

Making the Old New Again and Again:  
Legitimation and Innovation in the  
Tibetan Buddhist Chöd Tradition

Michelle Janet Sorensen

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

2013

© 2013  
Michelle Janet Sorensen  
All rights reserved

## ABSTRACT

### **Making the Old New Again and Again: Legitimation and Innovation in the Tibetan Buddhist Chöd Tradition**

**Michelle Janet Sorensen**

My dissertation offers a revisionary history of the early development of Chöd, a philosophy and practice that became integral to all Tibetan Buddhist schools. Recent scholars have interpreted Chöd ahistorically, considering it as a shamanic tradition consonant with indigenous Tibetan practices. In contrast, through a study of the inception, lineages, and praxis of Chöd, my dissertation argues that Chöd evolved through its responses to particular Buddhist ideas and developments during the “later spread” of Buddhism in Tibet. I examine the efforts of Machik Labdrön (1055-1153), the founder of Chöd and the first woman to develop a Buddhist tradition in Tibet, simultaneously to legitimate her teachings as authentically Buddhist and to differentiate them from those of male charismatic teachers. In contrast to the prevailing scholarly view which exoticizes central Chöd practices—such as the visualized offering of the body to demons—I examine them as a manifestation of key Buddhist tenets from the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus and Vajrayāna traditions on the virtue of generosity, the problem of ego-clinging, and the ontology of emptiness. Finally, my translation and discussion of the texts of the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé (1284-1339), including the earliest extant commentary on a text of Machik Labdrön’s, focuses on new ways to appreciate the transmission and institutionalization of Chöd. I argue not only that Chöd praxis has been an ongoing project of innovation and renewal, but also that we can properly understand modern incarnations of Chöd only through a nuanced appreciation of its historical and philosophical developments.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<b>List of Tables and Illustrations</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Historical Contexts</b>	<b>26</b>
a. The Period of the Later Spread	
b. Dharma lineages in the Later Spread	
c. Chöd in the Period of the Later Spread	
<b>2. Chöd Transmissions and Lineages</b>	<b>43</b>
a. Chöd Precursors	
b. Transmission Lineages	
<b>3. Philosophical Foundations of Chöd</b>	<b>103</b>
a. Chöd as Tantra: Machig and Vajrayoginī	
b. Chöd as Sūtra and Tantra	
c. Anti-Legitimation and Innovation	
<b>4. Cutting Through the Body</b>	<b>140</b>
a. Body	
b. Dehadāna	
<b>5. Cutting through the Mind</b>	<b>191</b>
a. Chöd and Universal Base Consciousness	
b. Opening the Gate of Space	
c. Internal Yoga	
d. <i>Düü</i> ( <i>bdud</i> )	

<b>6. Texts</b>	<b><u>Page</u> 225</b>
a. <i>The Great Speech Chapter</i> and Rangjung Dorjé's Commentaries	
b. <i>The Supplementary Chapter, The Quintessential Chapter,</i> and <i>The Supplementary Sections</i>	

<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>288</b>
---------------------	------------

<b>Appendices</b>	<b>313</b>
-------------------	------------

**Appendix One:** *The Great Speech Chapter, the textual tradition of the oral instructions of the profound Chöd of Prajñāpāramitā (Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa zab mo gcod kyi man ngag gi gzhung bka' tshoms chen mo, or the Bka' tshoms chen mo)*

**Appendix Two:** *The Supplementary Chapter of oral instructions of the Prajñāpāramitā (Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag yang tshoms zhus lan ma, or the Yang tshoms)*

**Appendix Three:** *The Quintessential Chapter of the Chöd System of Negative Forces, The Instructions of the Prajñāpāramitā (Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag snying tshoms chos kyi rtsa ba, or the Snying tshoms)*

**Appendix Four:** *The Common Eightfold Supplementary Section (Thun mong gi le lag brgyad)*

**Appendix Five:** *The Uncommon Eightfold Supplementary Section (Thun mong ma yin pa'i le'u lag brgyad pa)*

**Appendix Six:** *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section (Khyad par gyi le lag brgyad pa)*

**Appendix Seven:** *An Outline of the Great Speech Chapter of Chöd (Gcod bka' tshoms chen mo'i sa bcad)*

**Appendix Eight:** *A Commentary on the Great Speech Chapter of Chöd (Gcod kyi TIKA, or the Bka' tshom chen mo'i 'grel pa)*

**Appendix Nine:** A reconstructed outline of the *Bka' tshoms TIKA*

## LIST OF TABLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

<b>Tables</b>	<b><u>Page</u></b>
Table One: Dualistic and Non-dualistic Consciousness	<b>203</b>
Table Two: The Transformation of Universal Base Consciousness	<b>206</b>
Table Three: Poisons, Negative Forces, and Primordial Wisdoms	<b>238</b>
<b>Figure</b>	
Figure One: Thang ga from Spitok	<b>139</b>

## INTRODUCTION

The Tibetan Mahāyāna Buddhist praxis of Chöd (*gcod*; *chedikā*) incorporates a variety of techniques for the development of compassion, wisdom, and the spirit of enlightenment. “Chöd” is a Tibetan verb that can be translated into English as “to cut” or “to sever,” with a corresponding noun form of “cutting” or “severance.”<sup>1</sup> Chöd uses meditative practices of “cutting” through one's instinctual attachment to ego as techniques for liberation from the existential suffering of cyclic existence (*'khor ba*; *saṃsāra*). A traditional Buddhist view is that attachment to ego, or “self-grasping” (*bdag 'dzin*; *atmagraha*), is the root of ignorance (*ma rig pa*; *avidyā*) causing mental afflictions (*nyon mongs pa*; *kleśa*), which in turn generate suffering and perpetuate one's cyclic existence. This sense of one's own self, or ego, is reinforced by quotidian activities premised in constructs of “self” and “other,” and habitual practices that produce, and are produced by, emotional reactions rather than mindful activities. The techniques prescribed by Chöd enable the practitioner to analyze and become aware of the nature of the “ego” that is to be cut, including the aspects of consciousness that support and construct the ego. According to Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings, one's sense of an individual and independent ego arises from ignorance of the non-duality of subject and object. The praxis of Chöd includes theories and methods for cutting through the aspect of consciousness that is characterized by self-grasping and discriminative thinking in order to realize the matrix of consciousness free from subject/object discrimination.

Chöd practitioners use various techniques to achieve the aim of cutting the root of mind, including visualizations, meditations, recitations, physical movements and music. Chöd

---

\*My field research for this dissertation has been supported by fellowships from the American Institute of Indian Studies and Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute.

<sup>1</sup> The Tibetan word “*gcod*” is pronounced “chö” or “chöd,” depending on the Tibetan dialect.

methodology, in alignment with conventional Buddhist teachings, can be understood as two-fold. One aspect is akin to the Buddhist practice of calmly abiding through experiences of mental turmoil (*zhi gnas; śamatha*); the other aspect can be seen as parallel to the Buddhist practice of meditative analysis of the constructed nature of one's experiences as dependent on one's mental conditioning and functioning (*lhag mthong; vipaśyanā*). Using these two types of practice, the practitioner aims to deepen her understanding of the fundamentally empty nature of all phenomena. Buddhist Chöd texts emphasize that Chöd should be practiced in accordance with the ideal standpoint of the Mahāyāna bodhisattva, the ultimate aim being the liberation of all sentient beings from the realm of suffering. Thus, the perspective of the twofold *bodhicitta*—the relative consciousness of awakening which includes the aspiration and action toward enlightenment and the ultimate mind of awakening—is also central to Chöd.

Chöd texts frequently emphasize practicing in appropriate physical locations. Practitioners seek out sublime sites such as on mountain peaks, near rushing rivers, and in charnel grounds. Because the fear created by such situations generates attachment to one's life and identity, these locations exacerbate the self-grasping that Chöd takes as its object. Generally speaking, such visualizations operate through the Buddhist logic of emptiness: by facing objects which cause fear and other obscurations and employing one's knowledge of the Buddhist teachings on the true nature of reality as fundamentally empty of both subject and object, one builds one's capacity to release oneself from illusory appearances of self and other. Indeed, one's mind—with its habit of seeing reality in terms of subject and object, self and other—is itself the obstruction, the obstructor and the obstructed. Through Chöd practice, the unenlightened standpoint that translates all experience into binary relationships of subject and object is replaced by insight into the interconnected relationship of all phenomena.



One Chöd method of eradicating self-grasping is an offering of one’s body to other sentient beings. One visualizes discriminating—or *cutting*—one’s body into pieces. One then transforms these pieces into an abundance of offerings that will satisfy the needs and desires of all other sentient beings. This exemplary act of the perfection of generosity (*dānapāramitā*; *sbyin pa'i pha rol tu phyin pa*) is an enactment of the fundamental philosophy of Chöd: the cutting through attachment to the self to achieve liberation from suffering. At its most fundamental level, Chöd provides an interpretation of Buddhist teachings on the persistence of suffering within the realm of saṃsāra contrasted with the possibility for awakening oneself to the ultimate nature of reality and thus being capable of liberating oneself and others from this cycle of suffering. In line with mainstream Buddhist theory, Chöd teachings correlate the conditions of suffering with the causes of fundamental ignorance and the subsequent habits of perpetuating a belief in an independent subjective self amidst a world of objective others.

Chöd was first fully articulated by the female Tibetan philosopher-adept Machik Labdrön (Ma gcig labs kyi sgron ma, ca. 1055-1149).<sup>2</sup> The Chöd praxis of Machik, grounded in the Mahāyāna Buddhist *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings, is directed toward cutting through ego-clinging and erroneous patterns of thinking. It was adopted by various monastic and lay lineages of Tibetan Buddhism and it also has a Bon corollary. The life story of Machik has been recounted in several different Tibetan biographies (*rnam thar*), including two complementary versions in *The Explanation of Casting Off the Psycho-Physical Aggregates: Clarifying the Meaning of Chöd*, often referred to as *The Great Explanation* and attributed to Machik (*Phung po gzan skyur gyi rnam bshad gcod kyi don gsal byed*, or the *Rnam bshad chen mo*), a version in *The Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*) by Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel (‘Gos lo tswa ba Gzhon nu dpal), and a

---

<sup>2</sup> Alternate Tibetan spellings of her name include “Ma cig,” “Ma gcig labs gron,” and “Ma gcig kyi lab sgron ma.” Dates that have been given include: b. 1031, 1049 or 1055; d. 1126, 1129, 1143 or 1149.

version in Dharmasenggé's *Zhijé and Chöd Dharma History* (*Zhi byed dang gcod yul gyi chos 'byung rin po che'i phreng ba thar pa'i rgyan*). According to these sources, Machik was born in a village called “Tshomer” (“Mtsho mer”) situated in lower Tamshö (Tam shod) in E Gangwa (E'i Gang ba) of the Labchi (Labs phyi) region.<sup>3</sup> Her father, Chökyi Dawa (Chos kyi zla ba), was the chief of Tshomer village; her mother, Lungmo Bumcam (Klungs mo 'Bum lcam), gave birth to two other children: a son, Lotsawa Kheugang Korlodrag (Lo tsa tswa ba Khe'u gang 'Khor lo grags) and a daughter, Bumé (Bu med).

Machik took an early interest in Buddhist teachings and became a student of Drapa Ngonshé (Grwa pa Mngon shes, 1012-1090). She would prove an able reader of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* texts and would provide this service to lay persons on behalf of her teacher. Drapa Ngonshé eventually advised her to study with Kyotön Sonam Lama (Skyo ston Bsod nams Bla ma), from whom she received an initiation for the teaching named the “*Cycle of Māyā*” (“*phyir 'khor ba'i l lam du sgyu 'phrul*”). Following an encounter with a peripatetic Indian yogi known as Töpa Baré (Thod pa 'Ba' re), she became his partner and bore three sons—Nyingpo Drubpa (Snying po Grub pa), Drubchung (Grub chung) and Yangdrub (Yang grub)—and two daughters—Kongcham (Kong lcam) and Lacham (La lcam).<sup>4</sup> Later in her adult life, Machik returned to dressing as a spiritual practitioner with a shaved head and travelling to receive teachings. She eventually settled in a cave at Zangri Khangmar (Zangs ri Khang dmar), where a community formed around her.

Machik's principal male disciples included Gyalwa Dondrub (Rgyal ba Don grub, also known as Rgyal ba Grub che), who would become a principal lineage holder of her teachings.

---

<sup>3</sup> Alternatively, Gye'i Labs and Khe'u Gang, in the eastern part of the Yar klungs valley.

<sup>4</sup> Other sources, such as the *Rnam bshad chen mo*, suggest that she had only two sons, Grub pa and Kong po Khyab, and one daughter, Drub Chung ma.

His grandson was Tönyon Samdrub (Thod smyon Bsam grub), known as the “snowman (*gangs pa*) residing on Sham po gangs”; the tradition of black-hat-wearing Chöd practitioners known as “Gangs pa” originated with him. A second student, Khugom Chökyisenggé (Khu sgom Chos kyi seng ge), would also become renowned for his transmission of Chöd teachings.

According to several traditional sources, at some point fairly early in her career Machik met and received teachings from the Indian yogi Padampa Sangyé (Pha Dam pa Sangs rgyas, d. 1117), the well-known teacher of Zhijé, a Buddhist tradition of teachings focused on the pacification of suffering. It has become standard to attribute the transmission of the Chöd lineage from Dampa to Machik, although there is little material evidence that such a transmission took place. Frequently invoked in support of this argument is a prose work by Āryadeva the Brahmin, Dampa’s maternal uncle, *The Great Poem on the Prajñāpāramitā* (*Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa tshigs su bcad pa chen mo* or the *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa man ngag*), and considered to be a “root text” (*gzhung rtsa*) for several Chöd lineages that would develop later. Alternate versions of the Chöd transmission history suggest that the teachings were passed from Dampa to Machik’s teacher, Sönam Lama, and then to her. However, such claims are at odds with another traditional claim, namely that Machik’s system of Chöd was the only Buddhist teaching transmitted from Tibet to India, rather than from India to Tibet.

Extant texts that are traditionally directly associated with Machik include *The Great Speech Chapter, the textual tradition of the oral instructions of the profound Chöd of the Prajñāpāramitā* (*Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa zab mo gcod kyi man ngag gi gzhung bka’ tshoms chen mo*, or the *Bka’ tshoms chen mo*), *The Supplementary Chapter of Oral Instructions of the Prajñāpāramitā* (*Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag yang tshoms zhus lan ma*, or the *Yang tshoms*), *The Quintessential Chapter of the Chöd System of Negative Forces*, *The*

*Instructions of the Prajñāpāramitā* (*Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag [s]nying tshoms chos kyi rtsa ba*, or the *Snying tshoms*), *The Common Eightfold Supplementary Section* (*Thun mong gi le lag brgyad*), *The Uncommon Eightfold Supplementary Section* (*Thun mong ma yin pa'i le'u lag brgyad pa*), and *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section* (*Khyad par gyi le lag brgyad pa*). Of these, *The Great Speech Chapter* is the only one that can presently be historically situated through the existence of an annotated outline and a commentary ascribed to the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé (Rang byung rdo rje). In Rangjung Dorjé's *Commentary on the Great Speech Chapter* (*Bka' tshoms chen mo tikka*), he mentions texts by Machik which may no longer be extant, including the *Gnad them*s, *Khong rgol*, *Gsang ba'i brda' chos*, as well as a *Nang ngo sprod*. Rdza rong bla ma also mentions the *Gnad them*s, *Gsang ba'i brda' chos* and *Nang ngo sprod*, adding the *Gzhi lam slong* in his study entitled *Gcod yul nyon mongs zhi byed kyi bka' gter bla ma brgyud pa'i ram thar byin rlabs gter mtsho*.

‘Phreng bo gter ston Shes rab ‘od zer (1517-1584) classified Chöd as one of the “Eight Great Chariots, Lineages of Spiritual Accomplishment” (*sgrub brgyud shing rta chen po brgyad*), independent transmissions that have historically flourished in Tibet.<sup>5</sup> This classification was later picked up by Jamgön Kongtrül (‘Jam mgon kong sprul lo gros mtha’ yas, 1813-1899) and provided a guiding principle for his *Treasury of Instructions*. Unlike several of the others, most notably the tenet systems (*chos lugs*) of Nyingma (*Rnying ma*), Kagyü (*Bka' brgyud*), Sakya (*Sa skya*), and Kadam (*Bka' gdams*), Chöd did not retain its independent status. It is often claimed that Chöd is found in all four of the dominant tenet systems, i.e. the Geluk, Sakya,

---

<sup>5</sup> (1) Nyingma (*sna 'gyur rnying ma*); (2) Kadam (*bka' gdams*); (3) Kagyü (*bka' brgyud*); (4) Shangpa Kagyü (*zhangs pa bka' brgyud*); (5) Sakya (*sa skya*); (6) Chö and Zhijé (Chöd and zhi byed); (7) Kalachakra (*dus 'khor* or *sbyor drug*); and (8) Orgyen Nyendrub (*o rgyan bsnyen sgrub*). This taxonomy bears similarities to classifications by ‘Gos lo tsa ba and Dpa’ bo gtsug lag. Marc-Henri Deroche, a student of Matthew Kapstein, is working on a dissertation on Phreng bo gter ston and has not found a source earlier than Phreng bo gter ston (Kapstein, personal communication October 2007; see also Kapstein 1996, 277).

Nyingma and Kagyü; however, unless one wants to draw parallels between Sakya *Ku sa li'i tshogs bsags* practice and the Chöd offering of the aggregates, there is little evidence of Chöd praxis in the Sakya tradition.<sup>6</sup> Chöd may not have survived as an independent tradition because it never developed an institutional apparatus; rather, it became assimilated into the prevailing tenet systems. One could argue that the development of an institutional apparatus is anathema to the internal logic of Chöd, which, like other yoga or practice traditions, does not lend itself to regimented organization. Yet Chöd does have a kind of independent status when one considers the existence of Chödpas—practitioners of Chöd—for whom Chöd is their principal practice.

## SCHOLARSHIP ON CHÖD

Scholarship on Chöd in the West has ranged from early sensationalist descriptions that emphasize the “exotic” aspects of Chöd to contemporary interpretations that discuss the praxis of Chöd as a uniform tradition. Western scholarship in general has not been adequately attentive to the historical and cultural contexts of the emergence and development of Chöd. Recently, Chöd has been interpreted through the lenses of Bön and/or “shamanism,” precluding study of the explicit relationship between the teachings of Machik and traditional Buddhist teachings. My study aims to address the Buddhist foundations, transmissions and developments of Chöd that have been largely neglected in Chöd scholarship.

---

<sup>6</sup> For example, Sarah Harding writes, “Chöd is practiced widely in one form or another in all sects of Tibetan Buddhism as well as in the Bon tradition” (Ma gcig lab sgron 2003, 47). Others make similar remarks; see Gyatso 1985, 337; Edou 1996, 53; Kapstein 1996, 279. Rossi-Filibek, although remarking that “[t]he doctrine of *Chöd* was received, even if with adequate adaptations, by the other schools of Buddhism,” has a more nuanced perspective which does not substantiate the existence of Chöd in Sakya: “[t]he *Chöd* teaching (*man ngags* precepts and *ñams len* practice) was accepted by the bKa’ brgyud pa, by the Karma pa, a branch of the same school, by the Jo nang pa, by the Śaṅs pa and by some rÑyiñ ma pa traditions not only, standing by the authority of the source, by the same dGe lugs pa” (1983, 47; 48). Erberto Lo Bue suggests that because there is no transmission of Gcod yul in the Sakya tradition, Gzhon nu dpal gives Ma gcig zha ma—also a student of Padampa Sangyé—less attention than Machik Labdrön in the *Deb ther snon po* (1994, 482).

Although the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were a time of increased Tibetan interest in Chöd, with texts being recovered, authored and edited, Europeans and North Americans did not begin to write on Chöd until the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Early sensational representations of Chöd as a morbid Tibetan Buddhist ritual were included in foreign ethnographic travel narratives of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; such representations continue to influence the way that Chöd is considered to the present day. Perhaps the earliest reference to Chöd in a Western source is in an 1863 text, *Buddhism in Tibet*, by Emil Schlaginweit (162-63). Lawrence Austine Waddell also briefly mentions Chöd in his *The Buddhism in Tibet, or Lamaism*, first published in 1895 (74). A lengthier first-hand description of a Chöd practice is provided by Alexandra David-Neel in her 1929 writing, *Mystiques et magiciens du Tibet*; however, like the previously mentioned Western authors, David-Neel represents Chöd as a sensational and macabre “Mystery” performance (1993, 148-166).<sup>7</sup> In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, English-reading audiences were exposed to the details of one particular form of Chöd practice attributed to the Nyingma scholar, Longchenpa (Klong chen Rab ‘byams pa, 1308-1363). This teaching was recovered by Jigmé Lingpa (‘Jigs med gling pa, 1729/30-1798) and was translated and published in 1935 by Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup.<sup>8</sup> Dawa-Samdup was a Sikkimese translator for the British government and a teacher of and translator for David-Neel. This was the first Chöd practice text that was widely available in the English language.<sup>9</sup> The first Western author to characterize

---

<sup>7</sup> David-Neel’s volume includes photographs of a body being cut up and of an unidentified Chöd practitioner, reminiscent of Harding’s inclusion of a photo of an unidentified Chöd practitioner (2003) and a more recent image of a Bon practitioner used for the cover of Alejandro Chaoul’s text (2009). The reader of her text is left with a crude impression of Chöd extracted from any meaningful context.

<sup>8</sup> *Ye shes mkha’ ‘gro ma*, by Kun mkhyen ‘Jigs med gling pa, translated by Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup and included in Evans-Wentz, 1958 (1935), 276-341. See also Hermann-Pfandt 1990, which contains a discussion of the Chöd *Ye shes mkha’ ‘gro ma* practice composed by Kun mkhyen ‘Jigs med gling pa and translated by Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup in Evans-Wentz.

<sup>9</sup> More recent translations of ritual texts and commentaries on Chöd practice include: Phabongkha bde chen snying-

Chöd as a form of “shamanism” was the comparative religion theorist, Mircea Eliade, in his book *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (1964). Unlike David-Neel, Eliade had not done ethnographic field study of Chöd; however, his description of Chöd as a shamanic practice has remained popular. Fokke Sierksma, in *Tibet's Terrifying Deities: Sex and aggression in religious acculturation* (1966), classifies Chöd as “shamanism” and “mysticism.”

The influence of these early texts is felt in misinterpretations of practices central to the Chöd tradition. As I mentioned above, one genre of Chöd teachings employs the practitioner’s cherishing of her own body as the most fundamental source of subject/object perception and thus existential attachment. Various Chöd instructions in this genre feature a visualization method of offering one’s body to other sentient beings (*lus sbyin*). Unfortunately, it is common for secondary sources on Chöd to interpret these methods erroneously. For example, in Geoffrey Samuel’s translation of Giuseppe Tucci’s *The Religions of Tibet*: “If a fear-inspiring phantom arises, there is no point in avoiding it; one must look it boldly straight in the eye, and indeed look through the meditation on non-existence at both the object causing fear and also the subject experiencing fear, and the fear itself. The meditation is particularly strengthened by the offering of one’s own body as food or plunder to fear appearing or manifesting itself in demonic form” (1988, 90).

As with much Western commentary on Chöd, this interpretation mistakenly asserts that fear is the essential affliction to be confronted.<sup>10</sup> According to the Chöd texts attributed to

---

po, *Chod: Cutting Off the Truly Existent “I,”* trans. Lama Thupten Zopa Rinpoche (London: Wisdom, 1984); Anila Rinchen Palmo, *Cutting Through Ego-Clinging* (Montignac: Dzambala, 1987); trans. Sarah Harding; *Throma Nagmo: A Practice Cycle for Realization of the Wrathful Black Dakini, A Treasure of Dudjom Lingpa* (Junction City, California: Padma, 1990); Jamgön Kongtrül, *The Garden of All Joy*, trans. Lama Lodo Rinpoche (San Francisco: Kagyu Drodon Kunchab, 1994); Kalu Rinpoche, “Chod,” in *Secret Buddhism: Vajrayana Practices*, trans. Francois Jacquemart and Christiane Buchet (San Francisco: Clear Point, 1995), 141-164; and Patrul Rinpoche, *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* (which has a discussion of “Kusali Chöd”), trans. Padmakara Translation Group (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994).

Machik, the practitioner confronts the obstructions, obscurations, and suffering produced by one's own mind. Many texts also make the error of equating the obstacles to be confronted, usually called "Düd" (*bdud*) in Chöd texts, with "demons." In the texts included in my study, I have translated "*bdud*" as "Negative Force" in order to remind the reader of Machik's fundamental position that these forces are products of the practitioner's own discriminative thinking. Although the practice of visualizing the offering of one's body to illusory beings has become an oft-cited characteristic of Chöd (to the point of being identified with it in some cases), it is often overlooked that many versions of this offering feature a variety of recipients to whom one is beholden in positive or in negative relationships, from the three jewels to one's karmic creditors. In chapters four and five, I provide an analysis of these practices that aims to correct such misinterpretations.

Western scholars' interest in Chöd was revived in the late twentieth century. Janet Gyatso published an important study in 1985, "The Development of the *gCod* Tradition," which describes various source texts and contributes a preliminary historicization of Chöd. Several other Western scholars have also recently provided access to important Chöd texts. For example, Giacomella Orofino has been engaged in the study of Chöd since the mid-eighties and has published several Italian translations of Chöd texts, including *Contributo allo studio dell'insegnamento di Ma gcig lab sgron* (1987) and *Ma gcig: Canti Spirituali* (1995), as well as an abridged English-language translation of *The Great Speech Chapter (Bka' tshoms chen mo)* in "The Great Wisdom Mother and the Chöd Tradition" (2000). Michael Azzato wrote an extensive MA thesis on Buddhist Chöd in 1981, including a translation of a biography of Machik (*Ma cig gi rnam thar mdzad pa lnga pa* by Gshongs chen Ri khrod pa), as well as a translation of

---

<sup>10</sup> More recently, there has been an interest in theorizing the psychology of Chöd with an emphasis on the role of fear by authors such as Michael R. Sheehy (2005), who has written on the "contemplative dynamics" of Chöd, Tsultrim Allione (2008), and in the teachings of Pema Chodron.



*The Great Speech Chapter*. Carol D. Savvas' 1990 dissertation contains translations of several Chöd texts from the Geluk lineage. Elena de Rossi-Filibeck (1983) also considers Chöd in a Geluk context in her study of the Second Dalai Lama's account of the transmission lineage. In *Der Schmuck der Befreiung': Die Geschichte der Zhi byed-und Gcod-Schule des tibetischen Buddhismus*, Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz provides a German translation of the Tibetan language *Zhijé and Chöd History (Zhi byed dang gcod chos byung)* by the 19th century Nyingma scholar Dharmasengé; she supplements this translation with an annotated bibliography of Tibetan sources on both Zhijé and Chöd lineages.

While this scholarship has enriched the study of Chöd by making more primary sources available in western languages, many of these works revisit the same territory. There is still a vast quantity of indigenous materials available on Buddhist Chöd that has not been critically translated. Many of the works that have been made available in European languages have not been either adequately studied or critically examined. An example of the latter is the first complete English language translation of what is considered a central collection of teachings attributed to Machik, the *Phung po gzan skyur gyi rnam bshad gcod kyi don gsal byed*, commonly referred to as the *Rnam bshad chen mo*, or *The Great Explanation*, by Sarah Harding, entitled *Machik's Complete Explanation: Clarifying the Meaning of Chöd: A Complete Explanation of Casting Out the Body as Food* by (2003). Unfortunately, Harding's presentation is not complemented by sufficient historical contextualization nor by critical examination of the philosophical and practical content and the literary genres that are represented in the ten chapters.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> For my review of this edition, see Sorensen 2006.

A weakness endemic to the majority of Chöd studies, both Tibetan and Western, is what might be considered hermeneutic anachronism: there is scant attention paid to the temporality of sources and their relation to one another in time and cultural context. A related weakness is the uncritical reliance on 19<sup>th</sup>-century texts such as Dharmasengé's *Zhijé and Chöd History* and Jamgön Kongtrül's volumes for the historical, cultural and philosophical accounting of 12<sup>th</sup>-century events and developments. Not only has the reliance on these texts perpetuated errors in the identification of key figures and timelines of important events and teachings, but the biases of these projects—leading to generalizations about figures, transmissions, and teachings—have not been critically considered.<sup>12</sup>

To counter this tendency to hermeneutic anachronism, my work aims to provide a much-needed historicization of the Chöd tradition. The majority of texts discussing the praxis of Tibetan Buddhist Chöd, as well as Bön Chöd, have generalized over the problem of the transmission and evolution of Chöd in the Tibetan cultural sphere.<sup>13</sup> Chöd is presently taught to groups of various sizes in Tibet, India, Europe, and the Americas. It is often the case that teachers are transmitting a teaching—usually based in a practice text—as they have received it; rarely have teachers or students engaged in the critical and comparative study of the variations of Chöd. In my experience, teachers and practitioners alike often resort to ahistorical generalizations of Chöd and its transmission histories, thus neglecting issues of the sources of the

---

<sup>12</sup> On a related note, Gene Smith suggests that Jamgön Kongtrül utilized the *gzhan stong* doctrine as “the mortar that held his eclectic structure together” (2001b, 237). In his discussion of the place of the *Shes bya mdzod* in the context of nonsectarian thought, Smith observes: “As the relationship between Mkhen brtse and Kong sprul matured, their conception of the implications of the nonsectarian movement for the various traditions of Tibetan religious life changed. They stretched the bounds of eclectic thinking, integrating both structured bodies of doctrine and fragile lineages of oral transmission. Their innovation called into question the extent to which the synthetic effort may efface the very traditions it seeks to preserve” (2001b, 237).

<sup>13</sup> This is also the case with discussions of Bon Chöd, which are becoming more prevalent, but demonstrate problems of ahistoricity in their analyses, even though particular texts are used as authoritative sources. See, for example, Jones 1998 and Chaoul 2009.

discrete transmissions, their location in time, their development and the ways in which they reflect textual sources.<sup>14</sup>

Examples of this ahistoricism may be drawn from two recently published texts. The first is a 2006 publication of Kyabje Zong Rinpoche's teachings on Chöd in the Ganden (*dga' ldan*) tradition of the Gelukpa school. This text does distinguish the particular Chöd lineage that it follows, as well as its origination with Je Tsongkhapa (Rje Tsong kha pa Blo bzang Grags pa); however, other than a biography of Kyabje Zong Rinpoche, it provides little historical discussion of the tradition. David Molk, the editor of Zong Rinpoche's text, writes that "[f]rom Khedrup Chöje (also known as Khedrub Chenpo Zhönu Drub), Je Tsongkhapa received the Chöd lineages that can be traced back through Machig Labdrön and Padampa Sangyé to Buddha Shakyamuni. Je Tsongkhapa also received teachings on Chöd directly from Manjushri. This visionary lineage is known as the Ganden Oral Lineage of Chöd. A 'Dakini' oral lineage is also practiced in Gelug. Je Tsongkhapa passed the Chöd [sic] to only one of his disciples, Togden Jampel Gyatso, who was the principal holder of his Tantric Mahamudra lineage as well" (2006, 28). This discussion of "the Chöd" suggests that the Ganden tradition is the preeminent, or even singular, transmission of Chöd.<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, such obscuration of Chöd's history is common to many such practice texts.

---

<sup>14</sup> These are often organized teachings that are fee-based and may or may not require any evidence of a student's previous familiarity with Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism or Vajrayāna philosophy. I am not denying that Chöd also continues to be transmitted in much more intimate and delimited scenarios, such as within families, but from my field research, it appears to be the case that the atemporal and alocalization of even these type of transmissions is still a common situation. Of course, given the practice-oriented nature of many of these transmissions, it may be argued that such information would be more obfuscatory than enlightening.

<sup>15</sup> Jeffrey Cupchik (2009) has recently completed a study of Ganden (Gelukpa) Chöd practices from a primarily ethnomusicological standpoint, positing that there is a correspondence between songs (*mgur*) and practice texts (*sgrub thabs*; *sādhana*), and between the musical performances and text-based visualizations. Based on his readings of formal ritual texts (and not the actual songs of Machik or other Chöd practitioners), Cupchik argues that earlier impressions of such songs as spontaneous are undermined by this connection with practice texts. An early ethnomusicological study of Chöd was published by Ringjing Dorjé and Ter Ellingson (1979).

A similar problem occurs in a Chöd practice text by the fourteenth Karmapa, Thegchok Dorjé (1798/9-1868/9), with a commentary by Jamgön Kongtrül, considered to belong to the Kagyü lineage (particularly the Karma Kagyü), and translated by Lama Lodö Rinpoche. This text contains an oral biography of Machik Labdrön by Lodö Rinpoche that appears to be an abbreviated version of the biographies contained in *The Great Explanation*. Lodö Rinpoche remarks that “[t]he especially well-known, profound practice of Chöd was brought from India to Tibet by the great mahasiddha Dampa Sangye. This teaching flourished through the great wisdom dakini Machik Labkyi Drönma by the depth of her realization and compassion. Specifically, the Chöd teachings and practice were transmitted in Tibet by Machik Labdrön, who thus played a very important role in the Chöd lineage” (2007, 11).<sup>16</sup> Lodö Rinpoche’s biography of Machik is included in the same volume as translations of a Chöd practice text (*grub thabs, sādhana*) for the offering of one’s body (*lus sbyin*) and a commentary on this practice text, both of which are from 19<sup>th</sup> century Karma Kagyü scholars. Unfortunately, Lodö Rinpoche does not explain why these texts are qualified as “Mahāmudrā” (rather than, for example, *Prajñāpāramitā*). Given that the text does not provide a teaching lineage originating with either Padampa Sangyé or Machik in narrative (although one can use the supplied tables to piece together an unbroken lineage), the characterization of Machik’s teaching as specifically “Mahāmudrā” appears to be somewhat partisan.<sup>17</sup> Lodö Rinpoche later repeats the ubiquitous claim that “(w)hile the teachings of the Buddha had been faithfully carried from India to Tibet and elsewhere, never before had any tradition been transmitted from Tibet to India. Machik’s Chöd of Mahamudra transmission was the first time in history that a valid source of Dharma

---

<sup>16</sup> The issue of whether or not Padampa taught Machik directly, and whether or not he taught her Chöd, will be discussed further in later chapters.

<sup>17</sup> Lodö Rinpoche himself transmits both the Karmapa and Shangpa Kagyü lineages, according to the Kagyu Drogen Kunchab website: [www.kdk.org](http://www.kdk.org).

went from Tibet to India. Thus, such a great being, Machik Labdrön, was the first lineage holder, and this unbroken lineage continues until the present guru” (2007, 13). As I discuss later in this study, the identification of Chöd with Mahāmudrā does not originate with Machik herself, but is a historical development of the transmission of her teachings.

Several aspects of Lodö Rinpoche’s biographical sketch raise questions and issues that I will be considering throughout my study. First, as in several other biographies of Machik, Lodö Rinpoche reports that Machik’s system of Chöd was paradoxically both originally transmitted by Padampa Sangyé from India and initially transmitted by Machik to India. Concomitant with this apparent contradiction is the paradox that Machik inherited the Chöd teachings from someone—according to various sources this may have been Padampa Sangyé—and that she is the initial lineage holder and genetrix of these teachings. In chapter two on the transmission lineages of Chöd, I address these problems. Assumptions that the system of Chöd that is attributed to Machik was always characterized as “Mahāmudrā” is a problem I grapple with at the end of this study. This association with Mahāmudrā also invokes the parallel Sūtra and Tantra aspects of Chöd, which I explore in chapter three. Lodö Rinpoche’s text illustrates the prevailing tendency to neglect or gloss over the many distinctions in Chöd transmission lineages, in Chöd teachings, and in Chöd practices, by students and scholars alike. This disregard has not only resulted in undervaluing the role of Machik in the origination of Chöd, but also rendered Chöd’s theoretical, practical and cultural development obscure.

Another problematic development in the recent study of Chöd has been the prevailing insistence on the indigenous Tibetan roots of Chöd and the neglect of its fundamental Buddhist grounds. In her PhD thesis, Lucy A. Jones (1998) puts her study of a Bön Chöd practice text in dialogue with the theory of Georges Bataille and emphasizes the intersections of transgression

and compassion in these two systems. Alejandro Chaoul's work complements the study of Bön Chöd by Jones; however, his efforts to historicize Bön Chöd as antecedent to Buddhist Chöd is undermined by his dependence on Buddhist Chöd materials for his discussion. In his 1989 article, "Offering the Body: The Practice of Gcod in Tibetan Buddhism," David Stott makes brief mention of the Indic underpinnings of the Chöd tradition, and he provides a cursory analysis of Jamgon Kongtrul's *Gcod yul rgya mtsho'i snying po stan thog gcig tu nyams su len pa'i tshul* according to an oral teaching he received. Stott follows Eliade in suggesting parallels between Chöd and shamanism. As these works by Stott, Jones, and Chaoul indicate, many recent studies of Chöd associate it with "shamanism." This tendency is the result of identifying Chöd with its outer ritual practices rather than systemically investigating the lineages of the tradition. Those who have made such connections also generally fail to clearly articulate what they mean by "shamanism." Early writers drew connections between Chöd and shamanism based on the drumming and movements of some Chöd practices, while contemporary writers refer to recent classificatory systems, such as those proposed by Mumford<sup>18</sup> and by Samuel,<sup>19</sup> to equate Chöd with shamanism. Chaoul, influenced by such theoretical suppositions, has recently gone so far as to suggest the equation of "shamanism" with "Tantra." Charles Van Tuyl, in his article on Milarepa and Chöd, not only suggests connections between Chöd and shamanism, but also considers it to be possibly prehistoric. According to Van Tuyl, "The ch'ö ritual is of great importance to the history of religions, in part due to the antiquity of the rite. Since a form of the ch'ö ritual is practised not only in Tibet and North Asia, but also among the Eskimos and some

---

<sup>18</sup> Mumford (1989), influenced by Bakhtin, characterizes the interaction between Buddhist "Lamaism" and Gurung "Shamanism" in Nepal as a "dialogue" with three layers of "temporal identity": "the ancient matrix"; "the individual life sequence"; and "historical becoming."

<sup>19</sup> Samuel (1993) employs the classificatory dyad of "clerics" and "shamans" to characterize the development of Tibetan Buddhism as a synthesis of the two types of praxis.

of the Indian tribes of North America, this rite appears to date back to the times of the peopling of the Americas by migrations across the Bering Straits, perhaps as early as 25,000 BC. This ritual thus constitutes one of the oldest human possessions and might be accurately described as a living fossil” (1979, 34). There are two important problems in identifying Chöd with shamanism. The first is that if we take a general description of what might be called “shamanic,” it is difficult to see how the adjective applies to Chöd. For example, Chöd contains no communication with supramundane beings, no return from the dead, and no supramundane travel to other realms. The second and more important problem with yoking Chöd to shamanism is that it obscures the Buddhist core of the tradition. Often when this connection is made, it seems that the purpose is to suggest that there is something “non Buddhist,” or “non Indic,” or “indigenously Tibetan” about Chöd. But rather than illuminating the tradition, the term “shamanic” suggests elements by association that are not present, such as possession. Part of the purpose of my present study is to counter this unfortunate tendency in the study of Chöd by providing an account of the tradition on its own historical and philosophical terms.

In addition to the limitations of current scholarship on Chöd, there has been little sustained critical study of the philosophy, praxis and contributions of Machik to the male-dominated *Prajñāpāramitā* commentarial tradition. The reception and canonization of Machik is symptomatic of the production and reproduction of woman through and in Buddhist Tantric traditions. As I explain further in chapter three, Machik is frequently deified as an embodiment of *Prajñāpāramitā* and thus becomes a static personification of wisdom. In complementary representations of Machik, she stands in for the enlightenment of all women, but as a symbol illustrating the positive valorization of women in Tantra as uneducated helpmates who provide assistance as nurturers and sexual partners, thus eliding female sovereignty and emphasizing the

path to male enlightenment. In order to interrogate these conventional gender constructs, it is crucial to seriously consider Machik's philosophy and praxis rather than simply emphasizing her lived experience as represented in hagiographies.<sup>20</sup>

Machik was renowned as a “reader” of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*, texts that articulate the central Mahāyāna Buddhist teaching of emptiness (*stong nyid*, *śūnyatā*). Recognizing the ways in which Machik's Chöd praxis builds on the tradition of the *Prajñāpāramitā* contests the image of Machik as an uneducated woman. As I have noted, such a reading also counters the typical way in which Chöd is represented in Western studies: as an unduly exotic ritual that advocates the “renunciation” of the body. I would suggest that such representations perpetuate cognitive formulations of the West—particularly a “self” that possesses a mind and a body—as part of a received rational tradition that undervalues the body, embodiment and women's experience. Such rationalism, one might argue, dovetails with hegemonic commentarial traditions established by men throughout the histories of Buddhism. In Buddhist traditions, the idea of embodiment has often been used to perpetuate regimes of ascetic misogyny grounded in preoccupations with women as objects of desire.<sup>21</sup> Subverting such constructs, Chöd refigures the centrality of embodiment in an existential reorientation toward the impermanence of being human—of being subject to death. Chöd meditation techniques assist in cultivating compassion as a complementary experiential process, as a “cognitive responsiveness,” to the teachings of emptiness and of the *Prajñāpāramitā*. In Chöd, process is enlightening: cultivating liberative

---

<sup>20</sup> Studies that focus on the biography of Machik include: Elisabeth Benard, “Ma gcig Labs sgron, a Tibetan Saint,” *Chö Yang* 3 (1990); Massimo Facchini, “The Spiritual Heritage of Ma gcig Lab sgron,” *Journal of the Tibet Society* 3 (1983): 21-26; Migyur Dorjée Madrang, “A Discussion on Great Women in Tibetan History,” trans. Sonam Tsering, *Tibet Journal* 2 (1997): 69-90; K. Kollmar-Paulenz, “Ma gcig lab sgron ma: The Life of a Tibetan Woman Mystic Between Adaption and Rebellion,” *Tibet Journal* 23.2 (1998): 11-32, and “Die biographie der Ma gcig lab sgron ma—Quellenanalytische Vorarbeiten,” *XXIV Deutscher Orientalistentag vom 26 bis 30 September 1988 in Köln*, ed. Werner Diem (Stuttgart: Abdoldjavad Falaturi, 1990), 372-380; and Adelheid Hermann-Pfandt, “On a Previous Birth Story of Ma gcig Lab sgron ma,” *Tibet Journal* 25.3 (2000): 19-31.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Liz Wilson (1996).



techniques (*thabs; upāya*) with the complements of wisdom (*shes rab; prajña*) and compassion (*snying rje; karuṇā*) as generated by the impulse to enlightenment (*byang chub sems; bodhicitta*).

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In order to counter some of the prevailing tendencies of current research, such as ahistoricism and exoticization, I present here a study of the development of Tibetan Buddhist Chöd as evidenced in emic materials and my own translations of key early Chöd texts. I hope that this study will provide some resources to develop a “thicker description,” to borrow a methodological trope from Gilbert Ryle (1968),<sup>22</sup> in order to enhance our understanding of Chöd. Since recent scholarly studies have largely failed to historicize Chöd, thus broadly misrepresenting its relationship to Buddhist traditions, I endeavor to show how Chöd both situates itself within and adapts traditional Buddhist ideas and practices. To supplement the recent emphasis on yogic practitioners of Chöd in both contemporary scholarship and diasporic practice, I also explain how Chöd has developed its distinctive praxis through a symbiosis between institutions and individual practitioners. Through analyzing developments in Chöd teachings and shifts in institutional and lineage identities of key figures, I present an account of Chöd as a dynamic tradition that has, from its beginnings, invoked and adapted earlier Buddhist teachings. In each of my chapters, I show how Chöd has both legitimated itself through its association with Buddhist traditions and presented itself as an innovation on those traditions.

My discussion of the Chöd tradition is divided into three sections: “Historical Development,” “Philosophical Contexts,” and “Textual Analysis.” The first section on “Historical Development” consists of chapters on “Historical Contexts” and “Transmission and

---

<sup>22</sup> And of course, popularized by Clifford Geertz as a methodology in his ethnographical studies (1973).

Legitimation.” Against the prevailing tendencies among translators of and contemporary commentators on Chöd to treat the tradition as continuous and stable, this part of my dissertation illuminates the changes in Chöd over time. “Historical Contexts” provides the first thorough discussion of the cultural environment in which Chöd developed. I examine the “later spread period” (*phyi dar*) in Tibet, from the 11<sup>th</sup> through the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, during which historical conditions led to a tension between conservative and innovative impulses in Buddhist teachings. When we understand that Machik’s teachings were developed in this context, we see how she negotiated the tension between the need to authenticate her teachings as Buddhist and the need to present an innovative system in order to distinguish herself in this age dominated by male charismatic teachers.

In “Transmission and Legitimation,” I extend this historical survey to trace how the Chöd tradition was developed and codified by various Tibetan schools. This chapter begins by remarking on how Chöd commentaries associate the tradition with several precursor texts, including the *Abhidharmakośa* and the *Hevajratantra*. I then consider the vexed question of the influence of Padampa Sangyé’s Zhijé teachings on Machik’s Chöd. In contrast to many traditional accounts, which position Padampa Sangyé as the “father” of Chöd,<sup>23</sup> I speculate that his influence on Machik may have come through a text by his maternal uncle, *The Great Poem* by Āryadeva the Brahmin, which has often been cited as the root text (*gzhung rtsa*) in the transmission of Buddhist Chöd teachings. The remainder of the chapter surveys a wide range of Dharma histories (*chos ‘byung*) and spiritual biographies (*rnam thar*) to identify key figures and to trace lineages and traditions in the development and transmission of Chöd in Tibet. As I explain in this chapter, returning to such primary sources as *The Great Explanation* and the *Blue*

---

<sup>23</sup> For example, D. I. Lauf, “Die Chöd-Tradition des Dam-pa sang-rgyas in Tibet,” *Ethnologische Zeitschrift Zurich I* (1970): 85-98.

*Annals* has compelled me to reconsider received notions about the identities and roles of persons who have contributed to the transmission of Chöd teachings. In concert with Machik’s own strategies of authentication and innovation, this survey demonstrates how institutions were instrumental in both preserving and transforming the tradition.

The second section of my dissertation on “Philosophical Contexts” contains chapters on “Philosophy and Development,” “Cutting Through the Body,” and “Cutting Through the Mind.” This second part of my dissertation aims to counter exoticizing readings of key Chöd ideas and practices by elaborating the philosophical underpinnings of the Chöd tradition in Indic Sūtra and Tantra materials. Drawing on my research in primary sources, I consider the influences of Buddhist teachings on the theory and praxis of Chöd. In “Philosophy and Development,” I explain how Chöd legitimates its practice and philosophy by explicitly drawing from both Sūtra and Tantra traditions, and also how it innovates in intertwining elements from these two sources. I begin this chapter by considering the influences of the Sūtra *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus on the development of Chöd, and then I turn my attention to exploring the lesser known Tantric antecedents and parallels of Chöd. To demonstrate how Chöd developed a more explicit ritual apparatus through its association with established Tantra methods, I explore the resonances between Chöd and Vajrayoginī praxis. This association between Machik and Vajrayoginī helps me to account for the later diminishment of Machik’s role as philosopher and teacher, as she becomes equated with an ahistorical supramundane goddess. In the next section of “Philosophy and Development,” I explain how we can better understand Chöd as a fusion of Sūtra and Tantra elements through an etymological investigation of the Tibetan homonyms “*gcod*” and “*spyod*.” Finally, I explore Machik’s own claims about her teachings to demonstrate that she uses a

strategy of “anti-legitimation” to position her teachings as both integrating and transcending their Sūtra and Tantra antecedents.

The next two chapters in the “Philosophical Contexts” section, “Cutting Through the Body” and “Cutting Through the Mind,” are complementary explorations of how Chöd interweaves Sūtra and Tantra teachings in several of its most important practices. Chöd advocates procedures for severing self-attachment and ego-clinging using both Sūtra- and Tantra-based methods with the goal of realizing enlightenment. From the standpoint of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* teachings, Chöd recommends that the practitioner eliminate mental afflictions (*nyon mongs*; *kleśa*) that support the elaboration of the individual ego, with its subjective propensity to discriminate reality into discrete objects. This is done primarily through repeated identification of such afflictions and analysis of their ultimate emptiness of any independent reality. Complementing such strategies, Chöd also advocates various methods for arousing the deeper and more latent egoistical attachments and compulsions for subject/object discrimination through meditative states and environmental contexts; in this Vajrayāna-type practice, the practitioner actively seeks out the cognitive afflictions which might be otherwise suppressed in order to cut the root of what generates one’s sense of self.

In “Cutting Through the Body,” my focus is on the Chöd practices of visualized offerings of one’s body. While these practices are often treated as exotic non-Buddhist elements of Chöd, I explain that they are derived from exoteric Buddhist teachings on attaining wisdom and cultivating compassion. In particular, Chöd’s “gift of the body” practice is a manifestation of a long history of Buddhist *dehadāna*: the offering of the body as the supreme act of virtue. I examine this practice from within the context of Indic and Tibetan sources, but my discussion is also informed by contemporary Western conversations on concepts of “the body,” “gift” and

“sacrifice.” Drawing on a range of traditional Buddhist ontologies and Western philosophies, I explain that Chöd inscribes itself within the doctrines and discussions of Buddhist practice while also revaluing analyses of the value and utility of the body. Chöd provides a means for practitioners to integrate conflicting Buddhist ideas of the body as useful or useless, as the body becomes both source of suffering and means of liberation from that suffering. Chöd also provides technologies for every practitioner—not just highly realized beings—to make this body offering of supreme virtue.

While “Cutting Through the Body” explores practices that use the body as a focal point, “Cutting Through the Mind” turns to practices that concentrate on the mind. My focus in this chapter is on Machik’s adaptations and revisions of important Buddhist Mahāyāna Buddhist concepts and teachings, particularly her innovative interpretations of the idea of Dūd (*bdud*, *māra*), which are mentally-fabricated “Negative Forces” that some translators refer to as “demons,” and of the pairing of “Universal Base Consciousness” (*kun gzhi rnam par shes pa*; *ālaya-vijñāna*) and “Universal Base” (*kun gzhi*; *ālaya*). In the first part of the chapter, I explain how the Chöd practice of “Opening the Gates of Space” allows the practitioner to transform her mundane and karmically defiled consciousness, the Universal Base Consciousness, into the ideal of the supramundane Universal Base in its aspect as Intrinsic Knowledge (*rig pa*; *vidyā*). In the second part of the chapter, I discuss how Machik’s discussions of Negative Forces reflect her revision of the Indic Buddhist idea of “*māra*” as negative forces arising from mental discrimination of experience and resulting in psychic distress and ontological error. Based in their states of fundamental ignorance, sentient beings have propensities for relations of attraction and aversion, which lead to the discrimination of reality into categories of “helpful” and “good” or “harmful” and “bad.” These categories are often further substantiated into “divine” or

“demonic” activities, which are attributed to “gods” or “demons,” according to the positive or negative connotations the subject ascribes to them. Chöd allows the practitioner to see that what appear to be gods or demons are in fact illusory embodiments of one’s own mental discriminations that can be “cut” through practice. By revaluing Chöd practice in “Cutting Through the Mind” and “Cutting Through the Body,” I dispel the prevailing evaluation of Chöd as an exotic and “shamanistic” tradition by explaining how Chöd assimilated itself to and distinguished itself from traditional philosophical discourses of Buddhism.

The third part of my dissertation, on “Textual Analysis,” includes a chapter on “Texts” and a conclusion on “Mahāmudrā Chöd.” The “Texts” chapter focuses on six essential Chöd texts attributed to Machik Labdrön and two of the earliest commentaries on Chöd that were composed by Rangjung Dorjé (1284-1339), the Third Karmapa in the Karma Kagyü lineage. I have critically translated and annotated these texts, making all but one of them available to English-language readers for the first time. As I noted above, due to the increased interest in studying the non-Buddhist history of Chöd, particularly in the praxis of Chöd in the Bön lineages, the ways in which Chöd adapts and has been adapted by Buddhist traditions has been underexamined. By examining several key concepts in these seminal texts, including the “Three Bodies,” “gift of the body,” and the “exceptionality of Chöd,” I demonstrate how Chöd developed by consciously positioning itself in relation to Indic sources. This “Texts” chapter also begins an investigation of how Chöd was assimilated by different Tibetan schools. Through close analysis of his commentaries, I argue that Rangjung Dorjé modified Chöd teachings in order to assimilate them to his lineage of Karma Kagyü Buddhism. Rangjung Dorjé’s efforts at making explicit some of the implicit connections between the Chöd root texts and canonical Buddhist literature helps us understand not only the transmission of texts and traditions, but also

the work of interpreting heterodoxy into orthodoxy. Just as Machik adopted and changed traditional Buddhist teachings, so Rangjung Dorjé adopts and changes Machik's teachings to develop his own Chöd tradition. In the "Mahāmudrā Chöd" conclusion, I continue this process by examining how Rangjung Dorjé was instrumental in transforming Chöd into "Mahāmudrā" Chöd in line with his Karma Kagyü tenets. In this final section, I substantiate claims made in the first and second parts of my dissertation through close readings of primary sources regarding historical patterns in the transmissions and transformations of Chöd.

## CHAPTER ONE: HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

### THE PERIOD OF THE “LATER SPREAD”

In this chapter I will provide a brief survey of the cultural landscape of the period during which Machik Labdrön was active and in which her form of Prajñāpāramitā Chöd was developed. This will provide some background for later discussion of how Machik could participate in the regeneration of canonical Mahāyāna teachings while remaining independent of strict institutional or doctrinal affiliations. The unique and the traditional aspects of Chöd can be better understood in the context of eleventh- to fourteenth-century Tibet, which witnessed both innovative and conservative cultural activities due to the negotiations of political power among various clans on the Tibetan Plateau. Because of conflicts between conservative and innovative impulses, this period supported a variety of new communities with new ideas about authority and legitimation.

The eleventh to fourteenth centuries in Tibet were characterized by scholars, translators and practitioners making a profusion of teachings available in Tibet for the first time. It was a time of cultural change, with ruling clans and classes reimagining themselves through the construction of an indigenous Buddhist identity. Translations, interpretations, disseminations and practice of Buddhist teachings were thus of vital importance. This period, generally referred to as the “Later Spread” (*phyi dar*), fostered charismatic personalities who promoted particular interpretations of Buddhist philosophy and praxis.<sup>24</sup> Machik flourished in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. She developed her ideas alongside the importation and adoption of novel

---

<sup>24</sup> The period of the later spread of Buddhism on the Tibetan plateau has some overlap with the period of the formation of the “New [Translation] Schools” (*gsar ma*) in the region. The term “New Schools” in this context refers to the Kadam, Kagyü and Geluk traditions, in contrast with the teachings identified as “Nyingma,” or the “older” translation lineages from the *snga dar*, or “earlier,” period of Dharma transmission and translation. Some of the translations by the New Schools were of texts previously translated into Tibetan, but many were of texts not previously translated. During the period between the old and new translations, there had been shifts in perspective and practice in Indic tantric praxis, which might account for the discrepancy between evaluations by the earlier and later schools regarding what teachings were valid.



esoteric and exoteric intellectual and spiritual systems. As Ronald Davidson has noted, during the twelfth century Tibetans had become comfortable enough with their interpretations of imported systems that they considered themselves to be “authentically Buddhist enough to support the process of innovation” (2005, 276). However, during this time there was a struggle over social and spiritual authority between two tendencies of Buddhist ideas and practices in Tibet. On one hand, many teachers emphasized the need for order and control over the plethora of teachings in circulation. On the other hand, many teachers expressed skepticism toward the value of orthodoxies, especially when they served to curtail and devalue supposedly heterodox practices.

The first tendency toward order is represented by the early efforts of the ruler of Mnga’ ris in the western region of the Tibetan plateau, Lha Bla ma Ye shes ‘od (ca. 947-1024 CE). Early in his leadership, Ye shes ‘od supported multiple trips of the great translator Rin chen bzang po (958-1055 CE) to Kashmir for study in Buddhist teachings and the Sanskrit language, with the aim of developing authoritative translations for the transmission of Buddhavacana. Of special concern to Ye shes ‘od were teachings characterized as “Tantra,” which emphasized personal practice over scholarly learning and monastic discipline. Like Ye shes ‘od, many conservative thinkers in this period saw these teachings as corruptions or perversions of the Dharma. Such teachings were not necessarily “new” to the Tibetan region: for example, they included Nyingma teachings (including the practices of Dzokchen) that had been underappreciated, if not suppressed, in various regions of Tibet during the ninth century when Buddhism had lost favor among the ruling classes under Glang dar ma (ca. 863-906 CE). The foundations of what would later be referred to as the “Nyingma” teachings were introduced to Tibet by Padmasambhava several centuries earlier and had been embraced by the ruling classes

as well as certain members of the general population until conflicts occurred during the rule of Glang dar ma.

Later, Ye shes 'od would invest in sending several missions to bring the great scholar Atiśa<sup>25</sup> from the Buddhist center of learning, Vikramaśīla. However, ultimate success in bringing Atiśa from India would not be attained the mid-eleventh century (dates vary from 1041-1043 for his arrival), after the death of Ye shes 'od and under the direction of his nephew, Byung chub 'od (ca. 984-1078 CE). Samten Karmay points out that while Dzokchen was regaining popularity from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries, it was precariously situated: key figures such as Gnubs Sangs rgyas Ye shes were losing prominence, while the Kadampa lineage was being defined and gaining support following the arrival of Atiśa in 1042 (Karmay 1975, 150).

In addition to these efforts to identify, establish and perpetuate authentic Buddhist teachings through authoritative figures, Ye shes 'od and his successors, including Zhi ba 'od (d. 1111), issued written edicts (*bka' shog*) expressing their disapproval of particular unorthodox but popular Vajrayāna practices.<sup>26</sup> One of Ye shes 'od's edicts was directed toward tantric practitioners (*sngags pa*) in central Tibet sometime in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century, prior to Rin chen bzang po's return in 985.<sup>27</sup> In addition to claims of rapid attainment of Mahāmudrā realizations and claims of being a fully enlightened buddha due to one's inherently pure nature, three practices were of especial concern to these political ministers during this time: ritual sexual union (*sbyor*), ritual murder for the sake of liberation (*sgrol*), and ritual food offerings (*tshogs*).

---

<sup>25</sup> Atiśa is also known as Dīpaṃkāraśrījñāna, 982-1054 CE.

<sup>26</sup> Vide Karmay 1975, 1980a and 1980b for detailed discussions of these open letters. It is worth noting that “[t]he earliest source found to date which refers to a *sngags-log sun-'byin* of Zhi-ba-'od is *DSR* of Sa-pan Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan (1182-1251): *de'i de'i slob-ma zhi-ba-'od/ des kyang sngags-log sun 'byin-pa/ zhes bya'i bstan-cos mdzad ces zer/*--“The disciple of him (Lo-tsa-ba Rin-chen bzang-po), Zhi-ba-'od is said to have written a ‘Refutation of the Perverse Tantras. The next source which mentions a *springs-yig* of hi-ba-'od is *sngags-log sun-'byin shes-rab ral-gri* of Chag Lo-tsa-ba Chos-rje-dpal (1197-1264)” (Karmay 1980b, 11). See also Davidson 2005, 152-54.

<sup>27</sup> Vide in particular Karmay 1980a and 1975.

The ordinance of Ye shes 'od also mentions the religious practices of sanctified medicine (*sman sgrub*), an activity called “*bam sgrub*” which might refer to making effigies, and forms of offering (*mchod sgrub*) as worthy of concern and possible prohibition (Karmay 1980a, 152ff). Approximately a century later, Zhi ba 'od would follow his ancestor Ye shes 'od and issue his own edict denouncing similar practices.<sup>28</sup>

Atiśa composed a number of teachings reflecting similar anxieties while staying at Mtho lding, a centre of Buddhist learning in Tibet that was home to Rin chen bzang po. While at Mtho lding in the mid-eleventh century, Atiśa composed the *Bodhipathapradīpa* (and probably the *Bodhimārgadīpa-pañjikā*, also attributed to him), which discourages practitioners from engaging in erroneous praxes and declares that two of the four \**anuttaratantra* consecrations are inappropriate for celibate monastics. According to Karmay (1980a, 152), “[a]ll *chos-‘byung* speak of wrong tantric practices during this period, but none gives any precise account as to which or what kind of tantras were involved,” although he presumes that one of the Tantras being called into question was the *Gsang ba snying po* from the Mahāyoga cycle of the Nyingmapa.<sup>29</sup> Given the profusion of texts and interpretations circulating in Tibet, this heightened concern regarding the authenticity of teachings and the desire to discriminate between exoteric and esoteric teachings is not surprising. Erroneous interpretations of Tantras and the system of Mahāmudrā were of particular concern to many teachers, who strove to exert

---

<sup>28</sup> According to Karmay (1980b, 3; 11), Zhi ba 'od was probably the younger brother of Byang chub 'od, and thus also a grand nephew of Ye shes 'od. Karmay dates this letter to 1092 CE (1980b, 13-14); as he notes, this is a revision of his earlier suggestion of 1032 CE (1975, 151).

<sup>29</sup> See also Ruegg 1984, Karmay 1980a and 1980b, and Kapstein 2000. Davidson notes that not only did Zhi ba 'od's proscription include later *yoginī tantra* and *tilaka tantra*, but even such accepted texts as the *Pañcakrama* were identified as inauthentic (Davidson 2005, 154). According to Karmay (1980a, 152), the Indic authenticity of the *Gsang ba snying po* (*Guhyagarbha*) was questioned until a Sanskrit original was found at Bsam yas in the thirteenth century. The eleventh chapter of this text, “*Tshogs kyi dkyil 'khor*,” pertains to the practices of *sbyor*, *sgrol* and *tshogs*, with *sgrol* part of the *tshogs* and *sbyor ba* equivalent to *mchod pa* (Karmay 1980, 152; 159 n. 33).

order and control in order to avoid dangerous praxes. Matthew Kapstein makes the generalized observation that “[i]n the world of Tibetan Buddhism, as for Indian religious traditions more generally, orthopraxy was crucial, orthodoxy less so” (2000, 119). Yet, given that praxis is often informed by doxa, efforts toward establishing orthodoxa are also in evidence during this period, especially by more conservative interpreters and institutions.

One source of anxiety over doctrine was the difficulty of defining—and thus regulating—Tantra teachings such as the Mahāmudrā and Dzokchen, the latter of which is explicitly referred to in the letter composed by Ye shes ‘od.<sup>30</sup> David Ruegg observes that “whereas some Mahāmudrā teachings were fully recognized as genuine and valid, others were rejected either as execrable abominations . . . or as innovations having no canonical foundation” (1994, 376). Even though the principle of justifying authenticity through canonicity is not grounded in Indian Buddhism, Tibetans in this period made efforts to establish the authenticity of teachings through taxonomies of doxa together with hierarchies of categorization and codifications of terminology.<sup>31</sup> Jacob Dalton (2005) discusses the range of Indian and Tibetan doxographical

---

<sup>30</sup> “Now as the good karma of living beings is exhausted and the law of the kings is impaired, false doctrines called *rdzogs-chen* are flourishing in Tibet. Their views are false and wrong”; “*da lta las zad rgyal po’i khrims nyams pas / rdzogs chen ming btags chos log bod du dar / lta ba phyin ci log gi sar thogs pa*” (Karmay 1980a, 154). Of note is that this section of Ye shes ‘od’s letter laments that “As the ritual of the corpse has become popular the making of offerings in cemeteries is abandoned” (“*bam sgrub dar bas dur sa’i mchod pa stong*”); it also condemns cremation as an offence to the gods. Karmay (1980a, 160 n. 46) annotates this passage with a reference to the reply by Sog-zlog-pa Blo-gros Rgyal-mtshan (1552-1624):

*sngags gsar ma las kyang ro lang mkha’ spyod sgrub pa la sogs pa gsungs la / ‘di ni mtshan nyi tshang ba’i bam de dngos grub kyi rdzas su sgrub pa yin la / rot hams cad kyis bam sgrub tu rung ba ma bshad pas skyon de yang mi ‘bab bo / - ‘Even in the New Tantras it is said that there are sādhanas such as *Ro lang mkha’ spyod sgrub pa*. What is concerned here is that a corpse having the required qualities can be used as the substance for obtaining *siddhi*. As it is not said that any corpse would be suitable for practicing the *bam* rite, your charge therefore does not apply to’. However, in another place (n.d., 437) [Sog-zlog-pa Blo-gros Rgyal-mtshan] states that among the New Tantras there is also *Bam sgrub ro lang gser grub*. Presumably this work and *Ro lang mkha’ spyod sgrub pa* are identical, but no texts have been found. *Bam-sdrub* [*sic*] therefore has the same sense as *ro-sgrub* of which there is a story of a corpse having turned into gold, see *BZ*, 33. For another example of a passage in which the term *bam-sgrub* is used in the same context, see A.W. Macdonald, *Matériaux pour l’étude de la littérature populaire tibétaine*, Paris: 1967, 19.*

<sup>31</sup> See also Davidson 1990, 2002, 2005 and Doctor 2005.

systems, arguing for a reevaluation of the primacy of the four-fold schema of Kriyā, Caryā, Yoga and \*Anuttarayoga or \*Niruttarayoga which became paradigmatic in Tibet. He claims that these categories are not only ahistorical, but also conceal competing interests, philosophical views and systems of ritual practice. According to Dalton, the Tibetans strove to homogenize and control the “foreign intrusion of chaotic texts and rituals” that “arrived *en masse*” from the eighth to tenth centuries (2005, 162). The Tibetan system of codification was in place by the twelfth century and supported the primary doxographical division between “Nyingma” and “Sarma” textual and ritual traditions.

Counter to these efforts to order and regulate newly discovered teachings, this period also evidenced a tendency of skepticism—or even cynicism—toward attempts to formulate scholastic orthodoxies. Proponents of contemplative practices, regarded as heterodox by many conservative systematizers, often subverted attempts at dharma regulation by returning to canonical teachings, such as those contained in the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus. For example, the Second Karmapa, Karma Pakshi, argued that the limitations and circumscriptions promoted by 13<sup>th</sup>-century tenet systems fostered limited realization, myopia and ignorance rather than an understanding of the true nature of actuality (Kapstein 2000, 101-106). Karma Pakshi draws on the authority of the *Prajñāpāramitā* to support his position: “‘Tenets are like the edge of a sword. Tenets are like a poisonous plant. Tenets are like a flaming pit. Tenets are like the [poisonous] *kimpaka* fruit. Tenets are like spittle. Tenets are like an impure container. Tenets are reviled by all.’ Therefore, whatever tenets—whether good, bad, or mediocre—you might harbor are the causes of good, bad, or mediocre [conditions of] *saṃsāra*. They are devoid of the life-force of *nirvāṇa*.”<sup>32</sup> As we will see, Karma Pakshi’s iconoclasm echoes key teachings in

---

<sup>32</sup> As cited in Kapstein 2000, 102. Kapstein notes an earlier reference to the same passage made by Sa chen Kun-dga’ snying po (1092-1158)—a contemporary of Machik’s—in his *Rgyud sde spyi rnam gzhas chung ngu*; one

works attributed to Machik over a century earlier.

In comparison with the *snga dar* period of the eighth and ninth centuries, the period of the “Later Spread” was both vital and unruly, featuring an unrestricted influx and circulation of teachings and practices. Kapstein characterizes the period as one of “tantric free-for-all” (2000, 61). However, it should be remembered that conservative views on orthodoxy were not necessarily restricted to scholastics (Davidson 2005, 154). The problem of establishing the orthodoxy of teachings was common to many Tibetan Buddhists. Critics of the new scholastic systems argued against regimented practices and for the necessity of individual cultivation of lived experiences in the development of spiritual realizations. But of course, such individual cultivation resisted institutional control, inspiring the efforts of those advocating doxological constraints and appropriate methods for legitimating “Buddhadharma.”

### **DHARMA LINEAGES IN THE PERIOD OF THE “LATER SPREAD”**

*Chos lugs*, or Buddhist Dharma lineages, that have maintained a distinct identity in Tibet to the present were systematizers as well as nascent institution builders during period of the Later Spread. These so-called “New Schools”—the Sakyapa, Kagyüpa, and the Kadampa as assimilated into the Gelukpa—developed tenet systems and doxographies, often organized around particular classical commentators such as Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti and transmitted through orthodox figures such as Atīśa, Rin chen bzang po, Rñog Lo tsā ba and Pa tshab lo tsā ba. While these schools would become key political players in the cultural development of the Tibetan plateau, Dan Martin emphasizes that these three traditions were “arguably the three largest and most successful ‘lay initiated movements’ of the times,” given that their key founders

---

difference is that Kun dga’ snying po interprets “’*dod pa*” as “desire” rather than “tenets” as Karma Pakshi later does (Kapstein 2000, 244 n. 75).

or transmitters were laypersons, as were their followers (1996a, 23-24).

The Nyingmapa lineage was also developing—as well as being given—a particular identity during the Later Spread. In order to assert the authority of the teachings and texts that the Nyingmapa considered foremost in importance, practitioners who maintained their commitment to and belief in early transmissions of Buddhism to Tibet also became more organized. However, given that Nyingmapa *identity* was constituted through reaction to the institutional and doxological activities of the New Schools, the forms of organization undertaken by the Nyingmapa would continue to reflect these differences. For example, many learned and experienced Nyingmapa practitioners remained lay people and/or itinerant yogins, in contrast with the emphasis on celibate monasticism in the organization of the New Schools.

Due to the emphasis on such activities as transmission, exegesis and systematization by these indigenous traditions of Tibet, Ruegg has characterized this period as one of “full assimilation” of the Buddhadharmā (1979, 288). Yet it must be remembered that this was a dynamic time in the transmission and articulation of the Buddhadharmā by the Tibetans and their foreign colleagues. The identities of “schools” and “lineages” were still very fluid in Tibet, and individuals would study a variety of texts and practices with a variety of teachers from a variety of backgrounds. Machik Labdrön received her early teachings from the Abhidharma scholar, Drapa Ngonshé, who eventually encouraged her to study with the accomplished Vajrayāna master, Kyotön Sonam Lama. Karma Pakshi (1204-1283) was raised in a family of yoga practitioners before receiving Buddhist ordination and being recognized as the second Karmapa; he then continued his training in a diverse array of teachings with a variety of teachers. Kapstein makes a similar point about the fluid relationships between schools and doctrinal approaches in his discussion of self-representation in the history of Tibetan Buddhism. He qualifies this point

by stressing that the individuality of significant Tibetan thinkers must not be forgotten: “regardless of significant areas of overlap, there remain striking differences of approach and content among them” (2000, 119). Martin remarks on the “strong sense of freshness and vibrancy, and often an urgency, in their discussions of religious issues” that characterizes the works of great teachers from these lineages from the mid-12<sup>th</sup> to mid-13<sup>th</sup> centuries (1996, 47). Martin also points out that “the sectarian identities that have since become so familiar to us were not yet foregone conclusions,” and thus the popularity of “lay movements” and “accomplishment transmissions” must be fully considered in order to understand the complex Buddhist landscape during the era of the Later Spread (Martin 1996, 47). Moreover, sectarian identities did not prevent symbiotic relationships. Perhaps the most abiding symbiotic thread was between the Kagyü and Nyingma teachings, features of which are still referred to as “Ka-Nying.” These traditions have an affinity in their emphasis on experiential practice over scholastic doxographies.

### **CHÖD IN THE PERIOD OF THE LATER SPREAD**

The Buddhist Chöd tradition transmitted by Machik Labdrön is consonant with conservative movements in the period, in that it is grounded in orthodox Buddhist teachings, particularly an explicit dependence on the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus. Chöd was also heterodox in its organization, with a non-partisan orientation toward the significance of the lived experience of the practitioner. Chöd is often connected with the Zhi-jé teachings of the South Asian teacher, Padampa Sangyé, probably due to the fact that some historical materials suggest that Machik Labdrön received teachings—although not necessarily Chöd—from Padampa Sangyé. By the time it became popular to refer to the Eight Great Chariots of the Practice Lineages (*sgrub*



*brgyud shing rta chen po brgyad*), Zhijé and Chöd were considered linked. These “chariots” are the following lineages: 1) Snga ‘gyur Nyingma; 2) Kadam; 3) Kagyü; 4) Zhangs pa Kagyü; 5) Sakya; 6) Zhijé and Chöd; 7) Dus ‘khor or Sbyor drug (Kālacakra); and 8) Orgyan bsnyen sgrub. Unfortunately, the origins of this classificatory schema are somewhat obscure. The taxonomy is popularly considered to be a means for identifying the various lineages of teachings that were transmitted from India to Tibet; however, this transmission aspect seems to be a somewhat later development. The arrangement is often identified with Jamgön Kongtrül’s editing schema as featured first in the *Treasury of Knowledge* (*Shes bya kun khyab*)<sup>33</sup> and also used as an organizing principle for the *Treasury of Instructions*. In the *Treasury of Knowledge*, Jamgön Kongtrül credits the Nyingma treasure revealer, Phreng bo gter ston Shes rab ‘od zer (aka. Prajñāraśmi, 1517-1584), for the initial classification of schools.<sup>34</sup> Unlike several of these lineages, most notably the schools of Nyingma, Kagyü, Sakya and Kadam, Chöd did not retain its independent status. It is often claimed that Chöd is found in all four of the dominant schools-- Kadam (both alone and in relation to Geluk), Sakya, Nyingma and Kagyü. However, there is scant evidence for a “Sakya Chöd,” unless one wants to draw parallels between Sakya *Ku sā li’i tshogs bsags* practice and the Chöd offering of the aggregates.<sup>35</sup> Even if one were to do this, it

---

<sup>33</sup> Vide Harding’s translation of Kongtrül’s *Treasury of Knowledge*. It is interesting to note that Padampa Sangyé, as the source for Zhijé and Chöd, is the only Indian in this lineage (2007, 27).

<sup>34</sup> In email correspondence, Matthew Kapstein noted that his student Marc-Henri Deroche is working on Phreng bo gter ston’s root text, together with Mkhyen brtse dbang po’s commentary. Kapstein says that Deroche has not yet found an earlier classification, but agreed with me that, given the work of ‘Gos lo tsa ba ad Dpa’ bo gtsug lag, similar classifications were circulating. 19th century work has been done on this topic by scholars such as Zhe chen rgyal tshab, in his text *Pad ma dkar po*.

<sup>35</sup> For example, Sarah Harding claims that “Chöd is practiced widely in one form or another in all sects of Tibetan Buddhism as well as in the Bön tradition” (2003, 47). Similar statements are made by others, including Gyatso (1985, 337), Savvas (1990, 41; 145; 165), and Edou (1996, 53). E. de Rossi-Filibeck, although remarking that “[t]he doctrine of *gCod* was received, even if with adequate adaptations, by the other schools of Buddhism,” has a more nuanced perspective which does not substantiate the existence of Chöd in Sakya: “[t]he *gCod* teaching (*man nags* [sic] precepts and *ñams len* practice) was accepted by the bKa’ brgyud pa, by the Karma pa, a branch of the same school, by the Jo nān pa, by the Śāns pa and by some rÑyiñ ma pa traditions not only, standing by the authority of

appears that this practice of the Kusali offering probably began with Lce Bstan 'dzin phrin las, who was born in the 18th century and composed the text, *Nā ro mkha' spyod ma'i ku sā li'i tshogs bsags dang 'brel bar gnyis 'dzin 'khrul ba gcod pa'i man ngag*.<sup>36</sup> The *Sa skya Ngor chos 'byung* does mention Chöd, but its dates are difficult to determine since it was composed between the 16<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (it was published in 1705).<sup>37</sup>

While forms of Chöd praxis have been assimilated into a number of different Tibetan schools, Machik often explicitly characterizes her teachings and herself as outside of contemporaneous institutions and doxological debates. David Jackson (1994, 35-37) cites a discussion between Sgam po pa and the Dge bshes Brgya yon bdag on the inferiority of five other contemporaneous Tibetan Buddhist traditions—Dzokchen, Mtshan nyid, Pha rol tu phyin pa, Sngags pa and Kadam. All these traditions are superseded by Sgam po pa's Mahāmudrā tradition, which is “outside the standard textually expounded Buddhist doctrines” (35). Machik employs similar rhetoric when she dismisses a range of traditions in *The Great Speech Chapter*:

The nihilist has knowledge of the non-existent object; the absolutist has knowledge of the changeless object; the śrāvaka has knowledge of the perceiver and perceived object; the pratyekabuddha has knowledge of the emptiness of dependent relations; the Mind Only student has knowledge of his mind's own knowledge; the Madhyamaka student has knowledge that is freed from elaborations; the Father Tantra student has knowledge of bliss, clarity and winds; the Mother Tantra student has knowledge of bliss, emptiness, and extensive offerings; students of skillful means and wisdom have knowledge of non-duality; students of Mahāmudrā have knowledge of transcending the mind; students of Dzogchen have knowledge of the great primordality.<sup>38</sup>

---

the source, by the same dGe lugs pa” (1983, 48).

<sup>36</sup> The *Ku sa li'i tshogs bsags* versions I have located are as follows: *ku sa li'i tshogs gsog* by Phag mo gru pa rdo rje rgyal po (1110-1170, Phag mo Bka' rgyud); *nā ro mkha' spyod ma'i ku sā li'i tshogs bsags dang 'brel bar gnyis 'dzin 'khrul ba gcod pa'i man ngag* by Lce Bstan 'dzin phrin las (b.18<sup>th</sup> c., Sakya); *Ku sa li'i tshogs bsags* by Dpa' sprul O rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po (1808-1887, Nyingma); and *Ku sa li'i tshogs bsags* by Ju Mi pham rgya mtsho (1846-1912, Nyingma).

<sup>37</sup> For more about this work, see the section on *chos 'byung* in relation to Chöd included in this present study.

<sup>38</sup> “*chad pas cang med yul du rig // rtag pas 'gyur med yul du rig // nyan thos gzung 'dzin yul du rig // rang rgyal rten 'brel stong par rig // sems tsam rang rig sems su rig // dbu ma spros bral yin par rig // pha rgyud bde gsal*

However, in this context, Machik does not claim that Mahāmudrā is superior—as does Gampopa (Sgam po pa)—nor does she claim that Chöd supersedes all other Buddhist teachings. Rather, she refers to the Great Mother—Prajñāpāramitā—as the ground of all, and she posits that “as for all knowledge, it is knowledge of the knowledge of objects. Subjects are without identity (*de nyid min*). Lacking an object, the mind is without knowledge; one is fettered by knowledge of whatever is known.”<sup>39</sup> Through the objectification of classes of teachings, the mind is restricted. Rangjung Dorjé, who wrote the earliest extant commentary on this text by Machik (which I have translated in an appendix to this study and address further in a later chapter), chooses to interpret Machik’s observation from his own doctrinal standpoint. Although Rangjung Dorjé agrees with Machik in cautioning against the myopia that can arise from adherence to tenet systems, he augments his gloss of this passage with a reference to Tilopa in order to privilege the Mahāmudrā perspective. Tilopa maintains that although vehicles including Mantra, Pāramitā, Vinaya, Sūtra, and Abhidharma have their own textual traditions and tenet systems, they all embody the luminosity of the Mahāmudrā; however, adherents of the various systems are blinded by their own prejudices and are unable to see the luminous Mahāmudrā.<sup>40</sup> By reading

---

*rlung du rig // ma rgyud bde stong rgyas ‘debs rig // thabs dang shes rab gnyis med rig // phyag chen blo las ‘das par rig // rdzogs chen ye yin chen por rig’ {14/463}.*

<sup>39</sup> “*de ltar rig pa thams cad ni // yul du rig pa’i rig pa yin // yul can rnam ni de nyid min // yul med sems la rig pa med // gang rig pa yi rig pas bcings’ {14/463}.*

<sup>40</sup> “*de skad du yang / te lo pas / sngags su smra dang pha rol phyin pa dang // ‘dul ba mdo sde mngon pa la sogs pa // rang rang gzhung dang grub pa’i mtha’ yis ni / ‘od gsal phyag rgya chen po mthong mi ‘gyur / zhe ‘dod byung bas ‘od gsal ma mthong bsgrubs // zhes bshad pa ltar’ {74/522}.*

“Moreover, as is said by Tilopa, ‘Mantra expressions, pāramitā, vinaya, Sūtra, abhi[dharma] ([chos] mngon pa), and the like, as each has its own textual tradition and tenet system, the luminous Mahāmudrā will not be seen; one is not able to see the luminosity because of one’s own wishes.’ In that way it is explained.”

Rangjung Dorjé continues:

“*yul / yul can du rig pa’i don de ma yin la / yul / yul can bden med du gyur pas / rig bya rig byed gnyis med du gyur pa ni / chos nyid de bzhin nyid yin no zhes pa’o’ {74/522}.*

“It is said that, ‘objects and subjects are not the aim of enlightened knowing (*rig pa’i don*). There is no duality of knowable objects and knowing subjects because objects and subjects are without true existence; things themselves (*chos nyid; dharmatā*) are exactly like that/thatness (*de bzhin nyid; tathāta*).’”

Machik through Tilopa, Rangjung Dorjé incorporates Chöd into Mahāmudrā, a move which acts as a precursor to the institutionalization of Chöd into the Kagyü tradition.

In another teaching attributed to Machik, the tenth chapter of *The Great Explanation*, which takes the form of a *lung bstan* or prophetic text, the author takes a stronger iconoclastic position. In her replies to questions posed by one of her spiritual daughters, Machik claims that her system simultaneously is consistent with all dharma teachings as well as independent of both Sūtra and Tantra teachings and commentaries. She first states that “the meaning of my Dharma system is not especially dissimilar from other [systems], either Sūtra or Tantra, that have arisen from the instructions of the buddhas. . . . There is nothing in the meaning of any such outer or inner Dharma teachings, moreover, that is discordant with me.”<sup>41</sup> Here she emphasizes that her teachings are essentially *buddhavacana* and thus not to be distinguished from the authoritative teachings of the buddhas. However, as I will discuss further in the next chapter, her strategy for establishing the authority of her teachings requires her to situate herself within the authoritative lineage of the buddhas and simultaneously to acknowledge her innovative contributions. In the same section of *The Great Explanation*, Machik notes that her teachings are distinctive because they do not rely on direct quotations from scholarly commentary, but rather reflect the *meaning* of the dharma without secondary interpolation. This is an example of how Machik legitimates her teachings through a strategy that verges on iconoclasm. In doing so, her discourse uses the dialectical relationship between ahistoricity and historicity: she acknowledges her reliance on and inheritance of the Buddhist teachings while foregrounding her unique position to interpret and transmit these teachings according to her particular historical situation. This tactic of negotiating ahistorical and historical components is a powerful factor in the survival of cultural

---

<sup>41</sup> “Nga’i chos lugs ‘di don la gzhan dang mi ‘dra ba’i khyad par med sangs rgyas kyi bka’ las byung ba’i mdo rgyud gnyis dang. . . . nga dang mi mthun pa yang chos phyi nang gang gi don la med do” {*Rnam bshad chen mo* 404}.

ideologies.<sup>42</sup>

Martin has characterized lay movements of the eleventh and twelfth centuries such as Chöd as “an ‘alternative second spread,’ in which lay spiritual leadership and potential were provided for.” Martin acknowledges that these movements often did not have a sustained lifespan: “for the most part they eventually either faded away or were absorbed into or directly opposed and defeated by the emerging monastic institutions” (1996a, 24). He further argues that lay religious movements of the eleventh and twelfth centuries must be considered “in the light of different religious points of view about the ideal sources of authoritative guidance and blessing”: perspectives which emphasize individual personal experience along with proximity to or identity with enlightened beings often do not have the same authority as perspectives which are legitimated through a more formalized lineage of teaching transmissions (1996a, 47). Martin cautions against a common scholarly myopia: “Too often we assume that everyone in Tibetan culture did, or had to, share a single vision on these sorts of issues” (1996a, 47). Yet, given the difficulty of locating or dating source material, it is understandable that this area of study is less developed than that of the scholastic and monastic traditions.

In contrast to Martin, Davidson has a more ambivalent assessment of traditions such as Padampa Sangyé’s Zhijé and their assimilation into the Tibetan environment of the eleventh century. Davidson notes that Padampa Sangyé’s extant texts demonstrate an originality that bespeaks the influence of “Tibetan social realities and images” on them (2005, 246-9). But Davidson also writes of Zhijé as a “curious rubric” which includes a “highly differentiated

---

<sup>42</sup> My thinking here has been influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche’s observations as presented in Peter Preuss’ 1980 translation of *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*. Although Nietzsche does not explicitly theorize a dialectical relationship between ahistoricity and historicity, he does give material to think about the relationship between the “historical,” “unhistorical” and “superhistorical,” with the latter two as “antidotes” to the former in the project of existence. As Nietzsche writes, “By the word ‘the unhistorical’ I denote the art and the strength of being able to *forget* and enclose oneself in a limited *horizon*: ‘superhistorical’ I call the powers which guide the eye away from becoming and toward that which gives existence an eternal and stable character, toward *art* and *religion*” (1980, 62).

ideology and practice” with greater “inconsistency and discontinuity” than he has seen in his study of Tantra traditions.<sup>43</sup> According to Davidson, the “sense of insubstantiality” was not limited to the teachings alone, but “extended to Padampa’s Tibetan disciples as well, for the holders of the several Zhiché traditions imitated Padampa himself and tended to wander hither, thither and yon all over Tibet, collecting odd scraps of teachings and practicing in disparate environments” and “were not motivated to construct long-lived centers” (op. cit. 249).<sup>44</sup> The somewhat disparaging language used by Davidson is evidence of the critical attitude that remains prevalent in discussions of iconoclastic yogic traditions of Buddhism, even those that were popular and important. Conservative scholastic traditions have been more successful at defining orthodoxy and orthopraxy, even among contemporary scholars.

Of course, those positioned—voluntarily or not—outside of traditional lineages had reason to exercise skepticism regarding orthodoxy. Unfortunately, we do not know how explicitly competitive Machik was in such a *melée*; however, the continued transmission and spread of Chöd up to the present day speaks to her success as a charismatic figure. Machik was obviously adept at transmitting and interpreting traditional teachings in a sanctionable yet distinctive manner. In his discussion of authority and ambition during this period, Kapstein observes that “a distinctive vision that at once established both the personal virtuosity of the author and his (or in rare cases, her) mastery of what was sanctioned by tradition became a

---

<sup>43</sup> Although Davidson undergirds his observations by pointing out that he has “spent several decades reading tantric texts,” and his contributions to the Indic and Tibetan studies are vast, it is worth noting that he perpetuates the problematic claim that Machik was Padampa’s “most important female disciple” (2005, 290), with Chöd developing out of “ritual conversation” between the two. As I have pointed out elsewhere in this study, this claim cannot be adequately substantiated by sources.

<sup>44</sup> Davidson states that “the highly differentiated ideology and practice included with Zhiché pushes the envelope [of inconsistency and discontinuity] further than I can recall having previously seen. . . . Although Zhiché became a featured item in many teachers’ repertoires, it did not maintain a strong stable environment, a common occurrence among yogic traditions in late-eleventh-century Tibet. This was in great part because those attracted to such eccentric personalities tended to emulate their behavior and were not motivated to construct long-lived centers” (2005, 249).

fundamental means of self-representation” (2000, 120). Here Kapstein subtly points to the issue of gender exclusivity in lineage construction, and in a footnote to the above statement he explains that he means “her” to refer to Machik as “the best example” of the “rare case” of a female presence (2000, 249 n. 171). Yet, others, including Martin and Davidson, have posited that this environment was relatively hospitable to women practitioners of esoteric traditions.

Davidson observes that, especially in contrast with India, women practitioners were important and “gained greater expressive power” from the eleventh to early twelfth century in Tibetan regions, “especially in Tsang Province where all these women either studied or lived” (2005, 293). Martin elaborates that “[c]onsidering their rarity in later times, women religious leaders and lineage holders were relatively much more common in the late 11th through early 13th centuries. This is particularly true of the early Zhi-byed-pa and Chöd schools, but one finds it also in a 13th-century Mahāmudrā lineage coming from Mitrayogin . . . and in some of the early Lam-‘bras transmissions” (Martin 1996a, 35 n. 29). Erberto Lo Bue suggests that the Nyingma tradition’s lack of power allowed it to support women as active participants; he further observes that “[t]he emphasis placed by Tibetan authors on the fact that, thanks to Ma-gcig Labsgron, Buddhist teachings were taken for the first and only time from Tibet to India seems to reflect a certain amount of national pride and a spirit of independence from canonical orthodoxy which are characteristic of the *rNying-ma-pa* and *Bon-po* traditions and differentiate themselves from other Buddhist schools in Tibet” (1994, 486).<sup>45</sup> With the increasing dominance of conservative factions and male-dominated monastic institutions, female practitioners—as well as heterodox male practitioners—would become less influential and leave few historical traces. Davidson notes that as the political and cultural identity of Central Tibet developed into “a

---

<sup>45</sup> Of course, whether or not it is a “fact” that Chöd teachings literally went from Tibet to India is not easy to establish.

paragon of Buddhist practice—eclipsing even India,” women tended to be suppressed and silenced rather than supported and empowered.<sup>46</sup>

Although Chöd traditions have managed to survive to the present, the heterodox environment in which they originally flourished was gradually replaced by a culture of male-dominated orthodox institutions that have been effective in limiting women’s participation. At the same time, it must be appreciated that male commentators and practitioners have been central to the projects of transmission and innovation in Chöd traditions through their history. Because Chöd has been profoundly transformed from its origins in the teachings of Machik, it is vital to return to a close and critical reading of the sources available. Much work also remains to be done in understanding how Chöd was preserved and transmitted. Traditions such as Chöd developed their own identities through an innovative elaboration of philosophical interpretations and ritual methodologies. They also incorporated elements that could be transmitted through popular culture, including hagiographical narratives, songs, and musical compositions (especially important to the continuing popularity of Chöd). The popularity of such elements among monastic and lay communities was directly connected to the success and longevity of the tradition. The transmissions of Chöd were disseminated through lay lineages and also were appropriated by monastic lineages: the profusion of its forms contributed to its cultural survival.

---

<sup>46</sup> “But when Central Tibet became increasingly the focus of international interest and was held up as a paragon of Buddhist practice—eclipsing even India—then Tibetans began to assume some of the unfortunate standards of behavior that called for the suppression of women in India” (Davidson 2005, 293).



## CHAPTER TWO: CHÖD TRANSMISSIONS AND LINEAGES

In this chapter, I will be examining various textual sources that provide indications of the lineages of Buddhist Chöd teachings. There are contradictory and diverse transmission lineages presented in the various emic sources that we have on the Chöd tradition, suggesting conflicting ideas about the development of the tradition and authority.<sup>47</sup> Understanding transmissions of Chöd teachings is particularly difficult because they represent two different means of authenticating the tradition. Transmission lineages record the actual passing on of teachings, thus representing the renewal of the tradition, but they also retrospectively associate Chöd teachings with precursor figures, thus legitimating Chöd through its association with existing traditions. As with Machik Labdrön's development of teachings that were both innovative and traditional, the lineage histories of Chöd both reinterpret and affirm the existing tradition. As a corrective to the prevailing image of Chöd as an ahistorical and uniform system, the critical comparison of transmission sources can help to build a complex picture of this development and legitimation of Chöd traditions.

Chöd lineages have been examined by other scholars, most extensively by Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz (1993; 227ff).<sup>48</sup> As is made evident by Kollmar-Paulenz's schematics diagramming the transmissions of Chöd according to the various source texts she surveys, there are a variety of opinions about the transmission history of this tradition.<sup>49</sup> While several lineages

---

<sup>47</sup> "The classification of all of the transmissions and teachings of Machik's Chöd is extremely confusing and conflicting, and it is not the subject of this introduction. See Edou (1996), Kollmar-Paulenz (1993) and (1998), Gyatso (1985), and Orofino (1987)" (Harding 2003, 292, n. 59).

<sup>48</sup> One source that Kollmar-Paulenz did not consider is the *Man ngag zab mo bdud kyi gcod yul stan thog gcig ma'i gzhung* by Rje smon lam Mtha' yas rgya mtsho, a Gelukpa scholar who was born in 1863. This text is in the *Gcod tshogs: The Collected Gcod Teachings of the Dge-lugs-pa Tradition* (Dharamsala: LTWA, 1986, 291-43). I have completed a translation of this text and will be presenting it in a future study.

<sup>49</sup> Others have presented similar lists, although none as comprehensively as Kollmar-Paulenz 1993. For comparison, see Gyatso (1985), Orofino (1987), Edou (1996), Machik Labdrön and Harding (2003), Zong Rinpoche and Molk

of Chöd have been traced, these lineages have not been considered in terms of their historical contexts, with attention to the tradition(s) of the author(s) and the period of composition. In order to understand both how Chöd legitimated itself as a tradition and how it was regenerated, these lineages must be analyzed in terms of dates of transmissions (if they can be gleaned), identities of recipients, and doxological considerations.

Although much more work needs to be done to complete a comprehensive analysis of Chöd sources, this chapter will outline some of the important historical developments and different tangents in the lineage transmissions of Chöd. In general, although there is agreement that Chöd has been adopted by various Tibetan schools, many scholars represent Chöd as a unitary and unified tradition, without concern for how, when and to whom Chöd was transmitted, nor for the temporal and practical differences between the transmissions. The role of interpretation in the transmission of Chöd has thereby been obscured.<sup>50</sup> In this chapter, I consider a range of presentations of transmission lineages in terms of chronology and institutional affiliations. These documents help us to identify key figures and to trace lineages and traditions in the development and transmission of Buddhism in Tibet. This survey will help to undergird further analyses of the “movement” of Chöd and the stakes for legitimation of the tradition. Ultimately, this study will pave the way for future analysis of shifts in doxa and praxis depending on the author and his institutional affiliations during the period of composition.

I begin here with a brief overview of precursor texts and Chöd transmission lineages. Next, I survey a number of *chos 'byung* (Dharma histories) and *rnam thar* (spiritual biographies)

---

(2006), and Lodö Rinpoche (2007).

<sup>50</sup> In a later section of this study, I will consider a particular case of interpretation involving the *Bka' tshoms chen mo*, attributed to Machik Labdrön, and the earliest extant commentary on this teaching by the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé, approximately two hundred years later.

to outline key issues in legitimating and renewing the tradition.<sup>51</sup> I then examine three texts central to considering Chöd lineages: *The Great Explanation rnam thar*, which appears to be the earliest extant text (ca. 14<sup>th</sup> century with possible inclusion of earlier elements) discussing transmission lineages of Chöd; *The Blue Annals*, a highly-regarded 15<sup>th</sup>-century *chos 'byung* text discussing a wide range of figures and teachings, including Machik Labdrön and Chöd transmissions; and the lineage list contained in another 15<sup>th</sup>-century text, the *Ring brgyud gsol 'debs*, which is important to my project since it explicitly contextualizes the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé within a Chöd transmission lineage. These texts chart key developments in the transmission of Chöd teachings. The chapter concludes with my own provisional genealogy of key figures in the development of Chöd up to Rangjung Dorjé.

## CHÖD PRECURSORS

While in the next chapter I will be considering how elements of Buddhist philosophy were incorporated into Chöd teachings, here I will evaluate how a range of texts associated the development of Chöd with extant Buddhist traditions. For Machik and later Buddhist Chöd teachers, it was crucial to situate Chöd in relation to established Buddhist teachings. Tibetan authors have identified a variety of different teachings as precursors to the Chöd teachings of Machik. In his *The Blue Annals*, Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel cites Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* (V.34)<sup>52</sup> as a fifth century Indic source for Chöd: "Mental afflictions are generated from holding on to tendencies (*phra rgyas*), from the presence of external objects, and from inappropriate

---

<sup>51</sup> Another genre that is often useful is *gsan yig*, or records of spiritual teachings received by individuals, for example, in Mkhas grub's *gsung 'bum*, *Mkhas grub thams cad mkhyen pa dge legs dpal bzang po'i gsan yig bzhugs so* (ka 56-61).

<sup>52</sup> The *Deb ther sngon po* quotes: "*phra rgyas spangs pa ma yin dang / yul ni nye bar gnas pa dang / tshul bzhin ma yin yid byed las / nyon mongs skye ste*" (1140-1141).

mental activities.” (2003, 1139-62; 1976, 980-99). Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel’s commentary then links the *Abhidharmakośa* to the system of Chöd: “What should be cut are emotional reactions. If these emotional reactions are generated from tendencies, and objects, and mental fabrications of inappropriate mental activities, when the yogin has contact with an object, karmic propensities (*bag chags*) are taken on. It is called ‘*gcod yul*’ because one precisely cuts through the emotional reactions preceded by the mental fabrication of inappropriate mental activities and objects.”<sup>53</sup> In *The Blue Annals*, and in Thu’u bkwan’s *grub mtha’*, the authors point to the *Hevajratantra* as influencing Chöd’s concern about place. Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel maintains that Chöd praxis conforms to Tantra because it conforms to the *Hevajratantra*. He cites three passages from the *Hevajratantra* which resonate with three fundamental principles of Chöd: “Good meditation is [practiced] at first [near] a solitary tree, in a charnel ground, at the household of the Terrible mothers, at night, and then ultimately at a remote place” (VI.6);<sup>54</sup> “having generously given one’s body, after that one can correctly perform the practice” (VI.19),<sup>55</sup> and “truly whatever asura is before one, even if it comes like Indra, moving with a lion’s form one is not afraid of it” (VI.25).<sup>56</sup> These three themes in the *Hevajratantra*—appropriate space for practice, the offering of one’s body, and the development of fearlessness—are elemental in Chöd.

---

<sup>53</sup> “*gcad [gcod] par bya ba ni nyon mongs yin la / nyon mongs de dag phra rgyal dang yul dang tshul bzhin ma yin pa’i yid la byed pa las skye bas na / rnal ‘byor pas yul de nyer bcug nas bag chags blang ste / tshul bzhin ma yin pa’i yid la byed pa sngon du ‘gro ba’i nyon mongs rnam yul gyi thog de nyid du gcod par byed pas gcod yul zhes bya’o*” (Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel 2003, 1141).

<sup>54</sup> “*ji ltar rjes su mthun na / brtag pa gnyis pa las / shing gcig dang ni dur khrod dang / ma mo’i khyim dang mtshan mo dang / yang na dben pa’i bas mtha ru / sgom pa bzang bar brjod par bya*” (Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel 2003, 1139). One might note that this *Hevajratantra* quote itself echoes the *Samudayasūtra* of the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus.

<sup>55</sup> “*lus kyi sbyin pa sbyin byas nas / phyi nas spyod pa yang dag spyad /*” (Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel 2003, 1139).

<sup>56</sup> “*nges par sngon du lha min gang / brgya byin lta bu ‘ongs na yang / de la ‘jigs par mi bya ste / seng ge’i gzugs kyi rnam par rgyu*” (Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel 2003, 1139).

Karma chags med, in his 17<sup>th</sup> century text, *Gcod kyi gdengs bshad nyung nyur bsdus pa bzugs pa'i dbu phyogs*,<sup>57</sup> identifies four different Indic sources of Chöd, which might be considered lineage, or perhaps proto-lineage, sources. These are Āryadeva the Brāhmin's *The Great Poem*; Nāropa's *Ro snyoms*; Orgyan's *Khrul Gcod*; and Padampa Sangyé's *Zhijé*. Jamgön Kongtrül (1813-1899) has a similar list in his *Treasury of Knowledge*, differing only in the substitution of an unknown lineage or text referred to as the *Bka' brgyud don gcod* for Āryadeva's *The Great Poem*.<sup>58</sup> However, Kongtrül is not consistent in which texts he includes as relevant precursors to the Chöd system. For example, he does not include the *Bka' brgyud don gcod* in his collection of Chöd texts in the *Treasury of Instructions*, but he does include Āryadeva's *The Great Poem*. In his *Treasury of Instructions*, he lists the following texts as Chöd “gzhung rtsa ba,” that is, root texts for the tradition of Chöd: *The Great Poem* by Āryadeva, translated by Padampa Sangyé and revised by Zhwa ma Lo tswa ba; *The Great Speech Chapter* by Machik Labdrön; *Shes rab kyi pha rol ty phyin pa gcod kyi gzhung dang man ngag mtha' dag gi yang bcud zab don thugs kyi snying po*; *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag gcod yul gyi gzhung 'grel zag med sbrang rtsi*, by Drung pa Ru pa; *A Commentary on The Great Speech Chapter* by Rangjung Dorjé; *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag gcod kyi gzhung shes rab skra rtse'i sa gzhung spel ba rin po che'i gter mdzod*; and *The Supplementary Chapter of oral instructions of the Prajñāpāramitā*. In his *Zhijé and Chöd History*, Dharmasenggé, a near contemporary with Jamgön Kongtrül, mentions teachings by others which bear similarities to Machik's Chöd teachings: the *Khrul gcod gter ma* cycles of Orgyan Rinpoche (n.d.); the pure visions received by Thang stong rgyal po (1361-1485);<sup>59</sup> a Chöd teaching on offering the

---

<sup>57</sup> In *Tshogs las*, 229-239.

<sup>58</sup> Paro: Lama Ngodup, 1976, Vol. 4, 159-160.

aggregates articulated by Rgod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje (1189-1258);<sup>60</sup> and the *Ro snyoms* teachings by Nāropa (70a).<sup>61</sup> In this same passage, Dharmasenggé situates Rangjung Dorjé as an important inheritor of Chöd, explaining that he is responsible for having clarified previous erroneous ideas about Chöd. In subsequent sections of this chapter and in chapter six, I explain why Rangjung Dorjé is a pivotal figure in the development of the Chöd tradition.

It appears that there were teachings in circulation explicitly using the trope of “Chöd” as a technical term in practice from at least the time of Padampa Sangyé’s maternal uncle, Āryadeva the Brahmin, and his verse teaching entitled *The Great Poem on the Prajñāpāramitā*.<sup>62</sup> This text is frequently associated with Chöd by later authors, including Karma chags med and Jamgön Kongtrül, as a precursor to Machik’s Chöd teachings, or as a (or even *the*) “root text” for Chöd. This piece of philosophical prose was transmitted to Tibet by Āryadeva’s nephew, Padampa Sangyé, who traversed the area giving his teachings on Zhijé. The recitation of this text to Machik by Padampa Sangyé may have been the transmission of the teaching that became the basis of the Chöd tradition.<sup>63</sup> Padampa Sangyé is famous for his development of the Zhijé

---

<sup>59</sup> I think that Edou must be referring to the *gter ma* on Chöd recovered by Thang stong rgyal po; he only provides a reference to Cyrus Stearns’ 1980 M.A. thesis in this regard. See, for example, *Ma gcig gsang spyod snyan brgud las / dge sdig ‘khrul spong rgyu ‘bras gsal ba’i don ston bzhugs so*. In *Thang stong chos mdzod, tha*, edited by Chos kyi blo gros. 337-358.

