. Conceptualization of great bliss causes a flaw in creation-stage meditation.

529 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 264–265; TANGO ed.: f. 96a: *rnal 'byor la'ang mtshan nyid la mnyam gzhag mi dmigs pa rnam mkha' ltar stong pa bsgoms zhing, rjes thob sgyu mi'i rnal 'byor lam du byed la, sngags lass dbyer med bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i rnal 'byor lam du byed pas 'phags so.*

where appearance and emptiness and the two truths are of one taste, which the [former] Madhyamaka induces, is the fruitional Madhyamaka."[530]

Of course, Klong chen pa and Mi pham finally prized the view of rDzogs chen, in which realization is effectively perfected through the union of emptiness and awareness (*rig pa*), with the latter aspect focused on luminosity (*'od gsal*).[531] rDzogs chen teaches a number of practices to help facilitate an experience of this, but here the fine point of the discussion returns to the interpretation of emptiness. For example, Newland points out that according to the dGe lugs pa line of thought, even though emptiness can be the final mode of being of things, in and of itself it is not "a self-intuiting monistic ground."[532]

Certain contemporary rNying ma pa do not see a separation between rDzogs chen and the philosophical understanding of emptiness. As Khetsun Sangpo writes, "The external expanse is that of the sky; the internal one is the empty sphere of the mind; the secret expanse is the wisdom mind freed from all extremes once the mind has been purified. In Madhyamika this is called the freedom from all conceptual elaborations without anything to point to and with the eight extremes, of production from self, other, both and neither, coming, going, sameness and difference, refuted—a complete cessation of all elaborations."[533] In other words, in both systems one merges outer appearances which have the aspect of emptiness with a mind emptied of ordinary conceptual thoughts in order to arrive at an experience of the wisdom consciousness itself. The difference is in how rDzogs chen uses recognition of awareness in order to effect that experience.

More specifically, the difference here lies in whether one defines ultimate reality in terms of emptiness or wisdom. Pettit explains, "Gelug philosophers consider gnosis to be a conformative ultimate (*mthun pa'i don dam*);[534] they do not accept gnosis as a definitive ultimate, which is the position of Mipham and the gZhan stong pas."[535] On the other hand, one finds H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche writing that "it is wrong to refer to the mere emptiness, which is nothing at all, as the ultimate truth."[536]

Clearly Tsong kha pa favored the former perspective. This is understandable, considering his attention to the definitive status of the second promulgation's

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530 Pettit 1999: 403 (cit. *Nges shes sgron me*: ch. 7).
531 This point will be covered in more detail in the following chapter.
532 Newland 1992: 95.
533 Sangpo et al. 1982: 190–191.
534 This is to say, wisdom is only ultimate when it realizes emptiness.
535 Pettit 1999: 119.
536 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 185.

teachings on emptiness. Not surprisingly, we find Klong chen pa taking the opposite stance, defining ultimate reality in terms of wisdom.

> In brief, the profound *dharma*s of *nirvāṇa*; the expanse which is completely pure and peaceful by nature; the wisdom of the Buddhas which perceives sense-objects as perfectly pure and unchanging by means of an intellect which, free from obscurations, realizes that [expanse]; the resting equipoise-wisdom of those who have attained the *bhūmi*s; and the aftermath [wisdom] of remaining in the singular actuality of that, transforming perceptions in *vipāśyanā*—all of those are ultimate reality.[537]

It is important to note that by Klong chen pa's time, the interpretative debate around ultimate reality being defined in terms of emptiness or wisdom had not escalated to the level of later dGe lugs and rNying ma polemics. Nor does it appear that he drew such a big distinction between the two. In his presentation of Candrakīrti and subsequent scholars who held the second promulgation to be definitive, he explains that even though they held subjective wisdom (*yul can ye shes*) to be pacified at the level of Buddhahood,[538] the "non-erroneous intellect" that realizes the *dharmatā* is synonymous with the wisdom of the Buddha.

Klong chen pa's perspective on this is also visible in his response to critiques that the *dharmatā* (*chos nyid*) cannot be an object of knowledge (*shes bya*). To prove that it is indeed an object of wisdom for the fully-realized Buddha, he quotes from Rāhula's famous hymn:[539]

> Although it was thus taught that the *dharmatā* is not an object of knowledge which can be proven in actuality [to exist], it can be known [by a Buddha] because [what is] indescribable, inconceivable and limitless is an object of the wisdom of individual intrinsic awareness.[540] As Rāhula explains in *Praises to the Mother* (*Yum la bstod pa*), "The perfection of transcendent knowledge is

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537 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 126–127; TANGO ed.: f. 46b: *mdor na mya ngan las 'das pa'i chos zab pa dang zhi ba rang bzhin gyis rnam par dag pa'i dbyings dang, de rtogs pa'i blo sgrib pa thams cad bral bas sangs rgyas kyi ye shes yul rnam par dag pa 'gyur ba med par snang ba dang, sa thob pa'i mnyam gzhag gi ye shes mnyam gzhag dang de'i ngo bo gcig tu gnas pa'i rjes thob snang ba lhag mthong gi rnam par gyur to cog don dam pa'i bden pa'o.*

538 In his *Shing rta chen po,* Klong chen pa similarly qualifies ultimate reality as transcending categories of subject and object, or "realizer" and "realized." Not surprisingly, at this point he cites the *Ratnakūṭa,* Candrakīrti and *Vajracchedika*. Cf. *Shing rta chen po*: ch. 8.

539 H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche attributes the authorship of this text to Nāgārjuna, but his citation of the same passage is more directed towards an argument for a Great Madhyamaka (Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 185).

540 Elsewhere in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* Klong chen pa further describes wisdom and the *dharmatā* as being ineffable. The first reference is in regard to meditative equipoise (*Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 123; TANGO ed.: f. 45a). The second reference is within the context of the arising of the rDzogs chen tantras (*Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 388; TANGO ed.: f. 144a).

> beyond words, thought and description. Its very essence is like space, unborn and unceasing. Individual intrinsic awareness is its experiential domain. I bow to the Mother of the Victor [of] the three times."[541]

When discussing the Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka definition of an authenticating validating cognition, Klong chen pa further integrates Candrakīrti's "intellect," qualifying it as non-referential (*dmigs pa med pa*) with "wisdom," which is also referenced as non-referential:

> In terms of authenticating validating cognition, the consequence that the *dharmadhātu* ultimate reality is liberated from a [conceptually] fabricated phenomenality is due to its not being the experiential domain of an intellect which possesses a frame of reference. That is to say, wisdom realizes in a non-focused way. The consequence that phenomenal superficial realities possess [conceptually] fabricated phenomenality is due to their being the experiential domain of an intellect which has a frame of reference. Therefore, the basis of characterization of ultimate reality is established by means of logical knowledge (*rigs shes*). The basis of characterization of superficial reality is established by conventional knowledge (*tha snyad pa'i shes pa*) which apprehends bases of characterization.[542]

As a Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika, Klong chen pa does not deny that ultimate reality is an object of rational cognition.[543] The dialectical vehicle places great importance on analytical meditation because, in its system, it is by means of a validating cognition's analysis that ultimate reality can be ascertained. While people ordinarily engage the world by means of memory, mental events and the senses, the experience of the meditator at the level of the dialectical vehicle involves examining an object and its discrete qualities (e.g., yellow, flower). In apprehending the

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541 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 251–252; TANGO ed.: ff. 91b–92a: *chos nyid de ngo bor grub pa'i shes bya ma yin pas de skad gsungs kyang, brjod med bsam gyis mi khyab pa mtha' bral tsam du so so rang gis rig pa'i ye shes kyi yul yin pas mkhyen te sgrag can 'dzin gyis yum la bstod pa las, smra bsam brjod med shes rab pha rol phyin, ma skyes mi 'gag nam mkha'i ngo bo nyid, so so rang rig ye shes spyod yul ba, dus gsum rgyal ba'i yum la phyag 'tshal lo.*

542 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 130; TANGO ed.: f. 47b: *nges 'byed kyi tshad ma ni, chos dbyings don dam can spros pa las grol par thal, dmigs bcas kyi blo'i spyod yul ma yin pa'i phyir, de'ang ye shes kyis ni dmigs pa med pa'i tshul gyis rtogs so, chos can kun rdzob pa rnams chos can spros pa dang bcas par thal, dmigs bcas kyi blo'i spyod yul yin pa'i phyir, khyab yod de dmigs bcas kyi blo dang de'i yul rnams ni kun rdzob yin pa'i phyir ro, de ltar na don dam gyi mtshan gzhi la mtshan nyid rigs shes kyis grub la, kun rdzob kyi mtshan gzhi la mtshan nyid mtshan gzhi 'dzin pa'i tha snyad pa'i shes pas grub bo.*

543 Whether or not ultimate reality can be ascertained by a validating cognition is primarily a point of contention among the proponents of Svātantrika-Madhyamaka. Those who do not accept that ultimate reality can be ascertained by rational cognition explain their position in terms of two types of ultimate reality: enumerated ultimate reality and non-enumerated ultimate reality (*Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 118; TANGO ed.: f. 43b).

flower and deconstructing the mental image of the flower, he or she experiences the emptiness of the meaning generality of the flower. The process of realizing emptiness through rational analysis involves a gradual process of negation, with a gradual increase in inferential understanding, until there is a direct experience of emptiness and the ultimate basis of characteristics.[544]

For the dGe lugs pa, conceptual thought is reconciled with direct perception by means of concentration at the first and sixth *bhūmi*s. As Klein puts it, "In epistemological terms, the case is made that a properly conditioned mind can experience the unconditioned, and that it can do so with such force and immediacy that the effect of ordinary conditioning is negligible."[545] This is where theoretical certainty meets experiential certainty.[546]

Where Klong chen pa differs is in his statement that the defining characteristic of ultimate reality is freedom from the formulations (*spros pa*) of subject and object.[547] For him, reasoning—specifically, in terms of the great logical axioms (*gtan tshig*)[548]—functions to rid one of the tendency towards such fabrications.[549] The state of being free from formulations is not a subjective state, however, but the experiential modality of non-dual wisdom itself, such as that possessed by the Buddhas.[550] By defining ultimate reality in this way, Klong chen pa allows that it can be realized by other methods than rational cognition. For example, rDzogs chen offers the possibility of direct introduction to a non-referential experience of emptiness without the ancillary dimension of thought. This is because, in its presentation, mind itself is not conditioned. Together with wisdom-awareness, it is free of fabrications.

As H.H. the Dalai Lama points out, there are many different meanings of emptiness in the Buddhist tradition.[551] This multivalent value of emptiness is apparent in many of Klong chen pa's writings, but perhaps nowhere is this distinction better drawn out than in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. This is because the

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544 Whereas the basis of characterization of superficial reality includes the aspected objects perceived by the six consciousnesses, Klong chen pa defines the basis of characterization of ultimate reality in terms of the *dharmadhātu* itself (*Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 125; TANGO ed.: f. 46a).

545 Klein 1992: 296.

546 Pettit 1999: 181.

547 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 126; TANGO ed.: f. 46a.

548 These include the *vajra*-splinters (*rdo rje gzegs ma*) which negate the negandum through an analysis of the cause of the negandum, the production and destruction of existence and non-existence which negate the negandum through an analysis of the fruition of the negandum, the production and destruction of the four extremes (*mu bzhi*) which negate the negandum through an analysis of cause and effect, and negation of the negandum through an analysis of intrinsic reality (*ngo bo*).

549 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 118; TANGO ed.: f. 43b.

550 See Pettit 1999: 174.

551 For a very helpful summary, see Gyatso 2000: 139–148.

term is used in different ways at different times throughout the text in relation to the various Buddhist vehicles. Indeed, one of the uncommon features of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, especially compared to other doxographies, is that its discussion of emptiness extends from how it is defined by the philosophical schools[552] to how emptiness is employed within the rDzogs chen lexicon.[553]

This is not to say that there exist a number of different "emptinesses." As Thurman notes, even though Madhyamaka and Mantrayāna present different means of harnessing reason and communicating ultimate reality to "alienated humans," such masters as Tsong kha pa explained the view of emptiness itself "to be the same for exoteric and esoteric schools."[554] This point is further clarified by H.H. the Dalai Lama, who explains that the difference of the understandings of emptiness in sūtra and tantra are not found in the object (i.e., emptiness itself).[555] Instead, one can speak of differences in the mind that understands emptiness.[556]

One of the most significant dimensions of Klong chen pa's doxography is its explication of the respective modalities of Buddhism from the point of view of soteriology. Thus, the philosophical chapter of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* establishes the importance of the dialectical vehicle in terms of a correct understanding of emptiness and the two realities, but this is not done at a remove from the larger matrix of Mantrayāna. Textually, it serves as a springboard for the tantric vehicles. At the same time, some of Klong chen pa's interpretative moves—such as a more unified definition of ultimate and relative reality and his comfort with putting emptiness and wisdom-awareness side by side—point to how his philosophical thought was also nuanced by his understanding of rDzogs chen.

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552 Note that, following Klong chen pa, the rNying ma school has tended not to consider emptiness as an absolute negation (*med dgag*), but an implicative negation (*ma yin dgag*). Klong chen pa further departs from Tsong kha pa's presentation of the logical axioms by citing the relativity reason of great interdependence as an implicative negation and freedom from unity and plurality as an absolute negation (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 119; TANGO ed.: f. 43b).

553 Citing various passages in the *Tshig don mdzod* where the word *stong pa* appears (including references to the channels of the subtle-body being "empty"), Germano effectively rebuts Karmay's charge that rDzogs chen lacks teachings on the doctrine of emptiness (Germano 1992: 64 (cit. *Tshig don mdzod*: ff. 168, 175, 237, 251, 262, 266–267, 288, etc.)). As he puts it, rDzogs chen offers an "innovative dialectical reinterpretation of Prāsaṅgika notions of 'emptiness' rather than a mere sterile 'diametric opposition' to them that Karmay suggests" (Germano 1992: 65 (cit. Karmay 1988: 215)). This is simply another way of saying that rDzogs chen employs the term in a radically different way than the philosophical traditions.

554 Thurman 1988: 121, 143.

555 Gyatso 2000: 169.

556 On this basis, even within Anuttarayogatantra one can speak of different attitudes towards emptiness (cf. the *Guhyasamāja* and *Kālacakra* tantras). For example, the *Kālacakra-tantra* employs two "types" of wisdom: an inner wisdom which relates to (a subjective experience of) the clarity of mind and an outer (objective) wisdom which relates to emptiness itself. See Gyatso 2000: 169–171.

6. THE GREAT PERFECTION

By means of both doxographic convention and explicit statements, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* reveals perhaps more than any of Klong chen pa's other works how he held rDzogs chen[557] to be the apotheosis of all Buddhist teachings. For some, this dimension of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* may be considered the most important part of the text. After all, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* not only significantly contributed to the rNying ma canon, it also played an important part in the ratification of rDzogs chen into a unitary system. If asked to define rDzogs chen, many Tibetologists and contemporary students of Buddhism alike would likely respond with a scheme that is very similar to the one set forth in that text. The *Grub mtha' mdzod* provides much more than a summary of rDzogs chen literature, however, by outlining the different classes of rDzogs chen practice with specific commentary on the different ways in which they work.

The rDzogs chen section of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* does not resemble a mere intellectual exercise, for it is clear that this subject matter is dear to the author's heart. The depth into which Klong chen pa is willing to go on the subject shows that he did not intend the *Grub mtha' mdzod*'s presentation of rDzogs chen to be introductory. Its level of detail extends beyond the ken of the ordinary Buddhist novice, and certain of its expositions on highly esoteric material were likely not intended for an uninitiated audience. Furthermore, just as it would be impossible for any comprehensive discussion of his writing to ignore Klong chen pa's poetic style, his rDzogs chen orientation clearly surfaces at different points in the text.

It is important to note that the *Grub mtha' mdzod* does not directly teach rDzogs chen. In fact, it largely ignores issues pertaining to praxis. In this way, its tone differs greatly from the evocative style of Klong chen pa's other works, which specifically focus on the view and practice of rDzogs chen. Klong chen pa's discussion of rDzogs chen in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* instead comprises a largely ahistorical presentation of the tripartite divisions of mind-class, expanse-class and personal instruction-class as contained within rDzogs chen tantra, scriptures (*āgama*s) and private teachings. It is within the context of these that Klong chen pa ties rDzogs chen together with the larger doxographical structure of the rNying ma tantras and Buddhism overall, and it is precisely this contextualization and structuring of a heterogenous tradition within a homogenous one

557 This term, which has the meaning both of "complete" and "perfect," is synonymous with Atiyoga. See Guenther 1989b: 184–194.

that makes the *Grub mtha' mdzod* so innovative, giving it enduring value for the rNying ma school.

Klong chen pa systematizes rDzogs chen while also promoting it as an especially precious and efficacious modality of the Buddhadharma. The *Grub mtha' mdzod* first qualifies the other vehicles in terms of their own profound worth, and only then does it speak to the specialness of rDzogs chen and the distinction of its methodological approach. In the latter move, Klong chen pa does not shy away from the presentation of rDzogs chen scriptures which look condescendingly upon the "lower" vehicles. Rather, he mediates them through an integrative interpretation of rDzogs chen as a definitively Buddhist system.

This chapter addresses some of the major criticisms that rDzogs chen has had to face over the centuries. After showing what rDzogs chen *is not*, it then turns to examine what it *is*. Central to this analysis is the question of how rDzogs chen can be integrated with the other vehicles when it insists on the superiority (and uniqueness even) of its approach. Exploring this phenomenon and the surrounding tension around it, particularly through the lens of Klong chen pa's works, it is necessary to delineate the monolithic label of rDzogs chen in terms of its multivalent hermeneutic and wide range of literature. Clarity around the different strands of the tradition will afford a better understanding of Klong chen pa's key aim of resolving rDzogs chen with the larger traditions of Sūtrayāna and Mantrayāna.

Criticisms of rDzogs chen

Between the dynastic period and the fourteenth century, rDzogs chen came under fire for a number of potential errors in its methodology. Compared to the "sudden enlightenment" doctrine of Hva shang or the idealist school of Cittamātra, rDzogs chen was criticized as falling to the extremes of nihilism or eternalism. Regarding ethics, it suffered a critique which was more generally directed towards the rNying ma school's practice of tantra. And as its authenticity and connection to the Indian tantric tradition were challenged, it faced pressure from that side as well. rDzogs chen was defended from these different attacks by a number of different scholars and practitioners, but it would find its true champion in Klong chen pa.

Historicity

One common accusation leveled against rDzogs chen was its lack of historicity. For example, the term *rdzogs chen* is not even found in the *Mahāvyutpatti*, and

no rDzogs chen texts are found in the *lDan dkar ma* catalog (8th c.).[558] As late as 'Bri gung dpal bzang's *Chos dang chos ma yin pa rnam par dbye ba rab tu byed pa* (14th c.), one finds accusations that rDzogs chen did not exist before gLang dar ma (d.842) and that the eighteen mind-class tantras were authored by later rNying ma pa (e.g., Myang ston smra ba'i seng ge).[559] To this line of attack can be added Bu ston and his censure of various rNying ma tantras.

Against this, rNying ma apologists argued that the more esoteric the text, the more likely its existence was to be hidden from public view. One learns in the *'Dra 'bag chen mo*, for example, that Vairocana was prevented from publicly teaching rDzogs chen to King Khri srong lde btsan (742–796), and he had to do it at night in secret.[560] The *Grub mtha' mdzod* also speaks to the secrecy around personal instruction-class being shared with the king, even noting that certain rDzogs chen texts were even held back from Padmasambhava's main twenty-five Tibetan disciples.[561]

Amongst the earliest surviving writings which defend the authenticity of the rDzogs chen tradition, one finds Rong zom chos kyi bzang po's *Theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa* emphasizing rDzogs chen's Sanskrit origins and linking its unique methods of "terminology, style, versification, and *maṇḍala* formation" with the variant literary traditions of the "early translations" (*snga 'gyur*) and the "later translations" (*phyi 'gyur*).[562] Rong zom further defended rDzogs chen by citing its ability to withstand analysis according to Buddhist logic (i.e., it cannot be negated by reason). More specifically, Rong zom described people who are attached to conventional teachings as passing up the wish-fulfilling jewel of rDzogs chen for the glass baubles of dialectical jargon.[563] Although Klong chen pa does not mention Rong zom or his works by name, that rNying ma scholar certainly paved the way for later rNying ma apologists.

It is reported that upon meeting Rong zom, Atiśa compared him to the Indian pundit Kṛṣṇapāda and asked how he could even discuss the Dharma with such a master.[564] Though this account primarily underlines Rong zom's erudition, there is another important dimension to it: as much as Atiśa despaired the lack of scholarship in Tibet, he also perceived a need for ethical reformation. It could

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558 Reynolds 1996: 268.
559 Reynolds 1996: 263.
560 Reynolds 1996: 270.
561 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f: 404; TANGO ed.: f: 146a.
562 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, II: 71.
563 *Theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa zhes bya ba'i bstan bcos bzhugs so*: ff. 68ab. See also Karmay 1988: 127.
564 Tarthang Tulku 1984: 404.

thus be inferred from Atiśa's high opinion of Rong zom that he did not see him as a degenerate practitioner. This in itself is significant, considering the other charges being brought against the rNying ma school at that time.

It is also worth noting that ethics-related aspersions have often gone hand in hand with questions about textual authenticity, and this connection persisted even to the inception of Buddhist studies as an academic field. In the nineteenth century, the Indian scholar Sarat Chandra Das concluded that degenerate tantric practices were definitively linked to the rNying ma fabrication of apocryphal literature. He writes, "Particularly after Lang-darma's persecution of the Buddhists of Tibet, some Tāntriks, in the heat of debauchery and drunkenness, had composed many spurious Tantras, putting into writing the ravings of their intoxicated brains."[565] Accordingly, a prevailingly negative attitude towards the rNying ma pa led Western Tibetologists (e.g., Waddell and Tucci) to conclude that they enjoyed orgies, the worship of blood-drinking deities, and lay exorcisms in a confused relationship with Bon po praxis and shamanism. At the time that these criticisms were made, of course, Indology as a field was both focused on textual spuriousness and suffused with the strict morals of Victorian puritanism. There was little patience for sexual description *in flagrante delicto*, ritual cannibalism, and so forth. The literature of the rNying ma pa served as a perfect foil for a more "pure" Buddhism.

Yet even when tantra was first introduced in India, it had also faced charges of ethical laxity from the other schools. This tension became even more apparent when the *mahāsiddha* movement made the practices more public over the following centuries. For Atiśa visiting Tibet, the rNying ma pa were errant in their literal interpretation of tantra, especially when it came to active engagement in sexual communion. For Sa skya Paṇḍita, another critic of the rNying ma scriptural tradition, the danger lay in losing sight of one's vows in the face of rDzogs chen's all-accommodating view. These were both serious issues, and they would elicit a response from Klong chen pa.

Of all the rNying ma tantras, the *Guyhagarbha* was culled by critics as being especially pernicious.[566] Not only did it lack an Indian source, it prescribes human sacrifice and ritualized sex in the course of its practice. As an apologist for this tantra, Klong chen pa would write an extensive commentary, the *Phyogs bcu mun sel*, on its ethical code. This text explodes the Vinaya system by correlating the different kinds of Buddhist vows (*prātimokṣa*, *bodhisattva* and *mantra*) with

565 Das 1984: 213.

566 The *Essence of the Secret* (*gSang ba'i snying po*) is actually only part of the larger *Mahāmāyājāla* cycle (*sGyu 'phrul drva ba chen po*).

different levels of practice, both in terms of how one should maintain the vows and how they can be repaired.[567] It also provides some interesting and specific details on how to avoid killing sentient beings when engaging in the *Guyhagarbha* (e.g., during the geomantic ritual where daggers (*phur ba*) are inserted into the ground in order to keep *nāga*s at bay).[568] Yet, while Klong chen pa's greater contribution to Buddhist ethics is recognized by many rNying ma pa, it remains largely unexplored in the West.[569]

In response to the charge that rDzogs chen lacks attention to conduct, Klong chen pa was very clear on the need for practitioners not only to develop an understanding of rDzogs chen principles within that context but also to maintain their previous vows. As the rDzogs chen section of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* explicitly states:

> In that way, when one is practicing the path, after having gathered all the root and branch *samaya*s as enlightened body, speech and mind, the intention is to keep them exactly as one has been taught. Because one will boil in hell for a long time if one does not keep these [vows], lots of evil deeds prevent [one's] karmic ripening of [being reborn in] purelands.[570]

This point is very much linked with the common admonition for rDzogs chen practitioners in their pursuit of the non-dual view not to lose sight of worldly, conventional mores and thereby forsake virtuous conduct. Indeed, rDzogs chen requires that one develop a view that is vast while simultaneously remaining conscientious about extreme details. This double-edged outlook is summarized in Padmasambhava's famous advice to Princess Khrom pa rgyan, "A yogin endowed in this way has a view higher than the sky, meditation clearer than the sun and moon, and conduct more precise than sand grains."[571]

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567 See *Phyogs bcu mun sel*: ch. 19. The most famous rNying ma work on ethics, mNga' ris Paṇ chen's *sDom sum rnam nges*, was written approximately two hundred years after the *Phyogs bcu mun sel*.

568 Klong chen pa recommends merely pricking the serpents (*lto 'phye*, or "belly-crawlers") rather than piercing their heads. This same technique would later also be taught by mKhas grub rje in the *rGyud sde rnam gzhag*. See Mayer 1991: 168.

569 Such a project would certainly need to balance Klong chen pa's writings with his personal life, including the seemingly Bacchanalian atmosphere at mChims phu during his revelation of the *mKha' 'gro snying thig* and his time spent in Bhutan with a nun as consort.

570 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 380; TANGO ed.: f. 137a: *de ltar lam nyams su len pa'i tshe rtsa ba dang yan lag gi dam tshig thams cad sku gsung thugs su bsdus nas ji skad gsung pa bzhin bsrung dgongs te, ma bsrungs na nyes pa mang zhing rnam smin lci nas yun ring du ngan song du 'tshad pa'i phyir ro*.

571 This famous admonition is found in a short *gter ma* discovered by a subsequent incarnation of Klong chen pa, Padma gling pa (1450–1521). See Harding 2003: 92 (cit. *Pad gling gter chos*, I (*ka*): ff. 353–370).

Idealism

With its emphasis on awareness, self-arising wisdom and mind itself (*sems nyid*), rDzogs chen also drew criticism in regard to its resemblance with the Yogācāra-Cittamātra school and that philosophical tradition's assertion of non-dual intellect as ultimate truth. Against this faulty comparison, Klong chen pa replied in two different ways, implicitly and explicitly.

To begin with, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* dedicates a significant portion of its doxographical presentation of the four Buddhist *darśana*s to elucidating in great detail the various strands of Yogācāra-Cittamātra idealist thought, all of which share the fundamental tenet that appearances are merely the apparitional aspect of mind.[572] It goes into detail on the philosophical stances within Cittamātra: those who accept sense-data as veridical or not, and correspondingly, those who assert that a multiplicity of consciousnesses is true, those who assert that many consciousnesses are truly [only] one, and the tradition which says that there is only a single conglomerate (*tshogs*) of consciousness. As a doxographer, Klong chen pa refutes these positions one by one. This unequivocal rejection of Cittamātra philosophy adds up to an implicit denial of its connection with rDzogs chen.

When Klong chen pa introduces the Cittamātra school's epistemological categories—namely, that objects of knowledge are imagined (*kun brtags*), relative (*gzhan dbang*) and consummate (*yongs grub*)[573]—his doxographical presentation remains almost entirely within the context of Cittamātra: sense-objects, the eightfold aggregation of consciousness, and so forth. When he addresses the consummate nature of things, however, his language shifts. The *Grub mtha' mdzod* explains that "the unchanging consummate is the foundation which belongs to the true mode of being, the *dharmadhātu*, the *tathāgatagarbha* which by nature is clear light."[574]

This passage represents perhaps the best occasion to find similarity between Cittamātra and rDzogs chen language. But though the first half of the sentence contains certain words frequently used in rDzogs chen texts (such as *'gyur med*, *kun gzhi*, and *gnas lugs*), it would be a mistake to conclude that Klong chen pa

572 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 90–108; TANGO ed.: ff. 33a–39b.

573 Skt. *parakalpita*, *paratantra* and *pariniṣpanna*.

574 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: 91; TANGO ed.: f. 33b: *dang po 'gyur ba med pa'i yongs grub pa ni, gnas lugs don gyi kun gzhi chos kyi dbyings rang bzhin gyis 'od gsal de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po ste*. Note that in his interpretation of the consummate, H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche slightly shifts these to read the following: "the nucleus of inner radiance, the unchanging natural expression of the expanse of reality, or the truth which is the abiding nature." (Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 161).

is using them in a rDzogs chen way.[575] Instead, as his subsequent commentary makes clear, these terms function fully within the context of Cittamātra. According to Klong chen pa, some Cittamātrins define this *kun gzhi* as the psychological foundation (*ālaya*) on which is superimposed a beginningless lack of awareness and from which the various habitual instincts (*bags chags*) arise.[576] Being "impartial" and "indeterminate," it can be consummate, but it does not stir after the mentality (*yid*) of the five sense-doors. Taken as the basis of meditation, this non-conceptuality leads to rebirth in the formless realms.[577]

In the West, the debate of idealism versus realism has largely been based on the perceived distinction of mind and body, which then breaks perceptions into two types, subjective and objective.[578] For Cittamātra, the fact that mind possesses corporeal subjectivity opens up an entirely new psychological range.[579] In Buddhism, one finds that the "beings of the six realms experience water differently because their embodied experiencing is different, not because they have different ('purely mental') *ideas* about water."[580] But how this embodiment extends to the awakened state of a Buddha is another question. Some Cittamātrins do not accept that the wisdom of the Buddhas involves knowing external objects (this is because, in their eyes, it is impossible to know external objects without the arising of sense-data and subject-object duality follows from knowing sense-data). For Klong chen pa, the problem is reducing omniscient wisdom to a consciousness that perceives things in terms of sense-data or not.[581]

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575 It is also important to note that Klong chen pa buttresses this statement with citations from third-turning sūtras (e.g., the *Uttaratantra*, *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkara* and *Ghanavyūha*), not rDzogs chen texts.

576 It could be argued that *kun gzhi* in this passage is short for *kun gzhi rnam par shes pa* (Skt. *ālayavijñāna*), the foundational consciousness that takes truth as its object, except for the fact that Klong chen pa specifically notes that this *kun gzhi* does not apprehend objects.

577 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 91–92; TANGO ed.: ff. 33b–34a.

578 Western philosophies which focus on consciousness tend to get hung up on dualistic models because they are unwilling to explore the transformative pivot of how mind actually defines experience. In other words, there is a difference between "non-process philosophies" and those philosophies which use meta-language to explore "the experience of experience." See Jacobson 1988: 74.

579 See Vasubandhu's *Viṃśatikā*, III.

580 Lipman & Norbu 1983: 16.

581 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 246; TANGO ed.: f. 89b.

In other words, the experience of the Buddha is not a ordinary psychological modality.[582]

A more explicit difference between Cittamātra and rDzogs chen can be found by looking at another Tibetan word that they both use. In Cittamātra, *rang rig* (or "self-reflexive awareness"; Skt. *svasaṃvedana*) refers to consciousness knowing that it exists. rDzogs chen uses the same term, but in a very different way. Being synonymous with "spontaneously arisen primordial wisdom," it is a signifier for a dynamic "natural awareness." As Guenther defines it, such self-knowledge "does not mean the mind's static contemplation of its own given nature but the mind's creation of itself by knowing itself to know and, in so doing, also to know the world which it reveals and, in this revelation, creates."[583] In other words, it not only involves cognition taking itself as its own object, but the process of becoming aware of becoming aware.[584]

According to Guenther, obfuscation of these terms was perpetuated by Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamikas to the point that Mi pham needed to clarify them in his *Yid bzhin mdzod*.[585] Yet one can also find them being confused as early as the fourteenth century. Klong chen pa notes, for example, that while Cittamātra self-reflexive awareness is situated internally, rDzogs chen awareness transcends the differentiations between internal and external. With its emphasis on non-duality, rDzogs chen holds that there is no self and no other; the very idea of "self-reflexive" has no meaning. In his commentary to the *Chos dbyings mdzod*, Klong chen pa explains that it is problematic to take *rang rig* literally,

> If you fixate on these terms as referring to some ultimate "thing," I consider you to be no different from those of the Mind Only school who posit that consciousness without the duality of subject and object is some "thing" that they term "naturally lucid self-awareness."[586]

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582 Worth noting here is the apparent conjunction of Cittamātra and rDzogs chen terminology in Ken Wilber's psychological presentation of the purificatory function of meditation. For instance, he describes how one can access deeper and deeper states of consciousness by working with habitual instincts (which shares some resemblance with Jung's archetypes) as they well up from the foundational unconscious mind. Outside of egotistically based mind, it remains necessary to break through "transpersonal bands" (i.e., experiential modalities that that are still informed by dualistic patterning), all the way to the reality of "Mind itself." See Wilber 1993: 254, 262.

583 Guenther 1977: 208.

584 Not all Tibetologists agree. Karmay presumes that rDzogs chen directly borrows the term from Cittamātra and uses it in a similar fashion (i.e., self-recognition means correct apperception of oneself in terms of the ground of liberation; a lack of recognition serves as the basis of duality). See Karmay 1988: 189.

585 Guenther 1972: 149, n. 19.

586 *Lung gi gter mdzod*: f. 76a (tr. Barron 2001b: 163). See also Tulku Thondup 1996b: 103–104.

In rDzogs chen, perceptions which arise (*snang ba*) are said to be the play (*rol pa*) of mind itself. This is very different from the Cittamātra assertion that perceptions *are* mind (*snang ba sems yin*). It is precisely in regard to this type of confusion that Klong chen pa responds in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*:

> Nowadays there are ignorant people who say that the Great Perfection claims that perceptions are mind. That is totally illogical, for it would follow that mind in its recognition of colors would be divided into separate parts according to the way in which things appear. Therefore, perceptions in all their variation, which appear to the mind like a magical display, do not in fact exist. Vis-à-vis the intellect, they should be recognized as the property of habitually erroneous instincts. Mind itself, the ground [in which things] appear, is like the impartial surface of a mirror. The experiential actuality of individuated natural awareness should be realized as transcending fabricated extremes such as singularity or plurality.[587]

This passage is interesting for several reasons. Klong chen pa's rejection of a differentiated mind which recognizes things in relation to their appearances (i.e., the color red would be have to be apprehended by a "red" portion of the mind) demonstrates his familiarity with the bKa' gdams pa curriculum.

Furthermore, the way in which Klong chen pa describes the play of mind here resembles a similar analogy in the description of the Sāṃkhya system, where the superior aspect (*mahat*, the first unfolding of *prakṛti*) is defined in terms of a mirror-like transcendent intellect (*manas*).[588] Klong chen pa sees this as a faulty model which helps to refute Cittamātra self-reflexive awareness (i.e., consciousness is unable to be aware of itself, just like a sword cannot cut itself). Specifically, if one were to insist that self-awareness and awareness of other are mere differentials of a single consciousness, the consequence would be the illogical Sāṃkhya position of a single modality externally representing sense-data and internally presenting data to the *puruṣa*.[589]

For Klong chen pa, the resemblance between Sāṃkhya and Cittamātra extends beyond the psychological and to the subtle-body practices of Mantrayāna. Specifically, he notes, the "lower vehicles of secret mantra" in their blissful move-

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587 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 334; TANGO ed.: f. 121a: *ding sang ni gti mug can rnams rdzogs pa chen pos snang pa sems su 'dod pa yin zer ro, shin tu ang mi 'thad de sems kha dog ngos gzung phyogs cha dang bcas par thal te, snang ba de ltar snang ba'i phyir ro, des na sna tshogs su snang ba sems la snang ba'i cho 'phrul me long nang gi gzugs brnyan lta bu don la med la blo ngor snang ba'i rang bzhin bag chags 'khrul ba'i rnam ldan du shes par bya'o, sems nyid ni 'char gzhi me long gi ngos lta bu rgya chad phyogs lhung med pa so so rang rig gi ngo bo gcig dang du ma la sogs pa spros pa'i mtha' las 'das par rig par bya'o.*

588 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 62; TANGO ed.: f. 23a.

589 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 108; TANGO ed.: f. 39b.

ment of mind and winds into the central channel do not successfully reverse the impure ground (*kun gzhi*) and the eight aggregates of consciousness.[590] Because the sensation of bliss in that non-conceptual ground does not differentiate between mentality and afflicted mentality, Klong chen pa relates it to the Sāṃkhya equalization of the three qualities (*guṇa*s)[591] through the centralized conjunction of the three energy-*cakra*s within a singular non-conceptual clarity.[592]

The importance of Klong chen pa's comparison of these two systems is that it provides him with a clear context against which rDzogs chen can be contrasted. For example, rDzogs chen also employs the subtle-body physiology of channels, clear light and bliss in the heart-center—and it goes so far as to posit that awareness physically abides in the body—but Klong chen pa is careful to point out that aspects of praxis related to those belong to the lower vehicles.[593] rDzogs chen differs from the other approaches because the instantaneous experience of awareness of clear light reverses the ground of *saṃsāra*. At a psychological level, it is reversed because one recognizes the difference between the mere clarity of the *ālayavijñāna* and the non-fabricated lucid clarity that is resolved in self-arising wisdom.[594] In the yogic language of subtle physiology, in rDzogs chen practice the winds and knots in the channels are purified where they already are, allowing the entire system to simply light up.[595]

Its emphasis on awareness puts rDzogs chen at a remove from traditional Buddhist psychological and physiological models. While one does occasionally find cataphatic language suggesting an intrinsic essence (*ngo bo nyid*) of self-arising wisdom, any similarity between this and Cittamātra's use of the term is also dispelled upon closer investigation of the context. For example, within a presentation of rDzogs chen expanse-class, a so-called "essence" is used in a very technical way: specifically, the "stippled" modality is described as threefold, being in accord with mind-class because it advocates existence, expanse-class because it advocates non-existence, and personal instruction-class which advocates both.[596] The use of *ngo bo nyid* to describe self-arising wisdom is limited completely to the former type, whereas the latter two emphasize the emptiness and causelessness of self-arising wisdom.

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590 H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche explains that this ground arises with the first moment of delusion, or the unconsciousness of the actuality of truth (Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 55). For Klong chen pa's full description of the fourfold nature of *kun gzhi*, see the *Theg mchog mdzod*: f. 304a.

591 Namely, *rajas*, *tamas* and *sattva*.

592 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 375; TANGO ed.: f. 135b.

593 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 368–370; TANGO ed.: ff. 133ab.

594 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 374; TANGO ed.: f. 135a.

595 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 375–376; TANGO ed.: f. 135b.

596 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 341; TANGO ed.: f. 123b.

Neither is there resemblance between Cittamātra and rDzogs chen mind-class, which takes special care to deconstruct mind itself. Far from concluding that *sems nyid* is an ultimately existent thing, Klong chen pa points to its lack of intrinsic identity:

> Seventh, in terms of the mental orientation which advocates that the mental orientation [really exists], although through the display of the mind things are variously perceived (this is to say, they appear as the environment and its inhabitants and everything that appears), because mind itself lacks real existence, the variety of perceptions also lack real existence. Therefore, the reasoning that apparent and imagined things are not established is accepted as being just like this. Also for whatever [things] arise as the two aspects of mind—subjectivity and what appears as objectivities—even though they appear to be different, they have no existence whatsoever and are indivisible in the self-arising wisdom *dharmatā*. Therefore, apparent things are claimed to be the play of the mind.[597]

Instead of perception being predicated on the subtle existence of mind, it is the emptiness of mind itself that leads the practitioner to an understanding of the emptiness of all phenomena, subjective and objective. Thus, to describe the point of realization that form is entangled with emptiness and vice versa, rDzogs chen mind-class uses the term *rol ba* as "play of the mind."[598]

Eternalism

Another criticism brought against rDzogs chen regards certain of its terms, which appear to fall to the extreme of eternalism. Though a comprehensive analysis of rDzogs chen terminology is outside the scope of this present work, the short discussion of one particularly complex term may serve to outline some of the ways in which the intended meaning of its technical vocabulary have been misconstrued.

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597 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 337–338; TANGO ed.: f. 122a: *bdun pa sems kyi phyogs yin du smra ba'i sems phyogs pa ni, 'di ltar snod bcud snang srid du snang ba 'di dag sems kyi rol pa yin pas sna tshogs su snang yang, sems nyid ngo bo med pas sna tshogs su snang ba'ang ngo bo med pa'i phyir, snang brtags kyi chos ma grub pa'i 'thad pa'ang de nyid du 'dod cing, gang shar ba sems kyi rnam pa 'dzin byed dang, snang ba gzung bar byung ba gnyis ka'ang snang tha dad du snang yang, yin gang yang ma yin pa'i chos nyid rang byung gi ye shes su dbyer med pas, chos su snang ba sems kyi rol par 'dod pa'o.* Note that a portion of this passage appears word for word in Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 324–325.

598 Other less psychologically oriented translations of rDzogs chen might render this *rol ba* as 'display.'

The Tibetan word *ngo bo* poses a serious challenge on several fronts.[599] The first is simply, how should it be translated? To avoid connoting ontological undertones, one needs to locate it somewhere between its Sanskrit equivalent, *vastu*, which confers the sense of something that exists unto itself, and its most frequent English rendering as "essence" (which carries the weight of Western metaphysics and philosophical traditions ranging from Aristotle to Locke). Because the term has so many different possible meanings, often depending on the Buddhist context in which it is used, perhaps it makes more sense to identify what the rDzogs chen *ngo bo* is not. Fortunately, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* provides a very helpful gloss on the other various meanings.

The first occurrence of the word in Klong chen pa's doxography is found in his citation of the nihilistic Bārhaspatya, who argued that things arise spontaneously on the basis of their essence (e.g., the stamen of the lotus, the patterns on a peacock's feathers, or the points of thorns).[600] Moving on from this heterodox definition, Klong chen pa shifts to the quasi-Buddhist Vātsīputra, for whom *ngo bo* represented the "essence" of an indescribable self that sows karma and reaps its fruits.[601] For the Vaibhāṣikas, the "essence" of ultimate truth consists of subtle particles.[602] The Sautrāntikas, less inclined to realism, came to define appearances as being the face of cognition (*snang ba shes pa'i ngo bo yin*) even when such appearances are misleading; Klong chen pa thus gives the example of a horse appearing in a dream with the characteristics of an elephant.[603]

The Cittamātra school defines *ngo bo* as what arises in foundational consciousness, indeterminate and unobstructed, as well as the deeper dimension of a cognized object (as differentiated from its characteristics).[604] Svātantrika-Madhyamaka posits an epistemological *ngo bo* recognizing reality as non-dual, beyond unity and plurality.[605] When Klong chen pa says that the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika interpret the characteristic of ultimate reality as the actuality of being free from elaborations and fabrications (*spros pa*), he cites the *Prajñāmūla*.[606] From there he progresses to the third turning of the wheel, where *ngo bo* is related to the quin-

599 Literally, *ngo bo* is related to the word for 'face,' implying close proximity to what is being talked about.
600 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 71; TANGO ed.: f. 26a.
601 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 76; TANGO ed.: f. 27b.
602 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 80; TANGO ed.: f. 29b.
603 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 83; TANGO ed.: f. 31a.
604 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 96; TANGO ed.: f. 35b.
605 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 110; TANGO ed.: f. 40b.
606 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 126; TANGO ed.: f. 46a (cit. *Prajñāmūla*, sDe dge ed., tsha: f. 190a).

tessential expanse (*dbyings snying po*)[607] as the cause of liberation and the "Being" of the Tathāgata as the result.[608]

Aware of the danger of reading ontological significance into this use of *ngo bo* as a referent to the "Being" of a Buddha, Guenther clarifies it as a process-state of "utter openness and as nothing as such (*stong-pa*)."[609] In this, he echoes Klong chen pa's cautiously apophatic presentation of Mantrayāna's simultaneous alignment with and superiority over the dialectical vehicle, where the view of the former is defined in terms of the primordial nature of the deity which nonetheless lacks intrinsic existence (*ngo bo nyid med pa*) from the beginningless beginning.[610] Instead of having an ontological meaning, *ngo bo* thus comes to reflect the experience of the inseparability of the two realities.

At the level of rDzogs chen, the term *ngo bo* can still be defined in terms of "pure experience,"[611] but it also takes on an entirely new complex of technical meanings. For example, one finds it as part of a threefold set used to describe the dynamics of reality itself: actuality (*ngo bo*), nature (*rang bzhin*) and compassion (*thugs rje*). These are described as being timelessly related with one another. For example, Guenther explains that "'facticity' (*ngo-bo*), an utter openness, is present in and as 'actuality' (*rang-bzhin*), a pure radiance, which solicits and receives 'responsiveness' (*thugs-rje*) or resonance, a pristine cognitiveness."[612] At an abstract level, they are related with the pure experience of innate wisdom. But as the *Grub mtha' mdzod* clarifies, the physics of their operation is expressed manifestly by means of the three enlightened bodies of the Buddha:

> First, the primal ground is self-arising wisdom, free of [subject/object] division and partiality. Its very actuality is void like space, its nature is luminous like the sun and moon, and its compassion is pervasive like light-rays. These three, indivisible in actuality, are the three enlightened bodies that remain in the expanse which, being primally and perpetually in the nature of wisdom, neither transforms nor transmigrates. With emptiness-actuality possessing the nucleus of the *dharmakāya*, the clarity-nature the *sambhogakāya*, and pervasive compassion the *nirmāṇakāya*, there is no *saṃsāra* or *nirvāṇa* what-

607 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 162; TANGO ed.: f. 59b.
608 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 194; TANGO ed.: f. 67a.
609 Guenther 1977: 156, n. 38.
610 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 262; TANGO ed.: f. 95b.
611 Guenther 1989b: 187–188.
612 Drawing on Klong chen pa's *Ngal gso skor gsum*, Guenther draws a flowchart on these. In particular, see Guenther 1975, II: 31.

> soever. From the perspective of openness, the expanse is referred to as being "supremely pure by nature."[613]

Related to this threefold schema is a common variant on the set: actuality (*ngo bo*), nature (*rang bzhin*) and characteristic (*mtshan nyid*, here replacing compassion).[614] In the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, one finds these terms used again and again to illustrate the differences between the various types of personal instruction-class teachings.[615] The set does not appear to be a mere mnemonic device, but rather an analog of the threefold hermeneutic of ground, path and result. For instance, while Klong chen pa specifically breaks down random personal instruction-class statements in terms of ground, path and result, all of the other personal instruction-class modalities are explained via their actuality, nature and characteristics. Closer investigation of their literary contents reveals a direct correspondence. The actuality of the personal instruction-class modality of self-authoritative tantras is described as being the source of all *buddhavacana* (*bka'*) and its nature is said to be effortless.[616] Similarly, concentrating one's thoughts in the view is described as liberating the emotional addictions in their own place (i.e., in the ground) by means of pointing out the actuality of birthlessness, freedom from acceptance and rejection (on the path) by means of pointing out the nature of things arising without cease, and completing the path of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* by means of pointing out the characteristic of primal liberation.[617]

Nihilism

Arguing that such apparently cataphatic rDzogs chen terms as *sems nyid* and *ngo bo* do not entail the consequence of eternalism still fails to explain how the rDzogs chen tradition's use of extremely apophatic language does not make it a

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613 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 364; TANGO ed.: f. 131b: *dang po ni gdod ma'i gzhi rang byung gi ye shes rgya chad dang phyogs lhung med pa de nyid ngo bo stong pa nam mkha' lta bu, rang bzhin gsal ba nyi zla lta bu, thugs rje khyab pa'od zer lta bu'o, de gsum ngo bo dbyer med pa sku gsum ye shes kyi rang bzhin du ye nas rtag par 'pho ba dang 'gyur ba med pa'i dbyings su gnas te, ngo bo stong pa chos sku, rang bzhin gsal ba longs sku, thugs rje khyab pa sprul ba'i sku'i snying po can 'khor 'das gang yang ma yin la, go 'byed pa'i cha nas dbyings rang bzhin gyis rnam dag chen po zhes btags pa'o*.

614 According to Geshe Lobsang Jamspal, a standard metaphor for this triad describes *ngo bo* in terms of a house, with the *rang bzhin* as its windows and the *mtshan nyid* as the people inside.

615 These are divided into three main categories: random statements, oral messages, and self-authoritative tantras. The final type is further subdivided into the different styles of sharing the view which concentrates intentions, dispelling bloody demons, hiding and revealing, and showing how all subject matter is naturally clear (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 348–357; TANGO ed.: ff. 126a–129a).

616 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 349–350; TANGO ed.: f. 126b.