<sup>60</sup> *Tshogs bsog mchod sbyin gyi zhal gdams (Oral Instructions on Completing the Accumulations [of Merit and Wisdom] Through Giving Homage and Offerings)*, in *Gsung ‘bum*, Vol. 2, 375-382. This practice is not explicitly referred to as “Chöd”; however, as Edou notes, this text “does mention an offering of the aggregates to the lamas, yidams, and to the demons, for the benefit of beings, after separating one’s body and mind, thereby completing the accumulations of meritorious activity. This technique seems quite close indeed to Machik’s Chöd tradition” (1996, 188 n. 2). Rgod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje is mentioned in Dharmasenggé’s *Transmission History*, 550.

<sup>61</sup> Edou (1996, 79) has a somewhat similar list.

<sup>62</sup> I will be discussing this trope further in the next chapter in a section on etymology and Chöd.

<sup>63</sup> However, it might be the case that this connection to Āryadeva the Brahmin through his nephew Padampa is an association that is made explicit in later transmissions of the tradition, such as with Dharmasenggé.

teachings, which are sometimes discussed in complement with Chöd,<sup>64</sup> whereas Machik is always spoken of as the female teacher of Chöd. Both Zhijé and Chöd teachings are associated with Prajñāpāramitā teachings, with Zhijé emphasizing practices which pacify suffering and negativities, while Chöd emphasizes cutting through the root of mind as a means for eradicating clinging.

An abiding question in the study of Tibetan Buddhist Chöd is the historical connection between Padampa Sangyé and Machik Labdrön. Not all Chöd transmission lineages acknowledge either or both of these figures, although it is commonplace to posit that Machik Labdrön received teachings known as “Chöd” from Padampa Sangyé. Some scholars have contested the historicity of this transmission. For example, Janet Gyatso argues that, although it is “summarily stated that [Padampa Sangyé] transmitted Gcod to the Tibetan yoginī Ma-gcig Lab-sgron, [. . .] in fact the histories of Gcod do not really support this.”<sup>65</sup> Some sources present Padampa Sangyé as the “founder” of the Chöd teachings, with Machik as the authoritative source of “female Chöd.”<sup>66</sup> It is likely that Padampa Sangyé and Machik met, and it would not be surprising if Machik had received Zhijé teachings from Padampa Sangyé, given that these are the teachings for which he is renowned. It is also possible that Kyotön Sonam Lama (ca. 11<sup>th</sup> c.) received teachings on Chöd from Padampa Sangyé and that it was he who then directly

---

<sup>64</sup> E. de Rossi-Filibek (1983, 47), citing Thu’u bkwan’s *grub mtha’* (107) and Gene Smith’s “Introduction” to Kongtrul’s *Encyclopedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture* (ed. Lokesh Chandra, New Delhi, 1970, 66), states that Chöd maintained “a major individuality in respect to the *Zi byed*, a system with which it had common roots, so much so that often the *Gcod* was seen as *yan lag* of the *Zi byed*.”

<sup>65</sup> Gyatso 1985, 328. See also Kollmar-Paulenz 1998 and Machik Labdrön/Harding 2003.

<sup>66</sup> Ronald M. Davidson has called Padampa Sangyé “the most influential Indian yogin in late-eleventh- and early-twelfth-century Tibet,” and an exemplar of “Indian religious fluidity”: Padampa, with his creative transmissions of Buddhist teachings, “contributed an accelerating sense of openness to the religious zeitgeist” (2005, 245; 16; 246). Later in his introduction, Davidson mentions “the temporary efflorescence of women’s practice with Chö” in the early twelfth century. It is not particularly clear why he genders Chöd in this context (2005, 16). Drawing on limited secondary sources, Davidson presents a brief section on Machik and Chöd (2005, 290-291), uncritically perpetuating the traditional belief that Machik received the Chöd system of teachings from Padampa (even though he cites an article by Janet Gyatso in which she strongly suggests otherwise).

transmitted these teachings to Machik. However, it is important to note that Machik does not mention Zhijé teachings in texts that are attributed to her. Although the historical origins of the Chöd teachings are difficult to establish, the traditional perspective remains that there was an early connection between Padampa Sangyé's Zhijé teachings and the Chöd tradition, and that Machik was a spiritual heir to Padampa Sangyé, as well as a genetrix in her own right. There is no satisfactory evidence that there was a Buddhist Chöd lineage of transmissions identified as such until Machik started to describe and categorize her own teachings.<sup>67</sup>

According to Dharmasenggé's *chos 'byung* text, Padampa Sangyé and Machik met in Dingri.<sup>68</sup> Though in this text Padampa Sangyé does not transmit any teaching to Machik, following her meeting with him, she studies the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā* and liberates her mind through cutting.<sup>69</sup> Once she has achieved this accomplishment, Machik

<sup>67</sup> It is important to note that the titles of many of the extant texts associated with Machik signify that they are intended as commentarial teachings on the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus, e.g. *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa zab mo gcod kyi man ngag gi gzhung bka' tshoms chen mo bzhugs so* (*The Great Speech Chapter, the textual tradition of the oral instructions of the profound Chöd of Prajñāpāramitā*).

<sup>68</sup> Dingri, La Stod, was a site where Padampa Sangyé often spent time meditating in a cave and where people gathered to hear his teachings.

*ma cig gi sras la'ang ming srid lnga ru 'dod pa dang / bzhi dang gsum du 'dod pa yod kyang / yongs su grags pa rgyal ba don grub dang / thod smyon bsam grub / lcam mo la 'dus [27b3] gsum nges par snang / mtshan gyi rnam grangs tsam du zad / de nas jo mos dbus gtsang gi rgyal khams phyogs med 'grim zhing / la stodding rir dam pa rgya gar mjal du byon pas / dam pa rgya [27b4] gar gyi mngon shes kyis gzigs nas / ye shes kyi mkha' 'gro ma lab gyi sgron ma sang nang par byon par gda' / khyed ding ri ba rnams bsu ba la chas shig gsungs / de bzhin du bgyis te ding [27b5] rir byon nas zhag gsum bzhi bzhugs / dam pa dang nyams bsdur mdzad pas / dam pa thugs mnyes te jo mo khyod kyi bstan pa ni yun ring 'byung gsung / de nas zangs ri mkhar dmar du byon [27b6] te yon bdag mo chos mtsho bya ba zhig lus ni btsun mar 'dug chos ni mi shes par snang / gnya' na ri dmar po zangs ri 'khyil pa 'dra ba 'dug pas / gzhi bdag de'i [28a1] ming du zangs ri 'khyil bar btags / yon bdag mo'i rtsar bzhugs shing yod tsa na / nam srod la yon bdag mo de byung nas / jo mo khyod kyi mtshan ma cig lab sgron du snang / steng ya gir dur [28a2] khrod yod pas de la dgon pa thob la bzhugs / ngas kyang yon bdag byed pa yin zer / de nas mi dmar rta dmar can zhig byung nas nga zangs ri'i gzhi bdag yin / mkhar 'di la zangs ri mkhar dmar [28a3] zer / jo mo btsun ma 'di'i yon bdag byed pas / ri pha gi la nga 'dug pa yin / 'di gnyis kyi bar la bzhugs dang zer skad / jo mo'i dgongs pa la thod pa bha dra nged gnyis kyi lung bstan dang en [28a4] tsam mi 'dra bas / 'khor ba'i sdug bsngal 'ba' zhig dran pa dang / khrom der tshogs pa rnams kyis kyang 'phya bar 'ongs dgongs par mdzad do / /*

<sup>69</sup> *de nas phyi nyin nyi ma rtse shar la a ma jo mo g-yo ru gra thang gi sgo mo che la byon tsa na / dam pa rgya gar yang rdzu 'phrul gyis byon nas / rgyal [23a6] gyi lha khang gra'i rdo 'phrang la byon 'ongs ba dang thug gis mjal / phan tshun phyag dang dbu thug mdzad / a ma jo mos dam pa sangs rgyas bod yul du byon pa ngo mtshar che gsungs bas / dam pa'i zhal nas / [23b1] khyod ye shes kyi mkha' 'gro ma yin te lab tu sku 'khrungs nas / bod yul du*



teaches her doctrine of the “five that destroy partiality” (*phyogs ris 'jig pa lnga*)—a method for destroying partiality toward certain foods, certain attire, certain domains, certain companions and one’s homeland.<sup>70</sup> It is noted that her teachings were considered in accordance with the Buddha’s words.<sup>71</sup> In contrast, the *Rnam thar* within the *Rnams bshad chen mo* and the *Byin rlabs gter mtsho* (discussed further below) not only state that Machik and Padampa Sangyé met, but also list teachings that Machik received from Padampa Sangyé. Indeed, the *Rnam thar* texts emphasize that Chöd is a Tibetan teaching originating with Machik. They also claim that Chöd is notable in its authenticity as a Buddhist teaching and authority as the only teaching that originated in Tibet and was transmitted to India.<sup>72</sup> Several scholars have noted that this connection between Padampa Sangyé and Machik functions to legitimate Chöd through both an Indian and a male lineage;<sup>73</sup> as I noted in the previous chapter, there were many limitations on

---

*'gro ba sems can gyi don mdzad pa ngo mtshar che / khyod kyi chos brgyud dus kyi mtha' la nam mkhar nyi ma shar ba bzhin 'ong ba yin [23b2] gsungs / de nas dam pa ni 'gro don phyogs med byon / a mo jo mo yang nang du byon nas nyi khri klog par mdzad / mdo la gzigs rtogs mang du mdzad pas blo cig chod du grol te / rtogs pa khyad par [23b3] can rgyud la skyes /*

<sup>70</sup> *dang po zas la phyogs ris med pa'i rtags su / sngar rgod zas dkar [23b4] gsum mngar gsum min pa mi za ba las / phyis mdze zas dang sprang zas bza' bar byung / gnyis pa gos la phyogs ris med pa'i rtags su / sngar dar gos min pa mi gyon palas / phyis mdze gos [23b5] dang sprang gos gyon par byung / gsum pa gnas kyi phyogs ris zhig pa'i rtags su / sngar gnas gzhi dang sde gdon min par mi bzhugs pa las / phyis mdze sprang gi gseb dang lam srang du gzims par [23b6] byung / bzhi pa grogs kyi phyogs ris med pa'i rtags su / sngar mkhan slob dang btsun ma'i sde dang 'grogs pa las / phyis nas mdze sprang gi grogs dang 'grogs par byung / lnga pa yul [24a1] gyi phyogs ris zhig pa'i rtags su / sngar mi chos kyi yul e'i lab dang / lha chos kyi yul g-yo ru gra thang du bzhugs pa las / phyis nas rgyal kham phyogs med du gshegs par byung*

<sup>71</sup> *gzhan yang bka' thog nas grol ba'i lugs dang / bka' dang mi 'gal ba'i grol lugs 'ga' zhig byung ste / [23b4]*

<sup>72</sup> As Todd Gibson (1997) has argued, India has not been the sole source for all Mahāyāna or Vajrayāna teachings; he discusses other contributions, including from China and especially Central Asia.

<sup>73</sup> Kollmar-Paulenz (1998) addresses the issues of authority and legitimation with regard to Chöd, suggesting that this is the reason for the traditional efforts to draw a direct connection between Machik and Padampa. According to her, the position that the Chöd teachings originated with the male Indian figure “automatically legitimated this doctrine as being both Indian and Buddhist. These tactics were probably often employed with the aim of integrating an originally indigenous, non-buddhist [*sic*] Tibetan teaching into the teaching system of Tibetan Buddhism. . . . Nevertheless with regard to the *gCod* school of Tibetan Buddhism, it is quite interesting to notice that these tactics of legitimization of a controversial doctrine did not function generally. We can safely assume from the existent source material that *gCod*, irrespective of whether it was founded by Ma gcig lab sgron ma or not, must have been a genuine Tibetan teaching. *gCod* originated in Tibet and not in India” (23). See also Gyatso 1985, 328-329; Edou

women teachers in Tibet. Sarah Harding notes that while Machik represents an “exception” to social limitations on women, her story also depicts the restrictions she faced within a Buddhist culture. Harding reads what she refers to as Machik’s “‘demonstration’ of renunciation” as a “reflection of the prevailing attitude that one must renounce home life and children (and women themselves) as the cause of bondage” (2003, 32). In Harding’s view, the legacies of Machik and Chöd have persisted because “this very system, the amazing Chöd, and its undeniable uniqueness and efficacy” joins “the ultimate feminine principle with the life of an actual woman” (2003, 33). Though this explanation is attractive as a feminist interpretation of the tradition, it takes little account of the historical transmission of Chöd. While Harding previously acknowledges that texts such as *The Great Explanation* have been “retold and revised over centuries by the many men in her lineage” (2003, 33), she perpetuates the opinion that Chöd is an ahistoric and uniform phenomenon. In contrast, I believe that attention to the ways in which the history of Chöd has been constructed, retold and revised, and perhaps even appropriated, will contribute to a deeper and more complex appreciation of this system of Buddhist praxis.

## TRANSMISSION LINEAGES

Broadly speaking, in discussions of the transmission and reception of Buddhist Chöd and its lineages, several categories reappear.<sup>74</sup> Perhaps the most common form of classification is the

---

1996, 37; Orofino 1987, 408; Hermann-Pfandt 2000; and Chaoul 2009.

In a slightly different context, the impulse to establish authenticity through association with Indic elements is discussed by Todd Gibson in his paper on Central Asian influences on Buddhism. Gibson remarks “that even though the biographical material available shows that Śrī Siṃha was an Inner Asian born in T’ang China, the later Tibetan tradition at least occasionally refers to him as ‘the Indian Paṇḍit Śrī Siṃha.’ This may well be because his name is not Chinese, but it may also be due in part to the desire to establish authenticity for the Dzokchen lineage during the time of the later translations in Tibet, when scriptural authenticity was deemed identical with Indian provenance” (1997, 47).

<sup>74</sup> According to Edou, *The Concise Life Story* has an explicit description of the eight pairs and sixteen branches of Mahāmudrā Chöd, although only seven pairs and fourteen branches are mentioned (1996, 80).

distinction between the “*Pho*” (“Male”) lineage and the “*Mo*” (“Female”) lineage; a variant on this is that of the “*Pha*” (“Father”) and “*Ma*” (“Mother”) lineages. Often these lineages are identified with the teachings passed from Padampa Sangyé (as the “father”) and those from Machik Labdrön (as the “mother”).<sup>75</sup> These complementary lineages reflect the complex integration of Machik’s teachings with Buddhist traditions, as I discuss further below. Two sources that employ these categories are Gö Lotsawa’s *The Blue Annals* and Dharmasenggé’s *Zhijé and Chöd History*. These classifications are sometimes complemented by what is referred to as the “*Gnyis med brgyud*,” or “Non-dual lineage.” Another template for organizing lineages is that of the “*Sras*” (“Son” or “Offspring”)<sup>76</sup> and “*Ston*” (“Teacher”)<sup>77</sup> lineages.

Another prevalent model of establishing Chöd lineages is based on a taxonomy of the Buddhist vehicles of teaching (*yāna*; *theg pa*). In this classification, Chöd is divided into “Sūtra Chöd” (*mdo gcod*), “Tantra Chöd” (*rgyud gcod*) and “Sūtra/Tantra Chöd.” A fourth lineage category sometimes mentioned in this context is that of the *gter ma* (“treasure”) textual corpus. Sūtra Chöd refers to the *Pāramitāyāna* teachings that are grounded in the *Prajñāpāramitā*. Sūtra Chöd emphasizes the influence of Padampa Sangyé and stresses techniques of stabilization and pacification of the mind. In contrast with the *Pāramitāyāna* teachings of Sūtra Chöd, the *Mantrayāna* aspect of Tantra Chöd seems to be derived from *\*anuttaratantra* (*bla na med rgyud*) teachings. Tantra Chöd incorporates Generation Stage (*bla na med rgyud skyed rim*) and

---

<sup>75</sup> Kollmar-Paulenz says that “although most of the Tibetan sources explicitly name Ma gcig lab sgron ma as the founder of the *Gcod* school of Tibetan Buddhism, according to my knowledge, only G. Tucci, among the numerous scholars who took interest in the *Gcod* school and its fascinating ritual, pointed to Ma gcig as being the founder of the tradition of *mo gcod*. . . . It is very interesting that only Janet Gyatso discussed the question whether Pha Dam pa sangs rgyas or Ma gcig lab sgron ma founded the *Gcod* school. She decided this question in favor of the woman mystic” (1998, 23).

<sup>76</sup> Other terms used in this context include “Thugs sras” or “Spiritual [literally “heart”] offspring”; the term for “daughter,” “sras mo” is also sometimes used.

<sup>77</sup> A related term in this context is “Slob” (“Student”) lineage, viz. Dpa’ bo Gtsug lag ‘phreng ba, *Dam pa’i chos kyi ‘khor lo bsgyur ba rnams kyi byung ba gsal bar byed pa mkhas pa’i dga’ ston*.

Completion Stage (*rdzogs rim*) practices. Tantra Chöd traces its transmission lineage from Vajradhara in the *dharmakāya* form of Yum Chen mo, the Great Mother Prajñāpāramitā, through the *sambhogakāya* as bodhisattva Tārā, from whom Machik, as *nirmāṇakāya*, received direct transmission. Machik’s synthesis of Sūtra Chöd and Tantra Chöd is referred to as the “combined Sūtra/Tantra Chöd.” I will be discussing some of the ways in which Chöd teachings are philosophically contextualized within Sūtra and Tantra categories in the next chapter. In my analysis of lineage sources below, I will discuss how several of these lineage categories inflect the development of the Chöd tradition.

### 1. *CHOS ‘BYUNG*

In this section, I will provide a brief survey of “*chos ‘byung*,” that is, “dharma histories” (literally, “the arising of dharma”) that include sections on Chöd. The genre of “*chos ‘byung*” includes literary texts that provide details of oral and/or written transmissions of teachings. While *chos ‘byung* often provide extensive lineage information, they are not comprehensive. Information about who received what teaching from whom is often scant, though these texts will sometimes mention certain details about the transmission, such as the place where the transmission was given, when it was given, who was present, and the particular occasion that precipitated the transmission. For my purposes, these texts record and map useful information on teaching lineages, which is important for charting processes of legitimation and renewal of Chöd from the perspective of a particular figure or institution.

***Deb ther sngon po* (late 15<sup>th</sup> to early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries)<sup>78</sup>**

The earliest discussion of Machik and Chöd for which we can approximate a date is contained in *The Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*) by Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel (‘Gos lo tswa ba Gzhon nu dpal, 1392-1481; Karma Kagyü), a *chos ‘byung* composed in the late fifteenth century (1139-62). In the section on Chöd, Zhijé is not foregrounded (in contrast to other sources which characterize Chöd as a branch of Zhijé). This source contains a relatively brief biographical sketch with some lineage information as well as information on teachings that Machik received; it also mentions other figures who were key to the early development of Chöd. The transmission lineage of Buddhist Chöd from this text will be outlined in the next section of this study.<sup>79</sup> Sections other than the one explicitly discussing Chöd have also provided me useful information for the broader genealogical study I am constructing.

***Dam pa’i chos kyi ‘khor lo bsgyur ba rnams kyi byung ba gsal bar byed pa mkhas pa’i dga’ ston* (mid-16<sup>th</sup> century)**

This source is attributed to Dpa’ bo Gtsug lag ‘phreng ba (1503-1605, Karma Kagyü);<sup>80</sup> its composition has been dated to 1545-1565.<sup>81</sup> This history is traditionally considered reputable,

<sup>78</sup> I agree with Kollmar-Paulenz (1998, 11) that this is the earliest roughly datable source; however, I am no longer sure we can definitively date it to 1478 as is traditional. I am influenced by Leonard W. J. van der Kuijp’s argument against the traditional belief that ‘Gos lo tsa ba finished *The Blue Annals* before his death, positing that it was completed by ‘Gos lo tsa ba’s disciples after he himself had passed away (2006, 1). Regarding Gzhon nu dpal’s scholarly influences, van der Kuijp writes, “It is probably best to characterize him as a non-partial scholar in the sense that his training and scholarly interests led him to pursue textual studies that pertained especially to the Bka’ brgyud pa, Rnying ma pa, and Bka’ gdams pa traditions. Indeed, he shares these features with a good number of other fifteenth-century clerical associates of the Phag mo gru court at Sne’u gdong such as, to name but two, Byams gling pañ chen bsod nams rnam rgyal (1400-1475) and Zhwa lu lo tsā ba chos skyong bzang po (1441-1528)” (2006, 7-8). I have looked for mention of Machik in other early biographical catalogues including the *Deb ther dmar po* (composed between 1346 and 1363) by Tshal pa Kun dga’ rdo rje (1309-1364) to no avail; however, as Kurtis Schaeffer notes (1995, 6), this text does contain a biography of Rangjung Dorjé.

<sup>79</sup> My reconstruction of this source material varies from those provided by Edou (1996) and Kollmar-Paulenz (1993).

<sup>80</sup> Gtsug lag ‘phreng ba, the second Dpa’ bo of Gnas gnan (1504-1566) was the de facto regent of the Karmapa lineage while the 5th Zhwa dmar and 4th Rgyal tshab were searching for the 9th Karmapa; at the end of his life he

but it does include hagiographical materials. As well as providing a brief outline of the philosophical underpinnings of the tradition, it provides a brief biographical sketch of Machik and information on transmission lineages. The *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston* describes a Chöd lineage from Padampa Sangyé to Sma ra ser po and then Smyon pa be ro, as well as one from Kyotön Sonam Lama to Machik Labdrön; in addition, it divides the transmission from Machik into “the Student or Instruction lineage” (*slob brgyud*) and “the [spiritual] Son lineage” (*sras brgyud*). This text does mention that Machik met Padampa Sangyé, but does not explicitly say that she received Chöd teachings from him (1369-1371).

***Chos 'byung bstan pa'i padma rgyas pa'i nyin byed*<sup>82</sup> (late 16<sup>th</sup> century)**

This history, composed between 1575 and 1580, has a short entry on Chöd by 'Brug pa Padma dkar po (1527-1592; 'Brug pa Kagyü). Although the tradition is mentioned, it is not discussed in much detail. This work mentions transmissions of Chöd (“*spyod*” rather than “*gcod*”) teachings by Padampa Sangyé to Sönam Lama and Rma ra ser po, and it provides a short biography of Machik, including the names of her major students.

***Chos 'byung ngo mtshar rgya mtsho*<sup>83</sup> (early 17<sup>th</sup> century)**

Zhab drung Ngag wang Nam gyal (1571-1626) of the Stag lung Kagyü tradition initially composed this treatise in 1609; it is said to have been reedited by Ngag wang Ten pai Nyi ma (b. 1788). The section on Chöd is even briefer than in other sources and provides no new

---

lived in the Karmapa's monastery where he gave the *dge tshul* vows and many initiations to the 9th Karmapa Dbang phyug rdo rje.

<sup>81</sup> See Kollmar-Paulenz (1993, 9 n.32) who is following S. Richardson in Lokesh Chandra's edition of the *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, Vol. 1, ix.

<sup>82</sup> See folia 212a2-214a2.

<sup>83</sup> See folia 19b-20a.

information. It is worth mentioning if only to demonstrate a continuation of historical awareness of the Chöd tradition.

***Dam pa'i chos kyi byung tshul legs par bshad pa bstan pa rgya mtshor 'jug pa'i gru chen zhes bya ba rtsom 'phro kha skong bcas*<sup>84</sup> (17<sup>th</sup> century)**

The tenth abbot of the Sakya monastery of Ngor, Dkon mchog lhun grub (1497-1557) left this *chos 'byung* unfinished at his death. It was rediscovered by the 25<sup>th</sup> abbot, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs (1649-1705), who resumed work on it and completed it in 1692; it was published in 1705 at Sde dge. It is most remarkable for being a Buddhist history that emphasizes the Sakya pa lineages, while also including a discussion of Chöd.<sup>85</sup> This Sakya *chos 'byung* describes the transmission of the “*Pho Chöd*” and “*Mo Chöd*” lineages. It mentions the transmission of the pith of the Chöd collection (*gcod skor gnad*) to Sönam Lama and Sma ra ser po (of Yar lungs) from Padampa Sangyé in Gtsang on the latter’s third visit to Tibet. According to this text, on Padampa Sangyé’s fifth trip he travelled to Dingri (Ding ri) and taught the collection of Chöd transmissions; this teaching was twofold and would be transmitted as *Pho Chöd* (following Sma ra ser po) and *Mo Chöd* (following Machik).<sup>86</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup> For the discussion of Chöd, see folia 167a-b (335-336).

<sup>85</sup> As I have explained elsewhere in this study, Chöd teachings were not as prominent in the Sakyapa schools as they were in other Tibetan Buddhist schools. This text employs the classification of “pho” and “mo” when discussing Chöd transmission lineages.

<sup>86</sup> “*de yang dam pa nas brgyud pa'i gcod skor la / pho gcod mo gcod gnyis las / dang po ni sma ra ser po nas brgyud pa dang / gnyis pa ni ma gcig nas brgyud pa la zer ro / / ma gcig ni grwa pa mngon shes las rab tu byung zhing*” (335).

***‘Phags yul rgya nag chen po bod dang sog yul du dam pa’i chos ‘byung dpag bsam ljon bzang*<sup>87</sup> (18<sup>th</sup> century)**

Written by the head of Dgon lung byams pa gling, Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal ‘byor (1704-1788, Geluk pa), this text provides an elaboration on earlier accounts of the Chöd tradition. Kollmar-Paulenz<sup>88</sup> (1988, 30-31, n. 52; original source reference 375, 22-23) points out a passage explicitly acknowledging the direct transmission of Chöd teachings on the four Negative Forces according to the *Prajñāpāramitā* from Padampa Sangyé to Machik,<sup>89</sup> as is discussed earlier in this chapter, this connection is not easy to establish definitively. This *chos ‘byung* provides an important example of intersections between historical and biographical materials, as Kollmar-Paulenz has also noticed (1993, 13). Along with a biography of Machik, a lineage of “Mo Chöd” is briefly traced. Kollmar-Paulenz (1993, 14) observes that one unusual component of Ye shes dpal ‘byor’s chronology is that the Chöd tradition precedes the Zhijé tradition, contrary to other accounts.

***Bstan ‘dzin gyi skyes bu rgya bod du byon pa’i ming gi grangs* (18<sup>th</sup> century)**

Another eighteenth-century (1777) Geluk pa history was composed by Klong rdol bla ma Ngag dbang blo bzang (1719-1794). This text has a couple of passing mentions of Machik and Chöd.<sup>90</sup> The most notable element of this brief account of Machik’s life is that Ngag dbang blo bzang explicitly claims that Machik was a student of and in a consort relationship with Padampa

---

<sup>87</sup> See 374-379.

<sup>88</sup> See Sarat Chandra Das (ed.), *Pag sam jon zang*, Part II, History of Tibet from Early Times to 1745 A.D., edited with an analytical list of contents in English (Calcutta, 1908). I have not yet had the opportunity to see a copy of this text.

<sup>89</sup> “*dam pa dang mjal te sher mdo’i bdud l’eu las gsungs pa’i thogs bcas thogs med sogs kyi bdud bzhi thad kar gcod byed kyi gdams pa thob cing.*” Kollmar-Paulenz (1993, 13-14) also briefly mentions this text and its discussion of the Zhijé and Chöd schools, noting that the transmission of *mo gcod* is associated with Machik Labdron.

<sup>90</sup> See Volume *za*, including a reference to her *lung bstan* on 5r; to Chöd on 27r; and to her place of birth and family 32v.



Sangyé.<sup>91</sup> This claim continues to be repeated by contemporary Western and Tibetan individuals from this point forward; however, given that Ngag dbang blo bzang doesn't cite his sources, we are not sure of its provenance or veracity.<sup>92</sup>

***Bde bar gshegs pa'i bka' dgongs 'grel bstan bcos 'gyur ro cog par du sgrub pa'i tshul las nye bar brtsums pa'i gtam yang dag par brjod pa dkar chag yid bzhin nor bu'i phreng ba (18<sup>th</sup> century)***

This text is part of the collection by Dkon mchog 'jigs med dbang po (1728-1791; Geluk pa), the eleventh Khri of Bla brang bkra shis 'khyil, who was recognized as the second incarnation of 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa. The version I have accessed is in the *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag yid bzhin nor bu'i phreng ba*, which includes a section on Chöd in the third chapter entitled "*Bstan 'dzin rnams kyi bstan pa ji ltar bskyangs pa'i le'u*," with a subchapter entitled "*Bod gangs can gyi ljongs su bstan pa ji ltar dar ba'i tshul*" (folia 142b-143a).

***Grub mtha' shel gyi me long*<sup>93</sup> (late 17<sup>th</sup> - early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries)**

This text was composed by Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1738-1802; Kadampa; Dga' ldan Geluk) and completed in 1802.<sup>94</sup> This source has one chapter on Zhijé which includes information on Chöd and echoes *The Blue Annals*. The section on Chöd focuses

---

<sup>91</sup> "yum chen mo'i sprul pa ma gcig lab kyi sgron ma 'khrungs yul ni / E lab kyi 'dab grong mtsho mer mo / yab chos bla dbang phyugs mgon / yum klu ma 'bum lcam dpal skyid kyi sras mor 'khrungs / lo tsatsha ba khye gad 'khor lo grags dang sku mched yin / pha gcig dam pa sangs rgyas kyi slob ma dang yab yum du gyur / dgung lo dgu bcu go gcig / mang 'ga' zhid gi dgu bcu rtsa lnga dang rtsa brgyad bar du bzhugs zer / sras ra dgra grub be phyis su rgyal ba don grub du grags so" (32v, emphasis added).

<sup>92</sup> Many Tibetans have also spoken of the consort relationship between Padampa and Machik to me in conversation. Kollmar-Paulenz (1988, 22) cites a different edition of this text and remarks that, according to her research, this "is the only historiographical text which considers Ma gcig being the tantric consort of her teacher, although this is often asserted in Western works, cf. for example A. Ferrari, *Mkhyen brtse's Guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet*, Roma, 1958, p. 153, n. 543, and G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Roma, 1949, I, p. 92." One could also include Willis 1987, 98 and Samuel 1993, 477.

<sup>93</sup> See chapter five on Zhijé, which includes information on Chöd.

<sup>94</sup> For more on this figure and his work, see Gene Smith's 1969 article "Philosophical, Biographical, and Historical Works of Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma" (2001, 147-70).

on its doctrinal tradition with a survey of the lineages and its general philosophical teachings, view and practice.

***Bstan pa'i snying po gsang chen snga 'gyur nges don zab mo'i chos kyi byung ba gsal bar byed pa'i legs mkhas pa dga' byed ngo mtshar gtam gyi rol mtsho (n.d.)***

The *Snga 'gyur chos 'byung* is mentioned by Kollmar-Paulenz (1993, 16-17), but I have not been able to locate a copy anywhere. It is attributed to the late-18<sup>th</sup>/early-19<sup>th</sup> century Nyingma author Gu ru kra shi, a.k.a Stag sgang mkhas mchog ngag dbang blo gros. According to Kollmar-Paulenz, there is a short passage on *Brgyud pa'i gcod kyi skor* (folia 111b3-112b4), but it is of little value since it only repeats information, including a short biography of Machik, that is obtainable from other sources.

***Theg pa'i sgo kun las 'dus pa gsung rab rin po che'i mdzod bslab pa gsum legs par ston pa'i bstan bcos shes bya kun khyab*<sup>95</sup> (mid-19<sup>th</sup> century)**

This study by the great Kagyü (and “*ris med*”) scholar Jamgön Kongtrül (1813-1899) is dated by Gene Smith (2001, 237) to 1863-1864. In this work, Chöd is considered to be a branch of the Zhijé tradition associated with Padampa Sangyé, although Kongtrül elsewhere (for example, in his *Treasury of Instructions* [*Gdams ngag mdzod*] collection and in his commentary on Chöd practice) classifies Chöd as independent of Zhijé.<sup>96</sup> Often referred to as “encyclopedic,” this source includes factual data as well as narrative elaborations often included in hagiographical sources to contextualize Chöd from a Kagyü perspective. The section on Chöd is reminiscent of the information provided in *The Blue Annals*.<sup>97</sup> However, it does include relevant

<sup>95</sup> Chöd is discussed on folia 192a-194a in the section on Zhijé.

<sup>96</sup> Reference to Chöd as a branch (*yan lag*) of Zhijé is seen in other sources such as the *chos 'byung* by Padma nram rgyal discussed below.

<sup>97</sup> Note that it also includes the etymological discussion found in sources such as *The Blue Annals* and the *Grub*

citations from source materials (including *The Great Speech Chapter* and *Le'u lag* texts I have translated and included as appendices to the present study) and Kongtrül's interpretation of these sources. Kongtrül cites the *Zab don thugs kyi snying po* by Smin gling lo chen Dharma śrī (1654-1718, Nyingma) on the topic of choosing an appropriate location for the practice of certain Chöd visualizations.<sup>98</sup>

***Ma gcig mkha' 'gro snyan rgyud lam zab rgyun gyi rnal 'byor bde bkod pa*<sup>99</sup> (19<sup>th</sup> century)**

Written by Smon lam Mtha' yas rgya mtsho (b. 1863, Geluk), this historical survey is in a section of the text entitled *Man ngag zab mo bdud kyi Gcod yul stan thog cig ma'i gzhung* (291-436) in the Geluk *Gcod tshogs* compilation. This text includes an extended discussion of the transmission lineages that varies somewhat from other studies. The work also includes an analysis of the teachings that argues against any misunderstanding of their multiplicity and for a more uniform view of the tradition. One of the ways in which it homogenizes and legitimates Chöd teachings is through its representation of the Chöd lineage beginning with a prediction of the Buddha, then moving to the Dharma ruler Khri srong lde btsan, on to Padmasambhava, and then to Ye shes mtsho rgyal as Tārā as Machik.<sup>100</sup>

***Snga 'gyur rdo rje theg pa gtso bor gyur pa'i sgrub rgyud shing rta brgyad kyi byung ba brjod pa'i gtam mdor bsdus legs bshad padma dkar po'i rdzing bu*<sup>101</sup> (late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century)**

---

*mtha' shel gyi me long.*

<sup>98</sup> Dharmaśrī's text might be one of the earliest discussions of the role of place in Chöd practice.

<sup>99</sup> The relevant *chos 'byung* materials begin on folio 307 of the *Chos tshogs*. Neither Kollmar-Paulenz nor Savvas discusses this source. I have made a working translation of this document.

<sup>100</sup> In *Gcod tshogs* 291-436; 307.3.

<sup>101</sup> Chöd is discussed as a branch of Zhijé on folia 241-242. Kollmar-Paulenz (1993, 17) gives the composition date of this text as 1850, which is not likely given the dates of Padma rnam rgyal.

Although this work, by the famous Nyingma scholar Zhe chen rgyal tshab Padma rnam rgyal (1871-1926, aka Padma dkar po), who was an esteemed student of Mi pham rgya mtsho, generally reviews familiar territory in its discussion of Chöd, it does discriminate more categories of transmission lineages than other sources. As a contemporary Nyingma pa historical survey of Buddhist teachings, this source also indicates continued interest in Chöd, albeit as a branch of the Zhijé tradition.

***Zhi byed dang Gcod yul gyi chos 'byung rin po che'i phreng ba thar pa'i rgyan (late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century)***

This history of Zhijé and Chöd by Dharmasenggé (aka Chos kyi seng ge, late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century; Nyingma)<sup>102</sup> is one of the most popular in circulation, probably due to its efforts at providing a comprehensive summary of the existing sources. However, even including this study, desirable details and dates regarding the development of Chöd, such as the provenance of important texts and the identity of early figures in the transmission lineage, remain unavailable.

***Chos 'byung kun gsal me long<sup>103</sup> (20<sup>th</sup> century)***

This recent historical survey (published in 1971) of the various religions of Tibet was written by the Bon scholar Dpal ldan tshul khriims (1904-1972). Chöd is treated as a distinct tradition in this work, which reviews the materials from *The Blue Annals* and other sources.

## **2. RNAM THAR**

Another important category of texts in assessing the lineage history and tradition of Chöd is “*rnam thar*.” *Rnam thar* are life stories of remarkable spiritual persons, literally denoting

---

<sup>102</sup> This text has been translated into German by Kollmar-Paulenz (1993).

<sup>103</sup> See *gcod yul dang kha rag pa'i chos skor thugs rje chen po'i chos sgrub pa rnams byung tshul mdor bsdus bshad pa'i skabs te/ le'u nyer gcig pa*, 437-452.

stories of someone’s “complete liberation.” Sometimes they are considered biographies, while at other times they are referred to as “hagiographies.” These sources can sometimes provide us with historical information, although by nature the genre is often more concerned with providing inspirational narrative than empirical veracity. These materials are useful for gaining an understanding of how their subjects are remembered by the authors and for how key figures in a tradition are positioned. There are several spiritual biographies (*rnam thar*) of Machik, which will be briefly listed and introduced here.

***Phung po gzan skyur ba’i rnam par bshad pa las ma gcig lab sgron ma’i rnam par thar pa mdor bsdus tsam zhig (13<sup>th</sup> century)***

In his 1996 study, Jérôme Edou, brought attention to a rare Kagyü lineage *gter ma* text, the *Phung po gzan skyur ba’i rnam par bshad pa las ma gcig lab sgron ma’i rnam par thar pa mdor bsdus tsam zhig* attributed to Kunpang Tsöndru Sengé (Kun spangs Brtson ‘grus seng ge, ca. 13<sup>th</sup> century). This manuscript is written in *dbu med* script and consists of 519 folio pages. Edou calls it the most extensive account of the life of Machik; however, it is unclear whether he is evaluating it due to its length or due to its content, especially since it is subtitled a “*rnam par thar pa mdor bsdus*” or “brief summary.” Edou deduces that this text by Brtson ‘grus seng ge text is “undoubtedly the direct source” for *The Great Explanation*,<sup>104</sup> although more study is needed in order to substantiated such a claim.<sup>105</sup>

---

<sup>104</sup> Edou writes: “This version [i.e. the *Phung po gzan skyur ba’i rnam par bshad pa las ma gcig lab sgron ma’i rnam par thar pa mdor bsdus tsam zhig*], appearing in a manuscript in cursive script, contains many expressions in eastern Tibet dialect. Comparing the two texts shows that [this text] . . . is undoubtedly the direct source from which [the *Phung po gzan skyur rnam bshad gcod kyi don gsal byed*] . . . was condensed after the correction of numerous spelling mistakes. The sequence is closely followed, with entire sections adopted word-for-word, but [*Phung po gzan skyur rnam bshad gcod kyi don gsal byed*] . . . eliminates some over-marvelous or over-lengthy descriptions, as well as technical explanations of transmissions, titles of texts and lists of names” (1996, 108).

<sup>105</sup> For more on this issue, see Edou 1996, 108; 222; 196 n. 36; 196 n. 38; 222. To complicate matters further, Kollmar-Paulenz has disagreed with this position of Edou’s; however, she reads Edou as definitively dating the Namkha Gyaltzen text to the 15<sup>th</sup> century [although Edou doesn’t posit when in Namkha Gyaltzen’s life he would

***Phung po gzan skyur rnam bshad gcod kyi don gsal byed*<sup>106</sup> (ca. 14<sup>th</sup> century)**

Given their inclusion as the first two chapters in the *Phung po gzan skyur rnam bshad gcod kyi don gsal byed*, which was itself included in a recently bound and easily accessible collection of three Chöd texts entitled the *Gcod kyi chos skor*, as well as the fact that they have been translated at least three times into the English language, these are probably the most popular *rnam thar* of Machik. The woodblocks for the edition of this text included in the *Gcod kyi chos skor* were commissioned by Lho pa sprul sku Nag dang mkhyen rab bstan pa'i dbang phyug (late 19<sup>th</sup> century; Geluk). This text is often referred to as the “*Rnam bshad chen mo*,” that is, the “*Great Explanation*.” There is another available edition of this text that is printed from woodblocks (n.p.; n.d.).<sup>107</sup> I discuss this text in detail in the next section.

***Ma gcig ma'i rnam thar* (n.d.)**

A blockprint of this work was obtained by Edou from Lang Gonpa, near Phyger, Dolpo (1996, x; 220), but it does not seem otherwise to be available. Edou claims that it differs substantially from the two biographies by Kunpang Tsöndru Sengé and Namkha Gyaltsen (Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, 1370-1433). According to Edou, the manuscript is in *dbu med* script and lacks information regarding date or author;<sup>108</sup> the text does state that it was edited at the request of Rin bzang grags pa dbang phyug.<sup>109</sup> This text is also entitled the *Rnam thar mgur ma*,

---

have composed it; given that he was born in 1370, he might have composed it in the 14<sup>th</sup> century] and the Brtson 'grus seng ge text to the 13<sup>th</sup> century (1998, 25 n. 3). Hermann-Pfandt has also critically addressed Edou's work (1998).

<sup>106</sup> See 11-44.

<sup>107</sup> I have copies in my collection provided by Leslie Kawamura/Herbert Guenther and Orgyen Tenzin. See also *Dus gsum rgyal ba kun gyi yum gcig 'phags ma lab kyi sgron ma'i rnam par thar pa phung po gzan bsgyur gyi rnam par bshad pa mkha' 'gro bye ba'i gsang lam* (1992. Shinhua: mtsho sngon mi rigs dbe skrun khang, 1992). This source, unavailable to me at present, is cited in Edou; Edou says that this is an edition of the *rnam bshad* found in the *Gcod kyi chos skor*.

<sup>108</sup> Edou does note that it “appears to be quite old” (1996, 194, n. 28).

referring to the spontaneous songs (*mgur*) attributed to Machik that are included in the text.

According to Edou, this text includes a chapter describing Machik's conflict with her parents regarding her decision to devote herself to Dharma practice, and another chapter detailing Machik's travels to various places in order to practice Chöd.<sup>110</sup>

***Ma cig lab sgron rnam mthar pad ma dkar po'i phreng ba* (n.d.)**

This is a biography by Rgyal thang ri khrod pa mentioned in the *Labrang dkar chag*.<sup>111</sup> I have not been able to identify this author, nor have I been able to locate a copy of this manuscript to date.

***Ma gcig gi rnam thar mdzad pa bco lnga pa*<sup>112</sup> (15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century)**

This spiritual biography about Machik and fifteen important deeds in her life was composed by Gshongs chen ri khrod pa Mkhas pa btsun bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po (15<sup>th</sup> c., Shangpa Kagyü); it consists of twenty manuscript pages. Kollmar-Paulenz (1998, 12) dates this text (along with Gsongs chen ri khrod pa himself) to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and posits that it is the earliest datable *rnam thar* for Machik, but she suggests that it is derivative from earlier unknown sources. Given contemporary dating of Gshongs chen ri khrod pa to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it might be more accurately dated to that century rather than the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

---

<sup>109</sup> The TBRC database has a record for a "Graggs pa dbang phyug" who is dated to the 12th-13th centuries (P4205), although this may not be the same person.

<sup>110</sup> Edou outlines the chapters as follows: "(1) How Machig renounced the worldly life and left her family; (2) How Machig opened the gates of Dharma; (3) How Machig followed Thöpa Bharé and taught Dharma to her husband and her son Gyalwa Döndrop; (4) How Machig gained realization and subjugated demons in fearful places; (5) How Machig taught the ultimate meaning (of her doctrine) to Lhatag Khenpo and others; (6) How Machig settled at Zangri and worked to propagate her doctrine for the benefit of beings; (7) How Machig departed for the state beyond suffering" (175, n. 3).

<sup>111</sup> Actually, the *Labrang Karchag* (relevant selections photocopied from LTWA) has numerous Machik texts, but I haven't been able to obtain them. On this text, see also Edou 195, n. 33.

<sup>112</sup> In *Thang stong chos mdzod*. Thimpu and Delhi: Kunsang Topgay, 1976. Vol. 1. 21-41. Trans. in Azzato 1981, 67-93.

*Gcod yul nyon mongs zhi byed kyi bka' gter bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar byin rlabs gter mtsho*<sup>113</sup> (19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries)

This collection of biographies by the Nyingma pa author Rdza rong phu bla ma Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu (1867-1940 CE)<sup>114</sup> includes spiritual biographies of Machik and of various lineage holders. Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu posits that Machik received Chöd teachings directly from Padampa Sangyé.<sup>115</sup> Kollmar-Paulenz asserts that a comparison of the two twentieth-century texts by Chökyisenggé and by Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu suggests that Rong phu bla ma used biographical material on Machik from sources including the verse biography of Gshongs chen bla ma discussed above and the recently discovered *Ma gcig ma'i rnam thar*. According to Kollmar-Paulenz, these different biographical elements “which probably date as far back as the 12<sup>th</sup> century have been lost over the centuries and we can only get glimpses of the diverse material in the few texts which have survived during the almost nine centuries since Machik’s death” (1998, 13).<sup>116</sup>

### 3. THREE IMPORTANT SOURCES FOR TRANSMISSION LINEAGES

The three texts that I will consider here each contribute something specific to my project of complicating the commonly depicted picture of Buddhist Chöd. The *rnam thar* chapters of *The Great Explanation* establish precedents for later lineage constructs. *The Blue Annals*, as a

---

<sup>113</sup> Viz. folia 13a-40b.

<sup>114</sup> Kollmar-Paulenz dates this collection after 1903 (1993, 22 n. 65).

<sup>115</sup> Fols. 25b-26ra2.

<sup>116</sup> One of the episodes that Kollmar-Paulenz alludes to is an obscure verse by Gshongs chen bla ma, who was writing in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, that mentions a conflict between Machik and the abbot of Lhas stag that Kollmar-Paulenz argues requires extra-textual knowledge to understand, but which she was able to understand because of her familiarity with the later biographical presentation by Rong phu bla ma (1998, 19-20).



highly regarded historical document, contextualizes Chöd more broadly within Tibetan Buddhism. This source also provides details about key figures in the Chöd tradition that suggest alternate lineage constructions that were developing in the transitional period of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. The *Ring brgyud* provides an example of an explicit effort to codify a transmission lineage from Machik Labdrön to the Third Karma pa Rangjung Dorjé. As I explain in chapter six, the texts I have translated in the appendices establish the relationship between Machik and Rangjung Dorjé as perhaps the most historically important in the transmission and renewal of the Chöd tradition.

#### **A. *The Great Explanation rnam thars***

The earliest sources available to me thus far which present transmission lineages for Chöd are the two *rnam thar* texts about Machik which are collected in *The Great Explanation*.<sup>117</sup> These two *rnam thar* are usually taken to be a single biography. However, close reading reveals sufficient discontinuity between the first and second chapters to suggest that they were not meant to be considered as contiguous, but rather are two distinct life stories. According to the colophon, the biographies in *The Great Explanation* were redacted by Namkha Gyaltsen,<sup>118</sup> with

---

<sup>117</sup> There is at least one other source that I have not been able to study in detail yet, the *Phung po gzan skyur ba'i rnam par bshad pa las ma gcig lab sgron ma'i rnam par thar pa mdor msdus tsam zhig*, an *dbu med* text attributed to Kunpang Tsöndru Sengé. This also may be the same text as the *Ma gcig lab kyi sgron ma'i rnam thar dang gcod kyi chos skor ma 'ongs bstan bcas pa*; however, there are several texts with this title which may or may not be identical. To make matters more confusing, a text by this title is mentioned in Kollmar-Paulenz (2005); in this article, Kollmar-Paulenz attributes the text to a 19th century Mongolian author, Blo bzang bstan pa chos 'phel dpal bzang po. My next project will be an analysis of the editions of texts which are identified by this title in the near future in order to understand better the development and circulation of the Chöd traditions.

<sup>118</sup> I cannot confirm with confidence that Namkha Gyaltsen was the author of this text; however, his editorial remarks make it clear that he was an editor. This dating is only accurate if we can identify this Namkha Gyaltsen with Drung chen Namkha Gyaltsen (1370-1433), a Shangpa Kagyü scholar. Edou (1996, 195 n. 35; 195 n. 36.) refers to Khetsun Sangpo's *Biographical Dictionary* (1977, Vol. VII, 401). Harding follows Edou in this regard. I am not completely convinced that the Namkha Gyaltsen who edited the two *rnam thar* chapters of the *Rnam shad chen mo* and possibly compiled the other eight chapters (as Harding suggests) is identical with Drung chen Namkha Gyaltsen; however, at this point I lack sufficient evidence to identify him otherwise and so defer to Edou. See also Dharmasenggé's *Zhi byed chos 'byung* in this regard (540 ff.).

the assistance of Bkra' shis rgyal mtshan,<sup>119</sup> and they were collected by 'Byams pa bsod nams.<sup>120</sup> In the edition most commonly circulating at present, there are explicit editorial notes stating not only that Namkha Gyaltsen has edited these two texts and added his own material, but also that an author who identifies him (her?) self as "Shes par 'bum" has added further materials.<sup>121</sup> The following interpretations, which speculate on how Namkha Gyaltsen and Shes par 'bum have both preserved and renewed the transmissions and history of Chöd by reconstructing details about lineage transmissions and their own roles as editors, are based on my own translations of the primary texts.<sup>122</sup>

In the first *rnam thar*, the narrative recounts a meeting between Padampa Sangyé and Machik. Padampa Sangyé arrived in Tibet to meet with Machik as a very young woman (apparently when she was still a reader for Lama Drapa Ngonshé) whom he believed to be an embodiment of an Indian paṇḍita called Bhadra from Potari.<sup>123</sup> After greeting her as a Primordial Wisdom ḍākinī, he observes that her arrival in Tibet to help all sentient beings is a marvel worth rejoicing over. When Machik asks Padampa Sangyé how she can proceed to help all sentient beings, he states, "You, girl, should disclose your secret faults, crush indecision, give unflaggingly, eliminate obscurations, realize attachments, wander severe places! Knowing that all beings are like space, in severe places, seek the buddha within yourself." Before he leaves, he

---

<sup>119</sup> Thus far, I have been unable to identify this person in relation to Namkha Gyaltsen, aside from the mention of him in the addendum by Namkha Gyaltsen. TBRC has a listing for a person by this name, but the date given for him is in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>120</sup> Lab sgron 1974, 85. I have not been able to locate 'Byams pa bsod nams in any sources other than *The Great Explanation* thus far.

<sup>121</sup> Unfortunately, at this point little can be learned about the figure of Shes par 'bum.

<sup>122</sup> Although these materials have been translated in part or whole by several others, including in Edou and Harding, I have found omissions and mistranslations in their works, so I have chosen to provide my own translations here for the context of my argument.

<sup>123</sup> In the *rnam thar* texts, Machik is considered to be the fulfillment of the prophesied embodiment of other Dharma teachers, e.g. Lab sgron 1974, 42.

makes the prophecy: “Your teaching will be like the sun rising in the sky!”<sup>124</sup> Shortly after this passage, we are told that Machik receives teachings from Kyotön Sönam Lama that are in the transmission lineage of Sūtra teachings from Padampa Sangyé, although none of these are specifically affiliated with Chöd.<sup>125</sup> After receiving these teachings, Machik performs many amazing activities, including flying through the air, chanting in Sanskrit, and casting out her body as food to spirits (*'dre*) (Lab sgron 1974, 35).

A third mention of Padampa Sangyé and Machik meeting occurs in the first *rnam thar*. This time, Padampa Sangyé goes to Grwa thang, where he has heard that Machik is doing pilgrimage. In this episode, it is explicitly stated that Padampa Sangyé gives teachings directly to Machik and others, including a direct introduction to Nam mkha' sgo byed. In addition, we are told that he gives teachings to Machik on Zhijé and Chöd practices, all of which she “completely took to heart.” The list of teachings given here is: a Zhijé Cycle' Instruction on the Six Chöd Banquets (*tshogs*); the Zhijé “*hung*” Cycle; the Bare<sup>126</sup> Cycle of Instructions; the Three Cycles of Teachings on “*phat*”; the Symbolic Teachings of Utpala; Mahāmāyā; the Two-faced Lady; the Profound Path of Guru Yoga of the Precept Lineage (*bka' brgyud*); instructions on the transference of consciousness into another body (*'pho ba grong 'jug*) and entering the excellent path of the crucial points of guiding the body and mind; the crucial personal instructions through the subtle drop of simultaneous teachings on the manner of training in the illusory body, dreams and the intermediate state (*bar do*); and the personal instructions of the secret precepts on

---

<sup>124</sup> “*Bu mo khyod mtshang yul nas 'don / mi phod pa rdzis / mi nub pa bskur / 'khrub chod / zhen pa mthong / gnyan sa 'grim / sems can nam mkha' ltar shes par gyis la / gnyan khrod du sangs rgyas rang la tshol dang / khyod kyi bstan pa mkha' la nyi ma shar pa bzhin du 'ong ba yin gsungs nas lung bstan gnang pa mdzad de*” (Lab sgron 1974, 32).

<sup>125</sup> She does receive a Nam mkha' sgo byed empowerment, although it is not clear from the text whether or not this teaching is associated with either Padampa or Chöd (Lab sgron 1974, 35).

<sup>126</sup> *dmar*, lit. “red,” but meant to suggest the red color blood or of meat laid bare.

“Khrül Chöd” [the “cutting of illusion”], together with the eight instructions on the Chöd practice of accomplishing in one sitting the visualization of the great charnel grounds (Lab sgron 1974, 41).

In the narrative of the second *rnam thar*, Machik travels to meet Padampa Sangyé in Dingri. Padampa Sangyé informs Machik that he does not have any teachings more profound than those he has already given her, though he can give her a teaching from the “profound” *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*. He then tells her of a teaching on how to invite a retinue of guests—including the Great Mother, the female embodiment of *Prajñāpāramitā*—and how to make a great banquet for them, along with offerings; because of receiving yogic abilities through the power of the blessings from making this banquet and the offerings, the practitioner will have a long life clear of obstacles (Lab sgron 1974, 54-55). Machik requests that Padampa Sangyé give her this teaching, for which they make a maṇḍala offering, during which Machik directly recognizes Padampa Sangyé himself as Red Mañjuśrī. Along with the initiation for this *sādhana* practice, it is said that Padampa Sangyé gave her other teachings, including an uncommon personal instruction on the profound instruction and empowerment of the blessings of the teachers of the Speech Lineage (*bka’ brgyud bla ma’i byin rlabs kyi dbang dang gdams pa zab mo thung mongs ma yin pa’i man ngag*), as well as many secret teachings, including the bare instruction of the science of inner development, the distinctive meaning of entering the middle path,<sup>127</sup> and physical yoga practices<sup>128</sup> for making one’s wind energies (*rlung*) suitable.

---

<sup>127</sup> “*nang rig pa’i dmar khrid dbu ma’i lam du zhugs pa’i don khyad par can cig*” (Lab sgron 1974, 56).

<sup>128</sup> “*lus ‘khrul ‘khor la gnas shing*” (Lab sgron 1974, 56); lit. “abiding in the body’s machinery.” There are many versions of such yogic practices, including ones developed by Nāropā.

The second mention of Padampa Sangyé in the narrative of the second *rnam thar* is in the context of a discussion of Grub se, a figure sometimes considered to be Machik's younger son.<sup>129</sup> The narrative tells of Padampa Sangyé being invited to Zangs ri for a great celebration for Grub se becoming a renunciant. Grub se is given the name of Tönyon Samdrub and Padampa Sangyé gives him many teachings. Tönyon Samdrub, when making supplication prayers to them, would refer to Padampa Sangyé as his "father" and Machik as his "mother"; according to this account, this is how Padampa Sangyé came to be known as "*Pha*" ("father") Dampa.<sup>130</sup>

The last mention of Padampa Sangyé in the narrative of the second *rnam thar* (prior to the addenda by Namkha Gyaltzen and Shes par 'bum) is in a passage describing how Machik faces doubt and cynicism about the authority of her teachings as Buddhist Dharma. Three expert teachers arrive from India to review the legitimacy of her teachings and the validity of her claims regarding past incarnations as Indian men. The expert teachers listen to her claims, including her description of relics that she has left behind in Pho ta ri from her embodiment as Smon lam grub. Even though those gathered believe Machik's teachings and the stories about her previous births, and thus their doubts are dispelled, Padampa Sangyé is invited in order to prevent the arising of any further doubts or disbelief (*sgro 'dogs nges par chod*). Padampa Sangyé is then requested to travel to India with the expert teachers and to bring back a relic; he himself keeps the relic in order to support his personal practice.<sup>131</sup> Here the *rnam thar* narrative explicitly spells out the efforts that have been made to legitimize Machik's Chöd system as authoritative Buddhist teachings through the intervention of Padampa Sangyé.

---

<sup>129</sup> In this passage, Grub se is referred to as the younger son of Machik and Thod pa Bha dra. The issue of identifying Machik's "biological" and "spiritual" children is one I am continuing to investigate.

<sup>130</sup> Lab sgron 1974, 65-67.

<sup>131</sup> Lab sgron 1974, 73-78.

This second *rnam thar* is followed by a note by Namkha Gyaltsen in which he states that he has included his own addendum.<sup>132</sup> Within this addendum is a further composition that is self-attributed to Shes par ‘bum. This additional material has a structured discussion of transmission lineages that appear to be meant to complement the narrative discussions of transmissions of teachings in the bodies of the two *rnam thar*. In this second *rnam thar* and the annotations by Namkha Gyaltsen and Shes par ‘bum, many categories for the transmission lineages are first elaborated. These categories of transmissions, although they are sometimes reordered or combined, create precedents for later authors who reconstruct the lineages of Chöd.

According to the addendum by Namkha Gyaltsen, Dharma lineages based on her personal experience (*thugs la ‘khrungs pa’i myong chos*) were transmitted by Machik Labdrön through a family line of her sons and daughters,<sup>133</sup> and through 116 dharma lineage line holders; these lineages began with Machik and did not exist prior to her.<sup>134</sup> This comment by Namkha Gyaltsen provides very few details, neglecting to identify the biological or spiritual children who received the teachings, or the dharma lineage holders. One can only surmise that this is an early version of what will later be delineated as the “*sras brgyud*” (usually translated as the “son lineage”) and the “*ston* (or “*slob*”) *brgyud*” (the “teaching” or “student lineage”).

---

<sup>132</sup> Edou, based on guidance from Khenpo Tsultim Gyatso, has chosen a different way to read this section and to present it in his translation. Edou does not read the whole section as being an addendum by Namkha Gyaltsen, but only a brief paragraph that opens this section (whereas I agree here with Harding’s decision to read a larger passage as the addendum). In addition, Edou edits out a section, “since this untranslated section consists of a very technical exposition of the differing lineages and lineage holders, as well as the empowerments passed on in each” (1996, 208 n. 40); he includes the omitted materials later in his own discussion.

<sup>133</sup> Note that this does not necessarily mean her biological sons and daughters: it might also signify her spiritual sons and daughters, which isn’t uncommon in discussions of lineage masters.

<sup>134</sup> Lab sgron 1974, 80-1. Other sources that assert Machik founded Chöd herself include: *Mkhas pa’i dga’ ston* (1370, 11-12); *Chos ‘byung ngo mtshar rgya mtsho* 19v, 4-5 (“*gdam pa ‘di yang thugs la shar*”) and the *Zhe chen chos ‘byung* 241v, 2-3.

The next section is an insertion, composed by Shes par ‘bum, into Namkha Gyaltzen’s addendum.<sup>135</sup> This section presents two different categories of transmission lineages—which can be characterized as Sūtra and Tantra—to Machik Labdrön. Three slightly different lineages of Sūtra Chöd are distinguished in the insertion by Shes par ‘bum.<sup>136</sup> First, the *thabs rgyud*, or “lineage of liberative technique,” stresses the development of *bodhicitta* and the accumulation of merit from the aspect of conventional truth. This lineage runs from Buddha Śākyamuni through Mañjuśrī, Āryadeva (the spiritual son of Nāgārjuna), Āryadeva the Brāhmin, Padampa Sangyé,<sup>137</sup> Skyo [ston] Śā kya ye shes, and Sönam Lama (and both his uncle and nephew)<sup>138</sup> to Machik Labdrön. Second, the *shes rab rgyud*, or “lineage of knowledge,” emphasizes the accumulation of knowledge from the perspective of ultimate truth. This lineage is transmitted from Yum Chen mo (the Great Mother, Prajñāpāramitā), Tārā, Sukhasiddhi, Āryadeva the Brāhmin, Padampa Sangyé, and Kyotön Sonam Lama to Machik. The third Sūtra lineage is the *gnyis med rgyud*, or “nondual lineage,” which unites the two accumulations of liberative technique and knowledge. This lineage also begins with Yum Chen Mo, who transmits teachings to Śākyamuni, Tārā, Mañjuśrī, Āryadeva, Āryadeva the Brāhmin, Padampa Sangyé, Kyotön Sonam Lama, and finally Machik.

---

<sup>135</sup> This insertion is not acknowledged by Edou. Although Harding mentions this author in a footnote (2003, 305 n. 48), she does not address these editorial layers in her translation or discussion.

<sup>136</sup> Edou refers to the work of a 19th century Geluk scholar, Chödpa Blo gsang don stan (d. 1950) in his characterization of these three: “The means lineage emphasizes the gradual meditation methods such as love and compassion and the accumulation of merit according to relative truth. The wisdom lineage presents Chöd under the aspect of absolute truth and the accumulation of wisdom (Skt. *prajñā*, Tib. *shes rab*). The nondual lineage unites these approaches” (1996, 82). Blo gsang don stan’s work is the *Lam zab mo thabs shes kyi spyod yul stan thog gcit tu nyams su len tshul ‘khrid chog dgra las rnam par rgyal ba’i rgyal mtshan*, in *Gcod tshogs: the collected teachings of the Dge lugs tradition* (Dharmashala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1996, 191-251; see 231ff.).

<sup>137</sup> The text notes that Padampa was connected with both the “big” and the “little” Aryadevas.

<sup>138</sup> Harding seems to think “*khu dpon*” is a person, rather than referring to an uncle and a nephew (2003, 98).

Although this has not been explicitly noted by translators such as Harding or Edou, Shes par ‘bum characterizes the Sūtra lineage as the “Personal Instructions on the Speech Lineage.”<sup>139</sup> If this title were actually to refer to a lineage from the “Kagyü school,” it is odd that such important figures as Nāropa, Maitripa and Marpa are not acknowledged. Rather, it seems like the “Lineage of Means” operates to assert the connection from Machik back through to Buddha Śākyamuni in an orthodox fashion, situating Chöd within the paradigm of *buddhavacana* for legitimation.

It is curious to note that all three tributaries of the Kagyü Personal Instruction Lineage foreground the *two* Āryadevas, with an effort to connect Āryadeva the Madhyamaka scholar with Āryadeva the Brahmin, the maternal uncle of Padampa Sangyé. This connection actually seems more important to the author than other links between important figures. Though as I noted above, many important Kagyü figures are not included in these lineages, the presence of Sukhasiddhi (Su ka siddhi)<sup>140</sup>—an important supramundane figure traditionally linked with

---

<sup>139</sup> *bka' brgyud don gyi man ngag gi brgyud pa la gsum ste*. Edou refers to these three as “The Sūtra Tradition” (1996, 81); Harding refers to them as “lineages of the esoteric instruction of ultimate meaning of the precept lineage (the sūtra lineage)” (2006, 98).

<sup>140</sup> Sukhasiddhi is usually considered a ḍaḍiṇī who often taught students of Niguma. She is considered one of the foremost teachers of Mkhas grub Khyung po rnal ‘byor (990-1130), who is traced to the same family clan as Milarepa. He is recognized as the founder of the Shangpa Kagyü tradition, itself considered one of the Eight Great Practice Chariots, of which Chöd is another Chariot. A song (*mgur*) attributed to Sukhasiddhi uses the trope of “cutting the mind”:

When the awareness dakini Sukhasiddhi received perfect empowerment into the emanated mandala from the glorious master, the great Virupa, she attained to the eighth stage of awakening in a single night. She truly beheld Vajradhara and became inseparable from the Bhagavani Nairatmya. In order to impart the essential instructions to fortunate disciples, she uttered this song:

Disengaging from the objects of the six senses,  
 To experience non-thought, is the path that leads beyond.  
 The expanse of ultimate reality is non-conceptual.  
 Mahamudra is devoid of mental activity.  
 Do not meditate! Do not meditate! Do not engage in mind-made meditation!  
 Mind-made meditation is a cycle of delusion!  
 Conceptual thoughts are the shackles binding you to saṃsāra.  
 Turning away from conceptual mind, there is no meditation!  
 Space is empty and non-conceptual!  
 The root of conceptual mind, cut off!



Kagyü lineages (in particular the early Shangpa Kagyü)—is worth noting.<sup>141</sup> Though Padampa Sangyé is included in all three Sūtra transmission lists, none describes Machik receiving Chöd teachings directly from Padampa Sangyé.

The second category of transmission lineage mentioned by Namkha Gyaltsen is the Secret Mantra (or Vajrayāna) lineage, which originates with Rdo rje ‘chang chen po (the great Vajradhara), is passed to the Eminent Lady Sgrol ma (Tārā), and is then bestowed upon Machik. By dividing the transmission lists into these categories, Shes par ‘bum here establishes the legitimation of Chöd through both Sūtra and Tantra lineages. In the next chapter, I will discuss how Machik herself legitimates her philosophy through the union of Sūtra and Tantra traditions.

Shes par ‘bum also provides lineage lists of those who received teachings from Machik.<sup>142</sup> The recipients listed for the lineage of both Creation (*bskyed rim*) and Completion (*rdzogs rim*) teachings are Tönyon Samdrub; Gangs pa rmug sangs; Gangs pa lhun grub; Sangs rgyas bstan bsrung; Mnyam med rdo rje ‘dzin pa;<sup>143</sup> Gangs pa rin po che; Bla ma rdo rje; Stong zhig Namkha Gyaltsen; and Bkra’ shis rgyal mtshan.<sup>144</sup> The system of Creation and Completion delineated here includes teachings on the mantra practices of *tshe sgrub kyi skor* (a cycle for

Cut off this root and then, relax!

Thus it was said.

“A brief teaching of Sukhasiddhi, from the ‘shangs pa mgur mtsho’.” Trans. Sherab Drime (Thomas Roth), <http://rywiki.tsadra.org/index.php/Sukhasiddhi>. The translation in *Timeless Rapture* (49) has a different translation of this song which doesn’t use the same term, “cut.”

<sup>141</sup> *Timeless Rapture* says that Machik is an incarnation of Sukhasiddhi, a female co-founder of the Shangpa lineage; it notes that “[t]he Severance lineage often walked hand-in-hand with the Shangpa teachings through the walls of Tibet’s religious institutions, whereas less ethereal traditions were often stopped at the gates” (2003, 28-29; 199 n. 30).

<sup>142</sup> Here the text includes teachings that Machik received and composed herself (Lab sgron 1974, 81-82).

<sup>143</sup> This person may be the same person who is known as Mnyam nyid rdo rje ‘jung pa, but this requires further investigation.

<sup>144</sup> Rossi-Filibeck states that “The Karma pa masters received the *gCod* teaching from the Gans pa masters, so named from the Śam po or Śam bu’i gans hermitage, and they in their turn had received it from Thod smyon bsam grub, a *Gcod* master” (1983, 48).

attaining a long life); *Zhi rgyas dbang drag gyi sbyin sreg* (burnt offerings for pacification and destruction); and *las bzhi'i me mchod* (a fire offering for the four activities [of pacifying, increasing, magnetizing and subjugating]). In addition, the Personal Instructions on the Speech Lineage includes teachings according to the Prajñāpāramitā system on the Four Empowerments of Meditative Stabilization, and the empowerments and *gtor ma* associated with the banquet offerings for the five families. Shes par 'bum considers these teachings to be a combination of Sūtra and Mantra, which is based on the empowerment of Transforming the Buddhas of the Ten Directions. Shes par 'bum claims that the system of Creation and Completion, along with the tradition of Chöd, is uncorrupted up to Namkha Gyaltsen.<sup>145</sup> Shes par 'bum states that the Creation and Completion system was severed with the instruction of Bkra' shis rgyal mtshan, which was only approximated based on empowerments and banquets.<sup>146</sup>

The text then returns to the addendum composed by Namkha Gyaltsen. This section lists the recipients of the transmission of a teaching referred to as “a hundred empowerments and a hundred feasts”; the list of recipients includes Tönyon; Gangs pa rmug sangs; Grub chen pa; Mkhas grub chen po; Skye med gnam mtsho; Mnyam med rin po che; Ras chen gzhon nu; and Bsod nams rdo rje. Namkha Gyaltsen here uses literary conventions to emphasize the authoritative preservation and transmission of the Sūtra, Mantra, and Union of Sūtra and Mantra instructions to Tönyon Samdrub: these instructions “were kept in the heart of Machik” and “all of them, without exception, were taken to heart by Tönyon.”<sup>147</sup> Namkha Gyaltsen then notes that

---

<sup>145</sup> Given that this list goes past Namkha Gyaltsen to Bkra' shis rgyal mtshan, I am not sure what this insinuates about the lineage post Namkha Gyaltsen.

<sup>146</sup> I have only been able loosely to translate this last sentence due to a vocabulary problem, that is, the term “*nye ge ba*”: “*dbang tshogs la brten pa tsam nyeg ge ba las ma byung ba yin no*” (Lab sgron 1974, 82.6). The next line states “*sprul shad kyis bar 'di shes par 'bum pas sbyar ba yin*” (82.6-83.1) (“This ‘material’ between the *sprul shad* (a type of literary marker) is composed by Shes par 'bum).

<sup>147</sup> “*ma cig gi thugs la yod chad kyis chos mdo sngags gnyis dang zung 'jug dang gsum gyis dgams pa ma lus pa*

Gyalwa Dondrub completely “takes into [his] heart” Machik’s Personal Instructions on the Speech Lineage (*bka’ brgyud don gyi man ngag*), Personal Instructions of the Prajñāparamitā cycle (*phar phyin skor gyi man ngag*), and the Prajñāparamitā cycle together with the Uncommon Instruction on the Essential Points of Profound Meaning (*zab pa’i don gnad kyi gdams pa thun mong ma yin pa dang bcas pa phar phyin gyi skor*).

The four “Ornament Daughters” (*sras mo rgyan bzhi*), along with Chökyisenggé, are the direct recipients of the cycle of the Union of Sūtra and Mantra; the cycle of the Dharma of Heart-produced Experience (*thugs las ‘khrungs pa’i myong chos kyi skor*); the Profound Path of the Four Empowerments of the Mother Tantra Ḍākinī (*ma rgyud mkha’ ‘gro’i dbang bzhi’i zab lam*); Mahāmāyā; the Profound Activity of Guru Yoga (*bla ma’i rnal ‘byor zab las ma*); the Three Cycles of Visualization from the Perspective of the Protectors of the Three Families (*rigs gsum mgon po’i sgo nas dmigs pa skor gsum*);<sup>148</sup> the Personal Instructions on the Special Avalokiteśvara Meditation (*khyad par spyan ras gzigs sgom pa’i man ngag*); the Knot of Precious Jewels (*rin po che’i rgya mdud ma*); and the Vajra Verses. Namkha Gyaltsen seems less concerned to demonstrate the authoritative transmission of other teachings, using less emphatic language to mention that Mañjuḥṣa of Stod sde and Grol sde rgyal ba’i ‘byung gnas were among the sixteen recipients of Machik’s oral transmission of the infinitely scattered Cavernous Instructions of the [Prajñā] Pāramitā (*pha rol phyin pa la khog phug pa’i gdams pa kha ‘thor ba’i mtha’ yas pa gcig*).

Namkha Gyaltsen then discusses Machik’s son Grubpa, who visited her because of faith due to conditions at the time he reached the age of forty-two: “Machik, having seen that the time had come to discipline [him], gave him instruction. Having taken the lay precepts, he was given

---

*thams cad thod smyon gyis thugs su chud par byas*” (Lab sgron 1974, 83.2).

<sup>148</sup> Namely, Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, and Vajrapāṇi.

the name of Gyalwa Dondrup. When he reached forty-eight, he attained spiritual accomplishment.” He taught in many spontaneous ways, including speeches, songs and so forth. Gyalwa Dondrup had two sons: the eldest was a householder known as Tshangs dbang rgyal, and the youngest took monastic vows and was called Khams bu ya le. Tshangs dbang rgyal had three sons: the eldest was Dam pa ston chung, and the youngest one was Skye med ‘od gsal chen po. The middle one was renowned as Tönyon Samdrub. Namkha Gyaltzen records the significance of the name of Tönyon Samdrub’s daughter: because she was born on an occasion when he was involved in a dispute and was unable to formulate a response to his unnamed opponent, she was called Lan thog ma (“Lightning response”). Lan thog ma was considered an emanation of Machik, and she was renowned for spreading the teaching of Mahāmudrā Chöd and expanding its lineage.

Whereas Namkha Gyaltzen is concerned with charting how the teachings passed from Machik to her community of Dharma descendants, Shes par ‘bum tries to legitimate Chöd by establishing formal lineages that reach back to Śākyamuni. Shes par ‘bum also tries more clearly to identify and distinguish teachings associated with the Sūtra, Mantra/Tantra and Unified teachings of Chöd. If the interpolation by Shes par ‘bum was in fact (as it appears) composed later than Namkha Gyaltzen’s commentary, it indicates an increasing formalization in the legitimation of Chöd lineage traditions.

### **B. The Blue Annals (*Deb ther sngon po*)**

The earliest extant source that features the explicit characterization of Chöd lineages as “Male” (“*pho*”) and “Female” (“*mo*”) is *The Blue Annals*, the *Chos ‘byung* by the 15<sup>th</sup> century Karma Kagyü scholar Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel. In contrast with the emphasis on the categories of “Sūtra,” “Tantra,” and “Union” lineages of Chöd in the *Rnam bshad* texts, as noted above, *The*

*Blue Annals* employs classifications of “*Pho* (“Male”) Chöd” and “*Mo* (“Female”) Chöd.” In this source, the lineage of Chöd teachings that Machik received depends on whether one reads the section on *Pho* Chöd or *Mo* Chöd. Gö Lotsawa posits that the secret precepts of the Male Chöd system were passed from Padampa Sangyé to Sönam Lama and Sma ra ser po of the Yar klungs region, while Female Chöd was transmitted by Machik Labdrön. Texts which include a *Mo* Chöd lineage tend to emphasize that Padampa Sangyé directly transmitted Chöd teachings to Machik; texts which do not foreground the connection between the two also do not distinguish a lineage of *Mo* Chöd.

According to the discussion of the *Pho* Chöd lineage, one can trace the following. Sma ra ser po (aka Ram par ser po of Yar klungs) (A1) received the teachings from Padampa Sangyé (A) and committed them to writing. They were entitled “*Khrul tshogs drug pa*,” (or *Brul tshogs*, Six Groups of Precepts of Chöd);<sup>149</sup> Sma ra ser po did not commit the verbal precepts to writing. He refrained from teaching these and constantly practiced the method of Vajravārahī of Ha bu, as well as that of Chöd. In old age, Sma ra ser po bestowed the Chöd teachings on his attendant Smyon pa be re (or Be re smyon pa) (A1a), but he requested that the latter not pass them on to others. However, eventually Smyon pa be re transmitted the *gzhung brul tshogs drug* (the six groups of texts on Chöd), along with the introduction and precepts,<sup>150</sup> to (Ri khrod) Phug ston (A1b). Phug ston later taught three of the *Brul tshogs* in Phu tang; Śa ston rdo ‘dzin (A1b1) received these teachings at this time. He also transmitted the *Brul tsho drug* to an unnamed Khampa scholar (A1b2), whose yogin-copyist wrote them down.

---

<sup>149</sup> As I have noted elsewhere and confirmed with Dan Martin, physical copies of these *Khrul* or *Brul tshogs* teachings by Padampa do not seem to exist any longer, nor are the oral teachings transmitted.

<sup>150</sup> This seems to have been done with some reluctance, since the *Blue Annals* records the following scenario after Phug ston made his request for the Chöd teachings to Smyon pa be re: “The bla-ma Be-re sMyon-pa said: ‘No one knows that I possess this doctrine! Did a demon tell it to you?’ Again he asked: ‘Do you really intend practising it?’ — ‘Yes, I want to practise it!’” (Roerich 1976, 998).

Rog Śes rab ‘od learned of the existence of the *Brul tsho drug* teachings from the yogin-copyist and understood that they originated with Phug ston. Upon receiving a request for the teachings from Rog Śes rab ‘od (A1b3), Phug ston gave him the first section of teachings; however, Rog Śes rab ‘od wondered if this was the complete teaching and asked Phug ston if there were more teachings. Phug ston told him that there were more teachings, but that because he had not disclosed more than three sections to Śa ston Rdo ‘dzin at Phu thang, he did not want to upset Śa ston by giving Rog Śes rab ‘od additional teachings. Phug ston’s reason for not giving the complete transmission to Śa ston was that others in his community did not appropriately appreciate their teacher and only cared for the texts. Rog Śes rab ‘od beseeched Phug ston for the complete teachings, and Phug ston relented, transmitting the *Brul tsho drug pa* teachings together with the oral precepts, along with the demand that Rog Śes rab not commit them to writing. It is said that Phug ston decided to pass along the teachings when he realized that Rog Śes rab ‘od would benefit all sentient beings. These teachings were then passed from Rog Śes rab ‘od to Sum ston ras pa (A1b3a), who passed them to Bla ma gnyan ston (A1b3a1). Phug ston also transmitted the *Brul tsho drug pa* teachings to a daughter, Skal ldan (A1b4). She taught them to Gtsang ston skyi tshang ba (A1b4a), who passed them to Gnyan ston (A1b4a1). Gnyan ston transmitted them to a nephew Chos sdings pa dar ma shes rab (A1b4a1a), who then passed them to Sgrig ston sangs rgyas (A1b4a1a1).

At this point, *The Blue Annals* notes that Sum ston ras pa (aka Bsod nam shes rab) (A1b4a1a1a)<sup>151</sup> bestowed the transmissions on Sangs rgyas ston pa (aka Brtson ‘grus seng ge) (A1b4a1a1a1). The transmissions were then passed from Sangs rgyas ston pa to Mkhas btsun Gzhon nu grub (A1b4a1a1a1a). According to the *Deb sngon*, the lineage then continued and

---

<sup>151</sup> It is not explicitly stated that Sum ston ras pa received the Pho Chöd teachings from Sgrig ston sangs rgyas; however, given the logic of transmission lineages, this would only be worthwhile for Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel to note as a continuation of an unbroken lineage.

spread widely. The author states that he has only recorded the life stories of those whom he met. Another lineage that arises from Padampa Sangyé (A) according to the *Deb sngon* is a transmission received by Skyo Śākya ye shes (A2) (and two children with leprosy entrusted to the latter who were cured through practicing these teachings); after some time, afraid that the lineage might come to an end, Skyo Śākya ye shes bestowed the teachings on his nephew Sönam Lama (A2a) and later became a teacher of Machik.<sup>152</sup>

The discussion of the Mo Chöd lineage in *The Blue Annals* is somewhat ambiguous and seems to suggest, rather than establish, the transmission of Chöd teachings from Padampa Sangyé to Machik Labdrön: it does not explicitly discuss such a transmission.<sup>153</sup> Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupeel seems more interested in tracing the lineage that descends from Machik than explicitly establishing Machik's precedents. Perhaps because his project of historicizing Chöd is only one part of his comprehensive project of reconstructing Dharma associations in Tibet, Gö Lotsawa is not particularly concerned with legitimating the lineage.<sup>154</sup>

---

<sup>152</sup> However, other sources suggest that Sönam Lama received the teachings directly from Padampa.

<sup>153</sup> At the beginning of the discussion of the Mo Chöd lineage in *The Blue Annals*, there is mention of a transmission given by Padampa to a person named “Ma jo mchod gnas ma”: “Padampa gave Ma jo mchod gnas ma three heartfelt words, by which she obtained liberation. It is actually the case that she was liberated by these words just as it is said. Because she was a natural yoginī, many distinct instructions originated [with her].” [“*dam pa sangs rgyas kyi gsung gis yar glungs rog pa sar ma jo mchod gnas ma la snying gtam tshig gsum byas pas mo des grol / zhes gsungs pa ltar rang snyid* [should read “snying”] *des grol ba yin mod kyi / ‘di rang bzhin gyi rnal ‘byor ma yin pas ‘phral gyi gdams pa’ang mang du byung ba yin no*” (‘Gos lo tswa ba Gzhon nu dpal 2003, 1141)]. This account is also given in the *Mkhas pa’i dga’ ston*. If this is the case, it might be to make a direct connection between Padampa and Machik, while acknowledging that the transmission was not conventional. However, “Ma jo mchod gnas ma” could also refer to another of Padampa’s students, Ma jo byang chub of upper Gnyal, but there would be even less textual connection between Padampa and Machik if this were the case. Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupeel, in the context of discussing Padampa’s visit to Tibet, when he was encircled by four black birds which transformed into four dākinīs—Labsrgon of Gye, Ma jo byang chub of upper Gnyal, Zang mo rgyal mthing of Gtsang, and Smyon ma of Lha sa—goes on to discuss the latter two briefly, but seems to ignore Ma jo byang chub. Kollmar-Paulenz (1993, 228) has charted an elaborate “Mo gcod” lineage from her own reading of the *Deb ther sngon po*; however, I have not been able to retrace her steps confidently based on my own reading of this text.

<sup>154</sup> Drapa Hagtön is only mentioned in the *Deb ther sngon po* (in a lineage from Machik to her sons) and in the colophon of *The Great Speech Chapter* as a recipient of aural teachings.

### C. *Ring brgyud gsol 'debs lineage list*

The *Ring brgyud kyi gsol 'debs ma gcig gis mdzad par ban sgar 'jam dpal bzang pos kha bskang ba ldeb*<sup>155</sup> is a practice text invoking the recipients of a transmission of Chöd teachings. It was composed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century by Ban sgar 'Jam dpal bzang po, a student of Mthong ba don ldan (the sixth Karmapa) and teacher of Chos grags rgya mtsho (the seventh Karmapa).<sup>156</sup> This text is particularly important for my present study, as it traces a Chöd lineage that is transmitted through holders of the Karmapa title, establishing the key Chöd connection between Machik and Rangjung Dorjé. Unlike the *Rnam bshad* texts and *The Blue Annals*, the *Ring brgyud gsol 'debs* does not classify its lineage according to a particular category such as “Male lineage,” “Union lineage,” or one of the other popular categories of Chöd lineages. It is also distinct in that it takes care to identify locations for many of the transmissions.

The *Ring brgyud gsol 'debs* transmission list of Chöd originates with Bhagavan Śākyamuni at Vulture Peak and continues to Mañjuśrī on the Lion's Seat. From Mañjuśrī, the teachings were passed to Āryadeva in his grass hut in India, then to Padampa Sangyé at Langkhor Dingri (Glang 'khor Ding ri) in Latö (La stod), and then to Machik Labdrön at her retreat in Zangri Khangmar (Zangs ri Mkhar dmar). This is one of the earliest instances of a text making a direct connection between Padampa Sangyé and Machik Labdrön in the context of Chöd transmissions; as we have seen, texts such as *The Blue Annals* are more ambiguous about the direct receipt of Chöd teachings by Machik from Padampa Sangyé. According to the *Ring brgyud*, Machik passed the teachings to Kham bu ya le<sup>157</sup> at a Severe<sup>158</sup> Charnel Ground Retreat,

---

<sup>155</sup> Included in *The Treasury of Instructions*.

<sup>156</sup> Although it is attributed to a 15<sup>th</sup>-century author, the lineage list it presents continues several centuries beyond Ban sgar 'Jam dpal bzang po. I do not know of previous discussions of the lineage list, including in Kollmar-Paulenz.



and the transmission then continued to Dznyā na (Jñāna) dzwa la<sup>159</sup> in the land of Turquoise.<sup>160</sup> The lineage continues to the Great One (*chen po*) of Sky Lake<sup>161</sup> on an island in Sky Lake.<sup>162</sup> At this point the Chöd transmission enters the Karma Kagyü lineage, with Rangjung Dorjé receiving the transmission from the Great One of Sky Lake while at a pilgrimage place in Tsurphu Valley. Rangjung Dorjé is then responsible for passing along the teaching to his student G-yung ston chen po,<sup>163</sup> in the Display of Self-Generating Equanimity, who then passes the teaching to his own student, the Fourth Karmapa, Rol pa rdo rje,<sup>164</sup> in the Palace of Unelaborated Reality. The next figure in this transmission lineage is an individual about whom little is known, Ri khrod dbang phyug;<sup>165</sup> we are told that he received the teachings while at the Victorious Inner Abode Charnel Grounds,<sup>166</sup> which might be a reference to Gnas nang ri khrod, one of the ten charnel grounds at the Geluk Se ra byes institution. From Ri khrod dbang phyug the lineage continues to Mkha' spyod dbang po,<sup>167</sup> the Second Zhwa dmar in the Karma Kam tshang tradition, in the Maṇḍala of Victory over Appearances and Existents. The transmission lineage passes from the

---

<sup>157</sup> Revised from Kham bu la ye (P3315), a student of 'Jam dbyang mgon po and teacher of Thod smyon la ston.

<sup>158</sup> Reading “*gnyan sa*” for “*gnyen sa*.”

<sup>159</sup> Thus far I have been unable to identify this figure with any confidence.

<sup>160</sup> TBRC P10180 lists a Lam ‘bras master, (Mi nyag) Pra dznyA dzwa la, b. 12<sup>th</sup> c. TBRC P5293 is for (Khri thang) DznyA na, 11<sup>th</sup> c.

<sup>161</sup> Thus far I have been unable to identify this figure with any confidence.

<sup>162</sup> Possibly a large lake northwest of Lhasa, otherwise known as “Tengri Nor.”

<sup>163</sup> P1454, 1284-1365, a student of Rangjung Dorjé and teacher of Rol pa rdo rje.

<sup>164</sup> P1456, 1340-1483: Karmapa IV.

<sup>165</sup> P7850, n.d.

<sup>166</sup> If this is a reference to one of the ten charnel grounds (Gnas nang ri khrod) at Se ra byes, then this figure might be Geluk; or it might just be that the area was not dominated by Geluk at his/her time.

<sup>167</sup> P1413, 1350-1405.

Second Zhwa dmar to the Fifth Karmapa, De bzhin gshegs pa<sup>168</sup> in the Palace of Non-dual Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa. De bzhin gshegs pa passed the teaching to his student, Rin chen bzang po,<sup>169</sup> in the Maṇḍala of Profound Emptiness, who transmitted it to the Sixth Karmapa, Mthong ba don ldan,<sup>170</sup> in the Palace of Indivisible Bliss-Emptiness. The lineage then reached the respected Karma Kam tshang master and initial author of this transmission account, ‘Jam dpal bzang po,<sup>171</sup> in the Palace of the Omnipresent Reality Body residing everywhere. The Seventh Karmapa, Chos grags rgya mtsho,<sup>172</sup> received the transmission from ‘Jam dpal bzang po in the Palace of Complete Liberation of the Three Realms.

It would appear that the transmission lineage then enters the Geluk tradition. According to the list, ‘Jam dpal rgya mtsho,<sup>173</sup> an important Geluk master and a close disciple of Tsong kha pa, received the teaching in the Palace of the Sphere of Reality of Whatever Arises. From here it passes to two figures whom I have not had success in identifying: Chos kyi rgya mtsho,<sup>174</sup> who is associated with a Boundless Wilderness Retreat, and Yangs shog lhe pa blo bde,<sup>175</sup> who is connected with the Boundless Expanse Maṇḍala. Following Yangs shog lhe pa blo bde, Dpag bsam dbang po<sup>176</sup> of the Mansion of the Unchanging Dharmakāya received the transmission.

---

<sup>168</sup> P1410, 1384-1415: Karmapa V.

<sup>169</sup> Rin chen dpal (TBRC P1416); ca. 15<sup>th</sup> c. He was a teacher of Mthong ba don ldan and a student of De bzhin gshegs pa.

<sup>170</sup> P1006, 1416-1453: Karmapa VI.

<sup>171</sup> P467; b. 15<sup>th</sup> c.

<sup>172</sup> P821, 1454-1506: Karmapa VII.

<sup>173</sup> P2077; 1356-1428. ‘Jam dpal rgya mtsho was an early Geluk master and a close disciple of Rje Tsong kha pa.

<sup>174</sup> Thus far I have been unable to identify this figure with any confidence.

<sup>175</sup> Thus far I have been unable to identify this figure with any confidence.

<sup>176</sup> Possibly P877, 1593-1641: the Fifth ‘Brug chen and considered to be an incarnation of Padma dkar po. More

Dpag bsam dbang po might be the same figure as the Fifth ‘Brug chen and thus an incarnation of Padma dkar po; however, I am not confident with this identification, since the figures immediately preceding and following him in this lineage list are unknown to me at this time. From Dpag bsam dbang po, the list continues to Phun tshogs bstan ‘dzin<sup>177</sup> of the Place of the Visual Liberation of the Three Trainings. We then have the figure of Bstan ‘dzin dar rgyas<sup>178</sup> of the Entrance to Development and Completion; this Bstan ‘dzin dar rgyas may be one of the Tre ho incarnations of Shangs, although more research is required to authenticate this identity. Following Bstan ‘dzin dar rgyas are two more figures about whom little is known: Rin chen dbang po,<sup>179</sup> who received the transmission in the Completely Erudite Field of Knowledge, and Chos kyi dbang po,<sup>180</sup> whose location is the Three Doors of Liberation.

The lineage list then presents the Eight Zhwa dmar and Karma Kam tshang master who specialized in Prajñāpāramitā, Chos kyi don grub,<sup>181</sup> while in the Maṇḍala of the Indestructible Drop. Dpal chen Chos kyi don grub then transmitted the teachings to his student, the Eighth Si tu Pan chen and Karma Kam tshang scholar, Chos kyi ‘byung gnas,<sup>182</sup> in the Dharmadhātu Mansion of Ultimate Truth. The lineage then continues to the Eighth Karmapa, Bdud ‘dul rdo rje,<sup>183</sup> of the Place of Conquering the Four Negative Forces, and then to the Ninth Si tu Pan chen

---

research is needed to confirm this identity.

<sup>177</sup> Thus far I have been unable to identify this figure with any confidence.

<sup>178</sup> Possibly Tre ho sprul sku Bstan ‘dzin dar rgyas (P10417, b. 16th c.), who was one of the Tre ho incarnations of Shangs.

<sup>179</sup> Thus far I have been unable to identify this figure with any confidence.

<sup>180</sup> Thus far I have been unable to identify this figure with any confidence.

<sup>181</sup> P955, 1695-1732; Dpal chen Chos kyi don grub was the Eight Zhwa mar.

<sup>182</sup> P956, 1600/1700-1774: Si tu Pan chen VIII.

<sup>183</sup> P828, 1733/4-1797/8: Karmapa XIII.

Padma nyin byed,<sup>184</sup> in the Supreme Mahāmudrā Pilgrimage Site. Padma nyin byed dbang po transmitted the teachings to Blo gros mtha' yas<sup>185</sup> among the Impartial Community of Scholars; by collecting the works of minor lineages such as Chöd, 'Jam mgon kon sprul Blo gros mtha' yas was instrumental in keeping the tradition in scholarly memory. The Fifteenth Karmapa, Mkha' khyab rdo rje<sup>186</sup> in the Mansion of Unwavering Bliss and Emptiness, received the transmission next, and then transmitted the teachings to his own teacher, Bkra' shis 'od zer,<sup>187</sup> in the Celestial Palace of Emptiness and Compassion. The transmission lineage then goes through the Eleventh Si tu Pan chen, Padma dbang mchog,<sup>188</sup> in the Mansion of Magnetizing Appearances and Existents. The *Ring brgyud gsol debs* concludes with the transmission being passed to the incarnation of Jamgön Kongtrül, Mkhyen brtse'i 'od zer,<sup>189</sup> in the Mansion of Boundless Benefit to Sentient Beings.

This text provides important information about how the transmission of Chöd has travelled down through figures from schools including the Kagyü and Geluk. With additional study and contextualization, it may provide additional information about the historical interactions between these schools and the role Chöd played in those developments.

---

<sup>184</sup> P559, 1774-1853: Padma nyin byed dbang po, Si tu Pan chen X.

<sup>185</sup> P264, 1813-1899/90: Jamgön Kongtrül.

<sup>186</sup> P563, 1870/1-1921/2: Karmapa XV.

<sup>187</sup> P1373, 1836-1910: a teacher of Mkha' khyab rdo rje, Karmapa XV.

<sup>188</sup> P925, 1886-1952: Si tu Pan chen XI.

<sup>189</sup> P937, 1904-1953/4: Jamgön Kongtrül II.

#### 4. GENEALOGICAL NARRATIVE OF CHÖD TRANSMISSIONS

While the previous text provides a direct source linking Machik with Rangjung Dorjé, here I will present a broader genealogical study in order to contextualize Rangjung Dorjé within the development of Chöd and to indicate his importance as a transitional figure. Drawing from the chronological table that I have compiled during my research on the spread of Chöd, here I provide a narrative summary of the key figures associated with the tradition, generally categorized by century, in order to provide a genealogy of possible transmission connections between Machik Labdrön and Rangjung Dorjé.

##### A. 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Centuries

As I discussed above, while there were some teachings that would provide a base for the development of Chöd prior to the mid-eleventh century, most significantly *The Great Poem* by Āryadeva the Brahmin,<sup>190</sup> we do not see the coalescence of a body of work on the theme of Chöd until the teachings attributed to Machik Labdrön. There are several historical figures that are commonly mentioned as teachers of Machik. Drapa Ngonshé (1012-1090), the famous gter ston who recovered the *Rgyud bzhi* treatises on medicine, is said to have been her first teacher.<sup>191</sup> Other teachers of Machik include the Nyingma Bka' ma teachers Skyo ston (Skyo chen) Śākya ye shes<sup>192</sup> and Sönam Lama,<sup>193</sup> who are said to have both received Zhijé (and possibly Chöd) teachings from Padampa Sangyé.<sup>194</sup> While it is likely that Machik and Padampa Sangyé met, as I

---

<sup>190</sup> Which was probably orally transmitted by Padampa Sangyé (TBRC P1243; Dharmasenggé *chos 'byung* 11a-14a) and transcribed by Zhwa ma Lo tsā ba (TBRC P1GS46478). Another source of influence might have been the “Song of Sukhasiddhi,” a wisdom dākinī who inspired the founder of the Shangpa Kagyü lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, Khung po rnal 'byor.

<sup>191</sup> TBRC 4655; Dharmasenggé 1974, 37a-42b; Dudjom Rinpoche 2002, 753-755; 763; 950-951.

<sup>192</sup> TBRC P2891.

<sup>193</sup> TBRC P3311; Dharmasenggé 1974, 14a-15a.

explained above, Chöd lineage lists commonly link Machik to Padampa Sangyé through these two Nyingma figures.<sup>195</sup>

Machik’s teachings of Chöd were passed to her primary disciple, Gyalwa Dondrub (n.d.), who is often referred to as her “son,” though he was likely her spiritual son and not her biological one.<sup>196</sup> Gyalwa Dondrub’s grandson, Tönyon Samdrub (n.d.), is also sometimes referred to as the “son” of Machik.<sup>197</sup> Gyalwa Dondrub became the teacher of ‘Jam dbyangs mgon po (n.d.).<sup>198</sup> In two chapters of *The Great Explanation* collection, Tönyon Samdrub is presented as the main recipient of Machik’s teachings, although there is evidence that she teaches him through visions—appearing as Vajrayoginī in one episode—rather than in her historical embodied form.<sup>199</sup> Tönyon Samdrub’s direct teacher, Kham bu ya le,<sup>200</sup> was himself the student of ‘Jam dbyangs mgon po.<sup>201</sup> Tönyon Samdrub was the teacher of Khugom

<sup>194</sup> According to the *Deb ther sngon po*, Kyöton Sonam Lama is said to have given Machik an initiation for the teaching named “*phyir ‘khor ba’i l lam du sgyu ‘phrul*” (the “Outer Cycle of Māyā”).

<sup>195</sup> Another figure that appears in Chöd lineage lists directly connected to Padampa (TBRC P1243) is Yar lung kyi Sma ra ser po, although he is not usually connected to Machik.

<sup>196</sup> TBRC P3313; Dharmasenggé 1974, 42b-49b. Gyalwa Dondrub is also known as Rgyal ba Grub che in some sources. Following an encounter with a peripatetic Indian yogi known as Töpa Baré, she became his partner and bore three sons—Nyingpo Drubpa, Drubchung and Yangdrub—and two daughters—Kongcham and Lacham. Other sources such as the *Rnam bshad chen mo* suggest that she had only two sons, Grub pa and Kong po Khyab, and one daughter, Drub Chung ma.

<sup>197</sup> Tönyon Samdrub was also known as Thod smyon la ston and as the “Snowman (gangs pa) residing on Sham po gangs”; the tradition of black-hat-wearing Chöd practitioners known as “Gangs pa” originated with him. Rossi-Filibek, in her article on the transmission of Chöd teachings to the Second Dalai Lama, states that Tönyon Samdrub is “more frequently called Rje btsun Zil gnon chen po” (1983m 48 n. 11.)

<sup>198</sup> TBRC P3314.

<sup>199</sup> TBRC P3316. Another person who possibly received revealed teachings from Machik is Rgyal thang Bsam gtan ‘od zer (n.d.), the author of the *Bdud gcod zab mo’i skor*; however, more research is needed into this figure and his work (TBRC P8756; TBRC W2706).

<sup>200</sup> TBRC P3315.

<sup>201</sup> There are some discrepancies between this list and the genealogy I have been composing; for example, in my genealogy discussed in the next section, Kham bu ya le receives Chöd teachings from ‘Jam dbyangs mgon po and passes them to Tönyon Samdrub, the figure who becomes known as the Snowman of Sham po (*Shams po gangs pa*)

Dharmasenggé.<sup>202</sup> In Dharmasenggé’s *Zhijé and Chöd History*, the figure of Gnyan chung Lo tsa ba is mentioned as a transmission link between Tönyon Samdrub and Khugom Dharmasenggé; however, the *Bstan rtsis ka phreng lag deb* states that he was born in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>203</sup> Dharmasenggé is the interlocutor with Machik in one of the sections of *The Great Explanation* which discusses how a Chöd practitioner should behave and practice meditation.<sup>204</sup>

Another lineage that appears to have been transmitted from Machik sprul sku—the emanation form of Machik—through Tönyon Samdrub is sometimes referred to as the “*Gsang sngags kyi brgyud*” (“the Secret Mantra Lineage”)<sup>205</sup> or the “*Slob brgyud rnams*” (“the Disciple Lineage”);<sup>206</sup> this seems to have been a lineage of predominantly oral teachings. According to Dharmasenggé’s *Zhijé and Chöd History*, Gangs pa rmug sang was encouraged by Machik (probably in emanation or *sprul sku* form) to find Tönyon Samdrub to receive teachings on the ‘*Phags pa bdud kyi gcod yul*.<sup>207</sup> After he studied and meditated with Tönyon Samdrub, he received the name “Gangs pa Rmug sang” and was allowed to transmit the oral teachings. One of the sections of *The Great Explanation* collection of Chöd teachings is presented as a dialogue between Gangs pa Rmug sang and Machik Labdrön on the Chöd perspective regarding various types of Negative Forces (Düd) and manifestations of benefit and harm, or gods and demons (*lha*

---

and to whom a “Gangs pa Chöd” lineage is attributed.

<sup>202</sup> According to the Second Dalai Lama’s *Gcod gsol debs*, Khugom Chos kyi seng ge was from the Khu’i dgon pa in Snye mo (Gnimo in Ferrari 1958, 142; cited in Rossi-Filibeck 1983, 54 n. 45).

<sup>203</sup> TBRC 6524; Dharmasenggé 1974, 49b-50a; *Bstan rtsis ka phreng lag deb* 203 (TBRC W20115). This figure is also mentioned in the Zurmang Chöd liturgy by the 14<sup>th</sup> Karmapa, *Gcod kyi thsogs las yon tan kun ‘byung gsungs rgyun ‘khurl med ltar bkod pa bzhugs pa’i dbu phyogs*, including in the *Gdams ngag mdzod*; this text also mentions Machik, Rangjung Dorjé, Rnal ‘byor Blo gros rin chen and Tönyon Samdrub.

<sup>204</sup> *Rnam bshad chen mo* Section 7; Lab sgron 2003, 205-231.

<sup>205</sup> Dharmasenggé 1974, 61b-82a.

<sup>206</sup> Dharmasenggé 1974, 63.

<sup>207</sup> Dharmasenggé 1974, 63a-66a.

dre), a topic I discuss further in chapter five. According to *The Blue Annals*, Tönyon Samdrub had twenty-one male and female disciples and eighteen accomplished daughters (*sras mo grub thob*), among whom was the peerless Gangs pa Dmu yan (1145).<sup>208</sup> Gangs pa Dmu yan is remembered for his acts of freeing animals, his wealth, his institution of the continuous recitation of the Bka' 'gyur, and his role as a mediator between Tibet and an area called Gser gyu (China?).<sup>209</sup> Gangs pa Dmu yan's son was Gangs pa Lhun grub,<sup>210</sup> whose son was Sangs rgyas bstan bsrung,<sup>211</sup> the father of Gangs khrod ras pa.<sup>212</sup>

According to sources including *The Blue Annals* and the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (TBRC), the Chöd teaching lineage during the twelfth century passed from Dharmasenggé to Dol pa Zang thal, who was also known as Dbus ma Zang thal.<sup>213</sup> According to *The Blue Annals*, Dol pa Zang thal dressed as a layperson rather than a monastic and passed away at 56 years of age in Lower Lugs.<sup>214</sup> Rgya nag gcer bu<sup>215</sup> was the student of Dol pa Zang thal, and the teacher of Chödpa Sangs rgyas rab ston. Sangs rgyas rab ston might be the first to

---

<sup>208</sup> Harding (2003, 286 n.8) appears to erroneously interpret Roerich's translation of the *Deb ther sngon po* as implying that Gangs pa Dmu yan was a female; she does not refer to the Tibetan *Deb ther sngon po*. My reading of the *Deb ther sngon po* (1145-1146) is that Gangs pa Dmu yan was a male disciple of Tönyon Samdrub/Shams po gangs. Dharmasenggé does not mention this figure at all.

<sup>209</sup> *Deb ther sngon po* 1145-1146.

<sup>210</sup> *Deb ther sngon po* 1146; Dharmasenggé 1974, 63b-64a.

<sup>211</sup> *Deb ther sngon po* 1146; Dharmasenggé 1974, 64a-64b.