617 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 350; TANGO ed.: f. 127a.

nihilist system. Again, for the purpose of the argument, it is simplest to focus on a single problematic term, one that has led certain critics of rDzogs chen to presume a connection between that tradition and Ch'an Buddhism.[618]

One of the four key points of the rDzogs chen exercise of "cutting through" (*khregs chod*) involves "absence" (*med pa*).[619] Klong chen pa covers this absence in detail in the *gNas lugs mdzod*, repudiating dualistic structures such as subject and object (*gzung 'dzin*), production and cessation (*skye 'gag*), *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* (*'khor 'das*), and so forth. This technical term does not have a direct equivalence to the apophatic second component of the standard Nāgārjunian tetralemma. Against Pettit's claim, neither is this *med pa* synonymous with the non-existence of inherent existence (*rang bzhin med pa*).[620] Instead, it appears to play a meta-level role that is similar to the "emptiness of emptiness." Klong chen pa defines it accordingly, "The nature of absence is empty by its very essence. In the great expanse of the spirit of enlightenment, which is equal to space, however things appear they lack self-nature."[621]

In his *sDe gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, Klong chen pa further amplifies the extent to which Buddhist jargon (viz. both practice on the path and the resultant state of enlightenment) is negated by the rDzogs chen term *med pa*, "The view of great perfection is to realize that the ten attributes—view, vows, empowerments, *maṇḍala*s, *bhūmis*, paths, enlightened activity, timeless awareness, fruition and the *dharmatā*—lack self-nature."[622] Here Klong chen pa follows how these ten categories are negated in the *Kun byed rgyal po'i mdo*.[623] In short, the term *med pa* should be understood in terms of its non-dual nuance—not mere negation or reification of absence itself—which transcends distinctions between appearance and emptiness.

If negative discourse were the primary tenet of rDzogs chen, an opponent could levy the charge that it is as polemical as the dialectical traditions it seeks to critique. Yet, its apophatic language stems from the type of "ultimate-speak" which dispenses completely with literary categories and tenet systems. Just as the positivistic tone of technical rDzogs chen language is not meant to imply the existence of an intrinsic identity or actual entity (either in terms of an objective

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618 See Germano 1994: 217. However, just as rDzogs chen is comprised of a complex set of different literary strands with varying techniques and praxis, care must similarly be taken not to ascribe a single monolithic identity to Ch'an Buddhism.

619 The other three modalities are openness (*phyal ba*), spontaneity (*lhun grub*) and oneness (*gcig pu*).

620 Alak Zenkar helped confirm this point. (Pers. comm., Spring 2001.) See Pettit 1999: 96.

621 *gNas lugs mdzod*: f. 1: *med pa'i rang bzhin ngo bo nyid kyis stong, mkha' mnyam byang bhub sems kyi klong chen du, ji ltar snang yang de ltar rang bzhin med*.

622 *sDe gsum snying po'i don 'grel*: f. 60.

623 *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, mTshams brag ed., I: f. 32.

Absolute or subjectively based field of reality) but works as a sort of literary skillful means to evoke and entrain specific states of awareness through cataphatic metaphor, it would be a mistake to equate rDzogs chen's more negativistic teaching style with nihilism.

Subitism

One of the most momentous events in eighth-century Tibet was the famous debate at bSam yas between the Indian "gradualists" (*rim gyis 'jug pa*) and the Northern Ch'an tradition of "sudden" or "simultaneous" enlightenment (*cig car ba*).[624] After Kamalaśīla defeated the Chinese monk Hva shang Mahāyāna,[625] sending him back to Tun huang with only one shoe, the gradualist school assumed dominance in Buddhist Tibet. It brooked no compromise with what was perceived to be a very threatening doctrine, and in the centuries following the debate, it remained on guard against any attempts to revisit the so-called subitist heresy.

After the dissolution of the Tibetan empire in 842, the Gu ge royal family was very suspicious of any rDzogs chen leanings in the direction of *cig car ba*. In particular, the king of mNga' ris, Lha bla ma ye shes 'od, accused rDzogs chen of being merely a disguised form of that doctrine. He would not be the last. In subsequent years, one would find Sa skya and dGe lugs scholars making similar accusations. Even today, as rDzogs chen moves to the West, some continue to draw a parallel between its emphasis on immediacy and Ch'an/Zen Buddhism.[626]

Reactions to such criticism are known from quite early on in the history of Tibet. For example, one finds a section on sudden enlightenment in the *bSam gtan mig sgron*, penned by gNubs chen sangs rgyas ye shes in the tenth century. Yet, despite the fact that the author attempted to draw a distinction between this methodology and rDzogs chen—"I have given a detailed account (of this tradition) since its close similarity to the doctrine of rDzogs chen might mislead

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624 Though for the time being we must bracket the controversy surrounding this event, it is worth noting that some doubt has arisen around its historicity. For more on this point, particularly the way in which a dehistoricization of the actual debate—both through doxography and *gter ma* revelations—came to serve the agendas of different camps, see Ruegg 1989.

625 Roerich points out that Hva shang can occasionally be found in certain thangka paintings, alongside the *arhat*s, as well as in some rNying ma lama dances. The name Hva shang is actually a transcription of the title *huo shang*, meaning "preceptor" (from the Skt. *upadhyāya*), and so is more of a title than a proper name (Roerich 1985: 31–32). The generic aspect of his name also supports the hypothesis that the Indian camp did not have only one opponent, but a cadre of Chinese debaters.

626 Among the early Tibetologists, for example, Tucci hypothesized that there was a connection between these traditions.

one," he writes—the work sparked controversy and led to even greater confusion between rDzogs chen and Ch'an.[627]

Moreover, because not only the rNying ma school but also the bKa' brgyud pa were compelled to field this particular criticism, one hears from bSod nams rin chen sgam po pa (1079–1153) that Mi la ras pa (1052–1135) defended rDzogs chen against critics of subitism by qualifying it as a system meant primarily for those who had attained the sixth or seventh *bhūmi* and above.[628] Despite the fact that he himself had made extremely quick progress (e.g., overcoming terrific obstacles to awaken in a single lifetime), Mi la ras pa did not teach subitist methods but simply stressed the need for great effort on the part of the practitioner. Or, to be more precise, he pointed to the callouses on his buttocks which had developed from countless hours of sitting in meditation.

On the basis of that lesson, Mi la ras pa's disciple sGam po pa supposedly developed a preference for gradualism over sudden enlightenment. Yet he was still attacked for having pro-Hva shang tendencies. sGam po pa was a key figure in the synthesis of sūtra and tantra, with his style being called the "*mahāmudrā* of the *sūtra* tradition" (*mdo lugs phyag chen*) for its discussion of introduction to the nature of mind.[629] A century later, Sa skya Paṇḍita would later denounce this *mdo lugs phyag chen* system as "Chinese rDzogs chen" (*rGya nag rdzogs chen*).[630] For him, a soteriology based on mere recognition of mind was bound to go wrong.[631]

In particular, Sa skya Paṇḍita was incensed by sGam po pa's use of an analogy of a certain super-potent single white herb (*dkarpo chig thub*) to describe the possibility of a cure (i.e., enlightenment) by means of "self-sufficiency," or the attainment of Buddhahood through wisdom alone (instead of in combination with the liberative technique of compassion).[632] On the surface, this point seems unrelated

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627 Karmay 1988: 105 (cit. *bSam gtan mig sgron*: f. 186).

628 Jackson 1985b: 102.

629 David Jackson has noted that sGam po pa's sūtra quotes were not drawn from sūtras themselves, but rather from the same *bSam gtan mig sgron* text cited just above. On a side note, even though the *bSam gtan mig sgron* was apparently not a very popular text among the later rNying ma pa, Klong chen pa mentions in his *Lo rgyus rin po che'i phreng ba* that Kumarārāja received teachings on it from sLob dpon sGom pa. See Kapstein 2000: 102 (cit. *Lo rgyus rin po che'i phreng ba*, *Bla ma yang tig*: f. 12b).

630 Kapstein 2000: 77 (cit. Sa skya Paṇḍita's *sDom gsum*).

631 Jackson 1985b: 101.

632 For more on this teaching of sGam po pa, see Jackson 1994. In terms of where Ch'an may have derived the idea of seeking wisdom alone, the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* gives accolades to the disciple who reaches, from the very outset of practice, for ultimate truth.

to subitism.[633] Showing his great erudition, however, Sa skya Paṇḍita noted that in the bSam yas debate Hva shang had also used a similar medicinal analogy for instantaneous realization by means of quietist, non-conceptual meditation.[634]

Ruegg has taken up the medical metaphor to explicate the primary differences between Hva shang's approach and that of the other vehicles. According to this presentation, the gradualist path is "allopathic" because it uses antidotes to effect a cure over a period of time, tantras are "homeopathic" in their efficacious medicinal use of the actual thing that ails the patient, and Hva shang's system involves a "nature-based cure" similar to the drugless treatments found in Ayurveda.[635] He further nuances this division in terms of the biological debate of "nurture" versus "nature," comparing the method of the "gradualistic" sūtras to a progressive approach of "gnoseological and soteriological reinforcement," while the more subitist-oriented sūtras tend to be followed by *siddha*s with a "gnoseologically 'innatist' and a soteriologically 'spontaneist'" bent.[636]

The very idea of "sudden" needs to be qualified in terms of the rNying ma tradition of Tibet, however. For this school, by definition, "sudden enlightenment" relates to the practitioner who, after lifetimes of travail, has come to the point where he or she is finally ripe for immediate realization (viz., recognizing the nature of mind).[637] Accordingly, "gradual" does not correspond to the prolonged duration of the sūtric *bodhisattva* path, but the advanced progression of the Mantrayāna practitioner through the *bhūmi*s.[638] bLo bzang chos kyi nyi ma believed that *cig car ba* was but an aspect of practice belonging to the path, not a doctrinal system unto itself.[639] It is worth a further note here that "sudden" (*cig car*) is a specific technical term used in rDzogs chen to describe the instantaneous process of attaining "rainbow body" (i.e., when a person's ordinary physical body dissolves into light, usually at death).

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633 Given Sa skya Paṇḍita's apparent rancor against sGam po pa, one is left to wonder if his criticisms were not being driven to some degree by other circumstances in his life. Specifically, when rivaling for the favor of the Mongol khans, he and the 2nd Karma pa had an especially contentious relationship. To put it mildly, this may have intensified his polemic against the bKa' brgyud school. It is also worth noting that, several centuries later, Śākya mchog ldan's writings reveal the Sa skya school backing off from some of Sa paṇ's criticisms in this area. See Karmay 1988: 199.

634 Ruegg 1989: 70.

635 Ruegg 1989: 122.

636 Ruegg 1989: 131–132.

637 On the rather complex topic of the momentariness of the experience of enlightenment, one is advised to look at how the Vaibhāṣika school differs from the Sautrāntika's position on the simultaneity of realization (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 148). dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po (1728–1791) explores this difference in even greater depth. See Guenther 1972: 87.

638 Sangpo et al. 1982: 187.

639 Ruegg 1989: 119 (cit. *Me long*: f. 11b).

Klong chen pa himself does not directly address Hva shang's subitism in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. Nor does he, like Mi pham, draw a distinction between the *tathāgatagarbha* and the gradual path to enlightenment.[640] Instead, as examined further below, he employs a sophisticated means of reconciling rDzogs chen's apparent teaching on sudden enlightenment with the evolutionary scheme of ground, path and result.

One of the main differences between rDzogs chen and Ch'an is that while the former is largely grounded in the tantras, the latter finds its doctrinal base in the sūtric tradition.[641] More precisely, while the rDzogs chen mind-class tantras appear to reflect Ch'an ideas, other rDzogs chen texts exhibit a strong family resemblance with the Indian tantric context. This is admittedly a complex subject—and one which requires moving beyond limited binary concepts of influence, or what Germano calls the "either/or" framework.[642]

In the bigger picture, though, subitism was not the only reason why Hva Shang Mahāyāna was criticized. Linked with his doctrine was quietist meditation and possible antinomianism (i.e., ethical laxity). These in themselves were also perceived to be dangerous departures from Buddhist orthodoxy. Bu ston equated Hva Shang's view with nihilism (*chad lta*).[643] Tsong kha pa would revisit this critique, rejecting "sudden enlightenment" as nihilistic in his *Lam rim chen mo*. Upon closer investigation, his actual cause for concern revolved more around Hva shang's quietist approach,[644] or as Ruegg put it, a "cataleptic fixation on the Empty."[645] The problem with this blank-mindedness, the canceling out of all mental activity in order to better contact the primordial ground (or literally, "not acting on anything in the mind" (*ci yang yid la mi byed pa*)), is that it can be an obstruction to discriminating wisdom (*so sor rtogs pa'i ye shes*). Philosophically speaking, by falling to the extreme of excessive denial and eschewing predication to the point where all things lose their conventional status, Hva Shang was perceived as running the risk of no longer being able to define between the two realities.[646]

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640 Klein 1992: 273.

641 Furthermore, while the tantric-oriented rDzogs chen approach is able to encompass the binary cognitive dissonance of seeing things and voidness simultaneously, in exoteric Ch'an one has to switch back and forth between them.

642 Germano 1994: 217.

643 Bu ston's *Chos byung*: f. 128a.

644 Tsong kha pa called out three particularly egregious Prāsaṅgika misviews: a nihilist interpretation of emptiness, extrinsic emptiness (*gzhan stong*) and the quietist approach of Hva shang Mahāyāna.

645 Ruegg 1989: 105.

646 Tillemans 1998.

There is evidence that Klong chen pa did not agree with this perspective. Referencing an explanation in the *Khyung chen mkha' lding*[647] about how awareness is obscured in teachings that concern causality, Klong chen pa argues conversely that analysis can actually prevent an experience of resting naturally in the true nature of reality.[648] In his commentary to the *gNas lugs mdzod*, he writes, "The great master Ha Shang spoke in a similar way, and although those with less developed minds could not accept it at the time, in fact what he said holds true. This is kept secret from those who follow lesser spiritual approaches because their minds cannot encompass it, and were they to belittle it, the karma would cause them to fall into lower states of rebirth."[649]

Much later, H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche would also argue, "Now, the total freedom from deliberations during periods of meditative equipoise may well be the meditation of Hoshang Mo-ho-yen, but even the *Jewel Lamp of the Madhyamaka*,[650] composed by master Bhavya, which you esteem as a masterpiece of the Madhyamaka, says: Not dwelling on any cognition, not conceiving anything, directing no attention to anything..."[651] It is likely that here he was responding to the followers of Tsong kha pa, who compared this state to falling asleep or passing out.[652] On a side point, one may perhaps compare this state of consciousness (or unconsciousness, as the case may be) with the modern cognitivists' definition of a "pure consciousness event" (PCE),[653] its primary quality being a "vacuous state of emptiness, a non-responsiveness to the external world [...] a massive forgetting."[654]

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647 *The Great Garuda* is a rDzogs chen text authored by Śrī Siṃha.

648 As we have seen, Klong chen pa's understanding of the two truths is somewhat unorthodox. It is possible that his comfortability with Hva shang's quietist approach may have nuanced his conclusion that ultimate truth can withstand analysis.

649 Barron 1998: 135 (cit. *sDe gsum snying po'i don 'grel gnas lugs rin po che'i mdzod ces bya ba'i grel pa*: ff. 32b–33a).

650 *Madhyamakaratnapradīpa*.

651 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 905.

652 Pettit 1999: 158 (cit. *Lam rim chen mo*: ff. 776–777). While Tsong kha pa strongly insisted on the need for developing certainty regarding the view by means of meditative analysis, it is important to remember that one is ultimately supposed to put it aside. In the context of *anuttaryogatantra* practice, for example, the practitioner is taught not to engage in analytical meditation lest it scatter the subtle energies that he or she is trying to cultivate. See Gyatso 2000: 192.

653 It is called "pure" because it involves the temporary amnesia of all religious structures and cultural forms (even though they may be what initiated the experience in the first place). This question leads into an entirely different debate—namely, whether or not a true mystical is communicable—which belongs more in the domain of discourse-theorists like Wittgenstein, Gadamer and Rorty. Unfortunately, to engage this subject is beyond the scope of the present work.

654 Forman 1999: 4.

Finally, subitism is sometimes described as having been refuted in the bSam yas debate on ethical grounds. During this nascent period of Buddhism in Tibet, there was a heightened awareness of how problematic it could be for a bunch of so-called enlightened people to be running around, foregoing quotidian mores. Here the apparent threat revolved around the ability or willingness of non-conceptually-oriented practitioners to distinguish between virtue and non-virtue. This is what led Atiśa, approximately two centuries later, to lead a reform on the Tibetan plateau against degenerate tantric practice. He did not deny the efficacy or the accelerated soteriology of Mantrayāna, but instead sought to ground that vehicle in the sūtric ideal of compassion. Neumaier-Dargyay draws the interesting conclusion that the rNying ma pa reacted to Atiśa's introduction of *lam rim* texts by shifting the "sudden enlightenment" tenor of their own writings towards a systematic methodology that still provided for the attainment of a goal-less state.[655] In her opinion, the person who was most successful at integrating these changes was Klong chen pa.[656]

Regarding all of these various criticisms of rDzogs chen, it may come as a surprise that Klong chen pa did not react more explicitly against the attacks made against the rNying ma pa. Pettit suggests that Klong chen pa was simply not pressed in the same way as Rong zom or Mi pham to philosophically defend rDzogs chen.[657] This hypothesis is supported by Klong chen pa's life: after his stint in academia, he was largely removed from the atmosphere of dialecticism and debate, and there was not much of a transmission between his university time and his experiential immersion in rDzogs chen practice. Just as the philosophical section of his doxography does not enter deeply into polemics, the rDzogs chen section is very straightforward and non-disputatious.

To Integrate or Not to Integrate

The rDzogs chen tradition makes no secret of the fact that its system is special. This message is taught in rDzogs chen tantras and rDzogs chen retreats, and it is an integral part of the rNying ma school's historical relationship with the other Tibetan Buddhist orders. With the movement of rDzogs chen to the Western world's value-oriented culture, however, this "superiority-complex" has assumed an entirely new dimension. Buddhist magazines today run glossy advertisements of rDzogs chen teachers offering nuggets of esoteric wisdom over the course of

655 Neumaier-Dargyay 1992: 50, n. 79.
656 Neumaier-Dargyay 1992: 23.
657 Pettit 1999: 94.

a weekend. As modern readers tap into the rDzogs chen trope of preeminence, they are introduced to an exalted series of ancient spiritual practices alternately marketed as "the pinnacle of the Buddhist teachings" or "the peak vehicle."[658]

Despite the fact that sectarian competition was a factor in Tibet in the formation of the different Tibetan schools' currents of soteriological discourse, there also existed a system of checks and balances that discouraged proprietary systems from proliferating.[659] The desire to present rDzogs chen as a "unique" system was mediated by a healthy respect for Buddhism overall. When various schools of thought felt the need to present their extraordinariness, it was most often done within an integrative matrix of dialectics and debate. By using doxographical categories, Tibetan teachers highlighted the strengths of their own system by downplaying the other vehicles in a balanced way. This was also the pattern for champions of rDzogs chen, as becomes apparent through a brief survey of rNying ma commentarial literature.

According to 'Jigs med gling pa, the rDzogs chen practice of "crossing over" (*thod rgal*) serves to "distinguish the errors and obscurations of the preceding eight vehicles."[660] Furthermore, 'Jam mgon kongs sprul's *Shes bya mdzod* reports that all Buddhist vehicles lead to rDzogs chen. Mi pham also concluded that "the stages of the different vehicles are progressively more profound and sublime."[661] One finds reference to the causal and resultant vehicles as "lower" approaches.[662] And some, including H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche, have even gone so far as to say that all the paths and results contained in the lower vehicles are "fulfilled and gathered in this unsurpassed vehicle because its uncommon doctrines are neither included nor represented in those [lower vehicles]."[663]

The term "rDzogs chen" should actually be understood as a rubric for an entire panoply of teaching modalities. Comprising a wide variety of literature, it is perhaps impossible to speak of there being a single type of rDzogs chen. Moreover, even though such disparate traditions as mind-class and the *sNying thig* have in common the "rDzogs chen view,"[664] the non-reductionist attitude

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658 These terms are used by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche and Lama Surya Das, respectively.

659 While alternative strands did emerge at the local level, nationwide the major Buddhist orders were integrated more or less into an orthodoxy.

660 van Schaik 2000: 9.

661 Pettit 1999: 403.

662 Hillis 2003: 212, n. 77 (cit. Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso).

663 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 84.

664 In addition to the rDzogs chen tantric categories outlined by Klong chen pa—mind-class, expanse-class and personal instruction-class (which is subdivided into external and internal cycles (*phyi nang skor*), secret cycles (*gsang skor*), "seminal-heart" teachings (*snying thig*) and miscellaneous texts)—one finds an added classification of general pith instructions (*spyi ti*) and the utmost pith instructions (*yang ti*).

surrounding that outlook defies its simplification as a mere marker for a monolithic classification of rDzogs chen.

Stylistically and practically speaking, there are significant differences between the rDzogs chen which emerged from the tantric context of Mahāyoga and the rDzogs chen epitomized best by the autonomous meditation style of mind-class. Germano has further divided the *sNying thig* teachings into three distinct periods of dissemination. The early period of the early eleventh century to the early twelfth century drew on heterogeneous contributions of celestial tantras (not derived of human authors) transmitted by Vimalamitra and pulled together into a loose corpus known as the *Bi ma snying thig*. The so-called intermediate period of the early thirteenth century to the early fourteenth century saw the introduction of the *mKha' 'gro snying thig*, which is "tightly written, characterized by an evocative yet clear style, and presents the entire range of philosophical treatises, ritual manuals, and contemplative instructions in a single easy to consult cycle."[665] And the third period, contemporaneous with Klong chen pa, involved his synthetic codification of the previous literary and oral systems into a classical form with commentaries. This formulation, which would became the most accepted modality of rDzogs chen, is known today in terms of two historical strands: the "upper heart-drop teachings" (*sNying thig gong ma*) and the "lower heart-drop teachings" (*sNying thig 'og ma*). Respectively, these follow the inspirations of Klong chen pa and his primary redactor, 'Jigs med gling pa (1730–1798).

Klong chen pa's own work in rDzogs chen can be further subdivided, roughly speaking, into two distinct styles: teachings which directly use special rDzogs chen language in isolation from the tantric context (especially in relation to praxis) and systemizations which seek to integrate it within the context of the other vehicles.

The former type, which includes the use of *gter ma* treasure-texts, is unapologetic about colloquialisms, onomatopoeia and the cataphatic use of language. It tends to stress the importance of practice, not necessarily in a ritual context, and is concerned with providing alternative and often unorthodox technologies for awakening. As regards this style of writing, Klong chen pa's syncretic contributions are mainly commentaries on rDzogs chen literature, using technical language specific to that genre. An aspect of Klong chen pa's work that frequently receives accolades is his synthesis of different literary strands. In certain cases, such as his blending of the *sNying thig* cycles, this fusion is primarily a synthesis of different strains of rDzogs chen.

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665 Germano 1992: 273.

Klong chen pa's second type of rDzogs chen teaching employs a more holistic set of rhetorical devices. The objective of "systematizing texts" (like the *Grub mtha' mdzod*) is to present rDzogs chen in conjunction with the other vehicles, thereby "re-structuring and organizing the rDzogs chen philosophy."[666] It is in this mobilization of standard Indian Buddhist tropes for the advancement of rDzogs chen that Klong chen pa's gift for synthesis is most evident.

This artificial division is not iron-clad, of course. One can occasionally find crossover. But for the most part, Klong chen pa's language tends in either of these directions, practical or theoretical. The *mDzod bdun*, for example, can be divided along these lines. The structure of the *Man ngag mdzod* suggests a direct causal relationship between preliminaries (i.e., the path of the various vehicles) and a result (the actual path of rDzogs chen), the *Yid bzhin mdzod* is primarily concerned with scholastic issues common to both the esoteric and exoteric approaches (with occasional references to the rDzogs chen perspective), and the *Grub mtha' mdzod* delineates the various vehicles in relation to and sometimes even in terms of their ultimate subsumption within rDzogs chen. Alternatively, the technical discussion of the eleven "*vajra* points" in the *Tshig don mdzod* and the *Theg mchog mdzod* is fully grounded within the seventeen rDzogs chen tantras and their unique "physics," while the *gNas lugs mdzod* and the *Chos dbyings mdzod* offer evocative and poetic glimpses of the rDzogs chen awareness-state by means of a cataphatic or apophatic modality.

There are several explanations for these differences in literary style. In all likelihood, the most important factor was the variety of rDzogs chen sources that served as guide and inspiration for Klong chen pa. It is also presumable that his different writing modalities—ranging from prosaic to academic—reflect both the various environments in which Klong chen pa was immersed and the different types of audiences he was trying to reach.[667] If the spontaneity of the former style of teaching were to be compared to a shamanic modality of Buddhism, the second type of rDzogs chen writing might be seen as directed towards more clerically minded individuals.[668] Finally, it is only natural that as Klong chen pa's own perspective and understanding evolved over the course of his life as a rDzogs chen practitioner, from his time with Kumārarāja to his years of retreat in the hermitage of mChims phu, his style of writing would also change.

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666 Karmay 1988: 217.

667 Buddhist teachings are notorious for being tailored to the psychological proclivity and evolution of the student, especially when their content involves advice on practice.