<sup>212</sup> *Deb ther sngon po* 1147. Other figures that are included in Dharmasenggé's discussion of this lineage are Mnyam nyid rdo rje 'dzin pa (1974, 64b), Mtshan ldan gangs pa rin po che (1974, 64b-65b), and 'Dzong zig Namkha Gyaltsen (1974, 65b-66a; possibly the same person as Namkha Gyaltsen, 1370-1433, [P4086]).

<sup>213</sup> TBRC P3318; Dharmasenggé 1974, 51b-52b.

<sup>214</sup> According to the Second Dalai Lama's *Gcod gsol debbs*, Dol pa Zang thal was from Lung dmar lchang gsar dgon pa, in the area of Ralung and Gobzi (cited in Rossi-Filibeck 1983, 54 n. 46).

<sup>215</sup> TBRC P3319. Dharmasenggé 1974, 52b-53b. According to the *Deb ther sngon po*, Dharmasenggé, and the Second Dalai Lama's *Gcod gsol debbs*, Rgya gnag gcer bu was from Dbus stod dpal gyi Chu ri. See also Rossi-Filibeck 1983, 4, n. 47, and Ferrari 1958, 163.



have the title of “Chödpa” (“Gcod pa”) attached to his name in the historical records.<sup>216</sup> Chödpa Sangs rgyas rab ston’s student was Rtogs ldan Sangs rgyas dge slong (n.d.); from his name, we can presume that Rtogs ldan Sangs rgyas Dge long was an ordained monk (*dge slong*) who emphasized his yogic practice (*rtogs ldan*), probably within the ‘Brug pa Kagyü tradition.<sup>217</sup> Rtogs ldan Sangs rgyas Dge long is documented as a Chöd teacher of Dharma ba dzra,<sup>218</sup> who in turn would be the teacher of Sangs rgyas ston pa Brtson ‘grus seng ge, a figure who is discussed in more detail below.

Also living at some time during this period were the mysterious figures of Byams pa bsod nams, who was likely the editor of the eight sections of *The Great Explanation* that follow the two *Rnam thar* sections, and Gangs pa (the identity of whom has been discussed by Edou [1996] and Harding [2003]). One figure from this period for whom we do know dates and some details is Phag mo gru pa rdo rje rgyal po (1110-1170).<sup>219</sup> There is a text attributed to him entitled the *Ku sā li’i tshogs gsog*,<sup>220</sup> which has overtones of Chöd praxis. He founded the Phag mo gru pa Kagyü lineage and Gdan sa thel monastery in 1158. ‘Bri gungs ‘Jig rten gsum mgon po rin chen dpal (1143-1212/17)<sup>221</sup> was the founder of the ‘Bri gungs Kagyü, and also transmitted Ku sa li offering teachings, which have similarities to some Chöd offering practices.<sup>222</sup> Although the

---

<sup>216</sup> TBRC P3320; Dharmasenggé 1974, 53b-54a.

<sup>217</sup> TBRC P3321; Dharmasenggé 1974, 54a-54b.

<sup>218</sup> TBRC P3322; Dharmasenggé 1974, 54b-56b. He is also known as Sum ston ras chen, Sum ston ras pa, Sum ston zhang med and Chos kyi rdo rje. According to the Second Dalai Lama’s *Gcod gsol debz*, Dharm ba dzra/Sum ston ras chen was from the Kha rag mon bu dgon pa (cited in Rossi-Filibeck 1983, 54 n. 58).

<sup>219</sup> TBRC P127.

<sup>220</sup> TBRC W1588.

<sup>221</sup> TBRC P16.

<sup>222</sup> See for example, *gdams ngag ku sa li’i tshogs gsog* (TBRC W23743). There is also a brief discussion of Machik Labdrön in ‘Jig rten mgon po’s *gsung ‘bum* (Vol. 5, 196.7-197.7; TBRC W30101). Garchen Rinpoche transmits a

available records for these figures in the eleventh and twelfth centuries do not allow us accurately to date them, following their transmission lineage allows us to begin to construct a genealogy for the transmission of Chöd.

At about the same time, the renowned Rmog lcog pa Rin chen brtson 'grus (1110-1170)<sup>223</sup> was the primary disciple of Mkhas grub khyung po rnal 'byor (990-1139), who studied under Sukhasiddhi, Niguma, Rahula, Maitripa and Vajrasanapa before founding the Shangpa Kagyü. He is also said to be from the same family clan as Milarepa. The Shangpa Kagyü were important transmitters of Chöd teachings, as will be seen below. Gene Smith discusses how the Shangpa Kagyü was aggressively assimilated by the Geluk: “This pattern of growth through incorporation of lesser sects was especially common in Gtsang. The rebirth of the First Dalai Lama as the son of Grub chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan resulted in the end of a hereditary line of Shangs pa Kagyü lamas” (2001, 124). This assimilation might have been happening at the time of Sangs rgyas ston pa Brtson 'grus seng ge, a figure discussed below. In her discussion of the Second Dalai Lama Dge 'dun rgya mtsho's transmission lineage of Chöd, Elena de Rossi-Filibeck notes the connection between the Shangpa and the Dalai Lama lineage: “Sangs rgyas ston pa, Mkhas grub chos rje and Shangs ston pa . . . figure also in the list of dGe 'dun rgya mtsho as teachers of the principal doctrine of *Gcod (bstan thog gcig ma)*” (1983, 48).

---

Chöd teaching that is attributed to 'Jig rten mgon po. I have not been able to find the source for the version of the text he teaches. In the transliteration of the teaching by the Tibetan Meditation Center (TMC), Garchen Rinpoche has stated that he thinks the Chöd text he refers to should be complemented by a translation of the associated supplication, noting “more profound teachings about the ultimate view of Mahāmudrā are contained in the supplication” (1999 notes, 84). However, TMC was not been able to direct me to a source text for the teaching and I have not been able to research this further.

<sup>223</sup> TBRC P1984. This person seems to occasionally be confused with Kunpang Tsöndru Sengé he may be the same person who is known as Mond gcod Brtson 'grus seng ge. I discuss this a bit more below, but more research needs to be conducted into these identities.

## B. 13<sup>th</sup> Century

Rgod tshang pa Mgon po rdo rje (1189-1258) was a student of Gtsang pa Rgya ras pa, one of the early patriarchs of the 'Brug pa Kagyü transmission lineage. In particular, he is credited with founding the *Stod* (upper) tradition of the Brug pa Bka' (Dkar) brgyud Rgod tshang monastery north of Leh, Ladakh.<sup>224</sup> He is the author of a teaching that bears some similarity to Chöd, the *Tshogs bsog mchod sbyin gyi zhal gdams* (*Oral Instructions on Completing the Accumulations [of Merit and Wisdom] Through Giving Homage and Offerings*).<sup>225</sup> As Edou (1996, 188 n. 2) has also observed, the offering practice described by Rgod tshang pa Mgon po rdo rje includes the visualized separation of body and mind, and the offering of one's aggregates to a host of guests for the generation of merit.<sup>226</sup> Dharmasenggé mentions Rgod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje in the context of listing Chöd traditions that come from India and Tibet, along with Padmasambhava's *gter ma* teachings, Nāropa's *ro gcig* teachings, and Thang stong rgyal po's visions.

Although it is difficult to establish a Chöd lineage in the Sakya school, the earliest figure I have found is Rin chen seng ge, a 13<sup>th</sup>-century Sakya scholar remembered for his transmission of the Lam 'bras teachings.<sup>227</sup> Although he is remembered as a Sakya scholar, he was also

---

<sup>224</sup> TBRC P2090.

<sup>225</sup> In *Gsung 'bum* (Thimphu: Kunzang Tobgay, 1976), Vol. 2, 375-382.

<sup>226</sup> Dan Martin has written a brief biography of Rgod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje, with references to source materials: <http://www.treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Gotsangpa-Gonpo-Dorjé/3759>. Giuseppe Tucci's *Travels of Tibetan Pilgrims in the Swat Valley* (1940) is an English-language study of the travel records of Rgod tshang pa and his student, U rgyan pa. According to W19808, 27, his teachers included slob dpon wa zhwa (lam rim), slob dpon zhang ('grel chung), slob dpon stod (dbu ma), slob dpon yu pi ba (spyod 'jug); he had religious teachings from masters at 'bri gung, rwa sgreng, tshal pa, stag lung; at the command of his root guru, he went to meditate at lho brag mkhar chu, gangs dkar ti se, tsA ri, dza lan dha ra, etc.; and he founded the following monasteries: stod rgod tshang, steng 'bro, gnya' nam, bde chen steng, bar 'brog rdo rje gling. His students included dpal ldan yang dgon pa, ne rings pa, ba ri ba, phu ri ba, ma bdun pa, mdo bo che ba, gangs pa, and spyil dkar ba. Alternately, his three main disciples were Yang dgon pa, U rgyan pa and Spyil dkar ba.

<sup>227</sup> TBRC P4575. He is also known as Ratna sing ha and Dkar po brag pa Rinchen senge ge.

referred to as “Gcod yul pa Ratna sing ha” and authored a text entitled *Phyag rgya chen po gcod kyi gdams pa nam mkha’ sgo ‘byed*, which appears to be one of the earliest texts directly concerning the Chöd technique of “Opening the Gates of Space” (*nam mkha’ sgo ‘byed*) and explicitly interpreting Chöd within a Mahāmudrā (*phyag rgya chen po*) paradigm.

### C. Tsöndru Sengé

The next significant figure in the Shangpa Kagyü transmission lineage of Chöd is Tsöndru Sengé (Brtson ‘grus seng ge). Numerous Chöd texts are attributed to him, including a *rnam thar*, the *Ma gcig lab kyi sgron ma’i rnam thar dang gcod kyi chos skor ma ‘ongs lung bstan bcas pa*.<sup>228</sup> This text may be a (or even *the*) source text for the well-known *rnam thar* included in *The Great Explanation*. At this point in my research, I believe that Sangyé Tönpa Tsöndru Sengé (Sangs rgyas ston pa Brtson ‘grus seng ge) is the same person as Kunpang Tsöndru Sengé (Kun spangs Brtson ‘grus seng ge).<sup>229</sup> According to *The Blue Annals*,<sup>230</sup> Sangyé

---

<sup>228</sup> I have discussed this text briefly elsewhere in the present study. I have several different editions of this text and am presently undertaking a critical textual study of the various editions. TBRC has one edition on file, W1KG1646 pdf file, which their bibliographical data attributes to “Sangs rgyas ston pa Brtson ‘grus seng ge,” who is referred to as “Kun spangs Brtson ‘grus seng ge” in the colophon. Kollmar-Paulenz (2005) identifies the *Ma gcig lab kyi sgron ma’i rnam thar dang gcod kyi chos skor ma ‘ongs bstan bcas pa* as a 19<sup>th</sup> c. Mongolian text by Blo bzang bstan pa chos ‘phel dpal bzang po. Edou says that “A Concise Life Story of Machig Labdrön, Derived from An Exposition of Transforming the Aggregates into an Offering of Food (*The Concise Life Story*), by Kunpang Tsöndrü Sengé [13<sup>th</sup> Century]” (*phung po gzan skyur ba’i rnam par bshad pa las ma gcig lab sgron ma’i rnam par thar pa mdor msdus tsam zhig*) is the most extensive source; he obtained a photocopy of this rare *dbu med* manuscript of 519 folios from Cyrus Stearns; the original was found by T. Wylie and is in the rare manuscripts section of the East Asia Collection, University of Washington, Seattle. According to Hermann-Pfandt: “[t]he first unknown biography of Ma gcig used by Edou is the *phung po gzan skyur ba’i rnam par bshad pa las ma gcig lab sgron ma’i rnam par thar pa mdor mdus* [sic. Msdus] *tsam zhig* written by a certain Kun spangs btson (!) ‘grus seng ge, who according to Edou lived in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. This text is preserved in a *dbu med* manuscript of 519 folios in the East Asia Collection of the University of Washington in Seattle (Edou, p.222). The author might be the same Kun spangs brtson ‘grus seng ge who is an early holder of some *gCod* lineages and is mentioned several times in the *Zhi byed dang gcod yul gyi chos ‘byung*,—always in a context which makes it possible to date him to the 13<sup>th</sup> or even 12<sup>th</sup> century [viz also n.18]. As Edou tells us, this work ‘is said in its colophon to be derived from Machig’s *Grand Exposition of Transforming the Aggregates into a Food Offering*, a version which is no longer extant.’ (p. 175, n.2). This indicates Edou’s opinion that the extant *Phung po gzan skyur gyi rnam bshad* which is attributed to Ma gcig by the tradition (and by Edou himself!), but, as was said above, rather belongs to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, must have had a still larger predecessor with nearly the same title, which was authored by (or shortly after) Ma gcig herself and used as source by Kun spangs brtson ‘grus seng ge in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. And Kun spang’s text in its turn is believed by Edou to have been used as a model for writing the extant *Phung po gzan skyur gyi rnam bshad*” (1998, 97).

<sup>229</sup> Yet another name that occurs in the record and might refer to the same person is Rmog lcog pa Rin chen brtson

Tönpa Tsöndru Sengé was the seventh and final holder of the single line Ni gu transmission (following him, the Ni gu lineage was transmitted more widely) and became the abbot of Sangs rgyas Gnyan ston (743ff.). He was from a Bön po family (Yan gal dar po at Sil ma). He received Chöd teachings from Machik sprul sku at Gangs bzang when he was ten years old. He was ordained before Bla ma Tsa ri ras pa at the age of thirteen and given the name Tsöndru Sengé; however, Bla ma Tsa ri ras pa passed away before he was able to study extensively with him. He received extensive Chöd teachings from Sum ston ras pa, also known as Dharma ba dzra, who prophesied that Tsöndru Sengé would widely disseminate these Chöd teachings. Tsöndru Sengé received the cycle of Hevajra from Bla ma Dbu ma pa. He received the initiation of Amitāyus from Bzang yul pa, which was said to have extended his life when he was expected to have an early death; however, Bzang yul pa proscribed Tsöndru Sengé from transmitting the Amitāyus initiation until he was thirty and recommended that he take full monastic ordination when was nineteen, which he did in the presence of the preceptor Chos rgyal. Bla ma Spang po ba transmitted teachings—including the doctrines of Zhang ‘tshal pa—to him. He is also said to have received teachings from Bla ma Glang phug pa, Ācārya Tshogs ston Śākya, Bla ma Khro

---

‘grus, who is mentioned earlier in this reconstruction of a Chöd chronology, and whose dates overlap those of Kunpang Tsöndrü Sengé as given in *Timeless Rapture* (1110-1170). Dharmasenggé lists a “Mon gcod Brtson ‘grus seng ge” as following Kunpang Tsöndrü Sengé in the Chöd lineage. The identity of Kunpang Tsöndrü Sengé in Dharmasenggé’s *chos ‘byung* always places him before Nyi ma rgyal mtshan, who is subsequently followed by Mon gcod Brtson ‘grus seng ge, which would contraindicate that Rmog lcog pa Brtson ‘grus (sen ge) is the same as Mon gcod Brtson ‘grus seng ge. However, I have had little success in finding details about a figure by the name of “Mon gcod Brtson ‘grus seng ge.” Rmog lcog pa Rin chen brtson ‘grus (1110-1170, TBRC P1984) was the primary disciple of Mkhas grub khyung po rnal ‘byor (990-1139), who studied under Sukhasiddhi, Niguma, Rahula, Maitripa and Vajrasanapa before founding the Shangpa Kagyü. He is also said to be from the same family clan as Milarepa. His teachers included Khyung po rnal ‘byor, the founder of the Shangpa Kagyü lineage, A seng, Bsod nams rin chen, and Nyag mo dge bshes. His students included Chos kyi seng ge (1154-1217, an early Shangpa expert, not either of the Chöd pas) and Kun dga’ bsod nams. Mon gcod Brtson ‘grus seng ge and Rmog lcog pa Brtson ‘grus may be the same person (given the phonetic similarities of “Mon gcod” and “Rmog lcog”), but they are not the same as Sangs rgyas ston pa/ Kunpang Tsöndrü Sengé.

<sup>230</sup> See also Dharmasenggé 1974, 56b-58b. The biography of Sangs rgyas ston pa Brtson ‘grus seng ge provided by Jamgön Kongtrül in his *Dpal ldan shangs pa bka’ bryud kyi do ha rdo rje’i tshig rkang dang mgyur dbyangs phyogs geig tu bsgrigs pa thos pa don ldan byin rlabs rgya mtsho* (translated into English as *Timeless Rapture: Inspired Verse of the Shangpa Masters* by Ngawang Zangpo) closely follows the *Deb ther sngon po*.

phu ba, Bla ma Sakya pa, Ācārya Gtsang pa, Ācārya Jo stan, Ācārya Siddha, Mkhār rgya ba, Ācārya Jo rgyal and Khams ston.

Tsöndru Sengé travelled to learn meditation from Bla ma Rngog ston, who was reputed to be more learned and accomplished than Sakya Paṇḍita and Gro phu Lo tsa ba. However, upon Tsöndru Sengé’s arrival, Rngog ston had a vision encouraging him to travel to Yol phu to receive teachings in the practice of “illusory body” (*sgyu lus*) and “dream yoga” (*mi lam zin*) from Ri gong pa, who was believed to be a great yogin and accomplished master of the state of “clear light” (*‘od gsal*) in secret. Before they were able to travel to meet with Ri gong pa, Rngog ston passed away and Tsöndru Sengé delayed his travels to Yol phu for three years. When they finally met, after Ri gong pa chastised him for the delay (the arrival of Tsöndru Sengé had been predicted by the Ācārya Gzhu pa nag po, who had also since passed away), Tsöndru Sengé beseeched Ri gong pa for a transmission of the teachings of the Bla ma Shangs pa. According to *The Blue Annals*, Ri gong pa gradually transmitted the teachings and their methods. Tsöndru Sengé would later transmit numerous prophecies before passing away in Ri gong at the age of 72.

The TBRC lists a figure known as Sangyé Tsöndru Senggé (Sangs rgyas Brtson ‘grus seng ge, TBRC 95). He was born in 1207 at Kha rag rtsa’i sil ma gdung rus ya ngal dkar po and passed away in 1278 at Ri gung dgon pa in Yol phu, the last of the Ni gu chig brgyud. TBRC P95 does not list “Kunpang” as an alternate title. Under “Details” for this figure, TBRC notes that according to its previous TSD table tree (although their source is not provided), Sangyé Tsöndru Sengé was affiliated with the Shangpa Kagyü transmission lineage. According to this TBRC listing, Sangyé Tsöndru Sengé received the *Gcod kyi chig brgyud* transmission from

Machik sprul sku in 1216.<sup>231</sup> He is said to have received the *rab byung* vows, as well as the name “Tsöndru Sengé,” from Bla ma Tsa ri ras pa in 1219. Other teachers listed here include Slob dpon sregs (from whom he is presumed to have received the teachings of Mgon po phyag drug) and Sum ston ras pa, who transmitted the *Gcod skor*. His final vows were received from Mkhan po chos rgyal can. Other teachers listed under “Details” include Bla ma Glang phug pa, Slob dpon Tshogs ston Śākya, Bla ma Khro phu ba, Bla ma Sakya pa, Slob dpon Gtsang pa, Slob dpon Jo ston, Slob dpon Grub thob, Mkhar rgyab pa, Slob dpon Jo rgyal, and Khams ston. Sangyé Tsöndru Sengé is said to have met Sangs rgyas Gnyan ston Chos kyi shes rab at Yol phu ri gung, where he received the *Shangs chos chig brgyud*.<sup>232</sup> There is an earlier reference in *The Blue Annals* to Sangyé Tönpa Tsöndru Sengé as a scholar who was also a disciple of the Kadampa Dge bshes Sne’u zur pa Ye shes ‘bar (1042-1118).<sup>233</sup> Glang lung pa was said to have approached him for advice on whether or not the method of Atīśa could serve as a Path (Roerich 1976, 297, 299). Another section of *The Blue Annals* suggests that Sangyé Tönpa Tsöndru Sengé was an abbot of Dpal gsang phu monastery for six years, following in the lineage of Rin chen bzang po (Roerich 1976, 329).

The story is somewhat different if one considers the information that is recorded under TBRC P95 “Associated Persons.” According to “Associated Persons,” Sangyé Tsöndru Sengé was a student of Dharma ba dzra (the Chöd practitioner discussed earlier) and Chos kyi shes rab (1175-1255), the founder of the Shangpa Kagyü site Ri gong.<sup>234</sup> Sangyé Tönpa Tsöndru Sengé is

---

<sup>231</sup> TBRC P95 has the note “teacher (not recorded)” attached to the information under “Details” on these teachers of Brtson ‘grus seng ge.

<sup>232</sup> TBRC P95 has a typo here: “shangs shos chig brgyud.”

<sup>233</sup> TBRC P1316.

<sup>234</sup> TBRC P2248. Chos kyi shes rab was also known as Sangs rgyas gnyan ston, Ri gong pa, and Sbas pa’i rnal ‘byor pa.

listed as the teacher of Gtsang ma Shangs ston (1234-1309),<sup>235</sup> who is discussed further below, as well as Gnas rnying pa A'i Seng ge<sup>236</sup> (b. 13<sup>th</sup> c.) and Rin chen 'bum<sup>237</sup> (b. 13<sup>th</sup> c.). In addition, he is recorded here as the teacher of two important Shangpa Kagyü teachers, 'Jag chen Shes rab tshul khirms (b. 13<sup>th</sup> c.)<sup>238</sup> and Mkhas grub Bsam sdings pa Gzhon nu grub (b. 13<sup>th</sup> c.).<sup>239</sup>

Although Sangyé Tönpa Tsöndru Senggé was the last of the holders of the single lineage Ni gu teachings, he did pass the teachings to other students. According to sources including *The Blue Annals*, one of his foremost students was Mkhas grub Shangs ston of Khong rkyan Yang khan, who was mentioned above. Mkhas grub Shangs ston studied dharma from a young age, being ordained as a novice at thirteen. He became learned in Prajñāpāramita, Pramāṇa, Yogacāra and Madhyamaka, and studied with Kadam and Kagyü scholars, including Mdo ba Karma pa. Following these studies, he heard of Sangyé Tönpa Tsöndru Senggé and travelled to Ri gong to study with him. Dharmasenggé mentions Mkhas grub Shangs ston receiving Chöd teachings from Sangyé Tönpa Tsöndru Senggé in his *Zhijé and Chöd History* (58b-61b).<sup>240</sup> Mkhas grub Shangs ston is remembered as a great master of Shangpa Kagyü. *The Blue Annals* notes that, although the Ni gu gcig brgyud ended with Tsöndru Senggé, numerous students would afterward attain enlightenment in this tradition, but the details of these transmissions are

---

<sup>235</sup> TBRC P88. Gtsang ma Shangs ston was also known as Mkhas grub Shangs ston and Bsam sdings pa Shangs ston.

<sup>236</sup> TBRC P2846.

<sup>237</sup> TBRC P3323.

<sup>238</sup> TBRC P5706.

<sup>239</sup> TBRC P2CN20.

<sup>240</sup> Mkhas grub chos rje is the last in Dharmasenggé's list of the "Pha rgyud thabs kyi brgyud" of Chöd: Āryadeva, Dampa Rinpoche, Skyo Bsod nam Bla ma, Machik, Grva pa Mngon shes, Gyalwa Dondrub, Gnyan chung lo tsa ba, Khugom Chökyisenggé, Dol pa Zangs thal, Rgya nag gcer bu, Sangs rgyas rab ston, Sangs rgyas dge slong, Sum ston Zhang med (whom I understand to be the same figure as Dharma ba dzra), Sangs rgyas ston pa, and Mkhas grub chos rje.



difficult to apprehend. This source notes that Rmog chog pa (1110-1170)<sup>241</sup> was a contemporary of Dpal Phag mo gru pa (also 1110-1170), Skyer sgang pa was a contemporary of ‘Bri khung pa, Sangs rgya gnyan ston was a contemporary of Spyan snga, and Sangyé Tönpa was a contemporary of Yang dgon pa.

The Shangpa Kagyü teaching lineage of Chöd seems to have been passed from Mkhas grub Shangs ston to his student Rtogs ldan ‘Od rgyal (b. 13<sup>th</sup> c.),<sup>242</sup> about whom little is known. From Rtogs ldan ‘Od rgyal the teachings were transmitted to Bkra shis rgyal mtshan (b. 13<sup>th</sup> c.),<sup>243</sup> who then transmitted them to Kun dga’ ye shes (b. 13<sup>th</sup> c.).<sup>244</sup> I have not been able to find any record of writings by these figures; however, a figure named Rinchen Senggé from this period does have a Chöd text attributed to him, as discussed above.

Another transmission lineage of Chöd seems to have been passed from Sangyé Tönpa Tsöndru Sengé in the 13<sup>th</sup> century to Rin chen ‘bum,<sup>245</sup> and then to Dzo ki ras pa,<sup>246</sup> and on to A ri ka pa.<sup>247</sup> From A ri ka pa, the teachings were transmitted to Kun dga’ bzang po,<sup>248</sup> through ‘Gro mgon Mdzes snying,<sup>249</sup> and then to Bsod nams rin chen.<sup>250</sup> Unfortunately, little is known about these figures.<sup>251</sup>

---

<sup>241</sup> Although Dharmasenggé lists him as following Brtson ‘grus seng ge in a lineage of Chöd originating with La ‘dus rdo rje sgron ma, which must be an error.

<sup>242</sup> TBRC P3350. I am including him here on the basis of my recreation of the TBRC TSD Chöd tree. Rtogs ldan ‘Od rgyal is not mentioned in the *Deb ther snon po* or other sources that I have consulted thus far.

<sup>243</sup> TBRC P3351.

<sup>244</sup> TBRC P3352.

<sup>245</sup> TBRC P3323.

<sup>246</sup> TBRC P3324.

<sup>247</sup> TBRC P3325.

<sup>248</sup> TBRC P3326.

#### D. Rangjung Dorjé and lineages of Chöd

The importance of Rangjung Dorjé in the Chöd tradition is attested to by his appearance in a range of lineage texts. In the colophon for Rangjung Dorjé’s *Zab mo bdud kyi gcod yul khyi khrid yig*,<sup>252</sup> which the author alternatively refers to as the *Gcod kyi don bsdus ba’i tshigs su bcad pa rdzogs*, the transmission lineage provided begins with the Buddha and continues with Mañjughosa (Mañjuśrī), through to Aryadeva, Padampa Sangyé, Machik Labdrön, Kham bu ya le, Dznya na dzwa la, Nam mtsho and finally to Rangjung Dorjé. This transmission lineage from the Buddha to Rangjung Dorjé is the same as the one given in the *Ring brgyud gsol ‘debs* discussed above. However, it differs from that included in *The Blue Annals* (also discussed above), which suggests that the lineage through Kham bu ya le is then transmitted into the Gangspa line—to Tönyon Samdrub (aka Sham po Gangspa, the first Gangspa), to Gangspa Rmug sang and Gangspa Dmu yan, and then to Gangspa Lhun grub.

A number of other lineage texts position Rangjung Dorjé as an important inheritor of the Chöd tradition. Dharmasenggé’s *Chos ‘byung* lists Rangjung Dorjé in a Chöd lineage referred to as *Zung ‘jug brgyud ‘dzin*. This lineage begins with Khugom Chökyisenggé, and moves through Sangs rgyas ston pa and Gzhon nu grub to Rangjung Dorjé. Padma dkar po’s *Zhe chen chos ‘byung* (discussed above) states that the Ru pa’i Chöd lineage began with Rangjung Dorjé, Gnam mtsho do pa,<sup>253</sup> and Mi bskyod rdo rje.<sup>254</sup> This information is repeated by Jamgön Kongtrül in his

---

<sup>249</sup> TBRC P3327.

<sup>250</sup> TBRC P3328.

<sup>251</sup> According to the old TBRC TSD tree for Chöd, this lineage continues.

<sup>252</sup> “rang byung rdo rje’i min can gyis / yang yang bskyar te smras pa yin // gcod kyi don bsdus ba’i tshigs su bcad pa rdzogs so // ‘di’i brgyud pa ni / yang dag pa rdzogs pa’i sangs rgyas / ‘jam dpal smra ba’i seng ge / Arya de ba / dam pa rgya gar / lab sgron / kham bu ya le / dznya na dzwa la / gnam mtsho / rang byung rdo rje.”

<sup>253</sup> Thus figure is thus far unknown to me.

*Treasury of Knowledge (Shes bya kun khyab mdzod)*. Dpal ldan tshul khriims' Chos 'byung kun gsal me long (discussed above) lists two traditions of Chöd, one from Machik Labdrön and one from Tönyon Samdrub.<sup>255</sup> The tradition from Machik is further subdivided into four lineages including one that, although within the tradition of Machik, appears to be initiated by 'Phan yul gyi rtsi dar ma.<sup>256</sup> This lineage passes to Gnam mtsho ba Mi bskyod rdo rje, and then to Chos rje Rangjung Dorjé.<sup>257</sup> According to Dpal ldan tshul khriims, the transmission is passed in two lines from Rangjung Dorjé. The first is to Dpal mkha' spyod pa (1350-1405),<sup>258</sup> a figure who is also mentioned in the *Gcod ring brgyud gsol debbs* discussed above. The second is to A mes byang chub rdo rje,<sup>259</sup> Ri mo 'bab pa Bsod nams rin chen (1362-1453),<sup>260</sup> and then to Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupe, the author of *The Blue Annals*.<sup>261</sup> As we see from this range of transmission texts, Rangjung Dorjé is positioned as a key inheritor of Chöd, which indicates his important role as preserver and interpreter of the tradition.

In this chapter I have begun the process of closely analyzing representations of Chöd lineages from a variety of sources in order to learn how Chöd develops as it is affiliated with different historical figures, institutions and contexts. As I noted above, scant attention has been

---

<sup>254</sup> Possibly the same person as the Eighth Karmapa, Mi bskyod rdo rje.

<sup>255</sup> For one account of the transmission of Chöd in Bon, see Chaoul 2009. According to Chaoul, “the oldest Bön source for the chöd practice [is] the *Mother Tantra*’s “Taking the Fearful Place as a Path” (*Ma rgyud nyen sa lam khyer*), which is included in the *Secret Mother Tantra Cycle (Ma rgyud gsang skor)*, first promulgated among humanity by the Royal Shen Milu Samleg [*Mi lus bsams legs*]” (2009, 28).

<sup>256</sup> This figure is unknown to me thus far.

<sup>257</sup> The name “Mi bskyod rdo rje” usually follows the name “Rangjung Dorjé” in Chöd lineage lists.

<sup>258</sup> TBRC P1413.

<sup>259</sup> This figure is unknown to me thus far.

<sup>260</sup> TBRC P4280. According to TBRC P4280, Bsod nams rin chen was also a student of Mkha' spyod dbang po; he is associated with the Mar pa Kagyü, Dwags po Kagyü and Kam tshag transmissions.

<sup>261</sup> According to TBRC P1413, Gzhon nu dpal was also a student of Mkha' spyod dbang po.

paid to the ways in which Chöd changed as it was described by commentators from different perspectives. My preliminary analysis suggests how various factors—including institutional affiliations, doctrinal concerns, and historical changes—have influenced the description and representation of Chöd transmissions, and thus how Chöd has been preserved and renewed. By emphasizing the temporal and doctrinal contexts of the lineage sources that trace the historical development of Chöd, we can also better appreciate how different Tibetan schools interpreted, appropriated, and transformed the tradition. The next chapter of my study will explore how Chöd is contextualized within different Buddhist philosophical discourses and how such contexts have influenced its development.

### CHAPTER THREE: PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CHÖD

As I explained in the previous chapter, transmission lineages function to legitimate Buddhist Chöd by establishing traditions of important predecessors, even as they work to renew these traditions by integrating new interpreters and teachings into these lineages. In this chapter, I will explore how Chöd establishes itself as both authentic and innovative through its integration with established Buddhist philosophies and practices. Chöd legitimates its practice and philosophy by explicitly drawing from both Sūtra and Tantra traditions, but it is innovative in how it intertwines elements from these two sources.

Chöd is explicitly grounded in the Sūtra tradition, and one of the most important philosophical influences on Chöd is the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*.<sup>262</sup> Biographical accounts of Machik stress her precociousness in reading and understanding *Prajñāpāramitā* texts from a young age and the continuing influence of these texts on her own spiritual development and teachings. In fact, the Tibetan name for the *Prajñāpāramitā* is often appended as part of the full title of the Chöd system. According to *The Blue Annals*, a text that I have discussed more fully in the previous chapter, the full name of Chöd is “*Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa bdud kyi gcod yul gyi brgyud*.” Chöd texts frequently cite the *dhāraṇī* “*gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svāhā*” from the *Heart Sūtra*,<sup>263</sup> to the extent that it is also considered a Chöd *dhāraṇī*. Many

---

<sup>262</sup> According to Harcharan Singh Sobti, who follows Csoma de Koros in his preface to E. Obermiller’s *Prajñāpāramitā in Tibetan Buddhism*, the twelve main volumes of the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus in Sanskrit are thought to have been translated into Tibetan in the ninth century by the Indian scholars Jina Mitra and Surendra Bodhi along with the Lotsawa Ye shes sde (Obermiller 1998, xii). Richardson (1977) mentions the study of the *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings by Srong brtsan sgam po and Khri srong lde brtsan, suggesting that these texts were among the earliest circulated in Tibet. The first commentary addressed by Obermiller was composed by Bu-ston (1998, 2). Lopez (1996) discusses commentaries on the *Heart Sūtra* by Atiśa and Vimalamitra (8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century). The *Zhes chen chos ‘byung* (1910) also discusses the preservation of the *Prajñāpāramitā* in Tibet during the “dark ages.”

<sup>263</sup> Gyatso (1985, 324, n. 14) references Jamgön Kongtrül (ed.), *Gcod kyi tshogs las yon tan kun ‘byung gsung rgyun ‘khrul med ltar bkod pa bzhugs pa’i dbu phyogs lags so* (21 ff. in her ms.), and Zur mang Bstan ‘dzin rnam rgyal, *Gcod kyi tshogs las yon tan kun ldan gyi dmigs rim bla ma’i gsung rgyun gyi zin bris shel dkar me long*, 655-666 (in *Gdams ngag mdzod*) which includes a description of the visualization of this mantra within the praxis of Chöd.

Chöd lineages pay homage to the goddess Prajñāpāramitā as Yum chen mo, and Machik herself is traditionally considered an avatar of Prajñāpāramitā.<sup>264</sup>

While its close connections with the *Prajñāpāramitā* situate Chöd within a Sūtra lineage, the Chöd tradition is also consonant with Buddhist tantric teachings. *The Great Explanation* mentions Machik’s training in the *Cakrasaṃvara* and the *Mahāmāyātantra*. In *The Blue Annals*, and in Thu’u bkwan’s *Grub mtha’*, the authors point to the *Hevajratantra* as influencing Chöd’s concern about place. Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel maintains that Chöd praxis conforms to Tantra because it conforms to the *Hevajratantra*. He cites three passages from the *Hevajratantra* which resonate with three fundamental principles of Chöd: “Good meditation is [practiced] at first [near] a solitary tree, in a charnel ground, at the household of the Terrible mothers, at night, and then ultimately at a remote place (VI.6);<sup>265</sup> “having generously given one’s body, after that one can correctly perform the practice” (VI.19),<sup>266</sup> and “truly whatever asura is before one, even if it comes like Indra, moving with a lion’s form one is not afraid of it” (VI.25).<sup>267</sup> These three themes in the *Hevajratantra*—appropriate space for practice, the offering of one’s body, and the development of fearlessness—are elemental in Chöd. However, Chöd does not have its own extant root Tantra.<sup>268</sup> According to many sources, Machik is supposed to have received three Tantras from Tārā, but none of them survives.<sup>269</sup>

<sup>264</sup> Orofino argues that “[Ma gcig’s] analysis has an apophatic connotation that reminds us of the Prajñāpāramitā (Perfection of Wisdom) literature, and especially of Nāgārjunian thought which holds that supreme reality is neither conceivable nor obtainable through concepts. In this way, her analysis of mind is transformed into a hymn to the absolute reality, pure in its essential nature and free from religious dogma” (2000, 397).

<sup>265</sup> “*ji ltar rjes su mthun na / brtag pa gnyis pa las / shing gcig dang ni dur khrod dang / ma mo’i khyim dang mtshan mo dang / yang na dben pa’i bas mtha ru / sgom pa bzang bar brjod par bya*” (“Gos lo tswa ba Gzhon nu dpal 2003, 1139). One might note that this *Hevajratantra* quote itself echoes the *Samudayasūtra* of the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus.

<sup>266</sup> “*lus kyi sbyin pa sbyin byas nas / phyi nas spyod pa yang dag spyad*” (2003, 1139).

<sup>267</sup> “*nges par sngon du lha min gang / brgya byin lta bu ‘ongs na yang / de la ‘jigs par mi bya ste / seng ge’i gzugs kyi rnam par rgyu*” (2003, 1139).

<sup>268</sup> No specific Tantra qua Tantra for Chöd were ever revealed, so perhaps Chöd is not technically a “Tantra” and

As I explain in chapter six, the texts that I have translated for this study, which appear to be among the earliest surviving Chöd texts, emphasize their relationship to the “Sūtra” teachings of *Prajñāpāramitā* rather than a particular cycle of Tantra. Even in these early texts, however, there is evidence that Chöd not only draws from both Sūtra and Tantra, but that it seeks to combine the two in an innovative way. The fruition of this attempt is acknowledged by Jamgön Kongtrül in his 19<sup>th</sup> century encyclopedia of Tibetan teachings, the *Treasury of Knowledge*. In his section on Chöd, Kongtrül individuates the tradition as “famous as the combination of sutric and tantric realization”: “Abiding in emptiness, not forsaking beings, acting according to one’s word, and the sugatas’ blessing: these four are the meaning of the doctrine. Famous even now, this unbroken tradition of ripening and liberating instructions has the Sūtras on the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*) as the scriptural source of its view and the various methods that distinguish the mantra vehicle. Therefore it is accepted as the combination of sutric and tantric realization.”<sup>270</sup> The *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings provide an authenticating canon for Chöd teachings, but the Chöd tradition also develops its own innovative Tantra methods, especially when it produces mature *sādhana*, as I will explain below.

The negotiation between legitimation and innovation in Chöd can also be seen in its aspiration to be legitimated as authentic Dharma through Indic Buddhist antecedents and its insistence on its indigenous Tibetan origins. The Buddhist tradition of Chöd explicitly identifies

---

does not fit within general classifications of the Tantras such as Bu-ston’s; however, an examination of its techniques, and the language through which they are explicated, would suggest that it is definitely a ‘Vajrayāna’ practice.

<sup>269</sup> At the end of chapter two of the *Rnam bshad*—the end of the *rnam thar* portion of the text—the following list is presented: 1) The Secret Mantra Udumvara (precept lineage of transformation, Essential Drop Mirror); 2) Suppressing the five Poisons and Nāgas (Transforming Buddhas of the Ten Directions); 3) The Heart Essence Dispelling the Darkness of Ignorance (Hundred Empowerments of the Transforming Ḍākinīs of the mother lineage). All three of these teachings have *skyed rim* and *rdzogs rim* components.

<sup>270</sup> *Shes bya kun khyab* 3:422; Translation by Harding 2008, 278.

its roots in the *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings, which are themselves identified as *buddhavacana*, or the authoritative speech of the Buddha.<sup>271</sup> Chöd has also traditionally represented itself as uniquely Tibetan: according to the second *rnam thar* in *The Great Explanation* collection, Machik claimed that Chöd was the only Buddhist teaching to have been transmitted from Tibet to India, rather than from India to Tibet. Most Western analyses of Chöd have been weighted toward its Tibetan context: usually Chöd is assimilated to a pre-Buddhist version of “shamanism.”<sup>272</sup> As scholars such as David Seyfort Rugg have noted, indigenous literature was produced in Tibet from the late 8<sup>th</sup> century; such works feature explicitly Tibetan elements as well as “adaptations of ideas and motifs that are clearly of Indian origin and also the independent, and indeed confidently original, use of fully assimilated Indic—i.e. typologically, but not (as far as is known) historically borrowed, Indian—components” (1984, 372). Machik’s system of Chöd is grounded in an inheritance of Indic teachings and practices during a formative and reformative time in Tibet, a period characterized by developments of and negotiations between different threads of Buddhism.

---

<sup>271</sup> According to the Mahāyāna tradition of Buddhism, the *prajñāpāramitā* teachings were given by Śākyamuni Buddha at Mount Gr̥dhrakūṭa, Rājagr̥ha (Vulture’s Peak near modern-day Rajgir, Bihar). These teachings were later compiled by Kāśyapa. It is believed that some of these teachings were translated into Tibetan by the scholars Jina Mitra, Surendra Bodhi and Ye shes sde during the ninth century (de Koros 90; Sobti [1998 (1988)], xii). In his preface to E. Obermiller’s *Prajñāpāramitā in Tibetan Buddhism* [1998 (1988)], Harcharan Singh Sobti (following A. L. Waddell’s *Buddhism and Lamaism of Tibet* [1895], 159 ff.) discusses Alexander Csoma de Koros’s research on the *bka’ gyur* and *bstan gyur* corpus of texts as compiled by Bu ston (1290-2364), which was originally published by Obermiller in *Asiatic Researches* 20 (1836-1839), 41-93; 285-317; 393-552; 553-585. As seen from Obermiller’s quantitative findings, twenty-one volumes of the *Bka’ gyur* are dedicated to *Prajñāpāramitā* (*sher phyin*) texts, while sixteen volumes of the *Bstan gyur* contain commentaries on the *Prajñāpāramitā* (Sobti [1998 (1988)], ix-x).

<sup>272</sup> Chöd is conventionally and misleadingly seen as analogous to, if not derived from, shamanic initiatory dismemberment visions, as well as dualistic anti-body ascetic practices. Two of the elements most commonly referenced by authors in their “identification” of Chöd and/as shamanism—the dismemberment/sacrifice of the body and “demonology”—are presented in an oversimplistic fashion. In the first instance, the numerous Buddhist precursors for the offering of the body provide ample testimony to the ethical and meritorious status such acts have in the Buddhist imagination. As for the “demonology” of Chöd, one must keep in mind the psychology and philosophy of mind that explicitly undergirds the discourse of Dūd in Chöd.



The *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras* obviously ground Chöd in an established Buddhist philosophical tradition, but the question of the connections between Chöd and Vajrayāna teachings is more vexed and insufficiently studied. Since I explore “Sūtra Chöd” in greater detail in chapter six, I turn my attention in this chapter to exploring “Tantra Chöd” and to explaining how Chöd seeks to integrate Sūtra and Tantra aspects. In the first part of the chapter, I explain that as the Chöd tradition developed a more explicit ritual apparatus, many of its texts developed resonances with Tantra texts. In particular, I explore the ways in which Chöd draws from the Vajrayoginī cycles of methods of practice (*sgrub pa'i thabs; sādhana*). In the second part of the chapter, I explain how we can better understand Chöd as a fusion of Sūtra and Tantra elements, notably through the homonyms of the Tibetan terms “*gcod*” and “*spyod*.” In the final section of the chapter, I explain how Machik uses a strategy of “anti-legitimation” to position her teachings as both integrating and transcending their Sūtra and Tantra antecedents.

### **CHÖD AS TANTRA: MACHIK AND VAJRAYOGINĪ**

While Chöd philosophy is explicitly grounded in the *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings, many aspects of Chöd practice have affinities with Tantra practices. In much scholarship on Tantra, to argue the role of practice, process and praxis as definitive of “Tantrism” is standard.<sup>273</sup> David Snellgrove says that a general distinction between Sūtra and Tantra is that the former is primarily concerned with doctrine and the latter with ritual. Suggesting a parallel between practice and philosophical engagement, Ernst Steinkellner argues that Candrakīrti’s hermeneutical system of the fourfold explanation (*caturvidham ākhyānam, bshad pa rnam ba bzhi*), developed in his *Pradīpoddyotanā* commentary on the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, parallels the progress of a tantric

---

<sup>273</sup> For example, that of Blofeld 1970, Brown 2002, and Guenther 1999 [1963].

practitioner.<sup>274</sup> Drawing on the Tibetan commentarial tradition, John Pettit maintains that a paradigmatic teaching of Tantra is the pure perception (*dag pa'i snang ba*) of the self in relation with the world: through the practice of visualizing such a pure perception, “one creates the immediate and homologous cause for enlightenment” (1999, 63). Pettit emphasizes that this homology of cause and effect in Buddhist Tantra is distinct from the Pāramitāyāna, which emphasizes the causes of enlightenment, and not the effect as cause. The techniques for the emulation of enlightenment elaborated in the Tantra teachings—all of which are integrated into Chöd as it develops its ritual apparatus—include body postures and hand gestures (*mudrā, phyag rgya*), the use of ritual implements, verbal utterances (*mantra, sngags*), visualization of meditational deities (*iṣṭadevatā, yi dam lha*) and their abodes (*maṇḍala, dkyil 'khor*), empowerments (*adhiṣṭāna, byin gyis brlabs pa*) and initiations (*abhiśeka, dbang bskur ba*).

In its use of various techniques—including purification rituals, maṇḍala offerings, and deity generation—Chöd has many affinities with the *yoginītantras* and the *\*anuttaratantras*.<sup>275</sup>

---

<sup>274</sup> See Steinkellner 1978, 453. Steinkellner suggests c. 800 C.E., the period of Candrakīrti's work, as the period for “the final development of these tantristic hermeneutics,” and from that point forward this system was the obligatory reference for study of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*. In his survey of various Tibetan methods for explaining the Tantras (*rgyud kyi bshad thabs*), M. Broido identifies as primary the distinction of “convention” (*rtod byed sgra*) and “intention” (*brjod bya don*) in various hermeneutical projects, including Sakyapa Bsod nams rtse mo's *Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam bz'gag*, Candrakīrti's *Pradīpoddyotanā*, Bu ston Rin chen grub's commentary on the *Pradīpoddyotanā*, and Tsong kha pa's commentary on the *Jñānavajrasamuccaya*.

<sup>275</sup> Tony Duff, in an introduction to his translation of the 18th-century Nyingma gter ma *Long chen snying gi thig le las / gcod yul mkha 'gro'i gad rgyangs* recovered by 'Jigs med Gling pa, makes an effort to distinguish “general Chod” (according to the “Pacifier Chod system”) from “Nyingthig Chod,” claiming that the latter has a different “flavour” and “feeling” from the former. According to Duff, a crucial difference is that “Pacifier Chod” is a Vajrayāna system with “the key point of empowerment followed by the practice of a deity, and does use the terminology of the Vajra vehicle when discussing the view. However, it is strongly tied to the Sūtra vehicle's Prajnaparamita teaching of the view and generally presents the view in terms of ultimate Prajnaparamita, the space of direct experience of the mother or consort of the buddhas,” and emphasizes yogic conduct (2010, xv-xvi). Duff elaborates, “The teaching of view in Pacifier Chod starts with the concept of a problem that needs to be cut and ends up with the fact of the direct experience of Prajnaparamita, whereas the teaching of view in Great Completion bypasses concept all together and goes directly to the overarching expanse of that view” (2010, xvi). The methods utilized in Great Completion are known as “*khregs chod*” (“Thorough Cut”) and “*Thod rgal*” (“Direct Crossing”), which may or may not be followed by Nyingthig Chod practice; Duff remarks that for the Nyingthig practitioner, view is more important than practice (2010, xvii). Later, Duff notes that one of the distinctions between the two is that “[t]here is a strong emphasis within the Nying thig teachings on dharmakaya and the world of a Nyingthig

“Tantra Chöd” incorporates *\*anuttaratantra skyed rim* (“generation stage”) and *rdzogs rim* (“perfection stage”) practices. The Tibetan traditions of Nyingma (“old”) and Sarma (“new”) teachings both identify three general categories of Tantra practice. The “outer yoga” of the “generation stage” is practice working with form, that is, the visualization of oneself as a “deity” (*yi dam*) complemented by relevant *sādhana*s. The “inner yogas” of the “perfection stage” can be subdivided into practice working with subtle form, or “signs,” and practice of resting in the nature of mind, or formless practice without signs.

Deity yoga, according to David Germano, is the essence of generation stage practice; he characterizes deity yoga as “the imaginative appropriation of a new subjectivity, self-identity, and body-image as a male or female buddha” (1997b, 314). The technologies of such imaginative transformation include mental techniques (visualizations), physical techniques (*mudrās* and postures), and communicative or speech techniques (mantras) to support the physical, cognitive and emotional trans-identification with a perfected being. In complement, perfection stage practice aims at “com[ing] to terms with the body’s own reality, in terms of both its interior (symbolic) and its mute space devoid of images (nonsymbolic)” (1997b, 314). The techniques of the perfection stage parallel those of the generation stage, but they emphasize subtle body variants of visualization, breathing, and chanting practices, which incorporate the flows of energy of one’s being. The perfection stage also includes nonsymbolic meditations on emptiness, or the true nature of the mind. Germano’s characterization of these two stages of practice reveals an interesting chiasmatic relationship between the particular stage and its aim: whereas the *generation* stage is the process of *perfecting* the psycho-physical being of the

---

practitioner is very much about that. Thus, the sound of dakini laughter is not something that happened only for Jigmey Lingpa but is very much something that can happen to us, as practitioners, too” (2010, 19). From Duff’s discussion, it is difficult to understand what Chöd contributes to Longchen Nyingthig practices and raises the question regarding the place of Chöd within this system—indeed, why was a Chöd practice included at all?

practitioner through trans-identification, the *perfection* stage is the *generation* of one's realization through the lived reality of one's psycho-physical constituents. A homological relationship between embodying the divine and divine embodiment is thus created.

I explain in detail how important Chöd practices include generation and perfection stage elements in chapters four and five, but now I turn my attention to the ways in which a range of Chöd texts provide support for deity yoga. In particular, I explore how and why Machik became associated with the goddess Vajrayoginī as Chöd developed its Tantra components. Though Chöd does not have an explicit source Tantra text, the development of the tradition connects it with the representation of Vajrayoginī. Tantra elements associated with Vajrayoginī are often featured in Chöd paintings, biographies, and practice texts. The visual imagery of Chöd practice often features supramundane figures, including Vajrayoginī and the five *Dhyani* Buddhas. In addition, biographies of Machik establish a connection between Machik and Vajrayoginī, simultaneously validating Machik's historical significance within Tibetan Buddhism and equating her with an ahistorical, supramundane goddess. Further, in the genre of sādhana as practice texts, Vajrayoginī or one of her avatars often overshadows or even replaces Machik.

As I explained in the previous chapter, in Namkha Gyaltzen's appendix to the *rnam thar* in *The Great Explanation* collection, the transmission lineages of Chöd are described along three different paths. One derives from the Sūtra tradition of Prajñāpāramitā, or Yum Chen mo. A second lineage, which ultimately derives from Śākyamuni, runs through Mañjuśrī, Nāgārjuna, and the Brahmin Āryadeva to Padampa Sangyé and finally to Machik. A third lineage of Tantra runs from Vajradhara through Tārā to Machik. Missing from this scheme is the strong association between Machik and Vajravārāhī. In fact, though there are significant confluences between Chöd and the Vajrayoginī and Vajravārāhī Tantras, very little has been said about this

connection.<sup>276</sup> While Padampa Sangyé features prominently in many Chöd lineage lists, the strong association between Machik and Vajrayoginī in one of her avatar forms is missing from standard textual genealogies of Chöd transmissions. Because the association between Machik and Vajrayoginī was established later in order to help other schools assimilate Chöd, the process of legitimation through this connection has not been noticed. In addition, since most contemporary scholars are interested in Chöd's supposed origins in Tibetan shamanic practices, its transformations through Tibetan Buddhist lineages has been largely ignored.

To establish some affinities between the discourse of Chöd and the discourse of Vajrayoginī and her avatars, I will look at three different kinds of Chöd texts: first, assembly fields (*tshogs zhing*) as represented in *thang ga* paintings; second, *The Great Explanation* collection; and finally, a selection of sādhana, or “means of attainment” (*sgrub thabs*) practice texts, focusing on the central practices of *nam mkha' sgo 'byed* (a type of consciousness transference), *lus dkyil* (body mandala) and *lus sbyin* (gift of the body). Although Vajravārāhī and her avatars are not honored in Chöd lineage prayers, *thang ga*, *The Great Explanation*, and sādhana often intimate or foreground her influence. Through brief readings of these texts, I would like to suggest that much might be learned about the Vajrayāna content and context of Chöd by understanding its relation to Vajrayoginī or Vajravārāhī practice. The parallel

---

<sup>276</sup> This connection is briefly noted by F. Sierksma (1966, 142) and by B. Bhattacharya (1924, 247). Although Sierksma acknowledges parallels between Chöd and Vajravārāhī, he insists on the ‘shamanic’ character of Chöd. Janet Gyatso observes that “we may briefly consider the iconographical debts of Gcod to the Buddhist *tantras*. . . . Of the many aggressive deities of the Vajrayāna pantheon who confront and subdue the obstructions to enlightenment, it has been one form or another of the *ḍākinī* that has been adopted for the Gcod *sādhana*s. Most commonly used is an aspect of Vajrayoginī, often Vajravārāhī or her more wrathful counterpart, the black Khros-ma. Ma-gcig Lab-sgron or sometimes Ye-śes mtsho-rgyal are also found idealized as *ḍākinīs*” (1985, 325). I would argue that it is not merely “iconographical debts” that Chöd owes to Buddhist Tantras. Indeed, there are many resemblances between practical elements of Chöd sādhana praxis and aspects of the Vajrayoginī Tantra cycle. Elizabeth English, informed by Robert Mayer, draws attention to relations between Chöd and Nyingma sādhana featuring Vajravārāhī (as *Khros ma nag mo*). She mentions several key Nyingma sādhana, including the *Mkha' 'gro gsang ba kun 'dus kyi chos sko*—a *yang gter ma* composed by ‘Jams dbyangs mkhyen brtse’i dbang po related to a 13th century *gter ma* revealed by Jo mo sman mo—and *gter ma* revealed by Bdud 'joms Ling pa (2002, xxvi-xxvii).

relationship between Machik and Vajrayoginī functioned to justify and emphasize a legitimate Tantra connection for the institutionalization of Chöd. Ironically, this process of transmission has resulted in the diminishment of the historical figure of Machik, who is often superseded by Vajrayoginī or one of her avatars.

### ***Reading a Thang ga Painting***

In this section, I consider a traditional visual representation of a genealogy of Chöd as depicted in a *thang ga* painting. [See figure one.] This *thang ga* is from Spitok *dgon pa* outside of Leh, Ladakh. The date for this *thang ga* is not recorded, but I was informed by a resident attendant that it is ‘very old,’ which it appears to be given its state of deterioration. When I viewed it, it was hanging in the late Bakula Rinpoche’s (1917-2003) personal meditation room, above his chair. It depicts a Chöd assembly field, with Machik in the center. Machik is surrounded by three notable groups of figures that represent a tradition of Chöd in terms of its worldly and supramundane heritages.

On the left side of Machik are the worldly lineage teachers of Chöd. An integral part of the Chöd practice, in consonance with those of many Tantra, is the preliminary visualization of a lineage of Indian and Tibetan precursors. The central figure in this aspect of the visualization is Padampa Sangyé holding a *damaru* and *kang ling*. Above him is Padmasaṃbhava, who is credited with introducing Tantra to Tibet from India. Above Padmasaṃbhava is the Buddha Rdo rje ’chang (Vajradhara). This group also features numerous Indian Mahāsiddhas, including Tilopa, Nāropa, Sukhasiddhi, Asaṅga, Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Saraha and Virupa. These figures represent the Indic lineage of Padampa Sangyé’s teachings as they inform what will become Chöd.

Machik's root teacher, Kyotön Sonam Lama, and Tibetan figures who helped to perpetuate the tradition from Machik's teachings, including the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé, are also represented in this group. Slightly below and on either side of Machik are two men considered to be notable inheritors of her Chöd lineage. To the left is Tönyon Samdrub in monastic attire. To the right is Gyalwa Dondrub with the characteristic appearance of a yogi.<sup>277</sup> In this assembly field, these two men represent the main holders of Machik's Chöd teachings as passed along both institutional monastic lines and non-institutional lines of yoga practitioners. The commonly cited supramundane sources of Machik's Chöd lineage are depicted in the upper section of the painting. Directly above Machik is Tārā, and Śākyamuni Buddha is above Tārā. Yum Chen Mo, or Prajñāpāramitā, the Goddess of Wisdom, is above the Buddha. Above Prajñāpāramitā are the five *Dhyani* Buddhas with their consorts.

What particularly interests me here are the supramundane figures in the right portion of the assembly field. Unlike the groups organized around Prajñāpāramitā or Padampa Sangyé, this group of figures organized around Vajravārāhī is not generally recognized as a vital part of the Chöd tradition. While a few scholars have pointed out iconographic parallels between Machik and Vajrayoginī or Vajravārāhī, there has not been any systematic investigation of the relationship between these figures. And although Vajravārāhī is not commonly acknowledged in Chöd lineage prayers, she occupies a conspicuous place in assembly field representations such as this one. Vajravārāhī is in the *ardhaparyāṅka* (half-lotus dancing posture), echoing Machik's posture in the center of the painting. She is holding the *karṭṛka* (flaying knife) and *kapāla* (skull cap), as per her conventional iconography. When one sees this typical representation, the resonance between the visual image of Vajravārāhī and Chöd practice is striking. As I discuss

---

<sup>277</sup> Slightly to the lower left of Tönyon Samdrub is Rdo rje sgron ma, an emanation of Machik and lineal family descendent of Gyalwa Dondrub.

further in the next two chapters, a distinctive aspect of Chöd is cutting through attachment and ignorance by visualizing cutting up and offering one's own body. The flaying knife and skullcap are symbolic instruments associated with this practice. In many Chöd texts, when the Chöd practitioner is preparing for this offering, she transforms her consciousness into Machik, who in turn is visualized as performing the act of cutting through the body. As Chöd is assimilated into other Tibetan traditions, Machik's role as meditative support is often taken by Vajravārahī (or one of the other avatars of Vajrayoginī): the practitioner thus transforms into an ahistorical goddess rather than a historical woman.

Cakrasaṃvara, in heruka form together with Vajravārahī, is depicted above Siṃhamukha, the dakini distinguished by the lion face. The presence of Cakrasaṃvara is a reminder of the complicated tantric heritage of Vajrayoginī and her avatar Vajravārahī. As Elizabeth English explains, the tradition of Vajrayoginī has no root Tantra of its own, and so draws on and transforms Tantra associated with her consort Cakrasaṃvara.<sup>278</sup> I am speculating that in a similar way, Chöd lacks a root Tantra of its own and so adapts the textual and iconographic tradition associated with Vajrayoginī.

In the center of the painting, Machik herself is adorned with a five-skull head ornament, which signifies (among other things) the five buddha families, the five wisdoms and the five purified aggregates. Along with the other *mudrā* ornaments, this head ornament marks her as a wisdom *ḍākinī*. Like Vajravārahī, Machik is in the *ardhaparyāṅka* posture.<sup>279</sup> While it would be ritually consonant for her to hold a *kartṛka* and *kapala* like Vajravārahī, Machik needs to be iconographically distinguished from her supramundane analogue. Machik thus holds a *ḍamaru* (drum) in her right hand and a *dril bu* (bell) in her left. While the bell traditionally signifies the

---

<sup>278</sup> English 2002, 26-27.

<sup>279</sup> It is also similar to the posture of Śīva as Naṭarāja, "Lord of the Dance."



accumulation of wisdom, the *damaru* here might signify skillful means. Given that the *damaru* is used for calling the guests to partake of the offering of one's own body in Chöd sādhana, this implement also suggests the compassionate subduing of one's demons rather than the wrathful subjugation of them.<sup>280</sup>

The iconographical parallels between Machik and Vajravārāhī encourage us to consider the associations between Vajravārāhī and Chöd praxis more seriously. As I will explain further, some of the more “exotic” elements of Chöd praxis may be seen to correspond with aspects of Vajrayoginī and Vajravārāhī sādhana. Rather than being shamanistic practices overlaid with Buddhist concepts, Chöd practices are deeply rooted in Vajrayāna thought. Images like this assembly field are also vital in the lived practice of Chöd: they are both perceived as *thang ga* paintings and reconstructed through visualization. As an integral element of this assembly field, Vajrayoginī and her avatars are thus an integral element of Chöd as experienced practice.

### ***Reading The Great Explanation***

While such *thang ga* images establish an iconographic and meditative connection between Vajravārāhī and Machik's Chöd, written texts such as Machik's *The Great Explanation* and her various *rnam thar* establish a narrative and genealogical link between the two. The two *rnam thar* that are included in *The Great Explanation* are the most widely circulated and broadly accepted. These hagiographies are almost certainly the compositions of the 13<sup>th</sup> century writer Brtson 'grus seng ge of the Shangpa Kagyü school, and were written shortly before the Shangpa Kagyü were assimilated into the Kadam school.<sup>281</sup> The editions that are included in *The Great*

---

<sup>280</sup> This might be considered in contrast with Padmasambhava, who is renowned for his wrathful subjugation of demons when he introduced Buddhism to Tibet.

<sup>281</sup> Gene Smith discusses how the Shangpa Kagyü became aggressively assimilated to the Geluk: “This pattern of growth through incorporation of lesser sects was especially common in Gtsang. The rebirth of the First Dalai Lama as the son of Grub chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan resulted in the end of a hereditary line of Shangs pa Kagyü lamas.

*Explanation* were edited by Namkha Gyaltzen, who seems to have been associated with the Mar pa Kagyü and Dwags po Kagyü monastic lineages in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. These hagiographies, which are considered authoritative versions of Machik's life, are thus the product of the scholastic transmission and transformation of Chöd.

These texts establish a significant correspondence between Machik and Vajrayoginī practice through another male figure from the Indian subcontinent: the prince Arthasiddhi Bhadra. As *The Great Explanation* recounts, prior to her birth as a Tibetan woman, Machik was incarnated as Arthasiddhi.<sup>282</sup> Arthasiddhi becomes an adept in the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra cycle, and he also receives teachings in related Tantra traditions, including the Five Goddesses of Nag mo and the secret maṇḍala of Hayagrīva-Vajravārāhī. Tārā directs Arthasiddhi to help sentient beings in Tibet, and his journey to Tibet is facilitated by an unidentified wrathful, blue-black dākinī, reminiscent of the Vajrayoginī avatar Khros ma Nag mo. The dākinī instructs Arthasiddhi to merge his consciousness with her heart, and then kills him with a flaying knife. This ritual prefigures the Chöd *nam mkha' sgo byed* practice (described in detail in chapter five), which involves the transference of the practitioner's consciousness to Vajrayoginī. This narrative also evokes the visualized dissection and offering of the practitioner's body in the *lus sbyin* practice. Following the transference of his consciousness to the dākinī and her transportation of this consciousness to Tibet, Arthasiddhi's consciousness enters the womb of the mother of the future Machik. As with the lineage position of Padampa Sangyé, discussed in the previous chapter, the association of Chöd with Vajrayoginī Tantra is here undergirded by Machik's previous experiences as an Indian man.

---

This process continued until more recent times" (2001, 124; this might also explain why the second Dalai Lama was a Chödpa; see Rossi-Filibeck 1983).

<sup>282</sup> At the end of chapter two of *The Great Explanation*, Padampa is cited as saying that Arthasiddhi Bhadra is an incarnation of Vajravārāhī.

In this *rnam thar* genre of narratives, Machik’s own proper incarnation establishes her close relationship to, or even identity with, Vajrayoginī.<sup>283</sup> While still in the womb, Machik intones the mantra of Vajrayoginī and the Five Dakinis: “*ha ri ni sa.*” At birth, Machik immediately adopts the *ardhaparyāṅka* stance and intones the seed syllable “A” of the *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings; the seed syllable of Avalokiteśvara, “*hrī,*” appears on her tongue; and she manifests a third-eye of five-coloured light, signifying her embodiment as a dākini. As a young woman, Machik receives training in the Cakrasaṃvara cycle, and she later marries a yogin who specializes in the Cakrasaṃvara praxis. According to the *Rnam bshad*, Machik also gives initiation for the Five Deity Vajravārāhī praxis, in which she appears as Vajravārāhī with her retinue of four dākini.<sup>284</sup> Machik herself explains that her outer manifestation is Yum Chen mo, or Prajñāpāramitā, her inner manifestation is Tārā, and her secret manifestation is Vajravārāhī.<sup>285</sup> In this teaching, Machik identifies herself with Vajravārāhī along with her retinue of four dākinī. This group of five figures is manifested in various ways, including as the four syllable mantra “*ha ri ni sa*” with the seed syllable “*bam.*” Through these analogues, Machik as Vajravārāhī becomes the source of all being, from the cosmic constituents to the aggregates of existential being. As in the *thang ga*, Vajravārāhī’s role in *The Great Explanation* not only suggests the importance of Vajrayoginī Tantra in the development of Chöd, but also demonstrates Chöd’s incorporation of elements of Vajrayoginī practice.

---

<sup>283</sup> Carol Savvas writes that Machik “was also prophesied in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa Tantra*, where Buddhat told that ‘In the degenerate times of my teachings, in the North in the town of lab, an emanation of the Mother of the Buddhas, Prajñāpāramitā, will appear. She will be named *sgron me*’” (1990, 57).

<sup>284</sup> At the beginning of chapter five of *The Great Explanation*.

<sup>285</sup> Lopon P. Ugyen Tenzin (personal communication, 2006) said that Yum Chen Mo is the *Dharmakāya* form, Tārā is the *Sambhogakāya* form, and Vajravārāhī is the *Nirmanakāya* form of Machik.

### *Reading a Sādhana*

The assembly field *thang ga* illustrates the important role of Vajravārāhī in Chöd visualization, and Machik’s secret manifestation as Vajravārāhī in *The Great Explanation* demonstrates the significance of Vajravārāhī in the Chöd lineage. When one looks at Chöd sādhana, the influence of Vajrayoginī Tantra on Chöd practice becomes even more apparent.<sup>286</sup> The most distinctive practices in Chöd sādhana involve the practitioner visualizing the offering of her body to all sentient beings. While these meditative practices—including the White, Red, and Multicolored Banquets—are usually discussed in writings on Chöd, the parallels between Chöd sādhana and *yoginītantra* or \**anuttaratantra* sādhana are rarely explored.

*Sgrub thabs*, literally “means for accomplishment” and a translation of the Sanskrit word “sādhana,” refers to both a genre of ritual literature and the practice this literature describes and discusses.<sup>287</sup> Because of the emphasis on the embodied practice of teachings, sādhana are usually associated with Vajrayāna Buddhism. Hubert Decleer (1978, 113) states that texts of this genre include three elements: “(1) a scenario for visualization processes of inspiring symbols”; “(2) reference to philosophical material”; and “(3) indication of particular moods.” Sādhana praxis usually begins with the foundational Buddhist practice of going for refuge to the Three Jewels—Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha. One may also then recollect one’s impermanence, the imminence

---

<sup>286</sup> For example in Jigme Lingpa’s Laugh of the Dakini practice (*klong chen snying gi thig le las / Gcod yul mkha’ ‘gro’i gad rgyangs*), aside from becoming Ye shes Mtsho rgyal and Gsang ba Ye shes Mkha’ ‘gro ma, one also becomes Khros ma Nag mo for the *sgo ‘byed* and *lus sbyin*. And in Tsasum Lingpa’s *lus sbyin sādhana*, *thugs rje chen po ‘khor ‘das zil gnong las / sgyu lus mchod sbyin bsod pa*, Vajrayoginī is the support for transforming one’s consciousness, as well as the body mandala and the body offering practices.

<sup>287</sup> Sādhana texts are intended for study, but only so far as they undergird practice; they are a support for a “switch in perspective” or transformation that Decleer describes as “transition from text(ual) example to experienced content” (1978, 114). Daniel Cozort notes that “Sādhana are only one type of tantric literature.” According to Cozort, “Tantras themselves are ill-suited to be recited as the basis of a rite: they are arranged unsystematically; they contain deliberately obscure language; and they do not extensively describe preliminary practices typically considered essential in a sādhana, such as rousing in oneself an attitude of renouncing the cycle of rebirth, generating compassion, and ascertaining that phenomena are empty (*stong pa*) of inherent establishment (*rang bzhin gyis grub pa*)” (1996, 132).

of death, and one's precious human opportunity to attain enlightenment. The practitioner then generates the spirit of enlightenment, including compassion and its complement of meditation on emptiness, which reflects the Bodhisattva vow as defined by Mahāyāna: to attain enlightenment in order to aid all sentient beings until they too are enlightened.

These activities ground the Vajrayāna practice of deity yoga, which comes next. This aspect begins with paying homage to one's teacher and recollecting one's lineage (*bla rgyud gsol 'debs dang tshog zhing*); the practitioner might also incorporate the visualization of deities in front of herself (*mdun bskyed*) as the recipients of offerings and the source of blessings (*byin rlabs*). The next component is the generation of oneself as an enlightened being (*bdag bskyed*), which is usually combined with the notion of being imbued with divine pride (which is not the vulgar pride in one's own ego and self, but the unselfish belief in one's capacity for action informed by wisdom and skillful means). This aspect of the visualization practice underscores the Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine of actuality as emptiness, with all phenomena being fundamentally pure manifestations of the wisdom of bliss and emptiness of the Buddhas. Ordinary appearances must be understood from this perspective and hence the practitioner must "become" a buddha herself. The visualization of oneself as an enlightened being is a method for dissolving conventional appearances through the experiential awareness of the emptiness of things as interdependent and impermanent manifestations.<sup>288</sup>

---

<sup>288</sup> Tantric practices which include ritual offerings traditionally include four modes that are often in a dialogic relationship. An outer offering (*phyi mchod*) will be of tangible substances or objects, usually including drinking water, flowers, incense, light, perfume, food and music, often on an altar in front of a representation of enlightened being, presented in a ritual fashion accompanied by recitations, gestures or movements and visualizations. An inner offering (*nang mchod*) is composed of the visualized transmutation of mundane elements of existence such as the five body-mind aggregates into their purified counterparts, the five wisdoms; these purified elements can then be engaged in the consecration and purification outer offerings, as they are now viewed through the practitioner's wisdom of the ultimate nature of actuality as emptiness—that is, all phenomenal appearances are empty due to their true nature as interdependent and impermanent. (According to Garchen Rinpoche's 1999 oral teaching on Chöd, the five sense organs are transmuted into five lights, which are then transmuted into the five wisdoms. On the transmutation of the aggregates into the five colors of the "rainbow body" (*'ja' lus*), see Walter 2003. A secret

The offering of a maṇḍala to all sentient beings, or to a field of merit, usually composed of one's lineage holders and other significant beings, is a common component of sādhana practice. A Vajrayāna maṇḍala often signifies the domain of a deity or deities.<sup>289</sup> Within the context of offering in Vajrayāna Buddhist practice, the “outer maṇḍala” signifies the practitioner's experiential universe; as ritually visualized, it is based on an Indic worldview with Mount Meru in the middle surrounded by the four continents. The offering of an “inner maṇḍala,” which is common in traditions such as Chöd, involves visualization of the practitioner's own body as the universe. For example, the skin is understood as analogous to the ground, the blood to the rivers and oceans, the flesh to the abundance of flora, the trunk of the body to Mount Meru at the center, the four limbs to the continents, the eyeballs to the orbs of the sun and the moon, and the organs to the material resources that support sentient life. As such, the offering of an inner maṇḍala can be done by anyone, since it requires no more (and no less) than one's own being for its performance. Offered to the Buddhas of the three times, it demonstrates one's non-attachment to the mundane and ultimate desire for enlightenment. As I will explain in the following chapters, the accessibility of this offering to all practitioners becomes a key aspect of the Chöd tradition.<sup>290</sup>

---

offering (*gsang mchod*) requires a visualized introduction and union of male and female enlightened beings as representing the blissful non-dual union of wisdom and liberative technique. A Thatness offering (*de kho na nyid mchod*) is one that then offers this knowledge of the nondual wisdom of emptiness and bliss.

<sup>289</sup> “Maṇḍala” refers to “disc” or “circle”; one popular etymological analysis suggests that it is derived from “maṇḍa” referring to “essence” and “la” referring to “container.” Carl Jung (1972), Stanley Tambiah (1976), and Dan Martin (1994b) provide three different perspectives on maṇḍala, the body and the relation of the individual being to society.

<sup>290</sup> The inner offering of the body maṇḍala also has parallels with the Indic discussions of the cosmic Puruṣa referenced in *Rig Veda* 10.9, who is dismembered and recomposed and provides a template for microcosmic and macrocosmic analogies in Indic thought. I am presently working on a project surveying and analyzing the development of this trope in Indic and Tibetan culture and thought.

Chöd sādhanas share many generic aspects with other tantric sādhanas, particularly in preliminary and concluding practices. Chöd sādhanas open with preliminaries including the generation of bodhicitta (*sems skyed*); going for refuge (*skyabs 'gro*); the purification of obscurations (*sgrib sbyong*); and the making of offerings (*mchod 'phul*). The conclusion of the practice includes dedication prayers (*sngo smon*), the dissolution stage (*bsdus rim*), and the post-practice of taking on the path (*lam khyer*).<sup>291</sup> In the context of the Chöd sādhanas, merit (*tshogs bsags*) is accumulated through the visualization of a “refuge field” (*tshogs zhing*), such as the one depicted in the *thang ga*, with Machik flanked by Padampa Sangyé and his coterie to her left, the Buddha and the supramundane beings above, and Vajravārāhī and her retinue to her right. If the particular sādhanas include a *bla ma rnal 'byor* (guru yoga) practice, as in a sādhanas by the First Panchen Lama,<sup>292</sup> then one visualizes one’s lama in the form of Machik Labdrön, having the aspect of Vajravārāhī.<sup>293</sup>

While some specific techniques distinguish Chöd sādhanas from other tantric sādhanas, many of the most important Chöd texts intimately associate Machik as meditative support with Vajravārāhī. The main part of the practice begins with *nam mkha' sgo 'byed* consciousness transference practice. This is followed by a body maṇḍala practice, which culminates in banquets (*'gyed pa* and *tshogs*) involving the offering of the body. Some instructions for the consciousness transference practice indicate that Machik should be the “support” for the

---

<sup>291</sup> For example, in the *Lus mchod sbyin* sādhanas in 13 parts (*The Garden of All Joy*) by Jamgön Kongtrül, the *yi dams* are Prajñāpāramitā and Machik. The composition of this sādhanas includes the following: the “preliminaries” of generating bodhicitta, taking refuge, accumulation of merit, clearing away obscurations or purification, and making offerings; the “actual basis” of transference of consciousness, body maṇḍala, and white and red feasts with ganacakra; and the “conclusion” of dedication prayers, dissolving stage, and taking on the path.

<sup>292</sup> Pan chen Lozang Chökyi Gyaltzen, *Gcod kyi gdams pa thar 'dod kyi ded dpon* (*The Guide For Those Desiring Liberation*). Translated in Savvas 1990, 400-427.

<sup>293</sup> In the *Gcod kyi gdams pa thar 'dod kyi ded dpon* (*The Guide For Those Desiring Liberation*) by Pan chen Lozang Chökyi Gyaltzen, Machik, appearing like Vajravārāhī, figures as the root *bla ma* amidst a collection of guests that reads like a merit field. See Savvas 1990, 406.

consciousness, while others recommend Vajravārāhī or Khros ma nag mo.<sup>294</sup> In most Chöd sādhana, after the practitioner mixes her consciousness with space, she emanates as Vajravārāhī. It is in this emanation as Vajravārāhī that she also transforms her body into a maṇḍala offering. In this offering, the practitioner shifts her cognitive perspective from mundane to extraordinary: she purifies and transforms herself by visualizing homologies between her body as micro-cosmology and the universe as macro-cosmology. Identifying a particular body part with a particular enlightened being transforms the practitioner: she is no longer a limited human being with limited resources for offering and spiritual development, but has the ability to offer the entire universe through her body, and the means for unlimited enlightened activity as an embodiment of a field of enlightened beings. This body maṇḍala technique bears a close resemblance to similar practices in Vajrayoginī and Vajravārāhī sādhana. These Vajrayoginī practices derive from the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra cycle, in which the body maṇḍala is a core component.<sup>295</sup> Finally, as Vajravārāhī, the practitioner distributes her body—transformed into abundant offerings according to the needs and desires of the guests—to all sentient beings. In all stages of the practice, these texts closely connect Machik with Vajrayoginī. Throughout many such sādhana, Machik is thus systematically replaced by the ahistorical supramundane goddess Vajrayoginī, making the practice more appealing and accessible to male scholastic institutions.

Though the visual images, lineage narratives, and practice texts of Chöd all demonstrate a strong link with Vajrayoginī Tantra, the influences do not simply move in one direction. The practice of *Kusāli tshogs* provides one example of the symbiotic relationship between Chöd and

---

<sup>294</sup> For example, in the *Zab lam gcod kyi khrid yig* by Tsong kha pa, during the *sgo 'byed* practice, one's mind is inseparable from Phag mo Nag mo (i.e., Khros ma Nag mo).

<sup>295</sup> According to English, a sādhana in the *Guhyasamayāsādhnamālā* corpus refers “to the *Lakṣābhidhāna* (sometimes identified with the *Khasamatantra*), which is a mythical work, supposedly vast and authoritative in ten thousand verses, and allegedly the source from which the *Cakrasaṃvaratantra* itself was extracted . . . . The same legendary authority is claimed in the *Yoginīsaṃcāratāntra* following its description of the body maṇḍala, a core Cakrasaṃvara practice taken over with very little adaptation in Umāpatideva's *Vajravārāhī Sādhana*” (2002, 7).



Vajrayoginī praxis. *Kusāli tshogs* is thought to derive from the *Śṭkṣāsamuccaya* of Śāntideva. In this text, Śāntideva stresses that even if one is merely a *kusāli* or beggar, one can offer one's body (*lus sbyin*) for the accumulation of merit and wisdom and for the benefit of others. As Dpal sprul Rin po che describes them in the *Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung* (*The Words of My Perfect Teacher*), the ritual and meditative techniques of this practice (which he calls "*Kusāli Gcod*" and connects with the teachings of Machik) are very similar to those of Chöd, from the transformation of one's individual consciousness into Vajravārāhī or Khros ma Nag mo, to the various feasts for an assortment of sentient beings (1994, 297; 2005, 335). At least one Vajrayoginī sādhana, with a commentary by Tsong kha pa, incorporates a *Kusāli tshogs* practice.<sup>296</sup> In this example, there seems to have been a "pulling-through" of elements associated with Chöd. While Chöd adapts visual, narrative, and philosophical aspects of Vajrayoginī teachings, this Vajrayoginī practice is elaborated through the inclusion of a *lus sbyin* practice commonly identified with Chöd.

As I suggested earlier, the reason that Chöd sādhana demonstrate such close associations with those of Vajrayoginī and her avatars may be that Chöd does not have an explicit source Tantra to elaborate. Although the historical figure of Machik is eventually reborn as a ḍākinī in many Chöd sādhana, at the time of Chöd's systematization during the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, a supramundane figure was also needed for the practice to function. Since Vajrayoginī practices were extremely popular during this period,<sup>297</sup> and since the tradition around Vajrayoginī offered

---

<sup>296</sup> *Zab lam gcod kyi khrid yig* by Tsong Kha pa. Cf. the commentary by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso (2000) on Tsong kha pa's commentary, which also incorporates *kusāli gcod*. Khijo Rinpoche (1991) presents a commentary on a sādhana which appears to be the same one discussed by Tsong Kha pa and Gyatso.

<sup>297</sup> English notes that "[t]he cult of the Tantric goddess, Vajrayoginī, flowered in India between the tenth and twelfth centuries C.E. at a mature phase of the Buddhist tantras" (2002, 1). Further, citing the *Deb ther sngon po*, English observes that the majority of yogis studied Phag mo gzhung drug and that the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries saw many Kagyü transmissions (2002, xxii). At almost exactly the same time, Machik was articulating the teachings that would become the foundation of Chöd. According to Traga Rinpoche (Drikung Kagyu, Garchen Institute email

mature *sādhana* as models for Chöd, it makes a great deal of sense that Chöd would turn to Vajrayoginī as the *yi dam*, or meditation deity, for its *sādhana*. Chöd does not straightforwardly appropriate aspects of the Vajrayoginī tradition, but rather interprets and adapts elements of the yoginītantras for its own purposes. For example, as I noted earlier, a form of Vajrayoginī is used in the role of *yi dam*; and in the central practices *nam mkha' sgo 'byed* and *lus sbyin*, Vajravārāhī often provides a locus for the transformed consciousness.<sup>298</sup>

Vajrayoginī also plays a key role in the incorporation of Chöd by various Tibetan Buddhist schools. In later *sādhana*, as Chöd practices become recognized components of institutionalized Tibetan Buddhist systems, Vajrayoginī (or one of her avatars) supersedes Machik as ritual support. I would suggest that there are two interconnected reasons for the displacement of Machik by Vajrayoginī. First, this association substantiates Chöd as a Tantra teaching: Vajrayoginī provides a mnemonic marker to remind the practitioner of the association of Chöd with Tantra antecedents. As a familiar icon imbued with Vajrayāna resonances, Vajrayoginī obviously helped to organize and establish a tradition which was individually practiced outside the regulation of Buddhist institutions. The second reason can be attributed to the male scholastic traditions that came to predominate over the Buddhist landscape in Tibet. These traditions, including the Kagyü and Geluk, resisted accepting a historical woman as a source for Buddhist teachings and a paradigm for enlightenment, especially since it is a conventional Buddhist belief that it is difficult, if not impossible, to reach spiritual liberation in a woman's body. This attitude is suggested in a quote attributed to Machik's disciple, Tönyon

---

newsletter correspondence, 08.07.06), Vajrayoginī was not only the primary *yi dam* of Mi la ras pa and the main *yi dam* for Naropa's *chos drug* teachings, she was the principal female *yi dam* for \**anuttaratantra*.

<sup>298</sup> In a slightly different context for Chöd practice, the Drikung Kagyu lama Garchen Rinpoche (*Phat*: a transcript of oral teachings on Chöd from 1999, 13) equates *sems dbang* with *nam mkha' sgo byed* and *lus dbang* with *lha rnal 'byor*.

Samdrub, who is discussing Machik's transformation into Vajrayoginī in her avatar form as Vajravārahī: "E ma ho! How wonderful! An ordinary woman whose essence is impure is Vajravārahī herself in the essence of purified appearances" (147). When an ordinary woman is replaced by a goddess as the representative figure of the practice, Chöd teachings are more readily assimilable by Tibetan Buddhist schools and their ideologies. Like the establishment of Padampa Sangyé as the Indian male progenitor of Chöd, the replacement of Machik by Vajrayoginī helped monastic and scholastic institutions interpret and adapt Chöd to complement their own traditions.<sup>299</sup>

While I am still at a preliminary stage in explaining the reasons for Chöd's association with Vajrayoginī traditions, systematic study of the confluences and influences between the Vajrayoginī Tantra corpus and Buddhist Chöd would help to move the study of Chöd away from associations with shamanism and to locate Chöd within the historical and generical ground of the *yoginītantra* and *\*anuttaratantra* traditions. Both within Chöd and between Chöd and corresponding traditions, such a shift in interpretation would also facilitate a deeper understanding of the genre of *sādhana* and of psycho-physical yogic practices in extra-institutional and institutional contexts.

## CHÖD AS SŪTRA AND TANTRA

Though I have here tried to illustrate how Chöd both authenticates itself in terms of and innovates on extant Tantra practices, it is crucial to note that from its inception, Chöd sought to harmonize Sūtra and Tantra elements. In order to explain this interconnection, I will elucidate the homonyms of the Tibetan terms "*gcod*" and "*spyod*." In what is often considered the "root

---

<sup>299</sup> Tucci observes that Chödpas were counter-cultural practitioners, yet "[i]n East Tibet *gcod* was practiced above all in two *bKa' brgyud pa* monasteries, *rGyu ne [brgyud gnas?]* and *sKyabs che*, where monks, once they had finished the appropriate Tantric training and taken the relevant tests, received the title of master of *gcod (gcod pa)*" (92).

text” of Chöd, *The Great Poem on the Prajñāpāramitā*,<sup>300</sup> Āryadeva the Brahmin explicitly discusses the philosophy of the *Prajñāpāramitā* and suggests a new way of thinking of how one focuses on and actually practices the teachings of the *Prajñāpāramitā*. Āryadeva provides what might be considered the seminal use of “Chöd” as a technical term and provides a functional etymological analysis of the term:

To cut through the root of mind itself,  
 And to cut through the five poisons of mental afflictions,  
 And because all extreme views, mental formations during meditation,  
 And anxiety, hope and fear in activity (“*spyod*”),  
 And pride, are severed (“*gcod*”),  
 This is the definition of “*gcod*.”<sup>301</sup>

In this composition, Āryadeva juxtaposes the homonymic terms “*spyod*” and “*gcod*.” The term “*gcod*” literally means “to cut” or “to sever,” and Chöd teachings aim to assist the student to cut through the habit of self-grasping. The term “*spyod*” means “to practice” or “to experience.”<sup>302</sup>

The Chöd tradition of Machik is most commonly referred to as “*Gcod yul*,” but there are

---

<sup>300</sup> This text is alternatively known as the ‘*Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag* (*The Personal Oral Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom*). It is located in the *Gdams ngag mdzod*, in the *Gcod kyi chos skor*, and in the *Bstan ’gyur*. Gyatso suggests that this root text of Chöd “could easily be the work” of the Āryadeva who was the famous Mādhyamika scholar and student of Nāgārjuna (1985, 326); however, this identification has since been refuted by scholars such as Dan Martin. Āryadeva the Brahmin is now widely agreed to be the maternal uncle of Padampa Sangyé. Gyatso notes that the Āryadeva text “discusses the various demons, the primordial nondiscursive nature of consciousness, the illusoriness of phenomena, etc., notions that are common to Gcod and standard Prajñāpāramitā thought. Virtually the same text is found in the Peking edition of the *Bstan ’gyur*, although here the title is incorrectly Sanskritized to read *Prajñāpāramitā-mahāparipṛcchā*. The Peking text was translated by Mi-pham mgon-po (Ajitanātha?) and is a somewhat different version than that published in the Gcod collections, which was translated by Dam-pa and his student Zwa-ma Lo-tsa-ba. The redactor of the Peking canon was certainly aware of the text’s importance in the Gcod tradition, introducing it with the statement, ‘*Gcod kyi rgya gzhung Āryadevas mdzad pa*’” (1985, 326-327).

<sup>301</sup> “*sems nyid rtsa ba gcod pa dang / nyon mongs dug lnga gcod pa dang / lta mtha’ sgom pa’i ‘du byed dang / spyod pa nyam nga re dogs dang / snyems byed thams cad gcod pa’i phyir / nges pa’i tshig tu gcod ces bya.*” There are three sources for this stanza: Āryadeva’s *shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i tshigs su bcad pa chen mo*, ‘Jam mgon kon sprul glo gros mtha’ yas’ *Gdams ngag mdzod* in the volume on Chöd, and Dharmasenggé’s *Zhijé and Chöd History*. The only differences between these three texts with regard to this passage is that the version in Dharmasenggé’s *History* attributes this quote to Machik Labdrön, and it reads “*sgom pa’i ‘gyu byed*” where Āryadeva reads “*sgom pa’i du byed.*”

<sup>302</sup> It is curious that no one has considered a third homonym, “*mchod*” (meaning “offering,” or “puja”) in this context.

numerous occasions when it is referred to as “*Spyod yul*.” The frequent occurrence of these homonyms within texts might be due to the oral nature of many of the teachings or scribal errors. However, these terms are elaborated in various Tibetan historiographical sources, demonstrating Tibetan consciousness of the ways these terms illumine each other in the context of Chöd. As a functional etymology, I would propose that “*gcod*”—to cut—draws attention to the tantric components of Chöd, while “*spyod*”—to practice—draws attention to the sūtric components. While the difference between the two homonyms intimates a distinction between the two threads of Chöd, their application in various texts reinforces the interdependence of Tantra and Sūtra lineages of Chöd.

In the earliest extant treatise on Chöd, the 15<sup>th</sup> century *The Blue Annals*, Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel suggests that “*spyod yul*” emphasizes the practical aspects of the Chöd system which are grounded in the *Prajñāpāramitā*. He claims that the Chöd system is sometimes known as “*spyod yul*” because Maitri[pa], a South Asian siddha (1012-1097) who was a teacher of Marpa, has said that “in the *Prajñāpāramitā* there are practices conforming with Mantra[yāna].”<sup>303</sup> Further consideration of these homonyms might help us think more about how the complex relationship between Sūtra and Tantra aspects of Chöd is reflected in the terms used to define the tradition.

Many accounts of Chöd foreground practices in which one visualizes cutting through one’s own body. As Āryadeva’s poem emphasizes, however, the ultimate aim of Chöd is to cut through mental afflictions (*nyon mongs, kleśa*), “to cut through the root of mind itself.” This

---

<sup>303</sup> In his translation of this passage, Roerich translates “*rgyud*” as “lineage,” rather than as “Tantra” (1976, 981). It would appear that in Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel’s text, “*rgyud*” means “Tantra,” since he follows this opening sentence with a discussion of how Maitri had said “in the *Prajñāpāramitā* there are practices conforming with Mantrayāna” (which Roerich translates as “Tantra”), and thus the Chöd system is also called “*spyod yul*” (“*rje mai tri bas pha rol tu phyin pa la yang sngags dang rjes su mthun pa’i spyod pa yod par bshad pas / ming du spyod yul zhes bya ste*”) (2003 [1478], 1139).

trope of “cutting” through the root of mind can be traced to early Buddhist texts. For example, in the fifth century Pali text, the *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa writes that the “relinquishment by means of cutting off takes place in the one who cultivates the supermundane path leading to the destruction of contaminations.”<sup>304</sup> In *The Blue Annals*, Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel cites Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośa* (V.34)<sup>305</sup> as another fifth century Indic source for Chöd: “Emotional reactions are generated from holding on to tendencies (*phra rgyas*), from the presence of external objects, and from inappropriate mental activities.” Gö Lotsawa’s commentary then links the *Abhidharmakośa* to the system of Chöd: “What should be cut are emotional reactions. If these emotional reactions are generated from tendencies, and objects, and mental fabrications of inappropriate mental activities, when the yogin has contact with an object, habitual tendencies (*bag chags*) are taken on. It is called ‘*Gcod yul*’ because one precisely cuts through the emotional reactions preceded by the mental fabrication of inappropriate mental activities and objects.”<sup>306</sup>

However, the term “*spyod*” is also frequently used to indicate the Sūtra basis of Tantra practices, suggesting the complex interrelationship between “Tantra” and “Sūtra” Chöd. Dpa’ bo Gtsug lag phreng ba, in his 16<sup>th</sup> century history, the *Chos ‘byung mkhas pa’i dga’ ston*, analyzes the terminology of “*gcod*” and “*spyod*.”<sup>307</sup> According to him, the term “*gcod yul*” refers to the directly received oral instructions of Chöd, and literally refers to “accomplishment.” “*Spyod*

---

<sup>304</sup> Cited in Orofino 2000, 402.

<sup>305</sup> The *Deb ther sngon po* quotes: “*phra rgyas spangs pa ma yin dang / yul ni nye bar gnas pa dang / tshul bzhin ma yin yid byed las / nyon mongs skye ste*” (2003, 1140-1141).

<sup>306</sup> “*gcad [gcod] par bya ba ni nyon mongs yin la / nyon mongs de dag phra rgyal dang yul dang tshul bzhin ma yin pa’i yid la byed pa las skye bas na / rnal ‘byor pas yul de nyer bcug nas bag chags blang ste / tshul bzhin ma yin pa’i yid la byed pa sngon du ‘gro ba’i nyon mongs rnams yul gyi thog de nyid du gcod par byed pas gcod yul zhes bya’o*” (2003, 1141).

<sup>307</sup> See Dpa’ bo gtsug lag phreng ba 2003, 1369.

*yul*” refers to the complementary Chöd practice of a bodhisattva mahāsattva, one that integrates the six *pāramitās*.<sup>308</sup> Dpa’ bo Gtsug lag phreng ba directs our attention to the connection between Chöd and its Indic precedents in the *Pāramitāyāna*, the vehicle of the bodhisattva. He also suggests that the term “*gcod*” invokes the oral lineage of Chöd, with a tantric emphasis on “accomplishment.” By using the term “*man ngag*,” or “secret oral teachings,” and by emphasizing their direct connection with Machik, Dpa’ bo Gtsug lag phreng ba inflects the term “*gcod*” with tantric meaning.

Thu’u bkwan’s 18<sup>th</sup>-century study of the Tibetan *grub mtha’*, or philosophical systems, likewise presents an analysis of the “*spyod yul/gcod yul*” terminology. According to Thu’u bkwan, the system is called “Chöd” “because by means of compassion, loving-kindness and bodhicitta, one cuts through one’s own selfish activity; with the view of emptiness, one cuts the roots of cyclic existence.”<sup>309</sup> Thu’u bkwan posits that Chöd is also called “*spyod*” “because one practices on the path of knowledge and liberative technique, the practice of the bodhisattva.”<sup>310</sup> In Thu’u bkwan’s presentation, “*spyod yul*” invokes the non-dual lineage of “Sūtra Chöd”: “*spyod yul*” refers to the union of the “lineage of liberative technique” and the “lineage of knowledge.” In contrast, “*Gcod yul*” corresponds with the Tantra lineage of Chöd.

In his 19<sup>th</sup> century *Zhijé and Chöd History*, Dharmasengé observes that when the Chöd practitioner engages in the bodhisattva practice of aspiration and application without abandoning sentient beings, Chöd is known as “*spyod yul*.” This observation highlights the Mahāyāna

---

<sup>308</sup> “*ma gcig labs kyi sgron ma nas grags pa ste . . . thad kar Gcod pa’i phyir Gcod kyi man ngag zhes bya la sgrub pa’i sgrar sbyar / byang chub sems dpa’i sems dpa’ chen po’i spyod pa pha rol tu phyin pa drug gcig tu bsdu pa ston pa’i phyir spyod yul zhes kyang bya ste*” (2003, 1369).

<sup>309</sup> “*byams snying rje byuang chub kyi sems kyis rang don yid byed Gcod / stong nyid kyi lta bas ‘khor ba’i rtsa ba Gcod*” (1984, 171).

<sup>310</sup> “*yang spyod ches ces kyang bya ste / rgyal ba’i sras kyinyams len thabs shes kyi lam la spyod pas de ltar du grags so*” (1984, 171).

bodhisattva commitment of Chöd. Dharmasengé's discussion of "*gcod yul*" echoes Āryadeva's *The Great Poem* when he writes that the system is known as "*bdud kyi gcod yul*" because by means of it one "directly cuts through all ropes of arrogance" and "abides in the realm of the unchanging absolute, the freedom from the elaboration of the four alternatives<sup>311</sup> and the eight extremes."<sup>312</sup> Dharmasengé's interpretation of Chöd within the context of the "unchanging absolute" emphasizes the connection of Chöd with a deeper level of understanding of the *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings, wherein conventional and ultimate truths are sublated.

Dharmasengé reinforces this perspective when he subsequently equates "*Gcod yul*" with "*de kho na nyid*," or "thatness."<sup>313</sup>

Despite this tradition of commentary, contemporary Western scholars such as Jerome Edou and Janet Gyatso tend to minimize the *gcod yul/spyod yul* relationship. Gyatso remarks that *gcod/spyod* is merely a pun (1985, 324), while Edou posits that "one should differentiate the generic term 'chöd' that refers to cutting through the ego and its emotional entanglements (and in this sense would seem as ancient as Buddhism itself)," and the Chöd system articulated by Machik (1996, 10). Edou cites a rare thirteenth century *rnam thar* of Machik's which insists that "[a]lthough numerous Buddhas and mahasiddhas did appear in this country [Tibet], [prior to Machig] no tradition existed about how to transform the aggregates into a food offering and

---

<sup>311</sup> The *mu bzhi* (four alternatives) are *skyed 'gag* (birth and death); *rtag chad* (immortality and annihilation); *yod med* (existence and non-existence); *snang stong* (phenomenon and voidness).

<sup>312</sup> "*de'ang nang gi bdud bzhi la ma 'dus pa med pas sems kyi snyems thag thams cad yul de nyid kyi steng du thad kar gcod de mu bzhi'am mtha' brgyad spros bral du gnas pas na bdud kyi gcod yul du grags pa yin la*" (1974, 414-415). *mtha' brgyad* is also known as "*spros pa brgyad*," (*prapañcā*) or the "eight mental constructs." These are the elaborations of attributes of arising, cessation, singularity, plurality, coming, going, similarity and difference as analyzed in Buddhism.

<sup>313</sup> "*yul skad kyi dbang gis de ltar grags 'dug pas yongs grags su Gcod yul zhes pa kho na nyid do.*" *Zhi byed dang Gcod yul gyi chos 'byung rin po che'i phreng ba thar pa'i rgyan*, in *Gcod kyi chos skor* (New Delhi: Tibet House, 1974, 411-597 [413]).



thereby to satisfy [the gods and demons] with flesh and blood.”<sup>314</sup> With his insistence on the uniqueness of the term “Chöd” within the tradition systematized by Machik (following on similar claims attributed to Machik herself), Edou implicitly discounts the “*spyod/gcod*” interrelation.

By attending to the two aspects of *spyod yul/gcod yul*, writers from Āryadeva the Brahmin to Chökyi Sengé draw attention to the Sūtra and Tantra lineages of Chöd. “*Spyod*,” “to practice,” reflects the Sūtra presentation of Chöd: the bodhisattva practices, informed by bodhicitta, of accumulating the merits of wisdom and compassion. “*Gcod*,” “to sever,” reflects the Tantra aspect wherein visualization and embodied techniques are deployed. At the same time, these writers also emphasize the intertwined nature of these two components. The complete Chöd praxis incorporates both Sūtra and Tantra elements, both *spyod* and *gcod*.

## ANTI-LEGITIMATION AND INNOVATION

In works attributed to her, Machik frequently positions Chöd in relation to established Sūtra and Tantra traditions, though she claims groundbreaking status for her own teachings. A distinct element of Machik’s Chöd teachings is that she does not explicitly depend on a commentarial figure or figures; rather, she directly references traditional Buddhist teachings, most importantly the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus. This situates her in the ongoing Mahāyāna debate regarding the exoteric gradual process of realization gained through the cultivation of perfections, or *pāramitānaya*, in relation to the esoteric expedient practice of arcane techniques classified as “*mantranaya*.” Yet this position is complicated because her teachings are obviously affected by *\*anuttaratantra* teachings as well as the popular ideologies of *phyag pa chen po* and

---

<sup>314</sup> From the *Phung po gzan skyur ba’i rnam par bshad pa las ma gcig lab sgron ma’i rnam par thar pa mdor msdus tsam zhig*, by Kunpang Tsöndrū Sengé, 118; cited in Edou 1996, 10.

Dzokchen. Her *The Great Speech Chapter* employs technical \**anuttaratantra* words (e.g. *shugs 'byung*) as well as *myong tshig* (*lhan ne lhang nge lham me*) experiential language which is associated with *phyag chen* and Dzokchen words.<sup>315</sup>

As Matthew Kapstein has noted (2000, 120), Machik's claims for innovation were not unusual in the struggles for legitimacy during the period of the later spread (*phyi dar*) of Buddhism in Tibet: “[i]n the contest for authority within the Tibetan religious world, the crafting of a distinctive vision that at once established both the personal virtuosity of the author and his (or in rare cases, her) mastery of what was sanctioned by tradition became a fundamental means of self-representation” (2000, 120; 249 n. 171). Kapstein is specifically referring to Machik as the “rare case” here, and she established the authority of Chöd through this combination of virtuosity and mastery. Not only does Machik legitimate her teachings through both Sūtra and Tantra traditions, but she also stakes a claim for the innovations of her teachings.

One of Machik's strategies for simultaneously authorizing her teachings and asserting their originality is her paradoxical legitimation through what might be called “anti-legitimation.” Perhaps the most obvious example of this is seen in the final chapter of *The Great Explanation* collection, which is of the *lung bstan*, or “prophecy,” genre. This text relates a dialogue between Machik and one of her female students, Bsod nams rgyan, on the future of the Buddhist Dharma and Machik's teachings on Chöd. At the end of this discourse, Machik is asked about the distinctive nature of her teachings. She first explains that her teachings are not particularly distinctive, since they are grounded in Buddhist Dharma and her comprehensive knowledge: “The meaning of my dharma system is not especially dissimilar from other [systems], either Sūtra or Tantra, that have arisen from the instructions of the Buddhas. As for the meaning of

---

<sup>315</sup> Khamtrul Rinpoche (personal discussion, 18 July 2007) posited that such *myong tshig* words were associated with Dzokchen practice in particular, although he did not disagree that they might also be used within Phyag chen practice.

those things that are associated with the treatises and the completely pure personal instructions of the learned ones, there is nothing not known by me; there is nothing in the meaning of any such outer or inner dharma teachings, moreover, that is discordant with me.”<sup>316</sup> However, she does note that the language she uses in her teachings may appear unusual because her dharma system uses dissimilar language to traditional teachings, and because she does not rely on citations to explain or legitimate her teachings: “In addition, because I have not depended on the words of whichever previously-existing authoritative teachings or commentaries (*sngon byung gi bka’ bstan chos gang gi tshig*), nor do I mention any root teachings or authoritative transmissions, whatever dharma system explained by me, lacking the essence of previously-existing words of the authoritative teachings and commentaries, has no interpolations (*lhad ma zhugs pa rnam*).” Machik posits that it is this *lack* of dependence on explicit citation of previous Buddhist teachings that legitimates her own teaching as uncorrupted and uniquely hers. She acknowledges the role of citing authoritative texts in the legitimation of teachings, but points out that this would undermine the innovative nature of her own teachings: “words of Sūtra and Mantra that have come from previous Sūtras and Tantras as well as authoritative teachings and commentaries, from the many authoritative transmissions (*lung grangs nas*), these words have become powerful as authoritatively true. Even though whatever dharma system came about would be concordant with my dharma system, it is not really the dharma system explained by me.”

Machik claims that scholastic learnedness will not qualify one to be a dependable transmitter of her system, but rather her disciples should be evaluated by the degree to which they benefit others: “Many authoritative transmissions on the words of the Sūtras and Tantras by future learned ones will be dharma compositions composed in concordance with my dharma

---

<sup>316</sup> This and the following translations are my own.

system; however, if they were definitively concordant with the complete purity of my dharma system, then there would be many more benefits for my teachings.” Machik asserts that she is explicitly creating a dharma system for which her texts will be foundational; her teachings are consonant with the traditional teachings of Sūtra and Tantra, but they move beyond a mere recapitulation of those dharma teachings to create an original tradition.