668 For greater detail on this comparative scheme, see Samuel 1993: 10.

Furthermore, Klong chen pa's authorship of these two very different types of texts (i.e., those that mediate rDzogs chen's relationship with the other Buddhist vehicles and those that introduce it in terms of a radically alternative style of practice) mirrors the way in which rDzogs chen literature as a whole employs a variety of interpretative strategies. It is largely along these lines that Klong chen pa presents rDzogs chen as more or less integrated with the other Buddhist vehicles. On one side, he follows doxographic convention to show how rDzogs chen subsumes the lower vehicles. This is the case with the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. At the other, where integration is less of a concern, he presents rDzogs chen as being at a remove, where its superiority to the other vehicles is not predicated on a transcendence of their respective limitations.[669]

The latter extreme sets the tone of Klong chen pa's more formally rDzogs chen texts (i.e., those works which employ very evocative language). In his commentary to the *gNas lugs mdzod*, for example, Klong chen pa interprets a passage in the *Rig pa rang grol*[670] in a martial way as saying that the great *garuḍa* eagle of rDzogs chen "subjugates the amphibious *nāga*s" of the eight lower vehicles.[671] From this quote, as well as the overall tone of the *gNas lugs mdzod*, one can even get the sense that Klong chen pa is actually opposed to the other Buddhist modalities. Based on this reading, Hillis concludes that rDzogs chen is parasitic and seeks to deconstruct the other vehicles, that "the Great Perfection is an attack discourse, an ephemeral meta-critique that feeds on its hosts."[672] This is an unfortunate generalization, however, suggesting that when rDzogs chen concerns itself with integration with the rest of Buddhism, it does so only to further its own superiority.[673]

While the *gNas lugs mdzod* represents the acme of Klong chen pa's deprecation of the other vehicles, his style of writing there is based on the perspective of a certain type of rDzogs chen tantra. The *Rig pa rang grol* is but one instance of rDzogs chen literature quoted by Klong chen pa to promote the superiority of that tradition. For example, the *gNas lugs mdzod* also draws heavily on the *Kun byed rgyal po*, a mind-class tantra which denigrates the functionality of the other

669 Famously, ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny.

670 The *Tantra of Self-liberated Awareness* belongs to the set of seventeen rDzogs chen tantras. Interestingly, in spite all of its talk of subjugating *nāga*s, Klong chen pa describes this tantra as itself being "like a coiled snake" (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 390; TANGO ed.: f. 141a).

671 Cf. *sDe gsum snying po'i don 'grel*: f. 111.

672 Hillis 2003: 155.

673 In such a case, Klong chen pa's own efforts in that text would make him into something like a Buddha-cannibal!

vehicles.[674] From this purist vantage point, rDzogs chen is depicted as the apex of Buddhism, a summit unattainable by other approaches.[675]

Klong chen pa also cites the *Kun byed rgyal po* in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* and his commentary to the *Chos dbyings mdzod*, but in a slightly different way. Instead of using the tantra to depict the the "lower" vehicles as utterly worthless, he does so in order to describe their hermeneutical limitations. One important passage, which is additionally found in Klong chen pa's *Lung gi gter mdzod* (ff. 48a–49a) and many other later rDzogs chen commentaries, describes the way in which rDzogs chen view can offer a corrective to the methodological approaches of other modalities of Buddhism:

> O great heroes, listen to this! The three teachings of the Teacher of the three turnings are misunderstood. How is that? The six vehicles that teach the attainment of certainty are distortions of the great perfection. How is that?
>
> The *bodhisattva* sūtra-class claims [enlightenment] to be the stage of universal illumination.[676] Through the conceptual analysis of the two realities, absolute reality (*dharmatā*) is claimed to be empty [like] space. The great bliss of Atiyoga is the spirit of enlightenment which transcends conceptual analysis. Transcending conceptual analysis is obscured by the sūtra-class. The great perfection explains that conceptualization and analysis are errors in the sūtra-classes.
>
> Kriyā[tantra] claims [enlightenment] to be Vajrapāṇi. Entering the door [of] the three purities,[677] one dwells in the place where subject and object have been purified. The great bliss of Atiyoga is the spirit of enlightenment which transcends subject and object. Transcendence of subject and object is obscured by Kriyā. The great perfection explains that using subject and object is an error in Kriyā[tantra].
>
> The view [and] practice of Upa[tantra] [corresponds to] Kriyā practice and Yoga accomplishment. Since view and practice are not really connected, the truth of non-duality is not understood. The great bliss of Atiyoga is the spirit of enlightenment of non-duality. Non-duality is obscured by Upa[tantra]. The great perfection explains that creating duality is an error in liberative technique.[678]
>
> Yoga[tantra] claims [enlightenment] to be Ghanavyūha. From entering the door[679] of signs and signlessness, the four *mūdras*[680] are emphasized. It is

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674 *Kun byed rgyal po'i mdo*: ff. 30.5–31.1.
675 *Chos dbyings mdzod*: ff. 8a, 11a.
676 According to the sūtra tradition, Samantaprabha—the level of Universal Light—represents the 11th *bhūmi* (i.e., Buddhahood).
677 Namely, ablutions, cleanliness and moral purity.
678 That is, *upāya*.
679 This phrase describes meditation.
680 The four seals work with phenomena and noumena (*chos*), karma, vows, and the "great seal."

unable to proceed without accepting or rejecting. The great bliss of Atiyoga is the spirit of enlightenment without accepting or rejecting. The lack of accepting and rejecting is obscured by Yoga[tantra]. The great perfection explains that using acceptance and rejection is an error in the Yoga[tantra].

Mahā[yoga] claims [enlightenment] to be Vajradhara. From entering the door of liberative technique and wisdom, in the *maṇḍala* of one's pure mindstream, one practices the four aspects of service and attainment.[681] The great bliss of Atiyoga is the spirit of enlightenment which transcends effortful activity. Transcending effort is obscured by Mahā. The great perfection explains that making effortful activity is an error in Mahāyoga[tantra].

Anu[yoga] claims [enlightenment] to be indivisibility. From entering the door of the expanse and wisdom, phenomena appear accordingly: causes are seen as the pure expanse and effects are seen as the wisdom *maṇḍala*.

The great bliss of Atiyoga is the spirit of enlightenment which transcends cause and effect. Transcending cause and effect is misunderstood by Anu[yoga]. The great perfection explains that seeing cause and effect is an error in Anuyoga[tantra].[682]

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681 These four aspects—approach, approaching closer, accomplishment and great accomplishment—belong to the recitation stage of the Mahāyoga *sādhana*.

682 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 325–326; TANGO ed.: ff. 117a–118a (cit. *Kun byed rgyal po, rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, mTshams grag ed., vol. 1, f. 139): *dang po ni dbyings rang bzhin gyis dag pa'i sems nyid 'od gsal ba lhun grub rang gnas chen por ye nas gnas pa ni rang byung ye shes su bcos bsgyur med pa gzhir 'dod pa las, theg pa 'og ma thams cad bcos pa bslad kyi rtsol sgrub kyis blang dor byas pas re dogs kyi sgrib pas rang byung gi ye shes bsgribs te, rnal ma'i don la reg pai' dus skabs med pa nyid byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po lta ba nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'i rgyud las, kye sems dpa' chen po 'di nyon cig, 'khor gyi ston pa rnam gsum gyi, bstan pa gsum ni gol sgrib ste, de yang ji lta bu zhe na, nges pa thob pa'i theg pa drug, rdzogs pa chen po'i gol sar bstan, de yang ji lta bu zhe na, byang chub sems dpa' mdo sde ni, kun du 'od kyis 'dod pa, bden pa gnyis kyi rtog dpyod kyis, chos nyid stong pa nam mkhar 'dod, a ti yo ga'i bde chen ni, rtog dpyod 'das pa'i byang chub sems, rtog dpyog 'das la mdo sdes bsgribs, rdzogs chen rtog dang dpyod pa ni, mdo sde dag ti gol bar bshad, krii ya rdo rje 'dzin 'dod pa, dag pa rnam gsum sgor zhugs nas, gzung 'dzin dag pa'i yul la gnas, a ti yo ga'i bde chen ni, gzung 'dzin 'das pa byang chub sems, gzung 'dzin 'das la krii yas bsgribs, rdzogs chen gzung dang 'dzin byed pa, krii ya dag tu gol bar bshad, u pa ya yi lta spyod ni, krii ya spyod cing yo ga bsgrub, lta spyod 'brel pa'i don med pas, gnyis su med pa'i don ma rtogs, a ti yo ga'i bde chen ni, gnyis su med pa'i byang chub sems, gnyis su med la u pas bsgribs, rdzogs chen gnyis su byed pa ni, u pa ya ru gol bar bshad, yo ga stug po bkod 'dod pa, mtshan ma yod med sgor zhugs nas, phyags rgya bzhi la gtsor byed de, blang dor med la 'jug ma nus, a ti yo ga'i bde chen ni, blang dor med pa'i byang chub sems, blang dor med la yo gas bsgribs, rdzogs chen blang dang dor byed pa, yo ga dag tu gol bar bshad, ma haa rdo rje 'chang 'dod pa thabs dang shes rab sgor zhugs nas, rang rgyud dag pa'i dkyil 'khor la, bsnyen sgrib rnam bzhi sgrub par byed, a ti yo ga'i bde chen ni, rtsol sgrub 'das pa'i byang chub sems, rtsol sgrub 'das la ma has bsgribs, rdzogs chen rtsol sgrub byed pa ni, ma haa yo gar gol par bshad, a nu dbyer med pa 'dod pa, dbyings dang ye shes sgor zhugs nas, 'di ltar snang pa'i chos rnams la, rgyu ni dag pa'i dbyings lta ba, 'bras bu ye shes dkyil 'khor lta, a ti yo ga'i bde chen ni, rgyu 'bras 'das pa'i byang chub sems, rgyu 'bras 'das la a nus bsgribs, rdzogs chen rgyu 'bras gnyis ltan, a nu yo gar gol par bshad, ces so.* This quote is also translated in Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 295–297; Neumaier-Dargyay 1992: 134–135.

There is no doubt that this type of citation is quite antagonistic. On its own, it clearly supports Hillis' supposition that rDzogs chen is characterized by a subversion of "standard Buddhist tropes."[683] At points, Klong chen pa even appears to subscribe to this mode of writing in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*.

> First, mind itself—which by means of the naturally pure expanse is luminous, spontaneous and abides primally in its own supreme domain—is asserted to be self-arising wisdom which has neither been fabricated nor distorted. Because of accepting and rejecting, making efforts which sully or distort, all lower vehicles obscure self-arising wisdom with veils of hope and fear.[684]

What is complex here, and specific to Klong chen pa's presentation in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, is the way in which Klong chen pa mediates such strong statements as these. For instance, directly following the *Kun byed rgyal po* quote given directly above, Klong chen pa gives a defense of Sūtrayāna and Mantrayāna. In his opinion, the way that they frame truth is extremely pertinent for those people who are still operating from the perspective of causality or the tantric hermeneutic. In other words, he cites the *Kun byed rgyal po* in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* not to make a sectarian point about the superiority of rDzogs chen, but to offer an example of its expanded perspective.

At other points in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, one finds Klong chen pa drawing comparisons that are far less critical. Instead of always demonstrating the limitations of the various causal and resultant vehicles, for example, Klong chen pa employs the integrative rhetorical device of subsumption (not subversion!) to reconcile rDzogs chen with the other vehicles' highest visions of realization. This is to say, the rDzogs chen practitioner's moment of apotheosis matches those the other vehicles and even preserves certain of their characteristics. The *Grub mtha' mdzod* explains:

> In terms of the way in which the core of the lower [vehicles] is included within the higher [vehicles], at the point when one remains in a moment of the clear light, the lack of grasping onto an identity of personhood or things includes what is intended by the views of the *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha* and *bodhisattva* trio. By threefold body, speech and mind not possessing the stains of the emotional addictions, the practice of purification is included in the three stainless wisdoms belonging to the Kriyā, Upa and Yoga trio. Through the actual-

683 Hillis 2003: 156.

684 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 325; TANGO ed.: f. 117a: *dang po ni dbyings rang bzhin gyis dag pa'i sems nyid 'od gsal ba lhun grub rang gnas chen por ye nas gnas pa ni rang byung ye shes su bcos bsgyur med pa gzhir 'dod pa las, theg pa 'og ma thams cad bcos pa bslad kyi rtsol sgrub kyis blang dor byas pas re dogs kyi sgrib pas rang byung gi ye shes bsgribs te.*

> ization of the special *samādhi* of realization, entering into the triune convergence of appearances, awareness and non-duality includes the intention of the Mahā, Anu and Ati trio. Accordingly, because the *dhāraṇī*s and *samādhi*s and stages of the path settle into the aspect of remaining in the stainless wisdom-awareness, they are subsumed therein. The aspects of the excellent qualities of concepts and *samādhi*s which are practiced in the lower vehicles are also included here. Because there are no disadvantageous aspects, [rDzogs chen] should be known as the unadulterated and completely perfected vehicle.[685]

The *Grub mtha' mdzod* is not the only text in which Klong chen pa uses the comparative approach of subsumption. The *Chos dbyings mdzod* and its commentary, for example, present an even more detailed description of how the various Buddhist paths are all subsumed in awakened mind.[686]

Pettit suggests that "the long-standing orientation of Nyingma exegesis towards defining the Great Perfection in terms of, and yet distinct from, other systems [...] was, at least in part, a response to polemical critiques issuing from the adherents of those systems."[687] Yet, rDzogs chen does more than simply define itself in relation to the previous vehicles. It also employs many of their liberative techniques (after making certain modifications of praxis, of course). Examples include those rDzogs chen teachings which use Mahāyoga-type visualizations but upon dissolution of the deity move from the *sādhana* structure to alternative styles of non-conceptual meditation, or teachings which supplement the physiological maps of the subtle body laid out at the level of Anuyoga with additional information and unique yogic procedures involving the vital drops and channels. In these cases, the primary difference is the rDzogs chen view (*lta ba*).[688]

At its most integrative, rDzogs chen employs the other vehicles as a support for its own practice. Klong chen pa explains:

> Furthermore, by means of the ordinary preliminaries, with the lower vehicles [one] gains confidence. Using [them as] a stepladder to rise higher, after

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685 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 379–380; TANGO ed.: f. 137a: *'og ma'i snying po gong mar 'dus tshul ni, 'od gsal gyi skad cig la gnas pa de'i tshe, gang zag dang chos kyi bdag tu 'dzin pa med pas nyan thos rang rgyal byang chub sems dpa' gsum gyi lta ba'i dgongs pa 'dus so, lus ngag yid gsum nyon mongs pa'i dri ma med pas gtsang sbrar spyod pa krii ya u pa yo ga gsum gyi ye shes dri med gsum du 'dus so, snang ba rig pa gnyis med gsum zung du chud de rtogs pa'i ting nge 'dzin khyad par can mngon du gyur pas ma haa a nu a ti gsum gyi dgongs pa 'dus so, de bzhin du gzungs dang, ting nge 'dzin dang sa lam rnams kyang rig pa'i ye shes dri ma med pa la gnas pa'i chas bzhag pas de dag kyang 'dus te, theg pa 'og mar nyams su len pa'i ting nge 'dzin dang rtogs pa'i yon tan gyi cha rnams 'dir 'dus la, skyon gyi cha rnams med pas ma 'dres yong rdzogs kyi theg pa zhes bya'o.*

686 *Chos dbyings mdzod*: f. 9; *Lung gi gter mdzod*: ff. 62a–63b.

687 Pettit 1999: 99.

688 The precise differences involved here will be explored below.

> completing the extraordinary preliminaries along with resting in tranquility, [one] is introduced to the main practice.[689]

The ordinary preliminaries (*sngon 'gro*) of rDzogs chen include taking refuge and cultivating the spirit of enlightenment, a Mahāyoga-style practice of Vajrasattva in order to purify karma, and the accumulation of merit and wisdom by means of offering *maṇḍala*s and training in *guruyoga* via Padmasambhava. The extraordinary preliminaries involve a number of specific techniques—involving both external and internal yogas—that help the practitioner differentiate between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* (*'khor 'das ru shan*), as well as the rDzogs chen version of settling the mind (*rnal dbab*), including recitation of the *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya-sūtra.* Only after sufficient preparation in such practices, which are grounded in the approach of the "lower" vehicles, is the supplicant granted proper introduction to the advanced practices of "cutting through" (*khregs chod*) and "crossing over" (*thod rgal*).[690]

One also finds rDzogs chen correctives to the other systems. In relation to the subtle-body scheme of Anuyoga, Klong chen pa speaks to the problem of practitioners encountering possible confusion (like a bad trip) during practice:

> Because here [in the unexcelled vehicle] the winds are pacified in their own bases, they are not caused to enter the central channel. When the winds of the channel-petals are automatically purified and disappear, because the wisdom-wind of the light-channel is automatically clarified in its own place, there is a perception of pure wisdom. One perceives enlightened bodies, lights, purelands and so forth; hallucinations do not arise. Through an increase in the central light-channel, as the channel-knots gradually disappear into light, one is said to be liberated. The dawning excellent qualities of the *bhūmi*s are automatically perceptible.[691]

Furthermore, rDzogs chen teachings are held to augment one's perspective on the practices of the other levels. For this reason, it is taught that the superior teacher is able to show the student how the rDzogs chen view can inform his

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689 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 372; TANGO ed.: f. 134b: *de'ang thun mong gi sngon 'gros theg pa 'og ma yid ches par byas te gong du 'jug pa'i rkang stegs byas nas thun mong ma yin pa'i sngon 'gro rnal dbab dang bcas pa rdzogs nas dngos gzhi ngo sprod.*

690 It is very important to note that Klong chen pa explains that realization at this level involves "gathering the essence of the lower in the higher," maintaining continuity with the previous vehicles (*Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 373; TANGO ed.: f. 134b).

691 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 375–376; TANGO ed.: f. 135b: *'dir ni rlung rnams rang gzhir 'jog pas dbu mar 'jug tu med la, rtsa 'dab so so'i rlung rang dag la song du, 'od rtsa'i ye shes kyi rlung rang sa na rang gsal bas dag pa ye shes kyi snang ba, sku dang 'od dang zhing khams la sogs pa snang zhing 'khrul snang mi 'char la, dbu ma'i 'od rtsa 'phel bas rtsa mdud rnams rim gyis 'od du song ba la grol ba zhes 'dod de, sa'i yon tan rnams rang snang du 'char ro.*

or her practice of Mahāyoga or Anuyoga tantra. rDzogs chen practice does not require people to abandon other practices that they have previously received and trained in.[692]

Until the final moment of realization, as long as one is on the path, rDzogs chen practitioners are advised to adhere to certain tantric principles, such as maintaining one's *samaya* vows "exactly as they have been taught."[693] Contradicting the proscriptions given in the *Kun byed rgyal po*, Klong chen pa makes a special point of stressing the need for rDzogs chen practitioners to receive the four tantric initiations:

> Fourth, in terms of how the natural state of being is put into practice, although the ground awareness initially exists in its own suchness, it needs to be consummated; without the favorable condition of its being consummated by means of the instruction of the holy guru, there will be no liberation. In this regard, the initial conferral of the four ripening initiations acts as the ground for the path.[694]

Moreover, many rDzogs chen teachers recommend a continued practice of tantra because of its superior method when it comes to dispelling any obstacles that arise on the path. Tulku Thondup stands out in his explicit linkage of rDzogs chen with the other vehicles. In his opinion, the common Mahāyāna Buddhist views form the basis of rDzogs chen teachings, and that is why "all the essential aspects of Buddhist training are condensed in *Dzogpa Chenpo*, and *Dzogpa Chenpo* is the essence of Buddhist teachings."[695]

This perspective largely sums up Klong chen pa's own attitude in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, where the doxographical genre is consciously used to weave rDzogs chen within the larger tapestry of Buddhism.

Different Strands

The relationship of all the various Buddhist vehicles may be compared to a set of Russian *matryoshka* dolls nested inside of one another. Despite being of different capacities, they all share a family resemblance: emptiness. Mantrayāna is careful not to present itself as something separate from Mahāyāna. Klong chen

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692 There are, of course, occasional cases of people who attained by means of rDzogs chen alone.
693 One could compare this to the way in which the ethical codes of the Vinaya come to be subsumed within the multivalency of tantric *samaya*.
694 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 370; TANGO ed.: ff. 133b–134a: *gnas lugs nyams su blang lugs ni, dang por gzhi rig pa de nyid rang la yod kyang rkyen bla ma dam pa'i gdams pas ma zin na grol bar mi 'gyur bas zin dgos la, de'ang dang po smin byed dbang bzhi bskur ba ni lam gyi gzhi byed pa ste*.
695 Tulku Thondup 1996b: xix.

pa quotes the *Vajraḍāka Ocean* (*rDo rje mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho*) to support this point, "Entering fully into Mahāyāna in its entirety means engaging with the vehicle of mantra."[696] In the same way, by integrating rDzogs chen within the larger context of Mahāyāna (and, more specifically, affirming that the rDzogs chen view can be found in each respective vehicle), Klong chen pa dispels any sense of rDzogs chen being at a total remove from an otherwise homogeneous Buddhism. Instead, rDzogs chen is presented as an interpretative lens that shifts one's perspective on various modalities of practice, drawing them into greater focus and immediacy.

Of course, rDzogs chen differs from the other vehicles, particularly in such aspects as view, language, praxis and lineage. It is on the basis of these differences that it is also accurate to define rDzogs chen as an alternative Buddhist modality.

First, while the causal vehicle places its focus on the path and the resultant vehicle looks to the goal for an accelerated experience of realization, the rDzogs chen view places emphasis on the inherently perfect nature of the ground as it stands outside of causality and the scheme of ground, path and result even. At the level of this ultimacy, there is no view, no practice, and no conduct.[697]

Second, instead of employing language as a dialectical tool or in a symbolic sense (i.e., the "twilight language" of tantra), it eschews language altogether. For this reason, rDzogs chen is often said to be beyond description and beyond expression. In its literary tradition as well, one finds reference to certain pointing-out instructions that are non-verbal.

Third, many of the rDzogs chen tantras eschew formal *sadhāna* practice for a spontaneity and immediacy of experience. This teaching is based on the principle of awareness being effortless and self-sustaining.[698]

Fourth, while many rDzogs chen tantras are disregarded by other Buddhist vehicles for their apparent lack of historicity and questionable authenticity, their provenance from a series of extradimensional Buddhas can be located at which point they were introduced to spiritually erudite humans such as dGa' rab rdo rje, the first human to receive and then teach rDzogs chen. In this sense, rDzogs chen possesses its own distinct lineage of scriptures. Furthermore, many rDzogs chen

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696 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 285; TANGO ed.: 103b: *theg chen kun la rab 'jug bas, sngags kyi theg pa nyid du byed*.

697 This does not mean that rDzogs chen uses methods that other vehicles do not use. The dreamlike and timeless nature of things is taught in any number of scriptures, the primal nature of perfection is clearly stressed in the Mahāyāna (e.g., the *Uttaratantra*), and the emanation-model of Buddhas is common to Mahāyāna and Mantrayāna both. The difference is how rDzogs chen uses these principles as its point of departure for an immediate unitary experience. All of these aspects will be discussed in turn further below.

698 Gyatso 2000: 196.

texts are dissimilar from the greater Buddhist canon because of their discovery as treasure-texts.[699]

Taken together, all of these factors suggest that rDzogs chen is like a somewhat distant and eccentric cousin in the extensive family tree of Buddhism. While it shares Buddhism's basic genetic structure and ancestry, certain characteristics reveal it to be a super mutant strain. It proves itself capable of engaging its relations in polite conversation and sharing topics of interest such as the goal of ultimate enlightenment, yet it can also be prone to moments of iconoclasm and fits of superiority.

rDzogs chen and the Dialectical Vehicles

As regards the relationship between rDzogs chen and the philosophical vehicles, depending on one's perspective it is possible to put emphasis either on their difference or their similarity. Today in the West, one sometimes finds the line of thought that the two traditions are mutually exclusive, that practitioners of rDzogs chen tend not to be concerned with philosophy and that few serious philosophers privilege rDzogs chen. Such a view is unfortunate. Not only does it largely ignore the historical existence of those great practitioners who have made a point of integrating the two threads, it is also blind to the exact manner in which rDzogs chen functions in complementarity with the other vehicles.

Buddhism has a long history of different modalities living peacefully side by side. Two thousand years ago, for example, Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna monks shared the same *vihāra*s. As Mahāyāna gained favor in the courts, royal sponsorship provoked another level of growth. With new scriptures coming to light, the monasteries accommodated Mantrayāna as well. At the literary level also, these different strands were woven together within the commentarial tradition of Indian Buddhism. Extremely divergent types of literature are attributed to the same person; perhaps the most famous example involves the multiple personalities of Nāgārjuna,[700] but one can also point to the corpus of Candrakīrti, where

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699 These differences must be considered with the caveat that certain of the same techniques are utilized in other modalities of Buddhism. For example, the transcendence of language is a standard Mahāyāna trope found in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* and other sūtras, many of the accepted canonical tantras hail from Buddhas other than Śākyamuni, and so forth.