And in a move that might be described as “legitimation through anti-legitimation,” Machik notes that there is not even one word of authoritative Buddhist teaching in her system: “In the Dharma teaching as actually explained by me, moreover, as for the actual words from whatever historical words of the Buddha, commentaries or treatises, there is not even one.” This lack of authoritative language paradoxically makes her teaching authoritative because it contains no erroneous references. This absence of explicit reference to traditional sources also makes her system distinct: “As for the discordance with the completely pure meaning of the words of the Buddha, commentaries and treatises, there is not even as much as one-hundredth of a hair’s amount of error. Likewise, because the Dharma system as actually explained by me is not a meditative [system] by means of authoritative quotations, the particular distinctions of my Dharma system from others should be understood in that way, Sons and Daughters.”<sup>317</sup> This

---

<sup>317</sup> The full Tibetan text for this section is as follows:

*nga'i chos lugs 'di don la gzhan dang mi 'dra ba'i khyad par med sangs rgyas kyi bka' las byung ba'i mdo rgyud gnyis dang / mkhas pa rnams kyi bstan chos rnam dag man ngag dang bcas pa rnams kyi don la ngas ma lon pa yang med cing / nga dang mi mthun pa yang chos phyi nang gang gi don la med do // nga'i chos lugs dang mi 'dra ba'i khyad par tshig la yod do // de'ang sngon byung gi bka' bstan chos gang gi tshig la ngas ltos pa med pas na / lung khung smos pa yang med pa'i phyir du / ngas gang bshad pa'i chos lungs lhad ma zhugs pa rnams la / bka' bstan chos sngon byung rnams kyi chig [reading “tshig”] gi ngo bo med do // sngon gyi mdo rgyud dang bka' bstan bcas gnyis las byung ba'i mdo sngags kyi tshig yang dag pa rnams la dbang po byas nas tshig de dag lung grangs nas / nga'i chos lugs dang mthun par byas pa'i chos lugs byung yang / ngas bshad pa'i chos lugs dang dngos ni ma yin cing / phyis 'byung gi mkhas pa rnams kyis mdo sngags kyi tshig rnams lung grangs nas nga'i chos lugs dang bstun nas rtsom pa'i rtsom chos yin kyang / nga'i chos lugs rnam dag dang mthun nges na nga'i bstan pa la phan thogs pa yang mang po 'byung ngo // de ltar sngon byung gi bka' bstan bcas gnyis las byung ba'i mdo sngags gi lung gis bsgom pa'i gcod lugs byung [reading “byung”] yang / ngas dngos su bshad pa'i chos ma yin la / ngas dngos su bshad pa'i chos lugs la yang / sngon gyi bka' bstan bcas gang gis yang tshig dngos po ni gcig kyang med la / bka' bstan bcas kyi don rnam dag dang mi mthun pa ni skra brgyar bshag pa'i cha tsam yang med do / de*

suggests that her system is legitimate and authentically in line with *buddhavacana* because it is in accordance with the “completely pure meaning of the words of the Buddha,”<sup>318</sup> and this can be established through noting the benefits of her teachings rather than through “authoritative quotations.”<sup>319</sup> As I will discuss in chapter six of this study, in his commentaries on Machik’s

---

*lta ngas dngos su bshad pa'i chos lungs la lung tshig gis bsgrom* [reading “*bsgom*”] *pa med pas / nga'i chos lugs gzhan dang mi 'dra ba'i khyad par de lta bu shes par gyis dang bu dang bu mo kun gsungs so*  
Lab sgron 1974, 404-05.

<sup>318</sup> A pragmatic perspective of the role of authority is also seen in definitions of Dharma as that which teaches the path to enlightenment, whether it is a text, a being, or something else. According to Lewis Lancaster, the special power of the words of the Buddha is supplemented by the awareness that these words are informed by yogic insights which are “open and available to all who have the ability and the desire to exert the tremendous effort needed to achieve [them],” and hence that such words themselves “need not be considered as unique or limited to one person in one time” (1979, 216). Thus the Dharma is embodied by the Buddha’s speech while also transcending it.

<sup>319</sup> As various Buddhist teaching traditions developed, many texts supplemental to the *Tripitaka* were recognized as authoritative by one or more of these traditions. Moreover, the burgeoning field of texts also produced novel strategies of justification of the authority of such texts, exemplified in such texts as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra* and the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. Mahāyāna textual collections, even those edited in China and Tibet, were never discussed as “closed” canons, as were the collections of earlier schools. The construction of the identity of the Mahāyāna included not only the acceptance of additional texts, but a gradation of the texts considered authoritative according to a logic which privileged the Mahāyāna texts as more comprehensive teachings of the Dharma than those found in the *Tripitaka* Sūtras. It is a commonly-held view within the Mahāyāna tradition that the Mahāyāna Sūtras were delivered by Śākyamuni Buddha himself, as is suggested by the distinctive preface, “Thus have I heard at one time, when the Buddha was teaching at [insert location],” which has the rhetorical effect of legitimating such texts within the *sūtra-piṭaka* tradition, even though, as noted by Lancaster, there was no concern with the establishment of a canon. In relation to the use of the characteristic preface, Paul Williams observes that “source-critical and historical awareness has made it impossible for the modern scholar to accept this traditional account,” while reminding us that “it is not always absurd to suggest that a Mahāyāna *sūtra* or teaching may contain elements of a tradition which goes back to the Buddha himself, which was played down or just possibly excluded from the canonical formulations of the early schools” (1989, 29). In fact, some Mahāyāna traditions maintain that there was a meeting of monastics who followed the bodhisattva path, contemporaneous with the meeting of the First Council of the arhats, at which the Mahāyāna Sūtras were recited and thereby authenticated, thus providing a legitimacy to the Mahāyāna Sūtras equivalent to that of the *sūtra-piṭaka* and *vinaya-piṭaka*.

Davidson states that, “[u]nfortunately for the Mahāyānācāryas, establishing the Vimalasvabhāva mythology was easier than getting the *Mahāyāna-sūtras* accepted as the word of the Buddha” (1990, 309). This refers to the historical traditions of Bsod-nams rtse-mo and Bu-ston, which narrate that there was a Mahāyāna recitation parallel to the śrāvaka recitation, the former held at the cave of Vimalasvabhāva, while the latter took place at Rājagṛha (1990, 308). Davidson suggests that there was a direct correlation between the increase in popularity of Mahāyāna during the fourth to sixth centuries C.E. and the increase in intensity of the polemics. The Mahāyāna defense was informed by eight legitimating reasons found in verse I.7 of the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, which Davidson (1990, 313) surveys as follows. The *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* reveals contemporaneous (and possibly abiding) anxieties through its careful refutations of various assertions, including that Mahāyāna is a false dharma, a later dharma, or a heretical dharma. The *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* also claims that proper cultivation of the Mahāyāna path, as the basis for the arising of all nonconceptual gnosis (*sarvanirvikalprajñānāśrayavena*), functions as an antidote for the various defilements (*kleśa*); because only the word of a/the buddha can function as the proper antidote, Mahāyāna must be *buddhavacana*. Intricate justifications were developed for asserting that Mahāyāna doctrine was in fact *buddhavacana*, such as declaring that understanding only the literal meaning of the words of the Dharma does not substantiate a claim that the Mahāyāna is not *buddhavacana*. This argument was articulated into Mahāyāna

*The Great Speech Chapter* teachings, Rangjung Dorjé annotates his commentary with specific reference to Buddhist texts, introducing the explicitly scholastic slant that Machik has prophesied.

As I noted above, as a very young child, Machik was renowned as a “reader” of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*, and following her death she was often represented as an embodiment of the goddess of wisdom, Prajñāpāramitā. The *Prajñāpāramitā* texts are foundational in the Buddhist philosophical canon and contribute to the central Mahayana Buddhist teaching of *stong nyid* (*śūnyatā*), or emptiness of any inherent nature in conditioned things, and the logical entailment of the equation of form with emptiness and emptiness with form. The Buddhist teaching of emptiness emphasizes that modes of representing bodies are not independently existing, but are conditioned products that can be perceived through conceptual analysis and thus are not identical with the lived experience of human being. In Buddhist thought the theory of emptiness is complemented by that of *rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba* (*pratītyasamutpāda*) or interdependent co-arising which is the reality of all things: there is nothing which exists independently of conditioned relationships with other things, including conceptual designations. In the Buddhist episteme, the net or web of interdependent co-arising is a rhetorical trope to emphasize becoming, to augment the rhetoric of the Middle Way which denies the two extreme views of being/absolutism and non-being/nihilism: understanding of actuality is dependent on comprehending non-duality, interdependent co-arising, and the emptiness of emptiness. Chöd employs strategies akin to Madhyamaka philosophical methods, grounded in meditations on emptiness in order to transmute attachment and aversion into a view of how things truly are in

---

hermeneutical strategies, including those of *neyārtha* and *nīthārtha*. Regarding the legitimation of the Vajrayāna Tantra teachings, the general position according to the *Tattvasaṃgraha* is that the Buddha Vajradhātu taught the Tantras from Mount Sumeru in the period between his enlightenment as Vajradhātu and the period during which Śākyamuni Buddha (who may or may not be an incarnation of Vajradhātu) taught.

reality (*yathābhūtarśana*). This process requires an explicit cultivation of the “self” in order to see its constructed nature and thus its emptiness. In Chöd praxis, one generates attachment and fear of harm to oneself through practicing in extreme circumstances: severe physical environments or disturbing mental states. By exaggerating the conditions in which one becomes most attached to a sense of self, it makes the analysis and realization of the self as empty more efficacious.<sup>320</sup>

One can assume that Machik’s profound familiarity with the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature greatly contributed to the development of Chöd. In fact, it is critical that the methodology and praxis of Chöd is interpreted in the context of the tradition of the *Prajñāpāramitā* to counter the way in which Chöd is often represented in Western studies: as an unduly exotic ritual which advocates the “renunciation” of the body. Such readings perpetuate the cognitive formulations of the West, including that of a self that possesses a mind and a body. The technique of “offering” one’s “self,” discriminated into psycho-physical constituents, supports the process of cultivating an awareness of one’s modality as necessarily interconnected with the processes of other modalities, and ultimately an intuitive appreciation of the non-dual nature of emptiness.

As I explain more fully in the next two chapters, Chöd praxis unites the analytical articulation of the constructed nature of conventional existence, as laid out in the Sūtra literature of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, with embodied experiential awareness supported by the methodology and praxis of Tantra teachings. Chöd meditation techniques assist in cultivating compassion as a

---

<sup>320</sup> In the context of discussing the Madhyamaka position on emptiness, Lopez summarizes a form of Madhyamaka meditative analysis: “To seek the self, one must first have a clear idea of what one is looking for. Thus, some meditation manuals advise actively cultivating the sense of self, despite the fact that this sense is the target of the analysis. Our sense of identity is often vaguely felt. Sometimes, for example, we identify with the body, saying, ‘I am sick.’ At other times, one is the owner of the body, ‘My stomach hurts.’ It is said that by imagining a moment of great pride or imagining a false accusation, a strong and palpable sense of the ‘I’ appears in the center for the chest: ‘I did it,’ or, ‘I did not do that.’ This sense of self is to be carefully cultivated, until one is convinced of its reality. One then sets out to find this self, reasoning that, if it exists, it must be located somewhere in the mind or the body” (2001, 251).

complementary experiential process, as a “cognitive responsiveness,” to the teachings of the *Prajñāpāramitā*. Complementing the Sūtra tradition, which risks becoming over-intellectualized, “Tantra Chöd” provides the practitioner with an embodied exploration of a teaching that elucidates the means of developing one’s human potential. The practice of Chöd cultivates liberative techniques (*thabs; upāya*) with the complements of wisdom (*ye shes; prajñā*) and compassion (*snying rje; karuṇā*) as generated by the impulse to enlightenment (*byang chub sems; bodhicitta*).



Figure 1: Thang ga from Spitok



## CHAPTER FOUR: CUTTING THROUGH THE BODY:

### CHÖD AND *DEHADĀNA*

As I explained in the previous chapter, the philosophy of Buddhist Chöd developed through a negotiation between tradition and innovation: Machik's teachings are firmly grounded in established Buddhist philosophies, while they provide innovative interpretations of key elements of those philosophies. In the next two chapters, I turn to the ways in which Chöd philosophies are reflected in practice. The praxis of Chöd is also generated through processes of authentication and adaptation, as Machik uses and alters traditional Buddhist practices—especially those grounded in the body-mind of the practitioner—to support the lived realization of her philosophical concepts. Chöd inscribes itself within the doctrines and discussions of Buddhist practice, while also revaluing analyses of the value and utility of the body.

One of the fundamental teachings of Buddhism is that there is neither an intrinsic identity nor an enduring self-nature that defines the human being. In juxtaposition with a fundamentally stable model of the interactions between body and mind, what I will call the “body-mind modality” expresses the processes of *becoming* human.<sup>321</sup> (When I refer to the “body-mind” in what follows, it should be understood that I am invoking this “body-mind modality.”) Becoming human is a perpetual creative process that is necessarily mutually interdependent with the multiple perpetual processes that compose existence. Buddhist discussions of body-mind modalities provide ways to think about, perceive, and experience being which are antithetical to dualisms such as mind and body, or subject and object, or self and other. Body-mind modalities are ways of recognizing that we are complexes of interdependent modes. Various schemas of human modality are not considered to be mutually exclusive in Buddhist thought; rather, they are

---

<sup>321</sup> With regard to Japanese Buddhist traditions, see Kausalis (1993a). For Indian traditions, see Koller (1993), Staal (1993) and Dissanayake (1993).

seen as mutually informative. None of these models or conditions is thought of as a comprehensive ontology, but each suggests a possible way to appreciate the multiple factors and conditions that produce the modalities of sentient beings.

In Buddhist ontology, characterizations of the embodied being commonly integrate internal and external, necessary and contingent, individual and environmentally embedded. A human being is an experiencing, acting, developing process that integrates a complex manifold of mental and physical modes without beginning or end. To borrow John M. Koller's words, this body-mind modality can be understood as "a process constituted by interaction with other processes in an ever-widening sphere that extends ultimately to the whole world. . . . [W]hat we think of as individual persons or beings are viewed within the tradition as junctures within the karmic network, analogous to the knots in a fishnet" (1993, 45). One's psychic and physical constituents are modes in the process of existing; being conscious is a necessarily embodied activity, and the embodiment of the human modality cannot be divorced from psychic states.<sup>322</sup> As a tradition that emphasizes the embodiment of its practitioners, Chöd provides insight into this symbiosis between body and mind. Chöd praxis uses concepts of the body and mind as heuristic tools for investigating lived experience and Buddhist theorizations of human existence. Within the doctrine of existence characterized by ignorance as the source of suffering, the Chöd teachings of Machik describe and analyze the paradoxical nature of the body-mind. As in much traditional Buddhist thought, the body-mind in Chöd is represented as a source of suffering, but the key innovation of Machik's teachings is to reconceive the body-mind as the vehicle for

---

<sup>322</sup> In his discussion of the body in Japanese Buddhist traditions, Kausalis notes that in Buddhist teachings the preliminary stages of cultivating mindfulness often involve breathing practices to allow the practitioner to become aware of how breath can be controlled autonomically through the body and/or consciously through the mind, thus demonstrating an interconnection of the psychic and physical processes (1993a, 315). According to Kausalis, "it is almost impossible to change the expressive style of the mind-body complex through the mind alone. As soon as the mind-body complex encounters an idea alien or threatening to its present system, it initiates defensive action. To revise the mind-body complex, we must initiate a praxis with both mental and somatic components" (1993a, 314).

cutting through ignorance and attachment with the aim of alleviating suffering.

Chöd praxis, as I will explain in the next two chapters, expresses and analyzes the body-mind modality of human being. In this chapter, I will consider how Chöd refigures the practice of using the body as an offering in order both to assimilate itself to and distinguish itself from traditional Buddhist praxis. First, I consider the significance of the body in Buddhist narratives of practice. Then I explore the place of *dehadāna*, or “the gift of the body,” in Buddhist teachings. Building on these discussions, I examine how Chöd praxis both emerges from and transforms the history of engagement with the body through Buddhist practice.

## **PART I: BODY**

### **Models of Embodiment in Buddhism**

Tibetan Buddhist traditions such as Chöd inherited much from Indian Buddhist theoretical paradigms, including various schemas for analyzing and describing human existence and the interrelation between body and mind. Before looking at particular issues of the body in Chöd, it is thus important to consider the place of the body in various Buddhist discussions. These models of embodiment, it is important to note, are not necessarily competing frameworks for comprehending the body, but rather are contingent tools for the analysis of the body-mind modality.

#### **AGGREGATES**

The body—given its immediacy to us as a foundation for meditation and analysis—is frequently discussed in Pali literature. A key model is the well-known dissection of the self into five body-mind aggregates:<sup>323</sup> these consist of form, sensation, perception, mental formatives and

---

<sup>323</sup> P. *khandha*; S. *skandha*; T. *phung po*

consciousness.<sup>324</sup> Buddhist discussions of the aggregates aim to illustrate two beliefs. Sentient beings can be analyzed into aggregates, which are themselves conditioned by impermanence and interdependence, and thus there is no abiding and independent “self.” In addition, to be a sentient being is to be an embodied consciousness. Sue Hamilton-Blyth emphasizes that the paradigm of the body-mind aggregates is supposed to represent a dynamic sentient being: “[t]he *khandhas* [aggregates] are not a comprehensive analysis of what a human being is comprised of. . . . rather, they are factors of human experience (or, better, the experiencing factors) that one needs to understand in order to achieve the goal of Buddhist teachings. . . . they are about how the human being operates” (2000, 29). Apart from the form aggregate, the other aggregates are “mental” components; however, the five aggregates are often metonymically referred to as “the body,” signifying “embodied consciousness” rather than mere form. Winston King refers to the five aggregates as “an organizing principle for progression from body to feeling and thought” (1980, 67). One early canonical source for discussions of the five aggregates is the *Mahāsatipaḍḍhāna sutta* (*The Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness*; DN 22).<sup>325</sup> The *Mahāsatipaḍḍhāna sutta* reflects a traditional Abhidharma foundation and provides a template for *vipassanā*<sup>326</sup> meditation on the body, feelings, concepts and phenomena (*dharma*). A refrain in this teaching emphasizes the interconnectedness of the “internal” and “external” body, along with the awareness of impermanent phenomena.<sup>327</sup>

---

<sup>324</sup> P. and S. *rūpa*; T. *gzugs*; P. and S. *vedanā*; T. *tshor ba*; P. *saññā*; S. *samjñā*; T. ‘*du shes*; P. *saṅkhāra*; S. *samskāra*; T. ‘*du byed*; P. *viññāṇa*; S. *viññāna*; T. *rnam par shes pa*.

<sup>325</sup> For an English translation of the Pali, see Walshe 1995 [1987], 335-350.

<sup>326</sup> S. *vipaśyanā*, T. *lhag mthong*

<sup>327</sup> Walshe’s translation of the refrain in *Dīgha Nikāya* 22 is: “So he abides contemplating body as body internally, contemplating body as body externally, contemplating body as body both internally and externally. He abides contemplating arising phenomena in the body, he abides contemplating vanishing phenomena in the body, he abides contemplating both arising and vanishing phenomena in the body. Or else, mindfulness that ‘there is body’ is



The Buddhist paradigm of the body-mind aggregates is not to be understood as a definitive characterization of being human, but as a heuristic construct to support a deeper understanding of the principle of *paṭiccasamuppada*,<sup>328</sup> or interdependent co-arising. Another early text that offers a sustained discourse on the body-mind aggregates is the *Khandha Saṃyutta* (*Related Discourses on the Aggregates*, SN 22).<sup>329</sup> While this collection of teachings addresses the topic of the body-mind aggregates from a variety of perspectives, the underlying theme is the absence of a coherent self, not the “existence” of the aggregates. According to the principle of interdependent co-arising, because all phenomena are interdependent with all other phenomena through time and space, there is no singular phenomenon that “exists” independently.<sup>330</sup>

While not part of the *Tipiṭaka*, another Pali source of canonical stature is Buddhaghosa’s fifth century *Visuddhimagga* (*The Path of Purification*), which contains detailed discussions of the five aggregates along with a discussion of how one develops understanding of these aggregates through meditative awareness. In addition, the *Visuddhimagga* provides descriptions of the twelve bases and the eighteen elements.<sup>331</sup> These Abhidharma bases and elements provide

---

present to him just to the extent necessary for knowledge and awareness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. And that, monks, is how a monk abides contemplating body as body” (1995 [1987], 336).

<sup>328</sup> S. *prāṭhyasamutpāda*; T. *ren cing ‘brel bar ‘byung ba*.

<sup>329</sup> For an English translation of the Pali text, see Bhikkhu Bodhi 2003.

<sup>330</sup> Mathieu Boisvert (1995) has contributed a valuable study not only of the etymology and source materials for discussions of the five aggregates, but also of the historical development of these concepts according to the Pali literature and their relationship to the principle of reality as interdependent and co-arising.

<sup>331</sup> The “Eighteen Elements” (S. *dhatu*; T. *khams*) include the “Six Sense Faculties” (S. *indriya*; T. *dbang po*): “Eye Sense Faculty” (S. *caksurayatana*; T. *mig gi dbang po*); “Ear Sense Faculty” (S. *srotrayatana*; T. *rna ba’i dbang po*); “Nose Sense Faculty” (S. *ghranayatana*; T. *sna’i dbang po*); “Tongue Sense Faculty” (S. *jihvayatana*; T. *lce’i dbang po*); “Body Sense Faculty” (S. *kayayatana*; T. *lus kyi dbang po*); “Mental Sense Faculty” (S. *manayatana*; T. *yid kyi dbang po*); the “Six Sense Media” (S. *visayatana*; T. *yul*): “Form Medium” (S. *rupayatana*; T. *gzugs*); “Sound Medium” (S. *sabdayatana*; T. *sgra*); “Scent Medium” (S. *gandhayatana*; T. *dri*); “Taste Medium” (S. *rasayatana*; T. *ro*); “Tangible Object Medium” (S. *sprastavyayatana*; T. *reg bya*); “Phenomenon Medium” (S. *dharmayatana*; T. *chos*); and the “Six Awarenesses” (S. *vijnana*; T. *rnam shes*): “Eye Awareness” (S. *caksurvijnana*; T. *mig gi rnam shes*); “Ear Awareness” (S. *srotravijnana*; T. *rna ba’i rnam shes*); “Nose Awareness” (S. *ghranavijnana*; T. *sna’i rnam shes*); “Tongue Awareness” (S. *jihvavijnana*; T. *lce’i rnam shes*); “Body Awareness” (S. *kayavijnana*; T. *lus kyi rnam shes*); “Mental Awareness” (S. *manovijnana*; T. *yid kyi rnam shes*).

an alternate analysis of the experience of being a self. Several chapters of Part Three of the *Visuddhimagga* are devoted to these bases and elements from various perspectives: the supranormal powers and elements (chapters XII and XIII), the common aggregates, bases, elements and faculties (chapters XIV, XV and XVI), and the purification of the common elements, bases and aggregates (chapter XVIII). Such classifications demonstrate a Buddhist appreciation of the essential interdependency of processes that constitute the body-mind. More importantly, they illustrate the interconnection of embodied impulses, perceptions, and sensory experiences, not merely within the body-mind, but also in correspondence with the environment. It is the *interdependency* of the functioning of these elements that renders each element fundamentally empty when taken alone. When taken together, they provide a sense of unified consciousness in interaction with conceptual objects and perceptual awareness. According to Buddhist classifications, these elements are further discriminated into 84 *dhammas* or aspects that provide a more particular analysis of the processual modality conventionally labeled a “self.”

In Buddhist Chöd, the five body-mind aggregates are often the object for meditation; however, “form”— derived from the Sanskrit term “*rūpa*,”—is often taken as signifying the entire group. In his discussion of the rich meaning of “*rūpa*,” Rupert Gethin argues against the common translation of this term by the English word “matter,” which, as he says, misleadingly implies inertness. Based on his readings of the *nikāya* literature and the *Dhammasaṅgani*, Gethin posits that “the early Buddhist account of *rūpa* focuses on the physical world as experienced by a sentient being—the terms of reference are decidedly body-endowed-with-consciousness (*saviññāṇaka kāya*)” (1986, 36). As Gethin emphasizes, the notion of form is not to be taken as merely representing the material body. Analogously, in Chöd discussions of practice, it is crucial to remember that “form” and “body” connote the experiencing being, the

living organism determined by interdependent co-arising.

As in other forms of Buddhism, in Chöd the body-mind aggregates are a matrix onto which sentient beings impute an individual mind and self; however, in Chöd, they are also foregrounded as the objects that are to be cut. This tenet is attributed to Machik in various Chöd sources, including *The Great Explanation*. The use of the term “*phung po*” or “aggregates” in the title draws attention to the fact that, in Machik’s system of Chöd, the body-mind aggregates are the objects to be cut and subsequently offered; however, within the teachings themselves, there is a dearth of discussion of what is meant by the aggregates.

In what is considered the “outer” form of Chöd, all of the five aggregates are metaphorically represented by, and sometimes considered synonymous with, one’s physical embodiment. One’s embodiment, in this aspect of Chöd, stands in for all of the aggregates. The body is considered the primary ground for one’s self-habit of ego-clinging, and so one visualizes cutting and offering the body, while the four mental aggregates are not explicitly mentioned. However, even in this “outer” form of Chöd, one is ultimately to cut through the mental constituents of the self; the physical form of the body is presented as an abstract figure, the thing that is metaphorically cut.

#### ENLIGHTENED EMBODIMENTS

In contrast to such analyses of the body-mind from a standpoint in conventional reality, the enlightened or realized body-mind of a Buddha has been represented through various concepts of embodiment. These paradigms provide a foundation for Buddhist discussions of ontological dialectics. As John Makransky (1997, 4-5) has noted, in the contexts of both foundational and Mahāyāna Buddhism, the term “*kāya*” or “body” does not merely denote the “physical body” (*śarira*) of a Buddha, but also connotes “body” as a collection or corpus



(*saṃcaya*), as a substratum or basis (*āśraya*), and as embodiment. These aspects are reflected in an important paradigm of embodiment within Buddhism, namely, the two bodies of the Buddha manifested as *dharmakāya*, the “Dharma Body,” and *rūpakāya*, the “Form Body.”<sup>332</sup> The “Dharma Body” refers to the undefiled embodiment of the Buddha or buddhas, including the mental states of a realized being, and the teachings about the true nature of things that emanate from such mental states. Complementarily, the “Form Body” denotes the actual physical being of the Buddha or buddhas; this form is a manifestation of the conditioned being, a composite of defiled aggregates. This dyad is found throughout Buddhist teachings, from the Abhidharma teachings represented in the Sarvāstivāda *Mahāvibhāṣāśāstra* through the Tantras and their commentaries.

In his study of “wonderworkers” as represented in the *Gaṇḍhavyūhasūtra*, Luis Gómez (1977) posits that Buddhas and bodhisattvas possess both the Dharma Body and the Form Body through their identity with the *Dharmadhātu*. These two Bodies are non-dual realizations of the *Dharmadhātu*, the “realm of dharmas,” which itself has the non-dual aspects of being undivided (*asambhinnadharmadhātu*) and being manifest (*dharmadhātutalabheda*).<sup>333</sup> Gómez describes the Dharma Body as a “representation” of the total aggregate of all dharmas that is identical with “a non-essence which, to be consistent with its lack of determination, acquiesces to all transformations, but it [also has a] role as undifferentiated, pure, foundation . . . as the basis or root for the virtues of Buddhas, and as the metaphysical foundation behind appearances” (1977, 234). He juxtaposes this definition with a description of the Form Body as the aggregate of not only all the perfected qualities of a buddha, but also of all the illusory transformations and

<sup>332</sup> Louis de la Vallée Poussin (1929, 766) characterized *rūpakāya* as “*pravacanakāya*,” the corpus of teachings.

<sup>333</sup> In contrast with the *Abhisamayālamkāra* (as per Makransky 1997), the *Gaṇḍhavyūhasūtra* (as per Gómez 1977) refers to “*dharmāśarīra*” and “*rūpāśarīra*” rather than “*dharmakāya*” and “*rūpakāya*.”

manifestations of perceptible qualities and phenomena: “The Form Body represents the power of transformation (*vikurvaṇa*) inherent in the (unchanging) *Dharmadhātu*, the power by which the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas train the world in the foundation of all *dharmas*” (loc. cit.). These two Bodies are exemplary of enlightened being as capable of acting within conventions of the mundane world while simultaneously being concomitant with undifferentiated actuality.

A second paradigm that figures frequently in Buddhist traditions is the Three Bodies (*skugsum; trikāya*). This triad includes the Dharma Body (*chos sku; dharmakāya*), the Enjoyment Body (*longs sku; saṃbhogakāya*), and the Manifestation Body (*sprul sku; nirmanakāya*). This model is most likely an elaboration of the dyad just discussed, with the latter two Bodies being subsets of the Form Body. One of the most interesting aspects of this archetype is that there are numerous readings of the significance of these bodies. Often, they are interpreted as various aspects of the Buddha or buddhas, yet they also designate body, speech and mind in reference not only to buddhas, but also to the capacities of sentient beings. Another way of describing this model is with the Dharma Body connoting the absolute truth of emptiness (*stong nyid; śūnyatā*), while the other two bodies are the “form bodies” through which the Dharma Body is experienced and incarnated. Yet another characterization is that the Dharma Body figures the “cognitive pattern;” the Enjoyment Body signifies “the operational pattern in its division into being *with* others,” and the Manifestation Body refers to “being *in* the world” (Guenther 1972, 132); this latter reading explicitly situates the tri-fold body as a social modality.<sup>334</sup>

A third paradigm is articulated in sources such as the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, where we find

---

<sup>334</sup> Yet another perspective on the *trikāya* is provided by Robert A. F. Thurman, whose discussion of the Three Bodies as tropes for articulating the experience of enlightenment includes the following interpretation: “At enlightenment the ordinary mind expands in an experience of oneness with the infinity of beings and things, which becomes a permanent awareness, called the Body of Truth, or Body of Reality. . . . At the same time, the ordinary speech and body do not lose their continua of life. Body and speech are anyway seen by Buddhists as being interactive, the body reaching out from self-centeredness to touch other persons and things, and speech communicating the content of mind to others, linking mind to mind” (2001, 248).

the Dharma Body either having a synonymous epithet or a complementary aspect (depending on one's philosophical and ontological standpoints): namely, the “*svābhāvikakāya*” or “Essence Body.”<sup>335</sup> The introduction of the Essence Body became a locus for hermeneutical debate by Buddhist thinkers: this debate, as Makransky (1997) has argued, is not merely over the number of Buddha embodiments described, but over the “essence” of the Essence Body and its relations to Buddhist discourses of enlightenment and liberation. Briefly, the subject of the discussion is whether or not the buddha embodiment as Essence Body is synonymous with or distinct from the Dharma body; at stake is whether or not a clear distinction is needed in order to provide a sufficient ontological basis for the conditioned activity of an enlightened being in the mundane world. For thinkers such as Haribhadra (8<sup>th</sup> c. CE), a distinction between these two modes of embodiment would describe an unconditioned embodiment that transcends conditioned existence (the “Essence Body”) and an embodiment that sublates this transcendent body, allowing for a conditioned aspect of enlightened being that works within the mundane world for the sake of all sentient beings (the “Dharma Body”).

The paradigm of the Three Bodies is discussed in early texts of the Chöd tradition attributed to Machik, not in the context of body offerings, but in the context of ideal embodiments and doxographical disagreements. At times, Machik seems to write positively about the Three Bodies, while at other times, she seems to regard them as an example of distracting tenet disagreements. In *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section*, Machik writes that, “as for the teaching of the fruits of gaining experience, the circumstantial fruit is liberation from physical illness, having pacified the Obstructive Negative Forces, the Non-obstructive Negative Forces, the Joyful Negative Forces and the Negative Forces that Create

---

<sup>335</sup> For a complementary discussion of the concept of “*svābhāvikakāya*” in relation to “*apraṭiṣṭhitanirvāṇa*,” but from a Yogācāra-vijñānavādin standpoint, see Nagao 1991, esp. 103-122.

Pride. Liberated from mental suffering, one will ultimately be a buddha with the self-nature of the Three Bodies” (161/607).<sup>336</sup> Machik connects her theory of overcoming the Negative Forces, and thus liberating oneself from mental suffering, with one’s realization of the enlightened nature of the Three Bodies. Yet, in *The Great Speech Chapter*, she also cautions against dwelling on such conceptual schema like the Three Bodies, as they are undergirded by intellectual systems and fundamentally grounded in hope, fear, and attachment:

as for the Negative Forces of results, they are like this. As desires for the definitive attainment of the Three Bodies are the results of the tenet systems of the vehicles of the Hearers, the Self-conquerors, and the others, because of the joy associated with [such] desires, there are Negative Forces. The Three Bodies are explained as the result of the threefold self-nature of body, speech and mental consciousness; [the Three Bodies] are not established from the side of the enlightened ones. Having turned away from oneself—because there will not be attainment through accomplishment even if one searches for many millions of eons—not found, not accomplished, one rests in one’s own self-nature. Without hope, Chöd practitioners are freed from the limits of hope and fear; having cut the ropes of grasping, definitely enlightened, where does one go? (10/459).<sup>337</sup>

While Machik demonstrates her orthodoxy by endorsing the model of the Three Bodies as suggestive of embodied enlightenment, she also emphasizes her own understanding of such models as provisional tools at best. By reminding practitioners that the human mind is prone to reify such models, she cautions them against their own susceptibility and potential downfall.

#### MIND-MADE EMBODIMENTS

The interrelation between liberation and being-in-the-world evident in the model of the Three Bodies is also evident in some of the earliest Pali teachings on the mind-made body

---

<sup>336</sup> “*brgyad pa nyams su blangs pa’i ‘bras bu bstan pa ni / gnas skabs kyi ‘bras bu / thogs bcas kyi bdud dang / thogs med kyi bdud dang / dga’ brod kyi bdud dang / snyems byed kyi bdud rnam zhi nas lus na tsha las grol / sems sdug bsngal las grol te mthar thug sku gsum gyi rang bzhin du sangs rgyas par ‘gyur ro.*” See complete text and translation of the *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section* attached to this study in an appendix.

<sup>337</sup> “*‘bras bu’i bdud ni ‘di bzhin no // nyan thos rang rgyal la sogs pa’i // grub mtha’ theg pa’i ‘bras bu ni // sku gsum nges par thob ‘dod pas // ‘dod pa dang bcas brod pas bdud / § lus ngag yid gsum rang bzhin la // sku gsum ‘bras bur bstan pa las // sangs rgyas logs nas bsgrub tu med // rang las spangs te btsal gyur na // bskal pa bye ba du mar yang // bsgrubs pas thob par mi ‘gyur pas // mi btsal mi bsgrub rang bzhin bzhag // re ba med pa gcod kyi mi re dogs pa’i mtha’ dang bral // ‘dzin pa’i thag pa bcad pa las // nges par sangs rgyas ga la mchis.*” See complete text and translation of *The Great Speech Chapter* attached to this study in an appendix.

(*manomayākāya*). The form of mind referred to as “*manas*” is that which synthesizes and conceptualizes phenomena into “objects.”<sup>338</sup> The mind-made body is a form that is self-produced by the *manas*. It is described as an idealized embodiment attained through the practice of cultivated awareness: the form of a realized being upon enlightenment. This form can be realized by an advanced practitioner and is an accomplishment that has parallels with other enlightened forms. In a section of the *Mahasakuludayi Sutta* (MN 77.30), the Buddha states that he has taught his disciples a way to create the mind-made body, which has form and lacks no faculty: “And thereby many disciples of mine abide having reached the consummation and perfection of direct knowledge” (Walshe 1995, 643). This statement can be read in two ways. First, the consummation and perfection of direct knowledge yields a mind-made body. Second, direct knowledge is perfected through abiding in a mind-made embodiment. The production of the mind-made body is further described in the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* (DN 2.85-86): “And he, with mind concentrated, . . . [h]aving gained imperturbability, applies and directs his mind to the production of a mind-made body. And out of this body he produces another body, having a form, mind-made, complete in all its limbs and faculties” (Walshe 1995, 104). This embodiment is not distinct from the body generated biologically, but it is said to be like a reed pulled from a sheath or a snake that has shed its skin. Once a practitioner is able to concentrate his mind, he can then produce a mind-made body; that is, once one has an enlightened sense of self, one that is not misconceived as permanent and independent, one’s embodiment has effectively been transformed.

The supernormal power of transformation in the production of a mind-made body is

---

<sup>338</sup> Stephen Hodge has made a similar point: “In this context [“For to say that the *manas* perceives objects is equivalent to saying that it creates them, for all perception is a synthetic creation” (32)] it is interesting to note that one of the special functions of *manas* is to produce ‘free’ images such as the *manomaya-kāya* (the *manas*-created body) (D 177)” (2003, 543 n. 28).

discussed in the section on “Subjects of Meditation” in the *Vimuttimaggā* (Arahant Upatissa 1961, 213-14; 217-18). Here we find a description of the abilities of an advanced practitioner (entering into the fourth meditation, *jhāna*) that is similar to training in *manomayākāya*. The body and mind of the Buddhist practitioner are necessarily interconnected and profound awareness of this interconnection is to be cultivated as a supernormal ability. Upatissa writes, “[d]epending on the body, the mind changes; depending on the mind, the body changes. Depending on the body, the mind resolves; depending on the mind, the body resolves. The perception of bliss and lightness adheres to the body. In that state he accomplishes and abides” (Arahant Upatissa 1961, 213). This yogic experience is further discussed in terms that resonate with the Buddhist practice of *pho ba*, or the ejection of consciousness into space: “[r]ising therefrom, he knows space, and resolves through knowledge. Thus his body is able to rise up in space. Having resolved through knowledge, he can rise up in space” (Arahant Upatissa 1961, 213).<sup>339</sup> The practitioner is cautioned to practice this ability gradually; otherwise, there might be such a degree of fear that one’s meditative state would be compromised and the resulting benefits of serenity lost.

According to Upatissa, the practitioner can develop a further superior ability in relation to his form through meditative resolve. The practitioner builds on the supernormal power of resolve and strengthens his practice in order to change into any form he desires. Through this meditative practice, “he resolves through knowledge: ‘May I fulfil the form of a boy!’. Thus resolving, he can fulfil the form of a boy. In the same way in changing into the form of a snake or of a garulq, a yakkha, an asura, or into the form of Sakka-Indra or Brahma, the ocean, a mountain, a forest, a lion, a tiger, a leopard, an elephant, a horse, infantry, groups of an army”

---

<sup>339</sup> The Vajrayāna practice of *pho ba* has its parallel in Chöd traditions; the practice in Chöd is called “*nam mkha’ sgo ‘byed*” (“Opening the Door of Space”).

(Arahant Upatissa 1961, 217). Again, this expresses the capacity to achieve and utilize a mind-made body through meditative technique. Upatissa describes methods by which the practitioner ultimately can identify with an enlightened being in order to facilitate her own liberation from the bonds of conventional reality.

The concept of a body transformed through mental preparation is also important in Mahāyāna sources such as the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* and the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga*. These sources illustrate a Mahāyāna shift in emphasizing the figure of the bodhisattva who has transformed his coarse form into an enlightened body of wisdom.<sup>340</sup> In the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, Śāntideva explains that the exemplary practitioner, through an increase in merit and wisdom, “realises that this body, although it is produced in the womb, full of old age, disease and death, and union and separation, is capable of being the cause of a body of wisdom consisting in the resolution of a Buddha” (quoted from Bendall and Rouse 1922, 254; Śāntideva 277-278). A passage similar to this, but directly invoking the mind-made body, occurs in the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* and its *vyākhyā* commentary. In the context of a discussion on the pure and impure character of a bodhisattva, it is explained that the mind-made body enables the bodhisattva to be simultaneously immanent in and transcendent of the mundane world: “Bodhisattvas who have attained the Body made of mind” are no longer conditioned by defilements (*kleśas*; *nyon mongs pa*) such as ignorance, desire, aggression, and pride, yet they are able to continue acting in and affecting the mundane world of *saṃsāra*.<sup>341</sup> Through the conscious will of their mind-made bodies, bodhisattvas are able to remain in the world, to “attach themselves” to it in order to maintain their vow of helping all sentient beings attain enlightenment.<sup>342</sup>

---

<sup>340</sup> In this context, see also the passage in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* (Thurman 1998, 22-23).

<sup>341</sup> See Takasaki 1966, 243-4; *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* 1.67-68.

The image-making function of the *manas* is also an important topic in Vajrayāna teachings: the mind as *manas* (*vid*) is responsible for the proliferation of percepts and concepts, and this function can be utilized within a contemplative context to reconstruct oneself in the image of an enlightened being. This meditative use of *manas* is employed in Tantric practices of the Creation stage (*bskyed rim*; *utpattikrama*), when the practitioner develops an enlightened perspective and skill through visualized mimesis of a bodhisattva or other liberated being.<sup>343</sup> The Creation stage practice has parallels in different dimensions of Chöd praxis, particularly in the technique which requires one to project one's identity into the embodiment of an enlightened being in the act of offering one's own body, as is discussed extensively below. Chöd draws upon this model to prepare the practitioner for the offering practice, while simultaneously incorporating earlier models of embodiment to complement this deconstruction and reconstruction of the embodied self.

---

<sup>342</sup> Bodhisattvas attach themselves to the mundane world by means of consciously accepting “defilements endowed with virtuous roots” (Takasaki 1966, 245). On the topic of compassion as a “defilement,” Nagao observes, “[a] bodhisattva, however, does not eliminate kleśas for the purpose of remaining in saṃsāra, that is, not entering into nirvāṇa (*apraṭiṣṭhita-nirvāṇa*), and his compassion is nothing but a sort of a kleśa retained by him” (1991, 88). Makransky also discusses the activity of an enlightened being who remains “connected to the world through the force of their roots of virtue, which are likened to *kleśas* (defilements) and referred to metaphorically as such: *kuśalamūla-saṃprayuktā kleśāḥ* (defilements associated with the roots of virtue)” (1997, 341). However, according to Makransky, it is important to note that these *kleśa*-like roots of virtue are actually not defilements, but appear similar due to their roots being in the world that is produced through the conditioned defilements of non-enlightened beings. Makransky observes, “[t]his seems both to invoke and to explain away a model of bodhisattvas’ ‘retaining defilement’ like that expressed in the *Tarkajvālā* just above, and may represent a refinement of some such model in the direction of the classical nonabiding-nirvāṇa doctrine that dominated late Indian Mahāyāna” (1997, 342).

<sup>343</sup> In his study of the *Mahā-Vairocana-Abhisambodhi Tantra* (MVT) and Buddhaguhya's commentary on this text, Stephen Hodge examines the mind in the form of *manas*, along with its functions. Hodge discusses how the mind as *manas* can be employed in the service of enlightenment: “This view that the *manas* can play a valuable role in reshaping one's spiritual life had a long history in India. For example, we can find echoes or even the origins of many ‘tantric’ ideas and practices in the Vedas. There, such a term as *manas* and other related words derived from *man* are used with great frequency to indicate the process by which the Vedic seers achieved illumination. . . . In the MVT it is clearly stated that the *manas* is located in the heart. Here the term ‘heart’ should probably be understood as the core of man's inner dimension. Of course this idea is not unique to the MVT even in Buddhism, for the Theravādin school posited a ‘heart-base’ (*hrdaya-vatthu*) as the location of the *manas*. While the great commentator Buddhaghosa in his Path of Purity (*Visuddhi-magga*) understands this quite literally as the physical heart, other Theravādins understood it as the interior core of the person” (2003, 39-40).



### **The Body as Useless and Useful in Buddhist Meditation**

These paradigms for mapping the body in Buddhist tradition imply different evaluations of that body, with corresponding implications for practice. By heuristically adopting these models of the body-mind in various teachings, Buddhist Chöd situates itself within an Indic heritage. On the other hand, by emphasizing the provisionality of such models, Chöd develops an innovative understanding of the body-mind. In particular, Chöd provides a means through which the practitioner can transcend the problematic dichotomy of the body as useless/useful. Especially in the Chöd praxis of offering the body, Chöd uses earlier Buddhist paradigms to construct the body as both the source of suffering and the means of liberation from that suffering.

The “body,” in juxtaposition with the “mind” or “soul” or other non-corporeal element, is often considered problematic within the context of spiritual pursuits (as might be suspected when such pursuits emphasize the “spiritual” as distinct from the “material”). Within traditions that feature an eschatology of a life continuing after death, there is a question of what type of physical embodiment one will have in the “afterlife”: will it be recognizable and capable of “doing” things with others? Will it be a healthy, perfect body or the body that was present at the end of one’s life when one died “naturally” or “unnaturally”? Another problem is the association of the body with desires that are considered obstacles on many spiritual paths. A third problem common to many spiritual traditions is the transience of the body and its relation to suffering, in that leaving one’s mortal embodiment is associated with a form of liberation. For these reasons, it is not uncommon for spiritual traditions to discount the body and to emphasize its “uselessness.”

In Buddhist teachings and practice, we find embodiment valued as both “useful” and “useless.” Ideas about mundane embodiments and realized embodiments often have correlations

with ideas about useless and useful embodiments. A “mind-made body” is one that has been consciously generated by a practitioner on the path of enlightenment with the aim to engage in enlightened activity; thus, by definition, it is more useful than a mundane body. Similarly, the Dharma Body, in contrast with the Form Body, is the embodiment of the Dharma Teachings and the ultimate nature of actuality; although it is necessarily interrelated with the Form Body, the Dharma Body is the aspect of the enduring and unconditioned body of the Buddha. In fact, to a certain degree, one might see all of Buddhist praxis as engaged to varying degrees in negotiating the usefulness and the uselessness of embodiment for the religious practitioner. One area in which this negotiation most vividly comes into play is in Buddhist meditation and visualization practices.

As I discussed earlier, there are several paradigms for analyzing the body in Buddhist sources. Some of these paradigms are explicitly designed as foundations for meditation practice. There are two main categories of Buddhist meditation: calm-abiding meditation (*zhi gnas*; *śamatha*) emphasizing the development of single-pointed mindfulness, and insight meditation (*lhag mthong*; *vipāśyanā*) emphasizing the development of a penetrating wisdom through meditative analytical reflection. In Buddhist teachings, there are numerous examples of using the body-mind modality as an object of meditation.<sup>344</sup> Some teachings view the body-mind negatively—as “impure,” “contaminated,” “decaying”—and emphasize its “uselessness,” while others see the body-mind as more positive or “useful.”

In early Sūtra sources, the body is represented as coarse and as a symbol of impermanence and decay.<sup>345</sup> In the *Samyutta Nikāya*, for example, the mortal body is used as a

---

<sup>344</sup> In my discussion here, I am primarily referring to techniques of insight meditation; however, the body is also employed in techniques of calm-abiding meditation, for instance in meditations where the practitioner pays attention to the inflow and outflow of breath.

figure for consciousness: “It would be better, monks, if the untutored masses saw this body, produced by the material elements, as the self rather than seeing the mind as the self. Why? Because this material body persists for two years, or for three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty years. . . . But, monks, this that we call thought, or mind, or consciousness, it arises as one thing and perishes as another all day and all night long” (ii.94). Many such sources use the body as a synecdoche for the impermanence of the self and/or emphasize the decomposing nature of the body in order to illustrate the principle of impermanence.

Similarly, a taxonomy of the thirty-two elements that compose the body is outlined in the *Kāyagatāsati Sutta* (MN 119), including hair of the body, hair of the head, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, stomach, excrement, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, serum, saliva, mucus, synovial fluid, and urine. Buddhaghosa elaborates on how to develop a mindfulness practice focused on these thirty-two elements in Chapter VIII of his *Visuddhimagga*. He also provides detailed instruction for various meditation techniques, including forty meditation subjects, ten of which are on “foulness”: “The ten kinds of foulness are these: the bloated, the livid, the festering, the cut-up, the gnawed, the scattered, the hacked and scattered, the bleeding, the worm-infested, and a skeleton” (1999, 110). Later in the text, these ten subjects are given their own chapter, under the heading of “Foulness as a Meditation Subject”; in this chapter, each of the ten is described in sufficient detail to enable the practitioner to successfully

---

<sup>345</sup> “Presumably the foulness sign as it is developed—though it is not clearly so stated—changes like the kasina [a visual object that functions as a signifier for an object of meditation and which “supports” one’s meditative concentration] and becomes more generalized. We are told that in the case of a scattered body or skeleton, the counterpart sign brings the parts together into a perceptual whole, thus differing slightly from the original visual image. But even though the process begins with a dead body, and its sign becomes generalized by its meditative development, the goal is not to abstract it from life. One begins with a dead body only because therein the decay inherent in every living body is radically manifested. And that concrete beginning datum is generalized and etherealized solely for the purpose of making it flexible enough to apply to living bodies—which otherwise hide this, their true nature, from our awareness. Thus it is that the meditator is given illustrations of modes of applying the developed cemetery sign to other bodies” (King 1980, 70)

cultivate a meditative practice.<sup>346</sup> The chapter concludes with the instruction, “[s]o a capable bhikkhu should apprehend the sign wherever the aspect of foulness is manifest, whether in a living body or in a dead one and he should make the meditation subject reach absorption” (1999, 190).<sup>347</sup> Machik uses the same traditional taxonomy of the body in her teachings, but with different emphases. For example, in *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section*, she teaches that “when you have straightened your body, first, you should [mentally] let go of the mind-body as dissected parts, thinking ‘This body of mine is made out of thirty-two unclean substances, a sack of my own blood, a wound-up bundle of bones, a network of muscles. Through attachment and clinging to such, I experience of the suffering of saṃsāra. Now I must not have attachment and clinging!’”<sup>348</sup> Unlike Buddhaghosa’s accent on the repulsive aspects of the body with the aim of detachment, Machik stresses that attachment and clinging are the focus of the teaching. The taxonomy of the body is only useful to the practitioner up to a certain point, after which such discrimination perpetuates suffering.

The *Vimuttimaggā* by Arahant Upatissa advocates meditation on one’s own body as disgusting to cultivate an antidote for passion or lust: “When a man wishes to separate from passion, he causes the arising of the perception regarding the nature of his body. Because, if he

---

<sup>346</sup> *Asubha-kammaṭṭhāna-niddesa*, Chapter VI.

<sup>347</sup> In *Charming Cadavers* (1996), Liz Wilson provides an extensive study of “foulness meditations” which focus on impermanence and decay in relation to embodiment. Wilson pays special attention to texts that describe female embodiment as the object for meditative focus. Wilson’s presentation, while bringing issues of gender, ethics and politics into discussion, unfortunately risks obscuring the nuances of these practices, including their cultural and historical specificity. Many of the texts in the Pali canon discuss bhikkhus focusing on their own—male—bodies. For example, in the two versions of the Satipaṭṭhana sutta, the subject of bodies is non-gender specific. This is also the case in Buddhaghosa’s discussions, such as the ones just mentioned. These meditations are intended not only as an antidote for male lust, but also for personal vanity.

<sup>348</sup> In *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section* attributed to Machik, we read the following: “*lus drang por bsrang la / dang po phung po la gzhig ‘grel btang ste / bdag gi lus ‘di mi gtsang ba’i rdzas sum cu rtsa gnyis las grub pa / rang khrag gi rkyal pa / rus pa’i dum bu ‘thud pa / chu rgyus kyi drva ba / ‘di lta bu la chags shing zhen par gyur pas ‘khor ba’i sdug bsngal nyams su myong ba yin te / da ni ma chags ma zhen par bya dgos snyams du bsams la*” (158-9/604-5).

has the perception of the nature of his body, he can quickly acquire the perception of its disagreeableness and cause the arising of the after-image” (1961, 140). As in the *Visuddhimagga*, the aim of the practice is to generate awareness of the putrescence of the body in order to realize its impermanence. However, the perception of disagreeableness must be acquired appropriately in order to be used as an antidote for passion: “If the perception of putrescence is increased, the sign which he has grasped in his body will disappear. If he loses perception of his own body, he will not be able to acquire the thought of the disagreeableness quickly” (Arahant Upatissa 1961, 140). One should not generate too much attachment to the object: one should not increase the perception of putrescence to the point that the visualized sign—the visualized body as signifier of one’s embodiment as signified—disappears and thus is not useful for use as an after-image or for carrying into post-meditation experience. And it cannot be generated with too much detachment: if one is not adequately concerned with thought of one’s own body putrefying, the perception of one’s own body disappears along with the thought of its disagreeableness.

There is a dialectical relationship between usefulness and uselessness in foulness meditations: the body is rendered useful through the sublation of its uselessness as a decaying corporeal entity. Its significance as a sign for the meditation practitioner contributes to a revaluation of the body as a support for enlightenment. However, it is necessary to recall that the body and the mind are considered interdependent in Buddhist teachings. The *Vimuttimagga* thus describes the practitioner: “His mind, being wieldy, responds to the body, and his body responds to the mind. Thus that yogin sometimes controls the body with his mind, and sometimes the mind with his body. Depending on the body, the mind changes; depending on the mind, the body changes. Depending on the body, the mind resolves; depending on the mind, the body

resolves” (Arahant Upatissa 1961, 213). Attention to the mutual relation between mind and body is vital to the yogin’s practice and his pursuit of liberation. A similar instruction of interdependence becomes a motif in the Chöd teachings of Machik Labdrön. For example, in *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section* we read: “As for what has been concentrated by tightening, relax by loosening. The pith of meditative cultivation is like that.”<sup>349</sup> Machik suggests that awareness of the intersection between body and mind in the movements between flexibility and control, between relaxation and concentration, is vital to meditative practice.

In a subtle contrast with meditative practices that aim to develop single-pointed focus and a stable conscious state grounded in peace, techniques of meditation which employ the coarse body as a base for developing realization aim at developing a stable conscious state grounded in discomfort. Such practices foreground the body as a cause of suffering, and they enable one to abide in this realization. Winston King makes the following observation about body-part and body-foulness meditative practices: “a substantial part of the content and flavor of the Buddhist subjects of meditation is not ‘peaceful’; it is a deliberate and intensive direction of the attention to the insubstantial and impersonal, as well as repulsive, aspects of being human. Such is the thrust of body-part and body-foulness subjects” (1980, 55). In such meditations, the body is valued negatively: it is a paradigmatic object of attachment, representing attachment to one’s own self. But, as in the teachings on the mind-made body and in the praxis of Chöd, the physical body can be used as a tool to attain realization: the body-mind can be “purified” and transformed through practice.

Mahāyāna Buddhism emphasizes that through the precious opportunity of having a human embodiment, one is able to accumulate the merit and wisdom enabling one to practice

---

<sup>349</sup> “*grims gyis bsgrim la lhod kyis glod / bsgom pa’i gnad cig de na gda*” (606/160). The complete Tibetan text and my English translation are provided in an appendix to this study.

*bodhicitta*, the spirit of awakening. In Mahāyāna, the body can be valued positively as worthy of offering as a gift, as a precious human vehicle for enlightenment, and as a matrix for the two, three or four buddha bodies. In Vajrayāna, this revaluation is taken a step further, with many of the techniques for enlightenment requiring the technologies of the body.<sup>350</sup> As Khenpo Kalu (1999, 123) emphasizes, regarding the “skandhas or aggregates of our psycho-physical makeup” as “impure and base” is considered to be a “root downfall” in Vajrayāna Buddhism.<sup>351</sup> Because “[a]ll appearance is a form of divinity, all sound is the sound of mantra, and all thought and awareness is the divine play of transcending awareness,” the skandhas are the basis for enlightenment: “Acknowledging psycho-physical aggregates of an individual as the potential of the Buddhas of the five families, or the five elements, or the five feminine aspects, and so forth, is to recognize that, in tantra, the potential for that transformation exists within our present situation. To disparage that potential as something useless or impure or unwholesome is a root downfall, a basic contradiction, from the point of view of tantric practice” (1999, 123).<sup>352</sup> Rather than focusing on the decaying body as a sign of impermanence, Vajrayāna teachings emphasize the potential for transforming mundane embodiment into enlightened embodiment.

Chöd teachings share this Vajrayāna emphasis on the transformation of the body, but they also revalue the “uselessness” of the mundane body in an innovative way. In Chöd praxis, one conceives of one’s body not as abstractly disgusting, but as disgusting or pleasing dependent on

---

<sup>350</sup> David Germano, in an account of Longchenpa’s description of meditation from the *Tshig don mdzod* (*The Treasury of Words and Meanings*), points out how “the emphasis on posture, gaze and breath indicates a body-based knowing, that is, that the ways of knowing advocated in these texts must of their very nature involve bodily activities and processes” (1997a, 295).

<sup>351</sup> Khenpo Kalu Rinpoche (1905-1989) was an esteemed meditation master who transmitted a Kagyü lineage of Chöd.

<sup>352</sup> Embodiment in Vajrayāna is understood according to various anatomical schemas that include inner and outer, subtle and coarse, and microcosmic and macrocosmic mappings. However, such microcosmic/macrocosmic mappings are not necessarily indicative of Tantra praxis; as André Padoux observes, the Upaniṣads also employ such correspondences (2002, 19).

context. Machik frequently explains that what is disgusting to one being, such as flesh and blood, can be pleasing and desirable to another being. By grasping onto the foulness of one's embodiment, or by ignoring the material aspects of one's body, according to Chöd teachings, one perpetuates a hypostasized conventional discrimination rather than challenging and undermining that mental process as a means to liberation.

## **Part II: DEHADĀNA**

### ***Dehadāna* in Buddhist Practice**

The ways in which Chöd both follows and reconsiders Buddhist traditions of analyzing and valuing the body can be seen clearly in the context of *dehadāna*—the offering of one's own body. Chöd *dehadāna* (*lus sbyin*) assimilates itself to a long Buddhist history of body offering, and it provides innovative perspectives on this practice. As the Buddhist virtuous act *par excellence*, *dehadāna* has long held a vital place in Buddhist literature.<sup>353</sup> In general, the act of giving (*sbyin*; *dāna*) is constitutive of Buddhist communities: non-renunciants (or lay people) traditionally give alms<sup>354</sup> and clothing to renunciants (or monastics), and in turn lay donors receive dharma teachings from religious specialists. Buddhist discussions of *dehadāna* reiterate this social nature of *dāna* by emphasizing that it is an act to be performed for the welfare of others. *Dehadāna* serves others both in a mundane way—the practitioner physically provides another with something she requires—and in a supramundane way—the practitioner performs the act as part of the process of becoming an enlightened being in order to help others also become enlightened.

---

<sup>353</sup> See the studies of Ohnuma (1998, 2000, 2007) for surveys of Buddhist gift of the body narratives.

<sup>354</sup> As the *Vinaya* codes prohibit monastics generally from handling money, these alms were often in the form of edibles, which is echoed in the body offering practices of Chöd.



In early Buddhist texts, *dehadāna* narratives reflect two different (but not mutually exclusive) intentions. The first is the role of *dāna* in the development of merit. In such examples, *dehadāna* is practiced with the aim of a good rebirth for oneself or another. Perhaps the most striking example of *dehadāna* in early Buddhist literature is the *Jātaka* story recounted by Ārya Śūrya, wherein Śākyamuni Buddha, in a previous incarnation, accumulates merit through the ultimate act of generosity: offering his body to a starving tigress about to eat her cubs.<sup>355</sup> This exemplary *dāna* is echoed in numerous other Buddhist teachings, including the story of Dharmarakṣita cutting the flesh of his thigh and offering it to a sick man who needs it for medicine.<sup>356</sup> Analogously, Nāropa is asked by his teacher Tilopa to make an offering of a maṇḍala, but he lacks any grain, sand or water to construct one, so he uses his own flesh, limbs and blood.<sup>357</sup> The twenty-eighth chapter in the *mgur 'bum* of Milarepa describes him performing a practice that has overtones of Chöd: a visualized body offering with the aim of gaining merit and repaying debt.<sup>358</sup> The category of narratives illustrating *dehadāna* as merit generation includes acts driven by the bodhisattva motivation of great compassion. This category of stories can also encompass actions with sacrificial overtones and elements of *bhaktī* (devotion or worship).

The second important intention in the practice of *dehadāna* is the development of wisdom defined by a teleology of nirvāṇa, or liberation from suffering. Narratives in this

---

<sup>355</sup> In Āryaśūra 1983, 3-8, 43-50, 299-307. A similar motif is expressed in the *Jātaka* stories of the hare and the elephant, bodhisattva incarnations that sacrifice themselves to feed others (ibid). Har Dayal (1932 [1999], 181 ff.) discusses this motif at length.

<sup>356</sup> Dharmarakṣita, renowned for his Mind Training teachings transmitted in the *Blo sbyong mtshon cha 'khor lo*, taught Atiśa in Sumatra during the latter's trip there for his studies at the age of 31 in the early eleventh century. This is a popular tale often told during Blo sbyong teachings. See Sopa 1996, 5.

<sup>357</sup> Guenther 1999, 83.

<sup>358</sup> See Gtsan-smyon He-ru-ka, ed., 1994, 442-451; translated in Chang 1970, 296-311. For an analysis of this chapter of Milarepa's life, see van Tuyl, 1979.

category include such actions as renunciation of attachment to self and mental purification. An exemplary canonical instance of this type of motivation occurs in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* and the *Prajñāpāramitā-Ratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā*, when the Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita, with the aim of attaining the perfection of wisdom and skill in means, dismembers himself so that his body parts can be devoured by a *māra*.<sup>359</sup> In the *Cariyāpiṭaka*, the offering of one's limbs is characterized as the perfection of giving (*dānassa-pārami*), while the gift of one's whole body or life for the sake of another is characterized as the fulfillment of the perfection of giving (*pārami-pūrayiṃ*).<sup>360</sup> Śāntideva describes the usefulness of his kusāli's, or beggar's, body as an offering in the *Śīkṣāsamuccaya*, and Dpal sprul Rinpoche returns to this theme in his chapter on Kusāli Chöd in the *Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung (The Words of My Perfect Teacher)*. The *Nārāyaṇapariprcchā* epitomizes the intention involved in all of these examples: "The Bodhisattva must think thus: 'I have devoted and abandoned my frame to all creatures. . . . Any beings who shall require it for any purpose, it being recognized for a good, I will give hand, foot, eye, flesh, blood, marrow, limbs great and small, and my head itself, to such as ask for them.'"<sup>361</sup> In this type of discourse, the donation of one's body as a paradigmatic offering represents a union of the motivations of merit generation and liberation.

As a *pāramitā*, *dāna* exemplifies the ideal of a symbiosis of wisdom and compassion. In

---

<sup>359</sup> The wounds Sadāprarudita inflicts on himself do not prove fatal: once he has proven his sincerity in making the sacrifice to a disguised Sakra, Chief of Gods, Sadāprarudita heals himself through the magical power of a truth statement. He says, "As I am in truth irreversible, have been predicted to full enlightenment, and am known to the Tathagatas by my unconquerable resolution,—may through this Truth, through this utterance of the Truth this my body be again as it was before" (Conze 1994, 286).

<sup>360</sup> In the section on *dāna-pāramitā* in the *Cariyāpiṭaka*, the gift of one's limbs is described as the "perfection of giving" (*dānassa pārami*), and the gift of one's entire body or life is characterized as the "fulfillment of the perfection of giving" (*dānassa pārami pūrayiṃ*). See Jayawickrama, ed., 1974, 2, 13, v. 146.

<sup>361</sup> As quoted in W.Y. Evans-Wentz, ed., 1980 (1935), 297-298. In his discussion of the bodhisattva's sacrifice of his body, Evans-Wentz also makes reference to the *Akshayamatīnirdeśasūtra* and the *Vajradhvaṃśasūtra* (probably drawing from references made in the *Śīkṣāsamuccaya*, although he does not provide references) (1980, 298).

*pāramitā* paradigms, *dāna* is generally designated the first perfection, and it is distinguished by the fact that it is intended to be of immediate and direct benefit to others. *Dāna-pāramitā* (*sbyin pa'i pha rol tu phyin pa*) corresponds with the first stage of the career of the bodhisattva, and as the “perfection of giving,” it is sometimes characterized as the “lowest” of the perfections.<sup>362</sup> When *dāna-pāramitā* involves the gift of the body, however, it is frequently represented as the paramount perfection. We see such an evaluation in the *Nidānakathā*, where the Bodhisattva Sumedha makes a resolution before Dīpaṅkara to master the ten perfections that lead to the realization of an enlightened being. Upon accomplishment of these perfections, he recites the following words: “The Perfections are the sacrifice of limbs, the Lesser Perfections are the sacrifice of property, the Unlimited Perfections are the sacrifice of life.”<sup>363</sup> In this articulation, the offering of the body supersedes all of the other perfections.

The topics of *dāna-pāramitā* and *dehadāna* feature prominently in Śāntideva’s teachings to Buddhist practitioners on the bodhisattva path. In his *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, Śāntideva advises that, “[a]t the beginning, the Guide prescribes giving vegetables and the like. One does it gradually so that later one can give away even one’s own flesh. When insight arises that one’s own flesh is like a vegetable, then what difficulty is there in giving away one’s flesh and bone?” (1997, 80).<sup>364</sup> In the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, Śāntideva draws from a variety of sources in his

---

<sup>362</sup> This is especially evident in the context of the *pha rol tu phyin pa bcu*, the ten *pāramitā* (the first six plus an additional four—*thabs*, *smon lam*, *stobs*, and *ye shes*), which correspond to the *byang chub sems dpa'i sa bcu*: (1) *rab tu dga' ba*, extreme joyfulness; 2) *dri ma med pa*, stainless; 3) *'od byed pa*, light creator; 4) *'od 'phro ba*, radiant; 5) *sbyang dka' ba*, difficult to conquer; 6) *mngon du gyur pa*, manifest; 7) *ring du song ba*, gone the distance; 8) *mi gyo ba*, unwavering; 9) *legs pa'i blo gros*, good intelligence; and 10) *chos kyi sprin*, cloud of dharma).

<sup>363</sup> In T.W. Rhys Davids 1925 (1880), 109.

<sup>364</sup> The practice of giving one’s body is referred to in other areas of Śāntideva’s work. A possible source of influence on the Chöd meditation on transforming one’s aggregates into gifts for others can be seen in his bodhicitta prayer to be, among other things, “a wish-fulfilling gem” (1997, 35).

discussion of physical sacrifice, suffering and the gift of the body.<sup>365</sup> Here the gift of the body is also seen to contain all other perfections. This comprehensive potential of *dāna-pāramitā* is illustrated in Śāntideva's citation of the *Sāgaramati Sūtra* in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*.<sup>366</sup> In this passage, a bodhisattva mahāsattva is challenged by Māra and his entourage. This bodhisattva reflects on his attachment to his body in innumerable previous incarnations, which inspires a reevaluation of his body as a vehicle of compassion.<sup>367</sup> This passage also emphasizes the gift of one's body as the consummate perfection. *Dehadāna* is identified with each of the other six *pāramitās*, as the renunciation of one's body is equated with the Perfection of Giving, the offering of the body for the benefit of others with the Perfection of Conduct, enduring the dismemberment of the body for the sake of others with the Perfection of Patience, maintaining the belief in the law of karma and an ambition to enlightenment with the Perfection of Strength, the maintenance of mental stability during the dissolution of the body with the Perfection of Meditation, and the understanding of the impermanence and emptiness of all compounded things (including one's own body) with the Perfection of Wisdom.<sup>368</sup>

---

<sup>365</sup> In his discussion of the perfection of generosity in the *Lam rim chen mo*, Tsong kha pa makes reference to the teachings on dehadāna as presented in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*; in addition, he cites the *Pāramitāsamāsa (The Compendium of Perfections)*: “Recalling the superior deeds of the sages, strive at them and reflect on your commitment; understand the following excellent thoughts in order to clear away your attachment to things: ‘I gave away my body to all beings; then I relinquished the virtue of this gift. My being attached to external objects is senseless, like an elephant's bathing’” (cited in Tsong kha pa 2004, 18).

<sup>366</sup> *Śikṣāsamuccaya* § 186-187; 1971, 181-82.

<sup>367</sup> As others have noted, this passage bears a resemblance to an experience reported by Milarepa; see also the related note above.

<sup>368</sup> “This rejection and surrender of the body, this indifference to the body, that for him is the Perfection of Giving. In that, even when his body is dismembered, he radiates good will towards all beings, and does not contract himself from the pain, that for him is the Perfection of Conduct. In that, even when his body is dismembered, he remains patient for the sake of the deliverance even of those that dismember it, does them no injury even with his thoughts, and manifests the power of patience. That for him is the Perfection of Patience. That vigour by which he refuses to give up the urge towards omniscience, and holds fast on to it, depending on the power of thought, that vigour by which he remains within the coming and going of birth-and-death (without entering Nirvana as he could), and continues to bring to maturity the roots of goodness, that for him is the perfection of Vigour. That, even when his body is dispersed, he does not become confused in his cultivation of the thought of omniscience which he has

Reiko Ohnuma (1998, 2000, 2007) has argued that such Buddhist didactic and narrative texts reveal ambivalent attitudes toward the offering of the body. According to her interpretations, *dehadāna* is extreme behavior, overvaluing compassion and selflessness at the expense of wisdom and moderation. In Ohnuma's reading, gift of the body narratives reveal a tension between "selflessness" and "assertion-of-self" (the latter considered to anathema to Buddhist doctrine): "[t]he bodhisattva who gives his body away is supposed to be a paragon of 'selflessness,' yet at the same time, his deed constitutes the ultimate 'assertion of self.' Underlying this conflict is a more general tension between the Buddhist rhetoric of selflessness and its need to assert an individual and autonomous self capable of effecting its own salvation" (2000, 67).<sup>369</sup> Moreover, Ohnuma argues that such narratives also reveal a conflict between wisdom and compassion. According to Ohnuma, the radical act of compassion of offering one's body would suggest the disregarding of a more skillful action guided by wisdom, especially if such wisdom includes an understanding of the non-duality—and thus equality—of self and other. In acts of giving one's body, Ohnuma maintains that "[t]he bodhisattva's insistence on favoring others over himself (and thus making a clear distinction between himself and others) may, in some contexts, suggest a lack of the wisdom that realizes the selflessness of all beings, and a lack of the equanimity that treats all beings (including oneself) the same" (2000, 67).

I would argue that there is another way to understand such narratives that would be more in accord with their intention and context. Rather than illustrating "the bodhisattva's insistence

---

gained, has regard only for enlightenment, and takes care only of the peaceful calm of cessation, that for him is the Perfection of Concentration. That, even when his body is dismembered, he looks upon the phantom and image of his body as upon so much straw, a log, or a wall; arrives at the conviction that his body has the nature of illusion, and contemplates his body as in reality being impermanent, fraught with suffering, not his own, and at peace, that for him is the Perfection of Wisdom." In the *Śikṣāsamuccaya 187 (Sāgaramati Sūtra)* (Conze, ed., 1964, 136).

<sup>369</sup> Ohnuma goes on to unpack further tensions, such as that between the Buddhist models of compassion on the one hand and of wisdom and equanimity on the other (with, according to Ohnuma, *dehadāna* representing a perfect mode of compassion at the expense of wisdom and equanimity) (2000, 67).

on favoring others over [oneself],” these narratives emphasize one’s interconnection with others and one’s concern for and responsibility to the other,<sup>370</sup> a counterpoint to our habitual mode of self-preservation and self-interest. For example, in the section on “guarding introspection” in Śāntideva’s *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, a teaching on maintaining a mind free from pride is followed by a discussion of the appropriate attitude toward and use of the body. Śāntideva decries the human habit of vulgar self-protection and ego-clinging and enjoins the analysis of one’s own body and its ultimate emptiness as an antidote to this behavior. He advocates that the practitioner come to his own understanding in the following way: “First, with your own intellect, peel off this sheath of skin, and with the knife of wisdom, loosen the flesh from the skeleton. Breaking the bones, look inside at the marrow and examine for yourself, ‘Where is the essence here?’ If searching carefully this way, you do not see an essence here, then say why you are still protecting the body today” (1997, 54). Even while considering its foulness and impermanence, Śāntideva emphasizes the value of the body as food to sustain other beings and the value of embodiment to facilitate action: “If you will not eat it, as impure as it is, and if you would not drink the blood nor suck out the entrails, then what will you do with the body? However, it is proper to guard it for the sake of feeding the vultures and the jackals. This wretched body of humans is an instrument for action” (1997, 54). This dialectical relationship between the usefulness and uselessness of the body is echoed in Machik’s writings on Chöd when she emphasizes that it is the Negative Force of pride that is the fundamental cause of suffering and spiritual malpractice. This pride is located in the body, a metonym for the complete human being in its positive and negative potentiality. It is our own individual pride and ego-clinging that obscure from us the truths not only of our impermanence, but also of our inherent interconnectedness and

---

<sup>370</sup> Here I am influenced by Derrida’s discussion in *The Gift of Death* (1995).

interdependence with other beings, and hence our responsibility to them. Overcoming pride also entails overcoming ideas of the body's uselessness, as the practitioner's body in Chöd is revalued as literal and metaphorical food for others.

In canonical accounts, the gift of the body is exercised within the economy of karma.<sup>371</sup> The merit gained through *dehadāna* is determined by the purity of the intention of the one making the offering, the value of the gift, and the worthiness of the recipient. Therefore, it is traditionally of great importance to select the recipient for the gift of the body.<sup>372</sup> By performing *dāna-pāramitā*, the giver can eventually reap the benefits of mental purification, a good rebirth, and even enlightenment. When one offers one's own body in an act of *dehadāna*, one can quickly attain such benefits. However, generally speaking, one must have already accumulated great merit over numerous lifetimes and cycles of rebirth in order to make this offering.

Unlike in Chöd teachings, in Buddhist literature from the *jātaka* tales to the songs of Milarepa, *dehadāna* as the supreme act of giving is frequently represented as an exemplary act by a bodhisattva who is accumulating merit and wisdom through the deed. From renunciation in the Pali traditions, to the spirit of enlightenment in the Māhayāna traditions, to creation and completion in the Vajrayāna traditions, offering the body is the vehicle for spiritual development and attaining enlightenment. As the *dānapāramitā par excellence*, the gift of the body is the most costly and precious possession that one can offer. In fact, some teachers have claimed that the offering of the body is simultaneously an offering of Dharma: through the act of *dehadāna*, one is also offering a teaching of impermanence.<sup>373</sup> Rather than viewing the gift of the body as

---

<sup>371</sup> For a discussion of the intersection between offering, the law of karma and the economy of merit, see Makransky 1996, esp. 314-15.

<sup>372</sup> In her discussions of *dehadāna*, Ohnuma emphasizes gift of the body narratives that feature unworthy—even 'pitiful' and 'evil'—recipients.

an exceptional act by an exceptional being, Chöd is a system that theoretically provides any Buddhist practitioner with the ritual technology to emulate bodhisattva models of the perfection of giving and to gain immediate benefits. Chöd thus aligns itself with traditional Buddhist ideas of *dehadāna*, but adapts this practice to make it available to all.

### ***Dehadāna in Chöd Praxis***

To provide a sense of the ritual technologies for the practitioner's efficacious offering of the body, I will briefly describe elements of a typical Chöd practice. As in other Buddhist Tantric techniques, recommended preliminaries for these practices include developing skill at both calm-abiding (*zhi gnas; śamatha*) and insight meditation (*lhag mthong; vipāśyanā*). As in earlier Buddhist teachings, many Chöd *dehadāna* practices emphasize renunciation, purification, and self-transformation through the accumulation of merit and the exhaustion of demerit. Rather than suggesting that one must wait to accumulate adequate merit before offering the gift of the body, however, Chöd provides the opportunity for immediately efficacious offering of the body through techniques of visualization. Using a technique which echoes the traditional Buddhist teaching of the of the mind-made body (*manomayākāya*), the practitioner engages in visualizations which allow her to experience the non-duality of agent and object as she offers her body.

The process of giving the body as a means of attainment is commonly articulated in Chöd practice texts (*sgrub pa; sādhana*). These practice texts exhibit the framework of mature Tantra *sādhana*, including the stages of generating bodhicitta, going for refuge, meditating on the four immeasurables, and making the eight-limbed offering. Generally speaking, the main section of a developed Chöd *sādhana* has three components. The first two—a transference of consciousness

---

<sup>373</sup> Garchen Rinpoche makes this point during retreats on the Drikung Kagyü practice of Chöd.



(*nam mkha' sgo 'byed*) practice, and a body maṇḍala (*lus dkyil*) practice—have distinctly purifying purposes. The Chöd transference of consciousness practice has parallels with other Buddhist practices called “*pho ba*.” In this part of the visualization practice, the practitioner’s consciousness is “ejected” from one’s body through the Brahma aperture at the crown of one’s head. At this time, one’s consciousness can be visualized as becoming identical with an enlightened consciousness, which is embodied in a figure such as Machik, Vajrayoginī (*Rdo rje rnal byor ma*) or Vajravārāhī (*Rdo rje phag mo*). In the body maṇḍala practice, the practitioner identifies the microcosm of her body with macrocosms of the mundane and supramundane worlds. In this first stage of this transformation, the practitioner identifies with an enlightened being, thus overcoming attachment to her own body-mind aggregates and purifying them through this non-attachment. In the second stage, the practitioner can extend this identification: the practitioner identifies the microcosm of her body with macrocosms of the mundane and supramundane worlds. The body maṇḍala (*lus dkyil*) stage also allows the practitioner to reconceptualize her body as expanding through space and time and becoming indistinguishable from the realm of the supramundane, or the *Dharmadhātu* (*chos kyi dbyings*). Through the process of reconstructing her identity, the practitioner is able to see herself as the ultimate source of offerings for all sentient beings.

The third part of the core practice of Chöd is the offering of the body, which can take many forms depending on the particular practice text. In the fifth text of *The Great Explanation* collection of teachings attributed to Machik, there is a discourse between Machik and Tönyon Samdrub<sup>374</sup> on the method of giving the body (Lab sgron 1974, 144-230). The first step is the

---

<sup>374</sup> Tönyon Samdrub is sometimes referred to as Machik’s son; however, influenced by the *Deb ther sngon po*, I believe him to be the biological grandson of Gyalwa Dondrub, one of Machik’s “spiritual sons.” He seems to have also been known as Thod smyon la ston. His primary teacher was Kham bu ya le (a student of ‘Jam dbyangs mgon po sometimes mentioned in lineage lists), and his primary student was the great lineage holder Chos kyi seng ge.

purification of the body, which involves transforming it into offerings that will please the members of one's dharma community, including one's *bla ma*, *yi dam*, and *ḍākinīs* and dharma protectors.<sup>375</sup> Next, the practitioner transforms her body into valuable goods in order to recompense all of the karmic debts she has accrued through innumerable lives. The transformation of one's body into substances to meet the needs and desires of one's guests recalls more traditional Indic offering practices (*mchod pa*; *pūja*).<sup>376</sup> For example, in such practices within Mahāyāna Buddhist traditions, one makes offerings to buddhas and bodhisattvas, sometimes including the enlightened beings in the lineage of teachings one has received. As John Makransky explains, “[b]y following the ritual format, a practitioner generates the purest motivation to give the very best substances to the highest object: the supreme field of karmic merit (*puṇyakṣetra*, *tshogs zhing*), the buddhas” (1996, 314). Chöd *dehadāna* adapt these practices by using the practitioner's own body as the vehicle of generating merit. Machik explains that many people, because of their habits of ego-clinging, are incapable of sufficient acts of *dāna* to mitigate their negative karmic acts. Acting as a surrogate, the Chöd practitioner visualizes donating her own body with the intention of liberating others from negative karmic retribution, as well as to repay kindnesses that she herself has received. As Machik states, “I give this body . . . as compensation for the karmic debt incurred from beginningless time to the final moment.”<sup>377</sup>

---

See my chronology table attached as an appendix at the end of this study.

<sup>375</sup> This has overtones of sacrifice, worship, and supplication. On a related note, see Findly 2003. On the purification of the body according to the Pāñcarātra tradition of Vaiṣṇavism and the *Jayākhya Saṁhitā*, see Flood 2000.

<sup>376</sup> The Tibetan term “*mchod*” is also a homonym for “*gcod*.” For a study of the etymology of “*mchod pa*,” see Makransky 1996, esp. 312-13.

<sup>377</sup> “*sngon chad 'khor ba thogs ma med pa nas tha ma da lta la thug gi bar gyi lan chags ba'i bdag po 'bdag mo rnams la bdag gi lus d'i lang chags tu 'jal bar bya'o*” (Lab sgron 1974, 224).

This third component of the offering emphasizes one's act of charity in assisting all sentient beings to become free from suffering and to attain enlightenment. The practitioner generates the following thought: "I give up my body in order that all sentient beings, throughout the three realms, that are clinging and attached to the self give up their ego-fixations."<sup>378</sup> This component has several different stages according to the different types of sentient beings that are being addressed. The body takes different forms according to the desires of the recipients, who can be benign, wrathful and/or beatific beings. In Chöd practice, this offering of the body provides the vehicle for cutting through attachment to self. Through techniques of visualization, the body is transformed into a sign of abundance: one's own body, given its inherent emptiness, is visualized as multifarious attractive things that fulfill the needs and desires of all sentient beings.

Because of its dramatic representation of cutting through the body to offer it as food, Chöd *dehadāna* has frequently been misinterpreted as an exotic and esoteric practice with its roots in indigenous shamanic traditions. Due to the limited access of early ethnographers to Tibetan culture and Chöd practice in particular, emphasis has been placed on the elements of Chöd that were most visible, accessible and "translatable." Early researchers were likely drawn to specific practices due to the accoutrement of musical instruments and singing, and they often seemed compelled by the apparently "shamanistic" content of these practices.<sup>379</sup> Western presentations of Chöd have thus tended to represent body offering practices such as the White Offerings (*dkar tshogs*) and Red Banquets (*dmar tshogs*) (introduced in the early twentieth

---

<sup>378</sup> "sbyir khams gsum gyi sems can thams cad bdag la shin tu chags shing zhen pa rnams kyi bdag 'dzin thong bar bya ba'i phir du bdag gis lus gtong bar bya" (Lab sgron 1974, 224).

<sup>379</sup> Another author who popularized considering Chöd as shamanism was Mircea Eliade, drawing on the work of Alexandra David-Neel (1964, esp. 436-437). Eliade considers the appearance of outer practices of traditions like Chöd as "psychopomp" (438), and he quotes Robert Bleichsteiner (*L'Église jaune* [Paris: Payot, 1950, 194-195]), who characterized Chöd as "'a sinister mystery going back to the most primitive times'" (1964, 436). See also Sierksma 1966.

century through the work of Alexandra David-Neel and Walter Y. Evans-Wentz with Kazi Samdrup) in a sensational fashion, stressing their macabre elements rather than contextualizing and historicizing them in relation to Buddhist traditions. Contemporary scholars have continued to insist on the exotic and “shamanistic” character of Chöd praxis.<sup>380</sup> However, when we return to the Tibetan sources attributed to Machik (including the texts I have translated and discuss in detail in the last chapter), the Chöd practice of offering one’s body does not appear as exotic or excessive. While Machik does develop new techniques for liberation from suffering, she also emphasizes the correlations of her praxis with orthodox Buddhist teachings.

Machik’s intentions to assimilate her teachings to traditional Buddhist ideas and to develop an innovative praxis are evident in *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section*, which is often taken to be one of the teachings that Machik gave to the Indian scholars who came to investigate her teachings. Such attribution suggests that this is one of the earliest texts documenting Machik’s system of Chöd. Although it does not contain all of the elements that come to be associated with later Chöd sādhana, it usefully illustrates some of the core elements of the praxis. As in the other foundational discussions of the Chöd practice of visualizing the offering of one’s body as food for sentient beings, the phrase used for giving away or offering the body in this text is “*phung po gzan du bskyur*,”<sup>381</sup> that is, to toss away (*bskyur*) one’s aggregates as food (*gzan*). The relation between the usefulness and uselessness of the body is highlighted here: the body-mind aggregates are to be considered as unnecessary garbage that one needs to abandon, while the description of the visualization also emphasizes the value of the body which is offered.

---

<sup>380</sup> For example, see Wu 2004, Orofino 2000, Hermann-Pfandt 1998, Stott 1989, Gyatso 1985 and Van Tuyl 1979.

<sup>381</sup> See *Khyad par gyi le lag brgyad pa* 601/155, 607/161, 608/162, 609/163; *Thun mong gi le lag brgyad pa* 585/139; *Thun mong ma yin pa’i le’u lag brgyad pa* 590/144.

According to *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section*, the practice has three parts: a preliminary meditation on cultivating compassion and loving-kindness; the main practice of giving one's body, which is possessed of the six perfections; and the conclusion of dedicating the merit one has generated through the practice to the unsurpassed spirit of enlightenment.<sup>382</sup> The preliminary meditation requires the practitioner to generate compassion for all sentient beings, paying special attention to beings that have caused harm to (*gnod byed*) or obstructed (*bgegs*) the practitioner. During this meditation, the practitioner cultivates the intention to offer her body and visualizes those to whom she will offer her body.

In the main part of the practice, the practitioner visualizes her body as very large; with an envisioned sword of wisdom, she cuts through her neck and makes her body an offering to the harmdoers (*gnod byed*), satisfying them all according to their particular desires for meat, blood or bones. By visualizing her body as totally consumed, the practitioner's mind will no longer be attached to concerns about the past, present or future. Instead, she can dwell in a natural state of open awareness: "the mind (*sems*) does not hanker after the past, does not anticipate the future, and does not notice the present. You rest softly and very loosely. Then, meditatively cultivating compassion you give your body as food; the mind rests in the state of reality (*gnas lugs*). In that way, visualize the tip of day and the fading away of night cycling (*khor ro ro*) in turn (*re mos*)." For the conclusion of the practice, the practitioner recites a variation on the traditional Buddhist statement of going for refuge and dedicating the merit of her actions, repeating three times: "I myself go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma, and the Saṅgha<sup>383</sup> until enlightenment. By the merit of the actions including the giving of myself for the benefit of beings, may I attain

---

<sup>382</sup> For the original Tibetan and my English translation, see section four of the *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section* in an appendix to this study.

<sup>383</sup> Described here as the supreme assembly (*tshogs kyi mchog rnams*; *gaṇānāmagraṃ*).

buddhahood.” At this point in the teaching, there is the imperative to the practitioner: “Your activity should be comfortable!”<sup>384</sup> The Chöd practitioner must be advanced enough in her practice that the practice of visualizing the distribution of one’s body as food should be helpful on the Buddhist path and not a further obstruction or distraction.

In the same text, Machik provides an elaboration of the three parts of the practice. In the preliminary practice, Machik emphasizes that the generation of compassion and loving-kindness by the Chöd practitioner will provide an antidote to aggression, thereby “pacifying negative influences, male negative influences (*pho gdon*), illness, pain and discomfort.” In the main practice, through visualizing the offering of one’s body as food, the Chöd practitioner produces an antidote for desire and attachment, thereby “pacifying infection, exhaustion, and female negative influences (*mo gdon*).” And in the concluding part of the practice, resting in one’s natural state becomes an antidote for delusion, whereby “nāga negative influences (*klu gdon*) and illnesses accompanied by depression” are pacified. Machik’s elaboration of the practice makes clear that her novel techniques for offering the body are grounded in traditional Buddhist ethics. Machik also associates her body offering praxis with the philosophical tradition of *Prajñāpāramitā* by arguing that the giving of one’s body as food is a realization of the six *pāramitā* or perfections of behavior. Not only does the giving of one’s body exemplify the perfection of giving, the act contains within itself the other five perfections: it exemplifies the perfection of moral discipline because one gives the body for the sake of sentient beings; it exemplifies the perfection of forbearance because one gives the body without anger; it exemplifies the perfection of perseverance because one gives the body again and again in visualized practice; it exemplifies the perfection of concentration because one practices the

---

<sup>384</sup> “*gang bde’i spyod lam bya’o.*”

visualization without distraction; and it exemplifies the perfection of wisdom because one rests in the state of reality and emptiness.

In the same text Machik also links her praxis with canonical Buddhist narratives by distinguishing two modes of giving one's body as food through an example that evokes King Śibi's donation of one of his eyes to a blind Brahman as recounted in the *Śibi Jātaka*. In the first mode, the practitioner is encouraged to generate compassion toward sentient beings with eye illnesses by imagining that she is experiencing such an illness herself. Grounded in that compassion, she should generate the intention to give her own eyes in order to remedy the eye illnesses of others. In the second mode, the practitioner is instructed to visualize eighty thousand types of obstructors (*bgegs*) arising in front of her to whom she gives her eyes; her mind then rests without any thought. Machik instructs the practitioner to repeat these two modes of practice, substituting other body parts such as her hands: she repeats the process of generation of compassion, intention of offering, visualization of the recipients and the offering, and attainment of the state of resting her mind in non-thought. By practicing these two modes of giving her body as food, the practitioner is able to deepen her psychophysical experience of compassion through affective association of herself with the other who is suffering and through personifying obstructions as worthy recipients of her offerings. This cultivation of compassion allows her to attain non-attachment and clear awareness of her mind in its natural state.

In this early *sādhana*, some aspects of the practice of giving away the body as food differ from later descriptions of the practice. There is no distinct element of separating the mind and body, usually referred to as "*nam mkha' sgo 'byed*" or "*'pho ba*" in Chöd practices. Perhaps more notably, the recipients of the offering do not include Dūd, the "Negative Forces" that become a central characteristic of Chöd practices (as I discuss further in the next chapter).

Rather, the recipients in *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section* are primarily “harmdoers” (*gnod byed*), “obstructors” (*bgegs*), and those that have a need for a distinctive body part, such as one who suffers from an eye illness. In addition, the practice is aimed not at “cutting through the Negative Forces, or Dūd,” but at pacifying male, female and *nāga* negative influences (*pho gdon*, *mo gdon* and *klu gdon*).

While this early *sādhana* teaching does not include all of the elements that later become associated with the Chöd practice traced back to Machik, it does illustrate the essential philosophical and ritual aspects of Chöd body offering. The text not only echoes *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings by explicitly linking the offering of the body to the six perfections, but it also develops the dynamic of grounding one’s aspirations for enlightenment in one’s embodied experience. This elemental practice contains the pith of Chöd praxis—the ritual support for cutting through attachment to the embodied self and discriminative mental functioning to achieve liberation from suffering. In Chöd, the *pāramitā* of the gift of the body is highlighted through the visualization of the body as a sign of abundance. This offering is presented in its most ideal and idealized form: one’s own body, due to its inherent emptiness, is visualized as transformed into multifarious pleasing things to fulfill the desires of all sentient beings, while simultaneously providing the vehicle for cutting through attachment to self.

Echoing the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, the offering of the body in Chöd is seen as the essence of Buddhist Dharma. In *The Great Explanation* collection of Machik’s teachings, one of Machik’s avatars, referred to as the “Mother” of Chöd, states that “the condensed meaning of all Dharma, the root meaning of practice, is the meaning of offering and charity of the body.”<sup>385</sup> As with other examples of *dehadāna* in the Buddhist canon, the offering of the body in Chöd exemplifies

---

<sup>385</sup> “*chos thams cad kyi mdo don nyams len gyi don rtsa ba phung po mchod sbyin gyi don la da ltha rtsad bdar chod cig zangs rir song zer te.*” From chapter five of the *Phung po gzan skyur gyi rnam bshad Gcod kyi don gsal byed* [*rNam bshad chen mo*], in *Gcod kyi chos skor* (Lab sgron 1974, 144).



the renunciation of all attachments and the purification of all mental obscurations. The *pāramitā* of the offering of the body is explicitly foregrounded, which provides the central motif for the ritual technology of Chöd. But in Chöd, the abstract ideal of *dehadāna* is realized in practice: the practitioner visualizes giving her body in order immediately and actually to attain the merit and wisdom suggested in earlier gift of the body Buddhist narratives. In Chöd, as in its Buddhist antecedents, attachment to the body is a metaphor for attachment to a belief in one's self as individual and permanent. Such a belief is also intimately interconnected with one's discrimination of oneself from other sentient beings. The offering of one's own body is a strategic antidote for a self-construct that fosters ego-clinging and results in mental afflictions and habitual behaviors that perpetuate one's suffering. The gift of the body in Chöd also benefits the innumerable beings to which one makes the offering. The systematization of Chöd thus provides practitioners with ritual technologies for offering the body in order to help all beings attain enlightenment.

By enacting the gift of the body within the context of visualization, the Chöd system not only avoids the dangers of excessive acts of sacrifice, but also provides a ritual technology to emulate the bodhisattva example of offering one's body.<sup>386</sup> In order fully to understand the significance of Chöd praxis, it is crucial to appreciate that Chöd is grounded in the core Mahāyāna principle of bodhisattva motivation. This bodhisattva motivation arises from *bodhicitta*, the desire to attain enlightenment in order to help all other sentient beings themselves to overcome suffering. According to the teachings of Chöd, the examples of bodhisattvas who

---

<sup>386</sup> Davidson notes that he had considered connections between self-visualization and spirit possession: "However, none of the practices associated with spirit possession—ecstatic behavior, shaking of limbs, loss of consciousness, self-mutilation—are encountered in descriptions of self-visualization within the tantras or other esoteric texts" (2002, 129). Similarly, although Tibetan Buddhist Chöd has practices of self-visualized self-mutilation, given that it does not have the corresponding practices of spirit possession, I find it difficult to accept the arguments of those who want to align it with so-called "shamanic" practices.

have offered their own bodies are not to be taken as abstract ideals, but rather as concrete models for action. This revaluation can be seen in Machik’s explanation of the special quality of the Chöd system in *The Great Explanation*. Rather than gradually transforming oneself over many lifetimes, as in Pali and Mahāyāna Buddhist practice, the Chöd practitioner “is” an enlightened being in the practice. Machik explains that the results of the practice “do not come to fruition at a much later time; rather [Chöd] is an instruction for complete awakening in one life and in one body.” In the Chöd body offering practice, merit is not understood as gradually accumulated through various bodies and lives but immediately generated, reflecting the Vajrayāna orientation of Chöd. As Machik emphasizes, once “the living body that is held so dear” is “cast away without a thought as food for demons, then fixation on the self of this interim body will be severed spontaneously. . . . Abiding within the state of emptiness, unborn cognizant awareness hidden in the basic sphere of the sky is unimpeded and automatically, innately free.”<sup>387</sup> Through Chöd practice, the practitioner is able to manifest herself in innumerable bodies as an enlightened being through innumerable temporal and spatial realms, bringing relief from saṃsāra to innumerable sentient beings.

All levels of Tibetan Buddhist Chöd, whether Sūtra or Tantra, whether outer, inner, or secret, whether generation or completion stage, are designed not only to cut through the habitual tendencies and afflictions of the mind, but also to accumulate wisdom and merit. While the Chöd system is most remarkable in its singular technique for eradicating self-grasping, the motivation to cut self-grasping is a fundamental—and fundamentally—Buddhist one. This root motivation can be traced through various precedents for the visualization of the offering of one’s

---

<sup>387</sup> “*lar gces par ‘dzin pa’i lus srog ‘di / lots med ‘dre’i gzan du skyur bas na / bar lus kyi bdag ‘dzin dam shugs kyis chod pa de sprang mo nga’i chos lugs yin / dran rig skye med nam [m]kha’i dbyings su spas pa’i ‘gag med shugs ‘byung rang grol stong pa’i ngang la gnas pa’i nang ngar ‘dzin dam dam shugs kyis chod nas byar med rig pas btsan sa zin pa de / sprang mo nga’i chos lugs yin*” (Lab sgron 1974, 100).

own body to a gathering of sentient beings.<sup>388</sup> As we have seen, the combination of bodhisattva motivation and merit generation in the offering of the body is evident in some of the earliest Buddhist texts. Chöd teachings often explicitly invoke such precedents. For example, Machik Labdrön is recorded as remarking, “previously Buddha Śākyamuni actually gave his head, limbs, appendages and so forth, to whomever desired without hesitation. Are contemporary practitioners not aware of this precedent? Or do they . . . not appreciate the injunctions in the Buddha’s speech?”<sup>389</sup> Machik’s rhetorical questions acknowledge the Indic antecedents and bodhisattva motivation of Chöd. Rather than transforming the body *through* the act of giving, as in the Pali and Mahāyāna models, in Chöd the body is transformed *in* the act of giving. Thus, *dehadāna* within the context of the Chöd teachings is an act of self-transformation through the imagined sacrifice of one’s body: a revolution of one’s self grounded in the usefulness of one’s embodiment.

The methodology and praxis of Chöd represent a complex theorization of relationships among psychophysical constituents—including embodiment, consciousness and sub-conscious modes of being. Moreover, embodiment in Chöd praxis cultivates and is cultivated by the reciprocal relation between an awareness of the impermanence of one’s being and the development of wisdom and compassion. In *dehadāna* practices associated with Tibetan Buddhist Chöd, we see a dialectical relationship between the uselessness and usefulness of the body. Chöd teachings stress that mortal embodiment is the door to understanding human being. The habitual illusion of a unified self—-independent and enduring—is often located in one’s

---

<sup>388</sup> On the connection between food offerings and bodhicitta, Jane Tromge states, “[o]n an outer level food is offered to the three jewels, on an inner level to the mandala of deities who abide in our subtle channels and cakras. This offering becomes a source of merit that we dedicate to the beings whose very lives provided the food” (1995, 79).

<sup>389</sup> “*sngar sangs rgyas shakya thub pas mgo dang / yan lag dang / nying lag la sogs rnam gang la gang ‘dod pa rnam la lots pa med par dngos su gtong ba / de’i rgyu mtshan da lta’i chos byed rnam kyis ma tshor ba yin nam . . . sangs rgyas kyis lung bstan pa ma mthong ba yin*” (Lab sgron 1974, 105).

identification with a stable body. Yet it is exactly this paradox that generates the potency and efficacy of Chöd praxis. As I will elaborate in the next chapter, the heuristic visualization and cutting of the body also involves the “cutting away” and “offering” of the mind to facilitate analytical-experiential awareness and the dismantling of ego-grasping. Further, one cannot attain liberation from habitual grasping of the unified self by rejecting the body. The Chöd practitioner requires a sustained attention to being in the body as a condition of becoming human. In order to cut through one’s individual mode of self-grasping, it is important to understand the exact nature of the constructed self that is the subject and object of attachment, including its embodied gender identity and corresponding lived experiences.

### **Gift and Sacrifice in Chöd**

While Chöd practices are obviously rooted in Buddhist philosophical discourses, the offering of the body in Chöd can also speak to Western philosophical conversations. As a complement to considering Chöd reinterpretations of the Buddhist praxes of gift of the body from a historical perspective, Chöd can also be read in terms of contemporary theoretical ideas about “body,” “gift,” and “sacrifice.”<sup>390</sup> Chöd interweaves these three concerns in ways that provoke one to reconsider each of the terms<sup>391</sup> in itself and in relation to one another. In Chöd *dehadana*, the body is the ritual agent of giving *and* the gift itself; the body is also the material

---

<sup>390</sup> William R. LaFleur writes “[t]he fact that ‘body’ has become a critical term for religious studies, whereas ‘mysticism,’ for instance, has largely dropped out, can itself signal significant change in how we study religion” (1998, 36). As I write, “body” and “embodiment” continue to occupy a place in the discourses of the humanities and social sciences. I think this is for a variety of reasons. Highlighting the term “body” has provided for new ways to approach conversations on gender, on subjectivity, and on mind/body relations, to name a few.

<sup>391</sup> Influenced by the discussion of the multiplicity inherent in every “concept” by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1994), Mark C. Taylor writes: “The word ‘term’ derives from the Latin *terminus*, which means boundary or limit . . . . Whether conceived spatially or temporally, terms function as enabling constraints that simultaneously create possibilities and circumscribe the limits of exploration. But even when lines of definition seem to be clearly drawn, terms remain irreducibly complex” (1998, 16). Elaborating on Taylor’s observation that “[b]oundaries that join and separate terms are necessarily permeable, and thus terms are never simple. This complexity renders terms polysemous and multivocal” (1998, 16), I would suggest that a “term” is an indexical for a metaphorical range of relations under consideration.

and the site of the ritual. The offered body can be seen as a commodity within a system of economic exchange, but the transmuted body also transcends systems of exchange.

Discussions theorizing “the gift” are usually dated to the 1924 publication of Marcel Mauss’ *Essai sur le don (The Gift)*.<sup>392</sup> Mauss’ study examines the customs and practices of exchange among what he labels “archaic” societies, referring to communities including the Northwest American Indians, Melanesians and Polynesians. This work was influential in illuminating how gift exchange contributes to social organization and function in these specific cultures, as well as providing theoretical constructs for the study of other cultures, including our own.<sup>393</sup> Mauss argues that common exchange of everything between clans, households and individuals is the oldest known economic system and provides foundations for law and justice; he argues for the “return to the ever-present bases of law, to its real fundamentals and to the very heart of normal social life,” predicated on the self-aware citizen who is neither too subjective, too insensitive or too realistic (1966, 67).<sup>394</sup> In Mauss’ view, the economy of gift giving emphasizes the interdependence of social networks rather than encouraging the alienation of individuals.

In contemporary discussions of gift giving in Asia, we see a variety of interpretations of the economy of the gift. Maria Heim (2004) provides a survey of South Asian sources from

---

<sup>392</sup> As John-Joseph Goux has pointed out, the Stoic Seneca’s seven-volume work *De Beneficiis* (1st c. C.E.) is an early discussion of the moral and economic roles of the gift. Goux points out that both Derrida and Mauss disregard Seneca’s argument on the possibility of the pure gift that is without return, an act of generosity without an expectation of reciprocity (2002, 148-160.)

<sup>393</sup> Ian Cunnison, the translator of the edition I am using, notes that Mauss uses “*don*” and “*présent*” interchangeably (1966).

<sup>394</sup> Readers of Mauss often neglect to notice or to remark on the fact that Mauss explicitly intends his essay as an argument against utilitarianism and communism (67): “We have repeatedly pointed out how this economy of gift-exchange fails to conform to the principals of so-called natural economy or utilitarianism” (1966, 69). Of course, the fundamental criticism that Mauss’ theory faces (and Lévi-Strauss’s work involving gift-giving, which was influenced by Mauss’) is whether or not all gifts always create and maintain social relationships through evoking a sense of responsibility to reciprocate or to form bonds of mutual obligation.

roughly the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, including Hindu *Dharmaśāstra* anthologies (*nibandhas*) and Jain and Buddhist compendia (*saṅgaha*), emphasizing the social norms and moral duty of giving.<sup>395</sup> Heim argues that the Indic concept of *dāna* differs from Mauss' understanding of *don*, since the giver of *dāna* does not expect reciprocity or obligation.<sup>396</sup> As Heim notes in her discussion of the work of Thomas Trautmann (1981), although *dāna* might not participate in an economy of mundane reciprocity, the act of offering suggests an expectation of gaining spiritual merit.<sup>397</sup>

A different perspective on the expectation of supramundane reciprocity is argued by Kwangsu Lee, who provides a historical study of the intertwined practices of merit-making and donation within Buddhist communities in India from time of the Buddha. According to Lee, “[b]y c. 600 BC donations appear to have increasingly formed an important part of the new emergent economic order which was marked by remarkable technological growth, surplus production and a widening gap between the producers and the consumers. . . . The widespread

---

<sup>395</sup> Heim (2004, 36) draws parallels between ideas presented by Lakṣmīdhara in his *Dānakāṇḍa* of the *Kṛtyakalpataru* (*Book on Gift Giving in the Wish-fulfilling Tree of Duties*) and those of Jacques Derrida. In this context, Heim also cites Malinowski 1922; Mauss 1990; Sahlins 1965; Hyde 1979; and Parry 1986, 1994. She notes that James Carrier (1990, 1995) has traced the history of the ideology of the “perfect gift” in modern American and British culture as arising out of historical conditions of industrialization, liberalism and utilitarianism: “The ideal of the pure gift is everything a market commodity is not: it is unreciprocated, disinterested, based on sentiment, and free. Moreover, the notion of the pure gift is thought to be a modern invention, finding no antecedent in the ‘primitive’ cultures encountered by the anthropologist (Parry 1986: 458)” (Heim 2004, 37).

<sup>396</sup> Maria Heim analyzes Mauss' notion of the gift in the context of South Asian theories of *dāna* as follows: “Against this [Mauss'] perspective on the gift as a mechanism of social solidarity through mutual exchange, South Asian theories of *dāna* offer a sharp contrast. *Dāna*, according to all formal discussion on it, is not obligated in any way. It does not evoke return from the recipient, and is not premised on a notion of reciprocity and interdependence. . . . Mauss himself was not unaware of these features of *dāna* ideology, and acknowledges, in a footnote, the lack of obligations of return in gifts given to brahmans (Mauss 1990: 146-47). Indologists and others have puzzled over the significance of this denial in *dāna* theory of the otherwise apparently ubiquitous principle of reciprocity, both in terms of what it suggests about Indian thought as well as what this large-scale exception might mean for Mauss' general conclusions” (2004, 34). In a footnote, Heim observes that, “[a]s some of these authors note, there are other kinds of gift giving in South Asia besides *dāna* that may include reciprocity and obligation” (2004, 152 n. 2).

<sup>397</sup> “One view of the Indian denial of reciprocity is that while *dāna* theory denies earthly reciprocity it, like the sacrificial cult it replaced, yields religious merit and reward in the afterlife (Trautmann 1981: 279-282)” (Heim 2004, 34). (Trautmann, Thomas. 1981. *Dravidian Kinship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.)

notion of earning merit through donation was due mainly to the adoption of the Buddhist faith by Aśoka” (1998, 78). In contrast to Heim, Lee emphasizes the role of gift giving in a developing market economy. Both Heim and Lee stress the ways in which the gift functions as a “commodity” in a system of exchange.

In Makransky’s study of tantric practices, he also describes an economy in which an offering (*pūjā*) is given with the expectation of spiritual exchange: “With the development of tantric forms of Mahāyāna practice, *pūjā* constituted both a material offering ritual and a structured meditative visualization of boundless offerings to Buddhist deities whose presence was invoked and from whom blessings in the form of light and nectar were received. All such elements of Indian Buddhist practice were incorporated into Tibetan Buddhist offering practice and literature” (Makransky 1996, 313-14). Here the “guests” of the practitioner are sacred beings from whom the practitioner could “receive” a reciprocal gift: for example, karmic merit or blessings in the form of light and nectar. In contrast, through Chöd *dehadāna*, one does not receive positive merit, but rather pays karmic debts. In most Chöd *sādhana*, the body is sacrificed not to superior or supranatural beings, but to one’s karmic debtors and harmdoers, as well as to one’s cohort (parents, friends, teachers).

A cultural theory of economy based on usefulness might help us to understand Chöd *dehadāna*, which uses the gift to revalue embodiment as a productive condition. On the other hand, the praxis of Chöd resists the reification of the self as an object of economic value and exchange. As in the problem of the usefulness and uselessness of the body, Chöd praxis disrupts the existential and social categories of “productive” and “non-productive.” This dialectic between productive and non-productive in Chöd gift of the body practice has intriguing parallels with Jacques Derrida’s theories of the gift. For Derrida, if the gift is truly to be *a gift*, it

interrupts or suspends economic exchange. It defies, or even denies, reciprocity or return. In order to be a gift, it must simultaneously be contextualized by economics while sublating economics: it must be “aneconomic” (Derrida 1992, 7). For Derrida, the gift *qua* given gift is impossible: “If there is gift, the *given* of the gift (*that which* one gives, *that which* is given, the gift as given thing or as act of donation) must not come back to the giving (let us not already say to the subject, to the donor). It must not circulate, it must not be exchanged, it must not in any case be exhausted, as a gift, by the process of exchange, by the movement of circulation of the circle in the form of return to the point of departure” (1992, 7; emphasis in original). Within a Western philosophical context, Derrida writes of giving the gift of infinite love to finite others, engaging the awareness of one’s own finite self as an ethical actor: “the mortal thus deduced is someone whose very responsibility requires that he concern himself not only with an objective Good but with a gift of infinite love, a goodness that is forgetful of itself. There is thus a structural disproportion or dissymmetry between the finite and responsible mortal on the one hand and the goodness of the infinite gift on the other hand” (1995, 51). Derrida has called this gift of infinite love without expectation of reciprocity an “impossible gift.” This impossible gift reveals a rift within the system of market economies: it rejects common exchange valuation and commodification. It exists outside the perimeter of the cycle of economic exchange, sidestepping concerns of debt and obligation, reciprocity and return.

The gift of the body in Chöd is another kind of impossible gift: as I explained above, it is only possible through visualization and narration. The body is conceived as an inexhaustible resource, perpetually renewable through one’s bond to saṃsāra, even as an enlightened being. The “gift” part of the “gift of the body” in Chöd is what Derrida might refer to as a “pure gift,” that is, one that does not demand mundane reciprocity (even when offered in a group setting). It



does not even demand supramundane reciprocity; rather, it is a transformative inner act of self-making that imbues the self with a deeper moral sense and a more profound understanding of one's embodiment. *Dāna-pāramitā* also might be considered a practice of pure gift giving in the context of moral training. The offering is a transformative gift within an economy dictated by the law of karma (including the possibility for transformation through the “payment” of “karmic debts” to others) and the corresponding capacity for yogic purification. On the other hand, Chöd *dehadāna* subverts the system of exchange that is constitutive of more conventional economies. This transformation of the gift of the body, in keeping with the bodhisattva vow and the project to become a bodhisattva or a buddha oneself, occurs through remembering and practicing one's responsibility to others—that is, in practicing compassion and loving-kindness.

In Chöd, the internalized act of offering the body as a gift can also be seen as a sacrifice. Following the work of Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss (1964), the agent in such an offering can be simultaneously identified with and distinguished from the victim. Hubert and Mauss' study of sacrifice is grounded in their interpretation of the Vedic soma sacrifice as a transformative act that desacralizes and resacralizes the subject (the one who realizes the benefits), the object/victim (without which/whom there could be no transformative effect), as well as the object/recipient of the offering (such as a deity who is sustained through the offering). However, it might also be considered that a transformative act is impossible in this context. The success of the Vedic sacrifice was determined by the success of sustaining the divine and maintaining order in the cosmos, so rather than transforming the subject and community, this type of sacrifice serves to perpetuate the status quo.

In contrast, Chöd sacrifice is closely akin to “Dharma-sacrifice,” as expressed in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*. Vimalakīrti's teaching explicitly contrasts “Dharma-sacrifice” to other types

of sacrifice and offerings, including Vedic sacrifices. Each of the elements of a Dharma-sacrifice reflects a key Buddhist principle: great compassion and loving-kindness; the perfection of generosity (*dāna-pāramitā*) and the other five perfections; and meditation on the three signs of emptiness, signlessness and wishlessness. According to this discourse, not only is the bodhisattva exemplary because of “his extreme sacrifice,” he is “worthy of offerings from all people, including the gods” (Thurman 1998, 40). This suggests that the Dharma sacrifice is situated within an economy of exchange, with the offerings of the bodhisattva being “worthy” of reciprocity. However, the text subsequently describes an offering made by Vimalakīrti: upon reluctantly accepting a string of pearls offered to him by a householder, Vimalakīrti distributes half of the pearls to the poor of the city and offers the other half to the Tathāgata Duṣprasāha, who emanates another universe which is manifest to the audience. Vimalakīrti then makes a speech which resonates with the observations of Derrida: “‘The giver who makes gifts to the lowliest poor of the city, considering them as worthy of offering as the Tathāgata himself, the giver who gives without any discrimination, impartially, with no expectation of reward, and with great love—this giver, I say, totally fulfills the Dharma-sacrifice’” (1998, 41).<sup>398</sup> As in Chöd *dehadāna*, a totally fulfilled Dharma-sacrifice is one that is “pure,” without an expectation of reciprocity from its recipient.

Based on the *The Great Explanation*, some generalizations may be drawn regarding the strategies through which Chöd refigures the gift of offering the body in three productive ways. First, as the sacrifice of the body is an internalized act in Chöd, practitioners are able to avoid immoderate behavior while cultivating wisdom and compassion. Second, unlike traditional representations of *dehadāna* wherein the gift of the body is performed by a highly-realized

---

<sup>398</sup> It would appear that this is a self-referential observation by Vimalakīrti, identifying himself as an exemplary giver, although it may also be meant to characterize the original giver of the pearls, albeit as a lesser example.

bodhisattva, in the Chöd system the offering can be made by any practitioner since it is made through a contemplative visualization. Maximum merit for this gift is determined not by the quality of the recipients, but by their virtual quantity and diversity. Chöd praxis thus transvalues the attainments of the giver and the suitability of the recipient through the visualized offering of the body. Through identification with an enlightened being, the practitioner attains the capacity of a bodhisattva whose every act is characterized by great compassion, means and wisdom. As the practitioner's body is transformed into an abundance that completely fulfills the needs and desires of all sentient beings, all karmic debts are repaid, technically freeing the practitioner from the cyclic existence of *samsāra*. Explicitly invoking earlier *dehādāna* narratives, Chöd provides techniques through which practitioners can alleviate the suffering of others in order that they may no longer find it necessary to commit actions that result in karmic demerit. Chöd also allows the practitioner to make a sacrifice, in Vimalakīrti's terms, without any discrimination, impartiality, or expectation of reward.

Finally, rather than producing a sharp distinction between donors and religious experts, Chöd rituals involve both lay and monastic Buddhists. In the context of Chöd, *dāna* is primarily conceived of as a transformation of the practitioner (lay or ordained), rather than a gift from non-renunciant to renunciants. The act of renunciation is thus also transvalued in Chöd. Rather than being manifested through the tradition of renunciants dependent on gifts from the lay community, renunciation in Chöd occurs through the act of renouncing one's own body. The success of the offering is also functionally independent of the response of a worthy recipient, so important in earlier discussions of *dāna*. In this act of renunciation through offering of the body, giver and gift are explicitly identified. Since both the giver and the gift are consumed by the recipient, the offering of the body incorporates and is incorporated by the other. This process

thus encapsulates the attainment of non-attachment and the transcendence of self-other dualities. The transformation of the practitioner's self-identity through visualization thereby instills a sense of responsibility to others. Drawing on canonical representations of *dehadāna*, Chöd reconfigures and revalues such practices, and thereby makes offerings of the body accessible to all practitioners and expressive of an array of Buddhist teachings.

**CHAPTER FIVE: CUTTING THROUGH THE MIND:  
OPENING THE GATE OF SPACE AND THE DÜD**

In the preceding chapter I described how the Prajñāpāramitā Chöd doctrine of Machik Labdrön adapts traditional discussions of the practice of *dehadāna* within the context of the perfection of giving and the development of the wisdom that is defined by emptiness. Through introducing new strategies for visualizing the practice of giving one's body, Machik Labdrön revives canonical discussions from Indic Buddhist teachings to ground her development of an innovative practice that a variety of practitioners can engage in for personal and communal spiritual development.

In this chapter, I continue my discussion of Machik's tradition and innovation in her development of the practices of Chöd: I trace her reception and refiguration of classical Buddhist teachings to make them efficacious for her audience of Buddhist practitioners. As I argued in the preceding chapter, Chöd praxis addresses what I called the "body-mind modality," a non-dualistic conception of being. In understanding the complex strategies of Chöd, however, it is useful to distinguish provisionally between practices that use the body as a meditative focal point and those that use the mind as a site for transformation. While in the previous chapter I focused on Chöd techniques for cutting through the body, here I will be considering corresponding techniques for cutting through the mind.

The Chöd system provides several techniques to aid the practitioner in attaining non-dual awareness. Such techniques complement the analytical dismantling of the discursive construction of conventional existence as presented in the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* teachings with an emphasis on the cultivation of non-dual awareness as articulated in the Tantra teachings. Chöd, grounded in the Mahāyāna motivation of bodhicitta, explores the manifestations and

limitations of mind and mental activities in order to cut through the root of karmic attachment. In a parallel movement, Chöd also cultivates mental capacities in order to cut through the root of these manifestations and limitations. In this chapter, I will discuss how the Chöd teachings attributed to Machik Labdrön both rely and innovate on Buddhist representations of mental functionings of a human being, including the onto-epistemological trope of the Universal Base Consciousness and the psycho-ethical trope of Negative Forces as Düd. By drawing on and revising these traditional models, Chöd is able to develop effective techniques for “cutting through mind.”

As I discussed in the previous chapter, the Chöd tradition explores the problem of what is to be cut through various engagements with the body-mind aggregates (*phung po*; *skhandha*). In Buddhism, it is these aggregates onto which beings impute an individual mind and self, and in Chöd, they are foregrounded as the objects that are to be cut. In his verse composition, *The Great Poem on the Prajñāpāramitā* and regarded as a root text of Chöd,<sup>399</sup> Āryadeva explains that Chöd praxis is ultimately aimed at cutting through the root of mind:

To cut through the root of mind itself,  
 And to cut through the five poisons of mental afflictions,  
 And because all extreme views, mental formations during meditation,  
 And anxiety, hope and fear in activity,  
 And arrogance, are cut through,  
 This is the definition of ‘Chöd.’<sup>400</sup>

<sup>399</sup> Although there are other texts recognized as root texts for individual Chöd lineages, Brahmin Āryadeva’s *tshigs bcad* would appear to be earliest text recognized by any of the lineages, and hence what I would consider to be the ‘primary’ root text. In his *Treasury of Instruction*, Jamgön Kongtrül includes the *tshigs bcad* in the following list of *gcod gzhung rtsa ba*: ‘*Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag gi gzhung tshigs bcad chen mo*, by the Brahmin Āryadeva, translated by Dam pa Sangs rgyas and revised by Zhwa ma Lo tswa ba; *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa zab mo gcod kyi man ngag gi gzhung bka’ tshoms chen mo*, by Ma gcig Lab kyi sgröl ma [sic]; *Shes rab kyi pha rol ty phyin pa gcod kyi gzhung dang man ngag mtha’ dag gi yang bcud zab don thugs kyi snying po*; *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag gcod yul gyi gzhung ‘grel zag med sbrang rtsi*, by Drung pa Ru pa; *gCod bka’ tshoms chen mo’i sa bcad*, by Karmapa III Rangjung Dorjé; *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag gcod kyi gcod kyi gzhung shes rab skra rtse’i sa gzhung spel ba rin po che’i gter mdzod*; and the *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag yang tshoms zhus lan ma*. This issue will be discussed further in another chapter.

<sup>400</sup> “*sems nyid rtsa ba gcod pa dang / nyon mongs dug lnga gcod pa dang / lta mtha’ sgom pa’i ‘du byed dang / spyod pa nyam nga re dogs dang / snyems byed thams cad gcod pa’i phyir / nges pa’i tshig tu gcod ces bya.*”

This trope of “cutting” through the root of mind can be traced to early Buddhist texts. For example, in the fifth century Pali text, the *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa writes that the “relinquishment by means of cutting off takes place in the one who cultivates the supermundane path leading to the destruction of contaminations.”<sup>401</sup> In *The Blue Annals*, Gö Lotsawa cites Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakoṣa* (V.34)<sup>402</sup> as another fifth century Indic source for Chöd: “Mental afflictions (*nyon mongs*) are generated from holding on to tendencies, from the presence of external objects, and from inappropriate mental activities.” Gö Lotsawa’s commentary then links the *Abhidharmakoṣa* to the system of Chöd: “What should be cut are mental afflictions. If these mental afflictions are generated from tendencies, and objects, and mental fabrications of inappropriate mental activities, when the yogin has contact with an object, habitual tendencies (*bag chags*) are taken on. It is called ‘*Gcod yul*’ because one precisely cuts through the mental afflictions preceded by the mental fabrication of inappropriate mental activities and objects.”<sup>403</sup>

One obvious set of questions arising from this formulation concerns the nature of mind. If the principal goal of Chöd is to cut mind at its root, what is it that is cut and what is it that is doing the cutting? These problems can be articulated more clearly when Chöd is considered as a non-

---

There are at least four sources for this stanza. It can be found in Aryadeva’s *shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i tshigs su bcad pa chen mo*, in *Gcod kyi chos skor* (New Delhi: Tibet House, 1974, 1-9) and in the *Bstan ‘gyur* (Gser gyi lag bris ma, Vol. 216, 1033-39; Snar thang edition, Vol. 216, 792-7; Toh. 5871); in the two editions of Jamgön Kongtrül’s *Treasury of Instruction*, in the section of Chöd *gzhung rtsa* (Vol. 14, 2-7); and in Dharmasenggé’s *Zhijé and Chöd History* (1974, 411-597). In the latter text, this quote is attributed to Machik Labdron. The only other difference among these three texts is that the *Zhijé and Chöd History* reads “*sgom pa’i ‘gyu byed*” where Āryadeva reads “*sgom pa’i du byed*.” The translation of this text is said to have been orally transmitted by Padampa Sangyé in Dingri and edited by his student, Zha ma Lo tsā ba (also Zhwa ma Lo tsā ba). On Zha ma Lo tsā ba, see Edou 1996, 22; 29; 197 n. 48; and Davidson 2002, 203-224 (note that Davidson claims that the *Tshigs bcad chen mo* is not among Zha ma Lo tsā ba’s translations in the *Bstan ‘gyur*, which is clearly wrong).

<sup>401</sup> Cited in Orofino 2000, 402.

<sup>402</sup> The *Deb ther sngon po* quotes: “*phra rgyas spangs pa ma yin dang / yul ni nye bar gnas pa dang / tshul bzhin ma yin yid byed las / nyon mongs skye ste*” (1140-1141).

<sup>403</sup> *gcod [gcod] par bya ba ni nyon mongs yin la / nyon mongs de dag phra rgyal dang yul dang tshul bzhin ma yin pa’i yid la byed pa las skye bas na / rnal ‘byor pas yul de nyer bcug nas bag chags blang ste / tshul bzhin ma yin pa’i yid la byed pa sngon du ‘gro ba’i nyon mongs rnams yul gyi thog de nyid du gcod par byed pas gcod yul zhes bya’o*” (2003, 1141).

dual Sūtra and Tantra practice. Briefly, cutting through the root of mind should be understood on both conventional and ultimate levels. On an outer, conventional level, what is to be cut is depicted as the body: basically, one's self-grasping desire for identity and permanence manifests as an attachment to physical form. On an inner, more profound level, what is to be cut is the mental functioning that discriminates subject and object, and generates a mistaken sense of identity, independence, and permanence, thus obscuring the ultimate nature of actuality as emptiness.

Like most mainstream Buddhist teachings from the time of the Buddha, Chöd addresses the different needs and abilities of its audience of practitioners: the teachings not only explicitly identify the different needs and resources of practitioners, they provide multivalent instruction on levels including those of “inner” and “outer” discourse.<sup>404</sup> In what is considered the “outer” form of Chöd, physical embodiment represents the body-mind modality, and practitioners are taught to cut through the attachment to body in order to cut through attachment to ego. As in other traditions, the body-mind modality is a necessary condition for liberation. Chöd, however, entails a more profound transvaluation of the body than do other traditions. As I explained in chapter four, the physical body is not simply used as a meditative support or as a condition to be transcended, but through mentally visualizing one's body transformed into pleasing offerings for a variety of sentient beings, the practitioner's understanding of his mental and physical interrelationship and interdependency with conventional and ultimate reality is transformed. In “inner” Chöd teachings that are intended for advanced practitioners, more attention is paid to the fact that four of the five body-mind aggregates are mental. At this deeper level, Chöd praxis explicitly addresses the mind as the source of our perpetual self-grasping and thus the root of

---

<sup>404</sup> Some Chöd texts also include the level of “secret,” or even “suchness,” discourse, but this is not germane to the present discussion.



what is to be severed.

## CHÖD AND UNIVERSAL BASE CONSCIOUSNESS

In order to understand the processes of “cutting through mind,” Chöd praxis can be schematized using the Mahāyāna Buddhist concepts of “Universal Base Consciousness” (*kun gzhi rnam par shes pa; ālaya-vijñāna*) and “Universal Base” (*kun gzhi; ālaya*). The “Universal Base Consciousness” can be understood as the discriminating consciousness of the body-mind modality, which is simultaneously constructed and defiled through conventional ego grasping and dualistic conceptualization processes. The term “Universal Base” signifies the realized potential of non-discriminating primordial consciousness free of defilements. While the terms “Universal Base Consciousness” and “Universal Base” are not used in all Buddhist texts,<sup>405</sup> they represent a fundamental Buddhist opposition between mundane discriminating consciousness and supramundane nondualistic matrix. A goal of Buddhist praxis is to sublimate this duality.

The Pali *Aṅguttara Nikāya*<sup>406</sup> posits mind as originally pure and luminous, but defiled by ignorance and its consequent emotional reactions and habitual predispositions. This canonical description is a precursor for Mahāyāna Buddhist discussions of transformation of the defiled consciousness, such as in Asaṅga’s *Yogācārabhūmi*. The *Yogācārabhūmi* describes liberation of the defiled Universal Base Consciousness through a process called “transforming the basis” (*āśraya-parāvṛtti*). This transformation of the basis—the realization of a supramundane consciousness—is achieved through the “cultivation of wisdom (*jñāna*) which takes true reality

---

<sup>405</sup> These terms signify an eightfold consciousness paradigm, as articulated by the Yogācāra tradition and employed by some other Buddhist traditions, including the Vajrayāna traditions.

<sup>406</sup> “Recall the idea of original purity found in early Buddhism. The Buddha proclaimed that ‘this mind (*citta*), O monk, is luminous (*pabhassaram*), but is defiled by adventitious defilements (*āgantuka*)” (AN.1.10), qualities preserved in Yogācāra sources which speak of ‘a *citta* that is pure and luminous in its original nature (*prakṛti-prabhāsvara-citta*)’ but whose faults are ‘adventitious,’ extraneous, added on (MSA XIII, 19; MAVBh.I.22.c-d)” (Germano and Waldron 2006, 49)

(*tathatā*) as its object.”<sup>407</sup> There are many manifestations of this practice in Buddhism, but they have in common the apprehension of reality as conditioned and impermanent.

Although the Universal Base Consciousness functions as a principle of karmic continuity, it should itself be understood as conditioned and impermanent, without an independent existence.<sup>408</sup> The Universal Base Consciousness is conditioned because it is compounded through the causes and conditions of karmic actions (*las*; *karma*). It is impermanent because, due to its conditioned nature, it is continually subject to change. The term Universal Base Consciousness first came into use between the third and fifth centuries in the Yogācāra tradition and was elaborated by thinkers such as Asaṅga and Vasubandhu as a heuristic category to provide a locus for the operations of karma and rebirth.

As William Waldron (2003) and Paul Griffiths (1999) have pointed out, the Mahāyāna theorizing of the Universal Base Consciousness (or, as they write, “all-ground consciousness”) as an element of mind—though not equated with mind—provides a means for understanding the functioning of karma. Within the Universal Base Consciousness, the aggregates (*phung po*) are proliferated and karmic being is perpetuated. Griffiths calls Universal Base Consciousness an “explanatory category” which provides a locus and principle of continuity for the logical functioning of karma and rebirth.<sup>409</sup> The causes, conditions and consequences of one’s positive and negative actions dependently co-arise with the four mental *phung po*. In combination, the *phung po* comprise not only the discursive mind and consciousness, but also the material form of the karmic being as ethical agent. The discursive mind is susceptible to mental habits and

---

<sup>407</sup> YB 5.b [C.1], cited in Germano and Waldron 2006, 48.

<sup>408</sup> It is a Buddhist axiom (one of the “Four Seals of the Buddhist Dharma,” or “*lta ba bka' rtags kyi phyag rgya bzhi*”) that all conditioned things are impermanent (‘*du byas thams cad mi rtag pa yin*).

<sup>409</sup> Griffiths 1999, 98.

emotional reactions which, when one lacks awareness, proliferate and thus perpetuate the *phung po*. In turn, the *phung po* accrue the karmic traces deposited in the Universal Base Consciousness. Milarepa, a contemporary of Machik Labdrön, explains this dynamic in a song about his own practice. In preparing to offer his body to sentient beings, Milarepa describes the accumulation of karmic traces as *phung po*: “we have all taken myriads of bodily forms in our past incarnations. . . . Nevertheless, we have seldom utilized these bodies for a worthwhile purpose. Instead, we have wasted them by doing meaningless things [over and over again], thus accumulating more and more Skandhas and pains.”<sup>410</sup> Milarepa intimates an equation between the proliferation of skandhas and the perpetuation of saṃsāra in a practice that has marked affinities with Chöd. Milarepa experiences a situation which provokes fear of his own impermanence and the corollary attitude of self-grasping. He mediates this experience by analyzing the composition of his being and offering his *phung po* for the sake of all sentient beings.

The Universal Base Consciousness is produced by the symbiotic relationship between one’s accumulating karmic traces and discriminating cognitive activities such as perception and conception. This consciousness generally functions below the level of awareness, susceptible to mental habits and proliferating emotional reactions that perpetuate saṃsāra.<sup>411</sup> Dualistic cognitive processes produce the experience of cyclic existence, and Universal Base Consciousness provides a locus for the functioning of these processes. The Universal Base

---

<sup>410</sup> Gtsan smyon He ru ka, ed., 1994; Chang, trans. 1977. Milarepa’s song is primarily concerned with *gdon*, or “negative influences,” which are similar to but distinguished from *Düid*. Van Tuyl (1979) discusses Milarepa’s *mgur* on the “attack” by the Goddess Tseringma and her cohort, relying upon a Chöd commentary written by ‘Ba ra ba (1310-1391) and focusing on the eighteen types of *gdon*.

<sup>411</sup> As Waldron, contextualizing *ālayavijñāna* in the *Abhidharma*, explains: “karmic action creates results which are experienced as feelings, which evoke the active counterparts (*kleśa*) of the afflictions underlying them, which then lead to more karmically productive activities, which produce more results, and so on, ensuring the perpetuation of cyclic existence” (2003, 69).

Consciousness contains and undergirds the causes and effects of karmic activity and emotional afflictions, resulting in the continuity of identity through successive rebirths. According to Buddhist traditions that have inherited this Yogācāra paradigm, liberation from this suffering is only possible through a transformation of this defiled consciousness into a perfected and non-discriminating awareness.

In Sūtra presentations of Chöd, the Universal Base Consciousness is a cognitive ground for conceptual and perceptual processes. Especially in certain Vijñānavāda interpretations, the Universal Base Consciousness seems to become an absolute entity in itself. In contrast, Tantra Chöd interprets the Universal Base Consciousness as composed of the subtle mental capacity (*sems*) and subtle energy wind (*rlung*), which are ultimately impermanent and non-abiding. In a Tantra context, the Universal Base Consciousness denotes a potentiality that can be overlaid with traces of experience and experiential structures. In conjunction with appropriate conditions, this potentiality founds future experiences. Even given these differences, both Sūtra and Tantra Chöd retain a pragmatic understanding of the Universal Base as an indeterminate ground of the causes, conditions and consequences of the law of karma. The trope of the Universal Base Consciousness provides for a theorization of the ethical effects of the law of karma and of the beings that undergo cyclic existence.

According to Buddhist philosophy, the realization of the impermanence of one's physical form, along with the desire for a non-changing permanent physical form, perpetuates one's karmic attachment to saṃsāra. As Waldron, contextualizing *ālayavijñāna* in the *Abhidharma*, explains: "karmic action creates results which are experienced as feelings, which evoke the active counterparts (*kleśa*) of the afflictions underlying them, which then lead to more karmically productive activities, which produce more results, and so on, ensuring the perpetuation of cyclic

existence” (2003, 69). That is, one’s habit of self-grasping, although unsuccessful in yielding a permanent self, is successful at proliferating the body-mind modality which will keep one karmically attached to cyclic existence. Thus, in order to be liberated from saṃsāra, Chöd provides techniques for cutting through the proliferation of the body-mind modality and cultivating an awareness of the uncontaminated Universal Base. By cutting through the body-mind modality, one is actually severing one’s flawed identification with fabricated mental consciousness. Or, as Āryadeva claims in the Chöd root text, “to cut through the mind itself” is to sever all mental afflictions which tie one to existential suffering.

### OPENING THE GATE OF SPACE

Such theoretical understandings of the onto-epistemology of Universal Base and Universal Base Consciousness help us to understand the Chöd practice of “Opening the Gate of Space” (*nam mkha’ sgo ‘byed*). This practice both recalls and recontextualizes traditional previous Buddhist teachings, and it provides an innovative interpretation of similar Tantric practices, such as the transference of consciousness techniques of *’pho ba*. According to historical and biographical sources, Machik received the teaching of Opening from Padampa Sangyé’s student, Kyotön Sonam Lama. Apparently, the format for this initiation was recorded in Padampa Sangyé’s *’Brul tsho drug pa*; however, no copy of this text has been located. Versions of the initiation are recorded in Panchen Lozang Chökyi Gyaltzen’s (Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan) *Gcod dbang nam mkha sgo byed*,<sup>412</sup> Thu’ukwan blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma’s *Gcod dbang nam mkha’ sgo byed kyi dbang chos kyi sgo ‘byed pa’i lde mig*,<sup>413</sup> and Taranatha’s

---

<sup>412</sup> Lozang Chökyi Gyaltzen (1570-1662) was a Gelukpa Panchen Lama and a close friend of the fifth Dalai Lama.

<sup>413</sup> 1737-1802, a prominent Gelukpa and abbot of Dgon lung byams pa gling.

*Gcod yul gyi dbang nam mkha sgo 'byed du grags pa.*<sup>414</sup>

One of the more elaborate discussions of the onto-epistemological framework of Universal Base and Universal Base Consciousness is found in the *Ma gcig gsang spyod* recovered treasure (*gter ma*) tradition of the Bhutanese philosopher-adept Thang stong rgyal po (ca. 1361-1485). Thang stong rgyal po is revered for activities as diverse as his bridge engineering skills, medical knowledge, and expertise in performing arts, as well as for being a great discoverer of hidden Buddhist teachings, or “Tertön” (*gter ston*). According to the *Gsang spyod snyan brgyud* (SPNG) collection associated with the school of Thang stong rgyal po, Thang stong rgyal po received teachings from Machik in the form of Vajravārāhī. In the *Dge sdig 'khrul spong rgyu 'bras gsal ba'i don ston*,<sup>415</sup> Thang stong rgyal po discusses the connection between the Universal Base (*kun gzhi*) and karmic action (*las*), including positive and negative actions in the context of Chöd.<sup>416</sup> According to this exposition, it is within one’s own mental capacities to know mind alone [*sems*] as the Universal Base of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.<sup>417</sup> It is also within one’s own mental capacities to realize the non-duality of subject and object.

To such philosophical theories of consciousness, Tantric Buddhist teachings contribute methods aimed at the transformation of consciousness to its undefiled and ultimately luminous, aware and empty state. I will discuss some of these methods as they are elaborated in the Chöd

---

<sup>414</sup> Taranatha (1575-1634). In Jamgön Kongtrül, *Treasury of Knowledge*, Vol. IX: 803-812.

<sup>415</sup> Thang stong rgyal po n.d., 337-358.

<sup>416</sup> “*des na dge sdig kun gyi byed po /'khor 'das kun gyi gzhi ma sems gcig pu yin par ngo shes pa sad phyin cir snang rang sems su shes / gzung 'dzin gnyis med rang snang sems su ngo 'phrod pa yin*” (n.d., 347-348).

<sup>417</sup> This echoes Klong chen pa’s fourfold classification of “*kun gzhi rnam bshad*” in his *Theg pa'i mchog rin po che'i mdzod*: “It may be viewed under four aspects: as the all-ground of the initial ground of Samsāra; as the all-ground providing the link with either Sasāra or Nirvāṇa; as the all-ground of our physical existence; and as the all-ground of experientially initiated potentialities of experience” (Guenther 1963, 89 n. 13). Cf. Mipham Rinpoche’s *kun gzhi'i rnam par shes pa bzhi*: 1) *dag pa'i kun gzhi*; 2) *ma dag pa'i kun gzhi*; 3) *bag chag sna tshogs pa'i kun gzhi*; 4) *ye don gyi kun gzhi* (equivalent to *ye shes*). I thank Khenpo Pasang for bringing the latter to my attention.

tradition, using texts from *The Great Explanation* attributed to Machik Labdrön and from the *SPNG* collection. The school of thought associated with Thang stong rgyal-po's *SPNG* cycle of teachings emphasizes the Chöd practice of Opening the Gate of Space. These texts present a philosophy of mind and consciousness in relation to practices of ethical activity and liberation from suffering. The *SPNG* Chöd tradition systematically articulates the relationship between the supramundane and mundane consciousness, or Universal Base and Universal Base Consciousness, in the context of practice.

Various Buddhist teachers who have transmitted Chöd teachings identify the practice of Opening the Gate of Space as the most significant element of the Chöd system—possibly more important even than offerings of the body—including Āryadeva the Brahmin (the author of the “root text” of Chöd), Thang stong rgyal pa, Tsong kha pa (1357-1419, who cites Āryadeva), Jamgön Kongtrül and, more recently, the Geluk teacher Zong Rinpoche (1905-1984)<sup>418</sup> and the Karma Kagyü teacher Kalu Rinpoche (1905-1989). For example, Jamgön Kongtrül blo gros mtha' yas (1813-1899), the scholar responsible for collecting many rare texts from Tibetan traditions such as Chöd, emphasizes the importance of the Opening the Gate of Space practice, which he describes as a method enabling one to focus on intrinsic awareness (*rig pa*) and to settle mental phenomena (1982, 3:425). Kongtrül develops his own teaching on offering the body, which he explicitly connects with the Chöd lineage of Machik. In this teaching, Kongtrül refers to the Opening as “the king of all transference; the meaning of the wisdom mind of the Mother [i.e. Machik qua the Mother Prajñāpāramitā]; the actual Holy Dharma; the final meaning of the doctrine of cutting off the object—the demons.”<sup>419</sup> For Kongtrül, not only is the

---

<sup>418</sup> See Savvas 1990, 105.

<sup>419</sup> From the *Lus kyis mchod sbyin gyi zin bris mdor bsdus kun dga'i skyed tshal* (1994, 19-20); translated by Lama Lodo Rinpoche (1994, 22). The full passage in Tibetan reads, “*de'ang gdod nas smra bsam brjod bral yum gyi*

practice of Opening as outlined according to Chöd the epitome of all transference practices, it encapsulates the perfection of wisdom, the Buddhist Dharma, and the quintessential meaning of Chöd which severs the Negative Forces. More recently, Kalu Rinpoche has stated that Opening “is said to be one hundred times superior to ordinary powa [*‘pho ba*]” (1995, 156).

As Kalu Rinpoche suggests, precursors for the Chöd practice of Opening the Gate of Space might be located in the *‘pho ba* techniques of separating consciousness from the body taught by Niguma and Narōpa.<sup>420</sup> A key difference between Chöd Opening the Gate of Space and *‘pho ba* is that the former is an integral part of a more elaborate practice, while the latter is considered its own practice. Conventionally, the practice of *‘pho ba* is repeated a number of times in preparation for death, but then is not practiced again until the time of death. On the other hand, Opening is a method for reorienting consciousness to uncontaminated emptiness (*stong pa nyid*; *śūnyatā*); that is, returning to a state of intrinsic awareness released from processes of dualistic thinking. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, emptiness is defined as the lack of inherent existence, and thus permanence, of “self” and “other.” While “self” and “other” appear to be independent, they are concepts arising from mental operations of discrimination and categorization of phenomena that are impermanent and lacking any independent essence. Through the practice of Opening the Gate of Space, one is able to transform one’s discriminating consciousness to an “extra-discriminating” or immediate mode of awareness. One’s conventionally-functioning consciousness, constructed through discriminating “self” and “other” from birth (or even from previous births), is thereby transformed and reunited with its

---

*klong las gzhan du ma ‘das mi ‘da’ ‘da’ bar mi ‘gyur bar thag chod bdag gis stong gsal rigs pa’i snying po can gyi dgongs pa ‘pho ‘gyur med pa la dus rtag tu mnyam par bzhas pa ni ‘pho ba kun gyi rgyal po nam mkha’ sgo ‘byed chen mo yum gyi dgongs don dnges gzhi dam chos bdud kyi gcod yul gyi bstan don mthar thug pa ste thun min gyi theg pa dang mthun pa’i mnyam bzhas chos kyi dbyings su la zla ba’o.”*

<sup>420</sup> In the sixth chapter of the *Rnam bshad chen mo* (Lab sgron 1974), there is a practice called “*las sbyor ‘pho ba*” which is more closely akin to the *‘pho ba* of Niguma and Narōpa in that it is directly related to preparing for the experience of death.



primordially empty state.

This process is heuristically schematized in Table One:

**Table One**

<b>MUNDANE, DUALISTIC CONSCIOUSNESS</b>	<b>SUPRAMUNDANE, NON-DUALISTIC CONSCIOUSNESS-AS-EMPTINESS</b>
<p><b>DISCRIMINATING CONSCIOUSNESS</b> (<i>rnam par shes pa; vijñāna</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• due to ignorance (<i>ma rig pa; avidyā</i>), sentient beings are unable to be aware of Intrinsic Knowledge as their ultimate nature</li> <li>• parallel to dualistic mind (<i>sems; citta</i>)</li> </ul>	<p><b>INTRINSIC KNOWLEDGE</b> (<i>rig pa; vidyā</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the consciousness of sentient beings that realizes the mind as luminous and empty</li> <li>• parallel to a buddha’s body of phenomena which are empty of inherent nature (<i>chos kyi sku; dharmakāya</i>)</li> </ul>
<p><b>UNIVERSAL BASE CONSCIOUSNESS</b> (<i>kun gzhi rnam shes; ālayavijñāna</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• heuristic category to locate karmic formations (<i>‘du byed; saṃskāra</i>) based on the ignorance of discriminating activities</li> <li>• the “eighth consciousness” in the “eight-fold group” which includes the five sense consciousnesses, mental consciousness, and the mental consciousness of emotional afflictions</li> </ul>	<p><b>UNIVERSAL BASE</b> (<i>kun gzhi; ālaya</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• non-dualistic ground of consciousness undefiled by karmic formations</li> <li>• parallel to the non-discriminated, and thus empty, realm of phenomena (<i>chos kyi dbyings; dharmadhātu</i>)</li> </ul>

These pairs are not identical with each other, but they share sufficient family resemblances and are often mapped onto each other. In each case, they represent aspects of consciousness that arise from the fundamental Buddhist dialectical relationship of *nirvāna* (*mya ngan las ‘das pa*) and *samsāra* (*‘khor ba*). In Chöd, as in many Mahāyāna Buddhist contexts, non-duality is sought, and ideally achieved, through a negotiation of dualities. Conventionally, one understands consciousness as divided into a functional contaminated consciousness and an ideal uncontaminated and non-differentiating consciousness. This duality parallels the conceptualization of human experience as conventionally a realm of *saṃsāra*, but potentially and

ideally a realm of nirvāṇa. Ultimately, given the emptiness of inherent existence, these two modalities of consciousness—and of human experience—are non-dual. The Chöd praxis of Opening is taught as one possible path for Mahāyāna Buddhists to have experiential realization not only of the non-duality of body and mind, but also of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, and thus to achieve liberation from suffering. Chöd texts frequently recommend that one practice the technique of Opening daily.<sup>421</sup> The many variants of Opening praxis can be categorized as those “Without a Support” and those “With a Support,” depending on how the consciousness is visualized.<sup>422</sup> In both types of practice, the practitioner imagines that her mundane consciousness is transformed into the full intrinsic undefiled potential of sentient beings, or Intrinsic Knowledge (*rig pa*). In Opening Without a Support, this potential undefiled consciousness is conceived as a state without form or qualities. Conversely, in Opening With a Support, this potential undefiled consciousness is visualized as a substantial form, for example, that of a ḍakinī. These two types of praxis are considered complementary, and can be done in succession.

In the Opening With a Support, one transforms the discriminating consciousness into an ideal form as the enlightened consciousness of a perfected being, such as Machik Labdrön as wisdom ḍakinī, or a yoginī, such as Vajrayoginī, Vajravārāhī or Khros ma nag mo. When one has visualized one’s Intrinsic Knowledge as represented by a realized being, the process of transformation is completed by the compassionate offering of the body-mind to sentient beings. As a realized being, the practitioner visualizes cutting up and offering her body-mind modality to other beings. This offering is a manifestation and representation of severing one’s self-

---

<sup>421</sup> For example, see chapter seven of the *Rnam bshad chen mo* (Lab sgron 1974).

<sup>422</sup> See *Rnam bshad chen mo* (Lab sgron 1974), chapter five. See also the *Zab lam gcod kyi khrid yig ma ti bha dra kirti sbyar ba* by Tsong kha pa, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

attachment to ego. One's visualized consciousness as Intrinsic Knowledge thus cuts through the discriminating consciousness that perpetuates suffering and keeps one attached to saṃsāra.

The preliminary technique of Opening the Gate of Space in Chöd praxis cuts through the practitioner's attachment to the discriminating ego and prepares her for the visualization of the ultimate ethical and liberative behaviour: the offering of her body-mind to all sentient beings. By engaging in this process of cutting through the mental attachment to a reified concept of self, the Chöd practitioner is conditioned for the visualization of offering her body-mind: the processes of cutting through mind and body are symbiotic. Cutting through the mind enables the practitioner to cut through dualistic conceptualization and prepares her for the effective offering of the body. Chöd inherits the traditional Buddhist paradigm of the body-mind as a composite of psychophysical constituents, upon which a notion of a permanent self is imputed. As I discussed in the previous chapter, by visualizing the dismemberment, transformation and offering of this mind-body, the practitioner realizes the ultimate emptiness of the psychophysical components that constitute the self.

The Chöd technique of Opening is intended as a method for transforming one's mundane karmically-defiled consciousness, the Universal Base Consciousness, into the ideal of the supramundane Universal Base in its aspect as Intrinsic Knowledge (*rig pa; vidyā*). This equation of Universal Base Consciousness and Intrinsic Knowledge is made clear in *The Great Explanation*: “the Universal Base, the essence of spirit of enlightenment, is the god of reflexive intrinsic knowledge.”<sup>423</sup> In this process, consciousness is freed from dualistic appearances by a method in which consciousness as subject pervades emptiness as object, resulting in an experience of the non-existence of subject and object. By habituating oneself to this experience,

---

<sup>423</sup> “*kun gzhi byang chub kyi sems kyi ngo bo rang rig pa'i lha yin la*” (Lab sgron 1974, 139).

one’s consciousness eventually becomes regulated by non-discriminating non-duality.<sup>424</sup>

When texts in the Chöd tradition want to emphasize the ethical operations of karma, they generally use the language of Universal Base Consciousness and Universal Base. In order to signal the transformation of ethical actions and karmic traces, Chöd texts render the Universal Base as *Dharmadhātu*. For example, according to the *Rnam bshad*, the non-discriminating nature of Intrinsic Knowledge allows for “the view of the inherent purity in *Dharmadhātu* untainted even by the stains of ripened [karmic consequences],”<sup>425</sup> without elaborations due to misknowledge,<sup>426</sup> karmic action, or emotional afflictions (*nyon mongs*; *kleśa*). The practice of Opening Without a Support not only instructs practitioners in the conceptualization of Intrinsic Knowledge, but it also provides a method for uniting one’s Intrinsic Knowledge (*rig pa*) with the realm of emptiness, that is, transforming and homogenizing it with the *Dharmadhātu* (see Table Two).

**Table Two**

universal base consciousness	→	intrinsic knowledge	→	<i>Dharmadhātu</i>
		{purify/transform}		{identify/homogenize}

Tsong kha pa (1986b), citing *The Great Poem* by Āryadeva the Brahmin, maintains that the transformation of mind characterized as Intrinsic Knowledge into the *Dharmadhātu* is the optimum method for freeing oneself from saṃsāra. “Intrinsic Knowledge” (*rig pa*) is the undefiled non-discriminating consciousness of a sentient being, which has the potential to

<sup>424</sup> Guenther talks about *kun gzhi* as “possibility”: “When, by the everactive mind, mind as possibility (*kun gzhi*) is made the object of inspection, there is no epistemic reference, since neither subject or object can be the referent” (1969, 32).

<sup>425</sup> “*rnam par smin pa’i dri mas kyang gos pa med pa’i chos nyid kyi dbyings su rang bzhin rnam par dag pa’i lta ba*” (Lab sgron 1974, 140).

<sup>426</sup> *ma rig pa*; *avidyā*.

become conscious of and ultimately non-differentiated from *Dharmadhātu*, or the universal expanse of phenomena. In this context, Intrinsic Knowledge signifies the Universal Base Consciousness of a sentient being purified from its discriminating activities, while *Dharmadhātu* and the Universal Base are signifiers for the ideal supramundane.

When Intrinsic Knowledge and *Dharmadhātu* are merged, all discriminations of subject and object and signs of existence are dissolved. Mind is freed from dualistic appearances through methods in which the consciousness as subject pervades emptiness as object, and thus non-duality is realized. By habituating oneself in this practice, one abides in the realization of *Dharmadhātu*. One's individual consciousness is realized as Intrinsic Knowledge non-differentiated from the *Dharmadhātu*. The praxis of Opening without a support has the aim of locating the practitioner in an attitude of emptiness, emphasizing the ultimate nature of actuality as lacking any abiding inherent identity. Having realized the appropriate knowledge of ultimate emptiness, the practitioner is prepared to understand the physical form of consciousness used in Opening With a Support as ultimately empty in nature. Even though the consciousness takes a physical form in visualization, the practitioner understands the inherent formlessness and emptiness of Intrinsic Knowledge and *Dharmadhātu*.

The technique of Opening enables the practitioner to practice and habituate herself to the actuality of consciousness uncontaminated by discriminative thinking. The Opening praxis facilitates the assimilation of the defiled consciousness in the primordially present and undefiled consciousness. Opening With or Without a Support ideally enables an experience of the homogenization of defiled and undefiled consciousness. The practice of becoming aware of dualistic appearances as a product of the discriminating consciousness enables the practitioner to cut through mind: to appreciate the fundamentally non-dualistic ground that is considered to be

“co-emergent” with such discriminating consciousness.

## INTERNAL YOGA

Although Chöd is based on traditional ideas of body and mind in Buddhism, it also develops ideas of “internal yoga” which are latent in Buddhist teachings from the Pali teachings of Buddhaghosa and Upatissa to the *yogatantras* of the eighth and ninth centuries. In his discussion of the influence of Brāhmanical yoga techniques on Buddhist meditation methodologies, Winston L. King (1980, 88) differentiates the two approaches by emphasizing the Brāhmanical interest in “achieving freedom and power *in* and *over* the world,” which he contrasts with the Buddhist interest in “achieving freedom *from* the world and *all* its values.”<sup>427</sup> King’s emphasis on the “internal yoga” techniques represented in Pali texts including the *Visuddhimagga* and *Vimuttimagga* provides a thread to follow for the study of practices that emphasize experiential body-mind techniques for cultivating enlightenment (1980, 41).

Jacob Dalton’s essay (2004) on internal yoga practices in Buddhist Tantra teachings during the eighth and ninth centuries provides a useful companion to King’s work. Dalton (2004, 2) observes that the changes in ritual brought about by developments in Tantra during the eighth and ninth centuries—most notably an internalization of practice and performance—were apparent to contemporaneous Buddhist authors who explicitly described them as “internal yogas,” thus underlining their distinction from “external” ritual practices. Dalton posits that the earliest Yoga Tantras dating from the eighth century introduced the methodology of locating ritual praxis in/on the practitioner’s body: “These were the first ritual systems to thrust the Buddhist practitioner onto center-stage. Where previously the practitioner worshipped an

---

<sup>427</sup> Of course, this is a very general statement that does not consider the uses of Buddhist materials to develop and sustain such worldly interests as monarchies and so forth. Of the numerous works written about such topics, see for example Davidson 2004, Abé 1999, Schopen 1997, and Spiro 1982 (1970).

external shrine, in the Yoga tantras, he envisioned himself as the buddha and directed prayers and oblations to himself” (2004, 3). It should be emphasized here that the practitioner of internal yoga, within the ritual sphere, self-reflexively identifies as an idealized enlightened being.

Dalton stresses that “[t]his was a physical interiorization, not a psychologization nor a spiritualization in the sense intended by the western narratives of the shift from the *Vedas* to the *Upaniṣads*” (2004, 26). Dalton does not deny that Tantric practice has psychological components; however, he wants to emphasize the shift of ritual space from an external physical shrine to the interior of the practitioner’s body. By the end of the 9th century, “a new ritual discourse of the bodily interior was in place. The tantric subject had become the site for the entire ritual performance; the body’s interior provided the devotee, the altar, the oblations, and the buddha to be worshipped” (2004, 2).

Although later Chöd teachings elaborate details on certain practices, such as pilgrimage to auspicious practice sites, modes of dancing, specific ways to play the *damaru* or *rkang gling*, and so forth, the formative Chöd texts that I am considering in this study might be understood as what King and Dalton refer to as treatises on “internal yoga.” As I have explained in chapter four, Chöd praxis provides rituals (repeated with the hope of achieving the same goal each time or of cumulative experience based on previously achieved experience) and practices (mental and/or physical activities which are usually done more than once, but are not meant to be identical in performance or in outcome) to complement the *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings. Chöd reflects the interest in and development of internal yoga in Buddhist praxis as identified by King and Dalton. Similar to the shifts from external to internal sites of practice as discussed by Dalton, in Chöd, there is a shift from the external practice of physical offerings to an internal practice of offerings of the body-mind.

In particular, the Chöd practice of cutting through the mental aggregates is embedded in implicit and explicit Buddhist discussions of internal yoga. Chöd elaborates such ideas of internal yoga into new techniques including the *Nam mkha' sgo byed* practice of Opening the Gate of Space and the analysis of “Negative Forces” or Düd. The understanding of Düd in Chöd is dialectical: the Düd represent a catalogue of internal negative forces that are mistakenly conceptualized and thus externalized; Chöd provides a strategy for identifying this cognitive error and for the conceptual “re-internalization” and dissolving of these erroneous percepts.

## DÜD

Following on my evaluation of Chöd’s revision of the practice of *dehādāna*, the internalization of praxis (internal yoga) helps us to understand the innovative aspects of Chöd’s confrontation with the Düd. Chöd inherits an extensive tradition of conceptualizing negative forces in Indic and Buddhist discourses. The Tibetan word “*bdud*” is a translation of the Sanskrit word “*māra*.” The root for the term “*māra*” is “*mṛ*,” “to die.” Apte suggests the etymology of “*mṛ-dhañ*” (1998, 1263), with the meaning of “killing,” as well as of “obstruction” or “hindrance.” In Buddhist texts, “*māra*” refers to an abstraction designating the cause of “obstruction,” “impermanence,” or “death.” In addition, it designates both a particular cosmological deva—“Māra”—and a class of devas—“*māra*.”<sup>428</sup> In Chöd, Māra is not a “demon” per se, but a demonized negative force or obstruction: it arises from a person’s own ignorance obstructing her enlightenment and liberation.<sup>429</sup>

A popular story, found in various texts including the *Padhāna Sutta* (*Sutta nipata* 3.2),

---

<sup>428</sup> For a survey of the appearances of Māra in Pāli and Sanskrit literature in both mythical and allegorical aspects, see Dal 1932 [1999], 306 ff.

<sup>429</sup> “All four are called mara (obstacle) because they prevent the attainment of nirvana, the deathless state” (Lopez 1988, 26).



recounts Māra challenging Siddhārtha Gautama when he is on the cusp of attaining enlightenment.<sup>430</sup> Māra, who is also called “Namuci” (“he who doesn’t let go”), “Kanha” or “Kṛṣṇa” (“the dark one”), and “Kamadeva” (“the deity of love and passion”), brings his armies to defeat the Buddha. These armies are manifestations of the eight worldly concerns that are defeated through the Buddha’s wisdom: sensual desire, discontent, hunger and thirst, craving, laziness and torpor, fear, indecision, and pride. This story is visually referenced in the iconography of the Buddha sitting in *padmāsana* (the lotus posture for meditation), with his left hand palm up in his lap and the fingers of his right hand touching the earth, which witnesses his defeat of the temptations of Māra. Such narratives attest to the Buddhist concern with *māra* as the source for obstructions to one’s Dharma practice and spiritual attainment, representing one’s ego-clinging.<sup>431</sup>

Buddhist sources usually refer to one, three, four or five *māra*.<sup>432</sup> The most common Mahāyāna list, from the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra* attributed to Nāgārjuna, includes the following four *māra*: *kleśa-māra*, the manifestation of mental afflictions; *skandha-māra*, the manifestation of the body-mind aggregates; *mṛtyu-māra*, the manifestation of mortality and death; and *devaputra-māra*, the manifestation of Māra as a son of the deities, the one who will lead astray sentient beings who are fighting ignorance and attachment and performing virtuous acts in an effort to overcome the mental afflictions, body-mind aggregates and death.<sup>433</sup> These

---

<sup>430</sup> G. P. Malalasekera (2003) argues that the *Padhāna Sutta* (*Sutta nipata* 3.2) is the source narrative for this story. Another account of Māra challenging Śākyamuni is found in *Jātaka* i.71-76 (Warren 1998, 76-83).

<sup>431</sup> Echoing the enlightenment trajectory of Śākyamuni Buddha and his experience of the distractions and obstructions of Māra, one of the episodes recounted in the first biographical chapter of *The Great Explanation* has Machik offering her body as food to the demons who were interfering with her practice. See Lab sgron 1974, 35-56.

<sup>432</sup> For a discussion of the nonspecific plurality of Māras and the specific grouping of the traditional four Māra in Buddhist literature, see Boyd 1971. The *Śrī-Mahākṣatrantrārāja* (Toh. 387) discusses the traditional four Māra, but it subdivides them by four for a total of sixteen Māra (mentioned in Davidson 2005, 206).

*māra* are destroyed by the practitioner’s perfection of wisdom.<sup>434</sup> Gö Lotsawa cites the passage in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (27.447-49) that discusses the four reasons why a bodhisattva is untouchable by *māras*: because he abides in emptiness, does not abandon sentient beings, behaves in accordance with his speech, and is blessed by the Sugata.<sup>435</sup>

In traditional Buddhist discussions, Dūd or Māra are harmful embodied forces: external demons to be overcome along the path of enlightenment. By contrast, in Chöd the prevailing trope of the Dūd provides a context for an examination of the mind and mental activities. The opening statement of Machik’s *The Great Speech Chapter* declares that “the root of Negative

---

<sup>433</sup> Aside from the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*, other classical Sanskrit commentaries which mention these four Māra include the *Abhidharmakosabhasya* by Vasubandhu (II.10); the *Prasannapada* commentary on Nāgārjuna by Candrakīrti (I.1); the *Uttaratantra* (II.66; Takasaki 333); Prajnakaramati’s commentary to the *Bodhicaryāvatara* (IX.36); and the *Srāvakabhūmi* by Asaṅga (drawn from Lopez 1988, 25; 193-4). According to Lopez, “Tibetan expositions of the four Maras draw heavily on Asanga and appear most commonly in commentaries and monastic textbooks on the fourth chapter of Maitreyanatha’s *Abhisamayalamkara*, specifically at line IV.62a, where “overcoming enemies” (*satraṇanamatikramah*) is listed as the first of the ten aspects of the Buddha’s skillful methods (*upayakausalam*)” (1988, 25). According to Lopez, “Tibetan monastic textbooks describe the Mara of the aggregates as either the contaminated aggregates that arise in dependence on actions or that which is based on the predispositions of ignorance. It is of two varieties, the subtle and the coarse, with the former identified as the mental body that arises in dependence on the predispositions of ignorance and the latter identified as the five appropriated aggregates (*upadanaskandhah*\*). The Mara\* of the afflictions is described as the obstructions that prevent the achievement of liberation. It also has coarse and subtle forms. The subtle form is, for example, the seeds of the afflictive obstructions (*klesavarana*\*). The coarse forms include the six root afflictions and the twenty secondary afflictions” (1988, 25). The way in which the devaputra-māra envelops the other three māra is reminiscent of the way in which the Dūd of pride is interwoven with the other three Dūd in Chöd and impedes the defeat of the other three. Nāropā comments on the significance of Māra in verse 15 of the *Hevajratāntra*, citing the *Mañjuśrī-namā-saṃgīti*. According to Wayman, “Nāro-pā explains that the obscuration of the body is the personal aggregate Māra; the obscuration of speech is the defilement Māra; the obscuration of mind is the death Māra; and the externalization of nescience (*phyi rol tu ma rig pa ‘jug pa*) is the son-of-the-gods Māra” (Wayman 1985, 19; see also Willemen 2004 [1983], 103 and Farrow and Menon 2001 [1992], 243).

<sup>434</sup> “See Lamotte, *Le Trait de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse*, 339-340, which parallels Asaṅga’s discussion of the four *māra* in stating that the *klesamāra*\* is destroyed upon becoming a Bodhisattva, the *skandhamāra*\* is destroyed upon attaining the *dharmakaya*\*, the *mṛtyumāra*\* is destroyed upon attaining the path and the *dharmakaya*\*, and the *devaputramāra*\* of the Heaven of Controlling Others’ Emanations (*paranirmitavasavartin*\*) is destroyed when Bodhisattvas are of a single mind (*ekacitta*), are not attached to any realm, and enter into the unshakeable *samādhis*\* (*acalasaṃmadhi*\*)” (Lopez 1988, 193 n. 28).

<sup>435</sup> ‘Gos lo tswa ba Gzhon nu dpal 2003, 1140; Roerich 1976, 981. This passage is elaborated on in the corresponding section of the commentary, the *Prajñāpāramitā-ratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā*. For an English translation, see Conze 1973, 59; 260-1. In his 1997 article, Akira Yuyama provides a philological analysis of the various recensions of a passage from the *Prajñāpāramitā-ratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā* that is considered a foundational reference for Padampa Sangyé’s Zhijé teachings, and which probably influenced Āryadeva the Brahmin as well.

Forces is one's own mind."<sup>436</sup> This declaration is similar to an unidentified passage quoted by Padmavajra (ca. 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> c.) in his elaboration on Buddhaghosha's commentary on the *Tattvasaṃgraha* entitled the *Tantrārthāvatārvyākhyāna*.<sup>437</sup> In *The Great Poem*,<sup>438</sup> Āryadeva the Brahmin mentions only two types of Dūd, or Negative Forces: clinging to things as “real,” attachment, and aversion are called “Obstructive Negative Forces”; pride and producing manifestations of gods and demons are called “Non-obstructive Negative Forces.”<sup>439</sup>

In Chöd, the Dūd (as “demons”) are ultimately understood as the metaphorical manifestations of mind.<sup>440</sup> This is why the Chöd system is frequently referred to as “*bdud kyi gcod yul*” in historical sources such as *The Blue Annals*, as well as in titles of later *sādhana* practice texts, emphasizing that one externalizes and embodies the mind and its functions as Dūd. Just as the body in “outer” Chöd is to be understood as a metaphorical representation of the *phung po*, so the Dūd in this “inner” Chöd are ultimately understood as metaphorical representations of mental functions that promote self-grasping. Rather than enacting a ritual to confront Dūd as external forces, Chöd reflects the orientation of internal yoga in developing methods for cutting through obstructions of one's own mind.

The four Dūd that Machik discusses in her teachings include three that arise from attachment and one that arises without attachment.<sup>441</sup> These are presented in *The Great Speech*

---

<sup>436</sup> “*bdud kyi rtsa ba rang gi sems*” (*The Great Speech Chapter 7/456*).

<sup>437</sup> “*rang gi sems ni bdud ces gzungs / zhes pa*” (In *Rgyud kyi don la 'jug pa'i grel bshad*, Derge, *Rgyud 'grel*, 'i, 235a-3; TBRC W23703, 469; also cited in Wayman 1997 [1959], 491; 502, n. 160).

<sup>438</sup> As previously noted, this text is often referred to as the root text of Chöd.

<sup>439</sup> “*mngon zhen chags sdang thogs pa'i bdud . . . lha dre'i chos 'phrul snyems byed cing / thogs med bdud ces bya ba*” (*Tshigs su bcad pa*, *Gcod kyi chos skor* edition, 6).

<sup>440</sup> Considering Machik's discussion of the Negative Forces, one might be reminded of a quote from Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677): “nothing is sacred or profane or impure in an absolute sense apart from the mind, but only in relation to the mind” (*Theological-Political Treatise* G:3, 160/S151).

*Chapter:* “The Negative Forces are classified as four: the ‘Negative Forces With Obstruction’ {supported by an external object},<sup>442</sup> the ‘Negative Forces Without Obstruction’ {supported by internal mental conceptualization}, the ‘Joyous Negative Forces’ {supported by clinging to manifest qualities}, and the ‘Negative Forces Producing Pride’ {discursive thought due to dualistic grasping}. Furthermore, [these four are all] present in ‘Negative Forces Producing Pride.’”<sup>443</sup> The first Dūd is one all human beings are confronted with by the nature of the grasping mind: the mind mediates one’s existence in the world, desiring to construct a substantial reality; few are able to eliminate this obscuration of the *thogs bcas kyi bdud*, the Negative Forces with Obstructions. The second Dūd affects those who may have overcome their susceptibility to the first Dūd: although they do not construct a hypostasized reality, they are still not aware of the suffering which arises from subject/object dichotomization; this process is obscured by the *thogs med kyi bdud*, the Dūd of those without attachments. The third Dūd affects those who have overcome, or have become aware of, the dangers of the first two Dūd. Unfortunately, they are still susceptible to the *Dga’ spro yi bdud*, the Dūd of contentment. The final Dūd, considered the most difficult to sever, is that which arises once one has understood the hindrances of the other three Dūd: it is the Dūd of pride, which is able to obscure the reality of emptiness (*śūnyatā*; *stong nyid*) by attributing an ego to a non-existent self. Discussion of the Dūd of pride is not unique to

---

<sup>441</sup> Explanations of the Negative Forces according to Chöd are part of a number of texts attributed to Machik, including *The Great Speech Chapter*, *The Supplementary Chapter*, *The Quintessential Chapter*, and *The Eightfold Supplementary Section*; see the appendices to this study.

<sup>442</sup> I am still investigating the authorship of the embedded commentaries (*mchan*) within this text. It may be the case that they were authored by Jamgön Kongtrül himself: according to Gene Smith, “[i]n some cases Kong sprul adds his own explanation or notes” (2001b, 264).

<sup>443</sup> “*bdud la rnam pa bzhi ru dbye // thogs bcas bdud {phyi’i yul la brten pa} dang thogs med bdud {nang gi blos brtags la brten pa} // dga’ brod bdud {yon tan mngon zhen la brten pa} dang snyems byed bdud {gnyis ‘dzin gyi rnam rtog} // de yang snyems byed Bdud du ‘dug”* (*The Great Speech Chapter* 7/456). The Joyous Negative Forces (*dga’ brod Bdud*) and the Negative Force Producing Pride (*snyems byed Bdud*) might be related to Māra’s sons “Gaiety” (*harṣa*) and “Pride” (*darpa*) as mentioned in the *Buddhacarita* (XIII.3); however, no direct connection is drawn in the Chöd sources I have reviewed.

Chöd: a correlate is found in *Prajñāpāramitā* sources including the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* *Prajñāpāramitā* (XXIV), where attitudes of pride and conceit held by the bodhisattva create a psychic opening for the force of Māra to create distractions from the pursuit of enlightenment. However, in the discourses of Machik, it is emphasized that Māra is not an external force; rather, the Dūd are in fact produced through one's own mental activity in the course of trying to cut through the root of mind and its habitual patterns of thinking. The Dūd are manifest through challenges that a practitioner faces in realizing and maintaining the irreversible conviction of belief in the true nature of reality as non-dual.

In *The Great Speech Chapter*, these four Negative Forces are discussed at length and expanded on in a variety of contexts.<sup>444</sup> The Negative Forces with Obstruction are said to be caused by a person's affirmative and negative discriminations of sense phenomena. Believing these discriminations to be correct and real is what fetters a person in saṃsāra and perpetuates her existence in a world of suffering. In explaining this Dūd, Machik cites the *Prajñāpāramitā* teaching, "as for form, the essence of form is empty."<sup>445</sup> She advocates meditation on emptiness as remedy for this Dūd, although she cautions against making emptiness into something itself, which would result in nihilism. The aim of the practitioner is to become unattached to form and to liberate her sense consciounesses—hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and mental consciousness—by not evaluating their experiences as either positive or negative. Thus, one will be liberated from the Negative Force of grasping things as permanent, which is presented as equivalent to a Negative Force with Obstruction.

---

<sup>444</sup> See my translation of this text attached as an appendix to this study; in particular, this discussion refers to pages 7/456-12/461 of the Tibetan text.

<sup>445</sup> "gzugs ni gzugs kyi ngo bos stong" (*The Great Speech Chapter* 7/456).

Mental consciousness itself is said to be a Negative Force without Obstruction. While the sensory experiences can become Negative Forces with Obstruction, the mental processes that evaluate and grasp them as something permanent and real are Negative Forces without Obstruction. Negative Forces without Obstruction are the differentiations that are made by one's own discriminative thinking. As Machik elaborates, because one's natural mind does not grasp a deity (*lha*) as a deity or a spirit (*'dre*) as a bad spirit, the hopeful and fearful thoughts associated with these entities are Negative Forces that originate in one's own mind: they are fabrications that are said to appear "like waves arising from a still ocean" (8/457). The core of grasping and the source of *Dü*d are negation and affirmation. When these discriminating mental activities are abandoned, one is released from the behavior of grasping and the practitioner can rest in the clear state of the self-arisen mind (*rang byung sems*).

In *The Great Speech Chapter*, the third category of Negative Forces—the Joyous Negative Forces—is subdivided into two: the Common Negative Forces and the Exceptional Negative Forces, both which arise from mental confusion.<sup>446</sup> One type of Common Joyous Negative Force is the arrogant mind that is produced when a person is unaffected by spirits (*'dre*) in severe places. Further types include the Negative Force of Distraction that can arise when one receives powerful blessings resulting in merit and wealth; and the Negative Force of Enjoyment that can result from the pleasure of having profit, fame, family, friends and even enemies. These are all factors that can cause a practitioner to continue grasping onto dualistic appearances. Machik counsels her audience to see all qualities and appearances to be like objects of a dream, engaging their self-nature without clinging, just as a beautiful woman does not have any cause to be arrogant, since her appearance is merely an ornament and believing it to be otherwise is a

---

<sup>446</sup> In many Buddhist teachings there are prohibitions against resting too long in meditative states which merely peaceful or joyful. For examples from Theravada Buddhism, see King 1980.

mistake. The exceptional behavior of not grasping onto such qualities and appearances is not only advocated by Machik, but she also exhorts all intelligent people to maintain this attitude deep in their being.<sup>447</sup>

Two types of Exceptional Joyous Negative Forces are explained: Negative Forces of the Path and Negative Forces of the Result. Machik contextualizes these Negative Forces in an iconoclastic fashion, framing them in terms of traditional characteristics that define a Buddhist scholastic tenet system, namely “view,” “path” (including meditation and behavior), and “result.” As with the Common Joyous Negative Forces, the descriptions of Exceptional Joyous Negative Forces indicate that they are afflictions experienced by practitioners. In elaborating Joyous Negative Forces of Results, Machik criticizes practitioners who desire particular accomplishments. According to her, desires for the attainment of the Three Bodies are the result of the tenet systems (*grub mtha'*) associated with the vehicles of the Hearers (*nyan thos; śrāvaka*), the Self-conquerors (*rang rgyal; pratyekabuddha*), and the others; thus, they are Negative Forces. She argues that such accomplishments are not attained through the support of enlightened ones, nor are they accomplished through objective, goal-oriented behavior. Rather, because one’s own self-nature is always-already enlightened, a Chöd practitioner (*gcod kyi mi*) who is freed from the restrictions of hope and fear, who rests in her own self-nature, who has cut through the ropes of grasping onto objects, does not need to strive for anything else.

According to this section of *The Great Speech Chapter*, the Negative Forces of the Path are identified with joy arising from accomplishments associated with the Buddhist path, including having a view freed from elaborations, the experience of equanimous meditation, non-conceptual mental attitudes, and practicing the path of experience. These are Negative Forces

---

<sup>447</sup> “*dzin med rang lugs spyod mchog ‘di // blo ldan rnams kyi thugs la sbos*” (*The Great Speech Chapter* 9/458)

because if a practitioner feels joy from such experiences, she has turned the experience into an object and is no longer “travelling the Path.” At this point in her discussion, Machik makes the bold claim that the exceptionality of Chöd resides in the non-view of not committing to a viewpoint, allowing any phenomena to arise without the obstruction of definitive mental consciousness and in correspondence with the unlimited expanse.<sup>448</sup> With such a statement, she indicates that Chöd is not to be identified as just another doctrinal system. It is worth noting that she does not identify Chöd with a Mahāmudrā or Dzokchen standpoint here, although the experiential language (*myon tshig*) she uses in this section—for example, her imperative to “rest in still, clear, luminous experience”—has certain affinities with such systems. In contrast, through her explicit explanation of these terms, she appropriates this language to her own Chöd system.<sup>449</sup> Moreover, she returns to the signature Chöd trope of “cutting” or “severing” (*gcod*): “the rational mind (*blo*; *buddhi*) must be summonsed by cutting the apparent object.”<sup>450</sup> This is another example of how Machik seeks to locate her teachings within a Buddhist intellectual heritage and cultural landscape, while she simultaneously reinforces her revisionary standpoint. Machik and the members of her audience are products of their environment and thus share signs and signifiers for communication; however, Machik takes care to establish that her charismatic teachings are distinguished from others.

---

<sup>448</sup> “*ma ‘gags cir yang ‘char ba la // lta ba’i bsam pa ma ‘cha’ bar // mnyam shar phyogs med dbyings su bsgyur // mi lta ba ni gcod kyi mchog.*”

<sup>449</sup> “*kun kyang rang byung sems yin pas // bsgom mkhan gcig gis bsgom du med // ci byung rang shar byung tshor rnams // lhan ne lhang nge lham mer bzhang // don mi ‘gyur bas lhan ne ba // nges par rtogs pas lhang nge ba // rang sar grol bas lham me ba // dper na mar la mar bzhang bzhin // ma bsgoms pa yi bsam gtan te // de ni bsgom pa’i mchog yin no,*”

“Rest in still, clear, luminous experience (*lhan ne lhang nge lham mer bzhang*). The meaning of ‘still’ is ‘unchanging,’ of ‘clear’ is ‘definitive understanding,’ and of ‘luminous’ is ‘liberation in one’s own ground.’ For example, like placing butter in butter, one thinks constantly of not meditatively cultivating [one’s own mind]; that is the exceptional meditative cultivation” (*The Great Speech Chapter 9/458*).

<sup>450</sup> “*blo snang yul du bcad pas bo*” (*The Great Speech Chapter 10/459*).



Machik concludes this section with a reiteration of her teaching that, although the Negative Forces can be classified into four types, they are fundamentally implicated in the Negative Forces Producing Pride, arising through conceptualizing and grasping of the self as one thing and objects as another.<sup>451</sup> The valence of her discussion shifts here, introducing argument by analogy into her philosophical rhetoric.<sup>452</sup> One example is worthy of note in this context: the snow lion who is neither intimidated nor anxious while living in the highest mountains, but rather possesses an assurance absent of pride. For a practitioner who possesses an assurance similar to the innate assurance of a snow lion in its native environment, there is no possibility for deities and spirits (*lha 'dre*) to appear to exist; indeed, the practitioner's training becomes stronger when she understand that such deities and spirits are her own manifestations.<sup>453</sup> Once she sees that she is grasping onto objects as things independent of her own conceptualization, and once she cuts through the ropes of pride, she can appreciate the teaching that “one who rests in the clear essence does not identify a mind (*sems*) of clear essence.”<sup>454</sup>

---

<sup>451</sup> Another example of Machik's teaching on the mind as the root of Negative Forces and the Negative Forces Producing Pride as the foundational Negative Force is found in the *Thun mong kyi le lag brgyad*, translated in an appendix to this study: “*bdud la rnam pa gnyis su 'byed // thogs bcas bdud dang thogs med bdud // 'on kyang snyems byed bdud las med // snang dang de ni stong pa la // yid kyi snyems byed ma zhugs na // bdud rnams ma lus sems su bcad // sems ni skye med dbyings su yal // bdud rnams thams cad sems las byung // sems ni ngo bo ma grub pa // snang dang srid dang lha dang 'dre // ngo bo ma grub rang sar gro!*”

“The Negative Forces are differentiated into two (*rnam pa gnyis su 'byed*), the Obstructive Negative Forces and the Unobstructive Negative Forces; however, these do not exist apart from the Negative Forces that Produce Pride. As for appearances, they are empty. When not engaged in producing a prideful mind (*yid*), the Negative Forces without exception are severed in mind the mind (*sems*). As for the mind (*sems*), unproduced, it vanishes into the (unproduced) expanse. All Negative Forces arise from the mind. As for the mind, its essence is not established. Appearance and existence and deities and demons, their essence not established, are liberated on their own ground” (130-1/576-7; the Tibetan and an English translation of this text are included in an appendix to this study).

<sup>452</sup> This will be discussed further in chapter six of the present study.

<sup>453</sup> “*snang srid lha 'dres ldang mi nus // brgya la langs kyang gdams ngag gsal // rang gi cho 'phrul yin shes na // nges par rtsal sbyong chen por 'gro*” (*The Great Speech Chapter 11/460*).

<sup>454</sup> “*dvangs mar bz'had pa kun nas gsungs // dvangs ma'i sems la ngos bzung med*” (*The Great Speech Chapter 11/460*).

In Machik’s Chöd teachings, she insists that the positive and negative valuations of karmic actions and objects of experience are not characteristic of ultimate actuality, but are dependent on the discriminating mind. “*Dre*” is the conventional Tibetan word for general “demon” or “devil,” and is often paired in Chöd texts with “*lha*,” or “divine force(s).” Many Chöd teachings assert that these concepts are merely the result of phenomena being valued as positive or negative, good or bad, beneficial or harmful.<sup>455</sup> Just as the Negative Forces and the body function metaphorically in Chöd praxis, Machik uses the terms “gods” and “demons” to signify such positive and negative judgments. In *The Great Explanation*, Machik explains that “in a conventional sense . . . the defining characteristics of the gods and demons are just as previously explained. It is necessary to understand [their] characteristics of existence, and it is also necessary to practice according to that understanding.”<sup>456</sup> This relative understanding includes the appreciation that “positive, virtuous actions are gods, and negative, nonvirtuous actions are Negative Forces.”<sup>457</sup> In Giuseppe Tucci’s interpretation of Chöd praxis, there are essentially two elements of Chöd visualization: “a preparatory element, in which the deceptive assumption of the existence of gods and demons is made, and a second element which brings about the certitude that gods and demons are nothing but emanations of our own thought” (1980, 88).

Machik explicitly intertwines the evaluative activities of the discriminating mind with the Buddhist doctrine of karmic action. This symbiosis is developed in her discussion of the two truths and the functional trope of *kun gzhi*, or Universal Base. She summarizes that “the

---

<sup>455</sup> In chapter twelve of the *Leviathan*, “Of Religion,” Hobbes declares: “There is almost nothing that has a name that has not been esteemed amongst the Gentiles, in one place or another, a God, or a Divell” (1952, 81).

<sup>456</sup> “*de yang kun rzdob . . . lha ‘dre’i mtshan nyid ji ltar bshad pa de bzhin yod kyang yod la / yod pa’i mtshan nyid kyang shes dgos la / shes pa bzhin du nyams su lan dgos pa yin kyang*” (Lab sgron 1974, 139).

<sup>457</sup> “*las dkar po dge ba ni lha yin la / nag po mi dge ba ni ‘dre yin no*” (Lab sgron 1974, 139).

Universal Base, the essence of bodhicitta, is the god of intrinsic awareness.”<sup>458</sup> Machik thus maintains that what is conventionally referred to as a “god” is in fact the positive nature of reflexive awareness that characterizes the full potential of the enlightened mind when it is unsullied by discriminative thinking. In contrast, when “demons” are conventionally invoked, one should understand this as the obstruction of the full potential of the Universal Base by non-aware emotional reactions (*nyon mongs*; *kleśa*). Machik points out that though gods and demons are conventionally binarized, “they are a single cause, because of the distinction of awareness and non-awareness.”<sup>459</sup>

The Universal Base is the non-discriminated full potential of emptiness, and it is only the presence or absence of awareness that results in positive or negative characterizations. Machik stresses that in terms of ultimate meaning (*don dam*), the discrimination into positive and negative, god and demon “are without even a hair’s tip of true existence.”<sup>460</sup> The non-discriminating nature of awareness allows for “the view of the inherent purity in *Dharmadhātu* untainted even by the stains of ripened [karmic consequences],”<sup>461</sup> without elaborations due to non-awareness (*ma rig pa*), karmic action (*las*), and emotional reactions (*nyon mongs*). Machik’s analysis here implies that by cutting through the Dūd, the practitioner cuts through the obstructions that obscure the awareness identified with the Universal Base.

According to the *rnam thar* (vitae) chapters in *The Great Explanation*, Machik attained a personal understanding of the Negative Forces as they are represented in the *Prajñāpāramitā*

---

<sup>458</sup> “*kun gzhi byang chub kyi sems kyi ngo bo rang rig pa’i lha yin la*” (Lab sgron 1974, 139).

<sup>459</sup> “*rgyu gcig yin la / rig pa dang ma rig pa’i khyad par yin pas na*” (Lab sgron 1974, 140).

<sup>460</sup> “*bden par grub pa skra’i rtse tsam yang med pas*” (Lab sgron 1974, 140).

<sup>461</sup> “*rnam par smin pa’i dri mas kyang gos pa med pa’i chos nyid kyi dbyings su rang bzhin rnam par dag pa’i lta ba*” (Lab sgron 1974, 140).

teachings when she was under the tutelage of Kyotön Sonam Lama.<sup>462</sup> This section emphasizes that it is not the Dūd *qua* Dūd that are central to Machik’s realization, nor even visualization practice, but the contemplation of ego-grasping and its elimination that is central to realization. Kyotön Sonam Lama is said to have instructed Machik to move beyond simply understanding the meaning of the *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings to internalizing them, to examine her own mind thoroughly to gain a mind free from grasping and objectification, with the great fire of the great knowledge of nonaction<sup>463</sup> overcoming the darkness of the misknowledge of grasper and grasped.<sup>464</sup> By following this instruction while reciting the chapter of the *Prajñāpāramitā* on the Negative Forces, Machik is said to have gained a profound realization of the non-existence of a self through the wisdom of *prajñā* that was akin to the rising of the sun dispelling darkness.<sup>465</sup>

As was noted above, in traditional Buddhist narratives, Dūd are perceived embodiments of negative forces. They are often manifestations of obstacles that a practitioner encounters along the path to enlightenment.<sup>466</sup> A key weapon against the Dūd is the wisdom of *prajñā*. Traditionally, *prajñā* is considered a fundamentally mental wisdom and the Dūd are thought of as agents in themselves. A particularly remarkable aspect of the philosophy of Chöd is a double

---

<sup>462</sup> According to this same passage of the *rnam thar*, Kyötön Sonam Lama was learned in the exoteric Tripiṭaka and the esoteric four classes of Tantra.

<sup>463</sup> It might be interesting to compare the Buddhist notion of “*byar med*” or “non-action” with the Taoist notion of “*wu wei*” and the teaching of “*wei wu wei*,” often interpreted as effortless—and thus natural—action. For example, see Lao zi’s *Tao te ching*, section 63.

<sup>464</sup> “*de’i dus su ‘dzin pa thams cad dang bral ba’i blo gcig skyes nas / ‘dzin med du grol te bya byed kyi blo thams cad dang bral tel byar med shes rab chen po’i me chen rgyas nas / bdag ‘dzin ma rig pa’i mun pa ‘joms par byed pa yin bas / don gyi rtsa ba ragns sems la gad bdar legs por chod cig*” (Lab sgron 1974, 33).

<sup>465</sup> “*de nas lab sgron gyis bla mas ji ltar gsungs pa bzhin du chos la zhal ‘don mdzad cing don la sems pas / bdud kyi le’u yi nang du don gcig rnyed do / / sngar dan mi ‘dra ba’i rtogs pa khyad par can cig rgyud la skyes nas / blo’i spros pa thams cad dang bral zhing bdag ‘dzin gyi ma dud pa grol te / bdag med rtogs pa’i shes rab kyi nyi ma shar bas / bdag zhin gyi mun pa bya ba’i sgra yang mi grags par thal lo*” (Lab sgron 1974, 33-34).

<sup>466</sup> The use of the *Heart Sūtra* as support for the “exorcism” of “demons” (*māra*) is detailed in a ritual text attributed to Kumārabuddha (ca. 12<sup>th</sup> century?); see Lopez 1997.

chiasmatic shift of these central concepts. The mode of *prajñā* is externalized through the training of the embodied human being and her praxis: wisdom becomes associated with physical performance. At the same time, Dūd are refigured as internal psychological processes that entrench ego clinging. The confrontation with the Dūd, one of the most well known aspects of Chöd, may then be interpreted as a perpetual interplay between non-discursive experience and conceptually mediated experience. In other words, Chöd is a strategy of continual attention to and negotiation of the limits produced by hypostasizing human being—that is, cutting through the existential and social closures that obscure enlightenment.<sup>467</sup>

In the *Prajñāpāramitā* Chöd tradition, Dūd function as psychological and ritual signifiers highlighting the ultimately nondual relationship of the body-mind modality of the practitioner. In juxtaposition with the practices of Opening the Gate of Space and *dehādāna*, the confrontation with the Dūd as internally produced obstacles to enlightenment emphasizes the symbiotic character of Chöd praxis: cutting through the body is cutting through the mind, and vice versa. Ultimately, “inner” and “outer” forms of Chöd are grounded on this reciprocity of severing attachment to the self, whether conceptualized as the offering of the body as food or the overcoming of Negative Forces. The psychological experience of Negative Forces also demands that the practitioner understand the fabricated distinctions between the internal and external, the self and other, the individual and society. The inclusion of Dūd as guests receiving the offering of the body-mind constituents at a Chöd ceremony (such as those described in chapter four) can be understood as facilitating movement between existential and social realms. The cognitively constructed guests from these interconnected realms—the realm of one’s own psycho-physical

---

<sup>467</sup> Although Sherry B. Ortner is discussing Sherpa practices in Nepal which represent demons in considerably different ways, her comment about the bivalence of signification might also apply to the distinctive Chöd praxis: “I would suggest that this ambiguity accurately reflects the situation that demons (and pollution) are in fact both psychological and social symbols” (1978, 105).

modality and the realm of the interrelation of one's modality with those of other sentient beings—are invited to gather together. When one is analyzing the *phung-po*, or cutting up the psycho-physical constituents which will then be given/offered to the guests that one has invited to the celebration of the process of cultivating enlightenment, such a feeding can be interpreted as a returning of social constructions to the self and of the self to social constructions. If the socially-constructed aspects are offered back to the social environment, one can better integrate them into a complex comprehension of mind/body modality.<sup>468</sup>

---

<sup>468</sup> As David Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson write: “It is interesting to observe that Indian and Tibetan society have never abandoned those who reject their social norms. A place of honour and respect is accorded to the mendicant and the yogin, once it is judged that his intentions are sincere” (1995, 117).

## CHAPTER SIX: TEXTS

In the previous two chapters, I explained how Machik Labdrön adopted and adapted traditional Buddhist teachings to develop the Chöd practices of cutting through the body and cutting through the mind. In order to trace these fundamental and distinctive practices, I relied on several of the texts I translated for this study: in particular, my discussion of the gift of the body in Chöd was primarily derived from *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section*; and my discussion of the significance of Düd in Chöd praxis was primarily derived from *The Great Speech Chapter*. In this chapter, I provide an account of each of the six foundational treatises (*gzhung rtsa*, or root texts), conventionally attributed to Machik herself, that I have translated in the appendices: *The Great Speech Chapter*; *The Supplementary Chapter*; *The Quintessential Chapter*; *The Common Eightfold Supplementary Section*;<sup>469</sup> *The Uncommon Eightfold Supplementary Section*;<sup>470</sup> and *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section*. I also discuss in detail two of the earliest extant commentaries on Chöd: *An Outline of the Great Speech Chapter of Chöd* and *A Commentary on the Great Speech Chapter of Chöd*, both composed by the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé, in the fourteenth century. Apart from *The Great Speech Chapter*, these texts are being provided in the English language for the first time.

While there is no authoritative collection of Machik’s teachings (*gsung ‘bum*), the texts I am considering are listed in an early vitae on Machik, edited by Namkha Gyaltsen (ca. 1370-

---

<sup>469</sup> “brgyad” is written “brgyud” in the short edition. In *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag yang tshoms zhus lan ma* (*Treasury of Instruction*, Vol. IX, 547-610; Vol. IX, 576-586). Savvas cites *The Ruby Garland* as stating that “the *Eight Ordinary Chapters* are unelaborate and explain how to subdue the Four Demons, like the sun shining in the sky; the *Eight Extraordinary Chapters* are elaborate, and explain how to cut the adverse conditions from the root; the *Eight Special Chapters* are brief, and explain how to change the demon of pride, by eating it, like (the peacock) transforms poisons into nectar” (1990, 137).

<sup>470</sup> The “Uncommon Eight Supplements.” In *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag yang tshoms zhus lan ma* (*Treasury of Instruction*: Vol. IX, 547-610; Vol. IX, 586-601). This text has been previously translated by Carol Savvas in her Ph.D. dissertation. Although I am familiar with the Savvas translation, I have chosen to retranslate the text because the Savvas translation is very unreliable and does not follow the original text closely; in her version there are several omissions, as well as many additions from an acknowledged source (possibly an oral commentary).

1433) and included in *The Great Explanation* collection, suggesting that these texts might be considered as representative of her oeuvre. The second biographical section on Machik in *The Great Explanation*<sup>471</sup> quotes Machik addressing the Indian yogi-scholars who have come to investigate the system of Chöd, skeptical that it is actually Buddhist Dharma.<sup>472</sup> After debate on these teachings, the pandits became her students and proceeded to transmit numerous of Machik's Chöd teachings to India. According to this text,

with the experience of generating in her mental continuum the distinctive experience of severing the four Negative Forces on their own ground [that is, in one's own consciousness], the very profound dharma teaching was composed by Machik in ten texts. . . . Because [the teachings] were transmitted to India, moreover, all Indians having trust in the dharma teachings and all of them gaining dharma experience, the Tibetan dharma teachings were spread in India.<sup>473</sup>

The teachings by Machik that were transmitted to India are said to include the following: *The Great Speech Chapter*;<sup>474</sup> *The Supplementary Chapter*;<sup>475</sup> *The Quintessential Chapter*;<sup>476</sup> and

---

<sup>471</sup> This is the Tibetan collection of texts that includes a two-part biography (or, as I have argued, two distinct biographies) of Machik, attributed to Namkha Gyaltzen. These biographies have been translated several times, most notably by Phuntsog Tobjhor and Lama Tsewang Gyurme (in Allione 1984) and by Edou (1996). The collection of ten chapters has been translated by Sarah Harding (Lab dron, 2003).

<sup>472</sup> The assembly for these teachings at her retreat, Zangri Khangmar, was said to have included five hundred thousand five hundred and seventy-three women and men, including four translators and seventy thousand nuns and monks who had gathered for the occasion. See the article by Dekyi Drolma (n.d., 1) for what I take to be images of this site; also see Gyatso 1985. The TBRC entry for *Zangs ri mkhar dmar* cites *Mkhyen brtse gdan rabs* on *Zangs ri mkhar dmar* as the residence of Machik and her followers (TBRC.org, Place RID G2819).

<sup>473</sup> “*bdud bzhi rang sar gcod pa'i nyams khyad par can rgyud la skyes pa'i myong chos shig tu zab pa ma cig gis mdzad pa'i bka' rtsom chen mo / yang rtsom nying rtsom / le'u lag / gnad them / khong rgol / gsang ba brda chos la bzlas skor gsum / gzhi lam du slong ba / khyad par gyi man ngag dang bcu / rgya gar du bskur bas / rgya gar ba thams cad kyang chos la yid ches nas thams cad kyis chos nyams su myong te bod chos rgya la dar bar byas so*” (*The Great Explanation* 80).

<sup>474</sup> In the *Gdams ngag mdzod* (Vol. IX: 456-466; Vol. XIV: 7-16). Translated by Orofino into Italian (1987) and into English (2000). Also translated by Michael Azzato in his MA thesis (1981), and in an unpublished manuscript by Carol Savvas and Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche. The term *bka' tshoms*, as Harding notes Ringu Tulku Rinpoche observing, is frequently used to refer to “sayings,” in particular, those of the *Dhammapada*, considered the sayings of the Buddha. Harding also notes that “[i]n my texts, it is most often spelled *bka' rtsom* (‘composition’). Kongtrul favors *bka' tshom* (*TOK*, 3:423). The text itself in the *Gdams ngag mdzod* (9:456) uses *bka' tshoms* in the title” (Lab sgron 2003, 304, n. 40). The notion that these texts are meant to be considered in relation to teachings like the *Dhammapada* is substantiated by Machik herself when she states that after her study of the *bka'* of Śākyamuni, she composed the *bka' tshoms* based on them (Lab sgron 1974, 75).



*Supplementary Texts*. Additional texts mentioned, but which may no longer be extant, are the following: *Gnad them*; *Khong rdol*; *Gsang ba brda chos*; *Bzlas skor gsum*; *Gzhi lam du slong ba*; and the *Khyad par gyi man ngag*.<sup>477</sup> These latter texts are referred to in various historical and commentarial sources, but they are not included in Jamgön Kongtrül's *Treasury of Instructions*, which is a primary source for the six texts by Machik and the two commentaries by the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé I am discussing and include in the appendices.

The Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé was a key figure in the later transmissions of Chöd. In the fourteenth century, Rangjung Dorjé composed commentaries on Machik's teachings as well as other texts on Chöd, transmitting his interpretation of the Chöd system within the Karma Kagyü tradition. His formalizations of Chöd praxis, including his compositions of practice techniques (*sgrub thabs*; *sādhana*), contributed to the later assimilation of Chöd into

---

<sup>475</sup> In *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag yang tshoms zhus lan ma* (*Treasury of Instruction*: short edition: Vol. IX, 547-610), 548-561.

<sup>476</sup> In *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag yang tshoms zhus lan ma* (*Treasury of Instruction*: short edition: Vol. IX, 547-610; Vol. IX, 562-576). In the Paro edition, the title is given as *man ngag bdud kyi gcod yul las snying tshom chen mo* ("snying tshom chen mo"). This text is sometimes referred to with alternate spellings of "nying" for "snying" and/or "tshoms" for "tshom." I have chosen to use "snying" and "tshoms" for reference herein.

<sup>477</sup> The latter title may or may not refer to the text we presently have entitled the *Khyad par gyi le lag brgyad pa*. This catalogue of teachings thought to have been transmitted from Tibet to India is iterated by the following: the 19<sup>th</sup> century Geluk scholar, Bka' chen blo bzang bzod pa, who is drawing from the Dga' ldan snyan brgyud transmission lineage of Chöd (5-6); the 19<sup>th</sup> century Nyingma scholar Rdza sprul (77); and Dharmasenggé, another 19<sup>th</sup> century Nyingma scholar (470-71). Carol Savvas, citing Rlong rdol bla ma, provides a different context for the composition of the *bka' tshoms chen mo*, wherein it was composed at the behest of Nye gnas ma, an attendant of Machik's. Also according to Rlong rdol bla ma, Machik's son, Grub po, requested the teaching of the *Yang tshoms nyer lnga*, while her student Nam mkha' dpal requested the *Le lag brgyad ma*, along with the *Kong khol ma nyi shu*, *Gdams pa skye med tshig chod*, *Brda' chos* and the *La bzlo ba*. Regarding this latter text, Savvas writes, "this is probably the same as *la bzla*, merely a different spelling" (1990, 136 n.3). Savvas' reference is *Tibetan Buddhist Studies of Klon rdol bla ma nag dban blo bzang*, Vol. 2, edited by Ven. Dalama (Mussourie, 1964, 147). Savvas (1990, 141) also discusses references to these texts by Smon lam tha yas rgya mtsho (*Ma gcig mkha' 'gro snyan rgyud lam zab rgyun gyi rnal 'byor bde bkod pa* in *Gcod tshogs*, 308) and by Bka' chen Blo bzang bzod pa. In the *Commentary on the Great Speech Chapter of Chöd*, Rangjung Dorjé refers to four teachings of Machik's: the exoteric *Great Speech Chapter*, the esoteric *Ngo sprod*, the vital *Gnad them*, and the secret *Brda' chos*; the latter three have not been found as identifiable individual texts. Edou has noted that the *Concise Life Story* (manuscript folio 196) names the following as the four root texts: the outer *Bka' tshoms chen mo*; the inner *Le'u lag*; the secret *Brda' chos*; and *Don khang rgol gnad them su bstan pa* (1996, 81).

Karma Kagyü lineages.<sup>478</sup> In this chapter, I consider the transmission lineage of Chöd as it was passed through Rangjung Dorjé because his commentaries on *The Great Speech Chapter* are the earliest datable commentaries on Machik's texts. Through these commentaries, we can establish that *The Great Speech Chapter* was composed prior to the fourteenth century.<sup>479</sup>

While we cannot confidently attribute each of the six works I translate to Machik,<sup>480</sup> these texts, along with Rangjung Dorjé's commentaries, constitute the foundation of the Chöd tradition.<sup>481</sup> It is vital that these texts be revisited as they provide an alternative perspective of

---

<sup>478</sup> The assimilation of Chöd into Nyingmapa and Gelukpa traditions have different genealogies, although there are similarities in how this process worked, especially in the articulation of formal practice methods and the use of deity yoga. I am presently in the process of researching these developments.

<sup>479</sup> This observation is not original to me and has been noted by others, including Kollmar-Paulenz. Another early commentary I have located is attributed to Dorjé Lingpa (1346-1405); I will be presenting a translation of this in the near future.

<sup>480</sup> Through a critical reading of several of these texts, there are indications that someone other than Machik at least transcribed them (not uncommon to Tibetan spiritual teachings in general), if not edited or even wrote them. According to one biography, Machik stated: "Anyone who wishes to can write down my words, on stone, cloth or rock, and carry them away." Quoted in Dharmasenggé, *Commentary on the 21 Commitments*, folio 84; cited in and translated by Savvas (1990, 133) without the inclusion of the original Tibetan. I am not sure which edition Savvas translated; there is no corresponding quote in folio 84 of the edition that I received from the Kawaguchi collection of the Toyo Bunko Library, Tokyo Japan. I thank Lauran Hartley of Columbia University for her assistance in acquiring this text.

Here Machik seems to be echoing a similar injunction that Buddha Śākyamuni made to his followers when he was asked what language his teachings should be transmitted in to foster systematization. Just as the tracing of transmission genealogies is complicated, tracing the teachings that originate with Machik is problematic. An obvious problem is that some of the texts that we read about in the sources are not in material circulation; it may be the case that such texts were never written down or it might be that they have been lost. A second problem is knowing when one can be certain about attributions of authorship to Machik, since we do not have material texts discussing her teachings that we can confidently date to the eleventh or twelfth centuries.

<sup>481</sup> An additional key text to understanding the development of Chöd is the *Great Explanation*, although as others have noted (Hermann-Pfandt 1998, 95) the edition that is presently in print circulation was probably compiled in the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century. Additional texts that Machik is also reputed to have composed include a text referred to as the "Twenty-one Commitments"; however, this text may no longer be extant apart from a commentary written by Dharmasenggé, entitled *dam chos bdud kyi gcod yul las gzhi lam 'bras bu gsum gyi dam tshig gnyer gi khrid rim ye shes mkha 'dro'i zhal lung phrin las nyi ma'i nying po*. Dharmasenggé also refers to this text in his *History*, claiming that the "Twenty-one Commitments" was composed for Gyalwa Dondrup, a son of Machik, who eventually became a serious student of Chöd, and for whom Machik intended the "Commitments" as his primary practice. In this regard, TBRC lists two entries (TBRC W11234 and W11235), 127 ff. and 161 ff. in Volume One of the Potala gsung 'bum, but it does not have these texts in its collection. Savvas, who obtained a copy of this text from Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, cites it frequently (e.g. 142). She says Machik's text is quoted in folio 21. She also cites Dharmasenggé's *History* (506-507).

I have now collected five editions of *The Great Explanation*, but have not compared them: edition from the Gcod kyi chos skor; edition from Urgyen Tenzin (Sarnath); edition from Herbert Guenther; edition from Latse

Library; edition from Shinhua (1992). Edou writes that Jampa Sönam “is said to be the thirtieth holder of the hearing lineage (lung brgyud). If one estimates twenty years per generation, he would have lived in the nineteenth century, and hence be a contemporary of Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye” (195, n. 30). In addition, there is A Concise Life Story of Machig Labdrön, Derived from An Exposition of Transforming the Aggregates into an Offering of Food (The Concise Life Story) (*phung po gzan skyur ba'i rnam par bshad pa las ma gcig lab sgron ma'i rnam par thar pa mdor msdus tsam zhig*), by Kunpang Tsödrü Sengé (ca. 13<sup>th</sup> century). He was either a direct disciple of Machig or fifth, eleventh or twelfth in the lineage. As well, in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin is a text entitled *Phung po gzan bskyur gyi ram bhzag bshad pa Gcod kyi don gsal byed ma cig ye she's mkha'i 'gro'i sgung dri ma med pa*, which Hermann-Pfandt (1998, 101 n. 16) says is the *rnam bshad* attributed to Namkha Gyaltsen. Jérôme Edou also mentions another edition of Machig's biography that he found near Lang Gonpa near Phyger, Dolpo. The Dolpo edition, entitled *Ma gcig ma'i rnam thar* or *Rnam thar mgur ma*, is a *dbu med* blockprint manuscript lacking an explicit author or date, but containing the information that it was edited at the request of Rin bzang gras pa dbang phyug (Edou 1996, 220). According to Edou, this manuscript is written in cursive script and, although it lacks author or date, “appears to be quite old” (Edou 1996, 194 n. 28). According to Edou, this text includes elements not found in the other *rnam thar*, and it is supplemented with a collection of *mgur*, or spontaneous songs: “It follows the general historical trends of Machig's life, but devotes for example an entire chapter to the young Machig's fight with her parents to avoid marriage and dedicate herself to the practice of Dharma. Another chapter covers Machig's wanderings in fearful places subjugating demons. Due to its late discovery, we only managed to include here a few quotes from the manuscript where it differs from other available sources” (Edou 1996, 194-195, n. 28). Edou notes that this biography was published at the request of certain Rin bzang grags pa dbang phyug and has seven chapters: “(1) How Machig renounced the worldly life and left her family; (2) How Machig opened the gates of Dharma; (3) How Machig followed Thöpa Bharé and taught Dharma to her husband and her son Gyalwa Döndrop; (4) How Machig gained realization and subjugated demons in fearful places; (5) How Machig taught the ultimate meaning (of her doctrine) to Lhatag Khenpo and others; (6) How Machig settled at Zangri and worked to propagate her doctrine for the benefit of beings; (7) How Machig departed for the state beyond suffering” (Edou 1996, 175, n. 3). Hermann-Pfandt (1998), in her review of Edou's text, laments that Edou chose to retranslate materials previously in circulation rather than presenting more rare materials, such as the 13<sup>th</sup> century Kunpang Tsödrü Sengé text mentioned above or the *Ma gcig ma'i rnam thar*. She suggests that “it is easily possible that the *Ma gcig ma'i rnam thar* is one of the lost source texts the influence of which Kollmar-Paulenz has traced in some of the sources of the biographical tradition of *Ma gcig*” (1998, 99).

Edou cites *The Concise Life Story* (the University of Washington text) as stating that Machig, at the age of fifty-six or fifty-seven, “composed four major treatises known under the generic title of The Grand Exposition (*rNam bshad chen mo*): (1) The Grand Exposition according to Sūtra, at Sakarlog, requested by Khugom Chökyi Sengé and five other disciples who wrote it down. (2) The Grand Exposition according to Tantra, at the cave of Shampogang, requested by her son Thönyön Samdrup. The text was transmitted by eight of her disciples, including her four spiritual daughters and Khugom Chökyi Sengé. (3) The Grand Exposition according to Sūtra and Tantra Combined, in Lhodrag, requested by Khugom Chökyi Sengé, and copied out by twelve people. (4) The Grand Exposition of Transforming the Aggregates into an Offering, at Zangri, through the request of Thönyön Samdrup” (1996, 107).

According to Edou, “[o]ne of the difficulties in identifying these texts lies in the fact that most sources use the generic title *The Grand Exposition* without specifying whether it refers to all four treatises or to only one of them. No version of these four original texts has so far become available. A reference to Machig's *Grand Exposition of Transforming the Aggregates into an Offering* is found in the Labrang Karchag, but whether it refers to Machig's original version remains mere speculation since the text is not available” (Edou 107). Here Edou attaches a note: “*Phung po zan skyur Gcod kyi gsal byed ma cig rnam bshad chen mo (Machig's Grand Exposition of Transforming the Aggregate into a Food Offering, Illuminating the Meaning of Chöd)* in: *Bod kyi bstan bcos khag cig gi mtshen byang dri med shel dkar phreng ba*, referred to as the Labrang Karchag, edited by mTsho ngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, in the *rnam mthar* chapter, p. 70. Access to this text would tell us whether it is Namkha Gyaltsen's version of The Grand Exposition mentioned below (see n. 36), an earlier version of Machig's Grand Exposition of Transforming the Aggregates into an Offering of Food which could be the source of all the later versions and currently unknown, or a different text altogether” (Edou 1996, 195, n.33). Edou also remarks that “the colophon following chapter ten of our main source, *Transforming the Aggregates*, describes a lineage for the Grand Exposition: Machig Labdrön; Thönyön Samdrup, her son; Gangpa Mugsang; Gangpa Lhundrup; Sangyé Tensung; Nyamé Dorjé Dzinpa; Gangpa Rinchen Gyaltsen; Lama Dorjé; Namkha Gyaltsen, the compiler of the Marvelous

the Chöd system to the view popularly presented in modern communities of Tibetan and non-Tibetan practitioners that emphasizes demons, charnel grounds and dramatic performances. As I have repeatedly emphasized, Chöd teachings are frequently considered without reference to their historical and cultural contexts, limiting our ability to assess and appreciate the consistency and change of the tradition as a whole. To complement the historical and philosophical analyses of the previous chapters, I now turn to a discussion of the texts translated as appendices one through nine in this dissertation.