700 If one grants credence to the hagiographical tradition that records Nāgārjuna as having lived hundreds and hundreds of years (i.e., if one accepts that a single figure authored the multiple texts attributed to him), we find critical analyses of the two truths next to evocative tantric hymns. While the Mantrayāna tradition records many *siddha*s who were able to refute philosophical criticisms with the spontaneous brilliance of their wisdom, the story of Nāgārjuna presents a philosopher who did not refute for refutation's sake alone but instead worked to illuminate the conventional reality of the greater public. On the history of Nāgārjuna, see Wedemeyer 2007.

an "analytical-philosophical" *Madhyamakāvatāra* rests side by side with the "mystical-philosophical" *Pradīpoddyotana*.[701]

The largely paripatetic *siddha* tradition of India counted among its members many scholars. As Mantrayāna migrated northwards, the nascent Tibetan Buddhist movement would prove no different. The dynastic era saw the patronage of monastic universities and incredible translation projects concomitant with a prominent flourishing of Mantrayāna practice. The result of these efforts are visible in the rNying ma literary tradition. Over the subsequent centuries, the rNying ma school produced very accomplished thinkers. Along the way, it also developed a curricular system which placed great importance on a solid grounding in the philosophical vehicles. Today the value that rNying ma pa put on academic edification is especially evident in the extra education given to their reincarnate lamas (*sprul sku*). This practice may have been fostered even more by the rNying ma school's relationship with other, even more intellectually focused orders.[702] Therefore, while there are obvious differences between the rNying ma pa's primary focus towards yogic practice and academics, by no means would it be accurate to generalize that tradition as eschewing philosophical rigor.

Madhyamaka is clearly most relevant for those people who are primarily interested in following the dialectical approach. Yet Mantrayāna also incorporates philosophical analysis and study. This is not only a result of sociological overlapping between academics and institution-based yogic practice, but because a deep understanding of emptiness is taught to be a prerequisite for Mantrayāna, lest the practitioner's self-identification with the archetypal deity (*yi dam*) during *sādhana* practice lead to an overly distorted sense of ego.[703]

rDzogs chen also uses contemplation and meditation on emptiness as a preliminary. This point is stressed by H.H. the Dalai Lama when he teaches on rDzogs chen; he follows the position of Do drup chen 'Jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma that "reasoning that examines ultimate reality" helps the rDzogs chen aspirant in becoming a suitable vessel for the direct introduction of awareness (*rig pa*).[704] Mi pham agreed on the benefit of philosophical analysis in relation to rDzogs chen

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701 Ruegg 1981: 107.

702 In particular, one can point to the activity of the 5th Dalai Lama (viz., his assistance in getting rNying ma centers of education like sMin grol gling off the ground). This close relationship between the Dalai Lamas and the rNying ma school continues to the present day.

703 When one's relationship with the deity is incorrectly understood, one can stray to the extreme of eternalism or get all puffed up with excessive pride. The correct attitude—"*vajra*-pride"—involves the conviction during one's practice that one actually possesses the enlightened qualities of the deity; this attitude is generated not out of ego, but in order to successfully arrive at that resultant state of the deity.

704 Gyatso 2000: 190 (cit. Do drup chen's *rDzogs chen skor*: f. 299).

technique, stating simply, "In cutting through to primordial purity, one needs to perfect the Prāsaṅgika view."[705]

This interdisciplinary approach is strongly evidenced in the biographical tradition of Buddhism. While religious studies in the West tend to draw a strong line between mysticism and philosophy, Tibet in particular enjoys a rich history of yogi-scholars. Rather then eschewing practice over purely theoretical study, the most respected teachers in the history of Vajrayāna Buddhism (e.g., Sa skya Paṇḍita, Klong chen pa, Tsong kha pa) worked to integrate the two strands, and it is widely accepted that the insight gained from their meditative experience informed their dialectical abilitiy. Guenther seems clear on this point when he remarks, "As a matter of fact, the mystics have always been better reasoners than the desiccated rationalists."[706]

It is important to note, however, that these masters did not always see eye to eye on the philosophical relationship between Sūtrayāna and Mantrayāna. Around the time of Klong chen pa, there was increased concern about a "separation of [...] sūtra and tantra into isolated camps."[707] One attempt to reconcile them involved grounding the different tantric vehicles in the different philosophical schools. In this case, it was Bu ston who linked the four levels of gSar ma tantra to the four main philosophical schools (i.e., Kriyā relates to Vaibhāṣika, Caryā with Sautrāntika, Yoga with Yogācāra, and Anuttarayoga with Madhyamaka).[708] To support this concordance, Bu ston mainly drew on the tantric writings of Nāgārjuna, although a somewhat similar schema is found in Smṛti's *Vajravidāraṇā-nāma-dhāraṇī-vṛtti*.[709]

With the advent of the dGe lugs pa school, however, this correlation was quickly dismissed. According to mKhas grub rje, "the position is laid down that the philosophical viewpoint of all sections of the Tantras is the Prāsaṅgika."[710] As Tsong kha pa had made it very clear, Sūtrayāna and Mantrayāna are to be distinguished on the basis of liberative technique, not view. In other words, both systems have in common the view of emptiness espoused by the transcendent knowledge system of the *Prajñāpāramitā*.[711]

It is significant, therefore, that in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* Klong chen pa seems to differentiate precisely between the views of Mantrayāna and Sūtrayāna. While

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705 Gyatso 2000: 237, n. 78 (cit. Mi pham's *gSung 'bum*, sDe dge, IX: f. 9b).
706 Guenther 1977: 113.
707 Hopkins 1999: 53.
708 Lessing & Wayman 1980: 2.
709 *rDo rje rnam par 'joms pa shes bya ba'i gzungs kyi 'grel ba* (T. 2684).
710 Wayman 1973: 31.
711 Hopkins 1983: 544–556.

he does not explicitly say that they are different (unlike Mi pham, who criticized those scholars who make distinguishments between the two systems on the basis of means alone), there are indications that he followed this tack.[712] For example, following the *Raliguhyācintya-tantra* (*Ra li bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i rgyud*), Klong chen pa writes:

> In terms of characteristics, other than as a mere non-elaborated emptiness, the view in the dialectical [vehicle] does not realize [the two] inseparable truths as the primordial nature of deity and mantra. The [view of] mantra does realize [this]. It realizes indivisibility in the experience from the beginningless beginning of the lack of intrinsic essence of both relative reality—where one unites with purity as deities which are mere emanations, non-existent yet apparent—and ultimate reality, the non-dual expanse and wisdom.[713]

And despite the value that Klong chen pa puts on emptiness in the practice of Mantrayāna,[714] he suggests that the transcendent knowledge (*shes rab*) of Mantrayāna differs from that of Sūtrayāna:

> Accordingly, one should understand that just as the skillful means [of Mantrayāna] are exceptional, it should be known that the transcendent knowledge established by those skillful means when one is practicing the path is also exceptional.[715]

According to Klong chen pa, the reason why Mantrayāna is so exceptional is that it employs enlightened body, speech and mind on the path. Though the differences between the dialectical vehicles' and the Mantrayāna's perspective on these may seem to revolve around method, the rNying ma tradition has also interpreted their differences in relation to view. To support this, one need only look at the position of H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche regarding "the proponent of dialectics" who, "apart from merely establishing that the characteristics of relative appearance are non-existent, does not know the essence which abides from the beginning as great purity and sameness; and by not knowing that, he does not know the meditation which makes the precise aspects of the auspicious coincidence of the two buddha-bodies of form into the path."[716] He continues, "In the way of mantras,

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712 Pettit 1999: 131.

713 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 262; TANGO ed.: ff. 95ab: *mtshan nyid la lta ba stong nyid spros bral tsam las, bden pa dbyer med gdod ma nas lha dang sngags kyi rang bzhin yin par ma rtogs la, sngags kyis rtogs ste, kun rdzob kyang med la snang ba sprul ba tsam du lhar dag pa sbyor la, don dam dbyings dang ye shes ye nas gnyis su med pa gnyis, gdod ma nas ngo bo nyid med pa'i ngang du dbyer med par rtogs te.*

714 Klong chen pa explains that meditation on emptiness is particularly necessary at the onset of creation- and perfection-stage practice (*Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 273; TANGO ed.: f. 99a).

715 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 266; TANGO ed.: f. 96b: *de ltar thabs lhag pa ltar thabs res bzhag pa'i shes rab kyang lam spyod pa'i tshe lhag tu yod par shes par bya.*

716 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 251.

however, this utterly pure, original abiding nature of reality, in which the truest of results—that of the non-dual essence of the expanse and pristine cognition, the coalescence of bliss and emptiness—is spontaneously present from the beginning, is known as the object of the view."[717] Finally, he concludes, "Although this abiding mode of the two realities is the superior view of the mantras, certain scholars of Tibet hold that, in general, there is no distinction between the view of the vehicle of transcendental perfections and that of the way of secret mantra."[718]

Certain scholars have even insisted that the two systems are fundamentally incompatible. For example, Karmay insists that the fundamental dynamics involved are in diametric opposition, "While rDzogs chen holds its ontological principle, the Primeval Purity, as a positive reality, the Madhyamaka, on the other hand, negates the existence of any such contingent entity."[719] Germano is less extreme in his definition of rDzogs chen as an amalgam of exoteric philosophy and tantric discourse, but he does underline that logic and epistemology are delegated a less important role there than a poetic revelation of the dynamics of Being itself (per Heidegger).[720] For Klein, the ontological concerns of the rNying ma pa powerfully diverge from the kind of epistemological focus found in the dGe lugs pa school, leading to a tension between the impulse for enlightenment and the drive for purification.[721] This is to say, the intellectual approach (which deals with the "thinking" mind) is predicated on the progression from an ignorant state to a state of omniscience, from conceptual thought to direct experience, while the rDzogs chen approach—in her opinion—is more concerned about cleansing obscurations to the Buddha-nature.[722] As seen below, however, it is not entirely accurate to define rDzogs chen as a propaedeutic.

Without a doubt, philosophical conventions of logical syllogism and so forth are devalued by rDzogs chen's appreciation of immediate experience, but the Madhyamaka project is not discarded. Aside from rDzogs chen's technical use of "absence" (*med pa*, discussed above) and consequentialist methodology (e.g., the *Kun byed rgyal po* exercises the dialectical approach of *neti, neti*), Klong chen pa admits that the systems of Madhyamaka and rDzogs chen have certain parallel ideas (*cha tsam mtshungs pa*). In the *Theg mchog mdzod*, for instance, he notes how

717 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 251.
718 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 249.
719 Karmay 1988: 215.
720 Germano 1992: 5–6.
721 Klein 1992: 273.
722 Klein 1992: 269.

both systems differentiate between ordinary mind (*sems*) and mind itself (*sems nyid*).[723] His commentary to the *Chos dbyings mdzod* compares them further,

> For the most part, the methods used by the natural Great Perfection to comprehend "freedom from extremes" and so forth resemble those of Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka. However, while Madhyamaka focuses on space-like emptiness, here one takes pure and naked awareness, non-existent[724] and unceasing, as the basis of comprehending itself and all things arising out of it as being free from extremes.[725]

The difference of emphasis on either awareness or emptiness does not mean that the two should be taken as mutually exclusive. When Klong chen pa refers to the Madhyamaka realization of emptiness, it should be understood that the meditator at this level is using the cognitive faculty of transcendent knowledge (*shes rab*; Skt. *prajñā*) to strip objects of oversignification and reveal their lack of intrinsic identity.[726] One can parse this term into its two parts: "knowledge of phenomena" (i.e., *shes* relates to an object, or *yul*) and "highest" (*rab*). In its combined form, there is a sense of an insight into the nature of phenomena that transcends dualistic concepts of subject, object and so forth. The primary focus of awareness (*rig pa*),[727] on the other hand, is on clear light (*'od gsal*). In fact, just as clarity and emptiness are described as being in union, emptiness and awareness are said to be inseparable.[728]

According to rDzogs chen, this union of awareness and emptiness represents the culmination of Buddhism's various liberative techniques. This is because all of the specific points of focus used by the different vehicles to entrain the practitioner towards realization are combined in rDzogs chen. Adherents to Hīnayāna primarily rely on faith,[729] practitioners of Mahāyāna tend either towards compassion or emptiness, Mahāyoga meditation consists of integrating one's experience

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723 *Theg mchog mdzod*: f. 313a.

724 While this *med dgag* can also be read as "mere absolute negation," Pettit notes that H.H. the Dalai Lama interprets this awareness as an implicative negation (*ma yin dgag*). See Pettit 1999: 524, n. 807.

725 *Lung gi gter mdzod*: 76b. For alternate translations of this important passage, see Barron 1998: 163; Tulku Thondup 1996b: 104.

726 Madhyamaka uses many techniques to affect the understanding of emptiness. To provide a fairly simple example, the practitioner might realize the emptiness of a knife through contemplating how it could just as well be used as a toothpick or seen as a mere collection of molecules.

727 As the epitome of the enlightened bodies, Klong chen pa defines the essence of awareness as emptiness, its nature as luminous (i.e., the five lights) and its compassion as pervasive like their rays (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 369; TANGO ed.: f. 133b).

728 This etymology and explanation is based on an answer given by Lama Tharchin Rinpoche in Santa Cruz, California in September 2001 when I asked him about the difference between *rig pa* and *shes rab*.

729 According to the *Uttaratantra*, *śrāvaka*s and *pratyekabuddha*s realize absolute truth through faith because they lack the ability to understand it intellectually (*rig pa'i tshogs*).

of emptiness with arising appearances, and Anuyoga involves the integration of emptiness and bliss. rDzogs chen employs all of these methods, but primarily recognizes the union of emptiness and awareness.[730] (See Table 3.)

Table 3 Emphases of the different paths.

VEHICLE	PRIMARY FOCUS
Hīnayāna	Faith
Early Mahāyāna	Compassion
Higher Mahāyāna	Emptiness
Mahāyoga	Union of appearance and emptiness
Anuyoga	Union of bliss and emptiness
Atiyoga	Union of emptiness and awareness

This very important distinction both sets rDzogs chen apart from other Buddhist modalities and reflects how they are subsumed by its overarching view. Specifically in terms of the dialectical vehicle, Lipman explains that "just as rDzogs chen encompasses the *Cittamātra* (*sems tsam pa*) by understanding that *citta* (*sems*) is the 'creativity' or 'excitement' of *bodhicitta* (*byang chub sems*) or *rig pa*, it also encompasses the Madhyamaka by understanding *śūnyatā* (*stong nyid*) as a facet of *rig pa*."[731] In this way, rDzogs chen is free to employ dialectics but is not limited to the respective systems' epistemological requirements. Using a reasoning that examines ultimate reality can be very helpful prior to being introduced to mind itself,[732] but it is still fundamentally different from the awareness that attends the experience of the nature of reality being directly pointed out.

730 This presentation of the different emphases of the various vehicles was given by Lama Tharchin Rinpoche during a short retreat in Santa Cruz, California in June 2003.

731 Lipman & Norbu 1983: 141, n. 19.

732 Rong zom Paṇḍita notes that it's not as if there isn't any benefit to reasoning. He gives the example of someone about to go on a long journey, who does not arrive at the destination through mere familiarization with what is involved, and a disciplined seaman, who has the chance of working through reasoning to the home port of wisdom (cf. *Theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa*: f. 82a).

rDzogs chen and Tantra

Chapter Five of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* is dedicated entirely to the discussion of how Mantrayāna is superior to Sūtrayāna.[733] The reasons given for its superiority include the speed with which Mantrayāna enables one to attain enlightenment,[734] its skillful means in accomplishing things with less effort,[735] its method of using an approximation of the end-result as the path, its infallibility and so forth.[736]

Tantra uses as the path a visualization of the desired result. Just as an athlete may visualize him or herself succeeding—making a hand-off or jumping over the goal line at just the right moment—many times before the actual game, tantra capitalizes on the mind's natural ability to move in any direction. It even gives the practitioner the possibility of exploring realms of experience that may not have been accessible before the moment of death. Accordingly, it brings people in touch with powerful archetypal energies and offers them a powerful means of harnessing those energies instead of being put off by them.

Summarizing these various aspects of the superiority of Mantrayāna, Klong chen pa writes:

> Therefore, although [the vehicle of secret mantra] resembles the causal vehicle in that one is unable to use the actual expanse as the path, because of certain uniformities and dissimilarities in [the way that one processes data], it is greatly superior in terms of the duration of the path. It is like both a jewel and butter-lamp, set out at night and taken by two thieves grasping for a lighted jewel. The deluded thief gets the butter-lamp and the wise and undeluded thief gets the jewel. The big difference is that one acts as the cause of swiftly attaining the desired goal while the other does not.[737]

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733 Klong chen pa explains that Sutrayāna and Mantrayāna use different approaches, but lead to the same result, termed the "path of seeing" by the former and in Sutrayāna and the supreme *siddhi* of Mahāmudrā in the latter (cf. *rDzogs pa chen po sems nyid ngal so'i 'grel ba shing rta chen po*: ch. 9).

734 Significantly, Klong chen pa does not use this reason for superiority when citing the superiority of rDzogs chen over the other vehicles. In other words, in spite of rDzogs chen's continual emphasis on immediacy, it does not appear consider itself more superior to Mantrayāna in terms of speed of attainment. Instead, it goes one step further, invoking the rubric of timelessness.

735 Ultimately this means enlightenment, but at a more mundane level mantra also helps one prolong one's lifespan, accumulate wealth and power, and so forth.

736 'Jam yangs bzhad pa's lengthy philosophical doxography concludes with a brief chapter on this same issue of Mantrayāna's superiority to Sūtrayāna. In this presentation, the primary reason is Mantrayāna's ability to purify the very subtle mind of subtle obstacles to omniscience. For example, while the 'supreme object' of the emptiness of inherent existence is taught in the lower vehicles, the "supreme subject" of innate great bliss is only taught in Anuttarayogatantra. Using bliss as one's practice is said to be an particularly efficacious method of differentiating between emptiness and mistaken dualistic appearances. See Hopkins 2003: 1009–1016.

737 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 271–272; TANGO ed.: ff. 98b–99a: *des na dbyings dngos lam du bya mi nus par rgyu'i theg pa dang 'dra yang, rnam pa 'dra ba dang mi 'dra ba'i khyad kyis*

In tantra, all things are made into the path and made pure in the expanse.[738] Through "piercing the vital points" of one's subtle physiology, one realizes the ground of being; direct perception reveals how deep Mantrayāna really goes. From the rDzogs chen perspective, it is precisely by resting in this experience that one realizes the full scope of Mantrayāna and how the continuum of the ground is the expanse. That is to say, although the expanse is described as being "accomplished from the beginningless beginning as a *maṇḍala* of clear light," on the path the expanse has a practical function of expressing phenomena in terms of the various fruitional states of the different vehicles. In other words, the expanse-continuum relates the primal ground to the perfected result by reflecting the aim of the respective vehicles. For instance, for Kriyātantra, the expanse is described as the ground of purification.[739] For Anuyogatantra, the expanse is related to bliss and united with wisdom.[740]

Through meditation on the expanse, the various continua of relative reality (including one's psycho-physical aggregates) are said to be perceived as deities, purelands and so forth.[741] It is not that the deities and purelands inherently exist, but rather that they relate to the specific results described in the various tantras. Klong chen pa clarifies:

> The nature of the expanse resides from the beginningless beginning as the sacred fruition of actuality itself. From using the recognition of that as the ground, because one trains in that very recognition, it is called a "resultant vehicle." That is to say, with the perspective that one is dispelling stains, one meditates on the creation and perfection [stages]. Abandoned in the state of thatness, adventitious stains are made pure. Therefore, even though the deities and *maṇḍala*s and so forth on which one intellectually meditates are projec-

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lam nye ring la khyad che ste, nor bu dang mar me gnyis mtshan mo bsgrigs yod pa las, rkun po gnyis kyis 'od la nor bur zhen nas blangs pa las, rkun po rmongs pa des mar me thob la, ma rmongs pa'i mkhas pa des nor bu thob pa bzhin du, 'dod don myur du thob pa dang mi thob pa'i rgyu byed pa la khyad che ba nyid de.

738 Klong chen pa makes a crucial point by defining rDzogs chen as the the self-arising wisdom actuality of the clear-light expanse. This clear-light expanse is portrayed as being synonymous with ultimate reality, beyond causality and production. As the ground of whatever may arise, it is totally open (*go 'byed*). Because the experience of that state includes luminous visions, it is not some kind of blank zone. For example, Klong chen pa uses the metaphor of a sun and moon *maṇḍala* to describe the sphere of space-like mind which needs no alteration (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 327; TANGO ed.: f. 118a).

739 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 313; TANGO ed.: f. 113a.

740 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 322; TANGO ed.: f. 116b.

741 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 259–260; TANGO ed.: f. 94b.

> tions of one's own mind, the fruition of the expanse actually uses deities and *maṇḍala*s as the path.[742]

The passage concludes by saying that one can become familiar with the reality of the expanse even if one does not meditate (i.e., one does not intellectually work with the creation- and perfection-stages). Such an assertion resonates strongly with the underlying message of non-effort found in rDzogs chen,[743] suggesting that Klong chen pa had it in mind when he wrote these words.

In response to the objection that Mantrayāna is not a resultant vehicle since it also uses aspects of the causal path (i.e., it works to purify stains), Klong chen pa replies that purification can be instantaneous (*cig car*). It is instantaneous because one realizes how reality really is. Simply put, Mantrayāna operates on the principles of causality, but in a slightly more aggressive way.

For rDzogs chen, causality is a double-edged sword. In the lengthy passage from the *Kun byed rgyal po* cited above, that tantra faults Anuyoga for its misunderstanding of the transcendence of cause and effect by means of bliss.[744] Trying to transcend causality presumes one is still caught up with that concept. For this reason, certain rDzogs chen texts are adamant that cause and effect ultimately do not exist and, consequently, there is no need to transcend anything.[745]

On the other hand, we find Klong chen pa mediating such quotes with a more relativistic rDzogs chen approach. Directly following his presentation of the *Kun byed rgyal po*, for example, Klong chen pa approves teachings that relate to causality, since they give the practitioner some practical advice in the face of an intractable ultimate:

> Furthermore, because ultimate truth which is pure with the expanse actuality lacks cause and effect and because impure *saṃsāra* and compounded things such as the path and so forth that are destroyed are taught as being temporary due to the condition of having been created through cause and effect, truth as it concerns cause and effect is taught to be very important. Furthermore, by means of the scriptures of all the teachings which use cause and condition and

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742 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 271; TANGO ed.: f. 98b: *dbyings ngo bo nyid kyi 'bras bu dam par, ye nas bzhugs pa de'i rang bzhin shes pa gzhir byas nas, de nyid la bslab pa'i phyir 'bras bu'i theg pa zhes bya'o, de'ang dri ma sel ba la ltos nas bskyed pa dang rdzogs pa bsgom ste, de kho na nyid la spangs pas glo bur gyi dri ma dag par byed do, de'i phyir yid kyis sgom pa lha dang, dkyil 'khor la sogs pa rang gi sems kyi rnam 'phrul yin yang, dbyings kyi 'bras bu lha dang dkyil 'khor dngos lam du byas te*.

743 Remember that the *Kun byed rgyal po* goes so far as to state that there is no greater hindrance to enlightenment than formal and effortful meditative activity. (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 329; TANGO ed.: f. 119a).

744 In the presentation of this tantric class, causes are the pure expanse and effects are the wisdom *maṇḍala*.

745 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 326–327; TANGO ed.: ff. 118ab.

> accepting and rejecting, and especially through the ten natures of the inner and outer Mantra[yāna], the genuine (*rnal ma*) truth is taught undistortedly.[746]

This is a concrete example of Klong chen pa choosing not to limit his presentation of rDzogs chen to the radical apophatism of the mind-class tantras. Rather than following a complete eschewment of the other Buddhist scriptural traditions (i.e., Sūtrayāna teaching causality and Mantrayāna teaching the ten "natures"),[747] Klong chen pa allows that they are still vital to the overall soteriological matrix in which rDzogs chen is located.

Discussed above was the way in which rDzogs chen slightly adjusts the dialectical vehicles' focus on emptiness in its practice, but here the comparison can pivot, comparing and contrasting the methodology of tantra with that of rDzogs chen. Specifically, this entails an investigation of how rDzogs chen lines up with the Anuttarayogatantra of the gSar ma tradition, and then a brief exploration of its relationship with the inner tantras of the rNying ma tradition. While these are admittedly very large topics, they can be briefly addressed here in relation to Klong chen pa's perspective.