By providing accounts of each of these texts, I aim not only to augment our understanding of the canonical texts of the Chöd tradition, but also to develop my argument that Chöd both legitimated itself through its association with Buddhist traditions and presented itself as an innovation on those traditions. As can be clearly seen in these six texts, Machik was a transmitter of orthodox teachings, yet she was also an original thinker who creatively interpreted these teachings.<sup>482</sup> Machik constructed her authority through traditional Buddhist references, yet her project was also one of renewal: through focusing on the *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings on the Negative Forces, her system of Chöd reintroduced these important teachings and revitalized them through her commentaries and instructions for practice.<sup>483</sup> When the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé, developed his exegeses on *The Great Speech Chapter*, we can see this process of legitimation and innovation extended into the commentarial tradition. Eliot Deutsch maintains that traditional Indian philosophy is characterized by “recovery” rather than

---

Life; Tashi Gyaltzen; Nyima Gyaltzen; Mönchöd Tsödrü Sengé” (1996, 107; this reference does not appear in the Harding translation of the colophon).

<sup>482</sup> Confucius, *Analects* 7.1: “Following the proper way, I do not forge new paths.” (Ames and Rosemont, trans., 1998, 111).

<sup>483</sup> “Even when dealing with a text that explicitly posits itself within a defined textual tradition, the analyst should seek to understand how such a textual tradition is being posited and what claims are being made through that positing” (Puett 2002, 26).

“discovery”: he describes the function of philosophy *qua* commentary as “appropriation,” since the intellectual project is always necessarily determined by traditional readings of the “original.”<sup>484</sup> As I will discuss below, Rangjung Dorjé’s role in the systematization of Chöd is characterized by both “recovery” and “appropriation.”

### ***THE GREAT SPEECH CHAPTER AND RANGJUNG DORJÉ’S COMMENTARIES***

In this section I discuss *The Great Speech Chapter* attributed to Machik and Rangjung Dorjé’s substantial *Commentary on The Great Speech Chapter*, both of which are translated and included as appendices to this study.<sup>485</sup> My study of the Negative Forces, or Düd, in chapter five was based on my interpretations of *The Great Speech Chapter*, but here I turn to a discussion of topics in which the differences between Machik and Rangjung Dorjé are most apparent: Primordial Wisdoms, the Three Bodies, the practice of offering the body, the various capacities of practitioners, the use of authoritative Buddhist references, and the association of Chöd with Mahāmudrā. By comparing *The Great Speech Chapter* with Rangjung Dorjé’s commentaries on

---

<sup>484</sup> Deutsch further describes the historical development of Indian philosophy as a commentarial tradition, in which certain texts are established as authoritative by the commentaries and subcommentaries written on them (1989, 168-71). One might argue a similar point with regard to the “canonization” of many Buddhist texts; their canonical status is ensured through the commentarial process. José Cabezon has argued that, following an examination of western criteria informing the notion of “canon,” “the Indo-Tibetan *siddhānta* schema is very much the functional equivalent of a canon, albeit a philosophical or doctrinal one” (1995, 67; cf. Cabezon 1990, 7-26).

<sup>485</sup> Also included in the nine appendices is a translation of Rangjung Dorjé’s outline of the *Great Speech Chapter*. Two other texts of related interest in the context of Machik’s *Bka’ rtsom* are in the collection of the great Nyingma Gter ston Dorjé Lingpa (1346-1405 CE). The first is a commentary on the *Bka’ rtsom chen mo* teaching entitled the *Bka’ rtsom chen mo’i TIKA lta sgom gyi khogs byung khyung chen nam mkha’ ldings ltar / bshad pa gzhug soha / ba dzra bho dra’o*. In addition, this collection has a text named *bka’ rtsom gyi zhu len sum bcu rtsa lnga ba zhes bya ba yang rtsom rin gron ma lta sgom gyi gnad ‘brel rgya mtshor gza’ / skar shar ba ltar bshad bshugs so*, which appears to be a gter ma text (possibly from the Sharmapa? Skar shar ba). A third text is also worth noting, a different *Bka’ rtsom* text, *Bka’ rtsom kyi zhus lan sum bcu rtsa lnga pa / A ma’i yang gsang thugs kyi nying khu zhes bya ga rdzogs soha* is included in the *Gcod tshogs kyi lag len* (Bir, Tsondu Senghe, 1985, [15-31]. Savvas (1990, 133) says this is another edition of the Dorjé Lingpa text in the *Gcod skor* (311-352), but I don’t think it is since the number of pages is so very different.

it, we see how the Chöd tradition began to develop and how Machik’s teachings were both preserved and altered.

Rangjung Dorjé’s commentaries help us to understand how *The Great Speech Chapter* was both legitimated and renewed by scholars of Chöd. Through these commentaries, we begin not only to understand how Chöd was assimilated to the Kagyü school, but also to trace the development of Chöd. As we see from his commentaries, Rangjung Dorjé was at least partially responsible for later developments in Chöd, including increased emphasis on the “demonic” nature of the Negative Forces (as well as exorcism and healing), the development of more formal sādhana (along with deity yoga including supramundane female figures such as Vajravarahī and Vajrayoginī), and the intertwining of Chöd with Mahāmudrā.

The full name of *The Great Speech Chapter* is *The Great Speech Chapter, the textual tradition of the oral instructions of the profound Chöd of Prajñāpāramitā* (*Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa zab mo gcod kyi man ngag gi gzhung bka’ tshoms chen mo*).<sup>486</sup> My English translations are based on the Tibetan texts found in the two slightly varying editions of Jamgön Kongtrül’s multivolume compendium from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the *Treasury of Instructions*. The honorific term “*bka’ rtsom*” literally means “composition.” According to Sarah Harding, Rinpoche Tulku Rinpoche observes that the term “*bka’ rtsom*” frequently refers to “sayings”—in particular to the *Dhammapada*, a collection of sayings attributed to Śākyamuni Buddha.<sup>487</sup> Machik herself stated

---

<sup>486</sup> *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa zab mo gcod kyi man ngag gi gzhung bka’ tshoms chen mo* (“*bka’ tshoms chen mo*”). In the *Gdams ngag mdzod* (Vol. IX: 456-466; Vol. XIV: 7-16). As noted earlier, translated by Orofino into Italian (1987) and into English (2000). Also translated by Michael Azzato in his MA thesis (1981), and in an unpublished manuscript by Carol Savvas and Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche. Orofino also translates the *shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag Gcod kyi gzhung shes rab skra rtse’i sa gzhung spel ba rin po che’i gter mdzod ces bya ba bzugs so* (from the *Gdams ngag mdzod*, 528-546) into Italian in the same volume. In some sources, including versions of the *Rnam bshad chen mo*, this text is referred to as the “*Bka’ rtsom*.”

<sup>487</sup> Harding also notes that “[i]n my texts, it is most often spelled *bka’ rtsom* (“composition”). Kong sprul favors *bka’ tshom* (*TOK*, 3:423). The text itself in the *Gdams ngag mdzod* (9:456) uses *bka’ tshoms* in the title” (304, n. 40). Orofino (2000) translates “*bka’ tshoms*” as “collection of teachings,” and Edou (1996) as “collection of

that after her study of the speech (*bka'*) of Śākyamuni, she composed the *bka' rtsom*,<sup>488</sup> reinforcing the connection between *The Great Speech Chapter* and authoritative teachings like the *Dhammapada*.

The colophon of these editions of *The Great Speech Chapter* credits the composition to Machik, the wisdom *ḍākinī*, Tārā of Lab (16/465). A note on this attribution states that this teaching is in the tradition of Āryadeva the Brahmin, particularly the tradition that was passed from Machik through her spiritual son Drapa Hagtön (Grwa pa hag ston, n.d.). Drapa Hagtön is mentioned by Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel in his list of great “sons” who received the precepts from Machik herself (1976, 985; 2003, 1143). He is also mentioned in the *Zhijé and Chöd History*<sup>489</sup> by Dharmasengé as one of the “eight sons” of Machik.<sup>490</sup> In an addendum to *The Great Speech Chapter* by an unknown author (possibly the editor Jamgön Kongtrül), it is explicitly stated that this text should be presented together with Rangjung Dorjé’s *Outline and Commentary*.

Although there have been other translations of *The Great Speech Chapter* into English and Italian, this study is the first time it has been presented in an English translation together with these complementary texts by Rangjung Dorjé.<sup>491</sup>

---

precepts,” while Azzato (1981) translates it as “Testament.”

<sup>488</sup> “*dang po thub pa chen po'i bka' rgyas 'bring bsdus gsum la gzigs rtog mdzad nas bka' thogs tu grol ba'i tshul gyis bka' la brten nas gcod bka' rtsom pa*” (Lab sgron 1974, 75).

<sup>489</sup> “*mngon shes dang rdzu 'phrul mnyam pa ma gro'i rgya sgom hag ston*” (Lab sgron 1974, 75b6).

<sup>490</sup> Aside from these references, I have not been able to learn more about Drapa Hagtön.

<sup>491</sup> {*gzhung 'di nyid gra sa hag ston gyi bus nyan bshad byed ba brgyad cu tsam byung zer la / snga dus kyi 'grel pa mdo sdud pa dang sbyar ba zhig kyang snang zhing / chos kyi rje rang byung rdo rjes sa bcad dang 'grel pas mtshon phyis kyi gzhung 'grel mad do / 'di dang bram ze Aa rya de bas mdzad pa'i gzhung {17/466} yid bzhin nor bu gnyis gcod yul gyi gdams pa thams cad kyi gzhi lta bur snang ngo / MCHAN*}

{Note: with regard to this very textual tradition, reported to be approximately eighty aural teachings given by the son of Gra sa hag ston, the previous commentary should be connected with the collected Sūtras; moreover, appearing illustrated (*mtshon*) with an outline (*sa bcad*) and commentary (*'grel pa*) by the Dharma Lord Rangjung Dorjé, the later textual tradition is a true (*mad = bden*) commentary. And this, the textual tradition of the composition by Āryadeva the Brahmin, the ground of all instructions of the Chöd

The association of Chöd with the Karmapa, the lineage of incarnating heads of the Karma Kagyü school of Tibetan Buddhism, may have begun with the First Karmapa, Dusüm Khyenpa (Dus gsum mkhyen pa, 1110-93). Karmapa Dusüm Khyenpa studied Prāsaṅgika with Pa tshab as well as esoteric teachings with Gampopa (Sgam po pa).<sup>492</sup> Ronald Davidson intimates that Dusüm Khyenpa may have had contact with Machik in the mid-twelfth century when he stayed in Zangri where Machik lived.<sup>493</sup> As Kurtis R. Schaeffer (1995, 15) notes, the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé (1284-1339) is well known as a “systematizer” of Machik’s Chöd teachings. Dharmasengé, the author of the 19<sup>th</sup> century *Zhijé and Chöd History*, credits Rangjung Dorjé with “clarifying the inaccuracies regarding the Chöd of Machik Labdrön,”<sup>494</sup> presumably at least in part through his *Commentary and Outline on The Great Speech Chapter*.

In addition to *The Great Speech Commentary* and *The Great Speech Outline*, both translated in the present study, Rangjung Dorjé is credited with the composition of Chöd practice manuals and other explanatory texts.<sup>495</sup> One of the most comprehensive collections of works on

---

system of the two wish-fulfilling jewels [possibly referring to Padampa and Machik] appears as the view.} In his M.A. thesis, Azzato says that he compensates for not including Rangjung Dorjé’s commentaries by including Aryadeva’s *tshigs bcad* and its *’grel*. Orofino does not seem to acknowledge this caveat at all. I have no record of Savvas translating the supplementary texts by Rangjung Dorjé.

<sup>492</sup> In his 19<sup>th</sup> century history, Khams smyon ‘jigs ‘bral chos kyi seng ge (1974, 27a-b) refers to the *rnam thar* by Namkha Gyaltzen and notes that the second Karmapa, Karma Pakshi (1203-1284 CE) and Rangjung Dorjé are both said to have followed Machik’s partner, Thod pa bha dra.<sup>492</sup> This would be chronologically unlikely according to normative historical dating, since there would be almost a century between Thod pa bha dra (given Machik’s dates) and the second Karmapa, and more than a century between Thod pa bha dra and Rangjung Dorjé. In addition, this information does not appear in the editions of Namkha Gyaltzen’s biography of Machik that are in the *Great Explanation* collection. Moreover, Chökyi Sengé voices his lack of confidence in this connection, stating that it is not absolutely certain and cannot be confirmed because of the lack of biographies (“‘on kyang rnam thar du ma yod pas mtha’ gcig tu ma nges so”). Chökyi Sengé later mentions that Karma Pakshi and Brtson ‘grus seng ge (1207-1278; Shangpa Kagyüpa) received the linear transmission of the essential profound teachings of Chöd (*zab don snying po’i bka’ babs grub chen karma pakshi*) (68a). According to the TBRC database (P 95), Brtson ‘grus seng ge received a *Gcod kyi chig brgyud* from “Ma gcig sprul sku” in 1216 CE.

<sup>493</sup> Davidson 2005, 332.

<sup>494</sup> Toyo Bunko edition, 68; *gcod kyi chos skor* edition, 546.

<sup>495</sup> These texts include the *Gcod kyi khrid yig*, the *Tshogs las yon tan kun ’byung*, the *Ma lab sgron la gsol ba ’deb*



the practices of Chöd (the *Gcod kyi tshogs las rin po che'i phreng ba 'don bsgrigs bltas chog tu bdud pa gcod kyi lugs sor bzhag*, or the *Gcod tshogs*) is attributed to Rangjung Dorjé and was revised by Karma Chagmé in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Rangjung Dorjé's interest in Chöd may have been due to his connection to Padampa Sangyé: at a young age, Rangjung Dorjé's family made a pilgrimage to Langkhor, Dingri, a site closely associated with Padampa Sangyé, and the boy received blessings from a statue of Padampa Sangyé.<sup>496</sup> What can be definitively established is that Rangjung Dorjé was aware of these Chöd teachings by the early fourteenth century and found them important enough that he wrote commentaries on existing Chöd texts as well as composing his own teachings. From Rangjung Dorjé's commentaries, we learn that by the fourteenth century, teachings were circulating under the name of "Chöd" that were not presented as a subset of Padampa's Zhijé system. Rangjung Dorjé's commentaries also allow us roughly to date *The Great Speech Chapter* as existing prior to the fourteenth century.<sup>497</sup> In addition to being the earliest datable Chöd text, *The Great Speech Chapter* is noteworthy as one of the teachings said to have been initially given to the three Indian scholars as mentioned above.

*The Great Speech Chapter* opens with the author "pay[ing] homage to the state without thought, the realm beyond objects and without reference," rather than (as one might expect) to the Goddess Prajñāpāramitā or another form of enlightened being. The text is a systematic discourse on self-liberation from the Negative Forces as understood within the Chöd tradition,

---

*pa'i mgur ma*, the *Zab mo bdud kyi gcod yil kyi khrid yig*, and the *Gcod kyi nyams len*. I plan to continue studying these texts in order better to explain Rangjung Dorjé's contributions to the transmission of Machik's Chöd system.

<sup>496</sup> Schaeffer 1995, 8.

<sup>497</sup> This has also been noted by Kollmar-Paulenz (1994, 24-25) and Hermann-Pfandt (1998, 95). Hermann-Pfandt posits that *The Great Speech Chapter* is an early text, given that the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé (1284-1339) commented on it (1998, 95). In addition, Rdza rong bla ma Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu (1867-1940; Nyingma), in his *Gcod yul byin rlabs gter mtsho*, remarks that Machik herself recorded this text, although as Hermann-Pfandt acknowledges, "this single notice written down about 600 years later can of course not be enough to make the authorship of Ma gcig sure" (1998, 95).

and it communicates its messages via three strategies: by short and simple statements, through analogies, and with more elaborate explanations. As in other Chöd texts, the three Negative Forces—the Negative Force with Obstruction, the Negative Force without Obstruction, and the Joyous Negative Force—are distinct, yet they are also fundamentally interconnected with the Negative Force of Pride. The root of all of these Negative Forces is one’s own mind and its propensity to identify and attach itself to mental and physical objects, leading to mental confusion and other poisons. In *The Great Speech Chapter*, we are told that the “most distinguished instruction” (*gdams ngag kun la khyad par ‘phags*) is on comprehending deities and demons (*lha ‘dre*) as apparitions of one’s own mind, for which the antidote is the severance of the mind (here it is literally “the flow of mindfulness” [*dran rgyun*]).

### **Primordial Wisdoms**

While I have analyzed the presentation of the Negative Forces in *The Great Speech Chapter* at length in chapter five of this study, here I will turn to another innovative bridge that Machik constructs between Sūtra and Tantra teachings. The five poisons and the five realms of existence<sup>498</sup> are often interconnected in Sūtra teachings. In *The Great Speech Chapter*, however, Machik uses her trope of Negative Forces to underline the impermanence of these realms due to their mental construction. Though Rangjung Dorjé pays scant attention to this topic in his commentaries, Machik provides an alternative reading of the Negative Forces through a Vajrayāna teaching on the transformation of such Forces into Wisdoms. This teaching parallels conventional Vajrayāna teachings on the transformation of the Five Poisons into the Five Wisdoms through the antidotes of the Five Dhyani Buddhas. Through this connection between realms of existence and Negative Forces, Machik emphasizes the fundamental Buddhist teaching

---

<sup>498</sup> As will be seen, Machik does not use traditional language for these categories; moreover, rather than the conventional six categories of existence, Machik lists only five, apparently conflating the two realms of the titans and the gods.

that even the realms of existence and corresponding experiences of suffering are ultimately mentally fabricated and based in ignorance of the true nature of reality. According to Machik,

Resulting from severing the root of the production of pride (*snyems byed rtsa ba*), aggression is also liberated in its own place; emancipated from the molten hell Negative Forces, one attains Mirror-Like Primordial Wisdom.<sup>499</sup> Resulting from severing the root of the production of pride, desire and attachment are also liberated in their own place; emancipated from the hungry and thirsty ghosts, one attains the Individually-Discriminating Primordial Wisdom.<sup>500</sup> Resulting from severing the root of pride (*snyems kyi rtsa ba*), confusion is also liberated in its own place;<sup>501</sup> emancipated from the animal slavery Negative Force, one attains the *Dharmadhātu* Primordial Wisdom. Resulting from severing the root of pride, jealousy is also liberated in its own place; emancipated from the Negative Force of changeable persons,<sup>502</sup> one attains the Activity-Accomplishing Primordial Wisdom. Resulting from severing the root of pride, arrogance is also liberated in its own place; emancipated from the Negative Force of dissension, one attains the Equanimous Primordial Wisdom. Furthermore, the uncut rope of pride is the five poisons;<sup>503</sup> the severance of pride is self-liberated wisdom.<sup>504</sup>

The traditional Buddhist list of the five poisons (*dug lnga*) includes desire (*'dod chags; rāga*), aggression (*zhe sdang; dveṣa*), delusion (*gti mug; moha*), pride (*nga rgyal; māna*), and jealousy (*phrag dog; īrṣyā*). In *The Great Speech Chapter*, Machik elaborates this classification in order

<sup>499</sup> This section discusses the five types of Primordial Wisdom (*ye shes lnga; pañca jñānāni*), which are the antidotes to the five poisons (see note below).

<sup>500</sup> Reading “*so sor rtog pa'i ye shes*” for “*so sor rtogs pa'i ye shes*.”

<sup>501</sup> There is a shift here from “*snyems byed rtsa ba*” (“the root of the production of pride”) as the object to be cut to “*snyems rtsa ba*” (“the root of pride”) as the object. I am unsure of the significance of this shift.

<sup>502</sup> Das interprets “*gyur byed*” as “a changer; one who brings about changes” (1973, 294). According to the Padma Karpo Translation Committee (2005) entry for “*spra 'chal*,” this term is a modern form of the archaic “*gyur byed*,” meaning “[a]n older person who does not have any burdens of work that they have to do or any particular projects that they have to complete. Like a retired person in the West who has nothing particular they have to do any longer.”

<sup>503</sup> The five poisons (*dug lnga*) are desire (*'dod chags; rāga*), aggression (*zhe sdang; dveṣa*), delusion (*gti mug; moha*), pride (*nga rgyal; māna*), and jealousy (*phrag dog; īrṣyā*)

<sup>504</sup> *zhe sdang rang sar grol ba yang // snyems byed rtsa ba chod las byung // btso bsreg dmyal ba'i bdud las thar // me long lta bu'i ye shes thob // 'dod chags rang sar grol ba yang // snyems byed rtsa ba chod las byung // bkres skom yi dvags bdud las thar // so sor rtogs pa'i ye shes thob // gti mug rang sar grol ba yang // snyems kyi rtsa ba chod las byung // bkol spyod byol song bdud las thar // chos kyi dbyings kyi ye shes thob // phrag dog rang sar grol ba yang // snyems kyi rtsa ba chod las byung // 'gyur byed mi yi bdud las thar // bya ba grub pa'i ye shes thob // nga rgyal rang sar grol ba yang // snyems kyi rtsa ba chod las byung // 'thab rtsod ltung ba'i bdud las thar // mnyam pa nyid kyi ye shes thob // snyems thag ma chod dug lnga yang // snyems chod rang grol ye shes so // § (Bka' tshoms chen mo 11/460)*

to situate her teachings within a classical Sūtra discussion of the five poisons and five realms of being. At the same time, Machik elaborates a Vajrayāna teaching on the transmutation of the five poisons into the five wisdoms. By combining these two and reinterpreting them through her trope of Negative Forces, as can be seen in Table Three, she appropriates the traditional Sūtra and Tantra teachings to her system of Chöd.

**Table Three**

POISON	NEGATIVE FORCE	PRIMORDIAL WISDOM
aggression	Molten Hell	Mirror-like
desire, attachment	Hungry Ghost	Individually-discriminating
confusion	Animal Slavery <sup>505</sup>	<i>Dharmadhātu</i>
jealousy	Changeable Persons <sup>506</sup>	Activity-accomplishing
arrogance	Dissension <sup>507</sup>	Equanimous

As can be seen in the table above, there are two differences between traditional teachings and Machik’s exposition. The first difference is in the representation of realms of existence. While in Theravāda Buddhism there are only five realms of existence because they do not distinguish between the realms of the titans (*asuras*) and the gods (*devas*), in Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism, these two realms are usually distinguished. The traditional six realms are: the Realm of the Hell-beings (*dmyal ba; naraka; niraya*); the Realm of the Hungry Ghosts (*yi dvag; preta; petta*); the Realm of Animals (*dud ‘gro; tiryagyoni; tiracchānayoni*); the Realm of Humans (*mi; manuṣya; manussa*); the Realm of the Titans (*lha ma yin; asura*); and the Realm of the Gods

<sup>505</sup> Rangjung Dorjé glosses this as “*dud ‘gro*,” “animals” (66/514).

<sup>506</sup> Rangjung Dorjé glosses this as “*lha mi*,” “deities and humans” (66/514).

<sup>507</sup> Rangjung Dorjé glosses this as “*lha ma yin*,” “titans” (66/514).

(*lha*; *deva*). Not only does Machik use slightly different descriptors for these categories (“molten hell” for the more general “hell”; “animal slavery” for the more general “animal”; “changeable person” for “human”), but she follows the Theravāda practice of not discriminating between the titans and the gods—both classes appear to be included in the category of “Dissension Negative Forces.”

The second difference is in Machik’s discussion of the Primordial Wisdoms. In conventional teachings, the Primordial Wisdoms are connected with the five Dhyani Buddhas (or the five buddha families): Akṣobhya (with Mirror-like Wisdom); Ratnaśāmbhava (with Equanimous Wisdom); Amitābha (with Discriminative Wisdom); Amoghasiddhi (with All-accomplishing Wisdom); and Vairocana (with *Dharmadhātu* Wisdom). Rather than presenting the transformation of the poisons into the wisdoms with the five Dhyani Buddhas, Machik presents them in relation to a basic teaching on the realms of existence that are the results of the actions and karmic accumulations of sentient beings. With this strategy, Machik returns a conventionally Vajrayāna teaching back to its roots in basic Sūtra teachings on the law of karma.

### **Body offering**

As I elaborated in chapter four, *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section* contains an extensive discussion of the gift of the body, which is likely the basis for later elaborations of this practice in Chöd sādhana, or practice texts. *The Great Speech Chapter* contains a much simpler version of a body offering practice that emphasizes the practitioner’s non-attachment to her physical embodiment. In a passage that recalls early Buddhist teachings on the withdrawal of the senses, Machik teaches that one should be like a corpse:

With enlightened knowing (*rig pa*), bearing the corpse of one’s own body to severe places, places of leprosy, and so forth, one should abandon [one’s body] in a non-attached fashion. The mind itself rests in the sphere of the Great Mother. Whatever thoughts and cognitive acts occur, moreover, are thoughts as emanations of the Great

Mother herself. The emanation of the Mother is not bound to the place of saṃsāra. Like the dullness of one with a full stomach, rest in disintegrated cognition. Abandon saṃsāra; have certainty in nirvāṇa. E Ma Ho! How wonderful! Without deliberate activity, it is time to use your mind!<sup>508</sup>

Here Machik recommends that the practitioner should bear her body to a severe place, such as a place where there is leprosy. As if her body were a corpse, she should abandon it in a non-attached fashion, allowing her mind to rest in the sphere of the Great Mother, Prajñāpāramitā.

Rangjung Dorjé's commentary on this passage elaborates on Machik's recommendation that one practice as if one is a corpse. Rangjung Dorjé suggests that this instruction is directed specifically toward beginners for whom the knowledge of the unity of discursive thinking and enlightened knowing is a terrifying place in itself. Once one has accustomed oneself to the internal terror of non-duality, one can reorient oneself in external terrifying places without fear. Rangjung Dorjé suggests that for beginners, the practice of casting off the body as food is a strategy for dwelling in the state of prajñāpāramitā, the perfection of wisdom. Rangjung Dorjé addresses Machik's teaching on the connection between the practitioner knowing that her thoughts lack true existence and her passing into nirvāṇa:

In this regard, this very combination of one's own enlightened knowing and discursive thinking about grasped objects and grasping subjects is a terrifying place. Having cut through this very [internal terrifying place], one will cut through even external terrifying places. If one is a beginner, even with just a few anxieties, by casting off [the body] as food and so forth, one will become unattached. The aim is to dwell in the state of the perfection of wisdom.<sup>509</sup>

---

<sup>508</sup> *rig pas rang lus ro khur la // gnyan sa la sogs mdze gnas su // chags med tshul gyis skyur bar bya // sems nyid yum chen klong du bzhag // dran rtog shes byed ci byung yang // yum chen sprul ba nyid du dgongs // yum sprul 'khor ba'i gnas mi 'ching // glen pa lto ba 'grangs pa bzhin // 'du shes rnam par bshigs la bzhag // 'khor spangs mya ngan 'da' bar nges / E MA HO // bya rtsol med do dgongs pa longs / § (Bka' tshoms chen mo 13/462)*

<sup>509</sup> *“dran rtog bden med du shes pas mya ngan las 'da' ba ni / rig pa zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang bcu gcig ste / de yang rang rig gzung 'dzin gyi rnam rtog dang bcas pa 'di nyid gnyan sa yin te / 'di nyid chod nas phyi rol gyi gnyan sa rnams kyang chod par 'gyur zhing / gal te las dang po pa cung zad bag tsha ba rnams kyis kyang / gzan skyur la sogs pas ma chags par bya zhing / don shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i ngang du gnas par bya'o” (Bka' tshoms 'grel pa 70/518).*

There are two points worth noting here. While *The Great Speech Chapter* does not fully explain the body offering practices that will become central to the Chöd tradition (and which I have discussed in chapter four), Rangjung Dorjé uses language that will become characteristic of Chöd body offering practices (*lus sbyin*). For example, Rangjung Dorjé uses the term “*gzan skyur*,” referring to the “casting off” of the body as food, whereas in *The Great Speech Chapter*, the image is of bearing one’s body as a corpse. One could speculate that Rangjung Dorjé’s interpretation of this early text influenced more elaborate descriptions of this practice in later texts. Secondly, Rangjung Dorjé’s introduction of the notions of internal and external terrifying places is puzzling. Although he insists that this practice is for beginners, Rangjung Dorjé suggests that they should cut through internal terrifying places, which are equated with the experience of non-duality of discursive and non-discursive knowledge. Such an experience, as Machik suggests with her use of the term “*rig pa*” in the root text, is an advanced level of enlightened knowing. As with his descriptions of several other practices, Rangjung Dorjé seems to suggest that Chöd is only suitable to advanced practitioners, though Machik implies that her teachings are for all.

### **The Three Bodies**

We can see similar subtle differences between Machik and Rangjung Dorjé in their discussions of the traditional Buddhist concept of the Three Bodies—the Truth Body (*chos sku; dharmakāya*), Enjoyment Body (*longs sku; sambhogakāya*), and Emanation Body (*sprul sku; nirmāṇakāya*). Machik is skeptical in her treatment of the topic of the Three Bodies, cautioning against fixating on them as ultimate truth. In Machik’s view, aspiration to attain the Three Bodies can lead to attachment to particular teachings and tenet systems, thus constituting an obstruction to enlightenment. Here Machik characterizes the problem of desire for attaining the

Three Bodies as a “Negative Force of Results”<sup>510</sup>: “Because desires for the definitive attainment of the Three Bodies are the results of the tenet systems of the vehicles of the Hearers (*śrāvaka*), the Self-conquerors (*pratyekabuddha*), and the others, because of the joy associated with [such] desires, there are Negative Forces.”<sup>511</sup> Machik argues that dependence on enlightened ones, rather than on one’s own self-nature, will not lead to the realization of one’s own nature as enlightened: “The Three Bodies are explained as the result of the threefold self-nature of body, speech and mental consciousness; [the Three Bodies] are not established from the side of the enlightened ones (*sangs rgyas*).” By giving up the desire for attainment through tenet systems, the practitioner gives up hope for particular results dependent on external causes: “[w]ithout hope, Chöd practitioners are freed from the limits of hope and fear; having cut the ropes of grasping, definitely enlightened (*nges par sangs rgyas*), where does one go?”<sup>512</sup> Beyond the limits of concepts such as the Three Bodies, Machik insists that cutting through mental grasping and attachment is the ultimate form of practice.

In his *Commentary* discussing this passage, Rangjung Dorjé emphasizes understanding, rather than achieving, one’s own enlightened identity. For him, the Three Bodies are a means, rather than an obstacle, to this understanding: “The previous cause, result, and so forth, are created by liberation from having hopes and fears; when one understands one’s own triad of

---

<sup>510</sup> This appears to be a subset of “Negative Forces Producing Joy.”

<sup>511</sup> “*bras bu’i bdud ni ‘di bzhin no // nyan thos rang rgyal la sogs pa’i // grub mtha’ theg pa’i ‘bras bu ni // sku gsum nges par thob ‘dod pas // ‘dod pa dang bcas brod pas bdud*” (*Bka’ tshoms chen mo* 10/459). However, in the *Distinctive Eightfold Supplement* (164/410), Machik offers another perspective on the Three Bodies, connecting the pacification of the four Negative Forces—the Obstructive Negative Forces, the Non-obstructive Negative Forces, the Joyful Negative Forces and the Negative Forces that Create Pride—with liberation from physical and mental suffering and the attainment of the Three Buddha Bodies. This apparent contradiction might be explained by suggesting that Machik is using skillful means to address the needs of a different audience in a different context, or it might signify a shift in her teaching of Chöd.

<sup>512</sup> “*lus ngag yid gsum rang bzhin la // sku gsum ‘bras bur bstan pa las // sangs rgyas logs nas bsgrub tu med // rang las spangs te btsal gyur na // bskal pa bye ba du mar yang // bsgrubs pas thob par mi ‘gyur pas // mi btsal mi bsgrub rang bzhin bzhag // re ba med pa gcod kyi mi re dogs pa’i mtha’ dang bral // ‘dzin pa’i thag pa bcad pa las // nges par sangs rgyas ga la mchis*” (*Bka’ tshoms chen mo* 10/459).



body, speech and mind as the Three Bodies, there will not be accomplishment through other enlightened ones.” In order to undergird his position, Rangjung Dorjé turns to Nāropa: “By the master Nāropa it is said, ‘all things abide in the mind.’”<sup>513</sup> This aphorism is a paraphrase of the second line of Nāropa’s *The Summary of Mahāmudrā* (*Phyag rgya chen po’i tshig bsdu pa*), which reads “*chos rnam thams cad rang gi sems*” (“All things are mind in itself”). Herbert Guenther argues that it is problematic to translate “*rang gi sems*” as “one’s mind”:

*rañ sems*, also *rañ-gi sems*, is a term most likely to mislead the linguistic specialist by inducing him to translate the genitive case *rañ-gi* as such and render the whole term as ‘one’s mind,’ taking ‘one’ as one entity and ‘mind’ as another. However, the use of *rañ* is, to our Western thinking, exceedingly ambiguous. Above all it refers to itself so that *rañ-gi sems* would have to be translated as ‘mind pointing to itself,’ ‘mind in itself,’ ‘mind as such’ or any such similar circumlocutions.<sup>514</sup>

Yet, oddly enough, Rangjung Dorjé seems unintentionally to reinforce just the duality that Guenther cautions against: Rangjung Dorjé uses “*gnas*,” which can be read as a verb meaning “to abide, to dwell, to stay, to remain,” but not as a copula connecting “*chos*” (“things”) and “*sems*” (“mind”). Rangjung Dorjé’s paraphrase of Nāropa distinguishes between two entities: “things” *abide* in the “mind.” This formulation of containing things in one’s mind seems a long way from the non-place Machik posits as a result of cutting the ropes of grasping. While Rangjung Dorjé’s use of Nāropa muddles Machik’s teaching, he might invoke Nāropa to yoke Machik’s Chöd teaching to Nāropa’s Mahāmudrā system. I discuss the association between Chöd and Mahāmudrā further in a later section of this chapter.

In another passage from *The Great Speech Chapter*, Machik reiterates that the result of the Three Bodies is self-arising: “[a]s for the self-arising without attachment, it is said to be the

---

<sup>513</sup> “*gong gi rgyu ‘bras la sogs re dogs dang bcas pa las grol bar byed pa ni / rang gi lus ngag yid gsum rtogs na sku gsum yin pas / sangs rgyas gzhan nas bsgrub tu med de / slob dpon Na ro pas / chos kun sems la gnas zhes gsungs*” (*Bka’ tshoms ‘grel pa* 64/512).

<sup>514</sup> Guenther 1999 [1963], 39 n. 1.

Ornament of the *Dharmakāya* Without Pride. Because the result of the Three Bodies is one’s own, it is not necessary to generate joy in another way.”<sup>515</sup> Here Machik suggests that the attainment of the Three Bodies does not require specific training techniques, but is rather the spontaneous result of cutting through mental grasping. In his commentary on this section, Rangjung Dorjé explains that, “when you yourself are freed of both grasped object and grasping subject, you can depend upon your unhampered skills; this is an ornament.” Although Machik does not mention anything unorthodox in this passage, Rangjung Dorjé then uses the *Samcayagātha* to associate this “ornament” with the miracles (*rdzu* ‘*phrul*; *ṛddhi*) performed by a bodhisattva: “similarly, an intelligent bodhisattva—abiding in emptiness and primordial wisdom (*ye shes*), having reached the side of miracles and without an abode—displays infinite kinds of activities to beings without wavering and without exhaustion for ten million kalpa.”<sup>516</sup> This shifts the topic from Machik’s ongoing concern with severing pride as the fundamental action to Rangjung Dorjé’s interest in the bodhisattva’s capacity for miraculous acts. While Machik’s critique of tenet systems encourages ordinary practitioners to attain the “result of the Three Bodies” by cutting through the root of mind, Rangjung Dorjé associates such “results” with the exceptional attainment of the bodhisattva, implicitly putting them out of reach of most practitioners.

Near the conclusion of *The Great Speech Chapter*, Machik reiterates her argument that the essential problem for practitioners to address is attachment: “Without grasping a body, it is the body of a Victor; without grasping speech, it is the speech of a Victor; without grasping

---

<sup>515</sup> “*dga’ brod bdud kyang snyems su ‘dus // thun mongs chos la dga’ brod dang // ‘bras bu mchog la dga’ brod pa // rang gi snyems las byung ba yin // nges par chags na bdud du ‘gyur / § chags pa med pa’i rang shar ni // snyems med chos sku’i rgyan du gsungs / § sku gsum ‘bras bu rang yin pas // gzhan du brod pa bskyed mi dgos’* (Bka’ tshoms chen mo 11-12/460-461).

<sup>516</sup> *sdud pa* XX.12; this is an exact quote from the Tibetan. The Sanskrit reads: “*em eva śūnyata-sthito vidu bodhisattvo jñānā-ṛddhi-pārami-gato a-niketa-cārī / vividhāṃ kriyāṃ jagati darśayate an-antāṃ na ca sajjate na pi ca khidyati kalpa-koṭīḥ*” (Yuyama 1976, 78). See also Conze, “The Simile of the Twin Miracle” (1994 [1973], 46).

mental consciousness (*yid*), it is the mind (*thugs*) of a Victor; without grasping, one is included in the luminous Mother.”<sup>517</sup> Through severing the habitual act of dualistic grasping, not only will one have the body, speech and mind of a Buddha, but one will be inseparable from the luminous Mother, Perfection of Wisdom, Prajñāpāramitā. In his *Commentary*, Rangjung Dorjé expands on Machik’s argument, making explicit connections with the six virtuous perfections and the Three Bodies: “In addition, the yogin, having a foundation in the six perfections as his own path,<sup>518</sup> purifies self-grasping on its own ground; when apprehended objects have been diffused into the Body and Primordial Knowledge, they will be inseparable from the body, speech and mind of the Enlightened Ones. . . . Because one understands the inseparability of the Three Bodies, one does not seek the mind of the Victor elsewhere.<sup>519</sup> Rangjung Dorjé implies that one must cultivate the six perfections, which accommodates Machik’s Chöd to conventional Pāramitāyāna teachings. Rangjung Dorjé also seems to add a process of “diffusing” grasped objects into the Body and Primordial Knowledge, in contrast to Machik’s claim that a practitioner who abandons dualistic grasping attains the Three Bodies of a buddha.

### Capacities of Practitioners

The paradigm of the Three Bodies not only illustrates the different perspectives of Machik and Rangjung Dorjé on established tenet systems, but it also demonstrates their different views on and approaches to the capacities of Chöd practitioners. While Machik cautions that

---

<sup>517</sup> “*lus la ‘dzin med rgyal ba’i sku / ngag la ‘dzin med rgyal ba’i gsungs / / yid la ‘dzin med rgyal ba’i thugs / / ‘dzin med ‘od gsal ma gtogs pa / / rgyal ba’i dgongs pa gzhan mtshol*” (*Bka’ tshoms chen mo* 15/464).

<sup>518</sup> Interpreting “*bdag lam*” as “his own path”; however, this could also be an abbreviation for “*bdag po’i lam*,” meaning “governing path” or “dominant path.”

<sup>519</sup> “*‘dzin med rtogs na sku gsum du bstan pa ni / lus la ‘dzin ces pa la sogs pa tshig rkang lnga ste / de yang rnal ‘byor pa bdag lam pha rol tu phyin pa drug la brten nas / bdag ‘dzin rang sar dag cing / gzung yul sku dang ye shes su rgyas pa’i tshe / sangs rgyas rnams kyi sku gsung thugs dang tha dad med par ‘gyur bas / lam rnams kyang ‘dzin med ‘od gsal la / shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa nyid ma gtogs pa / rgyal ba’i dgongs pa gzhan nas btsal*<sup>519</sup> *du med de / sku gsum dbyer med du rtogs pa’i phiyir ro*” (*Bka’ tshoms ‘grel pa* 77/525).

hoping to attain the Three Bodies is a Negative Force, she does accept that the provisional teaching on the results of the Three Bodies is a useful tool for the unaccomplished practitioner: “The teaching of the results for the unaccomplished is the teaching on the results of the Three Bodies; in addition, the major and minor marks, and so forth, [are explained] in the teaching on the provisional meaning. This is for those without even the slightest trace of accomplishment.”<sup>520</sup> In his commentary on this “teaching on the provisional methods for those with lesser mental functioning,” Rangjung Dorjé provides more details on what such a provisional practice would include: “Even though appearances are exhausted for disciples through the power of aspirational prayers, as well as the thirty-two major marks, the eighty minor marks, and so forth, definitive appearances on top of meaning and actuality are not truly established even in the slightest amount.” Rangjung Dorjé here uses an esoteric text, the *Uttaratantra*, to elucidate this teaching apparently intended for a less advanced practitioner: “according to the explanation from the *Uttaratantra*,<sup>521</sup> it is said that, just as a jewel appears as if it is insubstantial by the variety of its colors, likewise the All-pervading Lord (*khyab bdag; vibhū*) appears insubstantial due to the various conditions of [his] being.”<sup>522</sup> If this is in fact a

---

<sup>520</sup> “*ma grub ‘bras bur gsungs pa ni / / sku gsum ‘bras bur gsungs pa yang / / drang ba’i don du gsungs pa las / / mtshan dang dpe byad la sogs pa / / nges par grub pa rdul tsam med’* (Bka’ tshoms chen mo 15/464)

<sup>521</sup> This is a quotation of verse 52 in the second chapter of the *Rgyud bla ma (Ratnagotravibhāga Mahāyānottaratantra)* by Asaṅga/Maitreya-nātha. There is a slight variation in the version found in the Derge Tangyur, which reads: “*ji ltar tshon ni sna tshogs kyis / nor bu de dngos min snang ltar / de bzhin ‘gro rkyen sna tshogs pas / khyab bdag de dngos min par snang /*” (emphasis added here to highlight the slightly different order of the terms) (Sde dge *Bstan ‘gyur, sems tsam, phi*, 64B). Following E.H. Johnston’s edition (1997 [1991], 87), the Sanskrit is as follows: “*raṅgapratyayaivaicitryādatad bhāvo yathā maṇeḥ / sattvapratyayaivaicitryādatad bhāvastathā vibhoḥ.*”

According to Klaus-Dieter Mathes, Rangjung Dorjé is considered to have composed a summary of the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, but there does not seem to be an extant copy of this text. Mathes discusses other texts of Rangjung Dorjé’s that refer to the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, including the *Dharmadhātustotra*, the *Snying po bstan pa* and his autocommentary on the *Zab mo nang gi don*. Mathes pays particular attention to the sections of the *Dharmadhātustotra* wherein Rangjung Dorjé summarizes the seven examples of the relationship between the *Dharmadhātu* and individual sentient beings, including ones mentioned in this present commentary concerning butter and gems. See Mathes 2008, esp. 51-75.

teaching for practitioners of lesser accomplishment, Rangjung Dorjé's use of an esoteric reference curiously obfuscates this practice. As in his explication of the body offering practice, Rangjung Dorjé's reference seems to make this "unaccomplished" teaching inaccessible to the unaccomplished practitioner.

While *The Great Speech Chapter* represents the teaching on the Three Bodies as suited to practitioners of lesser capacity, it suggests that those of moderate capacity, as I discussed above, will subscribe to a particular tenet system and thus only reach a partial understanding of reality. *The Great Speech Chapter* frequently stresses the exceptionality of Machik's teachings of Chöd as a dharma system, though it does not claim that these teachings are only for those of the highest capacity. According to Machik, one of the exceptional aspects of Chöd is that it teaches "non-view" ("mi lta ba"), which is defined as "not committing to a viewpoint." This "non-view" is a logical consequence of a mental state of enlightened knowing in which "whatever arises [in one's mind] is unobstructed."<sup>523</sup>

In his commentary on this passage, Rangjung Dorjé explicitly associates the Chöd "non-view" with "exceptional students," stressing that these teachings are "for the few persons who have a foundation of sharp faculties, because even explanations about the unfathomable particularities of view and meditative cultivation are not created in their actual mental consciousnesses, the mind of reification is also abandoned and one extensively determines the lack of truth of unobstructed apparent appearances." Although Machik does not present her

---

<sup>522</sup> "Inga pa 'bras bu la bzhi las / blo chung ba la drang thabs su bstan pa ni / ma grub ces pa la sogs tshig rkang lnga ste / de yang yod<sup>522</sup> med dang / skye 'gag / 'gro 'ong / rtag chad la sogs pa gang du yang ma grub pa'i / bden med ngo bo nyid kyi sku la 'bras bur gsungs pa dang / gzhan yang sku gsum du bstan pa la sogs pa / smon lam gyi stobs kyis gdul bya la snang bar zad mod kyi<sup>522</sup> / mtshan bzang po sum cu rtsa gnyis dang / dpe byad bzang po bryad cu la sogs pa yang / don gnas lugs kyi steng du nges par snang bden du grub pa rdul tsam yang med do / / de yang rgyud bla ma las / ci ltar tshon ni sna tshogs kyis ṽ / nor bu de dngos min ltar snang / de bzhiin 'gro rkyen sna tshogs pas / khyab bdag de dngos min par snang / zhes bshad pa'i phyr ro" (*Bka' tshoms 'grel pa 15/464*)

<sup>523</sup> *Bka' tshoms chen mo 9/458.*

teachings as exclusive, here Rangjung Dorjé suggests that they should be reserved for the most advanced practitioners. Machik does not link her “non-view” to authoritative Buddhist sources, but Rangjung Dorjé cites the *Rgyas pa* to explain this perspective: “Also in that way, the extensive teaching states, ‘form is not created in mental consciousness’ (*gzugs yid la mi byed*),<sup>524</sup> since it is said that there is no creation in mental consciousness (*yid*) in the middle of omniscience (*rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid*).”<sup>525</sup> Rangjung Dorjé domesticates Machik’s teaching by contextualizing it within what appears to be a *Prajñāpāramitā* discourse.<sup>526</sup> Machik’s potentially radical advocacy of a “non-view” is here subsumed by Rangjung Dorjé to an established Buddhist tradition.

### Rangjung Dorjé’s Secondary Sources

In contrast to Rangjung Dorjé’s legitimation of her teachings through sources such as the *Prajñāpāramitā* and the *Uttaratantra*, Machik emphasizes that her “exceptional path” is “taught from the speech (*bka’*; *vacana*) of the Victorious One,” that is, Śākyamuni Buddha. Following this “exceptional path,” when one has transcended cognitive fabrications such as “form” and “feeling” and is no longer bound by dualistic thinking, one will be freed from karmic latencies and attain enlightenment: “If cognitions such as form and feeling are not created in one’s mental consciousness, one will be freed from dwelling in the three realms; one will not be mixed up in

<sup>524</sup> I have yet to locate a direct source for this citation. It could be a paraphrase of or allusion to a passage such as this in the *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag nyi shu lnga pa* [To 5574(7)] (*Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*): “*dnogs po thams cad yid la mi byed ste*.”

<sup>525</sup> “*gnyis pa brda’ ru shes na grol ba la bzhi las / rang shar la blta bya lta byed med pa ni / lta bsgom zhes pa la sogs pa’i tshig rkang pa drug ste / de yang dbang po rnon po’i rten gyi gang zag ‘ga’ zhig la / lta bsgom pa’i bye brag dpag tu med pa bshad pa rnams kyang don dam par yid la byar med pa yin pas / / A ‘thas kyi blo yang spang zhing / ma ‘gags pa’i rtsal snang ba bden med du rgyas btob pa ni gcod kyi mchog yin no / / de ltar du yang / rgyas pa las / gzugs yid la mi byed ces pa nas rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid kyi bar du yid la mi byed par gsungs pa’i phyir ro”* (*Bka’ tshoms ‘grel pa* 62-63/510-511).

<sup>526</sup> Obermiller mentions variations in the use of the term “*prajñā-pāramitā*.” One example, which is salient in the context of Chöd, is from Dignāga’s *Prajñā-pāramitā-ārtha-saṃgraha*, wherein it is suggested that one meaning of *prajñā-pāramitā* is “the monistic Highest Wisdom personified as the Buddha in his Cosmical Body (*dharmakāya*), and free from the differentiation into subject and object (*grāhya-grāhaka*)” (1998 [1988], 6).

samsāra. If nothing whatsoever is created in one’s mental consciousness, karmic latencies do not arise, and the ground and path are complete.” Once the practitioner has attained this non-dual awareness, “it is not necessary to interrupt the movements of mental consciousness; they will be liberated on their own ground like mirages. . . . One travels on the path by means of any activities whatsoever.”<sup>527</sup> Rangjung Dorjé develops this teaching of Machik’s through citing *The Superior One* (*‘phags pa*): “*The Superior One* also explains, ‘Because all things are unfabricated in mental functioning itself, the perfection of wisdom is unfabricated in mental functioning itself.’”<sup>528</sup> Although these passages are evocative of *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings in general, I have not been able to locate a specific source for them. But once again, Rangjung Dorjé implicitly discounts Machik’s claim that her teachings are *buddhavacana* by supporting them with authoritative textual materials. While the root text has an editorial note reinforcing that this teaching “is not for the purpose of an ordinary person” (*‘di nas tshig rkang gnyis dpe phal ched du med*), Rangjung Dorjé appears to use an exoteric Sūtra source—rather than an esoteric one—to elucidate this teaching for non-ordinary persons.

Rangjung Dorjé’s frequent references to canonical texts not only legitimate Chöd as authentically Buddhist, but they serve to diminish Machik’s unique contributions to Buddhist dharma. In Machik’s biographies and *The Great Explanation*, there is a distinct effort to locate Machik in a previous (male-embodied) life in India, to identify her as a student of Padampa Sangyé, and to describe her teachings being tested and found valid according to “experts.”

---

<sup>527</sup> “gzugs dang tshor ba ‘du shes sogs // nges par yid la ma byas na // khams gsum gnas las grol bar ‘gyur // ‘khor bar ‘dre bar mi ‘gyur ro // gang yang yid la ma byas na // bag chags mi ‘byung sa lam rdzogs // yid la ma byas lam mchog tu // rgyal ba’i bka’ las gsungs par nges // yid la ma byas rtogs gyur na // yid kyi ‘gyu ba dgag mi dgos // smig rgyu bzhin du rang sar grol // de ltar {‘di nas tshig rkang gnyis dpe phal ched du med} rtogs pa’i rnal ‘byor pas // bag yangs spyod pa dgag mi dgos // gang ltar byas kyang lam du ‘gro // mi byed pa ni lam yin no” (*Bka’ tshoms chen mo* 15-16/464-5).

<sup>528</sup> “‘phags pa las kyang / chos thams cad yid la mi byed pa nyid pas / shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa yid la mi byed pa nyid do // zhes bshad pa” (*Bka’ tshoms ‘grel pa* 76/524).

Similarly, Rangjung Dorjé, in his efforts to domesticate Chöd, makes canonical Buddhist references explicit, drawing connections between passages in *The Great Speech Chapter* and authoritative Indic sources. Machik's teachings are thus both legitimated and altered through Rangjung Dorjé's references.

In *The Great Speech Chapter*, Machik never makes explicit reference to other teachings. She does occasionally allude to other traditions, as when she uses the *Prajñāpāramitā* aphorism “the essence of form is empty” to explain that one should meditate on emptiness.<sup>529</sup> She also claims that “[t]he word of the Victorious One (*rgyal ba, jina*; i.e. the Buddha) is not tainted by alteration; if altered, the alteration is because of a Negative Force.”<sup>530</sup> This reference both legitimates her own teaching and reminds the reader of episodes in the life of the Buddha when he himself encountered Negative Forces personified as Mārā. Rangjung Dorjé offers the following commentary on this passage: “Resting uncontrived and loosely is discussed in nine lines, from ‘*bcos bslad mi bya.*’ In this regard, from equanimous engagement in a state of mental inactivity, when there is another [state] contrived by discursive thinking because of a Negative Force, one should rest uncontrived and loosely.”<sup>531</sup> In his commentary on Machik's text, Rangjung Dorjé neglects to mention that the object of Machik's discussion is the legitimate speech of the Buddha (*buddhavacana*) which “is not tainted by alteration” unless a Negative Force is involved.

We see this strategy of subordinating Chöd to established traditions in Rangjung Dorjé's commentary on a rare passage of *The Great Speech Chapter* in which the authorial voice is made

---

<sup>529</sup> “*gzugs kyi ngo bos stong*” (*Bka' tshoms chen mo* 7/456).

<sup>530</sup> *bcos bslad mi bya rgyal ba'i bka' / / bcos na 'chos byed bdud yin pas bzhin.* (*Bka' tshoms chen mo* 13/462)

<sup>531</sup> “*ma bcos lhug par bzhag pa ni / bcos bslad mi bya zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang dgu ste / de yang yid la mi byed pa'i ngang du mnyam par 'jog pa las / gzhan rnam rtog gis bcos 'chos par byed pa bdud yin pas na / ma bcos lhug par bzhag par bya'o*” (*Bka' tshoms 'grel pa* 70/518).



explicit through “*nga yis smras*,” or “I say.” This construction is used to emphasize Machik’s central teaching that all suffering (and its manifestation through Negative Forces) is a result of mentally constructed pride: “Since one has been liberated from saṃsāra in one’s own place, one does not search from the side of nirvāṇa. From one’s own form arising in concepts, one does not meditatively cultivate for the purpose of conceptlessness. Thus, because everything is pride, I say that one must cut the ropes of pride. It has been taught that one who rests in the clear essence does not identify a mind of clear essence.”<sup>532</sup> In his commentary on this passage, Rangjung Dorjé relies upon the *Prajñāpāramitā*, thus subordinating the authorial voice to the authoritative Buddhist source: “Furthermore, these types of Negative Forces should be understood from the detailed *Prajñāpāramitā* sections on the Negative Forces; moreover, because the root of these [Negative Forces] is discursive thought, cutting that very [root], one should do meditative cultivation (*de nyid bcad cing bsgom par bya*).”<sup>533</sup> While the topic of cutting through the mental construct of pride is implicit in the *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings, Machik explicitly and repeatedly emphasizes the action of cutting the object of pride in her discourses and techniques. In addition, there is a tension between the root text and the commentary in the instructions for this process. In the root text, we are told that the method for cutting the ropes of pride is to “rest in the clear essence” *without* “identify[ing] the mind of clear essence.”

Rangjung Dorjé interprets this spontaneous realization through the more active language of

---

<sup>532</sup> “*dang po la gnyis las / dngos grub la chags na bdud yin pa ni dga’ brod la sogs tshig rkang lnga ste / de yang drod*<sup>532</sup> *rtags dang / gnas skabs kyi ‘bras bu rnam la chags pa de ka bdud yin no zhes so / ma chags na rgyan yin pa ni / chags med la sogs tshig rkang gnyis te / de yang gzung ‘dzin gnyis kyi dben pa’i bdag nyid la / ‘gag med kyi rtsal ‘cha’ ba ni rgyan yin no / de yang sdud pa las / rdzu ‘phrul gyi dpe dang / de bzhin byang chub sems dpa’ mkhas pa stong gnas shing / / ye shes rdzu ‘phrul pha rol son la gnas pa med / / ‘gro ba dag la bya ba rnam pa mtha’ yas ston / / bskal pa bye bar skyo ba med cing dub pa med / ces pa bzhin no (Bka’ tshoms ‘grel pa 67-8/515-6).*

<sup>533</sup> “*gzhan yang bdud kyi rnam pa de dag zhib par pha rol tu phyin pa’i bdud kyi le’u las shes par bya zhing / de dag gi rtsa ba yang rnam rtog yin pas de nyid bcad cing bsgom par bya’o*” (Bka’ tshoms ‘grel pa 67/515).

“meditative cultivation,” which includes “understanding that thought processes lack true existence . . . since there is no cause for meditative cultivation by means of another antidote.”

The distinction between Machik and Rangjung Dorjé’s teachings becomes clearer in the section immediately following. In this section, Machik uses several enigmatic analogies to further explicate her teachings. Though these analogies are somewhat difficult to understand, they caution against depending merely upon the teachings of others (especially those who are not themselves liberated) at the expense of one’s own experiential effort. For example,

As for the determinations by analogy:<sup>534</sup> the oral teachings of the yogas of attainment are like a small bird nurturing its fledglings. When oral teachings are conveyed by one’s lips, it is like a teacher starving a fledgling to death (*ltog grir shi ba*). I (*rang nyid*) can be certain of wandering in saṃsāra.<sup>535</sup> Like a fine *dri* (*‘bri*; female yak) nurturing her calf, when her own is satiated and she has the objective of helping [others] (*rogs kyi don byas*), [her nurturance] similarly spreads (*‘cho ba*<sup>536</sup>) to [other] calves and so forth. When one severs one’s own rope of pride, sentient beings will be liberated with certainty; the objectives of others will be established without doubt.<sup>537</sup>

In his *Commentary*, Rangjung Dorjé appears to support Machik’s position, asserting that “a person who has obtained the oral instructions [but] who is not liberated herself should not benefit others,” and explaining that only “when one understands oneself” as not truly existent can one improve the welfare of sentient beings. But in his commentary on the first part of this passage in

---

<sup>534</sup> “Determinations by analogy” are a form of logical presentation or argument that have a precedent in the *upadeśa* teachings of the Buddha.

<sup>535</sup> This is a provisional translation. Rangjung Dorjé writes in his commentary on the *Bka’ tshoms chen mo*: “A person who has obtained the oral instructions [but] who is not liberated himself should not benefit others; like the analogy of the little bird and the conveyed teachings (*ston skyel*), the teaching speaks of the difficulty of liberating self and others” (68/516). (“*dpe yis zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang drug ste / gdams ngag ‘di thob pa’i gang zag rnams kyis bdag ma grol bar gzhan don mi bya ste / bye’u dang / ston skyel gyi dpe bzhin / bdag gzhan grol bar dka’ zhes bstan to.*” )

<sup>536</sup> Rnam rgyal tshe ring (2001), in the *Bod yig brda rnying tshig mdzod*, defines “*‘cho ba*” as “*‘byams pa’am bzo ba*” (163).

<sup>537</sup> “*dpe yis gtan la dbab pa ni // gdams ngag thob pa’i rnal ‘byor rnams // bya byi’us phru gu gso ba bzhin // gdams ngag mchus skyel byas gyur na // ston bye’u ltog grir shi ba bzhin // rang nyid ‘khor bar ‘khyams par nges / § ‘bri bzang be’u chung gso ba ltar // rang ‘grangs rogs kyi don byas na // be’u chung la sogs ‘cho ba bzhin // rang gi snyems thag chod gyur na // sems can nges par grol bar ‘gyur // gzhan don ‘grub ‘gyur the tshom med’* (*Bka’ tshoms chen mo* 12/461).

the *Great Speech Chapter Outline (Gcod bka' tshoms chen mo'i sa bcad)*, Rangjung Dorjé interprets the “little bird” analogy as meaning “when one does not rely on one’s lineage, one is fettered.”<sup>538</sup> Not only does Machik not mention the concept of lineage here, but Rangjung Dorjé’s endorsement of a particular tenet system as leading to liberation is exactly counter to Machik’s critique of tenet systems as discussed above.

While Machik legitimates her teachings through nonspecific references to *buddhavacana*, Rangjung Dorjé frequently uses authoritative Buddhist texts to the same end. His most frequently used source is the *Samcayagātha*, verses on the *Prajñāpāramitā* that emphasize the duties of a bodhisattva. A typical example is his gloss on Machik’s explanation of “loosening” one’s “tightness.” Machik explains that “[t]hrough cutting one’s own pride, one pacifies the Negative Forces. By comprehending the separation from a root, the enlightened state becomes manifest. Therefore, one’s own tightness should be loosened. In all cases, one should rest in Thatness.”<sup>539</sup> Rangjung Dorjé cites the *Samcayagātha* to expand on this passage: “‘whoever transcends whatever is the guardian of the mundane world of the ten directions; the king of physicians trained in this knowledge mantra becomes unsurpassed.’”<sup>540</sup> Here Machik’s teaching on “resting in Thatness” is reinterpreted by Rangjung Dorjé to be training in the knowledge mantra of the *Prajñāpāramitā*.

Not only does Rangjung Dorjé use authoritative Buddhist sources to legitimate Machik’s teachings, but he also explicitly subordinates Chöd to the *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings:

---

<sup>538</sup> *Bka' tshom sa bcad* 56/505.

<sup>539</sup> “*E MA HO // rang snyems chod bas bdud rnams zhi // rtsa bral rtogs pas mngon sangs rgyas // de yang rang thang lhug par shog // kun kyang de bzhin bzhag par byos*” (*Bka' tshoms chen mo* 11/460).

<sup>540</sup> *sdud pa*: “*gang dag 'das dang gang dag phyogs bcu'i 'jig rten mgon // rig sngags 'di bslabs sman pa'i rgyal po bla med gyur*” (III.5). Rangjung Dorjé cites the source text verbatim except for presenting the past tense of “*gyur*” in the source as “*gyur*” (present or future tense). The Sanskrit reads “*ye 'tīta- 'n-āgata-daśa-d-dīśi loka-nāthā ima-vidya-śikṣita an-uttaru-vaidya-rājā*” (Yuyama 1976, 23).

Having the intention of both Sūtra and Tantra, the *Prajñāpāramitā* is the ultimate [teaching]. In that regard, [the *Prajñāpāramitā*] is a fine discipline from these two methods of gaining experience: from the [Sūtra] perspective of authoritative transmissions and logic, [the *Prajñāpāramitā*] is definitely understood as separate from the eight extremes of elaboration; relying on resting within is the [Tantra] method for eliminating the apparently true illusions of form and the rest. A supplementary practice to these two [Sūtra and Tantra], the mixing of subject and object without duality, is the oral instruction of Chöd based in the *Prajñāpāramitā*.<sup>541</sup>

While the *Prajñāpāramitā* is the ultimate teaching, Rangjung Dorjé does acknowledge the contribution of Machik's Chöd teachings to the authoritative Mahāyāna transmission. Chöd provides a "supplementary practice" to Sūtra and Tantra methods, a technique for enhancing one's practice (*bogs 'don*) of the Buddha dharma.

In *The Great Speech Chapter*, no object of consciousness is immune from critique, even dogmatic Buddhist constructs. For example, as I explained above, Machik examines the notion of the Three Bodies and the doctrinal tenet systems which have been classified by scholars and practitioners of Buddhism, emphasizing that they are themselves constructs and do not have inherent reality. In contrast, Rangjung Dorjé is concerned to legitimate Chöd by demonstrating how it is compatible with authoritative Buddhist teachings. By legitimating Chöd through references to canonical texts, Rangjung Dorjé paradoxically innovates on Machik's Chöd system.

### **Mahāmudrā and Chöd**

Through his commentaries, Rangjung Dorjé undoubtedly influenced the evolution of Chöd teachings, especially grounding Chöd in the *Prajñāpāramitā* and contributing elements of later practices. His commentaries also helped to establish the association of Chöd with

---

<sup>541</sup> “*mdo sde dang rgyud sde'i dgongs pa gnyis las / kun gyi mthar thug shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'o / / de la nyams su blangs pa'i tshul gnyis las legs par sbyangs shing lung dang rigs pa'i sgo nas spros pa'i mtha' brgyad dang bral bar gtan la dbab pa dang / nang du 'jog pa la brten nas gzugs sogs kyi snang bden sgyu mar bshig pa'i tshul dang / gnyis ka la bogs 'don yul yul can gnyis med du bsre bar byed pa ni pha rol tu phyin nas gcod kyi gdams ngag yin no*” (*Bka' tshoms 'grel pa* 58/506).

Mahāmudrā. In her influential article on Chöd, Janet Gyatso glosses a Chöd text recovered by the 19<sup>th</sup> century Nyingmapa, Dūdjom Lingpa (Bdud ‘joms gling pa, 1835-1904), by stating that “[w]e should . . . note that Mahāmudrā is . . . used in apposition to Gcod as a title of the tradition. . . . The philosophical contents of Mahāmudrā and Prajñāpāramitā are closely compatible, both being appropriate descriptions of the formless realization engendered at the completion of the Gcod *sādhana*s.”<sup>542</sup> For Gyatso, Mahāmudrā and Prajñāpāramitā are interchangeable foundations of the Chöd tradition, though she posits that Chöd is conventionally known as “Mahāmudrā Gcod.” In addition, two recent English-language studies of *The Great Explanation*, by Jérôme Edou and by Sarah Harding, also characterize Chöd as “Mahāmudrā Chöd.” While contemporary scholarship seemingly takes for granted the apposition of Chöd and Mahāmudrā, an examination of Rangjung Dorjé’s *Commentary on The Great Speech Chapter* can give us a more nuanced understanding of the historical development of their relationship.

*The Great Speech Chapter* only refers to Mahāmudrā once, including it in a catalogue of various Buddhist tenet systems. Mahāmudrā appears in this list as one of many systems which lead to confusion as a result of attachment to their own fundamental standpoints:

the divisions (*rim pa*) of the dharma vehicle rely on confused knowing of self-nature; in addition, the knowledge of view, meditation and effect is confused. The nihilist has knowledge of the non-existent object; the absolutist has knowledge of the changeless object; the *śrāvaka* has knowledge of the perceiver and the perceived object; the *pratyekabuddha* has knowledge of the emptiness of dependent relations; the Mind-Only student has knowledge of his mind’s own knowledge; the Madhyamaka student has knowledge that is freed from elaborations; the Father Tantra student has knowledge of bliss, clarity and winds; the Mother Tantra student has knowledge of bliss, emptiness, and extensive offerings; students of skillful means and wisdom have knowledge of non-duality; students of Mahāmudrā have knowledge of transcending the mind; students of Dzogschen have knowledge of the great primordially. In that way, as for all knowledge, it is knowledge of the knowledge of objects. Subjects are not thatness. Lacking an

---

<sup>542</sup> Gyatso 1985, 324-325. One could also remark on the compatibility of the descriptions of actuality in Dzokchen and Prajñāpāramita.

object, the mind is without knowledge; one is fettered by knowledge of whatever is known.<sup>543</sup>

According to *The Great Speech Chapter*, by their very nature, each of these systems has a preconceived object of knowledge and thus continues to be bound by the cognitive binary of a knowing subject and a known object. As the Chöd teaching presented in *The Great Speech Chapter* does not advocate such objective constructs of ultimate actuality, it is not fettered to objects of knowledge like these tenet systems.

In his commentary, Rangjung Dorjé suggests a different reading of this passage. His gloss of the reference to Mahāmudrā appears fairly straightforward: “One group asserts the transcendence of discursive mind and states that Mahāmudrā is the ultimate of both [Father and Mother Tantra].”<sup>544</sup> At first glance, although Rangjung Dorjé situates Mahāmudrā as the ultimate Tantra teaching, he attributes this idea to a particular Buddhist “group.” Rangjung Dorjé then supplements his gloss with a reference to Tilopa’s *Personal Instructions on Mahāmudrā* (*Phyag rgya chen po’i man ngag*): “Mantra expressions, *pāramitā*, *vinaya*, *sūtra*, *abhi[dharma]*, and the like, as each has its own textual tradition and tenet system, the luminous Mahāmudrā will not be seen; one is not able to see the luminosity because of one’s own wishes.”<sup>545</sup> Using Tilopa, Rangjung Dorjé is able to insist on the primacy and transcendence of

---

<sup>543</sup> “rang bzhin rig ‘khrul la // ltos chos theg pa’i rim pa yang // lta sgom ‘bras bur rig pa ‘khrul // chad pas cang med yul du rig // rtag pas ‘gyur med yul du rig // nyan thos gzung ‘dzin yul du rig // rang rgyal rten ‘brel stong par rig // sems tsam rang rig sems su rig // dbu ma spros bral yin par rig // pha rgyud bde gsal lung du rig // ma rgyud bde stong rgyas ‘debs rig // thabs dang shes rab gnyis med rig // phyag chen blo las ‘das par rig // rdzogs chen ye yin chen por rig // de ltar rig pa thams cad ni // yul du rig pa’i rig pa yin // yul can rnam ni de nyid min // yul med sems la rig pa med // gang rig pa yi rig pas bcings / §” (*Bka’ tshoms chen mo* 14/463).

<sup>544</sup> “gnyis ka’i mthar thug phyag rgya chen po zhes kha cig blo ‘das su ‘dod pa” (*Bka’ tshoms ‘grel pa* 74/522).

<sup>545</sup> This appears to be a paraphrase from the *Phyag rgya chen po’i man ngag* (Toh. 2303, zhi 242b7-244a5), a Tibetan translation of what was probably originally an *upadeśa* text in Apabhraṃśa, composed by the great North Bengali adept Tilopa (988-1069) for his student Nāropa. The Tibetan text reads: “sngags su smra dang pha rol phyin pa dang // ‘dul ba’i sde snod la sogs chos rnam dang // rang rang gzhung dang grub pa’i mtha’ yis kyang // ‘od gsal phyag rgya chen po mthong mi ‘gyur” (243B; emphasis added). Rangjung Dorjé has presented an alternate second line to the one underlined above, although his reference is clear. He also composed a commentary to this

Mahāmudrā even as he appears to be agreeing with Machik’s classification of Mahāmudrā as one school among many. Intriguingly, Rangjung Dorjé’s citation of Tilopa resonates with a later passage of *The Great Speech Chapter* in which Machik says that “the perfection of wisdom (*shes rab pha rol phyin pa; prajñāpāramitā*) is not established through objects of the discursive mind” (16/465),<sup>546</sup> even if such an object is the foundation of a tenet system. Whereas for Machik, *prajñāpāramitā* is descriptive of the perfected wisdom that is obscured by clinging to the discursive objects of tenet systems or particular texts, Mahāmudrā takes this place for Rangjung Dorjé. Through using Tilopa, Rangjung Dorjé makes a subtle revision to Machik’s argument, intimating that Mahāmudrā is not merely a tenet system or a discursive object of a tenet system; for Rangjung Dorjé, Mahāmudrā also signifies ultimate actuality and thus transcends the critique of tenet systems, as the *prajñāpāramitā* does for Machik.

The innovation of Rangjung Dorjé’s interpretation becomes more obvious when contrasted with a commentary on *The Great Speech Chapter* composed by his near contemporary, the Nyingma adept Dorjé Lingpa (Rdo rje gling pa, 1346-1405).<sup>547</sup> Dorjé Lingpa

---

text, which is included in the *Gdams ngag mdzod*. We also find in the Tibetan translation of Tilopa’s work a stanza that is remarkably similar in sentiment to that found in Āryadeva the Brahmin’s *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i tshigs su bcad pa chen mo* (ninth century). In the context of discussing the mind and its events, Tilopa explains, “*dper na ljon shing yal ga lo ‘dab rgyas / / rtsa bcad yal ga lo ‘dab khri ‘bum skams*” (ibid., 243A). (“As an example, there is a tree with flourishing branches and leaves, having cut its roots, the ten thousand branches and leaves dry up.”) In Āryadeva we read “*de ltar rtogs na sdong po rtsad bcad bzhin / / rtog pa’i yal ga nam yang skye mi ‘gyur*” (1974, 2-3). (“When one realizes this it is like cutting the root of a tree trunk: branches of thought will never again be produced.”) On correspondences between the compositions of Tilopa and Saraha, see Schaeffer 2005, esp. 105.

<sup>546</sup> “*shes rab pha rol phyin pa ni / / blo yi yul du grub pa med*” (16/465).

<sup>547</sup> *Bka’ tshoms chen mo’i ti ka ltar sgom gyi khogs byung khyung chen nam mkha’i ldings ltar / bshad pa bzhugs soha / badzra bho tra’o*. In *Gcod skor gter chen rdo rje rdzings pa’i* (sic. gling pa) *gter chos*. (A cycle of Chöd practice recovered from its place of concealment by Gter chen Dorjé Lingpa; reproduced from a rare manuscript preserved at O-rgyan-chos-gling in Bum-thang). Thimphu, Bhutan: Druk Sherig Press, 1984, 365-447. Dorjé Lingpa writes: “*phyag rgyas blo ‘das ‘od gsal rig / ces pa ni / phyag rgya chen no pas / ‘od gsal dang zung ‘jug gnyis blo las ‘das pa yin / zhes zhen pas ‘khrul lo / rdzogs chen ye shes chen nor rig / de ltar rig pa thams cad ni yul du rig pa’i rig pa yin / yul can rnam ni ‘di nyid yin / ces pa ni / rdzogs pa chen no bha zhig rang gi ye shes ni lhun gyis grub pa yin no / zhes zhen pas ‘khrul lo / ‘dor na grub mtha’ rnam kyis mda’ ji ltar rtags pa ltar / don du bden pa la mngon par chags pas khrul lo / de’ang mdo las / ji ltar ‘dzin ba de ltar kun nas nyon mongs stan / zhes so*”

follows *The Great Speech Chapter* in pointing out the confusions of the fundamental standpoints of the various traditions, including both Mahāmudrā and Dzogchen. Unlike Rangjung Dorjé, Dorjé Lingpa does not find textual authority to establish the superiority of any particular tenet system—not even the Dzogchen perspective, as one might expect from a Nyingmapa. Rangjung Dorjé’s implicit association of Mahāmudrā with Chöd thus appears to be his own interpolation.

If one were to become familiar with *The Great Speech Chapter* only through Rangjung Dorjé’s commentaries, one might think that Chöd philosophy is inherently associated with Mahāmudrā. Since the \**Anuttaratantra* Mahāmudrā is central to the Kagyü lineages, it is unsurprising to find Rangjung Dorjé construing Mahāmudrā as the highest teaching in his commentary on Chöd. What is more difficult to understand is why Rangjung Dorjé should engage with Chöd so extensively. Perhaps Chöd was popular enough at the time that Rangjung Dorjé felt the need to assimilate its teachings and its practitioners to the Kagyü tradition, or perhaps the Kagyü saw Chöd praxis as particularly efficacious. By aligning Chöd with Mahāmudrā, Rangjung Dorjé initiated the historical process through which Chöd became known as “Mahāmudrā Chöd.” While Kagyü teachings were apparently accorded greater popularity, prestige, or efficacy by incorporating Chöd, Chöd was able to survive as a praxis through its incorporation by dominant schools such as the Kagyü.

The Kagyüpas were not the only Tibetan Buddhists interested in the praxis of Chöd. The First Panchen Lama of the Geluk School, Lozang Chökyi Gyaltsen (Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, 1570-1662) wrote a treatise on Chöd in the late 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> century entitled *Chöd Instructions for Those Who Desire Liberation* (*Gcod kyi gdams pa thar ‘dod ded dpon*).<sup>548</sup> This text became a source for many commentaries by other Gelukpas. In another text entitled *The*

---

(427-428).

<sup>548</sup> This text is loosely translated by Savvas (1990).



*Mahāmudrā Root Text of the Precious Ganden and Kagyu Lineages, the Main Road of the Victorious Ones (Dge ldan bka' brgyud rin po che'i phyag chen rtsa ba rgyal ba'i gzhung lam)*, Lozang Chökyi Gyaltzen catalogues various teaching lineages including Chöd and Zhijé. In this work, Lozang Chökyi Gyaltzen's rhetorical aim is to argue for the ultimate incorporation of all these lineages within the Geluk-Kagyü Mahāmudrā system, namely “the Main Road of the Victorious Ones.”

One key way in which Lozang Chökyi Gyaltzen assimilates Chöd to the Geluk tradition can be traced by following the adaptations of the well-known Chöd saying discussed above: “With regard to what has been concentrated by tightening, relax by loosening.”<sup>549</sup> Versions of this dictum are included in various Chöd texts, including *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section*, where it is mentioned at the conclusion of a discussion on meditative cultivation. Frequently recited in other texts attributed to Machik, for many Tibetan Buddhists this instruction has become an aphorism signifying Chöd teachings as a whole.

The ubiquitousness of this saying can be attributed to its use in subsequent texts. This aphorism is cited by Tsongkhapa in his 14<sup>th</sup> century work, *An Instruction Manual on the Profound Path of Chöd (Zab lam gcod kyi khrid yig)*: “With regard to what has been concentrated by tightening, relax by loosening. One stays in that way, resting in *rig pa* [or “enlightened knowing”]).<sup>550</sup> In *The Mahāmudrā Root Text of the Precious Ganden and Kagyu Lineages*, Lozang Chökyi Gyaltzen picks up on Tsong kha pa's instructions by repeating this dictum, although he elides the reference to *rig pa* or “enlightened knowing.”<sup>551</sup> Following

---

<sup>549</sup> From ‘Jamgön Kongtrul, ed., *Gdams ngag mdzod* (1979, 155-64); *Gdams ngag mdzod*, Vol. IX (1971, 601-10).

<sup>550</sup> Mati Bhadra Kīrti Blo bzang grags pa, *Zab lam gcod kyi khrid yig ma ti bha dra kirti sbyar ba*. In *Gcod tshogs* 1-45 (30). See also Savvas 1990, 362.

<sup>551</sup> In *Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan gyi gsung 'bum*, Bkra shis lun po blocks, 1973: Vol. 4, 83-94. See also

Tsongkhapa, Lozang Chökyi Gyaltzen, distills the teachings of Chöd to this mnemonic core, making them more easily assimilable to the Geluk-Kagyü Mahāmudra tradition.

When we return this dictum, “[w]ith regard to what has been concentrated by tightening, relax by loosening” to its original context in *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section*, we see that Tsongkhapa and Lozang Chökyi Gyaltzen have extracted it from a detailed technical instruction on a Chöd visualization practice. In the context of Machik’s teaching, this instruction follows a description of the meditative experiences of persons of varying capacities. According to Machik, through the Chöd visualization practice she describes, a practitioner of high capacity will have an experience of “Freedom from Elaborations” or “*spros bral*”; a person of middling capacity will have an experience of “Direct Crossing” or “*thod rgal*”; and a person of low capacity will have an experience of “Possessing Strength” or “*shugs can*.” After one has concentrated by tightening, that is, by cultivating the stages of the visualization, one relaxes by loosening this mental functioning, with the ultimate goal of an experience beyond subject/object duality. In other words, once one has a particular meditative experience that can be conceptualized, one must not cling to the particular result, but relax one’s hold. Just as Machik warns against clinging to tenet systems in *The Great Speech Chapter*, here she is warning against clinging to meditative experiences.

However, in the context of the works of Tsongkhapa and Lozang Chökyi Gyaltzen, this instruction is presented as an aphorism definitive of Chöd praxis as a whole. While this is arguably justified by Machik’s claim that such instruction is the “pith” of meditative cultivation, removing this saying from its particular context allows it to be accommodated to a range of philosophical foundations. By eliding Machik’s specific instructions for Chöd practice,

---

Savvas (1990, 45), where this is misquoted and attributed to the wrong text (i.e., the *Thun mong ma yin pa* rather than the *Khyad par le’u lag*).

Tsongkhapa and Lozang Chökyi Gyaltsen are able to construe Chöd as easily compatible with Geluk and Mahāmudrā philosophies. This association of *The Mahāmudrā Root Text of the Ganden and Kagyu Lineages* with the praxis of Chöd continues to the present: in his text on the Ganden Aural Lineage of Chöd, the 20<sup>th</sup> century Geluk Chöd practitioner Lozang Donden (Blongdon Idan) specifically recommends Lozang Chökyi Gyaltsen’s *Mahāmudrā Root Text* to persons wishing to learn about Chöd.<sup>552</sup> As in Rangjung Dorjé’s *Commentary on The Great Speech Chapter*, one could argue that the Gelukpa adaptation of the aphorism, “what has been concentrated by tightening; relax by loosening,” both preserves and transvalues the original teachings of Chöd.

Reduced to a core principle, as encouraged by such pithy formulae found in its root texts, Chöd becomes flexible enough to be adapted as an efficacious means along varying dharma paths. For example, in his 16<sup>th</sup> century text, *Moonbeams of Mahāmudra (Phyag chen zla ba’i ‘od zer)*, Takpo Tashi Namgyal presents a form of Chöd known as “*kusulu tshog*” as an expedient method available to those who follow the *Kālacakra* injunction against the Mahāmudrā yoga of union with a human consort.

The extraction of discrete parts of Chöd teachings from their broader philosophical contexts is symptomatic of how Chöd has been incorporated into and transmitted through other Tibetan Buddhist lineages. For example, as I explained in chapter three, Chöd practices gradually merged with pre-existing models of deity yoga, such the *Vajrayoginī* practices within Nyingma, Kagyü, and Geluk traditions. Fundamental Chöd practices such as those described in *The Common Eightfold Supplementary Section* do not tend to involve the kind of deity visualization common to \**anuttaratantra* practices, but many Mahāmudrā Chöd practices have

---

<sup>552</sup> See *Dga’ ldan snyan brgyud kyi chos lugs ‘di la mi dga’ bas byung rgyal du spyad na dmag zor mas bka’ chad phob cig*, in the *Gcod tshogs*, 191-251.

been reconciled with other lineages through the employment of such visualizations. The incorporation of Chöd by the Geluk and Kagyü schools has thus had equivocal results: on the one hand, fragments of Chöd teachings are preserved, but on the other, the distinctiveness of Chöd is diminished in the service of different fundamental standpoints such as that of Mahāmudrā.

The historical intersection of Chöd and Mahāmudrā has not simply been a unilateral process, in which Chöd was adapted and altered to serve the purposes of Mahāmudrā teachings. In various texts, the Chöd tradition seems to be adapting and altering Mahāmudrā principles for its own purposes. One example of this inversion occurs in the teachings attributed to Machik contained in *The Great Explanation*.<sup>553</sup> In the chapter framed as teachings that Machik gives to her son Thönyon Samdrub during his extended retreat, Machik explains the profound and especial meaning of Chöd.<sup>554</sup> Perhaps reflecting the association of Chöd and Mahāmudrā which had become conventional by the time *The Great Explanation* was published in this form, the text contends that Mahāmudrā Chöd is the heart essence (*snying khu*) of all Dharma and the pinnacle of all teachings. Using a popular rhetorical stance employed by advocates of particular systems of Buddhist teaching, *The Great Explanation* also claims that Chöd is the superior essence of all Sūtra and Tantra teachings rolled into one.<sup>555</sup> After a general discussion of how Chöd follows

---

<sup>553</sup> As noted earlier in this study, *The Great Explanation* circulates in a number of different editions; the most accessible is the one included in the *Gcod kyi chos skor* and associated with the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Geluk teacher, Lhopa Tulku (Lho pa sprul sku) of Drepung, who commissioned the woodblocks. Byams pa bsod nam[s] [possibly the Gelukpa Byams pa bsod nam[s] rnam rgyal, 1401-1475] appears responsible for having collected donations for an earlier edition.) This edition of *The Great Explanation* consists of ten chapters, two of which are *rnam thar* or spiritual biographies, and eight of which feature tutorials given by Machik to her followers. The complicated provenance of these ten chapters as well as their literary styles and contents contrast starkly with texts such as the *Bka' tshoms chen mo* and the *Khyad par gyi le'u lag rgyad*, suggesting they have undergone a process of editing between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, the *Rnam bshad chen mo* is still regarded as containing the authentic teachings of Machik Labdrön herself.

<sup>554</sup> “*zab cing lhag pa'i don*” (*Rnam bshad chen mo* 97).

<sup>555</sup> “*Chos thams cad kyi snying khu / theg pa thams cad kyi yang rtse / mdo sngags thams cad gcig tu 'dril ba'i*

Sūtra teachings on the problems of ego-clinging and the importance of generosity, the text contextualizes Chöd within Mahāmudrā. Echoing traditional exegesis of the four seals of \**anuttaryogatantra* as presented in texts such as the *Vajramāla*,<sup>556</sup> the text describes the three seals of phenomena (*chos kyi phyag rgya chen po*), consort or *karmamudrā* (*las kyi phyag rgya chen po*) and spiritual commitment (*dam tshig gi phyag rgya chen po*). Here each of these three seals is called a “great seal,” while the fourth seal, traditionally referred to as the “Great Seal,” is subdivided into two: the Mahāmudrā of bliss-emptiness (*bde stong phyag rgya chen po*) and the Mahāmudrā of clarity-emptiness (*gsal stong phyag rgya chen po*). (While these two seals are discussed in Mahāmudrā teachings, they are not included in conventional three- or four-fold taxonomies.) Finally, the text adds a sixth and predominant seal: the Chöd of Mahāmudrā (*phyag rgya chen po'i gcod*). In order to explain the pre-eminence of this Mahāmudrā, *The Great Explanation* follows tradition in providing a functional etymology of “*mudrā*,” translated as “*phyag rgya*” in Tibetan. It states that “*phyag*” or “hand” signifies objective reality and “*rgya*” or “seal” signifies the absence of true existence of objects. It thus posits that it is only through the practice of Chöd that one can attain correct realization of actuality. This section concludes by maintaining that Machik’s system of Chöd not only is the perfection of Mahāmudrā, but also subsumes the unexcelled Madhyamaka and the fruitional teaching of Dzogchen.

Perhaps by the time *The Great Explanation* was circulating in its present form, the subordination of Chöd to Mahāmudrā in the compound “Mahāmudrā Chöd” was firmly

---

*snying po'i mchog tu gyur pa*” (*Rnam bshad chen mo* 98).

<sup>556</sup> “The four seals are mentioned in the exegetical tantra, the *Vajramāla*: ‘Thus spoke the indestructible Illuminated Conqueror: Many are the mudrās—the mūdra of phenomena, The mudrā of the inner consort of manifest awareness, The mudrā of spiritual commitment, and the great seal, To mention them in order.’” As cited in Takpo Tashi Namgyal, *Mahāmudra: The Quintessence of Mind and Meditation*, translated and annotated by Lobsang P. Lhalungpa (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2001 [1993]), 100.

established, or perhaps a resurgent Chöd tradition became strong enough to resist absorption into Mahāmudrā. At any rate, the innovative taxonomy of Mahāmudrā, as conveyed in *The Great Explanation*, demonstrates 19<sup>th</sup>-century Chöd reasserting its identity and emphasizing Chöd in the formulation Mahāmudrā Chöd. The exegesis of *The Great Explanation* suggests that Mahāmudrā is incomplete without the complementary understanding of reality that is generated by the Chöd teachings. In fact, the Mahāmudrā Chöd of *The Great Explanation* goes so far as to critique the common conception of Mahāmudrā: “A few ordinary people have the delusion together with their experiences of alertness and concentration that the innate characteristics of mind are simply clarity and simply emptiness, and they say that is ‘Mahāmudrā.’ Even [clarity and emptiness] are not innate characteristics of the mind; because such Mahāmudrās of mis-knowing are the dharma systems of the stupid and foolish, do not focus on them, leave them at a distance.”<sup>557</sup> In other words, if Mahāmudrā is not complemented with Chöd, it will lead to mistaken knowledge and confusion. As an antithesis to the assimilation of Chöd by Mahāmudrā, we see in *The Great Explanation* an attempt to subsume Mahāmudrā teachings under the all-encompassing praxis of Chöd.

Although *The Great Explanation* was asserting the primacy of Chöd as late as the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Chöd has an ambivalent legacy within the construct of Mahāmudrā Chöd. While Chöd is perpetuated through its incorporation in other tenet systems, it might be argued that some of its key original aspects have been overshadowed or forgotten. As part of a study of the transmissions of Chöd praxis, I hope that these preliminary analyses of Mahāmudrā Chöd will provide some material for understanding how originally distinct systems merged through the

---

<sup>557</sup> “*phal pa ‘ga’ zhid gis sems grub pa’i mtshan nyid gsal tsam stong tsam pa’i khrig khrig po sgrim sgrim po dang bcas pa’i mun pa can de la phyag rgya chen po zer nas / sems ma grub pa’i mtshan nyid tsam yang mi shes pa’i phyag rgya chen po rnams ni rmongs shing blun pa’i chos lugs yin pas / de la blo gad med do ring du spangs gsungs*” (*Rnam bshad chen mo* 108).

circulation and interpretation of teachings and practices. In addition, given the subordinate status of the Great Practice Vehicle of Chöd to dominant traditions such as the Geluk and Kagyü schools, continued investigation into the symbiosis of Chöd and Mahāmudrā may contribute to an understanding of how power relationships are historically negotiated in and through Tibetan Buddhist lineages.

### ***THE SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER, THE QUINTESSENTIAL CHAPTER, AND THE SUPPLEMENTARY SECTIONS***

While we can trace the early development of Chöd through Rangjung Dorjé's commentaries on *The Great Speech Chapter*, the other five foundational texts attributed to Machik demonstrate the complexity of the early Chöd tradition. These five texts take a variety of forms, from interview to didactic treatises to directions for practice. They also demonstrate a range of approaches to topics and themes central to Chöd and elaborated in *The Great Speech Chapter* and Rangjung Dorjé's commentaries. By tracing some of these key elements, including the Negative Forces, body offering, types of practitioners, and practice instructions, I aim to illustrate the heterogeneity of foundational Chöd.

#### ***The Supplementary Chapter***

The full name of *The Supplementary Chapter* is *The Supplementary Chapter of oral instructions of the Prajñāpāramitā (Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag yang tshoms zhus lan ma)*.<sup>558</sup> It is in the form of an interview or audience between Machik and a student or

---

<sup>558</sup> *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag yang tshom[s] zhus lan ma*. In the *Gdams ngag mdzod*, Vol. IX: 548-561; Vol. XIV: 101-115. There also seems to be another *yang tshoms* in the *Gcod tshogs kyi lag len* (alternatively the *Gcod kyi gdams khrid lag len sogs*) (Bir, Tsondu Senghe, 1985, pages 33ff [TBRC pdf on file]), entitled the *yang tshoms nyer lnga bzhugs*. Dorjé Lingpa's text, *Bka' tshoms gyi zhu len sum bcu rtsa lnga pa zhes bya ba yang tshoms rine(?) sgron ma lta sgom gyi gnas 'brel rgya mtshor gza' / skar shar ba ltar bshad pa bzhugs so*, 311-352, might be a commentary on this along with the Bka' tshoms.

students,<sup>559</sup> almost consistently presented in the form of seven-syllable verse. Carol Savvas states that *The Supplementary Chapter* is “said to be answers given by Machig Labdron in response to the questions asked by her son, Gyalwa Dongrub” (1990, 311 n. 1); however, she does not provide any evidence to support such a claim and thus far I have not found any evidence to substantiate it. Given that the questions are varied in their concerns and in the degrees of expertise and knowledge that they demonstrate, I would suggest that there are various students asking the questions—one of whom may have been Gyalwa Dondrub (a spiritual son of Machik’s discussed in chapter two above). The editions of the texts translated herein divide the text into two components: *Twenty-five Supplementary [Questions] to the Instructional Interview* (*zhus lan gyi gdams pa yang rtsom nyi shu rtsa lnga pa*),<sup>560</sup> and *The Vajra Play Interview* (*zhus len rdo rje rol pa*).<sup>561</sup> Rather than twenty-five questions (*nyi zhu rtsa lnga*), as suggested by the title of the first section, twenty-eight questions and their replies are presented.<sup>562</sup> This might be due to additional material being added since the text became known by this title. In addition to *Twenty-five Supplementary [Questions] to the Instructional Interview*, *The Vajra Play Interview* has an additional nineteen questions with much briefer replies.

The topic of the *Twenty-five Supplementary [Questions] to the Instructional Interview* is the practice of Buddhist Dharma in general and of Chöd in particular. It begins with outlining fundamental Buddhist teachings, including the rarity of a human rebirth out of all possible rebirths, the improbability of being born with awareness of Buddhist teachings, and the results of

---

<sup>559</sup> Some have translated *zhu lan* as “dialogue,” but it literally means “exchange,” and the text here is in the form of an interview, with a question being asked and a reply being given, rather than a discussion.

<sup>560</sup> 547-559; 101-113.

<sup>561</sup> 559-561; 113-115.

<sup>562</sup> Questions Seventeen and Eighteen in the *Yang tshoms*<sup>562</sup> are discussed in Dharmasengé’s *Zhijé and Chöd History* (416-417; Toyo Bunko 3b-4a), but Dharmasengé’s text does not exactly follow the textual editions I am consulting. I briefly discuss question seventeen below.



performing harmful acts that increase one’s karmic demerit. The interview then turns to questions of how one has the capacity for faith in the teachings and how to cultivate such faith. As in Rangjung Dorjé’s *Commentary, The Supplementary Chapter* emphasizes that the *Prajñāpāramitā* is the most excellent Dharma teaching, though this text develops a “Chöd” teaching of the *Prajñāpāramitā*.

Rather than providing a logical argument for the unity of wisdom and emptiness as the underpinning of actuality, the teacher of *The Supplementary Chapter* introduces the Negative Forces as the object of concern for the practitioner. The seventh question asks, “What is the most excellent of all Dharma?” The response is that “[i]t is stated by all perfected buddhas that this Great Mother Perfection of Wisdom is the most excellent among all Dharma [teachings].”<sup>563</sup> This exchange sets up a Chöd interpretation of the *Prajñāpāramitā* which foregrounds the method for “outshining” the Negative Forces (*bdud rnamz zil gyis non par ‘gyur*) through the practice of not fabricating signs in the mind and thus abiding in the expanse of the Great Mother. According to this text, “[i]f one does not fabricate signs in the mind, although one does not train in the stages of grounds and paths, one will abide in the Great Mother Expanse. Having understood the primordial meaning of that Great Mother, the afflictions of mental exertion become pacified.” Training in the *Prajñāpāramitā*, and thus abiding in the uncontrived, birthless, deathless ground of the Great Mother, one is freed from the ignorance of being dominated by the proliferation of signs that defines saṃsāra. But as in *The Great Speech Chapter*, the ultimate understanding is self-arising: “uncontrived, birthless, obstructionless, by means of one’s own nature, there is luminosity. The Mother that is the source of the buddhas of the three times is exactly that—there is nothing else. As for abiding in that state, it is abiding in

---

<sup>563</sup> “*chos thams cad kyi mchog tu gyur pa gnag lags / zhus pas / rdzogs pa’i sangs rgyas thams cad kyis gsungs pa’i bka’ yum chen mo shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin ma ‘di / chos thams cad kyi nang nas mchog tu gsungs / gsung*” (550/104).

the Great Mother Expanse.”<sup>564</sup> Through the practice of Chöd the Negative Forces will be “outshone,” dissolved by the luminosity of one’s own unadulterated nature.

As in *The Great Speech Chapter, The Supplementary Chapter* asserts that Negative Forces are created by one’s own mind, but here this idea is emphasized through the curious simile of “Rākṣa’s spit”: “there are the Negative Forces with Obstruction, the Negative Forces without Obstruction, the Joyous Negative Forces, and the Negative Forces Producing Pride. Having arisen from oneself, they harm oneself. For example, they are like a Rākṣa’s spit.”<sup>565</sup> In Indic mythology, Rākṣas are often considered to be flesh-eating demons;<sup>566</sup> however, in Buddhist texts such as the *Alavaka Sutta* (SN 10.12), a Rakshasa who beleaguers the Buddha is akin to a Māra. One would think that, from the context of this simile, Machik is suggesting that a Rākṣa is not immune to its own spit or venom.

In the eleventh question, Machik reiterates that the method for outshining the Negative Forces is a crucial point of her instruction.<sup>567</sup> In this response, when one maintains the experience of not deliberately grasping onto the dualities of subject and object and not producing cognitive thought, they will not produce the mental objects that are Negative Forces: “A mental object that arises is a Negative Force; the grasping subject welcomes the grasped object. The

---

<sup>564</sup> “*sa dang lam la ma bgrangs par // dmigs med don la gang ‘jog pa // bdud rnams zil gyis non (sic.) par ‘gyur // mtshan ma yid la ma byas na // sa lam rim gyis ma sbyangs kyang // yum chen klong na gnas par ‘gyur // yum chen de yi don rtogs nas // rtsol ba’i nad rnams zhi par ‘gyur // rtsol ba bral ba de yis ni // dus gsum sangs rgyas gdung zin nas // skye med sa la gnas par ‘gyur // dmigs med bsam med brjod dang bral // ma bcas skye med ‘gag med la // rang bzhin gyis ni ‘od gsal ba // dus gsum sangs rgyas ‘byung ba’i yum // de nyid yin no gzhan na med // de yi ngang la gnas pa ni // yum chen klong na gnas pa yin // mtshan ma’i dge ba ci byas kyang // ‘khor bar yun ring gnas pa yin // skye ‘chi med pa’i sa mi thob / ces gsungs so” (550/104).*

<sup>565</sup> “*thogs bcas bdud dang thogs med bdud // dga’ brod bdud dang snyems byed bdud // rang las byung nas rang la gnod // dper na srin gyi kha chu bzhin” (550/104).*

<sup>566</sup> Doniger (O’Flaherty) 1980, 307.

<sup>567</sup> “*nga yi gdams pa’i gnad ‘di” (551/105).*

grasped are not grasped, noble child!”<sup>568</sup> This idea of Negative Forces is complicated in the twenty-sixth question, where we are told that the Negative Forces are themselves the *Dharmakāya*. By recognizing one’s mind as the *Dharmakāya*, one should not fabricate Negative Forces (or anything else):<sup>569</sup> “As for resting in the unfabricated, how can the apparitions of Negative Forces arise?”<sup>570</sup> As she does at length in *The Great Speech Chapter*, Machik suggests that desire to attain the Three Bodies should not interfere with the non-dual perception of Negative Forces.

*The Supplementary Chapter* does not extensively discuss body offering practices. In response to the twentieth question (“What should one do when fever arises in oneself?”),<sup>571</sup> however, Machik replies that a practitioner should repeatedly cut up her body and offer it “to the assembly,” with the result that her “discursive thoughts will be concealed in the treasure of Dharmatā.” This is a slightly more descriptive passage on body offering than we see in the passage in *The Great Speech Chapter* that I discussed above, where one is merely encouraged to consider oneself as a corpse. But like *The Great Speech Chapter*, *The Supplementary Chapter* does not provide instruction on cutting up one’s body and making it into an offering.<sup>572</sup> This passage is followed by Machik remarking that “[i]f one does not understand how to turn adverse conditions into favorable ones, even lofty views are realms for going astray. One who is

---

<sup>568</sup> “ched du gang yang ma byas na // thogs med bdud rnams zil gyis gnon // yid yul byung ba bdud yin te // gzung du ‘dzin pa sna len yin // gzung du ma ‘dzin rigs kyi bu // byung tshor ma ‘gegs rigs kyi bu // lus sems ma bcos rigs kyi bu // ‘du shes ma ‘jug rigs kyi bu // de ltar khyod kyis nyams bskyangs na // bdud rnams zil gyis gnon par ‘gyur” (551/105).

<sup>569</sup> “bdud nyid chos sku yin pas na // de nyid sems su ngo shes kyis // sems la bcas bcos ma byed par” (558/112).

<sup>570</sup> “bdud kyi cho ‘phrul ci byung yang” (558-559/112-113).

<sup>571</sup> “rang na tsha byung na ji ltar bgyi” (555/109). According to Savvas, Tsong kha pa is referring to this passage in his *Zab lam gcod kyi khrid yig* (1986, 20); see also Savvas’ translation (1990, 346). Tsong kha pa only mentions that it comes from the *Tshoms*. If he is referring the *Yang tshoms*, given that it is not a direct quote from either of the editions of the texts I am working with, he is either paraphrasing or citing from a different edition.

<sup>572</sup> The practice of body offering is discussed at length in chapter four of this dissertation.

overconfident about simply having an empty mind is one who is grasped by a Secret Negative Force.”<sup>573</sup> Here the “Secret Negative Force” appears to be a synonym for the “Negative Force Producing Pride” that is mentioned earlier in *The Supplementary Chapter*, as well as in other Chöd texts, as one of the four main types of Negative Forces.

The second section of *The Supplementary Chapter, The Vajra Play Interview*, begins with a request for a “complete summary of the Chöd system of Negative Forces of the Noble Mother (*a ma jo mo*).” This summary distinguishes between two types of practitioners: “faithful ones” and “knowledgeable ones.” The faithful ones “have not abandoned the abyss of the lower state of existence”; the Chöd teaching for these individuals emphasizes that they should protect their commitments in order to become liberated from saṃsāra and not be reborn in a lower form of existence. The knowledgeable ones are those “who are not placed in the fetters of saṃsāra.” Again we find Machik being critical of doctrinal tenet systems. These “knowledgeable ones” are not to “enter the inferior gates of the tenet systems”; rather, they are to gain “meditative experience of bliss and clarity.” By entering the “unmistaken” gate of Chöd, they will have “the experience of meditation without remembering and without mental events.”<sup>574</sup> As in *The Great Speech Chapter*, Machik emphasizes that knowledgeable Buddhists should not be seduced by the lure of tenet systems, which are ultimately just another form of mental fetter.

---

<sup>573</sup> “*rkyen byang grogs su ma go na // lta ba mtho yang dbyings gol yin // sems stong tsam la rlom pa de // de ni gsang ba'i bdud kyis zin // zhes gsungs so*” (556/110).

<sup>574</sup> “*gcod yul 'di la gnyis su gsungs // de yang dad pa can ngan song gi g.yang la mi bskyr ba dang // shes rab can 'khor ba'i sgrog tu mi 'jug pa'o // dad pa can chos spyod dus gdab med par bya // rang sems g.yo sgyu med par byed // dam tshig do lkog med par bsrung bas // 'khor ba dang ngan song las thar ro // shes rab can 'jug sgo ngan pa grub mtha'i sgor mi 'jug // rnam rtog ngan pa gral mi sgrig // bsgom nyams bde gsal gser gyi sgrog tu mi gzhuks // shes rab can yin na 'jug sgo ma nor ba gcod kyi sgor zhuks nas // sgom dran pa med cing yid la byar med pa nyams su len pa'o gsungs*” (559-560/113-114).

### *The Quintessential Chapter*

*The Quintessential Chapter of the Chöd System of Negative Forces, The Instructions of the Prajñāpāramitā* (*Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag bdud kyi gcod yul las [s]nying tshoms*), known in brief as “*The Quintessential Chapter*,” opens with the following acknowledgement: “I take refuge, prostrating to the mother of all Victors [buddhas]. The meaning of this teaching by the liberated emanation body of the Lady Labki drönma on the intent of the *Prajñāpāramitā* has five parts.”<sup>575</sup> The title might indicate that it is a *dgongs gter*, a “mind treasure” originating from Machik and transmitted to the mind of the author. The structure of this text is more systematic than *The Great Speech Chapter*, with clearer delineations of its organization common to more scholastic treatises such as Rangjung Dorjé’s commentaries on *The Great Speech Chapter*. The text contains references not only to the *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings in general, but also to the *Samcayagātha*, the sources for many of the quotes used by Rangjung Dorjé in his *Commentary on the Great Speech Chapter*. In addition, *The Quintessential Chapter* is not presented as a dialogue, but as a didactic treatise. This generical style might suggest an influence of scholasticism. In contrast with *The Great Speech Chapter* and *The Supplementary Chapter*, which depict direct transmission from teacher to student, *The Quintessential Chapter* marks an attempt to organize a system of Chöd teachings.

*The Quintessential Chapter* cites the *Samcayagātha* two times. The first citation occurs when Machik is discussing how one’s mind should rest naturally in the pervasive display of thatness: “[t]his is the realm of space, inseparable and indivisible.”<sup>576</sup> The orthodox *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings as presented in the *Samcayagātha* are used to elaborate her teaching:

---

<sup>575</sup> “*rgyal ba kun gyi yum la phyag ‘tshal skyabs su mchi // shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i dgongs pa ‘grol ba'i sprul pa'i sku ma jo mo lab kyi sgron mas gsungs pa ‘di la don rnam pa lnga ste*” (116/562).

<sup>576</sup> This is probably a reference to the section of the *sdud pa* which reads: “*nam mkha'i khams dang ma tshungs ted byer med gcad du med.*”

“[i]n this way, when one understands how to rest in the state of identification, the expressive qualities, experience, signs of accomplishment, and so forth, occur of their own accord.”<sup>577</sup> It is interesting to note that the gloss introduces distinct characteristics of experience—qualities and signs, for example, that will occur of their own accord—to interpret a passage that is using the metaphor of inseparable and indivisible space. The second passage from the *Samcayagātha* is cited following a brief exposition by Machik on different types of practitioners; she explains how those with the best capacities, those with mediocre capacities, and those with the worst capacities take Negative Forces on the path.<sup>578</sup> The *Samcayagātha* passage posits that “through association with wisdom, it should be known as the equanimous place.”<sup>579</sup> The *Quintessential* elaborates on this passage to claim the “mind itself (*sems nyid*) will be the unwavering place with regard to the goal of equanimity.”<sup>580</sup> According to Machik’s interpretation, the mind is not merely figuratively associated with an equanimous place, but will itself “be” the place. As we have seen above, a similar strategy is employed by Rangjung Dorjé when he draws on the *Samcayagātha* in his *Commentary on the Great Speech Chapter*, suggesting a level of commentary in *The Quintessential* by someone other than Machik. Such authoritative associations, as in Rangjung Dorjé, help to legitimate Chöd in relation to Buddhist traditions such as the *Prajñāpāramitā*. At the same time, the Chöd teaching innovates on the *Samcayagātha* message, creatively interpreting it for its audience.

---

<sup>577</sup> “*di ni nam mkha’i kham dang dbyer med bcad du med / ces so // de ltar sems ngos zin pa’i ngang la ‘jog shes na / yon tan gyi rtsal / nyams dang drod rtags la sogs pa shugs la ‘byung ngo*” (564-565/118-119).

<sup>578</sup> It is worth noting here that the practice of offering the body is suggested for those with the worst faculties, while the other two types of practitioners are not directed to do such practices in their efforts to be able to rest in a state of equanimity.

<sup>579</sup> The *sdud pa* reads: “*ses rab ldan te mnyam nyid gnas bar shes par bya.*”

<sup>580</sup> “*de yang sdud pa las / shes rab ldan pas mnyam nyid gnas par shes par bya / zhes so // des na sems nyid mnyam pa nyid kyi don la ma yengs par gnas par bya’o*” (575-576/129-130).

Unlike *The Great Speech Chapter* and *The Supplementary Chapter*, *The Quintessential Chapter* explicitly describes practices that later become closely identified with Chöd (some of which I discuss in detail in chapter five). The text begins with instructions on preliminary practice that are comparable with developed sādhana, including a seven-limbed practice that includes an opening of taking refuge and a conclusion of dedicating merit. These instructions could either constitute a full practice or provide a frame for more elaborate practices. *The Quintessential Chapter* describes various forms of meditative practice to rest the mind, overcome discriminating modes of consciousness, and realize the space-like nature of mind. The text also elaborates antidotes for states of consciousness that are not conducive to good meditative practice. Negative Forces, or Dūd, are frequently discussed in the text as representative of flawed, dualistic mental activity. The characteristics of successful meditative practice are also outlined.

*The Quintessential Chapter* also provides advice on the best places to practice. It particularly recommends places where there are deities or demons (*lha 'dre*)<sup>581</sup> that will challenge one's cognitive composure and produce strong reactions of ego-clinging. The practitioner's response to these places will make her aware of the activities of her mind that are to be severed, including the projection of such forms as the body, deities, and demons, and the correspondent grasping at objects.

Like *The Great Speech Chapter*, *The Quintessential Chapter* does not explicitly present a body offering practice. However, *The Quintessential Chapter* does make several statements on giving the body. The first example advocates that one should give one's body to the deities and spirits without concern; if one becomes distracted by such deities and spirits, then one should

---

<sup>581</sup> As mentioned earlier, some people argue that "*lha 'dre*" are not two types of beings, but are actually "deity-demons," beings with a dual nature that is both divine and demonic, depending on the context.

relax by relaxing the mind.<sup>582</sup> The second passage reassures the practitioner that although the meditation might be dangerous, it will ultimately not be harmful. Although the meditation includes the practitioner visualizing her own self-dissection and offering her own heart, and “even if various unpleasant things occur such as it being said that you are dead at this time,” one should not consider such unpleasant things to be true; rather, with a tranquil consciousness one should rest in the vast mind—the essence of the Mother—that is generated. The practitioner is encouraged to “rest without fear or anxiety, without pride or conceptual thought” and to recognize that “it is the time of authentically severing erroneous views,”<sup>583</sup> such as cognitive dualism and attachment to subjects and objects. Here *The Quintessential Chapter* expands on the technique in *The Great Speech Chapter* that advocates considering oneself to be like a corpse, adding the practice of offering one’s dissected corpse. The final mention of body offering occurs when the text counsels the practitioner on how she should address problems of “hungry ghost sinking” (*yi dwags kyi byings*), the signs of which include “deep sleep, sluggish consciousness, or alternatively, an unhappy heart, a mind that is not abiding in its own self-nature, and gasping for breath.”<sup>584</sup> In such instances, the practitioner should approach her teacher and go for refuge. In addition, she should give her body, illness and thought to the spirits,

---

<sup>582</sup> The full passage here reads: “*gal te cho ‘phrul byung ba la / ‘dar yeng byung na sems yengs ba’i rtags yin pas / de ma thag tu lus lha ‘dre la ltos pa med par byin la / sems lhod kyis lhod la / A ma rtsir shes pa rgya bskyed la bzhag go*” (121/567).

<sup>583</sup> “*yang rang gi snying ‘byin pa dang / khyod kyi chod dang bsgom ‘di tshug min zer ba dang / khyod dus ‘di tsa na ‘chi zer ba dang / de la sogs pa mi snyan pa sna tshogs byung yang bden snyam par mi bya bar shes pa ‘bol le shig ge biang la / A ma rtsir / blo rgyar bskyed la bzhag go // nyam nga dang bag tsha med cing snyems dang rtog pa med par bzhag go // log lta yang dag tu chod pa’i dus so*” (122/568).

<sup>584</sup> “*gnyid che / shes pa nyog / yang na snying mi dga’ sems rang bzhin du mi gnas / dbugs rngams pa ‘byung ngo*” (127/572).



discarding her naked body in a dreadful place, and perform activities such as jumping, running, and twirling to energize the body and quiet the mind.<sup>585</sup>

### ***The Common Eightfold Supplementary Section***

The theme of *The Common Eightfold Supplementary Section* (*Thun mong gi le lag brgyad*), in common with all of these foundational texts, is the role of the mind in the construction of Negative Forces and dualistic perception. As in Machik's other major texts, *The Common Section* explains that the mind also has the capacity for enlightened knowing that does not perceive subjects and objects and is primordially peaceful. The Negative Forces are divided into two categories, the Unobstructed and the Obstructed, neither of which can exist apart from the Negative Force Producing Pride. Unlike in other teachings attributed to Machik, the Joyous Negative Force is not mentioned here. *The Common Section* is the least systematically organized of the three *Supplementary Section* texts. *The Common Section* explicitly states that it is teaching the oral instructions of Chöd. Although *The Common Section* does not have an explicit outline, the end of each section clearly identifies each of the text's eight topics. The sections are described as follows: [1] the section on uncontrived resting and thusness; [2] the section on the non-existence of grasping by an antidote; [3] the section on connections with effort; [4] the section on the occurrence of attainments through gaining experience; [5] the section on the introduction to becoming a buddha within one life; [6] the section on the marks that distinguish the places for straying; [7] the section of the heart essence [of the teaching]; and [8] the section on the instructions on gaining experience. It is quite lyrical and metrical, with most lines consisting of seven syllables, and the rhetorical exclamation “*E ma ho*” (translated here as “How wonderful!”) conveys an immediacy that is lacking in the other two *Supplementary* texts. As in

---

<sup>585</sup> “*de la bla ma la gsol ba gdab / skyabs su 'gro ba bya / lus dang / nad dang / rtog pa thams cad 'dre la byin la / ya nga ba'i sar lus gcer bur phyung ste mchong rgyug bya / lus gcu / smyeng / bskum / zlog sbyong dran tshad byas pa'i rjes la lus sems dad dal byas pas shes pa lhan gyis 'gro / de ni bying ba bcos pa'o*” (126/572).

*The Great Speech Chapter, The Common Section* teaches from the first person perspective, often employing colorful metaphors, as in the following passage: “Through skill in means regarding the single non-duality, even speaking about various things, sentient beings, by the flaws of their rational minds, are like beetles wrapped in fiber. This has been examined by me, an old lady: even dharma practitioners, are fettered by dharma; desiring liberation, they are once again fettered; desiring the Chöd system, they are fettered yet again.”<sup>586</sup> By speaking in the first person as “an old lady,” Machik encourages her students to believe that they are also capable of profound realization. Through the striking image of “beetles wrapped in fiber,” Machik reminds her students that even cognition of and desire for an “object” (such as “dharma” or “liberation”) or attachment to a particular “system” (even if that system is Chöd itself) will obstruct their realization of non-duality. Here *The Common Section* echoes *The Great Speech Chapter* in its critique of the division of the Buddhist Dharma into schools or vehicles, since these divisions are mentally constructed: “The division into nine [vehicles], as well, is by the mind (*sems*); things do not exist apart from mind (*sems las ma gtogs*), things are the mental thoughts (*blo yi bsam*).”<sup>587</sup> The taxonomy of the nine vehicles is predominantly employed by the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism, which may be the direct object of Machik’s criticism here.

### ***The Uncommon Eightfold Supplementary Section***

*The Uncommon Eightfold Supplementary Section* is organized as a scholastic treatise, with a clear outline of its contents and agenda. As is indicated by the title, the text has eight sections: [1] The section on the meaning of the name; [2] The section on teaching of the key points; [3] The section on experiential teaching correlated with the faculties; [4] The section on

---

<sup>586</sup> “*gnyis med gcig la thabs mkhas kyis // chos rnams sna tshogs gsungs ba yang // sems can rang gis blo skyon gyis // sbur pa bal du btums pa bzhin // rgan mo nga yis brtags pa la // chos pa rnams kyang chos kyis bcings // grol bar ‘dod kyang slar la bcings // Gcod yul ‘dod kyang slar la bcings*” (581/135).

<sup>587</sup> “*dgu ru phye yang sems yin pas // sems las ma gtogs chos med pas // chos ni blo yi bsam de yin*” (578/132).

teaching the dispelling obstructions; [5] The section on teaching about places of potential error; [6] The section on containing distractions; [7] The section on accepting any kind of experience when illness occurs; and [8] The section on enhancement of practice when strong.<sup>588</sup> Unlike the eight topics addressed in *The Common Section*, which are more philosophical in nature, the topics of *The Uncommon Section* contain more explicit instructions for practice.

The second part of *The Uncommon Section* provides instruction for a guru yoga practice (*bla ma rnal 'byor*). The guru who is the object of this practice is one's lineage lama. Although the text does not indicate a specific lineage, the lama to be visualized is an accomplished being (*siddha*) who is naked, holding a *damaru* and a *khatvanga*, and wearing six bone ornaments (587/141). It does not contextualize the guru yoga practice within the seven-limbed practice as many highly formalized Vajrayāna sādhana practices do, although it does presuppose familiarity with the seven-limbed practice in the fourth section (591/145).

The third part of *The Uncommon Section* discusses different practices depending on practitioners' abilities: highest, mediocre and lowest. No matter the ability of the practitioner, the experiential practices described are all nurtured and supported through engaging with apparitions of non-humans, which will prevent distraction by a happy mind and the Joyful Negative Force. In addition, all practitioners are reminded that no matter the environment of their practice, they should not act hypocritically or for profit, nor should they be separate from emptiness, compassion and devotion to their lama; if they act otherwise, they engage with Negative Forces (589-90/143-44).

---

<sup>588</sup> “*mtshan don gyi le lag dang gcig / gnad bstan pa'i le lag dang gnyis / dbang po dang sbyar ba'i nyams bstan pa'i le lag dang gsum / gegs sel bstan pa'i le lag dang bzhi / gol sa bstan pa'i le lag dang lgna / g.yel ba kha bsdus pa'i le lag dang drug / na tsha byung na nyams su ji ltar blang ba'i le lag dang bdun / 'thas na bogs dbyung ba'i le lag dang brgyad do*” (586/140).

*The Uncommon Section* makes several references to body offering practices (*lus sbyin*), initially in the introductory section, which states that Chöd practice is directed toward severance of clinging to the body and cutting through the root of mind. Unlike in the other texts I translate, *The Uncommon Section* does not mention Negative Forces (Düd) in the context of describing practices such as body offering. In this text, the role of Negative Forces is fulfilled by “non-humans” (*mi ma yin*) and “negative influences” (*gdon*). A brief passage in the third section contextualizes body offering within an experience of a practitioner being tested by non-humans in a solitary place. The practitioner is initially advised to use loving kindness and compassion in an attempt to pacify the non-humans. When this does not work, the practitioner is assured that the non-humans “will be pacified by throwing away one’s body-mind aggregates as food. The activities of a gentle Chöd practitioner are not abusive, forceful actions. Compassion, loving-kindness, and the spirit of enlightenment should be brought onto the path of freedom for oneself and all others.”<sup>589</sup> Unlike in the other foundational texts I discuss, *The Uncommon Section* emphasizes the practice of offering over the practice of resting in the non-discriminating mind.

In the sixth section, the practice of body offering is described as a method for manifesting negative forces when one’s Chöd practice has gone stagnant. In order to excite the negative elements, the practitioner should strip naked, blow a thighbone trumpet, play a damaru, and summon deities and demons by calling out their names, enjoining them to “all gather here because I am doing Chöd!” Following this, the practitioner makes offerings of white and red tormas.<sup>590</sup> The final instruction is to “complete the collection of merit by giving the body’s flesh

---

<sup>589</sup> “*de lta bu’i gnas dben par mi ma yin gyis nyams tshad byung na’ang byams pa dang snying rje bsgoms pas zhi nas ‘gro ba yin / des ma zhi na phung po gzan du bskur bas zhi pa yin / ‘jam por gcod pa las drag rtsub bya ba ma yin no / / snying rje dang byams pa byang chub kyi sems kyi bdag gzhan thams cad thar pa’i lam la ‘god par bya’o*” (590/144).

<sup>590</sup> These barley dough sculptures might be effigies in this context, as I have seen used in contemporary Shuksep

that was brought and blood that was brought when one's body and mind were separated."<sup>591</sup> The practice of offering the body is also discussed in the seventh part within a description of how to practice when one is ill. In this part, one is advised to go to a severe place and to cut the thought of clinging to one's body by giving it to the negative influences, announcing that "You and I both are now interconnected through a single aspiration [the aspiration to attain happiness and avoid suffering]. Therefore, moreover, by offering this body of mine to you [the negative elements], you remain here! Because the profound aural lineage [was transmitted to me], I will meditatively cultivate the correct meaning in the aim of purifying the faults of us both." Unlike the "old lady" of *The Common Section*, the author of this passage acknowledges that she has received an aural transmission of the system, not that the system originated with her. The text advises that no matter what the type of illness, it will abate if one separates the mind and body in this way and mentally relaxes in the meaning of actuality.<sup>592</sup>

The role of active compassion in Chöd is evident in the seventh part which addresses how to heal oneself or other people afflicted by illnesses; this section is more elaborate than the brief discussion in section four of experiences of illness that are obstructions to one's own practice. The importance of grounding Chöd in compassion, loving kindness and the spirit of enlightenment is also in the fifth part of *The Uncommon Section*. This part describes three areas in which a Chöd practitioner might deviate from the authentic teaching and thus take erroneous

---

Chöd practices in Dharamshala.

<sup>591</sup> "des ma slong na gcer bur bud la / mi lpags kyi g-yang gzhi go na / mi rkang gi gling bu 'bud / da ma ru dkrol zhing / rgya dkar nag bal po la sogs pa'i lha 'dre'i ming nas thon tshad bos la / ngas gcod byed pa yin pas thams cad 'dir 'dus shig pas la / sngon du dkar gtor cig byin / de nas dmar gtor byin te / rang gi lus sems phral la lus sha khyer khrag khyer du byin pas bsod nams kyi tshogs rdzogs" (592/146).

<sup>592</sup> "gnyan khrod 'grim la bcad pa ni / rang la na tsha byung na thabs gzhan mi btsal bar gnyan khrod gcig tu phyin la / lus 'di la zhen pa'i rtog pa bcad la / gdon de la lings kyis byin la 'di skad bya / khyod dang bdag gnyis smon lam gcig pas da lta 'brel ba yin / de bas kyang bdag gi lus 'di khyod la 'bul gyis / khyod 'dir sdod cig / nga la snyan brgyud zab mo yod pas rang cag gnyis ka'i sdig pa sbyong ba'i don du yang dag pa'i don bsgom gyi byas la / lus sems phral gnas lugs don la blo lhod kyis bzahag pas nad gang yin pa rang zhir 'gro'o" (593/47).

actions:<sup>593</sup> 1) Chöd that deviates into divination medicine; 2) Chöd that deviates into attributes of the desire realm; and 3) Chöd that deviates into wrathful mantras.<sup>594</sup> In addition, the cultivation of compassion toward all types of sentient beings of the six realms as the method of “extracting the profit”—of augmenting one’s practice—is central to the eighth and final section of the text.

*The Uncommon Section* concludes with the author addressing the topic of the attainment of the Three Bodies. Unlike in *The Great Speech Chapter*, where the practitioner is cautioned against desiring attainment of such a reified concept of enlightenment, *The Uncommon Section* presents the Three Bodies in a more positive light. In *The Uncommon Section*, the practitioner is encouraged to identify non-dual awareness with these Bodies of enlightenment, which are represented as progressive stages of realization. Addressing the a question regarding the attainment of the Three Bodies, the student is informed that “[o]ne who has understood and realized the emptiness of all things is the *dharmakāya*.” Once attaining identification with the *dharmakāya*, and with the power of aspiration for the enlightenment of all sentient beings, one will achieve the *nirmāṇakāya*. Once one has attained the Three Bodies, identity with the *sambhogakāya* is achieved with the unbiased understanding regarding the aims of all beings that arises through non-conceptuality and non-duality. The *svabhavikadharmakāya* (*ngo bo nyid chos kyi sku*) is the essence that transcends thought and expression, a product of understanding the inseparability of the Three Bodies.<sup>595</sup> By including a discussion of the *svabhavikadharmakāya*, a Body of the essence of reality which sublates the other Bodies,

---

<sup>593</sup> This section supplements an earlier criticism (588/142) of Bön practices of offering ransoms to gods and demons.

<sup>594</sup> “*Inga pa gol sa bstan pa’i le lag la gsum ste / gcod mo sman du shor ba dang / gcod ‘dod yon du shor ba dang / gcod drag sngags su shor ba’o*” (591/145).

<sup>595</sup> “*des ‘bras bu sku gsum thob bam zhe na / chos thams cad stong pa nyid du rtogs shing mngon du gyur pa ni chos kyi sku’o // de’i ngang nas smon lam gyi stobs kyis ‘gro don ci yang ‘byung ba ni sprul pa’i sku’o // ‘gro don phyogs bzhin du rtogs pa med pa / rtog pa med bzhin du ‘gro don ‘byung / de gnyis su med par longs spyod pa ni / longs spyod rdzogs pa’i sku’o // sku gsum po de dbyer med / ngo bo bsam brjod las ‘das pa gcig tu rtogs pa ni ngo bo nyid chos kyi sku’o*” (600/154).

Machik again uses Mahāyāna teachings in her own innovative system. Although *The Uncommon Section* is traditionally attributed to Machik herself, it contains more elaborate discussions of topics familiar from *The Great Speech Chapter*, which suggests that this is either a more mature work by Machik or that it has undergone substantial emendation in its transmission.

### ***The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section***

*The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section (Khyad par gyi le lag brgyad pa)* is similar to *The Uncommon Section* in that it is another systematically organized manual of practical instruction on Chöd. The colophon states that “this is the Practical Instruction of the Lady Machik, *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section on the Chöd System of the Negative Forces from the Prajñāpāramitā*.”<sup>596</sup> The eight sections of this text are identified as: 1) The entrance (*jug pa*), going for refuge with the conception of the spirit [of enlightenment]; 2) The blessings, the separation of the body and mind; 3) The meditative cultivation, without mindfulness and without mental activity; 4) The practice, the giving up of the mental and physical aggregates of being as food; 5) The view, not straying into the activity sphere of the Negative Forces; 6) The practical instruction, the pacification of temporary hindrances of body and mind; 7) The teaching of the Chöd commitments; and 8) The teaching on the fruits of gaining experience.<sup>597</sup> The impersonal nature of this text—not being in the form of a dialogue between Machik and an audience, but rather in the form of a scholastic treatise—might suggest that it has been interpreted as a transmission from Machik and is not a direct teaching given by Machik herself.

---

<sup>596</sup> “*Ma gcig jo mo’i gdams ngag pha rol tu phyin pa bdud kyi gcod yul las khyad par gyi le lag brgyad pa zhes bya ba ITP*” (610/164).

<sup>597</sup> “*jug pa skyabs ‘gro sems bskyed dang / byin rlabs lus sems bral ba dang / sgom dran pa med cing yid la byar med pa dang / nyams len phung po gzan la bskyur ba dang / lta ba bdud kyi spyod yul du ma song ba dang / lus dang sems kyi gnas skabs kyi bar chad zhi bar bya ba’i gdams ngag dang / gcod kyi dam tshig bstan pa dang / nyams su blangs pa’i ‘bras bu bstan pa’o*” (6011/155).

In comparison to the other *Supplementary Sections* texts, *The Distinctive Section* is unusual in giving specific instructions for visualizing an assembly field (*tshogs zhing*) to support one's practice of paying homage and going for refuge to lineage figures. The lineage in *The Distinctive Section* includes: the Great Mother, Prajñāpāramitā; the Lord and Victor Śākyamuni; Machik Labdrön; her two spiritual sons, the Victorious Dondrub, and the Savior of Beings, Thönyon Samdrub; the Buddhas of the Ten Directions; the Dharma; and the Saṅgha. Illustrating that it is a Vajrayāna practice, one also pays homage and goes for refuge to one's lama, an assembly of one's personal deities (*yi dam*), and the heroes and heroines who protect the Dharma (603/147). It is interesting to note that this is a very spare assembly field, without mention of Padampa Sangyé or other historical figures other than Machik's two spiritual sons, Dondrub and Samdrub, whose relation to Machik and their roles in the transmission of Chöd are discussed in chapter three of my study.

*The Distinctive Section* also provides more explicit details for visualizing a body offering practice than in the other texts attributed to Machik. In this text, the body offering practice directly follows the visualization of the assembly field gathered around the Great Mother, the embodiment of Prajñāpāramitā. The practitioner is directed to “visualize to the degree one's mind can hold” the dissection and offering of her body to the members of the assembly field: “Think that there is a sword of wisdom in the right hand; the first part that is the head, having cut right through from the neck, by making an offering to the lama and the [Three] Jewels, think ‘May this give you great pleasure.’ Likewise, having broken into the vital [region of] the chest, having entered into the five vital organs [i.e., the heart, lungs, liver, spleen, and kidneys], and so forth, think ‘May you [the recipient(s)] be pleased by this offering.’”<sup>598</sup> The description of the

---

<sup>598</sup> “*blos ‘khyud tshad tsam du bsgom la / lag pa g.yas na shes rab kyi ral gri yod par bsam la / yan lag gi dang po mgo yin pas rke nas rbad kyis bcad nas / bla ma dkon mchog rnam la mchod par phul bas / shin tu dgyes nas gsol*



dissection that the practitioner is to enact through visualization is more graphic and visceral in this text than in the others I have discussed. According to *The Distinctive Section*, this body offering practice can be considered a complete practice in and of itself. It includes the necessary activities of generating the supreme mind of enlightenment and going for refuge, in addition to the offering of the body, which increases one's store of virtuous merit, and the activity of resting in the unfabricated state following the offering, which increases one's store of intuitive wisdom.<sup>599</sup>

Later passages of *The Distinctive Section* return to the subject of offering the body with kindness and compassion and provide various methods for this practice. According to the ability of the practitioner, different types of sentient beings are identified as recipients for the offerings, including obstructors, harmdoers and negative influences. In addition, the practice of offering one's body is explicitly linked to the abstract ideal of the perfection of wisdom, or *prajñāpāramitā*, through a passage from “the noble teaching by the Noble One”: “Because the perfection of wisdom is uncreatedness in the mind, all things are non-creation itself in the mind. Because the perfection of wisdom is equanimity, all things are equanimity. Because the perfection of wisdom is birthlessness, all things are birthlessness. Because the perfection of wisdom is ceaselessness, all things are ceaselessness.”<sup>600</sup> *The Distinctive Section* is the only one

---

*bar bsam / de bzhin du brang dbrog pa'i gnad du don snying lnga la sogs pa bcug nas phul bas dgyes shing gsol bar bsam*” (603/157).

<sup>599</sup> “*de la byang chub mchog tu sems bskyed pa dang / skyabs 'gro byed pa dang / lus mchod par 'bul ba rgyu bsod nams kyi tshogs yin / rjes la gnas lugs ma bcos pa'i ngang la 'jog pa 'bras bu ye shes kyi tshogs yin pas / nyams len 'di gcig pus kyang chog pa yin no*” (604/158).

<sup>600</sup> “*shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa yid la mi byed pa nyid pas chos thams cad yid la mi byed pa nyid do // shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa mnyam pa nyid pas chos thams cad mnyam pa nyid do // shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa skye ba med pa nyid pas chos thams cad skye ba med pa nyid do // shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'gag pa med pa nyid pas chos thams cad 'gag pa med pa nyid do // zhes 'phags pa chos 'phags kyi byang chub sems dpa' rtag tu du la byas so*” (606-077/160-61).

of the supplementary texts attributed to Machik to invoke the perfection of wisdom, one of the six virtues in Buddhist teachings.

As in other works attributed to Machik, *The Distinctive Section* distinguishes among the experiences of practitioners with high, mediocre and low capacities for spiritual development. As I mentioned in the Mahāmudrā section, those with the highest faculties will have an experience of *spros bral*, or simplicity and freedom from elaborations (a common component of Mahāmudrā practice); those with mediocre faculties will have an experience of *thod rgal*, or direct crossing (a common component of Dzogchen practice); and those with the lowest faculties will have an experience of *shugs can*, or the possession of strength. Not only are these experiences suggestive of higher levels of Vajrayāna teachings, they are validated by citing Machik herself: “Machik said, ‘As for what has been concentrated by tightening, relax by loosening. The pith of meditative cultivation is like that.’”<sup>601</sup> Like Rangjung Dorjé’s commentaries, *The Distinctive Section* seems both to rely on Machik as authoritative source and innovate on her teachings.

The final three parts of *The Distinctive Section*—the sixth section on the pacification of temporary hindrances of body and mind, the seventh section on the general and the distinctive commitments of Chöd, and the eighth section on the teaching of the fruits of gaining experience—are notable for their brevity. According to the text, the pacification of temporary hindrances should be learned directly from a lama. The general commitments of Chöd are to avoid the ten traditional Buddhist non-virtues and to accomplish the ten virtues together with the six perfections, while the distinctive commitments are to avoid performing Bön rituals, medical treatments and exorcisms at all times. The eighth section on the fruits of gaining experience

---

<sup>601</sup> “*de la dgongs nas ma gcig gi zhal nas / grims gyis bsgrim la lhod kyis glod / bsgom pa’i gnad cig de na gda’*” (606/160). This is a teaching that I discuss further in the section of this chapter on Mahāmudrā.

notes that “the circumstantial fruit is liberation from physical illness.” The pacification of the four Negative Forces will lead to liberation from mental suffering, and one will ultimately become a buddha with the self-nature of the Three Bodies.<sup>602</sup> With this conclusion of the *Distinctive* text, we again see a positive representation of the Three Bodies as an aim of one’s practice.

## Conclusion

Through a critical reading of these six texts, there are indications that someone other than Machik at least transcribed them (not uncommon to Tibetan spiritual teachings in general), if not edited or even wrote them. According to one biography, Machik stated: “Anyone who wishes to can write down my words, on stone, cloth or rock, and carry them away.”<sup>603</sup> Just as the tracing of transmission genealogies is complicated, tracing the teachings that originate with Machik is problematic. An obvious problem is that some of the texts that we read about in the sources are not in material circulation; it may be the case that such texts were never written down, or it might be that they have been lost. A second problem is knowing when one can be certain about attributions to Machik, since we do not have material texts discussing her teachings that we can confidently date to the eleventh or twelfth centuries.<sup>604</sup>

---

<sup>602</sup> “*drug po lus dang sems kyi ‘phral gyi bar chad zhi bar bya ba ni / bla ma’i zhal pas shes so / bdun pa gcod kyi dam tshig bstan pa ni / thun mong ba’i dam tshig sdig pa mi dge ba bcu spang zhing sems can gyi don du dge ba bcu / pha rol tu phyin pa drug ldan du bsgrub par bya’o / / khyad par gyi dam tshig ni / bon chog dang / sman dpyad dang / ‘dre brdung rnams dus dang rnam pa thams cad du mi bya’o / / brgyad pa nyams su blangs pa’i ‘bras bu bstan pa ni / gnas skabs kyi ‘bras bu / thogs bcas kyi bdud dang / thogs med kyi bdud dang / dga’ brod kyi bdud dang / snyems byed kyi bdud rnams zhi nas lus na tsha las grol / sems sdug bsngal las grol te mthar thug sku gsum gyi rang bzhin du sangs rgyas par ‘gyur ro” (610/164).*

<sup>603</sup> Machik quoted in Dharmasenggé, *Commentary on the 21 Commitments*, fol. 84 (cited in and translated by Savvas 1990, 133 without the inclusion of the original Tibetan).

<sup>604</sup> In a somewhat different context, Ronald Davidson speaks of the development and transmission of Tantra teachings in the case of Padampa Sangyé: “There is little reason to doubt that Padampa could have composed these [particular tantra teachings], for his literate legacy is a summary of how the tantras were written in India, with personal instruction leading to notes and short works, and finally compiled into a scriptural text with a number of short chapters, as exemplified by both the tantras he is accused of authoring” (2005, 247).

Regardless of how we attribute the authorship of *The Great Speech Chapter*, Rangjung Dorjé's *Outline and Commentary* situate it as a key text in the historical inclusion of Chöd praxis within the Karma Kagyü school. More importantly, these commentaries legitimate *The Great Speech Chapter* as integral to the tradition of Chöd. Because of the influence of Rangjung Dorjé's scholarship, *The Great Speech Chapter* is the most important of these six foundational texts. Of the other five texts attributed to Machik that I consider here, *The Supplementary Chapter* is closest in content. Because it covers a range of basic material that complements *The Great Speech Chapter*, it seems primary to the latter text. The dialogue in *The Supplementary Chapter* addresses fundamental Buddhist topics such as the rarity of attaining a human embodiment and how a practitioner develops faith in the Buddha Dharma; but like *The Great Speech Chapter*, it describes the role of the mind in the construction of Negative Forces and the doctrine of Chöd for cutting through such mental constructions.

The other four foundational texts present intriguing similarities to and differences from the teachings in *The Great Speech Chapter*. Using strategies similar to those employed by Rangjung Dorjé in his commentaries, *The Supplementary Chapter*<sup>605</sup> and *The Quintessential Chapter* invoke authoritative Buddhist teachings to elucidate and legitimate the Chöd teachings of Machik, often emphasizing the connection between Chöd and *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings. In comparison with these texts that demonstrate an effort to systematize Chöd within a context of traditional Buddhist teachings, *The Common Eightfold Supplementary Section* is a less systematic compilation of oral teachings, suggesting that it is an earlier composition. In contrast, *The Supplementary Chapter*, *The Uncommon Eightfold Supplementary Section*, and *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section* appear to represent later attempts at systematization:

---

<sup>605</sup> *The Supplementary Chapter* has the fewest references to authoritative sources, only once mentioning an unidentified "Sūtra."

they are more sophisticated and methodical in their form and present specific instructions for practices that are to function as methods for the attainment of enlightenment and liberation (*sgrub thabs*; *sādhana*). *The Uncommon Section* is distinctive in lacking a discussion of the Negative Forces, a topic that is central to Machik's Chöd system. Despite Machik's warnings in *The Great Speech Chapter* regarding the tendency of Buddhist practitioners to reify the Three Bodies into a dogma presented in tenet systems, *The Uncommon Section* and *The Distinctive Section* paradoxically reclaim the formulation of the Three Bodies to illustrate positive attainments.

If we take these six texts attributed to Machik and the two exegetical texts by Rangjung Dorjé to constitute a provisional collection of early authoritative texts on Chöd, the system of Chöd is complex, paradoxical and sometimes self-contradictory. However, as students of Buddhism are well aware, the capacity of the audience and the skill of the teacher are crucial elements when interpreting such complexities, paradoxes, and contradictions—different methods suit different practitioners in different contexts. Although the same basic concerns and teachings emerge in each text, these texts reflect different adaptations of whatever the “original” teaching was of the Chöd of Machik. Critically revisiting the early sources of the tradition helps us to understand the processes of legitimation and innovation that produced this fascinating and complicated system necessarily requires critically revisiting the early sources of the tradition in dialogue with each other.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abé, Ryūichi. 1999. *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse*. New York: Columbia UP.
- Allione, Tsultrim. 2000 (1984). *Women of Wisdom*. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion.
- . 2008. *Feeding Your Demons: Ancient Wisdom for Resolving Inner Conflict*. New York: Little, Brown, and Company.
- Ames, Roger T. and Henry Rosemont, trans. 1998. *The Analects of Confucius*. New York: Ballantine.
- Anila Rinchen Palmo, trans. 1987. *Cutting Through Ego-Clinging*. Montignac: Dzambala.
- Arahant Upatissa. 1961. *The Path of Freedom: Vimuttimagga*. Trans. N.R.M Ehara, Soma Therea, Kheminda There and Tipiṭaka Saṅghapāla. Ceylon: M. D. Gunasena and Co.
- Aryadeva the Brahmin. 1974. *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i tshigs su bcad pa chen mo*. In *Gcod kyi chos skor*. Delhi: Tibet House. 1-9.
- Asaṅga/Maitreyaṅgana. n.d. *Theg pa chen po rgyud bla ma'i bstan bcos*. In *Sde dge Bstan 'gyur, sems tsam*, phi, 54b1-73a7.
- Āryaśūra. 1983. *Jātakamālā: The Marvelous Companion*. Tibetan Translation Series. Berkeley: Dharma Publishing.
- Azzato, Michael A. 1981. "Mother of Tibetan Buddhism: An Introduction to the Life and Teaching of Ma-cig Lab-kyi Sgron ma." Master's Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Canada.
- Aziz, Barbara Nimri. 1980. "The Work of Pha Dampa Sangs rgyas." In *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*. Eds. Michael Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi. New Delhi: Vikas. 21-29.
- Aziz, Barbara Nimri, ed. 1979. *The Tradition of Pha Dam pa Sangs-rgyas*. Five volumes. Thimphu: Druk Sherik Parkhang.
- Bachelard, Gaston. 1971. *The Poetics of Reverie: Childhood, Language, and the Cosmos*. Trans. Daniel Russell. Boston: Beacon P.
- Bareau, André. 1987. "Hinayāna Buddhism." In *The Encyclopedia of Religion 2*. Ed. Mircea Eliade. New York: Macmillan. 444-457.
- Bechert, Heinz. 1969-70. "Theravāda Buddhist Sangha: Some General Observations on Historical and Political Factors in Its Development." *Journal of Asian Studies* 29:

- 761-78.
- . 1982. "The Importance of Aśoka's So-called Schism Edict." In *Indological and Buddhist Studies*. Eds. L. A. Hercus, et al. Canberra: Australian National University. 61-68.
- Benard, Elisabeth. 1990. "Ma gcig Labs sgron, a Tibetan Saint." *Chö Yang* [Dharamsala] 3.
- Benn, James A. 2007. *Burning for the Buddha: Self-Immolation in Chinese Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Beyer, Stephen. V. 1973. *The Cult of Tārā: Magic and Ritual in Tibet*. Berkeley: U of California P.
- Bharati, Agehananda. 1993. *Tantric Traditions*. Delhi: Hindustan Pub.
- Bhattacharya, B. 1924. *Indian Buddhist Iconography*. London: Oxford UP.
- Blofeld, John. 1970. *The Tantric Mysticism of Tibet: A Practical Guide*. New York: E.P. Dutton.
- Bka' chen blo bzang bzod pa. 1979-85. *Dga' ldan snyan brgyud kyi thabs shes gcod kyi gdams pa'i byung rabs pad rag gi 'phreng ba*. In *Gsung 'bum / Blo bzang bzod pa*, Vol. 4. New Delhi: Ngawang Sopa. 7-95.
- Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*. 1996. Two volumes. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.
- Boisvert, Mathieu. 1995. *The Five Aggregates: Understanding Theravāda Psychology and Soteriology*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier UP.
- Boyd, James W. 1971. "Symbols of Evil in Buddhism." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 31.1. 63-75.
- Broido, M. 1983. "Bshad Thabs: Some Tibetan Methods of Explaining the Tantras." In *Contributions on Tibetan and Buddhist Philosophy*. Eds. Steinkellner and Tauscher. Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien. 15-45.
- Brown, Robert L. 2002. "Introduction." In *The Roots of Tantra*. Eds. Katherine Anne Harper and Robert L. Brown. Albany: SUNY P. 1-14.
- Buddhaghosa. 1999 [1975]. *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*. Trans. Bhikkhyi Nāṇamoli. Seattle, WA: BPS Pariyatti Editions.
- Bu-ston. 1986 (1932). *History of Buddhism*. Trans. E. Obermiller. Delhi: Sri Satguru.
- Cabezón, José Ignacio. 1990. "The Canonization of Philosophy and the Rhetoric of Siddhānta

- in Tibetan Buddhism.” In *Buddha Nature*. Ed. Paul J. Griffiths and John P. Keenan. Tokyo: Buddhist Books. 7-26.
- . 1995. “Comparison as a Principle of Knowledge and Its Application to the Translation of Buddhist Texts.” In *Buddhist Translations: Problems and Perspectives*. Ed. Doboomb Tulku. New Delhi: Manohar. 59-74.
- . 2001. “Authorship and Literary Production in Classical Buddhist Tibet.” In *Changing Minds: Contributions to the Study of Buddhism in Tibet in Honor of Jeffrey Hopkins*. Ed. Guy Newland. Ithaca: Snow Lion. 233-63.
- Cabezón, José Ignacio and Roger R. Jackson, eds. 1996. *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion.
- Chang, Garma C. C., trans. 1970. *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Chaoul, Alejandro. 2009. *Chöd Practice in the Bön Tradition*. Ithaca: Snow Lion.
- Chinchore, Mangala. 1995. “Lost Buddhist Texts: The Rationale of Their Reconstruction in Sanskrit.” In *Buddhist Translations: Problems and Perspectives*. Ed. Doboomb Tulku. New Delhi: Manohar. 119-37.
- Chos rje dpal. 1979. *Sngags log sun ‘byin skor bzhuqs so / Chag Lo tswa ba dan ‘Gos khug pa Lha btsas sogs kyis mdzad pa*. Thim phu: Kunsang Tobgyel and Mani Dorji.
- Collins, Steven. 1990. “On the Very Idea of the Pali Canon.” *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, 15. 89-127.
- Conze, Edward, ed. 1964. *Buddhist Texts Through the Ages*. New York: Harper Torchbooks.
- Conze, Edward, trans. 1994 (1973). *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and Its Verse Summary*. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications.
- Crook, John and James Low. 1997. *The Yogins of Ladakh: A Pilgrimage Among the Hermits of the Buddhist Himalayas*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Cupchik, Jeffrey. 2009. “The Tibetan Buddhist gCod Ritual Meditation Practice: A Study of the Music, Liturgy, Transmission and Performance.” PhD Diss., York University.
- DalMolin, Eliane. 2000. *Cutting the Body: Representing Woman in Baudelaire’s Poetry, Truffaut’s Cinema, and Freud’s Psychoanalysis*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P.
- Dalton, Jacob. 2004. “The Development of Perfection: The Interiorization of Buddhist Ritual in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries.” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32. 1-30.



- . 2005. "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra during the 8th-12th Centuries." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 28.1: 115-81.
- Das, Sarat Chandra et al. 1973. *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*. Repr. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- David-Neel, Alexandra. 1927. *My Journey to Lhasa: The Personal Story of the only White Woman Who Succeeded in Entering the Forbidden City*. London: William Heinemann.
- . 1993 (1958). *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*. New York: HarperCollins. (*Mystiques et magiciens du Tibet*. Paris: Plon, 1929.)
- Davidson, Ronald M. 1990. "An Introduction to the Standards of Scriptural Authenticity in Indian Buddhism." In *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*. Ed. Robert Buswell. Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P. 291-325.
- . 2002. "Gsar ma Apocrypha: The Creation of Orthodoxy, Gray Texts, and the New Revelation." In *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism*. Eds. Helmut Eimer and David Germano. Leiden: Brill. 203-224.
- . 2004 (2002). *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: a Social History of the Tantric Movement*. Repr. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- . 2005. *Tibetan Renaissance: Tantric Buddhism in the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture*. New York: Columbia UP.
- Dayal, Har. 1932 [1999]. *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*. Repr. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- De La Vallée Poussin, Louis. 1929. "Appendice iii: Notes sur les corps du Bouddha." In *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi, la siddhi de Hiuan-tsang*, vol. 5. Paris: Paul Geuthner. 766.
- Decler, Hubert. 1978. "The Workings of Sādhana: Vajrabhairava." In *Tibetan Studies*. Eds. Martin Brauen and Per Kvaerne. Zurich: U of Zurich P.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1994. *What is Philosophy?* Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell. New York: Columbia UP.
- Della Santina, Peter. 1995. "Liberation and Language: The Buddhadharma in Translation." In *Buddhist Translations: Problems and Perspectives*. Ed. Daboom Tulku. New Delhi: Manohar. 97-118.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1992. *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. Chicago: U of Chicago P.
- . 1995. *The Gift of Death*. Trans. David Wills. Chicago: U of Chicago P.

- Deutsch, Eliot. "Knowledge and the Tradition Text in Indian Philosophy." In *Interpreting Across Boundaries: New Essays in Comparative Philosophy*. Eds. Gerald James and Eliot Deutsch Larson. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1989. 165-83.
- Dissanayake, Wimal. 1993. "Self and Body in Theravada Buddhism: A Tropological Analysis of the 'Dhammapada.'" In *Self as Body in Asian Theory and Practice*. Eds. Thomas Kasulis, et al. Albany, NY: SUNY Press. 123-145.
- Dharma seng ge, aka Chos kyi seng ge. 1974. *Zhi byed dang Gcod yul gyi chos 'byung rin po che'i phreng ba thar pa'i rgyan*. In *Gcod kyi chos skor*. New Delhi: Tibet House. 411-597.
- Dkon mchog 'jigs med dbang po. 1999 (1773). *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag yid bzhin nor bu'i phreng ba gsung 'bum*. Volume 5. Bla brang bkra shis 'khyil: Bla brang par ma. 5-532.
- Dkon mchog lhun grub and Sangs rgyas phun tshogs. 1973 (1705). *Ngor chos byung (Dam pa'i chos kyi byung tshul legs par bshad pa bstan pa rgya mtshor 'jug pa'i gru chen zhes bya ba rtsom 'phro kha skong bcas)*. New Delhi: Ngawang Topgay.
- Doctor, Andreas. 2005. *Tibetan Treasure Literature: Revelation, Tradition, and Accomplishment in Visionary Buddhism*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications.
- Doniger (O'Flaherty), Wendy. 1980. *Women, Adrogyes, and Other Mythical Beasts*. Chicago: U of Chicago P.
- Dorje, Ringjing, and Ter Ellingson. 1979. "Explanation of the Secret Gcod Damaru: An Exploration of Musical Instrument Symbolism." *Asian Music* 10.2: 63-91.
- Dorje, Thekchok and Jamgön Kongrül Lodö Taye. 2007. *Chöd Practice Manual and Commentary*. Trans. Lodö Rinpoche. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion.
- Douglas, Nik and Meryl White, eds. 1976. *Karmapa: The Black Hat Lama of Tibet*. London: Luzac and Company.
- Dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba. n.d. (2003). *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, smad cha. Sarnath, India: Vajra Vidya Library. 1369-1371.
- Dpal sprul Rin po che. 1994. *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*. Trans. Padmakara Translation Group. San Francisco: Harper Collins.
- . n.d. (2005). *Snying thig sngon 'gro'i khrid yig kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*. Sarnath, Varanasi: CIHTS.
- Dreyfus, Georges B.J. 2003. *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Buddhist Monk*. California: U of California P.

- Drolma, Dekyi. n.d. "Nuns of the Unique Joyul (*gcod-you*) Sect of Tibetan Buddhism." *China Tibetology* 4. China Tibet Information Center.
- Dudjom Lingpa. 1990. *Throma Nagmo: a Practice Cycle for Realization of the Wrathful Black Dakini, A Treasure of Dudjom Lingpa*. Trans. Sarah Harding. Junction City, CA: Padma.
- Dudjom Rinpoche. 2002. *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*. Trans. Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein. Boston: Wisdom.
- Edou, Jérôme. 1996. *Machig Labdron and the Foundations of Chöd*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion.
- Eimer, Helmut. 2002. "Introductory Remarks." In *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism*. Eds. Helmut Eimer and David Germano. Leiden: Brill. 1-11.
- Eimer, Helmut and David Germano. 2002. *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism*. Leiden: Brill.
- Eliade, Mircea. 1964. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Trans. Willard R. Trask. Princeton: Princeton UP.
- Emmerick, Ronald Eric. 1987. "Buddhism in Central Asia." In *The Encyclopedia of Religion* 2. Ed. Mircea Eliade. New York: Macmillan. 400-404.
- English, Elizabeth. 2002. *Vajrayoginī: Her visualizations, rituals, and forms*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications.
- Evans-Wentz, Walter Y. 1958 (1935). *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines: Or Seven Books of Wisdom of the Great Path, According to the Late Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdub's English Rendering*. London: Oxford UP.
- Farrow, G.W. and I. Menon, trans. 2001 (1992). *The Concealed Essence of the Hevajra Tantra, with the Commentary Yogaratnamālā*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Findly, Ellison Banks. 2003. *Dāna: Giving and Getting in Pali Buddhism*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Flood, Gavin. 2000. "The Purification of the Body." In *Tantra in Practice*. Ed. David Gordon White. Princeton: Princeton UP. 509-520.
- Fuchs, Rosemarie, trans. 2000. *Buddha Nature: The Mahayana Uttarantra Shastra by Arya Maitreya*. Ithaca: Snow Lion.
- Gardner, Alexander. 2006. "The Sa Chog: Violence and Veneration in a Tibetan Soil Ritual." *Études Mongoles et Sibériennes, Centrasiatiques et Tibétaines* 36-37.  
<http://emscat.revues.org/index1068.html>

- Geary, Patrick J. 1994. *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages*. Ithaca: Cornell UP.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1977 [1973]. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Germano, David. 1997a. "Food, Clothes, Dreams, and Karmic Propensities." In *Religions of Tibet in Practice*. Ed. Donald S. Lopez. Princeton: Princeton UP. 293-312.
- . 1997b. "The Elements, Insanity, and Lettered Subjectivity." In *Religions of Tibet in Practice*. Ed. Donald S. Lopez. Princeton: Princeton UP. 313-334.
- . 2002. "Canons at the Boundaries: The Rnying ma Tantras and Shades of Gray Between the Early and Late Translations." In *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism*. Eds. Helmut Eimer and David Germano. Leiden: Brill. 199-202.
- Germano, David and William Waldron. 2006. "A Comparison of Ālaya-vijñāna in Yogācāra and Dzogchen." In *Buddhist Thought and Applied Psychological Research*. Eds. K. Nauriyal, et. al. London: Routledge. 36-68.
- Gethin, Rupert. 1986. "The Five Khandhas: Their Treatment in the Nikayas and Early Abhidhamma." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 14: 35-53.
- Gibson, Todd. 1997. "Inner Asian Contributions to the Vajrayāna." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 40: 37-57.
- 'Gos lo tswa ba Gzhon nu dpal. 2003 [1478]. *Deb ther sngon po*. Sarnath, Varanasi: Vajra Vidya Institute.
- . 1976. *The Blue Annals*. Trans. George N. Roerich and Gendun Choephel. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Gombrich, Richard. 1988. *Theravada Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo*. London: Routledge.
- Gómez, Luis O. 1977. "The Bodhisattva as Wonder-worker." In *Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems: Studies in Honor of Edward Conze*. Ed. Lewis Lancaster. Berkeley: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series. 221-261.
- . 1987. "Buddhism in India." In *The Encyclopedia of Religion* 2. Ed. Mircea Eliade. New York: Macmillan. 351-385.
- Goudriaan, Teun. 2002. "Imagery of the Self from Veda to Tantra." In *The Roots of Tantra*. Eds. Katherine Anne Harper and Robert L. Brown. Albany: SUNY Press. 171-192.
- Goux, Jean-Joseph. 2002. "Seneca against Derrida: Gift and Alterity." In *The Enigma of Gift and Sacrifice*. Eds. Edith Wyschogrod, Jean-Joseph Goux and Eric Boynton. New York: Fordham UP. 148-160.

- Griffiths, Paul. 1981. "Buddhist Hybrid English: Some Notes on Philology and Hermeneutics for Buddhologists." *JIAS* 4.2: 17-32.
- . 1999 [1986]. *On Being Mindless: Buddhist Meditation and the Mind-Body Problem*. Repr. Delhi: Sri Satguru Pubs.
- Gshongs chen mkhas btsun bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan. n.d. (1976). *Ma gcig gi rnam thar mdzad pa bco lnga ma*. In *Thang stong chos mdzod*, vol. 1. Thimpu and Delhi: Kunsang Topgay. 21-41.
- Gtsan-smyon He-ru-ka, ed. 1994. *Mi-la'i mgur-'bum*. Leh, India: Mahabodhi.
- Gtsug lag phreng ba, Dpa' bo. 2003. *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, smad cha. Sarnath, India: Vajra Vidya Library.
- Guenther, Herbert V. 1963. "Indian Buddhist Thought in Tibetan Perspective." *History of Religions* 3.1: 83-105.
- . 1969. *The Royal Song of Saraha: A Study in the History of Buddhist Thought*. Boston: Shambhala.
- . 1972. *Buddhist Philosophy in Theory and Practice*. Baltimore: Penguin.
- . 1999 (1963). *The Life and Teaching of Nāropa*. Repr. Boston: Shambhala.
- Gyatso, Geshe Kelsang. 2000 (1991). *Guide to Dakini Land: The Highest Yoga Tantra Practice of Buddha Vajrayogini*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Gyatso, Janet. 1985. "The Development of the Gcod Tradition." In *Soundings in Tibetan Civilization*. Eds. B.N. Aziz and M. Kapstein. New Delhi: Manohar. 320-341.
- . 1986. "Signs, Memory and History: A Tantric Buddhist Theory of Scriptural Transmission." *JIAS* 9.2: 7-36.
- Gyatso, Lobsang. 1998. *Memoirs of a Tibetan Lama*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion.
- Hamilton-Blyth, Sue. 2000. *Early Buddhism: A New Approach: The I of the Beholder*. New York: Routledge.
- Harper, Katherine Anne and Robert L. Brown. 2002. *The Roots of Tantra*. Albany: SUNY P.
- Harrison, Paul. 1996. "A Brief History of Tibetan bKa' 'gyur." In *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*. Eds. José I. Cabezón, and Roger R. Jackson. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion. 70-94.
- Heim, Maria. 2004. *Theories of the Gift in South Asia: Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain Reflections on Dāna*. New York: Routledge.

- Hermann-Pfandt, Adelheid. 1990. *Dākinīs: Zur Stellung und Symbolik des Weiblichen im tantrischen Buddhismus*. Bonn: Indica et Tibetica Verlag.
- . 1998. Review of *Machig Labdrön and the Foundations of Chöd*. *Tibet Journal* 23.3: 93-102.
- . 2000. "On a Previous Birth Story of Ma gCig Lab sgron ma." *Tibet Journal* 25.3: 19-31.
- Hirakawa, Akira. 1990. *A History of Indian Buddhism: From Śākyamuni to Early Mahāyāna*. Trans. and ed. Paul Groner. Hawai'i: U Hawaii P.
- Hobbes, Thomas. 1952 (1651). *Leviathan*. Ed. Nelle Fuller. *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 23. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica.
- Hodge, Stephen. 2003. *The Maha-Vairocana-Abhisambodhi Tantra: With Buddhaguhya's Commentary*. New York: Routledge.
- Hopkins, Jeffrey. 1984. *The Tantric Distinction: An Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*. Ed. Anne C. Klein. London: Wisdom.
- Hubert, Henri and Marcel Mauss. 1964. *Sacrifice: Its Nature and its Function*. Trans. W. D. Halls. Chicago: U of Chicago P.
- Jackson, David. 1994. *Enlightenment by a Single Means*. Wien: Österreichische Akademie Der Wissenschaften.
- 'Jam-dbyaṅgs-rdo-rje, Smyo-sul Mkhan-po. 2005. *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems: Biographies of Masters of Awareness in the Dzogchen Lineage*. Trans. Richard Barron. Junction City, CA: Padma Publishing.
- 'Jam mgon kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas. 1971. *Gdams ngag mdzod*. Volume 9. Delhi, India. N. Lungtok and N. Gyaltsen.
- . 1979. *Gdams ngag mdzod*. Volume 14. Paro, Bhutan: Lama Ngodrup and Sherab Drimey.
- . 1982. *Shes bya kun khyab*. Three volumes. Lhasa: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.
- . 1994. *The Garden of All Joy (Lus kyis mchod sbyin gyi zin bris mdor bsdus kun dga'i skyed tshal)*. Trans. Lama Lodo Rinpoche. San Francisco: Kagyu Drodon Kunchab.
- . 1999. *A Sea of Blessing: Songs of the Shangpa Masters (dpal ldan shangs pa bka'brgyud kyi do ha rdo rje'i tshig rkang dang mgur dbyangs phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs pa thos pa don ldan byin rlabs rgya mtsho)*. In *Gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 12. Kathmandu: Shechen Publications. 463-560.
- . 2003. *Timeless Rapture: inspired verse of the Shangpa masters*. Trans. Ngawang Zangpo.

- Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion.
- . 2007. *Shes bya kun khyab. Treasure of Knowledge: Book eight, part four: esoteric instructions: a detailed presentation of the process of meditation in Vajrayana.* Trans. Sarah Harding. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion.
- Jayawickrama, N.A., ed. 1974. *Buddhavaṃsa and Cariyāpiṭaka.* London: Pali Text Society.
- ‘Jigs med gling pa. 2010. *Longchen Nyingthig Chod Practice “Sound of the Dakini Laughter.”* Trans. Tony Duff. Kathmandu, Nepal: Padma Karpo Translation Committee.
- Jones, Lucy Annette. 1998. “Transgressive Compassion: The Role of Fear, Horror, and the Threat of Death in Ultimate Transformation.” PhD diss., Rice University.
- Jung, C. J. 1972. *Mandala Symbolism.* Trans. R. F. C. Hull. Princeton: Princeton UP.
- Kalu Rinpoche. 1995. “Chod.” In *Secret Buddhism: Vajrayana Practices.* Trans. Francois Jacquemart and Christiane Buchet. San Francisco: Clear Point Press. 141-164.
- Kalu Rinpoche. 1999 (1987). *Foundations of Tibetan Buddhism: The Gem Ornament of Manifold Instructions Which Benefits Each and Everyone Accordingly.* Ithaca: Snow Lion.
- Kant, Immanuel. 1951. *Critique of Pure Reason.* Trans. J. H. Bernard. New York: Hafner Press.
- Kapstein, Matthew. 1980. “The Shangs-pa bKa'-brgyud: an unknown school of Tibetan Buddhism.” In *Studies in Honor of Hugh Richardson.* Eds. M. Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi. Warminster: Aris and Phillips. 138–44.
- . 1989. “The Purificatory Gem and Its Cleansing: A Late Tibetan Polemical Discussion of Apocryphal Texts.” *History of Religions* 28: 217-44.
- . 1993. “Mi-Pham's Theory of Interpretation.” In *Buddhist Hermeneutics.* Ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. 149-74.
- . 1996. “gDams ngag: Tibetan Technologies of the Self.” In *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre.* Eds. José Ignacio Cabezón and Roger R. Jackson. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion. 275-289.
- . 2000. *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation and Memory.* New York: Oxford UP.
- . 2008. “The Sun of the Heart and the Bai-ro-rgyud-‘bum.” *Review d’Etudes Tibétaine* 15: 275-288.

- Karma nges don bstan rgyas. 1973. *Chos rje karma pa sku 'phreng rim byon gyi rnam thar mdor bsdus dpag bsam khri snying (Brief Biographies of the Successive Embodiments of the Black Hat Karmapa Lamas)*. New Thobgyal, HP: Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre.
- Karmay, Samten G. 1975. "A discussion on the doctrinal position of the rDzogs-chen from the 10th to the 13th centuries." *Journal Asiatique* 263: 147-156.
- . 1980a. "The Ordinance of Lha Bla-ma Ye-shes-'od." In *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*. Eds. Michael Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi. Warminster: Aris and Phillips. 150-162.
- . 1980b. "An Open Letter by Pho-brang Zhi-ba-'od to the Buddhists in Tibet." *Tibet Journal* 5.3: 3-28.
- . 1981. "King Tsa/Dza and Vajrayana." In *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R. A. Stein*. Ed. Michel Strickmann. Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques, vol. 20. 192-211.
- Kasulis, Thomas P. 1993a. "The Body—Japanese Style." In *Self as Body in Asian Theory and Practice*. Eds. Thomas P. Kasulis, et al. Albany, NY: SUNY Press. 299-319.
- . 1993b. "Truth Words: The Basis of Kukai's Theory of Interpretation." In *Buddhist Hermeneutics*. Ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. 257-72.
- Khijo Rinpoche. 1991. *Vajrayoginī Commentary: Stairway for Voyage to Great Bliss Space Dweller Pure Realm*. Trans. Dhawa Dhodup. Croydon Park, Sydney: Samsara Relief Thought Books.
- King, Winston, L. 1980. *Theravāda Meditation: The Buddhist Transformation of Yoga*. University Park, PA: Penn State UP.
- Kinsley, David. 1997. *Tantric Visions of the Divine Feminine: the Ten Mahāvidyās*. Berkeley: U California P.
- Klein, Anne Carolyn, trans. 1991. *Knowing, Naming, and Negation: a Sourcebook on Tibetan Sautrāntika*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion.
- . 1995. *Meeting the Great Bliss Queen: Buddhists, Feminists and the Art of the Self*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- . 1998. *Knowledge and Liberation*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion.
- Koller, John M. 1993. "Human Embodiment: Indian Perspectives." In *Self as Body in Asian Theory and Practice*. Eds. Kasulis, et al. Albany, NY: SUNY Press. 45-58.
- Kollmar-Paulenz, Karénina. 1993. *'Der Schmuck der Befreiung': Die Geschichte der Zhi byed- und gCod-Schule des tibetischen Buddhismus*. Wiesbaden: Harrowitz Verlag.



- . 1998. "Ma gcig lab sgron ma – The Life of a Tibetan Woman Mystic Between Adaption and Rebellion." *Tibet Journal* 23.2: 11-32.
- . 2005. "Khros ma nag mo, the 'Wrathful Black one' and the Deities Summoned to the Ritual Feast in the gCod-tradition of Tibetan Buddhism: a Preliminary Survey of the gCod Demonology." *ZAS* 34: 209-230.
- Kolmas, Josef. 1978. "Introduction." In *The Iconography of the Derge Kanjur and Tanjur*. New Delhi: Arya Bharati Mudranalaya. 15-64.
- Kun spangs btson 'grus seng ge. n.d. (13th c.?). *Phung po gzan skyur ba'i rnam par bshad pa las ma gcig lab sgron ma'i rnam par thar pa mdor msdus tsam zhig*. (My own personal collection via Cyrus Stearns.)
- Lab sgron, Ma gcig. *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa zab mo gcod kyi man ngag gi gzhung bka' tshoms chen mo (Bka' tshoms chen mo)*. In *Gdams ngag mdzod*. Ed. 'Jam mgon kong sprul. (vol. 14. Paro, Bhutan: Lama Ngodrup and Sherab Drimey, 1979. 7-17.) (vol. 9. Delhi, India: N. Lungtok and N. Gyaltzen, 1971. 456-66).
- . *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag yang tshoms zhus lan ma bzhugs pa (Yangs tshoms)*. In *Gdams ngag mdzod*. Ed. 'Jam mgon kong sprul. (vol. 14. Paro, Bhutan: Lama Ngodrup and Sherab Drimey, 1979. 101-15.) (vol. 9. Delhi, India: N. Lungtok and N. Gyaltzen, 1971. 547-61).
- . *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag [s]nying tshoms cos kyi rtsa ba (Snyin tshoms)*. In *Gdams ngag mdzod*. Ed. 'Jam mgon kong sprul. (vol. 14. Paro, Bhutan: Lama Ngodrup and Sherab Drimey, 1979. 130-40.) (vol. 9. Delhi, India: N. Lungtok and N. Gyaltzen, 1971. 576-86).
- . *Thun mong gi le lag brgyad*. In *Gdams ngag mdzod*. Ed. 'Jam mgon kong sprul. (vol. 14. Paro, Bhutan: Lama Ngodrup and Sherab Drimey, 1979. 116-30.) (vol. 9. Delhi, India: N. Lungtok and N. Gyaltzen, 1971. 562-76).
- . *Thun mong ma yin pa'I le'u lag brgyad pa*. In *Gdams ngag mdzod*. Ed. 'Jam mgon kong sprul. (vol. 14. Paro, Bhutan: Lama Ngodrup and Sherab Drimey, 1979. 140-55.) (vol. 9. Delhi, India: N. Lungtok and N. Gyaltzen, 1971. 586-601).
- . *Khyad par gyi le lag brgyad pa*. In *Gdams ngag mdzod*. Ed. 'Jam mgon kong sprul. (vol. 14. Paro, Bhutan: Lama Ngodrup and Sherab Drimey, 1979. 155-64.) (vol. 9. Delhi, India: N. Lungtok and N. Gyaltzen, 1971. 601-10).
- . 1974. *Phung po gzan skyur gyi rnam bshad gcod gyi don gsal byed*. In *Gcod kyi chos skor*. New Delhi: Tibet House. 10-410.
- . 2003. *Machik's Complete Explanation: Clarifying the Meaning of Chöd: A Complete*

*Explanation of Casting Out the Body as Food (Phung po gzan skyur gyi rnam bshad gcod kyi don gsal byed).* Trans. Sarah Harding. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion.

- LaFleur, William. 1998. "Body." In *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*. Ed. Mark C. Taylor. Chicago: U Chicago P. 36-54.
- Lamotte, Étienne. 1988. *History of Indian Buddhism: From the Origins to the Saka Era*. Trans. Sara Boin. Louvain-la Neuve: Institut Orientaliste, Université de Louvain.
- . 1993. "Assessment of Textual Interpretations in Buddhism." In *Buddhist Hermeneutics*. Ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. 11-28.
- Lancaster, Lewis. 1979. "Buddhist Literature: Its Canon, Scribes and Editors." In *The Critical Study of Sacred Texts*. Ed. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty. Berkeley: Berkeley Religious Studies Series. 215-29.
- Lauf, D. I. 1970. "Die gCod-Tradition des Dam-pa sang-rgyas in Tibet." *Ethnologische Zeitschriften* Zurich I: 85-98.
- Lee, Kwangsu. 1998. *Buddhist Ideas and Rituals in Early India and Korea*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Ling, Trevor O. 1962. *Buddhism and the Mythology of Evil*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Lo Bue, Erberto. 1992. "The Use of Human Skulls in Tibetan Rituals." *Tibetan Studies: PIATS Narita 1989*, vol. 1. Tokyo: Naritasan Shinshoji. 159-173.
- . 1994. "A Case of Mistaken Identity: Ma-gcig Labs-sgron and Ma-gcig Zha-ma." In *Tibetan Studies: PIATS Fagernes 1992*. Ed. Per Kværne. Oslo: Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture.
- Lopez Jr., Donald S. 1988. *The Heart Sutra Explained: Indian and Tibetan Commentaries*. Albany: SUNY P.
- . 1993a. "Introduction." In *Buddhist Hermeneutics*. Ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993. 1-10.
- . 1993b. "On the Interpretation of the Mahayana Sutras." In *Buddhist Hermeneutics*. Ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. 47-70.
- , ed. 1995. *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*. Chicago: U Chicago P.
- . 1996. *Elaborations on Emptiness: Uses of the Heart Sūtra*. Princeton: Princeton UP.
- . 1997. "Exorcising Demons with a Buddhist Sūtra." In *Religions of Tibet in Practice*. Ed.

- Donald S. Lopez. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 511-526.
- , ed. 1997. *Religions of Tibet in Practice*. Princeton: Princeton UP.
- . 2001. *The Story of Buddhism*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Lorenzen, David N. 2002. "Early Evidence for Tantric Religion." In *The Roots of Tantra*. Eds. Katherine Anne Harper and Robert L. Brown. Albany: SUNY P. 25-36.
- Lyssenko, Viktoria. 2004. "The Human Body Composition in Statics and Dynamics: Āyurveda and the Philosophical Schools of Vaiśeṣika and Sāṃkhya." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32: 31-56.
- Macdonald, A. W. 1980. "Creative Dismemberment Among the Tamang and Sherpas of Nepal." In *Tibetan Studies in Honour of High Richardson: Proceedings of the International Seminar on Tibetan Studies, Oxford, 1979*. Eds. Michael Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi. Westminster: Aris and Phillips. 199-208.
- Madrang, Migyur Dorjee. 1997. "A Discussion on Great Women in Tibetan History." Trans. Sonam Tsering. *Tibet Journal* 2: 69-90.
- Makransky, John. 1996. "Offering (*mChod pa*) in Tibetan Ritual Literature." In *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*. Eds. José Ignacio Cabezón and Roger Jackson. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion. 312-330.
- . 1997. *Buddhahood Embodied: Sources of Controversy in India and Tibet*. Albany, NY: SUNY P.
- Malalasekera, G.P. 2003 (1937). *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*. Delhi: Asian Educational Services.
- Martin, Dan. 1991. "The Emergence of Bon and the Tibetan Polemical Tradition." PhD Diss., Indiana University.
- . 1994a. "Pearls from Bones: Relics, Chortens, Tertons and the Signs of Saintly Death in Tibet." *Numen* 41.3: 273-324.
- . 1994b. *Mandala Cosmogony: Human Body, Good Thought and the Revelation of the Secret Mother Tantras of Bon*. Asiatische Forschungen, 124. Wiesbaden.
- . 1996a. "Lay Religious Movements in 11th- and 12th-Century Tibet: a survey of sources." *Kailash* 18.3/4: 23-55.
- . 1996b. "On the Cultural Ecology of Sky Burial on the Tibetan Plateau." *East and West* 46.3/4: 353-370.

- Masuzawa, Tomoko. 1993. *In Search of Dreamtime: The Quest for the Origin of Religion*. Chicago: U Chicago P.
- Mathes, Klaus-Dieter. 2008. *A Direct Path to the Buddha Within: Gö Lotsāwa's Mahāmudrā Interpretation of the Ratnagotravibhāga*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- . 2007. "Can *sūtra mahāmudrā* be justified on the basis of Maitrīpa's Apratiṣṭhānavāda?" In *Pramānakīrthiḥ: Papers dedicated to Ernst Steinkellner on the occasion of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday*. Part 2. Eds. Birgit Kellner, et al. Wien: Wein U. 545-66.
- . 2006. "Blendign the Sūtras with the Tantras: The Influence of Maitrīpa and His Circle on the Formation of Sūtra Mahāmudrā in the Kagyu Schools. Leiden and Boston: Brill. 201-27.
- Mauss, Marcel. 1966. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Trans. Ian Cunnison. London: Cohen and West.
- Mishra, T.N. 2000. *Buddhist Tantra and Buddhist Art*. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld.
- Mumford, Stan Royal. 1989. *Himalayan Dialogue: Tibetan Lamas and Gurung Shamans in Nepal*. Madison, WI: U Wisconsin P.
- Nagao, Gadjin M. 1991. *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra: A Study of Mahāyāna Philosophies*. Trans. Leslie S. Kawamura. Albany, NY: SUNY P.
- Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu and Bhikkhu Bodhi. 1995. *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya*. Boston: Wisdom.
- Narain, A. K., ed. 1980. *Studies in the History of Buddhism*. Delhi: B.R. Publishing.
- Nariman, G. K. 1998 (1919). *Literary History of Sanskrit Buddhism*. Delhi: Pilgrims Books.
- Nāropa. n.d. *The Summary of Mahamudra: the Key Points of Mahamudra Instruction*. In English and Tibetan (name of translator not provided). Nepal: Thrangu Dharma Kara Publications.
- Nattier, Jan. 1992. "The Heart Sūtra: A Chinese Apocryphal Text." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 15.2: 153-223.
- . 2003. "Re-envisioning the Mahāyāna: A New Look at the Earliest Texts." Columbia University Seminar on Buddhist Studies. New York. 6 March.
- Ngag dbang blo bzang, Klong rdol bla ma. n.d. [1777]. *Bstan 'dzin gyi skyes bu rgya bod du byon pa'i ming gi grangs*. In *Gsung 'bum / Ngag dbang blo bzang*: lithograph print from the Lhasa blocks. Khreng tu'u: n.p. Accessed through the TBRC Core Text Collection Three.

- Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu, Rdza sprul. 1972. *Gcod yul nyon mongs zhi byed kyi bka' gter bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar byin rlabs gter mtsho*. Gangtok: Sonam Topgay Kazi.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1980 [1874]. *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*. Trans. Peter Preuss. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing.
- Obermiller, E. 1998 (1988). *Prajñāpāramitā in Tibetan Buddhism*. Ed. Harcharan Singh Sobti. Delhi: Classics India Publications.
- Ohnuma, Reiko. 1998. "The Gift of the Body and the Gift of Dharma." *History of Religions* 37.4: 323-359.
- . 2000. "Internal and External Opposition to the Bodhisattva's Gift of His Body." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 28: 43-75.
- . 2007. *Head, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood: Giving Away the Body in Indian Buddhist Literature*. New York: Columbia UP.
- Orofino, Giacomella. 1987. *Contributo allo studio dell' insegnamento di Ma gcig Lab sgron*. Supplemento n. 53 agli Annali, vol. 47. Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale.
- . 1995. *Ma gcig: Canti spirituali*. Milano: Adelphi Edizioni.
- . 2000. "The great wisdom mother and the gcod tradition." In *Tantra in Practice*. Ed. David Gordon White. Princeton: Princeton UP. 396-416.
- Ortner, Sherry B. 1978. *Sherpas Through Their Rituals*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Padma Karpo Translation Committee. 2005 (2000). *The Illuminator Tibetan-English Encyclopaedic Dictionary*. Electronic Edition for Macintosh 5.10. Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Padma rnam rgyal. n.d. *Zhe chen chos 'byung*. n.p.
- Padoux, André. 2002. "What Do We Mean by Tantrism?" In *The Roots of Tantra*. Eds. Katherine Anne Harper and Robert L. Brown. Albany: SUNY P. 17-24.
- Payne, Richard K. 2002. "Tongues of Flame: Homologies in the Tantric Homa." In *The Roots of Tantra*. Eds. Katherine Anne Harper and Robert L. Brown. Albany: SUNY P. 193-210.
- Pettit, John Whitney. 1999. *Mipham's Beacon of Certainty: Illuminating the View of Dzogchen, the Great Perfection*. Boston: Wisdom.
- Phabongkha bde chen snying-po. 1984. *Chod: Cutting Off the Truly Existent "I."* Trans. and ed. Lama Thupten Zopa Rinpoche. London: Wisdom.

- Prats, Ramon. 1979. "Some Preliminary Considerations Arising from a Bibliographical Study of the Early Gter-Ston." In *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson: Proceedings of the International Seminar on Tibetan Studies, Oxford*. Eds. Michael Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi. Warminster: Aris and Phillips. 256-60.
- Puett, Michael J. 2002. *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard-Yenching Institute.
- Ray, Reginald. 2001. *Secret of the Vajra World: The Tantric Buddhism of Tibet*. Boston and London: Shambhala.
- Rang byung rdo rje the Third Zhwa nag. (1284-1339). 1968. *Nges don phyag rgya chenpo'i smon lam*. Chemre.
- . 1971a. *Chos rje rang byung rdo rjes mdzad pa'i rlung sems gnyis med*. In *Gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 6. Ed. Jam mgon kong sprul. Delhi: N. Lungtok and N. Gyaltzen. 164-170.
- . 1971b. *Phyag rgya chen po gangga rna 'i 'grel pa*. In *Gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 5. Ed. Jam mgon kong sprul. Delhi: N. Lungtok and N. Gyaltzen. 36-37.
- . 1971c. *Phyag rgya chen po lhan cig skyes sbyor gyi khrid yig*. In *Gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 6. Ed. Jam mgon kong sprul. Delhi: N. Lungtok and N. Gyaltzen. 1-16.
- . 1974a. *Gcod bka' tshoms chen mo'i sa bcad*. In *Gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 9. Ed. Jam mgon kong sprul. Delhi: N. Lungtok and N. Gyaltzen. 501-527.
- . 1974b. *Bde mchog lha lnga 'i bskang ba karma pa rang byung rdo rje mdzad pa*. In *Rare Karma-pa Texts on the Practice of the Mahamudra, the Six Doctrines of Naropa, and Other Esoteric Precepts*. Kandra, Himchal Pradesh. 243-246.
- . 1974c. *Ston pa thams cad mkhyen pa'i skyes rabs phreng/ bcu phrag gsum dang bzhi ni dpa' bo'i stel/ phyi nas rang byung rdo rjes bdun lhag pa'i/ drug cus brgya rtsa rdzogs par mdzad pa bzhugs/*. In *The Tibetan Rendering of the Jatakamalii of Aryasura Supplemented with 67 Additional Jataka Stories by the Third Karma-pa Rang-byung-rdo-rje*. Two volumes. Kargyud Sungrab Nyamso Khang, Darjeeling.
- . 1978. *Nyams len lag khrigs ma'i khrid ngo mtshar can bzhugs so*, alias *Karma snying thig*. In *Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo*, vol. 86. Kyichu Monastery, Paro Bhutan: Ngodrup and Sherab Drimay. 423-470.
- . 1978. *Gcod kyi khrid yig*. In *Khrid Material on the Practices of Gcod*. Kunsang Tobgay, Thimpu. 175-203.
- . 1979. *Chos rje rang byung zhabs kyi phyogs bsgribs mdzad pa tshogs las yon tan kun 'byung chog gzhug*. In *Gcod tshogs yon tan kun 'byung—The collected Gcod Teachings of the Zur-mang Bka'-brgyud-pa Tradition*. Bir, H. P. 1-96.

- . 1981a. *Ma lab sgron La gsol ba 'debs pa'i mgur rna bzhugs so*. In *Gcod tshogs rin chen 'phreng ba*. Paro: Lama Ngodrup and Sherab Drimey. 1-7.
- . 1981b. *'Rje rang byung rdo rjes mdzad pa'i gcod kyi tshogs las rin po che'i phreng ba 'don bsgrigs bltas chog tu bkod pa gcod kyi lugs sor bzhag bzhugs so*. In *Gcod tshogs rin chen 'phreng ba*. Paro: Lama Ngodrup and Sherab Drimey. 9-195. Also in *Gcod tshogs sgrub skor*. n.d. 1-123.
- . 1985a. *Gcod kyi nyams len bshugs so*. In *Phyag chen rgya gzhung*. Tsondrü Senge, Bir Tibet Society. Khangra, H. P. 647-658.
- . 1985b. *Doha mdzod kyi glu 'i don gsal bar byed pa tshig gi rgtjan dri rna med pa'i sgron me*. In *Phyag chen rgya gzhung*. Khangra H.P.: Tsondrü Senge, Bir Tibet Society. 567-645.
- . n.d. *De bzhin gshegs pa 'i snying po bstan pa*. In *Zab mo nang gi don zhes bya ba' i gzhung gzhugs by Rang byung rdo rje*. Rumtek. 35a-39a. (Also in *Selected Writings on Vajrayana Buddhist Practice by the Fifth Zhwa dmar Dkon mchog 'bangs*, vol. 1. 459-474.)
- . n.d. *Pha brgyud thabs kyi brgyud pa gsol ba'i debs pa rje Rang byung rdo rjes so* (text 20). In *Gcod tshogs sgrub skor*.
- . n.d. (1974). *Zab mo bdud kyi gcod yul gyi khrid yig*, vol. 9. In *Gdams ngag mdzod*. Ed. Jam mgon kong sprul. Delhi: N. Lungtok and N. Gyaltzen. 618-628.
- . n.d. *Zab mo nang gi don zhes bya ba'i gzhung bzhugs* (includes *De bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po bstan pa* and *Rnam shes ye shes 'byed pa'i bstan bcos bzhugs so*). Rumtek.
- . n.d. *Zab lam na ro chos drug gi gsal byed spyi chings khrid yig dang bcas pa: Karma pa rang byung rdo rjes mdzad pa'i chos drug gser zhun mar grags so*. In *Gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 6. 17-61. (Also available in *Na ro chos drug gi khrid skor- A Collection of Texts for the Practice of the Six Precepts of Naropa According to the Method Transmitted by the Masters of the Kal Ji tshang Bka-brgyud pa Tradition*. Karlo, Tibetan Camp, Majnu-Tila, Delhi. 1985. 109-194.)
- . n.d. *Rang byung rdo rje'i mgur mam*. Kunchhap, Bidung, Tashigang, Bhutan.
- . n.d. *Rje rang byung rdo rdes mdzad pa'i gdon tshogs dgu ma dang da bdag drug sbyor*. In *Gcod tshogs sgrub skor*, text 3.
- Rdo rje gling pa. 1984. *Bka' tshoms chen mo'i ti ka lta sgom gyi khogs byung khyung chen nam mkha'i ldings ltar / bshad pa bzhugs soha / badzra bho tra'o*. In *Gcod skor gter chen rdo rje rdzing pa'i (sic. gling pa) gter chos*. (A cycle of Chöd practice recovered from its place of concealment by Gter chen Rdo rje gling pa; reproduced from a rare manuscript

- preserved at O-rgyan-chos-gling in Bum-thang). Thimphu, Bhutan: Druk Sherig Press. 365-447.
- Rgod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje. 1976. *Tshogs bsog mchod sbyin gyi zhal gdams (Oral Instructions on Completing the Accumulations [of Merit and Wisdom] Through Giving Homage and Offerings)*. In *Gsung 'bum*. Vol. 2. Thimphu: Kunzang Tobgay. 375-382.
- Rhi, Juhyung. 2003. "Pious Dedication and Wondrous Vision: Images of Mahāyāna in Gandharan Art." Columbia University Seminar on Buddhist Studies. New York. 18 September.
- Rhys-Davids, T. W. 1925 (1880). *Buddhist Birth-Stories (Jataka Tales): The Commentarial Introduction Entitled Nidāna-kathā, The Story of Lineage*. London: George Routledge and Sons.
- . 1980 (1911). *Buddhist India*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Richardson, Hugh E. 1977. "The Dharma that Came Down from Heaven: A Tun-huang Fragment." In *Buddhist Thought and Asian Civilization*. Eds. Leslie Kawamura and Keith Scott. Emeryville: Dharma Publishing. 219-229.
- Rin chen seng ge. 1979. *Phyag rgya chen po gcod kyi gdams pa nam mkha' sgo 'byed*. In *Gdams ngag mdzod*. Vol. 14. Ed. 'Jam mgon kong sprul. Paro, Bhutan: Lama Ngodrup and Sherab Drimey. 848-864.
- Rinjing Dorje and Ter Ellingson. 1979. "Explanation of the Secret Gcod Da ma ru': an Exploration of Musical Instrument Symbolism." *Asian Music*, 10.2: 63-91.
- Rnam rgyal tshe ring. 2001. *Bod yig brda rnying tshig mdzod*. Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang.
- Rossi-Filibek, E. de. 1983. "The Transmission Lineage of the gCod Teaching According to the 2nd Dalai-Lama." In *Contributions on Tibetan and Buddhist Religion and Philosophy*. Eds. E. Steinkellner and H. Tauscher. Wien: U Wien. 47-57.
- Rossi, Donatella. 2008. "An Introduction to the mKha' 'gro gsang gcod Teachings of Bon." *East and West* 58, 1-4: 213-33.
- Ruegg, David Seyfort. 1979. "On the Reception and Early History of the Dbu ma (Madhyamaka) in Tibet." In *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*. Eds. Michael Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi. Westminster: Aris and Phillips. 277-279.
- . 1984. "Problems in the transmission of Vajrayana Buddhism in the Western Himalaya about the Year 1000." *Acta Indologica*, vol. 6. 369-381.
- Ryle, Gilbert. 2009 (1971). "The Thinking of Thoughts: What is 'Le Penseur' Doing?" (1968).



- In *Collected Essays*, vol. two, 1929-1968. New York: Routledge.
- Samuel, Geoffrey. 1993. *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Sanderson, Alexis. 1988. "Śaivism and the Tantric traditions." In *The World's Religions*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 660-704.
- Śāntideva. 1971 (1922). *Śikṣā-Samuccaya: A Compendium of Buddhist Doctrine*. Trans. Cecil Bendall and W.H.D. Rouse. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- . 1997. *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life: Bodhicaryāvatāra*. Trans. Vesna A. Wallace and B. Alan Wallace. Ithaca: Snow Lion.
- Savvas, Carol D. 1990. "A Study of the Profound Path of Gcod: The Mahayana Buddhist Meditation Tradition of Tibet's Great Woman Saint Machig Labdron." PhD Diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Scarry, Elaine. 1987. *Bodies in Pain: the Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Schaeffer, Kurtis R. 1995. "The Enlightened Heart of Buddhahood: A study and translation of the Third Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje's Work on Tathāgatagarbha, the De bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po gtan la dbab pa." MA Thesis, University of Washington.
- . 2005. *Dreaming the Great Brahmin: Tibetan Traditions of the Buddhist Poet-Saint Saraha*. New York: Oxford UP.
- Schlaginweit, Emil. 1863. *Buddhism in Tibet*. London: Susil Gupta.
- Schnier, J. 1957. "The Tibetan Lamaist Ritual: Chöd." In *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 38: 402-407.
- Schopen, Gregory. 1997. *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks*. Honolulu: U Hawai'i P.
- Sheehy, Michael R. 2005. "Severing the Source of Fear: Contemplative Dynamics of the Tibetan Buddhist gCod Tradition." In *Contemporary Buddhism: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 6.1: 37-52.
- Sheppard, Gerald T. 1987. "Canon." In *The Encyclopedia of Religion* 2. Ed. Mircea Eliade. New York: Macmillan. 63-71.
- Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa sdud pa tshigs su bcad pa*. n.d. n.p. Copy received from the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamshala, Acc. Number 13877.

- Sierksma, F. 1966. *Tibet's Terrifying Deities: Sex and aggression in religious acculturation*. Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle.
- Simmer-Brown, Judith. 2001. *Dākinī's Warm Breath: The Feminine Principle in Tibetan Buddhism*. Boston: Shambhala Publications.
- Skorupski, Tadeusz. 1996. "The Canonical Tantras of the New Schools." In *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*. Eds. José Ignacio Cabezón and Roger R. Jackson. Ithaca: Snow Lion. 95-110.
- Smith, E. Gene. 2001. *Among Tibetan Texts: History and Literature of the Himalayan Plateau*. Ed. Kurtis R. Schaeffer. Boston: Wisdom.
- Snellgrove, David L. 1987. *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors*. London: Serindia Pubs.
- Snellgrove, David and Hugh Richardson. 1995 (1968). *A Cultural History of Tibet*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Sobti, Harcharan Singh. [1988] 1998. "Preface." In *Prajñāpāramitā in Tibetan Buddhism*. By E. Obermiller. Delhi: Classics India Publications. ix-xiii.
- Sopa, Geshe Lhundup, Michael J. Sweet and Leonard Zwillig. 1996. *Peacock in the Poison Grove: Two Buddhist Texts on Training the Mind*. Boston: Wisdom.
- Sorensen, Michelle J. 2006. Review of *Machik's Complete Explanation: Clarifying the Meaning of Chöd: A Complete Explanation of Casting Out the Body as Food*. H-Buddhism, H-Net Reviews. September.
- Spiro, Melford E. 1982 (1970). *Buddhism and Society: a Great Tradition and its Burmese Vicissitudes*. Berkeley: U California P.
- Staal, Fritz. 1993. "Indian Bodies." In *Self as Body in Asian Theory and Practice*. Eds. Thomas Kasulis, et al. Albany, NY: SUNY P. 59-102.
- Steinkellner, Ernst. 1978. "Remarks on Tantristic Hermeneutics." In *Proceedings of the Csoma De Koros Memorial Symposium*. Ed. E. Ligeti. Budapest. 445-58.
- Stoddard, Heather. 2009. "Eat It Up or Throw It to the Dogs? Dge 'dun chos 'phel (1903-1951), Ma cig lab sgron (1055-1153) and Pha Dam pa sangs rgyas (D. 1117): A Ramble Through the Burial Grounds of Ordinary and 'Holy' Beings in Tibet." In *Buddhism Beyond the Monastery: Tantric Practices and Their Performers in Tibet and the Himalayas*. Eds. Sarah Jacoby and Antonio Terrone. Leiden: Brill. 9-36.
- Stott, David. 1989. "Offering the Body: The Practice of Gcod in Tibetan Buddhism." *Religion* 19: 221-26.

- Strong, John. 1979. "The Transforming Gift: an Analysis of Devotional Acts of Offering in the Buddhist 'Avadana' Literature." *History of Religions* 18.3: 221-237.
- Takasaki, Jikido. 1966. *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga*. Serie Orientale Roma, vol. 33. Rome: Is. M.E.O.
- Tambiah, Stanley Jeyaraja. 1976. *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand Against a Historical Background*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Taylor, Mark C. 1998. "Introduction." In *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*. Ed. Mark C. Taylor. Chicago: U Chicago P. 1-19.
- Taylor, Mark C., ed. 1998. *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*. Chicago: U Chicago P.
- Thang stong rgyal po. n.d. *Ma gcig gsang spyod snyan brgud las / dge sdig 'khrul spong rgyu 'bras gsal ba'i don ston bzhugs so*. n. p. In *Thang stong chos mdzod*, vol. *tha*. Ed. Chos kyi blo gros. 337-358.
- Thondup, Tulku. 1986. *Hidden Teachings of Tibet: An Explanation of the Terma Tradition of the Nyingma School of Buddhism*. Boston: Wisdom.
- Thurman, Robert A.F. 1978. "Buddhist Hermeneutics." *JAAR* 46.1: 19-39.
- . 1993. "Vajra Hermeneutics." In *Buddhist Hermeneutics*. Ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993. 119-148.
- . 1997. *Essential Tibetan Buddhism*. Edison, NJ: Castle Books.
- . 2001. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. New Delhi: Harper Collins.
- Thurman, Robert A. F., trans. 1998 (1976). *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti: A Mahāyāna Scripture*. University Park: Penn State UP.
- Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang Chos kyi Nyi ma. 1984. *Thu'u bkwan grub mtha*, vol. 1. Kun su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang.
- Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (TBRC). TBRC Digital Library. <<http://www.tbrc.org>>
- Tilopa. n.d. *Phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag*. Toh. 2303, zhi 242b7-244a5.
- Tromge, Jane and Chagdud Tulku. 1995. *Ngondro Commentary: instructions for the concise preliminary practices of the new treasure of Dudjom*. Junction City, CA: Padma Publishing.
- Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje (1309-1364). n.d. *Deb ther dmar po* (comp.1346-1363). TBRC.

- Tsong kha pa (Ma ti bhadra kirti), et al. 1986a. *Gcod tshogs: the Collected Gcod Teachings of the Dge-lugs-pa tradition*. Dharamshala, India: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.
- Tsong kha pa (Ma ti bhadra kirti). 1986b. *Zab lam Gcod kyi khrid yig ma ti bha dra kirti sbyar ba*. In *Gcod tshogs: the Collected Gcod Teachings of the Dge-lugs-pa tradition*. Dharamshala, India: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. 1-45.
- Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa. 2004. *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment: Lam rim chen mo*, vol. 2. Translated by the Lamrim Chenmo Translation Committee. Ithaca: Snow Lion.
- Tucci, Giuseppe. 1940. *Travels of Tibetan Pilgrims in the Swat Valley*. Calcutta: The Greater India Society.
- . 1988 [1980]. *The Religions of Tibet*, rev. ed. Trans. Geoffrey Samuel. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- . 1999. *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*. Hong Kong: SDI Publications.
- Tulku, Doboomb, ed. 1995. *Buddhist Translations: Problems and Perspectives*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- van der Kuijp, Leonard W. J. 2006. "On the Composition and Printings of the Deb gter sngon po by 'Gos lo tsā ba gzhon nu dpal (1392-1481)." *JIATS* 2: 1-46.
- Van Tuyl, Charles. 1979. "Mila-ras-pa and the gCod ritual." *The Tibet Journal* 4.1: 34-40.
- Waddell, Lawrence Austine. 1895. *The Buddhism in Tibet, or Lamaism*. London: W. H. Allen.
- Waldron, William S. 2003. *The Buddhist Unconscious: The ālaya-vijñāna in the context of Indian Buddhist Thought*. London: Routledge.
- Walshe, Maurice. 1995 (1987). *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: a Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom.
- Walter, Michael. 2003. "Jabir, the Buddhist Yogi, part III: Considerations on an International Yoga of Transformation." *Lungta* 16: 21-36.
- Warder, A. K. *Indian Buddhism*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980.
- Warren, H. C., trans. 1998 (1986). *Buddhism in Translations*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Watson, Burton, trans. 1993. *The Lotus Sutra*. New York: Columbia UP.
- Wayman, Alex. 1997 (1959). *Untying the Knots in Buddhism: Selected Essays*. Delhi:

Motilal Banarsidass.

- . 1973. *The Buddhist Tantras: Light on Indo-Tibetan Esotericism*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- . 1980. "Observations on the History and Influence of the Buddhist Tantra in India and Tibet." In Narain, ed., *Studies in the History of Buddhism*. Delhi: B.R. Publishing. 359-363.
- . 1985. *Chanting the Names of Mañjuśrī: a translation of the Mañjuśrī-namā-saṃgīti*. Boston: Shambala Publications.
- . 1987. "Esoteric Buddhism." In *The Encyclopedia of Religion* 2. Ed. Mircea Eliade. New York: Macmillan. 472-482.
- White, David Gordon. 1996. *The Alchemical Body: Siddha Traditions in Medieval India*. Chicago: U Chicago P.
- . "Introduction." 2000. In *Tantra in Practice*. Ed. David Gordon White. Princeton: Princeton UP. 3-38.
- Willemen, Charles, trans. 2004 (1983). *The Chinese Hevajratāntra*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Williams, Paul. 1989. *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*. London: Routledge.
- Willis, Janice Dean, ed. 1987. *Feminine Ground: Essays on Women and Tibet*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion.
- Wilson, Liz. 1996. *Charming Cadavers: Horrific Figurations of the Feminine in Indian Buddhist Hagiography*. Chicago: U Chicago P.
- Wu, John. 2004. "The Dance of the Self-Beheading Woman: Death and Mutilation in the Tibetan Hermeneutics of the Feminine." In *The Dark Side: Proceedings of the Seventh Australian and International Religion, Literature and the Arts Conference 2002*. Eds. Christopher Hartney and Andrew McGarrity. Sydney: RLA Press.
- Wyschogrod, Edith, Jean-Joseph Goux and Eric Boynton, eds. 2002. *The Enigma of Gift and Sacrifice*. New York: Fordham UP.
- Yuyama, Akira. 1997. "The Inspirational Source of the Zhi-byed-pa Doctrine." In *Les Habitants du Toit du Monde: Études Recueillies en Hommage à Alexander W. Macdonald*. Eds. Samten Karmay et Philippe Sagant. Nanterre: Société d'ethnologie. 299-307.
- Yuyama, Akira, ed. 1976. *Prajñā-pāramitā-ratna-guṇa-samcayagāthā (Sanskrit Recension A)*;

*edited with an introduction, bibliographical notes and a Tibetan version from Tunhuang.*  
Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Zong Rinpoche, Kyabje. 2006. *Chöd in the Ganden Tradition*. Ed. David Molk. Ithaca: Snow Lion.

Zürcher, E. 1987. "Buddhism in China." In *The Encyclopedia of Religion 2*. Ed. Mircea Eliade. New York: Macmillan. 414-421.

## APPENDICES

**Appendix One: *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa zab mo gcod kyi man ngag gi gzhung bka'****tshoms chen mo* / /<sup>606</sup>

{7.3/456.3} *shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa zab mo gcod kyi man ngag gi gzhung bka'*  
*tshoms chen mo bzhugs so* / /

*The Great Speech Chapter, the textual tradition of the oral instructions of the profound  
 Chöd of Prajñāpāramitā.*

*mi smra mi bsam bsam du med pa'i ngang* / / *yul 'das dmigs med dbyings la phyag 'tshal  
 lo / § gcod kyi bka' tshoms chen mo 'di / § 'ga' la phan snyams yi ger bkod / § bdud kyi rtsa ba  
 rang gi sems* / / *yul snang cir yang rig pa la* / / *zhen cing chags pas bdud kyi zin* / / *sems la yul du  
 bzung bas bsalad* / §

Not speaking, not thinking, I pay homage to the state without thought, the realm beyond objects and without reference. This is the *Great Speech Chapter of Chöd*. It is written down<sup>607</sup> with the thought to benefit some. The root of Negative Forces (*bdud*; *māra*) is one's own mind (*sems*). Because of clinging and attachment to the knowledge (*rig pa*; *vidyā*) of all varieties of<sup>608</sup> apparent objects, one is in the clutches of Negative Forces; there are taints (*bsalad*) from grasping objects in the mind.

*bdud la rnam pa bzhi ru dbye* / / *thogs bcas bdud {phyi'i yul la brten pa} dang thogs med  
 bdud {nang gi blos brtags la brten pa} / / dga' brod bdud {yon tan mngon zhen la brten pa}  
 dang snyems byed bdud {gnyis 'dzin gyi rnam rtog} / / de yang snyems byed bdud du 'dug / §*

<sup>606</sup> Two editions consulted: 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas, ed., *Gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 14 (Paro, Bhutan: Lama Ngodrub and Sherab Drimey, 1979): 7-17; *Gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 9 (Delhi, India: N. Lungtok and N. Gyaltzen, 1971): 456-466.

<sup>607</sup> "yi ger bkod," lit. "arranged in letters."

<sup>608</sup> "cir yang," lit. "whatever."

The Negative Forces are classified as four: the “Negative Forces With Obstruction” {supported by an external object},<sup>609</sup> the “Negative Forces Without Obstruction” {supported by internal mental conceptualization}, the “Joyous Negative Forces” {supported by clinging to manifest qualities}, and the “Negative Forces Producing Pride” {discursive thought due to dualistic grasping}. Furthermore, [these four are all] present in “Negative Forces Producing Pride.”

*thogs bcas bdud la grangs mang yang // dbang po'i ngo la snang ba la // dgag sgrub  
dpyad pas thogs bcas bdud // nges par bzung bas 'khor bar bcings / §*

There are many Negative Forces With Obstruction. Because of one’s affirmative and negative discriminations toward the appearances presented<sup>610</sup> to the sense faculties, there are Negative Forces With Obstruction. Through grasping these as definitive, one is fettered in *samsāra*.

*gzugs ni gzugs kyi ngo bos stong // gzugs la ma<sup>611</sup> chags stong par bsgom // gzugs la  
nges par ma chags pas // rtag par 'dzin pa'i bdud las grol // stong pa yid la ma bsgoms pas //  
{8/457} chad pa'i bdud las nges par grol // gzugs snang dgag tu mi btub ste // nges par ma  
bzung rang snang 'od // sgra dang dri dang ro dang reg // yid la sogs pa de bzhin grol // yid ni  
thogs med bdud yin te // dbang po'i sgo las byung bas na // thogs bcas bdud du bstan pa yin //  
dbang po'i ngos la snang ba rnams // rang grol dgongs pas thad kar bcad // dbyer med gti mug  
chen por bsgyur / §*

<sup>609</sup> I am still investigating the authorship of the embedded commentaries (*mchan*) within this text. It may be the case that they were authored by Jamgön Kongtrul himself: according to Gene Smith, “[i]n some cases Kong sprul adds his own explanation or notes” (2001b, 264).

<sup>610</sup> “*ngo la snang ba la*,” lit. “appear in the face of.”

<sup>611</sup> Reading “*la ma chags*” for “*lam chags*.”



As for form, the essence of form is empty.<sup>612</sup> Unattached to form, meditate on emptiness. One who is definitively unattached to form is liberated from the Negative Forces of grasping [things] as permanent.<sup>613</sup> One who does not meditatively cultivate emptiness in mental consciousness (*yid*) is definitively liberated from the Negative Forces of nihilism (*chad pa'i bdud*). The appearances of forms cannot be obstructed; not definitively grasped,<sup>614</sup> they are self-apparent luminosity (*rang snang 'od*). Hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, mental consciousness, and so forth, are similarly liberated. As for mental consciousness, it is a Negative Force Without Obstruction. When there are occurrences through the doors of the sense faculties (*dbang po'i sgo*), they are the Negative Forces With Obstruction. Appearances presented to the sense faculties are directly severed through one's intent for self-liberation; without separation, there will be great delusion.

*thogs med bdud kyi byung tshul ni // yid yul byung tshul bzang dang ngan // rang gi rtog pas phye ba rnams // thogs med bdud du bstan pa yin // rang byung sems las ma gtogs pa // lha bzang lha ru 'dzin pa dang // 'dre ngan 'dre ru 'dzin pa dang / yid kyi re dogs 'gyu byed rnams // rang bdud rang la longs pa yin / §*

As for the manner in which Negative Forces Without Obstruction occur: the manner in which objects occur in the mental consciousness (*yid*) is as good or bad; the differentiations [made] by one's own discriminative thinking are taught as Negative Forces Without Obstruction. Because one's natural mind (*rang byung sems*) does not include grasping a deity (*lha*) as a deity, a spirit (*'dre*) as a bad spirit, the hopeful and fearful thoughts of the mental consciousness (*yid*) are one's own Negative Forces that have happened in oneself.

---

<sup>612</sup> This is a reference to and commentary on the Sūtra teachings of the *Prajñāpāramitā*.

<sup>613</sup> May also be interpreted as “eternalism” or “absolutism.”

<sup>614</sup> May also be interpreted as “reified.”

*chos dbyings klong chen ngang gsal las // dran rtog cir yang<sup>615</sup> ‘char ba yin // dper na  
rgya mtsho g.yo med las // rba rlabs la sogs ‘byung ba bzhin // de ltar rtogs pa’i skyes bu yis //  
bcas bcas mi dgos rang sar zhog // phan gnod mi ‘byung dbyings su grol // chos nyid dbyings  
nas rang sar la // phrag dog dgag bsgrub byar mi rigs // dgag bsgrub ma byas rang byung  
sems / §*

Whatever thoughts and memories (*dran rtog*) arise are from the clear state of the great sphere of the expanse of things (*chos dbyings*; *dharmadhātu*). For example, they are like waves and so forth arising from a still<sup>616</sup> ocean. In that way, knowledgeable beings (*rtogs pa’i skyes bu*) must rest in their own ground without the need for fabrications (*bcas bcas mi dgos*). Benefit and harm not arising, one becomes liberated in the expanse. From the expanse of things themselves (*dharmatā*), it is untenable to negate or create envy in one’s own ground; not creating negations or affirmations, there is self-arisen mind (*rang byung sems*).

*dga’ brod bdud kyi byung tshul ni // thun mong bdud dang mchog gi bdud // rigs ‘khrul  
sems las byung ba yin / §*

As for the manner in which Joyous Negative Forces arise, the common Negative Forces and the exceptional Negative Forces arise from mental confusion (*rigs ‘khrul sems*).

*gnyan sar ‘dre yis ma tshugs pas // rlom sems<sup>617</sup> skyes pa dga’ brod bdud // byin brlabs  
nus pa’i rtags byung bas // bsod nams nor rdzas g.yeng ba’i bdud // khe grags dgra gnyen spro  
ba’i bdud // lha ‘dres dngos grub ster ba dang // bu dang mdza’ bshes ‘khor ‘dus la // dga’  
zhing brod pas dga’ brod bdud / §*

---

<sup>615</sup> Reading “yang” for “yad.”

<sup>616</sup> “g.yo med,” lit. “still.”

<sup>617</sup> Reading “rlom sems” for “rloms sems.”

Because one is unaffected by spirits in severe places, the arrogant mind that is produced is a Joyous Negative Force. Because of the occurrence of marks of potent blessings, the merit and possessions are Negative Forces of distraction. Profit, fame, enemies and relatives are Negative Forces of enjoyment. Because of the pleasure and joy in the attainments provided by deities and spirits, and in one's retinue of children and close friends, there are Joyous Negative Forces.