According to the Anuttarayogatantra system, father tantras put the emphasis in the creation-stage on appearances and liberative technique; the perfection-stage involves working with the karmic winds. Mother tantras put the emphasis on emptiness and transcendent knowledge in the creation-stage and karmic vital drops in the perfection-stage. The *Grub mtha' mdzod* appears to draw a correspondence between these and the practices taught by the rNying ma tantras: it clearly states that Mahāyoga tantras primarily use appearances as liberative technique and female-oriented Anuyoga tantras use emptiness and transcendent knowledge.[748] rDzogs chen, in this context called Atiyoga, is simply said to be non-dual.[749]

It is tempting here to draw a correlation between rDzogs chen and the "non-dual" tantras of the Anuttarayogatantra. Klong chen pa's doxographic treatment

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746 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 328–329; TANGO ed.: ff. 118b–119a: *de'ang dbyings ngo bo nyid kyis dag pa'i don dam la rgyu 'bras med kyis, ma dag pa 'khor ba dang lam la sogs pa 'dus byas so cog rnams rgyu 'bras kyis bskyed pas rkyen gyis 'jig par bstan pas, rgyu 'bras la ltos pa'i don gal che ba bstan no, de'ang rgyu rkyen blang dor du byed pa'i chos thams cad kyi lung dang khyad par du sngags phyi nang gi rang bzhin bcus rnal ma'i don la bcos su med par bstan pa.*

747 These consist of meditation, the observance of vows, engagement in the *bhūmi*s, progression on the path, questing for enlightened activity, initiations, effort of enlightened body, speech and mind, and *maṇḍala*s.

748 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 320; TANGO ed.: f. 115b.

749 For a similar correlation by Klong chen pa on the three rNying ma levels of inner tantra and the threefold gSar ma division of Anuttarayogatantra, see the *Phyogs bcu mun sel*: f. 149; Germano 1994: 250.

of the latter is extremely sparse, however, and nowhere else in the *Grub mtha' mdzod* does he explain rDzogs chen as having an analogue in the gSar ma tradition.[750] This elision makes it all the more difficult to divine the precise relationship between rDzogs chen and the twofold structure of Anuttarayogatantra (i.e., creation-stage and perfection-stage).[751]

While rNying ma Mahāyoga tantras employ both creation-stage and perfection-stage practice, they tend more towards the former. Correspondingly, Anuyoga tends more towards the latter. The question then arises, where does rDzogs chen fit in? Some argue that it doesn't. For example, Namkhai Norbu states that "rDzogs chen has a methodology all its own which distinguishes it from other vehicles, and so it is not just an extension or continuation of the Tantra system."[752] He bases this conclusion on "some very old texts," which would seem to indicate that rDzogs chen was perceived from an early date to be standing outside of creation-stage and perfection-stage. In other words, a differentiation was made between *rdzogs rim* and *rdzogs chen*, with the latter possessing a panoply of alternative methods for adducing and realizing the experience of total perfection.[753] One finds an example of this in the doxographic outline of Padmasambhava's *lTa ba'i phreng ba*. Klong chen pa also offers a quote from the *Mahāvyuha* (*bKod pa chen po*) that suggests that creation-stage is for those with open minds, perfection-stage is for those with juicy minds, and the great perfection (*rdzogs pa che*) is for the superior secret agents.[754]

Gene Smith follows this line as well, citing hermeneutical differences between Anuttarayogatantra and rDzogs chen,

> The term "stage" (*rim*) suggests a hierarchy and progress of some sort, although the conglomerates of psychological events or experience to which we attach these names are intrinsically always coexistent. The emphasis of rdzogs chen is upon primordial mind rather than upon specific mental activity of any sort, e.g., the methodology of the "stages."[755]

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750 It is worth noting that Germano finds significant Klong chen pa's mention of the *Manjuśrīmūla-tantra* (i.e., the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*) in relation to the *Māyājāla*, seeing it as a clever maneuver to connect the non-dual Anuttarayogatantra of the gSar ma tradition with the canonically problematic *Guhyagarbha-tantra*. See Germano 1994: 249 (cit. *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 300; TANGO ed.: f. 115b). Note that this text is also cited again later on (*Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 321; TANGO ed.: f. 116a).

751 Technically speaking, by adding a coincidence-stage (*bskyed rim rdzogs zung 'jug*), one could argue that the process of inner tantra involves three stages.

752 Reynolds 1996: 30.

753 Reynolds 1996: 30.

754 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 320; TANGO ed.: f. 115b.

755 Smith 2001: 274, n. 4.

Contrasted against this camp are those scholars who locate rDzogs chen within Anuttarayogatantra perfection-stage. One finds H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche drawing on the Indian tantric tradition to support this thorny point. Specifically, he quotes Vitapāda: "That which is called the Great Perfection is the second stage of the second [i.e., perfection] stage."[756] This division of the perfection-stage into two parts marks the place at which, in the rNying ma tantric system, practice shifts from Anuyoga to Atiyoga. This is the point at which the deity is dissolved within emptiness and the practitioner rests in non-conceptual *samādhi*. In Anuttarayogatantra, this precise moment of perfection-stage practice is called Mahāmudrā.

By the twelfth century, this term "Mahāmudrā" had been adopted by the bKa' brgyud school to designate the apotheosis of their teachings; accordingly, it came to have a completely different set of technical meanings. However, during the early period of Tibet's gSar ma tradition, Mahāmudrā still marked the juncture between rDzogs chen and the perfection-stage of Anuttarayogatantra.[757] sGam po pa not only presents rDzogs chen as doctrinally parallel to Mahāmudrā "as a practical instruction (*man ngag*) of the Mantrayāna 'perfection stage' (*rdzogs rim*)," he "even seems almost to identify the two."[758] Clearly, then, in India and Tibet there was a history of rDzogs chen and perfection-stage being seen in sync.

Though these two divergent interpretations of rDzogs chen's incorporation of (or incorporation within) a "stage" mentality are difficult to reconcile, it may be a futile enterprise to attempt an airtight equivalency. As noted above, there exist many types of rDzogs chen, not to mention countless varieties of tantra.[759] The comparative endeavor only makes sense when one closely investigates the various strands of the rNying ma tantric tradition. For example, one can look at which tantras break from the Mahāyoga focus of the lineage of Zur (as it evolved from the clans of gNyags and gNubs). In this alternative strand of rDzogs chen, creation-stage and perfection-stage are defined as being inseparable in wisdom mind. It is not a big leap from there to the rDzogs chen tradition that sees itself as completely independent of the stages and teleology in general.

That the rDzogs chen tradition itself shifted within the larger context of rNying ma tantras is supported by text-critical analysis. Regardless of whether or

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756 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 313 (cit. *Sukusumanāmakmukhāgamavṛtti* (T1866)).

757 Unfortunately, a closer comparison of Mahāmudrā and rDzogs chen remains outside the scope of this present study. For more information on the complex relationship between these three advanced systems, see Gyatso & Berzin 1997.

758 Jackson 1992: 101 (cit. *Tshogs bshad legs mdzes ma*: f. 220; *Tshogs chos yon tan phun tshogs*: f. 269).

759 Germano points out that there were at least seven separate lines of Buddhism's transmission to Tibet (via Padmasambhava, Hūṃkara, et al.) (Germano 2000: 225).

not one accepts an evolution in the internal modalities of rDzogs chen (i.e., *klong sde* and *man ngag gi sde* were grafted onto the precursor of *sems sde*), the difference between apophatic rDzogs chen literature and the complex ritualism found in other rNying ma tantra suggests an underlying tension and challenges those who presume rDzogs chen to be a homogenous tradition.

As noted earlier, Klong chen pa's doxography walks the fine line of connecting rDzogs chen with the other vehicles while still maintaining its precedence. Because this is a formidable task even at a general level, Klong chen pa does not attempt to link the various modalities internal to Atiyoga with the lower tantras, not even those belonging to his own tradition. This task has been taken up by modern Tibetological scholarship. Recent research suggests that the development of rDzogs chen, particularly *sems sde*, was dependent on Mahāyoga (albeit through a process of negative relief).[760] Germano explains,

> The former offered a built-in deconstruction of the latter's own architectonic doctrinal and ritual complexity, as well as a mitigating influence on its emphasis on the visual logic of deities and the wrathful logic of subjugation. Mahāyoga in turn offered the Great Perfection a backdrop for its radical rhetoric of negation and the natural inherence of Buddhahood, a safety net in which it could perform its acrobatics within empty space, semantic fields that gave its own denials substance even under the erasure of negation.[761]

Clearly over time there was a change in attitude. In the eighth century, one finds the *lTa ba'i phreng ba* classifying rDzogs chen "within the bosom" of Mahāyoga.[762] At that early date, even though rDzogs chen was seen as involving a level of practice outside of the standard creation- and perfection-stage paradigm, it did not possess the status of being a separate vehicle. By the tenth century, however, the *bSam gtan mig sgron* distinguished between rDzogs chen and Mahāyoga as completely different systems. This is also obviously the position of Klong chen pa and the *Grub mtha' mdzod*.

For a better understanding of why it makes sense to differentiate rDzogs chen from the other tantric traditions, it is helpful to study the fundamental differences of their technique. According to H.H. the Dalai Lama, Anuttarayogatantra and rDzogs chen differ in their methodological approach of leveraging the "innate mind of clear light" towards a realization of emptiness: while the former modality puts more emphasis on a gradual reduction of gross obscurations to

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760 Simply put, the eighteen *sems sde* texts introduced by Śrīsiṃha and translated by Vairocana lack the complex ritualism found in the Mahāyoga tantras.

761 Germano 2002: 240.

762 Reynolds 1996: 268.

the subtle luminosity, rDzogs chen seeks to reveal the clear light of intrinsic awareness from the outset.[763] The same could be said about rDzogs chen and the rNying ma tantras of Mahāyoga and Anuyoga.

Different Hermeneutics

On the surface, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* does not appear to be much interested in making interpretive decisions or addressing those made by others. In his description of the Dharma's promulgation in India, Klong chen pa classifies the Buddha's teachings in terms of four different hermeneutics: interpretable meaning, definitive meaning, intentional and intimated.[764] He picks up the first two categories—interpretable meaning and definitive meaning—at various points in his differentiation between the second and third turnings of the Wheel of the Dharma. But the second set (which could also be translated as 'literal' and 'symbolic') appears nowhere in his comparison of sūtric and tantric teachings. The doxography does not enter into discussion of the various devices (e.g., the seven ornaments, the six parameters, the four programs) employed by Candrakīrti's *Pradīpodyotana* in relation to the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* (and later elucidated by Tsong kha pa).[765] Nor does it even introduce the most basic of hermeneutical strategies, the "four reliances."[766]

For all these reasons, it must seem somewhat odd that this exploration of the *Grub mtha' mdzod* would point to its hermeneutical contributions. From the outset, it should be noted that the use of the term "hermeneutics" here does not strictly adhere to the technical meaning which it has been given by previous scholars of Buddhology.[767] Instead, it implies a more general meaning of hermeneutic, an "interpretative lens" which catalyzes a shift in epistemology and informs language with a polysemic richness. Thurman has clearly established the hermeneutical differences between Sūtrayāna and Mantrayāna. Yet it also seems accurate to describe the differences between the various levels of tantra in terms of different hermeneutics. As Thurman himself points out, "But in fact, in the tantric multiverse, the different stages are really different universes. The person who is on each different state is an utterly different subjectivity, a different form of life."[768]

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763 Gyatso 2000: 156.
764 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 43; TANGO ed.: f. 16a.
765 For an introduction to these categories, see Thurman 1988: 127–143.
766 In this common Buddhist hermeneutic scheme, the student is advised to rely on the teaching, not the teacher; to rely on the meaning, not the letter; to rely on the definitive meaning, not the interpretable meaning; and to rely on wisdom, not common cognition.
767 For an overview of this specific meaning of the term, see Thurman 1984; Lopez 1988.
768 Thurman 1988: 124.

It is in relation to this "different subjectivity" (or *Weltanschauung*) that rDzogs chen can be said to have a different hermeneutic.[769] This hypothesis is supported by Klong chen pa's doxographical structuring of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*: in the same way that Klong chen pa establishes the "resultant view of [secret] mantra" as superior to the "vehicle of dialectics," he classifies the clear light *vajra*-essence (i.e., rDzogs chen) as being superior to the lower tantric vehicles. As should be clear by this point, Klong chen pa is not only interested in proving rDzogs chen's superiority. His goal is to show how it enhances and illuminates the other modalities of Buddhism. Gene Smith reveals this important point when he defines the *Grub mtha' mdzod* as "a survey of the highest tantric teachings from the viewpoint of Atiyoga."[770]

The *Grub mtha' mdzod*'s final poetic wrap-up of the Buddhist vehicles does, however, explicitly suggest a tripartite division of modalities:

> In that way, through the sheer extensiveness of Dharma methods, the ground of supreme fortune is threefold. Through sūtra, tantra and the wish-fulfilling essence, there is good fortune.[771]

A hermeneutical differentiation between rDzogs chen and the other vehicles can be supported on the basis of some of its teachings' departure from conventional causal-based Buddhist soteriology. However, because this difference is largely interpretive, rDzogs chen can still be said to belong to Buddhism. For example, much in the same way that Mahāyāna is largely grounded in Hīnayāna teachings but integrates the *bodhisattva* ideal as a reflection of the system-dynamics of enlightenment, or Mantrayāna depends on a clear understanding of emptiness as taught in the sūtras but uses a panoply of high-tech methods to accelerate the enlightenment process, these same principles (i.e., correct Mahāyāna motiva-

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769 It is very important to note that our broader definition of the term should not be taken to infer creation on the part of Klong chen pa of a "third" hermeneutic (viz. outside of definitive and interpretable). According to Tsong kha pa, such a move would entail a grave mistake: "This way (I have explained above) should be understood to be the path of the determination of the ultimate reality (revealed) in all the scriptures, esoteric as well as exoteric, since there is a grave mistake (in thinking) that, while the systems of the two (philosophical) Champions for determining the ultimate reality by distinguishing the interpretable and the definitive among scriptures are evidently prevalent in the context of the Transcendence Vehicle, the great Siddhas and the Pandits who elucidated the scriptures of the Tantric Vehicle had a third alternative (system) for determining ultimate reality" (Thurman 1984: 382).

770 Smith 2001: 280, n. 94.

771 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 408; TANGO ed.: f. 147b: *de ltar chos tshul shin tu rgya ches gsum "byor pa dam pa'p gzhi, mdo rgyud yid bzhin snying pos legs 'byor*.

tion and the view of emptiness) are built into the rDzogs chen system.[772] Similarly, a prior understanding of the two realities serves the important function of bringing the practitioner back into relationship with the world after the sustained epiphany of realization. Because rDzogs chen's view of non-duality is not based on a separation between the two realities—indeed, its acceptance of all things belonging to *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* forwards its non-dualistic view—rDzogs chen does not lack the royal reason of relativity. Instead, it incorporates it into its hermeneutic.

Just as the single-vehicle (*ekayāna*) language of the Mahāyāna was an important hermeneutical tool that helped to foster a sense of harmonization between the various modalities of Buddhism blossoming in India during the post-Mauryan and Gupta periods, Klong chen pa's doxography frames rDzogs chen accordingly. Klong chen pa's deliberate efforts towards inclusivism extend beyond textual structuring, however. They mirror other successful Mahāyāna tactics, such as the deployment of an earlier tradition's technical jargon with a slightly altered meaning.

A key example of Klong chen pa's attention to polyvalency in the rDzogs chen hermeneutic can be found in his explanation of the spirit of enlightenment (*bodhicitta*). This is one of the most important concepts in all of Buddhism, yet it is interpreted quite differently by the different vehicles.[773] For instance, the causal vehicles refer to relative and ultimate *bodhicitta* as compassionately wishing to eliminate the suffering of beings and coming to an in-depth understanding of emptiness, respectively. Mantrayāna nuances these definitions with a number of other meanings: creation-stage involves three types of *bodhicitta* (the ultimate *bodhicitta* of the samadhi of thatness, the relative *bodhicitta* of the samadhi of open appearance, and the union of these two in the samadhi of causation), while perfection-stage interprets *bodhicitta* in terms of the union of male and female energies. rDzogs chen gives it an entirely different meaning; here *bodhicitta* is defined as the place where everything is gathered and everything is pure.[774] Parsing the Tibetan word for *bodhicitta* (*byang chub kyi sems*), Klong chen pa explains that awareness is "refined" (*byang*) because it is stainless and untouched by *saṃsāra*, enlightened qualities are "consummate" (*chub*) in the heart-essence within which

772 While the hermeneutic of Mantrayāna can be said to inform Sūtrayāna, one must be aware of the dangers of importing "back into the exoteric the metaphors that arise from the profundity of the esoteric" (Smith 2001: 229). Though rDzogs chen is slightly more backwards-compatible in that its view penetrates that of the lower vehicles, practitioners are advised not to confuse them.

773 For more information on the full range of meaning of this term in Buddhism, see Lipman & Peterson 2000: 66–72.

774 *Chos dbyings mdzod*: f. 23.

anything can arise, and the lucid responsiveness of this heart-essence shapes how beings perceive the world (*sems*).[775]

rDzogs chen's unique hermeneutic can be explained in other ways as well. The *bSam gtan mig sgron* offers a threefold division of Buddhist modalities: the first three vehicles (i.e., Sūtrayāna) involve the path of renunciation (*spong lam*), outer Mantrayāna uses purification (*sbyong lam*), and inner Mantrayāna acts on the principle of transformation (*bsgyur lam*). To these are added rDzogs chen. In an entirely different manner than the other vehicles, it works by means of automatic liberation (*rang grol gi lam*).[776] As Germano puts it, "enlightenment is in the end an epistemological question of 'recognition', not an ontological matter of 'transformation'."[777]

rDzogs chen teaches that no effort is necessary.[778] It does not recommend modifying or modulating what arises in the play of reality. Klong chen pa asks, "Since effort and achievement are not other than their natural state of basic space, whence could effort come? To what achievement could it lead?"[779] This central rubric of rDzogs chen has been extensively written about by other commentators, but its source can be traced back to mind-class tantra. For this reason, it enjoys a lofty status in many of Klong chen pa's works. As he writes in his commentary to the *Kun byed rgyal po*,

> So then, you do not eliminate passions, as do those who are content with listening and preaching or being independent; you do not refine away passions, as do bodhisattvas; and you do not transform them as tantrics do—these judgmentally conditioned passions are pure and transparent in their own place.[780]

Some might object that the differences in these modalities are more methodological than hermeneutical. In response to this, one needs to consider the interpretive component involved in a specific individual's acumen and personal predisposition. Mantrayāna is often taught as being intended for those beings with superior faculties. This is also the case with rDzogs chen, with a twist. In the *Grub mtha' mdzod*'s discussion of the various tantras and which types of people should practice them, Klong chen pa recommends Mahāyoga for those who have many thoughts and a tendency to anger and Anuyoga for those who tend

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775 *Lung gi gter mdzod*: f. 173 (tr. Barron 2001b: 364; Guenther 1975, I: 258).
776 Norbu 1984: 9. See also Cornu 1994: 81–82; Achard 2002a: 44.
777 Germano 1992: 627, n. 399.
778 Note that the very word *sādhana* (from Skt. √*sādh*, 'to establish, to accomplish') stands in fundamental opposition to the rDzogs chen tenet of not needing to accomplish anything.
779 Barron 2001a: 49.
780 Lipman & Peterson 2000: 42.

towards lust and delight in trancing out (*sems gnas pa*).[781] At this point, one learns that Atiyoga, with its focus on non-duality, is actually best suited for ignorant people who spend a lot of effort on things (*bya rtsol can*).[782] In his commentary to the *gNas lugs mdzod,* Klong chen pa gives a related warning about falling into the mire of excessive braininess; he recommends not thinking too hard about getting enlightened and instead simply relaxing "into the uncontrived mindset of a moron" (*ma bcos glen snang la lhod p*a).[783]

It is not uncommon for teachers of rDzogs chen to stress the simplicity of its view. In practice, busy intellects can find it difficult to realize something so simple. This is one explanation for rDzogs chen's criticism of overly cerebral approaches.[784] Klong chen pa notes that at the apogee of rDzogs chen's personal instruction-class, those with mental habits tending towards conceptual elaboration are classified as having the most inferior intellects.[785] They have to study the eighteen tantras, whereas those with superior intellects are able to apprehend the pith essence by means of intrinsic awareness alone (i.e., intuitively).[786] The academic value system is thus reversed.

According to Hillis, Klong chen pa's differentiation between idiot and scholar is grounded in a series of rDzogs chen rhetorical juxtapositions.[787] One could argue, though, that it goes beyond abstract literary rubrics and methodological recommendations. Given Klong chen pa's own life experience,[788] it is very likely that it was also based on practical considerations of teaching to ordinary people.[789] In this sense, it can be said that if Mahāyāna opened the horizons of Buddhism beyond the monastic classes to the general layperson and Mantrayāna made the

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781 At the beginning of this chapter we noted how Klong chen pa saw some merit in the transic meditation style taught by Hva shang Mahāyāna. Here it appears as if he is critical of that approach.

782 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 320; TANGO ed.: f. 115b.

783 Hillis 2003: 161 (cit. *sDe gsum snying po'i don grel*: f. 48).

784 In fact, this attitude is nuanced differently by the various types of rDzogs chen literature. According to Klong chen pa, it is most pronounced at the level of the "secret" and "unexcelled secret" teachings (*Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 355–356; TANGO ed.: ff. 128b–129a).

785 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 397–398; TANGO ed.: f. 143b.

786 This refers not to the eighteen rDzogs chen mind-class tantras but the seventeen rDzogs chen *upadeśa* tantras, to which is appended the "guardian" *Terrific Black Mother* (*Nag mo khros ma*).

787 Hillis 2003: 161.

788 One can only speculate on what psychological changes Klong chen pa must have gone through during his transition from eminent scholar to wandering yogi under the tutelage of Kumārarāja.

789 It should be noted that rDzogs chen teachings are not indiscriminately given to just anyone. Just as people experienced heart attacks when Śākyamuni taught and the Pāramitāyāna was initially not introduced to the masses lest by means of misunderstanding they would denigrate it and create bad karma, certain Mantrayāna practices are reported to be so powerful that they can be life-threatening or cause insanity. Along these lines, rDzogs chen was traditionally introduced to more advanced students with a strong recommendation towards rigorous preliminaries.

path more accessible to those who got hung up on the Buddha's provisional prohibitions (e.g., the five ethical precepts), rDzogs chen extends it even further to truly simple-minded folk. This is because the rDzogs chen view brings the Buddhadharma down to the lowest common denominator.

The Ground

In rDzogs chen, one often hears references to the "ground." It is an extremely important tenet for the rDzogs chen school's premise of inherent purity, yet it risks confusion with an almost identical term used in the traditions of Mantrayāna and Sūtrayāna. Moreover, in various contexts in the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, Klong chen pa explains it as meaning different things. Tracing the relationship between these different definitions, one finds does certain points of connection. Consequently, the term serves to demonstrate a linkage between rDzogs chen and the other vehicles. But only to an extent. It also reveals fundamental differences.

At the level of Mantrayāna, Klong chen pa differentiates between two types of universal ground (*kun gzhi*, or *ālaya*): the universal basis of miscellaneous habitual instincts (*bag chags sna tshogs pa'i kun gzhi*) and the true ground of everything, which belongs to the true state of being (*gnas lugs don gyi kun gzhi'i don*).[790] Simply put, the basic difference between these two types of universal ground is that the former is reversed and the latter is not. Unfortunately, however, it is not that simple.[791] Theoretically speaking, one type of ground is psychological and the other is ontological.[792]

Within the context of Sūtrayāna, one finds the same dual modality of the universal ground under the same name, but with a primarily psychological aspect. In the early literature of the Yogācāra school, for example, the universal ground is related to the foundational consciousness (*kun gzhi rnam shes*, or *ālayavijñāna*) that stores the habitual instincts. Upon the purification of these, the *ālaya* is said to simply cease. The *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkara* departs from this model by arguing instead for a transformation of consciousness. Called by a slightly different name (*gzhi*, or *āśraya*), this "ground" is described as being both the fundamental prin-

790 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 282; TANGO ed.: f. 102b.

791 Note, for example, that in the *Tshig don mdzod* (f. 235), Klong chen pa expands on these to make four different modalities of the universal ground: the universal ground of the primal reality (*ye don gyi kun gzhi*), the universal ground of the matrix-reality (*sbyor ba don gyi kun gzhi*), the universal basis of miscellaneous habitual instincts (*bag chags sna tshogs pa'i kun gzhi*), and the universal basis of physical habitual instincts (*bag chags lus kyi kun gzhi*). For a nuanced discussion of the universal ground, see Guenther 1989b: 214–215.

792 Guenther makes this same point in his etymological exposition of the words *ālaya* and *āśraya* (Guenther 1989b: 276, n. 2).

ciple of enlightenment and basis for the quotidian causes of *saṃsāra*.[793] By the "flipping" (Skt. *parāvṛtti*) of this ground, the ordinary world is transformed into the *dharmadhātu* truth-expanse and consciousness (*vijñāna*) is converted into the "taintless" consciousness (*amalavijñāna*).[794]

In the thirteenth century, Rig pa'i ral gri would introduce to Tibet this idea of a taintless ninth consciousness (as it had been developed by Paramārtha some eight hundred years before). How important the subject was to the intellectual discussions of the fourteenth century is evidenced by the work of such Jo nang pa scholars as Dol po pa and Sa bzang ma ti Paṇ chen (1294–1376), as well as the fact that it was refuted by Tsong kha pa. Although Klong chen pa himself does not appear to have subscribed to this ninth consciousness, his presentation of the Yogācāra school does describe the foundational consciousness transforming into mirror-like wisdom through the yogic practice of a "*vajra*-like *samādhi*."[795] With the shroud of nescience uncovered, wisdom simply dawns.

The *Grub mtha' mdzod* clarifies that in addition to the eight aggregates of consciousness, there is a separate ground of everything (*ālaya*) to be purified.[796] Though differentiated from the foundational consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*), this universal ground nonetheless has a psychological component.[797] Using the Madhyamaka *Kāyatrayāvatāra-śāstra* as a supporting source,[798] Klong chen pa explains that five wisdoms dawn through the decline of the eight consciousnesses and their supportive basis into the expanse. Through the purification of this universal ground, there emerges the *dharmadhātu* wisdom. By purifying the foundational consciousness, mirror-like wisdom appears.[799] By purifying the afflicted consciousness (*manovijñāna*), equanimity wisdom becomes apparent. By puri-

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793 In the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkara*, the ground is synymous with the conception of the spirit of enlightenment. In other words, it still involves effort and "great initiative."

794 Nagao & Kawamura 1991: 81. Cf. *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkara*, IX: 12.

795 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 96; TANGO ed.: f. 35b.

796 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 282; TANGO ed.: f. 102b.

797 The difference between these two models may be explained by the existence of two distinct camps of Cittamātrins, those who include the *ālaya* together with the aggregates of consciousness and those assert a separate and true ground (*don gyi kun gzhi*) which facilitates the comprehension of thatness by a fully lucid *ālayavijñana* (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 91–92; TANGO ed.: ff. 33b–34a).

798 Toh. 3890.

799 It is within the context of this wisdom's arising that Klong chen pa refers to the mirror-like ground which acts as the basis for the enlightened bodies to arise (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 243; TANGO ed.: f. 88b). This passage supports Stearns's conclusion that Klong chen pa's *kun gzhi me long lta bu'i ye shes* has no connection whatsoever with Dol po pa's similar term for "universal ground gnosis" (*kun gzhi ye shes*). Stearns 1999: 52.

fying the emotional addictions, discriminating wisdom arises. And by purifying the consciousnesses of the five senses, the all-accomplishing wisdom arises.[800]

In his explanation of how the ground is understood by the gSar ma tradition of Mantrayāna, Klong chen pa uses this same model: a separate universal ground is to be purified along with the eight aggregates,[801] the cessation of which is none other than *dharmadhātu* wisdom. Furthermore, he adds, the reversal of the other types of consciousness leads to the four remaining wisdoms.[802] Tantric transmutation involves a dismantling of the practitioner's psychological architecture.[803]

The rDzogs chen tradition also uses both words for ground—*āśraya* (*gzhi*) and *ālaya* (*kun gzhi*)—but differentiates between them more radically. In the rDzogs chen system, the meaning of *ālaya* retains some of the characteristics found at the sūtra level (i.e., it still describes the substratum of a fundamental consciousness). H.H. the Dalai Lama notes, however, that the term also refers to a neutral and placid state of mind that dissipates in the face of awareness.[804] Klong chen pa poetically described it to be like an ocean that the *dharmakāya* "sailor" cruises across.[805] When infused with the wisdom of the *āśraya*, it is reversed from this latency state.[806] Practically speaking, in meditation this occurs when by means of the "great seal" of the enlightened body one is able to "secure" the *ālaya* as mirror-like wisdom.[807] In all cases (i.e., Madhyamaka, Mantrayāna and rDzogs chen), the role of the *ālaya* is integrally connected with its wisdom-coefficient,

800 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 240–241; TANGO ed.: f. 87b.

801 The difference in these is that the *ālaya* is non-conceptual and does not lucidly differentiate between the mentality (*yid*) and the addicted mentality, while the *ālayavijñāna* is a mere lucidity which illuminates a little bit and the consciousnesses of the five doors perceive through the respective sense-consciousnesses the five gross objects such as form and sound (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 374; TANGO ed.: f. 135b).

802 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 282; TANGO ed.: f. 102b.

803 The difference is that the basis of change is said here to be the clear-light expanse (i.e., the totally pure *dharmatā*). In the Sutrayāna presentation, Klong chen pa explains that there are two causes behind the wisdoms' dawning: an antidotal cause (retaining the teachings, equanimity-meditation, teaching and accomplishing for the sake of others) and the natural cause of wisdom-obscurations being cleared away as a matter of course.

804 Gyatso 2000: 173.

805 Guenther 1989b: 217 (cit. *Theg mchog mdzod*, II: f. 35).

806 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 263, 340.

807 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 356.

which leads to a definitive shift from "*saṃsāra* mind."[808] The major difference is that the rDzogs chen system does not define it as being the mind of clear light.[809]

In rDzogs chen parlance, *āśraya* does not refer to a basis which is flipped or purified. Instead, it is a term to describe the ever-present nature of reality, which is either recognized or not. As part of the threefold technical set of ground, ground of apparitions and deluded appearances (*gzhi*, *gzhi snang* and *'khrul snang*), it describes the evolution or devolution of awareness. That is to say, it comes into play when one strays from a state of clarity and develops erroneous perceptions in regard to the lighting up of the dynamic display (*rtsal*) of the ground.[810] Conversely, when appearances of the ground are pointed out by the guru (or as His Holiness the Dalai Lama puts it, one is "introduced to rigpa as energy"), the rDzogs chen practitioner comes face to face with the awareness of the ground itself.[811]

By no means is the ground a static, ontological entity. By its very nature, by virtue of its inherent energetic, it is process-oriented. As the wellspring of appearances, it is not touched by subsequent interpretations that render those appearances in terms of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. Therefore, the technical terms listed directly above—*gzhi*, *gzhi snang* and *'khrul snang*—are epistemological, designed to better clarify various stages in the perceptive apparatuses of those sentient beings who have not achieved liberation through recognition of the ground. For example, in the *Tshig don mdzod,* Klong chen pa writes,

> Though when located in our heart awareness is said to remain within the ground, at this time cyclic existence still bubbles up from the expanse and awareness has not yet achieved the point of liberation. Therefore, it is still classified as being within the ground of apparitions (*gzhi snang*).[812]

In the rDzogs chen *view*, the ground is totally pure. Appearances which arise from that ground provide the perceptual fodder for delusions such as *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. rDzogs chen *meditation* involves training in awareness (*rig pa*)

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808 It must be noted, however, that Klong chen pa doubts the lower Mantrayāna vehicles' efficacy in making this shift. In his opinion, even through an insertion of the mind and winds of the *ro* and *rkyang* channels into the central channel which gives rise to co-emergent bliss, clarity and non-conceptual wisdom, this in itself does not reverse the *ālaya* and the eight aggregates of consciousness. For that, only wisdom-awareness will suffice (*Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 374; TANGO ed.: f. 135b). He also states that the ground, being the support or the place where all things arise, is mistaken and obscured by the lower vehicles which use effortful activity, such as accepting and rejecting (*Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 327; TANGO ed.: f. 118b).

809 This definition is found in the Sa skya order's Lam 'bras system, as well as in gSar ma tantras, such as the *Guhyasamāja* (Gyatso 2000: 173).

810 Guenther (1984: 99–100) compares this process to the Big Bang.

811 Gyatso 2000: 74.

812 *Tshig don mdzod*: ff. 177–178.

and differentiating it from ordinary mind in the face of potentially delusory appearances. The rDzogs chen *result* is the attainment and manifestation of the enlightened bodies.[813] This triad (*gzhi snang*, *lam snang* and *'bras snang*) are further explained by Klong chen pa in terms of the different subjective perceptions attendant to the process of awakening. The first aspect relates to awareness at the primal level or in the post-death experience, when it is still obscured by non-recognition. The second involves what sort of visions one can encounter after having been introduced to awareness by a teacher. The third, as mentioned above, signifies the fully fruitional state of the three enlightened bodies.[814]

The linearity depicted in this rDzogs chen presentation is important for several reasons. To begin with, it evokes comparison with the system of progression found in the other Buddhist vehicles. For example, according to Klong chen pa, the Madhyamaka ground consists of the two realities, the Madhyamaka path consists of the two accumulations, and the Madhyamaka result consists of the two enlightened bodies.[815] Mantrayāna also uses this same structure, with evolution taking place from the ground through special liberative techniques to the result of ordinary and extraordinary *siddhi*s.[816] As Thurman points out, "The apocalyptic vehicle in an important sense has to be understood to *begin from* enlightenment,[817] rather than to *lead to* enlightenment."[818] In this way, rDzogs chen can be said to share family resemblance with the other Buddhist modalities.

Furthermore, by not taking the position that the ground is the same as the result, Klong chen pa keeps his distance from Dol po pa's fusion of the two (*gzhi 'bras dbyer med*).[819] Dol po pa's interpretation may be explained on the basis of his strong reliance on *tathāgatagarbha* theory, but it was also likely rooted in his tantric understanding of the ground. More specifically, his system held the universal ground to be synonymous with "the total integration of ultimate

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813 Tulku Thondup 1996b: 202.

814 Germano 1992: 893.

815 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 131; TANGO ed.: f. 48a.

816 Mi pham departs slightly from this and Klong chen pa's scheme. Instead he presents the path as the completion of both the five paths and the ten stages and the result as both incidental and lasting. See Pettit 1999: 371.

817 Mantrayāna clearly uses that level of purity as the object of meditation. If one did not perceive the deity to be pure, for example, meditation on him or her would be inefficacious. H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche explains, "It would be equivalent to meditation on the horns of a hare" (Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 252).

818 Thurman 1988: 122.

819 Karmay 1988: 185 (cit. *Ri Chos*: ff. 23a, 113b); Stearns 1999: 98 (cit. *bKa' bsdu bzhi pa'i rang 'grel*: f. 588).

bliss and emptiness."[820] This is clearly a departure from the interpretations of the *ālaya* given above.

On this very subtle point of the relationship between the ground and the result (i.e., the *dharmakāya*), it is possible that Klong chen pa went through an evolution of thought. In Germano's opinion, these two points of being are somewhat blurred in his *Yid bzhin mdzod* and *Shing rta chen po*, which have been shown to be among his earliest writings.[821] However, by the time of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, Klong chen pa appears to unequivocally refute Dol po pa's position.

> Hence, in terms of the original wisdom expanse, it should be known that the ground is when it possesses stains, the path is when one is purifying stains, and the result is the point of being free of all stains. Because it is [like this], differentiating the ground and the *bhūmi* of liberation is very important. These days, making such distinctions is very rare.[822]

Having established that his perspective regarding rDzogs chen and the ground does not depart from the standard evolutionary paradigm of Buddhism, Klong chen pa makes the sort of radical interpretive move that suggests a unique hermeneutic.

Students of rDzogs chen are repeatedly reminded of the inherent perfection of the beginningless beginning. The primary purpose of the guru's pointing-out instructions—be they verbal or symbolic or telepathic—is to provide a taste of this, to introduce the student to his or her own natural awareness. From there, one needs only to sustain that way of being (*gnas lugs*), deepening the experience until all things have that unitary taste (*ro gcig*).

Because rDzogs chen's soteriological system relies so much on this recognition of the ground as inherently perfect, its approach differs somewhat from that of Mantrayāna. Mantrayāna is defined as a "resultant vehicle" because practitioners work backwards, assuming the meditative pose of a perfected result (i.e., enlightenment).[823] In a sense, they cultivate a virtual reality of realization until that reality manifests as second nature.

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820 Stearns 1999: 238, n. 30 (cit. *bsTan pa spyi 'grel*: f. 46).

821 Germano 1992: 628, n. 399.

822 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 382; TANGO ed.: f. 138a: *des na dbyings rang byung gi ye shes la, dri ma dang bcas dus gzhi, dri ma sbyong dus lam, dri ma mtha' dag dang bral dus 'bras bu zhes bya ba yin bas, gzhi dang grol sa phyed pa shin tu gal che'o, deng sang ni rnam dbye phyed pa shin tu nyung ngo*.

823 Notably, for the dGe lugs pa school the resultant vehicle is "a dress rehearsal for enlightenment, an imitation of aspects of Buddhahood not presently possessed" (Makransky 1997: 366). Here the practice of tantra, functioning in a causal manner vis-à-vis the accumulation of merit and wisdom, serves to produce Buddhahood. In other words, the state of perfection is still forged, not simply recognized or discovered.

From the point of view of rDzogs chen, that nature is their true nature. Instead of using *sādhana*s to construct an enlightened future, rDzogs chen suggests immediate recall to the time before there was anything other than non-dual perception. Because of this approach, one might even be tempted to give rDzogs chen a name like "originality vehicle." After all, it appears as if rDzogs chen involves taking the ground as the path. As Klong chen pa says, "one 'arrives' at the ground of being in all its immediacy by not straying from its true nature."[824]

The most glaring problem with this definition of rDzogs chen, however, is its inherent tautology. Like Ouroboros eating its tail, the eternal return dissolves on itself.[825] It could be asked, how is one supposed to bootstrap oneself with a ground that precedes definitionality? Fortunately, Klong chen pa addresses this point.

> If one were to define the path in terms of taking the ground as the path, [it would be mistaken]. Because the non-fabricated and undistorted ground is not merely some thing, the ground does not work as the path. Ground and path are contradictory. There would be no point at which one attained fruition. Space-like mind itself needs no changing. That would be an adulteration.[826]

In this statement, Klong chen pa is obviously aware of the logical fallacies involved with a method based on the ground being perfect, where the *tathāgatagarbha* and Buddha-gene (*gotra*) do not represent potentialities but are already perfected. This type of position (i.e., *dang po nas sangs rgyas*) is what got Hva shang Mahāyāna in trouble.

For Klong chen pa, the strength of rDzogs chen is its ability to shift beyond the paradigm of method altogether, structuring the view in terms of primal perfection, instead of a restoration or return to a primordial *ab initio* ideal.[827] Though the difference between "primordial" and "primal" is a fine one, and often blurred in the translation of rDzogs chen material, it is actually key to correctly understanding how Klong chen pa does not contradict himself when he advocates the teleological system of ground, path and result on one hand and "space-like

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824 *Lung gi gter mdzod*: f. 63b.

825 This metaphor evokes the opening line in Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, "Tragedy begins," after which devolution there is interwoven (albeit with irony) the doctrine of "Eternal Recurrence." See Nietzsche [1891] 1967.

826 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 327; TANGO ed.: ff. 118ab: *chos kun 'byung ba'i gnas sam rten du yod pa de nyid gzhi yin pa la, theg pa 'og mas rtsol sgrub spong len du byas pa de nyid kyis gol zhing bsgribs so, de'ang gzhi lam du byed pas lam zer na, gzhi bcos bsgyur med pa dngos po tsam du ma byas pas, gzhi lam du byas par ma song ste gzhi lam 'gal lo, des 'bras bu thob dus med de ram mkha' lta bu'i sems nyid la bcos shing bsgyur mi dgos pa nyid bslas pa phyir ro*.

827 It is worth noting that, unlike many other religions of the world, Buddhism does not preach a definitive "beginning" or *illud tempus*. For more on this subject, especially in relation to how creation-myths shape ritual, see Eliade 1959.

mind" which "needs no changing" on the other. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the former term implies the origin point from which other things are derived (biologically, evolutionarily, and so forth) and the latter carries an almost metaphysical sense of "pristine."

Within the context of ground, path and result, it is fully appropriate to speak about view, meditation and conduct. But, as Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso clarifies, in the ultimate context of the view, "there is no view, no meditation, and no conduct."[828] Along these lines, it would be incorrect to say that ground is the path because, ultimately, there is no path. The very concept of path or stage of spiritual development is lost when one realizes the nature of reality.[829] As Klong chen pa writes, "Levels of realization and spiritual paths are timelessly free, free in transcending the stages of development and completion."[830] Similarly, the idea of a "result"—which is predicated on a linear temporal model of evolution and the existence of something that transforms or purifies—makes simply no sense in terms of timeless and primal purity.[831]

Timelessness

Simply put, there is an element of timelessness involved with the rDzogs chen view. To evoke a sense of the primal nature—an "anagnosis"[832] of the ground—rDzogs chen uses any number of technical terms (e.g., *ka dag*, *ye nas*, *gdod nas*, *thog ma med pa*). Primal awareness is not just about going backwards, however. Practically speaking, the efficacy of rDzogs chen view is based on the tenet of "spontaneous accomplishment" (*lhun grub*) and the soteriological potentiality of the present moment (as it is connected to the timelessness of the primal state).

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828 Hillis 2003: 212, n. 78 (cit. Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso: *lta ba chos can. sgom du med te. rang gnas kyi ye shes kyi ngang la gnas pa'i phyir*).

829 For more on the seeming paradox of how an unconditioned goal can be achieved by means of a conditioned path, see Klein 1992.

830 *Chos dbyings mdzod*: ch. 12: *sa lam ye grol bskyed rdzogs bral bar grol*. Also see Barron 2001a: 115.

831 Upon entering into this level of "ultimate-speak," there exist a number of other ways of refuting the path. Drawing on the work of Niguma (who was either the wife or sister of Nāropā), Kapstein gives one example by noting how the tripartite classification of ground, path and result as illusory reflect the three important theoretical facets of ontology, praxology, and buddhology. He writes, "what there are are apparition-like dharmas; the essential element of practice is to cultivate the realization of their apparitionality; and the enlightenment that is attained is an apparition-like buddhahood." The relevance of this woman's work to Klong chen pa's thought can be found in the relationship between her **Māyādhvakramavṛtti* and Klong chen pa's *sGyu ma ngal gso'i 'grel pa shing rta bzang po*. See Kapstein 1992: 203.

832 This term was coined by Giuseppe Tucci (1980: 13).

This fusion of spontaneity and timelessness is apparent in the *bSam gtan mig sgron* when it states, "The nature of the Buddha, sentient beings and their objects is without exception enlightened in the great state of the spontaneous *dharmatā*, which is without beginning nor end."[833] Through recognition of this fact, one is able to access the same state.[834] According to Klong chen pa, this is because the result—indwelling (*rang gnas*) and available through the spontaneity of the present moment—is connected with the ground of self-arising wisdom Buddhahood from the beginningless beginning.[835] From this perspective, ground and result are essentially the same.[836]

The rDzogs chen tenet of perceiving things to be pure in their own place is integrally linked to this timeless perfection. Here Klong chen pa answers the objection of the person who asserts that enlightenment is predicated on purification and actually "reaching" a goal:

> If one wonders how [the rDzogs chen approach] differs from the ordinary [vehicles], because the great perfection of self-arising wisdom itself exists primally as the spontaneously accomplished excellent qualities of supreme Buddhahood, and because due to the three bodies being inherently complete it is not necessary to search elsewhere, accomplishment is accordingly taught in terms of not wavering from the experience of the uncontrived state of [things] as they are.[837]

In the rDzogs chen tradition, the principle of primal purity is not an abstract ideal. It is personified in the figure of the so-called Ādibuddha, Ārya Samantabhadra, who resides timelessly (i.e., outside of the past, present and future) in a state of pristine awareness.[838] In the moment of presencing (i.e., "the very moment when

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833 Karmay 1988: 114.

834 In the case of very special individuals, such as King Indrabhūti, this realization can lead to instantaneous liberation. See Gyatso 2000: 55.

835 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: ff. 263–275; TANGO ed.: ff. 96a–100a.

836 Just above, we saw Klong chen pa cautioning against confusing ground and result in terms of the path. In the non-teleological and timeless context outside of the path, however, they are fused. It is in accord with this latter view that one must understand H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche's seemingly anti-soteriological definition of Mantrayāna, in its essence, as observing ground and result to be indivisible. See Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 257.

837 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 329; TANGO ed.: f. 119a: *tha ma la dang khyad par ci yod snyam na, rang byung gi ye shes rdzogs pa chen po nyid ye nas sang rgyas kyi che ba'i yon tan lhun grub tu yod pa, sku gsum rang chas su tshang ba'i phyir logs nas brtsal mi dgos pas, 'di nyid ma bcos ji bzhin ba'i ngang nas ma g.yos pas 'grub par bstan te.*

838 For more on this Buddha, the "agent" of all Buddha-activity out of whose wisdom-field Vajradhara emanates, see Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 115–119. Note also that the rNying ma school's emphasis on the *sambhogakāya* origin of the tantras traditionally differs from the gSar ma system, which marks their lineal descent from the historical Buddha (i.e., Śākyamuni). Klong chen pa's move to connect Śākyamuni with Vajradhara is an interesting way of reconciling this difference (*Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 12; TANGO ed.: f. 5a).

the ground arises as phenomena from the primordial ground"),[839] Samantabhadra always recognizes the display for what it is.[840] For this reason, the rDzogs chen teachings assert that there was never a time when this Buddha lacked complete and unadulterated awareness.

Samantabhadra's awakening begs the question of whether there is temporality in the atemporal state. He is described as being enlightened from the beginningless beginning, yet this enlightenment is predicated on a process of recognition. For example, directly after Klong chen pa begins the *Grub mtha' mdzod* with a paean to Mañjuśrī, he turns to a description of Samantabhadra as taking up residence in Ghanavyūha, at the boundary of Akaniṣṭha just below the formless realm of infinite space, at the point in his awakening that he attains Buddhahood.[841] This type of paradox is not unknown to Buddhism. One can point, for example, to the famous vow made by Amitābha Buddha in his prior life as Dharmākara. This vow effectively stated that he would defer enlightenment until all other beings attained enlightenment.[842] And yet also he is currently portrayed as Amitābha Buddha.

Of Klong chen pa's works, the *Grub mtha' mdzod* does not directly focus on Buddhist cosmogony.[843] Yet it is discussed in passing, particularly within the context of the historical Buddha's awakening process. The orthodox Nikāya position is that Śākyamuni attained enlightenment on the *vajra*-throne in Bodhgāya after three incalculable eons of accumulating merit and wisdom. This position is echoed by some in the Mahāyāna school, though they presume that he consciously incarnated and awakened in this realm in order to benefit sentient beings. Others follow the Mantrayāna claim that he achieved his realization of non-duality in the pureland of Akaniṣṭha even as his physical body sat by the Nairañjanā river, before he even made his famous stand against the demons of delusion at the *vajra*-throne. Finally, the unexcelled vehicle states that he attained Buddhahood in the inconceivable past and that the Śākyamuni *Passionspiel* was just that, a didactic display for the sake of suffering sentient beings.

This last position is the one that Klong chen pa takes to be definitive:

> The corresponding position of the holy unexcelled great secret is that enlightenment is the original state and that the method [of attaining Buddhahood] is beyond measurement in eons. Within the experiential state of union with the *vajra*-expanse, and likewise without straying from the *dharmakāya*, [the

839 Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, I: 115.
840 This description hints at the continually dynamic nature of the primal state.
841 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 3; TANGO ed.: f. 2a.
842 See this famous 18th vow, which would have such an impact on the Pureland school of Buddhism, in the larger *Sukhāvatī-sūtra*.
843 For this, one may look to the *Tshig don mdzod*.

> Buddha] appears with countless *sambhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya* emanations—however all the beings need to be tamed. As long as the world exists, these will be made to appear.[844]

The relationality of the Buddha's appearance in the world provides a fine example of the royal reason of relativity. Ultimately, of course, the Buddha does not do a thing. Definitely he is not sitting in some time-vacuum somewhere propped up on a throne, thinking to himself, "I'm a Buddha!" Yet, relatively speaking, he does act.[845] The way in which he acts depends entirely on the disposition of the person he wishes to succor.

This multivalent functionality (or non-functionality) is a wonderful illustration of the interrelatedness of the two realities in action.[846] It is also an indicator of how the different paradigms of rDzogs chen (i.e., linear evolution and timeless perfection) can be reconciled.[847] In the paradoxical face of a primal Buddha such as Samantabhadra having any effect in the relative sphere, *trikāya* theory[848] linked with the two realities actually reconciles how a Buddha located at the point of infinity, the limit of the "continuous macro" incalculable vastness where ordinary time loses meaning, can respond to the "discrete micro" needs of beings with immediate and manifest presence.

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844 *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 14; TANGO ed.: f. 5b: *de dang mthun pa'i gsang chen bla na med pa dag ni, gdod ma'i gnas su byang chub nas, bskal pas gzhal ba las 'das pa'i tshul rdo rje'i dbyings su mnyam pa'i ngang nas chos kyi sku las ma g.yos bzhin du longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku dang, sprul ba'i sku grangs med pa 'gro ba thams cad kyi ngo kha la gang la gang 'dul du snang ba nyid, 'jig rten ji srid par kun du ston par mdzad pa nyid de.*

845 In the previous quote, the honorific Tibetan word *mdzad* acts like a causative, suggesting that the appearance of the Buddha involves agency on his part.

846 The royal reason of relativity is not only a philosophical model. It has a practical soteriological application: the Buddha's total *éblouisement* in the ultimate reflects back into the relative matrix of collective consciousness. In relation to this point, Tsong kha pa's commentary on Āryadeva's *Catuḥśataka* (XVI: 24) bears remembering, "(In regard to subject and object) to say 'The one exists, yet the other does not!' is not proper ultimately, nor conventionally. Thus, one cannot even use the expression" (Thurman 1984: 314).

847 It is precisely this point that led Klong chen pa to differentiate between the view of the causal vehicles and the view of Mantrayāna. A very important quote from the *Grub mtha' mdzod* given earlier bears repeating in this context. "In terms of characteristics, other than as a mere non-elaborated emptiness, the view in the dialectical [vehicle] does not realize [the two] inseparable truths as the primordial (*gdod ma nas*) nature of deity and mantra. The [view of] mantra does realize [this]. It realizes indivisibility in the experience from the beginningless beginning of the lack of intrinsic essence (*ngo bo nyid med pa*) of both relative reality—where one unites with purity as deities which are mere emanations, non-existent yet apparent—and ultimate reality, the non-dual expanse and wisdom" (*Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 262; TANGO ed.: ff. 95ab).

848 That is, emanating *sambhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya* aspects while remaining in *dharmakāya* ultimacy.

The modern picture of the universe is based on two seemingly irreconcilable models, relativity and quantum mechanics.[849] Scientists today are focused intently on discovering the point of connection between these paradigms. The search is on for the unitary nature of reality and one of the main leads is an apparent inseparability in the dynamic behavior of particles created in the same event.[850] Though some researchers have given up, saying that unification is impossible and that there needs to be an "ecology of models," others continue to forge ahead, on occasion even delving into the nature of consciousness and its possible interactive role with phenomena.

The significance that Buddhist cosmology holds for the current conundrum in physics is beginning to be picked up. In his seminal work on autopoiesis, Erich Jantsch cites Klong chen pa's writings on the non-divided state from which emerges meaning and "an immediacy of existence in which all opposites contain each other."[851] Nick Herbert, a physicist whose theoretical work *Quantum Reality* was followed by a more speculative book entitled *Elemental Mind: Human Consciousness and the New Physics*, is now driving the idea of "Quantum Tantra" towards a more cohesive religio-scientific model.[852] What remains is for someone to examine in particular rDzogs chen's synthetic view[853] on the dynamics of the ground and temporality and how this might foment new webs of meaning for the present impasse between knowledge and wisdom. The potential benefit of such a study would seem much more far-ranging than an achievement of unification in the domain of science alone. This is because, in rDzogs chen, one's own success is based directly on the actual principle of Buddha-realization. In the words of Klong chen pa, just as the enlightened *dharmakāya* which does not waver from mind itself is the nature of the great perfection which transcends deliberate activity, the practitioner who mirrors this paradigm of not wavering is brought face to face with complete and perfect enlightenment.[854]

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849 Whereas the former serves to describe the movement and behavior of large objects, the latter works at the atomic level.

850 For example, an EPR event (as described by Bell's theorem) exposes the instantaneous interaction of two spatially separated systems.

851 Jantsch 1980: 301.

852 In a definition of this emergent field of study, Herbert writes that the goal of Quantum Tantra is "to initiate an entirely new direction of research by approaching quantum theory and its paradoxes as if they were incomplete fragments of a 'successor science' based on tantric and alchemical principles" (Herbert, n.d.).

853 As Gene Smith puts it, "Rdzogs chen is simultaneously the approach, the process, the sum of the stages, and the realization itself" (Smith 2001: 274, n. 4).

854 *Grub mtha' mdzod*, A 'DZOM ed.: f. 330; TANGO ed.: f. 119b.

7. CONCLUSION

In the dynastic era, the seeds of Buddhism were planted in Tibet. Over a span of centuries, as more and more scriptures were added to the fertile field of that land's religious imagination, healthy diversity was encouraged. Buddhism's survival was ensured. By the time the Mongols arrived, the Dharma was heavy on the vine, fertilized by stories of successful realization by Tibetans themselves. The Mongols were offered to partake of Vajrayāna. The gesture was not merely symbolic. It helped mitigate Tibet's relationship with her bellicose neighbor. Liberated from that yoke in the fourteenth century, Tibet saw a time of flowering, a renaissance of ideas and appraisal of the Buddhadharma in all its complexity. This is when Klong chen pa drew his grand synthesis, when Bu ston redacted the canon, when Dol po pa made his daring innovations. The full harvest would come with the social engineering of Tsong kha pa, by means of which Tibet's intellectual resources were marshaled towards an ever clearer distillation of Buddhist philosophy.

The growth of Buddhism in the West can be seen as mirroring this brief synopsis of Buddhism in Tibet. No matter that it has taken less than fifty years to reach some of the same landmarks as seven hundred years. As academicians struggle with insiders of the tradition over the ownership of canon, as technological advances like virtual databases full of translated *buddhavacana* are promised as modern treasure-texts, and as secular powers continue to play games of bloodshed with one other instead of adopting the principles of peace propounded by the religious traditions to which they supposedly adhere, it is more crucial than ever that the hopeful Buddhist should decide whether he or she wants to subscribe to an apocalyptic, other-emptiness qua idealist vision of the world or an engaged dialectic with relativity and all its apparent suffering by means of an admittedly perfectionist view of ultimate reality.

Progress has been made. After an initial introduction by charismatic Tibetan lamas and intrepid ambassadors from the West, who were motivated either by scholastic ambitions or personal religious quests, many of the most seminal texts have been translated into English and now are being introduced into other languages. Buddhism is making inroads into common culture, changing the way that people look at business ethics and the environment. The recognition of H.H. the Dalai Lama for a Nobel Peace Prize symbolizes the potential contributions that Buddhism could make to the warring nations of the world. The modern monasteries have yet to arrive, but our universities are already packed

with students who fill courses on Buddhism beyond capacity. It is possible that a renaissance could be just around the corner.

Perhaps the biggest indicator of Buddhism's evolution in the West is the level of its study in academia. It is no coincidence that many of the points of interest of this dissertation match concerns that Klong chen pa himself must have had. But there is a larger dynamic as well. The need for a contextualization of rDzogs chen in relation to the other Buddhist vehicles, a philosophical determination of what Madhyamaka means for someone trained in the rDzogs chen view, attention to the overall organization of the rNying ma canon in the face of isolated writings on it, and so forth—all of these are as relevant to Buddhism as it stands today in the West as they were to Klong chen pa nearly seven centuries ago. These issues extend beyond the dry womb of academia and find application in the burgeoning glebe of private practitioners. If Buddhism is truly to take deep root in Western culture, it will be through a grounding of personal meditative experience in theory and vice versa.

This is why the *Grub mtha' mdzod* is such an ideal text for the modern Buddhist. Though the scope of its presentation may initially be off-putting, the serious student should rejoice in the full breadth and depth of Klong chen pa's doxographic enterprise. As an interpretive yet sensitive lens on the larger Buddhist tableau, it methodologically nuances philosophical points of contention, representing the various dialectical schools as more or less accurate in their depiction of reality, not just for the sake of argumentation but in terms of actual effectiveness. The same can be said of its comparison of the various tantric modalities, in which both the gSar ma and rNying ma traditions are represented.

Klong chen pa's ability to harmonize without homogenization represents one of his points of greatness. He was able to achieve this not only by means of generous quotations from all manner of texts, but also through his own understanding of the subtleties involved in making such comparisons. Specifically as regards the *Grub mtha' mdzod*, its overarching matrix of Buddhist philosophical systems and modalities of practice represents a blend of rigid doxographic categorization and inspired synthesis.

Its attitude towards an open canon is balanced by its detailed classification of Mantrayāna scriptures into the different classes of outer and inner tantra. Historically speaking, this enumeration appears to be a direct response to the abridged redactions of the sNar thang monks and Bu ston, mirroring the long-standing debate surrounding the rNying ma *gter ma* tradition. The *Grub mtha' mdzod*'s attention to Buddhist literature, however, also set the stage for Klong chen pa's greater doxographic agenda of establishing an even stronger hierarchical relationship between rDzogs chen and the other vehicles.

The multivalent nature of rDzogs chen makes it hard to answer the complex question of whether rDzogs chen should be interpreted as an extension of the other vehicles or as an entirely separate modality of Buddhism. In the more recent past, different camps have argued one way or the other, citing sundry rDzogs chen texts to support their position. But as noted here, regardless of whether rDzogs chen might employ apophatic (*med pa*) or cataphatic (*ngo bo*) rhetoric, it was held by Klong chen pa to transcend such categories. Ironically, this very emphasis on non-duality can serve as a reminder of rDzogs chen's family resemblance with Mahāyāna Buddhism. In a savvy manner, by applying its hermeneutic to the tenet systems of the other vehicles, Klong chen pa maintained rDzogs chen's superiority even while integrating it with Sūtrayāna and Mantrayāna. On one hand, he brought them all together within the conventional evolutionary context of ground, path and result. On the other, by means of "ultimate-speak" he repeatedly offered to his readers an alternative to that linear model.

rDzogs chen is taught as being particularly relevant in this time of great change. It remains to be seen if the Western world will choose to undergo a similar cultural shift as Tibet and Mongolia, prioritizing non-violence and exploration of the inner sciences over myopic cannibalization of our precious planet's resources. There does appear to be a thirst for Buddhism's rational and compassionate perspective, however. There is a need for something new. As explained by the anthropologist Greg Urban, this is the evolutionary stage of a "metaculture," which values dissemination over replication and novelty over tired routine. Ordinarily one would not expect a doxography to reveal a great deal of original material. But Klong chen pa surprises. Familiar subjects are cast in a new light. His message is fresh.

The purpose of this work has been to provide the genuinely questing person with an initial roadmap to the topography of Klong chen pa's thought as it relates to Buddhism at large. The various chapters only signify important landmarks. There are many other paths that one could take into the subject matter of the *Grub mtha' mdzod*. Dedication and patience will be required for this, but translations are available and the rewards are great.

If this illumination of the doxographical gemstone of the fourteenth century has been at all successful, if the gentle reader has been able to understand the issues at play, it is only because Klong chen pa's work stands in some relation to what he or she has previously known. Max Planck once said that new ideas come into being through the death of the ideas of others. This seems an apt way to describe the attitude of doxography. Fully aware of the stakes involved with dismantling soteriological systems, Klong chen pa entered into the mêlée with a largely non-confrontational attitude. Instead of wielding the club of brute

polemic, his tactic was to deftly weave rDzogs chen like a net that covers all. Or a shining coat of dew on things familiar, reminding one at the break of dawn what has always been known.

In Klong chen pa's writing one finds both a profound seriousness and an incredible joy. His view was not merely hopeful, but certain. To read him with critical awareness is to span the centuries and directly meet his line of thought. To read him with faith is to open to another dimension of his message, timeless and true. Following the Buddhist tradition, where these two meet is the important crux—one might even say the great perfection, only a heartbeat away. For this reason, Klong chen pa chose to conclude the *Grub mtha' mdzod* on a hopeful note: "It seems that all the virtuous karma perfected in the past and the blessings of the kindness of the holy ones have entered the beings of this land, and that the *saṃsāric* ocean is going to end."[855]

May it be virtuous, virtuous, virtuous!

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855 Tulku Thondup 1996b: 170–171 (cit. *Blo gsal ri bong gi rtogs pa brjod pa'i dris lan lha'i rnga bo che lta bu'i gtam*: f. 3 in Klong chen pa's *gSung thor bu*).

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APPENDIX A:
GENERAL INFORMATION ON KLONG CHEN PA

Klong chen pa's names and titles:[856]

Tshul khrims blo gros	ordination name from bSam yas
Ngag gi dbang po	given when at bSam yas
Klong chen rab 'byams pa	given when at bSam yas, gSang phu, by Kumārarāja or Byang chub rgyal mtshan
bSam yas lung mang pa	given when at gSang phu ne'u thog
Dri med 'od zer	given by Padmasambhava during a vision
rDo rje gzi brjid	given by Ye shes mtsho rgyal in a vision
Kun khyen	given when teaching at sKyi ru river in Upper dbU ru
Padma las 'brel rtsal	name of previous incarnation
Dag gi dbang po	
Klong gsal dri med	mentioned in *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 408
rDo rje sems dpa'	mentioned in *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 408
bLo gros mchog ldan	mentioned in *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 408
Padma las grol	mentioned in *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 408
sNa tshogs rang grol	mentioned in *Grub mtha' mdzod,* A 'DZOM ed.: f. 408

856 Texts used by Tulku Thondup 1996b for the biography of Klong chen pa include the *gTer 'byung rin po che'i lo rgyus* (f. 53, vol. om, *mKha' 'gro snying tig ya bzhi*) by Klong chen pa, pub. Sherab Gyaltsen Lama; *Zhus lan bdud rtsi gser phreng* (ff. 203–211, vol. wam, *mKha' 'gro snying tig ya bzhi*) by Klong chen pa, pub. Sherab Gyaltsen Lama; *De bzhin gshegs pas legs par gsung pa'i gsung rab rgya mtsho'i snying por gyur pa rig pa 'dzin pa'i sde snod dam pa snga 'gyur rgyud 'bum rin po che'i rtogs pa brjod pa 'dzam gling tha gru khyab pa'i rgyan* (f. 336) by 'Jigs med gling pa, pub. Jamyang Khyentse; *Ngal gso skor gsum gyi spyi don legs bshad rgya mtsho* (f. 60) by Klong chen pa, pub. Dodrupchen Rinpoche; *sNga 'gyur rdo rje theg pa gtso bor gyur pa'i sgrub brgyud shing rta brgyad kyi byung ba brjod pa'i gtam mdor bsdus legs bshad padma dkar po'irdzing bu* (f. 284) by Zhe chen rGyal tshab Padma rnam rgyal (19th c.), pub. T.Y. Tashigangpa; *Blo gsal ri bong gi rtogs pa brjod pa'i dris lan lha'i rnga bo che lta bu'i gtam* (f. 45) by Klong chen pa, pub. Sanje Dorje; as well as the TRT, ZDO, KNRT, NLC, and TTD (whose abbreviations he does not explain). Aside from these, one may also refer to a 33-folio blockprint from Lha lung, the *Kun khyen chos kyi rgyal po gter chen dri med 'od zer gyi rnam par thar pa cung zad spros pa ngo mtshar skal bzang mchog gi dga' ston* by Kun bzang 'gyur med mchog grub dpal 'bar (1725–1762), the 5th Thugs sras incarnation of Klong chen pa's son, Zla ba grags pa.

The succession of Klong chen pa's prior and subsequent incarnations:

* Princess Padma gsal (8th c.)
* Padma las 'brel rtsal (1291–1315)
* Klong chen pa (1308–1363)
* mKhas grub rje dGe legs dpal bzang (1385–1438)
* young boy killed while stealing peas
* young man who died after a visit to heavenly Zang mdog dpal ri
* Padma gling pa (1445–1521)
* O rgyan gter bdag gling pa (1646–1714)
* 'Jigs med gling pa (1730–1798)
* mKhan po Ngag chung, a.k.a. Ngag dbang dpal bzang (1879–1941)
* Kyabje Thinley Norbu Rinpoche
* H.E. Namkha Drimed Rinpoche
* Lingtrul Rinpoche
* Gangteng Tulku.

Monasteries started, repaired or taken over by Klong chen pa:[857]

Bab ron thar pa gling	Chu smad valley of Bum thang, Bhutan
Shing mkhar bde chen gling	U ra valley of Bum thang, Bhutan
O rgyan gling	sTang valley of Bum thang, Bhutan
Kun bzang gling	Kur stod, Bhutan
'Bras bcags gling	sNgag lung, Bhutan
Padma gling	mKho thang, Bhutan
Kun bzang gling	Men log, Bhutan
bSam gtan gling	sPa gro, Bhutan
Gangs ri thod dkar	above bSam yas, Central Tibet
Grog o rgyan (offered by sGom pa kun rig)	Central Tibet
Zhva padma dbang chen (built in 9th c.)	sBral mda', dbU ru region, Tibet
white *stūpa* at bSam yas (built in 8th c.)	bSam yas, Central Tibet

857 Aris 1979: 315, n. 19; Thondup 1996b: 158–162.

Klong chen pa's lineage: [858]

Immediate Disciples:	Close Lineage:
Chos grags bzang po Bya bral pa bzod pa	Grags pa 'od zer
Khyab brdal lhun grub	Sang rgyas dbon po
bDe legs rgya mtsho	Zla ba grags pa
Grags pa Seng ge	Kun bzang rdo rje
gYag sde Paṇ chen	rGyal mtshan dpal bzang
Shes rab mgon po	sNa tshog rang grol
Grags pa 'od zer	bsTan 'dzin grags pa
Chos kyi grags pa	

858 Tarthang Tulku 1995: 168–169.

APPENDIX B:
GENERAL OVERVIEW OF TIBETAN DOXOGRAPHIES

KEY: N = rNying ma K = bKa' gdams
B = Bon S = Sa skya
G = dGe lugs

Composed[859]	Author	Title	Translator(s)
8th c.	Padmasambhava (rNying ma)	*Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba*	Karmay 1988
8th c.	Vairocana (rNying ma)	*Theg pa gcod pa'i 'khor lo*	
~9th c.	dPal brtsegs (rNying ma)	*lTa ba'i rim pa bshad pa*	
~9th c.	Ye shes sde (rNying ma)	*lTa ba'i khyad par*	
11th–12th c.	Rong zom chos kyi bzang po (rNying ma)	*lTa ba'i brjed byang chen mo*	
		Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba zhes bya ba'i 'grel ba	
		gSung mthor bu: Grub mtha' so so'i bden gnyis kyi 'jog tshul; rGyu 'bras kyi theg pa'i bye brag chen mo; mDo sngags kyi grub mtha' mthun mi mthun mdor bsdus kyi bsdud byang	
		Theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa	
11th–12th c	Shes rab 'od	*Grub mtha' so so'i bzhed gzhung chos 'byung*	
12th c.	Nyi ma 'od (bKa' brgyud)	*lTa ba'i rim pa*	

859 This list is also based on Mimaki 1982: 27–28; Cozort & Preston 2003: xi.

Composed	Author	Title	Translator(s)
14th c.	Klong chen pa (rNying ma)	*Grub mtha' mdzod*	Barron 2007
14th c.	dbUs pa blo gsal (bKa' brgyud)	*Grub pa' mtha' rnam par bshad pa'i mdzod*	
14th c.	Tre ston rgyal mtshan dpal (Bon)	*Bon sgo gsal byed*	
14th–15th c.	Tsong kha pa (dGe lugs pa)	*dbU ma la 'jug pargya cher bshad pa rab gsal*	Hopkins 1985; Klein & Hopkins 1994
		Legs bshad snying po	Thurman 1984; Hopkins 1999
15th c.	gSer mdog paṇ chen shākya mchog ldan (Sa skya)	*dbUma ma thal rang gi grub mtha'i rnam par dbye ba'i bstan bcos nges don gyi rgya mtshor 'jug pa'i rnam dbyod kyi gru chen*	Komarovski 2000
15th c.	Stag tshang lo tsa ba shes rab rin chen (Sa skya)	*Grub mtha' kun shes nas mtha' bral grub pa*	
15th–16th c.	dGe 'dun rgya mtsho (dGe lugs pa)	*Grub mtha' rgya mtshor 'jug pa'i gru rdzings*	
15th–16th c.	Paṇ chen bsod nams grags pa (dGe lugs pa)	*rGyud sde spyi'i rnam par bzhag pa skal bzang gi yid 'phrog ces bya ba bzhugs so*	Boord & Tsonawa 1996
17th c.	'Jam yangs bzhad pa (dGe lugs pa)	*Grub mtha' rnam bshad chen mo*	Hopkins 1983; 2003; Cozort 1998
17th–18th c.	Grags pa bshad sgrub (dGe lugs pa)	*Grub mtha' thams cad kyi snying po bsdus pa*	
18th c.	dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po (dGe lugs pa)	*Grub mtha'i mtha'i rnam par bzhag pa rin po che'i phreng ba*	Sopa & Hopkins 1976; Guenther 1972
18th c.	Thu'u bkwan chos kyi nyi ma (dGe lugs pa)	*Grub mtha' shel gyi me long*	Hoffman 1961; Mittal & Jamspal 1984

Composed	Author	Title	Translator(s)
18th c.	lCang skya rol ba'i rdo rje (dGe lugs pa)	*Grub pa'i mtha'i rnam par bzhag pa gsal bar bshad pa thub bstan lhun po'i mdzes rgyan*	Cozort 1998; Klein 1991; Donald Lopez 1987; Hopkins & Wilson 1987
18th c.	Ngag dbang dpal ldan (G)	*Grub mtha' chen mo'i mchan 'grel dka' gnad mdud grol blo gsal gces nor*	Cozort 1998
18th–19th c.	bLo bzang dkon mchog (G)	*Grub mtha' rtsa ba'i me long*	Cozort & Preston 2003
19th c.	Mi pham rgya mtsho (N)	*Yid bzhin mdzod kyi grub mtha' bsdus pa*	Guenther 1972
20th c.	bDud 'joms 'jigs bral ye shes rdo rje (N)	*rNying bstan rnam gzhag*	
20th c.	dGe 'dun chos 'phel (G)	*Sems tsam pa'i grub mtha'i rnam bzhag*	
		Phyi rol pa'i grub mtha'i rnam bzhag	

APPENDIX C:
THE RNYING MA NINE-VEHICLE SCHEME

Padmasambhava's *lTa ba'i phreng ba* outline:[860]

1. perverted views
   a. *phyal ba*—common sense of ordinary people
   b. *gyang 'phen pa*—materialists
   c. *mur thug pa*—nihilists
   d. *mu stegs pa*—eternalists
2. views of those on the road to liberation
   a. *mtshan nyid kyi thegs pa*—vehicle of characteristics
      i. *nyan thos*—*śrāvaka*s
      ii. *rang sang rgyas*—*pratyekabuddha*s
      iii. *byang chub sems dpa'*—*bodhisattva*s
   b. *rdo rje'i theg pa*—apocalyptic vehicle
      i. *bya ba'i rgyud*—tantra of ritual activity
      ii. *gnyis ka'i rgyud*—tantra of both [outer and inner action]
      iii. *rnal 'byor rgyud*—yogatantra
         1. *rnal 'byor phyi ma thub pa'i rgyud*—outer yogatantra
         2. *rnal 'byor nang pa thabs rgyud*—inner yogatantra
            i. *bskyed pa'i tshul*—method of creation
            ii. *rdzogs pa'i tshul*—method of perfection
            iii. *rdzogs pa chen po'i tshul*—method of great perfection

Primary lineage affiliations of the nine vehicles' introduction into Tibet:[861]

Śrāvaka
Pratyekabuddha
Bodhisattva
} associated with Vinaya, Sūtra, and Abhidharma transmission

Kriyā
Caryā
Yoga
} spread by the disciples of Buddhaguhya

860 Reynolds 1996: 266–267.
861 Tarthang Tulku 1984: 154.

Mahāyoga—taught by Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and disciples of Buddhaguhya
Anuyoga—taught by gNubs sangs rgyas ye shes
Atiyoga—initially received by Prahevajra (dGa' rab rdo rje) in 1st c. CE
sems sde—taught by Vairocana
klong sde—taught by Vairocana
man ngag gi sde— taught by Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra

'Jig med gling pa's doxographic outline of the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*:[862]

1. Mahāyoga tantras
   a. eight *Māyā* classes (*sgyu 'phrul sde brgyad*)
   b. eighteen explicative tantras
   c. eight *heruka sādhana*s (*sgrub sde bka' brgyad*)
2. Anuyoga tantras
   a. four root tantras (*rtsa ba'i rgyud bzhi*)
   b. six tantras which clarify the six limits (*mtha' drug gsal barbyed pa'i rgyud drug*)
   c. twelve rare tantras (*dkon rgyud bcu gnyis*)
3. Atiyoga tantras
   a. Mind-class
      i. diverse tantras
      ii. *Kun byed rgyal po* cycle
      iii. eighteen tantras
   b. Expanse-class
      i. root tantras
      ii. auxiliary tantras
   c. Personal instruction-class
      i. cycle of outer and inner
      ii. cycle of inner
      iii. cycle of unexcelled secret
      iv. cycles of *spyi ti* and *yang ti*

862 Achard 2002b: 44–61 (cit. 'Jigs med gling pa, *De bzhin gshegs pas legs par gsung pa'i gsung rab rgya mtsho'i snying por gyur pa rig pa 'dzin pa'i sde snod dam/ snga 'gyur rgyud 'bum rin po che'i rtogs pa brjod pa 'dzam gling tha grub khyab pa'i rgyan ces bya ba*: ff. 666–699).

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