*yon tan ci byung ci shar yang // yul sems gnyis su med pa'i blos // yon tan dag tu mi  
gzung bar // rmi lam dag gi yul bzhin du // rang bzhin zhen pa med par spyad // mtshar mo'i  
byad kyis rang mdzes ltar // {9/458} rang byung rang la brgyan pa yin // de la rlom sems<sup>618</sup>  
skye rgyu med // skyes na rigs 'khrul 'dzin pas bslad // 'dzin med rang lugs spyod mchog 'di //  
blo ldan rnams kyi thugs la sbos / §*

Whatever qualities occur (*byung*), as well as whatever [qualities] arise (*shar*), a rational mind (*blo*) lacking the duality of object and mind (*sems*) does not grasp the qualities; they are like objects of dreams; their self-nature is engaged without clinging. The countenance (*byad*)<sup>619</sup> of an attractive woman, self-arising like her beauty, is an ornament to herself; there is no reason for an arrogant mind to be produced in her. If it is produced, she is tainted by mental confusion. This exceptional behavior—one's own manner without grasping [onto qualities]—should be concealed in the heart of the intelligent ones!

*mchog gi bdud la rnam pa gnyis // lam dang 'bras bu gnyis su bstan / § spros bral lta  
bas brod pa dang // mnyam nyid sgom pas brod pa dang // rtog med spyod pas brod pa dang //*

<sup>618</sup> Reading “*rlom sems*” for “*rloms sems*.”

<sup>619</sup> This looks like “*khyad*” (e.g. “distinction”) in the 1971 edition and “*byad*” (“aspect,” “countenance”) in the 1981 edition.

*nyams len lam gyis brod pa rnams // bag tsam yul du spyad pas na // lam du mi 'gro bdud kyi las / §*

There are two types of Exceptional Negative Forces; they are taught as two—path and result. There are joys through the view freed from elaborations, joys through equanimous meditation, joys through involvement without conceptuality, and joys through the path of experience. If one is involved with objects even a little bit, not travelling on the path is the action of Negative Forces.

*lta sgom brda' ru bstan pa las // nges par yid la bya rgyu med // ma 'gags cir yang 'char ba la // lta ba'i bsam pa ma 'cha' bar // mnyam shar phyogs med dbyings su bsgyur // mi lta ba ni gcod kyi mchog / §*

From the symbolic teaching<sup>620</sup> (*brda' ru bstan pa*) of the view and meditative cultivation, there is no cause for activities of definitive mental consciousness (*nges par yid*). As whatever arises is unobstructed, not committing (*'cha' ba*) to a viewpoint,<sup>621</sup> the unlimited expanse (*phyogs med dbyings*) arises simultaneously (*mnyam shar*). This non-view is the exceptionality of *Chöd*.

*kun kyang rang byung sems yin pas // bsgom mkhan gcig gis bsgom du med // ci byung rang shar byung tshor rnams // lhan ne lhang nge lham mer bzhag // don mi 'gyur bas lhan ne ba // nges par rtogs pas lhang nge ba // rang sar grol bas lham me ba // dper na mar la mar bzhag bzhin // ma bsgoms pa yi bsam gtan te // de ni bsgom pa'i mchog yin no / §*

In all cases (*kun kyang*), because the mind is self-arising, there is no meditative cultivation by a meditation expert. All things that occur (*ci byung*) are self-arising sensations.

---

<sup>620</sup> This might be a reference to the “symbolic teachings” that Machik reportedly gave on *Chöd* and which are mentioned in some lists of her transmissions.

<sup>621</sup> “*lta ba'i bsam pa*,” lit. “thoughts of a view.”

Rest in still, clear, luminous experience (*lhan ne lhang nge lham mer bzhang*).<sup>622</sup> The meaning of “still” is “unchanging,” of “clear” is “definitive understanding,” and of “luminous” is “liberation in one’s own ground.” For example, like placing butter in butter, one thinks constantly of not meditatively cultivating [one’s own mind]; that is the exceptional meditative cultivation.

*rang spyod shugs ‘byung rang grol la // ched du byas nas spyad du med // mnyam shar  
gnyen pos bzung du med // gcud kyang rang byung yin shes na {dpe la lar bdud<sup>623</sup> zer ba ‘dug} /  
/ rang la rang grol bkag pa med // rtogs pa’i khyad par btsan pas na // nges par spyod pa dgag  
tu med // ma rtogs spyod pa mi bya ste // gdams ngag ‘di yi bzhed lugs kyis // dam pa’i<sup>624</sup> byin  
rlabs gting<sup>625</sup> ldan gyis // rnam rtogs dag la thog brdzis bya // rim gyis byin rlabs zhugs nas ni /  
/ nges par rtogs pa ‘char bar ‘byur // nges par gsungs pa’i gdams ngag ‘di // spyod yul kun las  
‘das pa yin // mi spyod spyod pa’i mchog tu gsungs / §*

On account of one’s own practice being self-liberating of its own accord (*shugs ‘byung*),<sup>626</sup> there is no practice (*spyad du med*). Not having been grasped by an antidote (*gnyen pos bzung du med*), [one’s practice] arises simultaneously. When the essence (*gcud*) is also understood as self-occurring {yet in the example they are called “Negative Forces”}, one is self-liberated in oneself without impediment. When one who has the distinctive force of

<sup>622</sup> According to Khamtrul Rinpoche (personal communication 18 July 2007), these *myong tshig* (terms which resonate with lived experience) originate in Dzokchen practice. See also Orofino’s Italian translation for comments on connections with Dzokchen (1987, 21; 23). Such terms as those employed here resonate with still, clear, luminous experiences as might be achieved through calm-abiding meditative practices (*zhi gnas*; *śamatha*).

<sup>623</sup> Reading “*bdud*” for “*bdung*.”

<sup>624</sup> Azzato (1981, 119) and Orofino (1987, 22) interpret this ambiguous use of “*dam pa*” to refer to Padampa Sangyé. At present, I do not see any reason for such an interpretation to be preferred over an interpretation of the term as an adjective of “*byin rlabs*” meaning “deep”; in fact, I believe the latter to be preferable since it avoids making unjustifiable claims about the relation of Padampa and Machik in the context of this Chöd teaching.

<sup>625</sup> Reading “*gting*” for “*gding*.”

<sup>626</sup> “*shugs ‘byung*” (“of its own accord,” or “spontaneously arising”) is a technical term in *bla na med pa’i rgyud* (\**anuttaratantra*) and describes the experience of a practitioner who no longer strays from practice and who no longer departs from the view of the system of practice.

comprehension practices with certainty, there is no obstruction; practice by one who does not comprehend is inactive. The discursive thoughts of one who has the deep, excellent blessings through the accepted system of this oral instruction should be crushed (*thog brdzis bya*). Having been infused with blessings through stages, definitive comprehension will arise. This oral instruction of definitive statements is a realm of practice that transcends everything. Non-practice is taught as the exceptional practice.

*nyams su gang yang mi len na // {10/459} de yis nyams su blangs pa yin // nyams ni  
shes bya blo yi nyams // yang dag don du myang du med // skye med logs nas blang du med //  
nyams su blangs pas chos nyid nyams // blo snang yul du bcad pas bos // yul du ma chags  
nyams lan ni // thar pa'i lam mchog bla ma'i zhal / §*

When one does not gain any experience whatsoever, then one has gained experience. As for this [former] experience, the experience of one's rational mind (*blo yi nyams*) is the object of knowledge (*shes bya*). Without experiencing the genuine meaning (*yang dag don*, i.e. emptiness as intrinsic reality), one will not gain [experience] from the side of birthlessness. By gaining [such] experience, one has the experience of the way things are in actuality (*chos nyid*; *dharmatā*). The rational mind must be summonsed (*bos*) by cutting the apparent object.<sup>627</sup> As for the experience of non-attachment to objects, the exceptional path of liberation is from the mouth of a lama.

*'bras bu'i bdud ni 'di bzhin no // nyan thos rang rgyal la sogs pa'i // grub mtha' theg  
pa'i 'bras bu ni // sku gsum nges par thob 'dod pas // 'dod pa dang bcas brod pas bdud / §*

As for the Negative Forces of results, they are like this. Because desires for the definitive attainment of the Three Bodies are the results of the tenet systems of the vehicles of the Hearers

---

<sup>627</sup> This is a provisional translation: the term “*bos*” (imperative of “to summons”) is awkward in this context. Rangjung Dorjé does not provide a gloss for this term.

(*nyan thos*; *śrāvaka*), the Self-conquerors (*rang rgyal*; *pratyekabuddha*), and the others, because of the joy (*brod*) associated with [such] desires, there are Negative Forces.

*lus ngag yid gsum rang bzhin la // sku gsum 'bras bur bstan pa las // sangs rgyas logs  
nas bsgrub tu med // rang las spangs te btsal gyur na // bskal pa bye ba du mar yang // bsgrubs  
pas thob par mi 'gyur pas // mi btsal mi bsgrub rang bzhin bzhag // re ba med pa gcod kyi mi re  
dogs pa'i mtha' dang bral // 'dzin pa'i thag pa bcad pa las // nges par sangs rgyas ga la  
mchis / §*

The Three Bodies are explained as the result of the threefold self-nature of body, speech and mental consciousness; [the Three Bodies] are not established from the side of the enlightened ones (*sangs rgyas*). Having turned away (*spangs*) from oneself—because there will not be attainment through accomplishment even if one searches for many millions of eons (*bskal pa*)—not found, not accomplished, one rests in one's own self-nature. Without hope, Chöd practitioners (*gcod kyi mi*) are freed from the limits of hope and fear; having cut the ropes of grasping, definitely enlightened (*nges par sangs rgyas*), where does one go?

*bdud la bzhi ru phye lags kyang // snyems byed bdud ru 'dus pa yin / § dngos po'i yul la  
snyems zhugs pas // thogs bcas bdud ru bstan pa yin / §*

The Negative Forces are classified (*phye lags*) into four types; in addition, they are connected with Negative Forces Producing Pride. Through prideful engagement with a tangible object, they are taught as Negative Forces With Obstructions.

*dngos po'i yul gyi chags sdang rnams // rtsa ba<sup>628</sup> snyems su rtogs tsam na // dper na  
rtsig gseb du ba yang // thab kyi me bus rang zhi ltar // snyems thag chod pas dngos 'dzin grol /  
'gog pa bzhin du yul mi dgag // rtsa bral rtogs pas thogs bcas bdud // nges par bdud rnams*

---

<sup>628</sup> Reading “*rtsa ba*” for “*tsa ba*.”

*chod pa yin // dper na sgyu ma mkhan po bzhin // snang yang chags sems mi 'byung ngo // de  
bas snyems kyi thag pa chod // bcad pas chod pa ma yin kyang // rtsa bral rtogs na zung mi  
thub // chos dbyings klong du grol bar 'gyur // rtsis gdab med pa'i la bzla gces / §*

When there is even some comprehension of attachments and aversions to tangible objects as the root of pride, it is analogous to when a blazing fire in a fireplace (*thab kyi me bus*) subsides of its own accord,<sup>629</sup> the smoke from cracks in the wall also [subsides]: by severing the ropes of pride, one is liberated from grasping things. By comprehending the separation from a root, an object that is like an obstruction is unobstructive; Negative Forces With Obstructions are severed as definitive Negative Forces. For example, even though there are appearances for a master of illusion, attachment [to them] does not occur in his mind (*sems*).<sup>630</sup> Therefore, just as there is no cutter through cutting, the ropes of pride are severed. When comprehending the separation from a root, grasping is impossible. One will be liberated in the realm of the expanse of things (*chos dbyings; dharmadhātu*). There will be the cherished passing over (*la bzla gces*)<sup>631</sup> without evaluation (*rtsis gdab med pa*).

*thogs med bdud kyang snyems su 'dus // dug lnga la sogs nyon mongs dang // mthong  
med 'dre la 'jigs pa dang // dngos med lha la re ba dang // de bzhin yid yul re dogs rnams //  
snyems byed las byung {11/460} snyems kyi bdud / §*

---

<sup>629</sup> “*rang zhi*,” lit. “self-pacified.”

<sup>630</sup> This might be an allusion to *sdud pa* I.19.

<sup>631</sup> According to the Padma Karpo Translation Committee (2005) entry for “*la zlo ba*,” the *Li shi'i gur khang* gives two usages. One is from the Dzokchen teachings of *khregs chod* (“Thorough Cut”) wherein “to have passed over” is a metaphor for “conduct” (*spyod pa*), and the other is simply “to decide upon” something definitively. Further elaboration is given on this first meaning, citing oral instructions from Tsoknyi Rinpoche translated by Tony Duff: “*sgom pa ngang skyong / spyod pa la bzla* ‘the meditation is to preserve the state; the conduct is to cross over.’ In the lower vehicles at the time of conduct one usually practices various special techniques specific to conduct and thus stays in the conduct. However, in the Thorough Cut practice, having arrived at conduct one ‘goes past it and thus arrives back’ in meditation; i.e., there is no special conduct other than returning to meditation.”



Negative Forces Without Obstruction are also connected with pride. Occurring from the production of pride, such things as the five poisons, as well as the afflictive emotions, fear of unseen spirits (*mthong med 'dre*), hope in insubstantial deities (*dngos med lha la re ba*), and similarly, the hopes and fears of one's mental consciousness toward objects, are Negative Forces of Pride.

*zhe sdang rang sar grol ba yang // snyems byed rtsa ba chod las byung // btso bsreg  
dmyal ba'i bdud las thar // me long lta bu'i ye shes thob // 'dod chags rang sar grol ba yang //  
snyems byed rtsa ba chod las byung // bkres skom yi dvags bdud las thar // so sor rtogs pa'i ye  
shes thob // gti mug rang sar grol ba yang // snyems kyi rtsa ba chod las byung<sup>632</sup> // bkol spyod  
byol song bdud las thar // chos kyi dbyings kyi ye shes thob // phrag dog rang sar grol ba yang /  
/ snyems kyi rtsa ba chod las byung // 'gyur byed mi yi bdud las thar // bya ba grub pa'i ye shes  
thob // nga<sup>633</sup> rgyal rang sar grol ba yang // snyems kyi rtsa ba chod las byung // 'thab rtsod  
ltung ba'i bdud las thar // mnyam pa nyid kyi ye shes thob // snyems thag ma chod dug lnga  
yang // snyems chod rang grol ye shes so / §*

Furthermore, aggression is liberated in its own place, arising from severing the root of the production of pride (*snyems byed rtsa ba*). Emancipated from the molten hell Negative Forces, one attains Mirror-Like Primordial Wisdom.<sup>634</sup> Moreover, desire and attachment are liberated in their own place, arising from severing the root of the production of pride. Emancipated from the hungry and thirsty ghosts, one attains the Individually-Discriminating Primordial Wisdom.<sup>635</sup> In

<sup>632</sup> At this point in the text, there is a shift from “*snyems byed*” (“producing pride”) used in previous verses to “*snyems kyi*” (“of pride”).

<sup>633</sup> Reading “*nga rgyal*” for “*da rgyal*.”

<sup>634</sup> This section discusses the five types of Primordial Wisdom (*ye shes lnga; pañca jñānāni*), which are the antidotes to the five poisons (see note below).

<sup>635</sup> Reading “*so sor rtog pa'i ye shes*” for “*so sor rtogs pa'i ye shes*.”

addition, confusion is liberated in its own place, arising from severing the root of pride (*snems kyi rtsa ba*).<sup>636</sup> Emancipated from the animal slavery Negative Force, one attains the *Dharmadhātu* Primordial Wisdom. Moreover, jealousy is liberated in its own place, arising from severing the root of pride. Emancipated from the Negative Force of changeable persons,<sup>637</sup> one attains the Activity-Accomplishing Primordial Wisdom. Moreover, arrogance is liberated in its own place, arising from severing the root of pride. Emancipated from the Negative Force of dissension, one attains the Equanimous Primordial Wisdom. Furthermore, the uncut rope of pride is the five poisons;<sup>638</sup> severing pride is self-liberated wisdom.

*des na thams cad snyems su 'dus // gangs dkar ston kyi seng ge bzhin // nyam nga bag tsha*<sup>639</sup> *ma byas par // snyems med gdengs dang ldan gyur na // snang srid lha 'dres ldang mi nus // brgya la lang kyang gdams ngag gsal // rang gi cho 'phrul yin shes na // nges par rtsal sbyong chen por 'gro // dran rgyun bcad nas mi bsgoms te // rang shar rtogs pas chog pa yin // nad rims la sogs de bzhin mtshungs // rtsa bral rtogs nas chod pa 'di // gdams ngag kun la khyad par 'phags / §*

Therefore, everything is connected with pride. Without intimidation or anxiety, one is like a lion of the highest white snow mountains; when one possesses assurance without pride, the apparent existence (*snang srid*) of deities and spirits is incapable of emerging (*ldang*). Even

---

<sup>636</sup> There is a shift here from “*snyems byed rtsa ba*” (“the root of the production of pride”) as the object to be cut to “*snyems rtsa ba*” (“the root of pride”) as the object. I am unsure of the significance of this shift.

<sup>637</sup> Das interprets “*gyur byed*” as “a changer; one who brings about changes” (1973, 294). According to the Padma Karpo Translation Committee (2005) entry for “*spra 'chal*,” this term is a modern form of the archaic “*gyur byed*,” meaning “[a]n older person who does not have any burdens of work that they have to do or any particular projects that they have to complete. Like a retired person in the West who has nothing particular they have to do any longer.”

<sup>638</sup> The five poisons (*dug lnga*) are desire (*'dod chags; rāga*), aggression (*zhe sdang; dveṣa*), delusion (*gti mug; moha*), pride (*nga rgyal; māna*), and jealousy (*phrag dog; īrṣyā*)

<sup>639</sup> Reading “*bag tsha*” for “*bag cha*.”

rising in the hundreds, the oral instructions are clear. When one understands [the deities and spirits] are one's own manifestation (*rang gi cho 'phrul*), one's training becomes greater. Having severed the continuum of mindfulness (*dran rgyun*), there is no meditative cultivation. Because comprehension is self-arising, it is sufficient. It is like epidemics and so forth: when the root is understood as separate, they are severed. This is distinguished as superior to all oral instructions (*gdams ngag kun la khyad par 'phags*).

*rtogs kyang thad kar ma bcad na // mtshon rnon tsha ngar bo ba bzhin // lta bas mi skyobs nyam ngas 'ching // lta spyod 'dzoms pa'i rnal 'byor ni // dpa' bo dag la mtshon bskur bas // dgra dpungs thams cad 'joms pa bzhin // bdud rnams snyems med dbyings su 'joms / §*

Moreover, when comprehension is not directly cut through, it is like a sharp weapon that has been tempered by intense heat (*tsha ngar bo ba*).<sup>640</sup> Without refuge provided by the view, one is fettered by intimidation and the union of view and conduct collected together is like defeating all the legions of enemies by bestowing weapons on warriors: the Negative Forces are defeated in a realm without pride.

*E MA HO // rang snyems chod bas bdud rnams zhi // rtsa bral rtogs pas mngon sangs rgyas // de yang rang thang lhug par shog // kun kyang de bzhin bzhag par byos / §*

How wonderful! Through cutting one's own pride, one pacifies the Negative Forces. By comprehending the separation from a root, the enlightened state becomes manifest (*mngon sangs rgyas*). Therefore, one's own tightness should be loosened. In all cases, one should rest in Thatness (i.e. reality; *de nyid, tattvatā*).

---

<sup>640</sup> According to the Padma Karpo Translation Committee (2005) entry for “*bo ba*,” this is an idiomatic Kham term meaning something with the possible characteristic of leaking or spilling out; I have extrapolated from this to arrive at the interpretation of “melting.”

*dga' {12/461} brod bdud kyang snyems su 'dus // thun mong<sup>641</sup> chos la dga' brod dang  
 // 'bras bu mchog la dga' brod pa // rang gi snyems las byung ba yin // nges par chags na bdud  
 du 'gyur / § chags pa med pa'i rang shar ni // snyems med chos sku'i rgyan du gsungs / § sku  
 gsum 'bras bu rang yin pas // gzhan du brod pa bskyed mi dgos / §*

Even the Joyous Negative Forces are connected with pride. Joyfulness regarding common things and Joyfulness regarding excellent results arise from one's own pride. If one is definitively attached, it becomes a Negative Force. As for the self-arising without attachment, it is said to be the Ornament of the *Dharmakāya* Without Pride. Because the result of the Three Bodies is one's own, it is not necessary to generate joy in another way.

*'khor ba rang sar grol ba las // myang 'das logs nas btsal du med // rtog par rang gzugs  
 shar ba las // rtog med ched du bsgom du med // de bas thams cad snyems yin pas // snyems  
 thag gcod pa nga yis smras // dvangs mar bzhag pa kun nas gsungs // dvangs ma'i sems la ngos  
 bzung med / §*

Since one has been liberated from saṃsāra in one's own place, one does not search (*btsal du med*) from the side of nirvāṇa. From one's own form arising in concepts, one does not meditatively cultivate for the purpose of conceptlessness. Thus, because everything is pride, I<sup>642</sup> say that one must cut the ropes of pride (*snyems thag gcod pa*).<sup>643</sup> It has been taught that one who rests in the clear essence (*dbangs mar bzhag pa*) does not identify a mind of clear essence (*dbangs ma'i sems*).

---

<sup>641</sup> Reading “*thun mong*” for “*thun mongs*.”

<sup>642</sup> The referent of “*nga yis*” is not explicit; as per the colophon, the suggestion is that it refers to Machik herself.

<sup>643</sup> This is possibly intended as a pun, since *thag gcod pa* also means “to ascertain thoroughly.”

*dpe yis gtan la dbab pa ni // gdams ngag thob pa'i rnal 'byor rnams // bya byi'us phru  
gu gso ba bzhin // gdams ngag mchus skyel byas gyur na // ston bye'u ltog grir shi ba bzhin //  
rang nyid 'khor bar 'khyams par nges / §*

As for the determinations by analogy:<sup>644</sup> the oral teachings of the yogas of attainment are like a small bird nurturing its fledglings. When oral teachings are conveyed by one's lips, it is like a teacher starving a fledgling to death (*ltog grir shi ba*). I (*rang nyid*) can be certain of wandering in saṃsāra.<sup>645</sup>

*'bri bzang be'u chung gso ba ltar // rang 'grangs rogs kyi don byas na // be'u chung la  
sogs 'cho ba bzhin // rang gi snyems thag chod gyur na // sems can nges par grol bar 'gyur //  
gzhan don 'grub 'gyur the tshom med / §*

Like a fine Dri ('*bri*; female yak) nurturing her calf, when her own is satiated and she has the objective of helping [others] (*rogs kyi don byas*), [her nurturance] similarly spreads ('*cho ba*<sup>646</sup>) to [other] calves and so forth. When one severs one's own rope of pride, sentient beings will be liberated with certainty; the objectives of others will be established without doubt.

*khyung chen nam mkar lnging ba yis // gling bzhi bya rtsol med par mthong // ngam  
grog<sup>647</sup> g.yang sar nyam ming // bya bran la sogs zil gyis gnon // de bzhin nyams kyi thag chod*

<sup>644</sup> “Determinations by analogy” are a form of logical presentation or argument that have a precedent in the *upadeśa* teachings of the Buddha.

<sup>645</sup> This is a provisional translation. Rangjung Dorjé writes in his commentary on the *Bka' tshoms* (68/516): “*dpe yis zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang drug ste / gdams ngag 'di thob pa'i gang zag rnams kyi bdag ma grol bar gzhan don mi bya ste / bye'u dang / ston skyel gyi dpe bzhin / bdag gzhan grol bar dka' zhes bstan to.*”

“A person who has obtained the oral instructions [but] who is not liberated himself should not benefit others, like the analogy of the little bird and the conveyed teachings (*ston skyel*), the teaching speaks of the difficulty of liberating self and others.”

<sup>646</sup> Rnam rgyal tshe ring, in the *Bod yig brda rnying tshig mdzod*, defines “‘*cho ba*” as “‘*byams pa'am bzo ba*” (2001, 163).

<sup>647</sup> Reading “*ngam grog*” for “*ngam grogs.*”

*pas // bdud bzhi rtsa ba med par rtogs // 'dre bdud la sogs zil gyis gnon // ngan<sup>648</sup> song gnas  
gsum nyam mi nga // nges par rtsa bral ma shes par // rgyu 'bras chos la spyod pa ni // sdong  
bzhag yal ga bsnyab pa 'dra / §*

The four continents are seen without effort by a great garuda bird soaring in the sky, not intimidated (*nyam mi nga*) in ravines (*ngam grog*) and abysses (*g.yang sa*), he outshines [other] birds including those which are kept.<sup>649</sup> Similarly, one who has severed the rope of experiences understands that the four Negative Forces are rootless, outshines the spirits and Negative Forces and so forth, and is not intimidated by the three bad states. One who practices the teaching of cause and effect without understanding the separation from a root is like one who reaches (*bsnyab*) for a limb that is split off (*bzhag*) from the trunk.

*rtsa bral rtogs pa'i rnal 'byor ni // dran rtog glo bur yin shes nas // sbangs blang med  
pa'i chos la spyod // gzugs mthong sems kyi sku ru blta // sgra thos sems kyi gsung du blta // ci  
sems sems kyi thugs su blta // rgyu 'bras {de'i la lar med} {13/462} med pa'i don du blta / §*

As for the yoga of knowing the separation from a root, having understood that thoughts (*dran rtog*) are adventitious, one practices the teaching of not accepting the dregs [of thoughts].<sup>650</sup> Perceived form is seen as the body of mind (*sems*); heard sound is seen as the speech of mind; mind as such (*ci sems*) is seen as the heart of mind; cause is viewed as the objective without {without some of that} effect.

---

<sup>648</sup> Reading “ngan” for “dan.”

<sup>649</sup> “bran,” lit. “enslaved”; however, it is somewhat peculiar to speak of “enslaved birds” in English, so I have used “kept.”

<sup>650</sup> “sbangs” can be interpreted as “dregs” in the context of brewing beer, or “dung” in the context of animals. Rangjung Dorjé’s commentary discusses “memories” (*dran*) in the context (‘*grel pa* 69/517), which suggests “dregs of thought.”

*bzhag thabs bsgom pa'i gnas lugs ni // lha khang nang gi lder so<sup>651</sup> bzhin // 'dug tshul  
 bzung dang zhal 'dzum yang // mi sems sems pa'i tshul med bzhin // rang lus gang bder 'dug  
 byas nas // mi bsam bsam par mi bya'o // bsam pa yul min de nyid yin // des na mi bsam ngang  
 la bzhag // byung tshor rtog pa'i rjes mi bcad // mkha' la glog 'gyu rang log bzhin // rnam rtog  
 byung ba de bzhin bzhag // rgya mtsho chen po'i 'jings bzhin du // gyo ba med pa'i ngang du  
 bzhag // rkyen snang rtog pa rlabs bzhin du // ngang gis chos nyid dbyings su skyur / §*

As for the reality of meditatively cultivating the method of resting, it is like a clay figure within a deity shrineroom: a fine pose (*'dug tshul bzung*) with a smiling face, unconscious, as if without volitional behaviour. One who has rested one's own body in bliss should not have the thought of no-thought. There is not an object of thought; there is thatness (*de nyid*). Therefore, resting in a non-thought state, sensations are not severed from a trace of conceptual thought. Conceptual thought occurs, [and] like the natural return (*rang log*) of lightning in the sky, rests like that. One rests in an unwavering state that is like the depths of a great ocean. Conditions, appearances, and thoughts are like waves; things themselves (*chos nyid; dharmatā*) naturally surrender (*skyur*) to the expanse (*dbyings; dhātu*).

*bcos bslad mi bya rgyal ba'i bka' // bcos na 'chos byed bdud yin pas // nges par rang  
 sar bzhag pa ni // skyes bu nad kyis zin pa bzhin // tshogs drug lhug pa'i tshul du bzhag // bya  
 ba zin pa'i skyes bu bzhin // blo bde'i ngang la kad kyis bzhag // bu chung ma ma mthong ba  
 bzhin // snang yang nus pa med par bzhag / §*

The word of the Victorious One (*rgyal ba, jina*; i.e. the Buddha) is not tainted by alteration; if altered, the alteration is because of a Negative Force. As for resting in one's own ground with certainty, it is like a person grasped by illness rests in the manner of loosening the

---

<sup>651</sup> Reading “*lder bzo*” for “*lder so*.”

sixfold group;<sup>652</sup> it is like a person whose work is done (*bya ba zin pa*) rests briefly (*kad kyis*) in a state of blissful rational mind; it is like a small child who sees its nurse (*ma ma*); even though there is an appearance, one rests without power (*nus pa med pa*).<sup>653</sup>

*rig pas rang lus ro khur la // gnyan sa la sogs mdze gnas su // chags med tshul gyis  
skyur bar bya // sems nyid yum chen klong du bzhag // dran rtog shes byed ci byung yang //  
yum chen sprul ba nyid du dgongs<sup>654</sup> // yum sprul 'khor ba'i gnas mi 'ching // glen pa lto ba  
'grangs pa bzhin // 'du shes rnam par bshigs la bzhag // 'khor spangs mya ngan 'da' bar nges /  
E MA HO // bya rtsol med do dgongs pa longs / §*

With enlightened knowing (*rig pa*),<sup>655</sup> bearing (*khur*) the corpse of one's own body to severe places, places of leprosy (*mdze gnas*), and so forth, one should abandon [one's body] in a non-attached fashion. The mind itself rests in the sphere of the Great Mother. Whatever thoughts and cognitive acts occur, moreover, are thoughts as emanations of the Great Mother herself. The emanation of the Mother is not bound to the place of saṃsāra. Like the dullness of one with a full stomach, rest in disintegrated cognition. Abandon saṃsāra; have certainty in nirvāṇa. E Ma Ho! Without deliberate activity, it is time to use your mind (*bya rtsol med do dgongs pa longs*)!

*spyod pa dpe yis bstan pa ni // sgo srung khro bo king dang kang // khro shing gtum pa  
'dra na yang // rgyud la nyon mongs skye med bzhin // brtul zhugs nges par che ba la // zhe*

---

<sup>652</sup> The sixfold group of sense consciousness: eye consciousness (*mig gi rnam par shes pa*); ear consciousness (*rna ba'i rnam par shes pa*); nose consciousness (*sna'i rnam par shes pa*); tongue consciousness (*lce'i rnam par shes pa*); body consciousness (*lus kyi rnam par shes pa*); mind consciousness (*yid kyi rnam par shes pa*).

<sup>653</sup> This is a provisional translation. I am unsure about the last analogy.

<sup>654</sup> Reading “*dgongs*” for “*gongs*.”

<sup>655</sup> This is not referenced accurately in the *Bka' tshoms sa bcad*, which reads “*rigs pa rang lugs*” (56/504) rather than “*rig pas rang lus*.”



*‘dod rtog pa med*<sup>656</sup> *par spyod // brtul zhugs che bas bar chod ‘dul // zhe ‘dod med pa de nyid lam // mtsho la nya mo ‘phyo ba bzhin // ‘dzin chags med par phya ler spyod // skyi ser ri rtsibs gcod pa bzhin // chags sdang rjes med rtsis las ‘das / §*

As for practice taught through analogy: it is just as there is no production of mental afflictions in the mindstreams of gatekeepers (*sgo srung*), wrathful emissaries and vultures (*khro bo king dang kang*),<sup>657</sup> even when they seem (*‘dra na yang*) wrathful and fierce. In the greatest yogic disciplines (*brtul zhugs*), one practices without conceptualizing one’s innermost desires (*zhe ‘dod*); one overcomes obstacles through great yogic discipline. The absence of innermost desires is itself the path. Like a fish swimming in a lake, one behaves evenly without grasping and attachment. It is like wind (*skyi ser*<sup>658</sup>) cutting through a mountain range; one moves beyond evaluation (*rtsis las ‘das*) without a trace of attachment or aversion.

{14/463} *rang gis rang la spyod pa la // snyems bya snyems byed gzugs mi dgos // rang la ‘dzin pa med par spyod // rmi lam yul gyi dgra de yang // rang las byung ba ma dgongs sam / yi dam lha yi dngos grub kyang // sems la sems kyis bsgom las byung // des na rang yin gzhan ma yin // rang snang rang la gcod pa las // gzhan yul ‘brel med gnod ma nus // dper na rgya gar dug sbrul bzhin / §*

One’s practice is by oneself; the forms of prideful actions and prideful actors are not necessary. One practices not grasping on to oneself. Are not enemies that are the object of

---

<sup>656</sup> The 1981 edition erroneously reads “*mod par spyod*.”

<sup>657</sup> This may be a Tibetan rendering of the Sanskrit “*king ka ra*,” a servant or emissary, possibly associated with the lords of the charnel grounds depicted as dancing skeletons (*dur khrod bdag po; citipati*). According to Orofino, “King dang kang: nome di divinità terrifica, probabilmente sinonimo di Rahula (V. *Jaschke*, p. 2 e p. 119). Rahula é una divinità indiana accettata nel pantheon tibetano. É considerato colui che domina le divinità planetarie maggiori e minori, i *gza’ chen* ed i *gza’ phran*. V. *Oracles*, pp. 259-263, e p. 380 dove viene fatta menzione di: ‘the *ki kang* illness of the *gza* from which those are supposed to suffer, on whom the shadow of Rahu’s poisonous raven-head had fallen” (1987, 31 n. 16).

<sup>658</sup> Rnam rgyal tshe ring defines “*skyi ser*” “*skyi bser te / bser bu’i ming*” (2001, 33).

dreams also thoughts that arise from oneself? Even the accomplishment of personal deities (*yi dam lha*) arises from meditative cultivation by the mind in the mind (*sems*). Therefore, it is oneself, it is not another [that cultivates such accomplishment]. Having cut through one's own appearances in oneself, without relation to an objective other, harm is impossible; by analogy, [the harm] is like poisonous snakes in India.<sup>659</sup>

*'bras bu dpe yis bstan pa ni // mar la dkar por ma bsgrub kyang // mar ngo shes pas dkar po grub // nges par mar ngo shes tsam nas // dkar po gzhan nas sgrub mi dgos // de bzhin sangs rgyas ma bsgrubs kyang // sems ngo shes pas sangs rgyas 'grub // nges par rang sems ngo shes nas // sangs rgyas gzhan nas bsgrub mi dgos / §*

As for the result as taught through analogy: butter (*mar*) does not attain whiteness; however, the butter is established as white through identification. Having simply identified [it] as butter with certainty, it is unnecessary to establish its whiteness otherwise. Similarly, the enlightened state is also not attained: the enlightened state is established through the identification of one's mind (*sems*). Having identified one's own mind with certainty, it is not necessary to establish one's enlightenment otherwise.

*snyems sangs rtsa bral kun las rgyal / † des na logs nas bsgrub tu med // de ltar rtogs na bdud rnam zhi // de yang rang byung rang zhi yin / §*

One who has cleared away pride (*snyems sangs*)<sup>660</sup> and is freed from the root (*rtsa bral*) [of mind] is victorious over everything.<sup>661</sup> That being so, there will not be separate (*logs nas*) attainment. In that way, when comprehended, Negative Forces are pacified. Furthermore, self-arising is self-pacification.

<sup>659</sup> This analogy may be suggesting that poisonous snakes are not harmful if not grasped.

<sup>660</sup> Rangjung Dorjé's *'grel pa* (72/520) reads "*snyems grol*," "to become liberated from pride."

<sup>661</sup> This would appear to be a quote due to the marker in the Tibetan text; however, I am unsure of the source.

*rig med gti mug chos dbyings la // yul du rig cing bzung bas 'khrul / §*

Without knowledge (*rig med*), there is delusion; one becomes confused by knowing (*rig*) and grasping objects in the expanse of things (*chos dbyings*; *dharmadhātu*).

*dbyer med gcig la rig byung bas // khams gsum gnas su 'khor ba yin // rigs drug gnas su 'khrul pa yin // de yang rang bzhin rig 'khrul la // ltos chos theg pa'i rim pa yang // lta sgom 'bras bur rig pa 'khrul // chad pas cang med<sup>662</sup> yul du rig // rtag pas 'gyur med yul du rig // nyan thos gzung 'dzin yul du rig // rang rgyal rten 'brel stong par rig // sems tsam rang rig sems su rig // dbu ma spros bral yin par rig // pha rgyud bde gsal rlung du rig // ma rgyud bde stong rgyas 'debs rig // thabs dang shes rab gnyis med rig // phyag chen blo las 'das par rig // rdzogs chen ye yin chen por rig // de ltar rig pa thams cad ni // yul du rig pa'i rig pa yin // yul can rnam ni de nyid min // yul med sems la rig pa med // gang rig pa yi rig pas bcings / §*

Through knowledge arising as an undifferentiated singularity, there is saṃsāra in the place of the three realms. There is confusion in the place of the six families. Furthermore, the divisions (*rim pa*) of the dharma vehicle rely on confused knowing of self-nature; in addition, the knowledge of view, meditation and effect is confused. The nihilist has knowledge of the non-existent object; the absolutist has knowledge of the changeless object; the śrāvaka has knowledge of the perceiver and perceived object; the pratyekabuddha has knowledge of the emptiness of dependent relations; the Mind Only student has knowledge of his mind's own knowledge; the Madhyamaka student has knowledge that is freed from elaborations; the Father Tantra student has knowledge of bliss, clarity and winds; the Mother Tantra student has knowledge of bliss, emptiness, and extensive offerings; students of skillful means and wisdom have knowledge of non-duality; students of Mahāmudrā have knowledge of transcending the mind; students of

---

<sup>662</sup> Reading “*cang med*” (an abbreviation of “*ci yang med pa*”) for “*cad med*.”

Dzogchen have knowledge of the great primordially. In that way, as for all knowledge, it is knowledge of the knowledge of objects. Subjects<sup>663</sup> are without identity (*de nyid min*). Lacking an object, the mind is without knowledge; one is fettered by knowledge of whatever is known.<sup>664</sup>

*des na rig med gti mug 'di // {15/464} ye shes chen por rgyal bas gsungs // ma rig yul med 'khrul pa sangs // yul snang blo yis btang tsam na // snyems thag ma lus chod pa yin // yul med rig pa ci la snyems / §*

That being so, this delusion without knowledge, as explained by the Victorious One (*rgyal ba; jina*; i.e. the Buddha), is the great primordial wisdom (*ye shes chen po*). Not knowing and the lack of an object purifies confusion (*'khrul pa sangs*). When an apparent object is released by the discursive mind, the rope of pride is severed without remainder. Without an object, in what does knowing (*rig pa*) have pride?

*rig pa 'khrul par shes tsam na // 'khrul pa'i chos la mi 'dzin pas // 'dzin med rig pa cir yang snang // ched du ma byas rang byung yin // de ltar dgongs na nam yang yin / §*

When one understands the confusion of knowing even a little, by not grasping onto confused things, whatever else arises is knowledge without grasping. Not deliberately created, it is self-arising. In this way, it is always in one's mind (*dgongs*).

*yang dag don gyi yum chen de // 'khor 'das kun gyi gzhi yang yin // dus gsum sangs rgyas rnam kyis kyang // ma mdzad skye med gzhi ru gsungs / §*

The Great Mother of pure reality is *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*; moreover, she is the ground of all. The buddhas of the three times, moreover, teach on the unborn ground without acting.

---

<sup>663</sup> In Tibetan Buddhist epistemology, these are mutually-determined terms: generally speaking, an “object” (*yul*) is that which is known by a “subject” (*yul can*; lit. “one that has an object”). Discussions of these concepts from the perspective of the Sautrāntika as presented by the Gelukpa school can be found in Klein 1991 and 1998.

<sup>664</sup> This may be the passage that Tsong kha pa is referring to in his *Zab lam gcod kyi khrid yig* (1986); see also Savvas' translation (1990, 341). Savvas has identified the passage in Tsong kha pa's *Khrid yig* as referring to the *Bka' tshoms chen mo*, but I have not found a direct correlation.

*sangs rgyas 'dus ma byas yin pas*<sup>665</sup> // *skye ba med par yid ches na* // *skye med gzhi la byed mkhan med* // *ma byas gzhi yi gol sa chod* / §

Because enlightenment (*sangs rgyas*) is uncompounded, when there is trust in the birthless, the creation of the unborn ground is without a maker; points of deviation from the uncreated ground are cut through.

*ma byas 'dus ma byas yin pas* // *mi byed lam du nges par 'gro* // *snang stong yid la ma byas pas* // *rtag chad med par lam du slong* // *gnyis med yid la ma byas pas* // *skyes mched mu bzhi' bdud las grol* // *shes bya'i sgrib pa rang sar dag* / §

Because the uncreated is uncompounded, one travels with certainty on the indestructible path. Because appearance and emptiness are not created in mental consciousness (*yid*), one starts out on the path that is without permanence and nihilation. Because non-duality is not created in the mind, one becomes liberated from the Negative Forces of the four states. Obscurations of knowable objects (*shes bya*) are purified on their own ground (*rang sar dag*).

*gzugs dang tshor ba 'du shes sogs* // *nges par*<sup>666</sup> *yid la ma byas na* // *kham gsum gnas las grol bar 'gyur* // *'khor bar 'dre bar mi 'gyur ro* // *gang yang yid la ma byas na* // *bag chags mi 'byung sa lam rdzogs* // *yid la ma byas lam mchog tu* // *rgyal ba'i bka' las gsungs par nges / yid la ma byas rtogs gyur na* // *yid kyi 'gyu ba dgag mi dgos* // *smig rgyu bzhin du rang sar grol* // *de ltar { 'di nas tshig rkang gnyis dpe phal ched du med } rtogs pa'i rnal 'byor pas* // *bag yangs spyod pa dgag mi dgos* // *gang ltar byas kyang lam du 'gro* // *mi byed pa ni lam yin no* / §

If cognitions such as form and feeling are not created in one's mental consciousness (*yid*), one will be freed from dwelling in the three realms; one will not be mixed up in saṃsāra. If nothing whatsoever is created in one's mental consciousness, karmic latencies (*bag chags*;

<sup>665</sup> Reading "yin pas" for "yin bas."

<sup>666</sup> Reading "nges par" for "des par."

*vāsanā*) do not arise, and the ground (*sa*) and path (*lam*) are complete. It is definitively taught from the speech (*bka'*; *vacana*) of the Victorious One (*rgyal ba*) that the exceptional path is not created in one's mental consciousness. When there is comprehension of that which is uncreated in the mental consciousness, it is not necessary to interrupt the movements of mental consciousness; they will be liberated on their own ground like mirages. In that way, {the analogy of the following two lines of verse (*tshig rkang; pada*) is not for the purpose of an ordinary person} through the yoga of comprehension, it is not necessary to interrupt the relaxed practice (*bag yangs spyod pa*). One travels on the path by means of any activities whatsoever. As for the indestructible (*mi byed pa*), it is the path.

*ma grub 'bras bur gsungs pa ni // sku gsum 'bras bur gsungs pa yang // drang ba'i don  
du gsungs pa las // mtshan dang dpe byad la sogs pa // nges par<sup>667</sup> grub pa rdul tsam med / §*

The teaching of the results for the unaccomplished is the teaching on the results of the Three Bodies; in addition, the major and minor marks, and so forth, [are explained] in the teaching on the provisional meaning. This is for those without even the slightest trace of accomplishment.

*grub na gang grub mthar ltung 'gyur // 'khor ba'i pha rol 'das pa yin // {16/465} shes  
rab pha rol phyin pa ni // blo yi yul du grub pa med // blo ni grub pa 'khor ba'i chos // grub  
med 'bras bu<sup>668</sup> ma rtogs na // grub 'dod rtsol ba cir byas kyang // thar pa thob par mi 'gyur  
ro / §*

When one is accomplished, having fallen into whatever tenet system, one passes beyond (*pha rol 'das pa*) saṃsāra.<sup>669</sup> The perfection of wisdom (*shes rab pha rol phyin pa*;

<sup>667</sup> Reading “*nges par*” for “*des par*.”

<sup>668</sup> Reading “*'bras bu*” for “*'bras bung*.”

*prajñāpāramitā*) is not established through objects of the discursive mind. The discursive mind accomplishes the things of *samsāra*. No matter how much desire and effort for accomplishment, if there is no accomplishment [or] comprehension of the results, one will not attain liberation.

*chos kyi zhen blo ma zhig par // zhen pa'i blo yis chos spyod pas // chos kyang 'ching ba'i grogs su 'gyur // des na gdams ngag srog gis bslu // sangs rgyas 'dus byas ma yin pas // 'dus byas rtsol bas ga la 'grub // 'dus byas chos la yid ma chags // byas pa'i chos la re ma che / §*

For a discursive mind (*blo*) that has not destroyed clinging to things, even things become beneficial fetters because of the Dharma activity by a clinging discursive mind [i.e. falling into tenet systems, as mentioned above]. In that case, one will be seduced by the living oral instruction (*gdams ngag srog gis bslu*). Because enlightenment is not compounded, how could it be that there is attainment through compounded efforts (*'dus byas rtsol ba*)? Do not attach mental consciousness (*yid*) to compounded things. Do not have great hopes for created things.

*lus la 'dzin med rgyal ba'i sku / ngag la 'dzin med rgyal ba'i gsungs // yid la 'dzin med rgyal ba'i thugs // 'dzin med 'od gsal ma gtogs pa // rgyal ba'i dgongs pa gzhan mtshol / §*

Without grasping a body, it is the body of a Victor; without grasping speech, it is the speech of a Victor; without grasping mental consciousness (*yid*), it is the mind (*thugs*) of a Victor; without grasping, one is included in the luminous Mother.

*E MA HO / gcod ni rnam par rtog pa gcod // bka' ni rang bzhin 'gyur ba med // tshoms ni bshad pa'i tshoms su bstan / §*

How wonderful! “Chöd” is the severance of discursive thinking; “speech” is the immutable nature; “section” is the teachings in the explanatory section.

---

<sup>669</sup> This is a provisional translation: I am unsure of “*pha rol 'das*” and how “falling into tenet systems” would support one’s transcendence of *samsāra*.

*nan tan nyams myong bstan pa ni // dmigs pa'i yul las 'das pa ste // nyams su myong  
ba'i blo dang bral / §*

As for conscientiously experiential teaching, freed from the discursive mind of experience, it transcends the referential object.

*gnyan sa la sogs gcod pa'i dus // ji ltar me yis tshig pa<sup>670</sup> la // me<sup>671</sup> de nyid kyis gdung  
ba bzhin // slad<sup>672</sup> gcod log gnon gdams pa mi rma byung me yis bsregs btang bzhin //*

When a Chöd practitioner goes to severe places and so forth, it is like [one who is] angered<sup>673</sup> by fire, that very fire having caused suffering: corrupted Chöd, with erroneous instruction on suppression, is like burning a wounded person with fire.<sup>674</sup>

*rkyen snang khal du bkal ba yin / khal 'gel gnad yin go ba longs // chos kun khal du ma  
khel na // zhi bde'i gnyen pos grol mi nus //*

Apparent circumstances are imposed as a burden; one must now understand (*go ba longs*) that the burden is the point. When nothing is imposed as a burden,<sup>675</sup> one is unable to be liberated by the antidote of peace and happiness.

*gnyan sa ri khrod 'grims shig Ang // dpe<sup>676</sup> ma yengs dpe tshig gis // byin rlabs mi  
'byung tshig dred<sup>677</sup> khyer // de bas gnyan sar nyams su longs / {'di gzhung du med kyang  
tshig<sup>678</sup> bkra legs kyad kyis bstan par snang ngo // MCHAN 104}*

---

<sup>670</sup> Reading “*tshig pa*” for “*tshigs pa*.”

<sup>671</sup> The 1971 edition reads “*ma*.”

<sup>672</sup> The 1981 edition reads “*sar*”; the 1971 edition appears to read “*slad*.”

<sup>673</sup> This could be read as a pun, since “*tshig pa*” can mean both “to burn” and “anger.”

<sup>674</sup> This is a provisional translation. There are discrepancies between the two editions of the text that I have available to me and the meaning is obscure.

<sup>675</sup> “*chos kun khal du ma khel na*,” lit., “when all things are not imposed as burdens.”

<sup>676</sup> The 1981 edition reads “*dpe la*.”



Wander in severe places and isolated mountains! Not wandering according to these examples, carrying resistance toward the words (*tshig dred khyer*), blessings will not occur through the exemplary words.<sup>679</sup> Therefore, gain experience in severe places. {Note 104:<sup>680</sup> This was not in the main text; however, through various auspicious words the meaning is apparent.}

*shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag gcod kyi bka' tshoms chen mo zhes bya ba ma gcig ye shes kyi mkha' 'gro lab kyi sgrol mas mdzad pa rdzogs so /*

*The Personal Instruction of the Prajñāpāramitā, the Great Speech Chapter of Chöd*, composed by Machik, the wisdom ḍākinī, Tārā of Lab, is complete.

*{gzhung 'di nyid gra sa hag ston gyi bus nyan bshad byed ba brgyad cu<sup>681</sup> tsam byung zer la / snga dus kyi 'grel pa mdo sdud pa dang sbyar ba zhig kyang snang zhing / chos kyi rje rang byung rdo rjes sa bcad dang 'grel pas mtshon phyis kyi gzhung 'grel mad do / 'di dang bram ze Aa rya de bas mdzad pa'i gzhung {17/466} yid bzhin nor bu gnyis gcod yul gyi gdams pa thams cad kyi gzhi lta bur snang ngo / MCHAN}*

{Note: with regard to this very textual tradition, reported to be approximately eighty aural teachings given by the son of Gra sa hag ston,<sup>682</sup> the previous commentary should be connected with the collected sūtras; moreover, appearing illustrated (*mtshon*) with an outline (*sa bcad*) and commentary (*'grel pa*) by the Dharma Lord Rangjung Dorjé, the later textual tradition

<sup>677</sup> The 1981 edition reads “*dred*”; the 1971 edition reads “*drang*.”

<sup>678</sup> Reading “*tshig*” for “*tshigs*.”

<sup>679</sup> This is a provisional translation. There are discrepancies between the two editions of the text that I have available to me and the meaning is not transparent to me.

<sup>680</sup> I am not sure of the meaning or reference for “104.”

<sup>681</sup> Reading “*brgyad cu*” for “*bgyad cu*.”

<sup>682</sup> This is probably the same person as Gra pa hag ston, mentioned by Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel in his list of great “sons” who received the precepts from Machik herself (1976, 985; 2003, 1143). He is also mentioned in the *Gcod chos 'byung* (75b6) by Gcod smyon dharma seng ge as one of the eight sons: “*mngon shes dang rdzu 'phrul mnyam pa ma gro'i rgya sgom hag ston*.”

is a true (*mad = bden*) commentary. And this, the textual tradition of the composition by Āryadeva the Brahmin, the ground of all instructions of the Chöd system of the two wish-fulfilling jewels (*yid bzhin nor bu gnyis*)<sup>683</sup> appears as the view.}

*sa rba dwa ka lyaa nam bha wa tu /*

*Sarva daka lyā nam bhava tu.*<sup>684</sup>

---

<sup>683</sup> Possibly referring to Padampa Sangyé or Āryadeva and Machik Labdron as the “two wish-fulfilling jewels.”

<sup>684</sup> I am still investigating the provenance of this mantra.

**Appendix Two: *Shes rab khyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag yang tshoms*<sup>685</sup> *zhus lan ma bzhugs pa* [“Yang tshoms”, “The Supplementary Chapter”]<sup>686</sup>**

{548/102} *e ma ho / ma mi min ye shes mkha' 'gro ma // rdo rje dbyings la phyag 'tshal lo //*

E MA HO! Non-human<sup>687</sup> Wisdom Dakini! [I] pay homage to the *Dharmadhātu*.

[Question One]

*mi lus thob pa ji ltar dkon // zhus pas //*

*sems can gzhan gyi lus mthong na // mi lus thob pa med pa tsam // kha 'thor tsam gyi lus mthong na // mi lus thob pa srid pa tsam // sems can gzhan la ltos pa na // 'khor lo*<sup>688</sup> *sgyur rgyal lam kyang dkon // gsung //*

Question: “How rare is it to attain a human embodiment?”

Response: “To look at the embodiments of other sentient beings, it seems like a human embodiment might not be attainable. To look at random embodiments, it is like the attainment of a human embodiment might be possible. In relation to other sentient beings, [a human embodiment] seems as rare as the path of a universal sovereign.”<sup>689</sup>

[Question Two]

*dam chos byed pa ji ltar dkon // zhus pas //*

<sup>685</sup> Reading “*tshoms*” for “*tshom*.” Some secondary sources refer to this term as “*rtsom*.”

<sup>686</sup> In *Gdams ngag mdzod*, Vol. 14 (1979): 101-115; Vol. 9 (1971): 547-561; (*zhus lan gyi gdams pa yang tshoms nyi zhu rtsa lnga pa zhes bya ba* [101-113; 547-559]; *zhus lan rdo rje rol pa* [the Vajra-play Dialogue: 113-115; 559-561]). This interview has twenty-eight questions (rather than twenty-five as the title indicates) and their replies, generally formulated in a seven-syllable meter. Savvas (1990, 311 n. 1) says that these statements by Machik were replies to her son Gyalwa Dongrub’s inquiries. Thus far I have not found any evidence to substantiate such a claim.

<sup>687</sup> *ma mi yin*

<sup>688</sup> Reading “*khor lo*” rather than “*khor los*.”

<sup>689</sup> This passage is paraphrased in Tsong kha pa’s *Zab lam gcod kyi khrid yig* (1986, 4); see also Savvas’ translation (1990, 311).

*mtha' 'khob yul gyi mi rnams dang // chos ma dran la tshang btsugs na / dam chos byed pa'i mi rnams ni // U dum pa ra las kyang dkon // gsung //*

Question: “How rare is a Dharma practitioner?”

Response: “In a place<sup>690</sup> of borderland people<sup>691</sup> with no mindfulness of dharma, Dharma practitioners are more precious than Udumbara flowers.”<sup>692</sup>

[Question Three]

*sdig pa byed pa ji ltar lags // zhus pas //*

*sdig la spyod pa'i mi rnams ni // bu chung me la 'ju ba dang // glen pa btsan dug za ba dang // 'dre can rang srog gcod pa 'dra // rang sdug rang gis nyol pa yin // bskal par bde ba thob mi 'gyur // gtan du skye shi'i 'dam na gnas // las su sdug bsngal las la spyod // zo chun khyud mo ji bzhin 'khor // snga ma'i rnam smin ma zad par // phyi ma'i las ngan sgrib {549/103} pa sogs // de bas sdig pa byed pa ni // shin tu blun pa yin par gsungs / gsung /*

Question: “What is a harmdoer like?”

Response: “People who cause harm are like children who grab fire, foolish ones who eat dangerous poison,<sup>693</sup> intoxicated ones who leap into abysses, and those possessed by demons who cut their own lives—one’s own dissatisfaction is purchased by oneself. [One] does not attain happiness in a kalpa; dwelling in the mire of perpetual birth and death, the *karma* [from] practicing dissatisfying behaviours cycles just like a water wheel. Not only is the ripening of past [actions] obscured, but so are future negative actions. Therefore, harmdoers are called very stupid people.”

---

<sup>690</sup> *tshang btsug na*

<sup>691</sup> Skt. “*mleccha*”; alt. Eng. “barbarians.”

<sup>692</sup> The Udumbara plant is said to flower only once every three thousand years.

<sup>693</sup> *btsan dug*

[Question Four]

*dad pa'i yon tan ji ltar lags / zhus pas /*

*dad pa zhing sa gshin po 'dra / dad pa 'tsho byed mkhas pa 'dra / dad pa bud med  
'dzangs dang 'dra // dad pa 'bri mo bzang dang 'dra // de rnams yod pa'i mi rnams la // dgos  
'dod thams cad 'byung ba bzhin // dad dang ldan pas de bzhin 'byung / gsung /*

Question: “What are the qualities of faith like?”

Response: “Faith is like tilled farmland; faith is like an expert physician; faith is like a refined woman; faith is like a fine female yak. To people for whom there are these things, it is like the occurrence of all necessities and desires; by having faith, they occur as such.

[Question Five]

*dad pa che ba brtson 'grus chung na ji ltar lags / zhus pas /*

*dad ldan brtson 'grus chung pa ni / gyi ling sgrog tu tshud pa 'dra // zhing bzang son ma  
chags pa 'dra // chang la phab 'degs brjed pa 'dra / rgyu la yod kyang rkyen med pas // dad pa  
che yang tha mal las // 'phags par mi nus don chung 'gyur / gsung /*

Question: “How is there strong faith when there is weak perseverance?”

Response: “Faith with little perseverance is like a *gyi ling*<sup>694</sup> horse put into fetters; it is like excellent land not producing<sup>695</sup> agriculture; it is like having forgotten to raise the yeast<sup>696</sup> in chang; furthermore, [it is like] a cause without a condition. Even great faith with ordinary action becomes incapable of excellence and of little purpose.

[Question Six]

*dad pa dang brtson 'grus 'dzom na ji ltar lags / zhus pas //*

---

<sup>694</sup> *gyi ling*: “name of a good breed of horses from Amdo where there are twelve different breed” (Das 235).

<sup>695</sup> *chags pa*

<sup>696</sup> *pha*

*dad pa zhing sa gshin po la // brtson 'grus so nam byas gyur na // bla med byang chub  
thob par 'gyur // ma lus don dang ldan par 'gyur // rang la rang drin che bar 'gyur // gtan gyi so  
nam zin par 'gyur // {550/104} gsung //*

Question: “How does faith fit together with perseverance?”

Response: “When faith is [like] tilled farmland, perserverance becomes [like] farming.  
One will attain unsurpassed enlightenment. One will come to possess truth without remainder.  
One will come to have greater self-kindness. One will come to grasp perpetual farming.”

[Question Seven]

*chos thams cad kyis mchog tu gyur pa gnag lags / zhus pas /  
rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas thams cad kyis gsungs pa'i bka' yum chen mo shes rab kyis pha  
rol tu phyin ma 'di / chos thams cad kyis nang nas mchog tu gsungs / gsung /*

Question: “What is the most excellent of all Dharma?”

Response: “It is stated by all perfected buddhas that this Great Mother Perfection of  
Wisdom is the most excellent among all Dharma [teachings].”

[Question Eight]

*de nyams su blangs pa la yon tan ji lta bu lags / zhus pas /  
sa dang lam la ma bgrangs par // dmigs med don la gang 'jog pa // bdud rnams zil gyis  
non par<sup>697</sup> 'gyur // mtshan ma yid la ma byas na // sa lam rim gyis ma sbyangs kyang // yum chen  
klong na gnas par 'gyur // yum chen de yi don rtogs nas // rtsol ba'i nad rnams zhi par 'gyur //  
rtsol ba bral ba de yis ni // dus gsum sangs rgyas gdung zin nas // skye med sa la gnas par 'gyur  
// dmigs med bsam med brjod dang bral // ma bcos skye med 'gag med la // rang bzhin gyis ni  
'od gsal ba // dus gsum sangs rgyas 'byung ba'i yum // de nyid yin no gzhan na med // de yi*

---

<sup>697</sup> Perhaps this should read “zil gyis gnon pa.”

*ngang la gnas pa ni // yum chen klong na gnas pa yin // mtshan ma'i dge ba ci byas kyang //  
 'khor bar yun ring gnas pa yin // skye 'chi med pa'i sa mi thob / ces gsungs so //*

Question: “Regarding that practice, what are the qualities?”

Response: “The ground and path are immeasurable, whatever is established with regard to meaning without an objective referent, it will outshine the Negative Forces. If one does not fabricate signs in the mind, although one does not train in the stages of grounds and paths, one will abide in the Great Mother Expanse. Having understood the primordial meaning of that Great Mother, the afflictions of mental exertion become pacified. Through that freedom from mental exertion, having attained the lineage<sup>698</sup> of the buddhas of the three times, one will abide in the birthless ground—objectless, conceptless, freed from verbal expressions. Uncontrived, birthless, obstructionless, by means of one’s own nature, there is luminosity. The Mother that is the source of the buddhas of the three times is exactly that—there is nothing else. As for abiding in that state, it is abiding in the Great Mother Expanse. What is the use of the auspiciousness of signs when there is the enduring abiding in saṃsāra. One is not able to attain a birthless, deathless ground.”

[Question Nine]

*dmigs med ngang la ji ltar bzhang // bdud ces bya ba ji lta bu // zhus pas //  
 ci yang yid la mi byed na // dmigs med ngang la bzhang pa yin // yid byed bral ba'i don de  
 la // zhe 'dod dmigs pas ma bcos na // nges par dmigs med bsgom pa yin // zhes gsungs so // bdud  
 kyi bye brag bstan pa ni // thogs bcas bdud dang thogs med bdud // dga' brod bdud dang snyems  
 byed bdud // rang las byung nas rang la gnod // dper na srin gyi kha chu bzhin // gsungs //*

---

<sup>698</sup> H. *gdung*

Question: “How does one rest the objectless state? What are the so-called ‘Negative Forces’?”<sup>699</sup>

Response: “If nothing whatsoever is created in the mind, that is resting in the objectless state. With the aim of freedom from mental fabrication, if one does not contrive a mental image of the mind’s desire, there is contemplation without a definite object.

“As for the teaching the details of the Negative Forces there are the Negative Forces with Obstruction, the Negative Forces without Obstruction, the Joyous Negative Forces, and the Negative Forces Producing Pride. Having arisen from oneself, they harm oneself. For example, they are like a Rākṣa’s spit.”

[Question Ten]

*thogs bcas bdud de gang la bgyi // zhus pas //*  
*mig gi dbang po gzugs la thogs // gzugs sdug mi sdug rang bzhin gyis // chags sdang*  
*gnyis su bzung bas {551/105} bdud // gnyis su ‘dzin pa’i sems nyid la // bzhi rtsa’i ngo bo ma*  
*grub pas // rtsa bral ngang du rang bzhag na // gzugs la thogs pa zil gnon pas // slar yang ye*  
*shes nyid du ‘gyur // gzugs ni ma bcings ma grol bka’ dang mthun // rna ba’i dbang po la sogs*  
*pa // gong du bstan pa bzhin du ‘ong // thogs bcas bdud du bstan pa yin // phyi yi bdud du shes*  
*par bya // dngos po’i yul du mi snang bar // zhe la gnag pa ‘chang ba dang // yul med yid la ‘dod*  
*pa dang // gdams ngag med par rmugs pa dang // zhar la rang re mthong ba dang // phrag dog*  
*zhe la ‘jog pa dang // lha ‘dre yid la byed pa dang // thogs pa dngos su mi snang yang // yid la*  
*gnod pa bskal bas na // thogs med bzhin du bdud du ‘byung // gsung //*

Question: What are the actions of the Negative Forces with Obstruction?

---

<sup>699</sup> Tsong kha pa presents a paraphrase of this section in his *khrid yig* (1986, 28; see also Savvas’ translation 1990, 358). Savvas mentions that there is a detailed explanation on this verse by Snar thang pa grags pa dpal (Blo gros bas pa) in *Gcod kyi gdams ngag phul byung gser gyi phreng ba*, in *Gcod tshogs (Dge lugs pa)* 151-180 (161) (Savvas 1990, 358 n. 2).



Response: “The faculty of sight obstructs forms. Through dualistic grasping of forms as being, by their own nature, pleasant and unpleasant, and thus [experiencing] attachment or aversion, there are Negative Forces. The identity of the four roots is not established in the dualistically-grasping mind itself. The obstructions to form are outshone when one rests naturally in a state free of roots. Then again there will be primordial wisdom in itself. As for form, it is consistent with the statement ‘unbound, unliberated.’ The aural faculty and so forth occur just as previously explained. This is the teaching on the Negative Force with Obstruction. It should be known as the ‘Outer Negative Force.’

“Toward an invisible objective thing, one holds blackness in the mind,<sup>700</sup> there is desire in the mind<sup>701</sup> without an object, there is dullness when there is no personal instruction. In the same vein, each of us sees,<sup>702</sup> jealousy is established in the mind,<sup>703</sup> one makes a god-demon in the mind and even though the obstructions are not visible as things, when they interrupt (bskal ba<sup>704</sup>) and harm the mind, they occur as Negative Forces that are like the [Negative Forces] without Obstruction.”

[Question Eleven]

*bdud rnams zil gyis gnon na nyams su ji ltar blang // zhus pas //*  
*e ma ho // nga yi gdams pa'i gnad 'di yang // 'gyu ba ci byung ci shar yang // ched du*  
*gang yang ma byas na // thogs med bdud rnams zil gyis gnon // yid yul byung ba bdud yin te //*  
*gzung du 'dzin pa sna len yin // gzung du ma 'dzin rigs kyi bu // byung tshor ma 'gegs rigs kyi bu*

---

<sup>700</sup> *zhe la gnag pa*

<sup>701</sup> *yid*

<sup>702</sup> *zhar la*

<sup>703</sup> *zhe*

<sup>704</sup> *bskal ba*: *bar chod pa* or *rgyang ring ba* (“to be interrupted”).

*// lus sems ma bcos rigs kyi bu // 'du shes ma 'jug rigs kyi bu // de ltar khyod kyis nyams  
bskyangs na // bdud rnams zil gyis gnon par 'gyur // gsung //*

Question: “How does one gain experience in outshining the Negative Forces?”

Response: “How wonderful! This is a crucial point of my instruction! How does the lightning flash occur? How does it shine forth? If one does not do anything deliberate, one outshines the Negative Forces without Obstruction. A mental object that arises is a Negative Force; the grasping subject welcomes the grasped object. The grasped are not grasped, noble child! Sensations are not obstructed, noble child! Body and mind are uncontrived, noble child! Cognitions are not engaged, noble child! In that way, when you protect the experience, the Negative Forces will be outshone.”

[Question Twelve]

*bdud kyi rtog pa ji ltar 'joms // snyems kyi thag pa ji ltar bcad // zhus pas //  
gang la dga' zhing brod pa de // dmigs su med pas ma zin na // pha rol phyin pa'i don  
min pas // bdud kyi dbang du song ba yin // da lta rang re bdud yin te // rang zhin tsam na bdud  
kyang gnas // rang la rang bzhin ma grub pas // de bzhin bdud kyang 'grub mi 'gyur // gzhi rtsa  
med pa'i chos nyid kyis // rang {552/106} gi 'dzin pa zil gnon te // bdud rnams thams cad zil  
gnon te // mya ngan kun las 'da' par 'gyur // dga' brod skye med rang sar dag // ngar 'dzin zhen  
med rang sar grol // rnam rtog rang bzhin nyid kyis stong // de ltar dgongs shig rigs kyi bu //  
bdag nyid chos sku yin shes na // bdud kyi rtog pa chom pa yin // snyems byed snyems bya zhes  
bya ba // phyi nang thams cad rang snyems yin // snang srid 'khor 'das rang sems yin // lha dang  
'dre la sogs pa yang // de yang rang gi snyems byed yin // snyems kyi rgyu 'grul chad tsam na //  
bla na med pa'i byang chub yin // dran pa 'gegs pa ma yin gyi // thams cad snyems tsam yin shes  
na // snyems chas chos kyi zung mi thub // ma thub pa ru bzhag tsam na // bdud rnams zil gyis*

*gnon par 'gyur // 'jig rten chos rnam thams cad la // yid kyi rtog pa ma 'gyus na // sems kyi thag pa chod pa yin // rigs kyi bu yis de dgongs na // bdud rnam zil gyis gnon par 'gyur // rtsol ba ma lus spang par 'gyur // rtsol bral ngang la gnas par 'gyur // ji bzhin dgongs la gnas par 'gyur // zhes gsungs so //*

Question: “How does one overcome the concept of Negative Forces?”

Response: “That which is joyous and delightful, if it is not grasped because it is without reference, because it is not the aim of the pāramitā/perfection/transcendent, it is the occurrence of the power of the Negative Forces. Now if it is just our own nature that we are Negative Forces, the Negative Forces also remain. Because it is not established as one’s own nature in oneself, that very Negative Force, moreover, will not be established.

“As Dharmatā/Reality is without foundation and root, it outshines one’s own grasping, it outshines all Negative Forces, it transcends all suffering/is nirvāṇa. The birthless joy is pure in its own ground; without grasping onto oneself (ego-fixation), there is liberation in its own ground. Discursive thought is empty through its very nature. Consider this, noble child. When understanding that one’s very self is the *dharmakāya*, the concept of Negative Forces is overcome. These should be known as prideful acts and proudful ones; all external and internal (pride) is one’s own pride. Appearances, existences, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are one’s own mind. Deities and demons, and so forth, moreover, are one’s pride. When one just severs the orientations<sup>705</sup> of pride, there is unsurpassed *bodhi*. Mindfulness is not obstructed: when one understands that it is all just pride, it is impossible to grasp things that are the accoutrement<sup>706</sup> (chas) of pride. When merely resting in inability, the Negative Forces will be outshone. If mental concepts have not stirred/flashed regarding all of the worldly things, the fetters/ropes of

---

<sup>705</sup> *rgyu 'grul*, “the act of travelling in a particular direction.”

<sup>706</sup> *chas*

the mind are cut. When you have contemplated this, noble child, the Negative Forces will be outshone; effort will be abandoned without exception; one will abide in the state free from effort; one will abide in contemplation just like this.”

[Question Thirteen]

*gnyan sar ‘grim pa ji ltar lags / zhus pas /*

*e ma ho / thog tu byung ba’i rkyen ngan de // chos kyi grogs su ‘gro ba dka’ // dang po  
gdams ngag rloms sems kyis // gynan sa la sogs ‘grim tsam na // rkyen gyi dbang du mi ‘gyur ba  
// gdams ngag grogs su ‘gyur bar nges // sems dang lus la ‘phongs pa dang // srog la bar chad  
byung dogs na // nyam<sup>707</sup> su blangs pas rig pa chun // rig pa chun pas nyams myong skye // de  
ltar nyams dang ldan tsa na // thog tu byung ba’i rkyen la yang // shugs kyis rang dbang thob par  
‘gyur // rkyen gyis chos kyi bskul ‘debs byed // de bas gnyan sa ‘grem pa gces // gnyan sa  
{553/107} ‘grim zhig rigs kyi bu // de ltar rtog pa khal bkal bas // bdag la ‘dre bdud byung dogs  
pa’i // rtog pa ngang gis ‘gags par ‘gyur // dogs pa med pa’i sems nyid la // sna sun med par ‘dre  
mi ‘byung // de bzhin rtog pa thams cad ‘gags // brgya la bskyes kyang nyams len grogs /  
gsungs /*

Question: “How should one wander/roam in awful places?”

Response: “How wonderful! In the beginning, bad circumstances arise in the beginning, [and] it is difficult to connect with helpful things. The initial personal instruction is: if one just roams in the awesome places and so forth there will not be any force of circumstances. The personal instruction will definitely be helpful. If one is apprehensive about the interruption of life<sup>708</sup> occurring and the casting away<sup>709</sup> of body and mind, one must tune one’s knowledge

---

<sup>707</sup> Should read “nyams.”

<sup>708</sup> That is, about death.

through practice! Experience is generated through tuning one's knowledge. In that way, when one has experience, the circumstances directly arise; moreover, self-control will be acquired through one's own accord.<sup>710</sup> The excitement of things is established through circumstances. Roam in awesome places, noble child! Understood in that way, through bearing the burden, the spirits and demons coming into being in oneself will be obstructed through the state of understanding the fear. Not offensive to a mind that is itself without fear, the spirits do not come into being. Similarly, all thought is obstructed. Generated in the hundreds, moreover, the practice is beneficial.”

[Question Fourteen]

*lta ba'i blta tshul ji ltar lags / zhus pas /*

*sems la gnyis su ma mchis pas // blta ru med pa'i tshul gyis blta // bltas pas rang gi sems mi mthong // ma mthong ba nyid chos nyid yin // mthong bas chos nyid don ma yin // de bas blta bar bya ba ni // rdul tsam yod pa ma yin no / gsungs /*

Question: “What is the way to examine the view?”

Response: “Because the mind has not gone to duality, one examines by means of the way without examination. Through examination, one's own mind is non-perceiving. Non-perception itself is Reality/Dharmatā. Dharmatā through perception is not the aim. Therefore, as for the activity in examination, there is not even a speck of it.”

[Question Fifteen]

*gnyan sa 'grim pa'i dus su ni // sems nyid bzhag thabs ji ltar bzhag // zhus pas /*

*e ma ho / rigs kyi bu / lus ni ro yi tshul du bzhag / bdag po med pa'i tshul du bzhag / sems ni nam mkha'i tshul du bzhag / mar me rlung gis ma bskyod bzhin / gsal la mi rtog tshul du*

---

<sup>709</sup> 'phongs

<sup>710</sup> shugs kyi

*bzhag / rgya mtsho rlung gis ma bskyod bzhin // mer ri<sup>711</sup> dvangs pa bzhin du bzhag / kye rigs kyi  
 bu / shes la brling bar bzhag yin no // rtsol ba'i bya byed med par rang lugs su bzhag pa yin no /  
 sems nyid rang bzhin med pas bsgom mi bsgom gyi 'dzin pa ma zhugs par bzhag pa / skye med  
 bya ba dang bral ba yin pas lhod kyis klod<sup>712</sup> nas / khongs shigs kyis bshigs la / chos nyid rtog pa  
 dang bral ba yin pas rtsis gdab gang yang ma zhugs par / chos nyid skyon yon gnyis las 'das pa  
 yin pas // skyon yon gang la mi bsam par / res 'ga' mi mgo skam po ltar dbang po sgo lnga har  
 bar bzhag pa yin no // yang na bu chung gnyid log pa bzhin du lhan ne nyal ler bzhag go // chos  
 nyid chags pa dang bral ba yin pas / skar mda' 'a ma skyes pas mda' {554/108} 'phangs pa  
 bzhin du shes pa rgyang rtser<sup>713</sup> gtad la bzhag pa yin no // 'khor ba las grol bar tsam las sangs  
 rgyas don la med pas g.yas med du bzhag pa yin no // don med du bzhag pa yin no // zhig po'i  
 tshul du bzhag pa yin no / dga' dang mi dga'i gza' gtad med pa'i tshul du bzhag pa yin no //  
 glen thom me bzhag pa yin no // lar bzhag ces te ched du mi rtog // gdams ngag gi gnad kyis zin  
 na / gang ltar bzhag / ji ltar byas kyang yin / yang ni don rtsa ba dang bral ba'i go bas ma zin  
 na ji ltar bzhag kyang ma yin no // 'o na kyang de ltar bslab bo // rigs kyi bu de ltar du go bar  
 gyis shig gsungs //*

Question: “When one roams in severe places, resting the mind itself, what is the method for resting?”

Response: “How wonderful, noble child! As for the body, rest in the manner of a corpse. Rest in the manner of one without a self. As for the mind, rest in the manner of space, like a butter lamp unstirred by wind. Rest in the manner of luminous non-conceptuality, like a lake

<sup>711</sup> Reading “*mer ri*” following the 1971 edition; the 1981 edition has “*mer re*.”

<sup>712</sup> Reading “*glod*” for “*klod*.” This is an oft-cited aphorism attributed to Machik; see below.

<sup>713</sup> Reading “*rtse*” for “*tse*.”

undisturbed by wind.<sup>714</sup> Rest like very clear<sup>715</sup> fire mountain.<sup>716</sup> O noble child! Knowledge is to rest steadfastly. Rest naturally<sup>717</sup> without undertaking conceptual activities.

“The mind itself, because it is without a self-nature, rests without engaging the grasping of meditation and non-meditation; because it is separated from birthless activity, has been loosened through relaxing,<sup>718</sup> overcoming through abolishing/destroying categorization; because Reality is separate from concepts, it does not engage in any calculations whatsoever; because Reality transcends the duality of faults and good qualities, there is not any consideration of faults and good qualities. Occasionally, the five doors of the faculties are like a desiccated human head and there is suddenly<sup>719</sup> rest. Alternatively, it is like a small child asleep, resting still and reclined. Because Reality is free of desire, understanding is like an arrow propelled by the generation of a mother shooting star, it is resting focused on a distant point.<sup>720</sup>

“Having been freed from saṃsāra, a buddha rests unwaveringly without aim. One is to rest without aim. One is to rest in the manner of a broken one.<sup>721</sup> One is to rest in the manner that lacks vacillation between happiness and unhappiness. One is to rest in in a dull stupor.<sup>722</sup>

---

<sup>714</sup> Several of these similes are paraphrased in Tsong kha pa’s *khrid yig* (1986, 28-9; Savvas 358-359).

<sup>715</sup> *dvangs pa*

<sup>716</sup> *mer ri?*

<sup>717</sup> *rang lugs su bzhag pa*

<sup>718</sup> One key way in which Lozang Chökyi Gyaltzen assimilates Chöd to the Geluk tradition can be traced by following the adaptations of a well-known Chöd saying: “With regard to what has been concentrated by tightening, relax by loosening.” This dictum was originally articulated in the *Khyad par gyi le’u lag brgyad* (The Eight Distinctive Chapters), concluding a discussion of meditative cultivation. Frequently recited in other texts attributed to Machik, for many Tibetan Buddhists this instruction has become an aphorism signifying the Chöd teachings as a whole. See Jamgön Kongtrul, *Gdams ngag mdzod*, Vol IX: 601-610; Vol. XIV: 155-164)

<sup>719</sup> *har bar?*

<sup>720</sup> This is a provisional translation: ‘*a ma skyes pas?*’

<sup>721</sup> I am following the 1981 edition that reads “*zhig po*,” which is possibly a reference to a yogin who has broken free from saṃsāra. The 1971 edition reads “*zhag tho*.”

“It is called ‘resting on the ground’: there is deliberate non-thought. When it is grasped through the pith of the oral instruction, one rests in such a way; it is even acting just like that. Moreover,<sup>723</sup> when meaning is not grasped through the understanding of freedom from the root, one does not even rest like that. In that case, moreover, one should train in that way.<sup>724</sup> Noble child, understand in this way!”

[Question Sixteen]

*spyod pa'i spyad thabs ji ltar spyad // zhus pas //*

*don la spyod rgyu mi dmigs te // rkyen snang 'khor ba'i rang spyod ni // rtog med phag pa bzhin du spyad // rtsis med smyon pa bzhin du spyad // snyems byed rtog pa byung ba na // byis pa mgo thug byed pa bzhin // slar yang de yi thog tu skyur // rkyen snang rtsal shar ci byung yang // rang grol dgongs pas zin par spyad // 'di spyad kho na'i phyogs ma btsal // 'di ga<sup>725</sup> yin gyi gdams kha med // 'o na kyang 'di la spros pa'i gtam mi btang // sems la sa zin mi bdog pas // 'jig rten dga' brod bdud kyis khyer // spro ba skyed pa'i chos gtam btang // nyams dang sbyar ba'i glu chung blang // ci bya snyam pa'i skyo ba bskyed // ga na 'dug kyang 'bol le ba // yid la mi byed pa la gzhog // yi mug pa yi sems bzhin du // nga la cis kyang bya rgyu med / nga la sus kyang dgos pa med // ched du bya ba kun bzhag nas // bag chags kun las grol bar 'gyur // zhes gsungs so //*

Question: “How does one practice the techniques of this practice?”

Response: “Not perceiving the cause, practice the meaning. As for the apparent conditions of one’s own cyclic existence—practice without examination like a pig, practice

---

<sup>722</sup> *glen thom me*

<sup>723</sup> *yang ni*

<sup>724</sup> This seems to be an unconventional use of ‘o na, where it is not being used to qualify a preceding statement.

<sup>725</sup> Reading “‘di ga” for “‘di ka.”



without calculation like a crazy person. When an understanding of the function of pride arises, it is like the activity of the head and heart of a child—it is once again immediately abandoned. Whatever ability arises from the apparent conditions, moreover, it will be grasped through the enlightened intention for self-liberation. This does not require an exclusive direction of practice (*'di spyad kho na'i phyogs ma btsal*). There is no oral instruction for this particular one (*'di ga yin gyi gdams kha med*). Furthermore, that being so, one does not pass along elaborated information about this [practice]. Because there is nothing that can be held firmly in the place of the mind, the world is carried by the Joyous Negative Force. Having passed along information on dharma teaching about the production of elaborations, having taken up a little song about joining with temporary experience, what is the use of producing disturbing thinking? Wherever one is, moreover, one is ebullient (*'bol le ba*, “downy like carded yarn”); without mental activity, it is sheared. Despondency (*yi mug pa*) is like the thinking mind. For me, absolutely no activity is caused. For me, absolutely no one is necessary. Having completely set aside deliberate activity, one will become liberated from all habitual tendencies.”<sup>726</sup>

[Question Seventeen]

*gcod ces bya ba ji lta bu // zhes zhus pas //*  
*kye rigs kyi bu // thams cad sems su gcod pa yin // sems ni snyems su gcod pa yin //*  
*snyems su ma 'dus gang yang med // {555/109} snyems byed tsam du go tsam na // dper na*  
*khang stong rkun ma bzhin // ngo shes tsam gyis zungs ma thub // go ba long par bya ba las //*  
*ched du don la spyad du med // mi phod brdzi bas gcod du gsungs // zhes gsungs so //*

Question: “What is this so-called “Chöd” like?”<sup>727</sup>

<sup>726</sup> This is a provisional translation.

<sup>727</sup> This part of the interview is referenced in Dharmasenggé's *Zhijé and Chöd History* (although it does not seem to be a verbatim quotation of the editions I am using, suggesting either that Dharmasenggé used a different edition or

Response: “Oh, noble child, everything is severing the mind. As for the mind, it is severing pride. There is nothing whatsoever that is not included in pride. If one simply understands that it is merely the production of pride, then, for example, one is like a thief in an empty house: by simply recognizing [the situation], grasping is impossible. Having correctly understood, there is no practice with an intentional objective. Because it crushes any hesitations (*mi phod*), it is explained as Chöd.”

[Question Eighteen]

*mi phod brdzi ba la don mchis sam / zhes zhus bas //*

*skyid la 'bral bar mi phod dang // sdug la spyod bar mi phod dang / lha la mi phod mi phod dang // 'dre la lus skyur mi phod dang // rang khyim spong bar mi phod dang // gnyan sa 'grim par mi phod dang // nad dang rims la sogs pa la // mi phod bzhin du thog pa rdzis na // ro snyoms spyod pa khyad par 'phags // kun kyang yon tan mnyam par 'gyur // dgag sgrub rtog pa chung bar 'gyur // dgag sgrub med pa'i don rtogs na // btang snyoms chen po'i ngang bzhag go // ces gsungs so //*

Question: “What are the targets for the crushing of hesitations?”

Response: “Hesitations about separation from happiness, hesitations about unpleasant practices, unbearable hesitations [*mi phod mi phod*] about the gods, hesitations about giving one’s body to the spirits, hesitations about abandoning one’s own household, hesitations about roaming awesome places and such things as illnesses and infections—when one crushes these hesitations, one practices the distinctive Equalization of Taste.<sup>728</sup> In all circumstances, the

---

was paraphrasing): “*yang tshoms las / sras kyis gcod ces bya ba ji ltar lags zhus pas / lan du / mi phod rdzi ba gcod du bshad // thams cad sems su rtogs tsa na // gcod bya'i yul cig logs na med // sems nyid stong par rtogs tsa na // gcod bya gcod byed gnyis su med // gnyis med nyams su myong tsa na // bdud rnams ma gcod gong nas chod // dper na khang stong rkun ma bzhin*” (416-417 [Toyo Bunko 3b-4a]).

<sup>728</sup> “Equalization of Taste” (*ro snyoms*) is an example of the author employing what is traditionally considered

qualities will become equal. The conceptualization of negation and affirmation will diminish. When one realizes that there is nothing to negate or affirm, one rests in the state of great equanimity.”

[Question Nineteen]

*gzhan la byin rlab ji ltar bgyid*<sup>729</sup> // *ces zhus pas* //  
*dang po phyi yi byin rlabs ni* // *nyams dbyangs glu chung blang ba dang* // *spyod lam*  
*brling bar byas pa yis* // *gzhan mos skyes la byin rlabs ‘byung / nang gi byin rlabs bya ba ni* //  
*‘dre dang nad ba rang gi sems* // *gnyis med gcig gi ngang bzhang pas* // *sdug bsngal zhi ba’i byin*  
*rlabs ‘byung* // *gsang ba’i byin rrlabs bya ba ni* // *byin ni ‘gyur ba med pa yin* // *rlabs ni ‘gags*  
*med shugs las byung* // *chos nyid snyems dang bral nas ni* // *rtsol bral chen po’i ngang bzhang*  
*na* // *byin rlabs ‘bad pa med par ‘byung* // *‘bad pa dang bcas byin rlabs ni byin dang mi ldan*  
*nus pa chung* // *gzhan don byas kyang sgrib pa ‘byung* // *zhes gsungs so* //

Question: “How does one make blessings for others?”

Response: “First, as for the outer blessing: one sings a little song of experience and through one’s steadfast conduct, generating the appropriate intention toward the other, blessings occur.<sup>730</sup> As for the activity of the inner blessing: as the spirits and illnesses are one’s own mind, by resting in the non-dual single state, the blessing of the pacification of suffering occurs. As for the activity of the secret blessing: such a blessing is changeless, the waves occur from unobstructed energy.<sup>731</sup> As for the Reality (*chos nyid*; *dharmatā*) that is separate from pride: when one rests in the state of great freedom from mental effort, blessings without exertion occur.

---

Vajrayāna terminology.

<sup>729</sup> Old terminology; equivalent to “*byed pa*.”

<sup>730</sup> This is a provisional translation.

<sup>731</sup> This explanation of the “secret blessing” suggests a play on an etymological analysis of “*byin rlabs*” as “waves of gifts”; “*byin rlabs*” is usually translated as “blessing” or “consecration.”

As for the blessing together with exertion, unendowed with a gift, there is little efficaciousness. Moreover, even having benefitted others, obscurations will occur.”

[Question Twenty]

*rang na tsha byung na ji ltar bgyi // zhus pas //*

*lus po gtubs la tshogs su ‘bul // rnam rtog chos nyid gter du sba // de yang lan grangs mang du bya // sos na dga’ ba’i sems mi bskyed // rkyen snang na tsha ci byung yang // rtsal sbyang re re shes par {556/110} bya // rkyen byang grogs su ma go na // lta ba mtho yang dbyings gol yin // sems stong tsam la rlom pa de // de ni gsang ba’i bdud kyis zin // zhes gsungs so //*

Question: “What should one do when fever arises in oneself?”<sup>732</sup>

Response: “Offer one’s chopped-up body to the assembly. Discursive thoughts will be concealed in the treasure of Reality (*chos nyid; dharmatā*). In addition, do this many times. When healed, do not generate a happy mind. In the situation that such a fever arises, moreover, one should understand each individual improvement in training. If one does not understand how to turn adverse conditions into favorable ones, even lofty views are realms for going astray. One who is overconfident (*rlom pa*) about simply having an empty mind is one who is grasped by a Secret Negative Force.

[Question Twenty-One]

*gdams ngag ‘debs pa lan res ‘ong ngam mi ‘ong zhus pas //*

*lan cig skal ldan blo rnon ‘ga’ // sngon gyi sbyangs pa’i las can yin // de min nan tan bya ba gces // dam pa’i chags phyir<sup>733</sup> ‘brenng ba gces // gdams ngag khong du chud par gyis //*

---

<sup>732</sup> According to Savvas, Tsong kha pa is referring to this passage in his *Zab lam gcod kyi khrid yig* (1986, 20); see also Savvas’ translation (1990, 346). Tsong kha pa only mentions that it comes from the *Tshoms*. If he is referring to the *Yang tshoms*, given that it is not a direct quote from either of the editions of the texts I am working with, he is either paraphrasing or citing from a different edition.

*go ba gding du ma lon par // tshig nyan tsam la thag ma bcad // de ltar dgongs shig rigs kyi  
bu //*

Question: “Through a connection (*lan re*) with [your] oral instructions, will one return or not return?”

Response: “Once-returners are the fortunate few with sharp minds; they are those who have previously purified their actions (*las; karma*). If one is not [a once-returner], conscientious actions should be treasured; the pursuit of excellent assistance should be treasured. One should completely internalize the oral instructions! There is no resolve in merely listening to the words without reaching a depth of understanding. Think about it in this way, noble child!”

[Question Twenty-two]

*gsungs mi min ye shes mkha’ ‘gro ma // sangs rgyas bya ba ji ltar lags // de ru ‘gro lugs  
ji ltar ‘gro // zhes zhus bas //*

*sangs rgyas bya ba’i yin tshul ni // rnam rtog ‘dzin pa kun spangs nas // skye med rang  
bzhin ye sangs rgyas // sangs rgyas zhes ni de la btags // de ru ‘gro lugs bstan pa ni // sangs  
rgyas bya ba’i mtshon pa ni // ‘khor ba ‘jig pa’i thabs su bstan // sangs rgyas skye med bla  
dvags yin // snga rabs ‘das pa rnams kyis kyang // ‘dzin pa rang sar grol ba las // sangs rgyas  
sa la phyin pa med // da ltar bzhugs pa rnams kyis kyang // ‘dzin pa rang sar grol ba las //  
sangs rgyas sa la ‘gro rgyu med // slad nas ‘byon pa rnams kyis kyang // sangs rgyas sa la ‘gro  
ma mnos<sup>734</sup> // byis pa’i blo phyir ma ‘breng zhig // sangs rgyas thob phyir ma byed cig // skye  
med dmigs par ma byed cing // ‘khor bar dogs pa ma byed cig // rnam rtog zungs su ma ‘dzin  
cig // mi rtog bsgom par ma byed cig // ye nas sems nyid skye med la // skye med dogs par ma  
byed cig // mi skye re bar ma byed cig // ye nas chos nyid byar med la // rtsol bas nyams su ma*

---

<sup>733</sup> This is a Khams pa term meaning “*zhabs phyi*.”

<sup>734</sup> Archaic for “*mno pa*,” meaning the process of thinking.

*len zhiḡ // chos nyid ḡdal ba<sup>735</sup> chen po la // dmigs pas bsdud par ma byed cig // 'khor 'das gnyis su {557/111} med pa la // re dogs bsam pa ma 'cha' zhiḡ // 'khor ba 'dzin med myang 'das yin // myang 'das 'dod ba 'khor ba yin // ma re ma dogs rigs kyi bu // ma sgoms ma 'dzin rigs kyi bu // ma dgag ma spyod rigs kyi bu // mdo las kyang // sangs rgyas med pas sangs rgyas ming yang med // byang chub sems dpa'i ming yang med // ces gsungs so //*

Question: “What are the activities of the speaking non-humans, wisdom ḡākinī, and buddhas? Their method of going: how do they go?”

Response: “As for the manner that is the activity of buddhas, birthless, having abandoned grasping at discursive thinking, that is the identity [of the] primordial buddhas; they are designated as ‘buddhas.’ As for explaining their method of going, as for representing the activities of buddhas: saṃsāra is explained as the fearful method; buddhas are the birthless representation. Previous ancestors who have passed away, moreover, having been liberated in their own ground, they grasp firmly, without arriving at the buddha ground. At present, those who stay, moreover, grasp firmly, having been liberated in their own ground, they grasp firmly, without the cause to go to the buddha ground. In the future, those who come, moreover, do not think about going to the buddha ground. On account of their childish minds, they do not pursue! On account of attaining buddha[hood], they not not act! Do not make a birthless objective referent and do not be concerned about saṃsāra! Do not grasp onto the constituents [zungs] of discursive thinking! Do not cultivate non-thinking! Do not be concerned about the birthless in the primordial birthless mind itself! Do not hope for no-birth! Do not gain experience in the primordial, inactive *Dharmadhātu*/Reality through intentional effort! Do not subsume the great, pervasive *Dharmadhātu* through reference! Do not initiate thoughts of hope and fear regarding

---

<sup>735</sup> Reading “*gdal ba*” for “*gdal pa*.”

the non-dual saṃsāra and nirvāṇa! The absence of grasping saṃsāra is nirvāṇa. The desire for nirvāṇa is saṃsāra. No hope, no concern, noble child.<sup>736</sup> No cultivation, no grasping, noble child. No obstruction, no practice, noble child. From the sūtras,<sup>737</sup> furthermore: because there is no buddha, there is also no name ‘buddha,’ there is also no name ‘bodhisattva.’”

[Question Twenty-three]

*yang zhus pa // mi blta mi bsgom mi spyod mi bsgrub bam // zhus pas //*  
*don la blta ru ma mchis pas // lta byed grol ba'i skyes bu de // ma nor lta ba yin par*  
*gsungs // don la bsgom yul ma mchis pas // sgom byed grol ba'i gang zag de // ma nor bsgom*  
*pa yin par gsungs // don la spyod pa'i yul med pa // spyod byed mkhan po grol ba de // ma nor*  
*spyod pa yin par gsungs // pha rol phyin pa'i 'bras bu la // bsgrubs rgyu rdul tsam yod min bas*  
*// sgrub byed grol ba'i gang zag de // ma nor 'bras bu yin par gsungs // de lta bu yi don rnyed*  
*nas // re dogs 'ching bas 'ching mi 'gyur / 'khor ba grol bar the tshom med // dper na sos ka'i*  
*chab rom bzhin // blo snang 'khor ba'i rang bzhin yang // skad cig tsam gyis grol bar 'gyur //*  
*zhes gsungs so //*

An additional question: “There is no looking, no cultivation, no practice, no accomplishment?”

Response: “In fact, because there will be no viewing, it is said the person freed from making views is an unmistaken viewer. In fact, because there is no cultivated object, it is said that person freed from cultivating is an unmistaken cultivator. In fact, without an object of practice, it is said that one who is freed from being a master of practicing is the unmistaken practitioner. Because there is not even a particle of cause in the result of the perfections, it is said that the person who is freed from making accomplishments is the unmistaken result

<sup>736</sup> The use of “*rigs kyi bu*” here is reminiscent of the repetitive use of “Shariputra” in the Heart Sutra.

<sup>737</sup> I have not been able to locate a primary source text for this passage.

[-maker]. Having discovered the meaning of that perspective, there will not be binding through binding hopes and fears, there is no doubt in the freedom from saṃsāra. For example, like glacial water in the late spring, by even a moment of [realizing] the nature of the appearances of saṃsāra, the mind will be freed.”

[Question Twenty-four]

*‘o na sangs rgyas la gzhan don nam yon tan mi ‘byung ngam / zhus pas /  
rtog dang bcas pa’i gzhan don de // sems kyi nus pa’i stobs su gsungs // sangs rgyas  
sems can don byed pa // dper na nor bu rin chen bzhin // rtog pa med bzhin gzhan don ‘byung /  
/ rang rtog ‘dzin pa med pa la // sangs rgyas yon tan bsam mi khyab // da lta sems can bde  
skyid dang // dam pa’i chos la spyod pa dang // grub pa thob pa’i dngos grub dang // rtogs  
ldan rnam kyi nyams myang dang // lo tog char chu dus ‘byung dang // mdor na longs spyod  
thams cad ni // sangs rgyas {558/112} kun gyi yon tan yin // zhes gsungs so //*

Question: “In that case, do not other aims or good qualities arise in buddhas?”

Response: “The other aim associated with analytical thought is said to be powerful mental strength. Buddhas make other sentient beings the aim. For example, like a precious jewel, the aim of others arises without analytical thought. Without grasping onto one’s own analytical thought, a buddha’s qualities do not permeate thought. Now sentient beings are happy and there is the practice of the supreme Dharma and the accomplishments of the attained accomplishments, and the experience of those with knowledge and the crops occur at the time of the rains, and, in brief, as for all of the valuable resources, these are the qualities of all buddhas.”

[Question Twenty-five]

*rang la sangs rgyas kyi byin rlabs ‘byung bar bgyi na ji ltar bgyi // zhus pas //*



*sangs rgyas kun gyis gsungs bzhin du // don nyams su blangs na byin rlabs 'byung //*  
*tshig la sgro 'dogs ma sems par // don nyams su longs shig rigs kyi bu // dus gsum sangs rgyas*  
*sku gzugs la // mos pa byas nas don 'byung na // don nyams su blangs na lta ci smos // gsungs*  
*mdo sde tsam la rtags 'byung na // don nyams su blangs na de dang mtshungs // nyams su longs*  
*shig rigs kyi bu // tshig la mkhas pa mkhas pa min // don la mkhas na mkhas pa yin // don la*  
*bsam zhing rang rig skye // don ni stong nyid skye med dbyings // tshig gis rang nyid mtshon*  
*pa'i thabs // don la zhog cig rigs kyi bu // nyams su longs shig rigs kyi bu // lam la bgrod rgyu*  
*ma mchis pas // gzhi la zhog cig rigs kyi bu // 'bras bu thob rgyu ma mchis pas // re ba ma byed*  
*rigs kyi bu // 'khor bar ltung rgyu ma mchis pas // dgos par ma byed rigs kyi bu // spyod pa*  
*spyad rgyu ma mchis pas // dus gsum rgyun du lhug par zhog // de ltar rtsol med ngang bzhag*  
*na // chos rnam kun gyi rtsa ba chod // nyon mongs rnam rtog ngang gis 'gags // bdud rnam*  
*skye med rang sar grol // 'khor ba myang 'das gnyis su med // gcig tu gyur pa chos nyid*  
*dbyings // sangs rgyas thams cad dgyes ba na // byin rlabs 'byung gi rigs kyi bu // brgyud pa*  
*zung zhig rigs kyi bu // skal ldan skyongs shig rigs kyi bu // zhes gsungs so //*

Question: “When requesting the blessings of the buddhas for oneself, how does one do this?”

Response: “There will be blessings when one has gained experience in the meaning explained by all of the buddhas. Gain experience in the meaning without thoughts of exaggerating the words, noble child! When meaning arises from having conviction in the forms of the buddhas of the three times, there is no need to mention then that one has gained experience in the meaning. When the indications regarding just the Sautantrika teachings arise, then one has gained experience of the meaning equivalent with that. Gain experience, noble child! Learned in words is not learned. Learned in meaning is learned. Contemplating the meaning produces

self-knowing. As for the meaning, it is emptiness, the birthless realm. The method of demonstrating oneself is through words; rest in the meaning, noble child! Gain experience, noble child! Because there is no reason to travel on the path, stay on the ground, noble child! Because there is no reason to obtain results, do not create hopes, noble child! Because there is no reason to fall into saṃsāra, do not be compelled, noble child! Because there is not a reason to practice the practice, loosely rest in the stream of the three times! In that way, when resting in the effortless state, sever the all roots of phenomena! Ceasing afflicted emotions through the state of discursive thought, without producing Negative Forces, one is liberated on one's own ground. Saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are without duality; being singular, it is the realm of Reality/Dharmatā. When all buddhas are delighted, the blessings will occur, noble child.”<sup>738</sup>

[Question Twenty-six]

*bdud kyi gcod yul 'di ji ltar lags // zhes zhus pas //*  
*bdud nyid chos sku yin pas na // de nyid sems su ngo shes kyis // sems la bcas bcos ma*  
*byed par // ma bcos pa la bzhag pa ni // bdud kyi cho {559/113} 'phrul ci byung yang // skye*  
*med ngang la spyod cing spyod // bdud kyi gcod yul zhes su gsungs // don gyi man ngag de nyid*  
*yin / zhes gsungs so /*

Question: “This Chöd system of Negative Forces: what is it like?”

Response: “Because the Negative forces themselves are the *dharmakāya*, by recognizing in one's mind exactly that, do not fabricate them in one's mind. As for resting in the unfabricated, how can the miracle of Negative Forces arise? Moreover, practicing the practice in the birthless state is known as ‘The Chöd System of Negative Forces.’ The personal instruction of the meaning is exactly that.”

---

<sup>738</sup> I don't know how to account for the “*gi*” here, which would seem to be a genitive but doesn't really fit; perhaps it should have been a “*zhig*” like in the next line?

[Question Twenty-seven]

*gcod 'di mi gzhan la spel lam mi spel // zhus pas //*

*khyod kyis spel bas mi 'phel gyi // dad ldan skal ba<sup>739</sup> ldan pa rnams // dad cing 'dug na  
bstan par mjod // rkyen gyis dad pa'i gang zag la / zhal gyi gdams pa nan cher thob // nad sos  
ci 'gyur cha med pas // yig sna sbyin par mi 'gyur ro // gang zag snod la brtags pa gces // nor  
gyi phyi ru bka' dogs yin // 'o na kyang nor la brtag du btubs // 'di la chud gson mi btub na //  
nges par skal ldan las can yin // rtogs par gyis la chos 'brel gyis // snod mi ldan la bstan mi  
rung // zhes gsungs so //*

Question: “Can this Chöd be propagated or not propagated by other people?”

Response: “There will not be an increase in fortunate ones possessing faith through your propagation. When there is faith and presence (*'dug*), there is patience<sup>740</sup> for the teachings. By means of these conditions, faithful persons will have great persistence to obtain instruction from me. Whatever the illness and recovery, there is no change in the offering of various syllables by inexperienced ones. For a person who holds dear the conceptual imputation of a container, there is suspicion regarding its future value. In that case, moreover, its value is determined. When it cannot be lost in this way, one is definitely fortunate with karmic merit (*las can*). One must act in connection with dharma and act understandingly. One is not able to teach without having a container.”<sup>741</sup>

[Question Twenty-eight]

*ma gcig mi rtag 'gyur dus su // dgongs pa ji ltar gshegs / zhes zhus pas //*

---

<sup>739</sup> Reading “*skal ba*” for “*skal pa*.”

<sup>740</sup> “*mjod pa*” is an archaic term for “*bzod pa*.”

<sup>741</sup> This is a provisional translation.

*skye med ngang la dgongs pa med // 'gag med ngang la gshegs yul med // 'o na kyang  
dmigs med rang grol nas // lhang nge lhan ne lham me ba // zhes gsungs so //*

Question: “When Machik becomes impermanent, how will her temporal thoughts pass away?”

Response: “There is no mind in the birthless state. There is no object that passes away in the obstructionless state. If that is the case, moreover, having become self-liberated without an objective referent, lhang nge, lhan ne, lham me ba.”<sup>742</sup>

*zhus lan gyi gdams pa yang tshoms nyi shu rtsa lnga pa zhes bya ba I TI //*

Thus is the “Dialogue Instruction, the twenty-five additional (yang) sections.”<sup>743</sup>

*bdud kyi stobs rab tu 'joms pa la phyag 'tshal lo //*

I pay homage to the one who thoroughly overcomes the strength of the Negative Forces.

*A ma jo mo'i bdud kyi gcod yul 'di hril gyis dril na ji ltar bgyi // zhus pas //*

*gcod yul 'di la gnyis su gsungs // de yang dad pa can ngan song gi g.yang la mi bskyr  
ba dang // shes rab can 'khor ba'i sgrog tu mi 'jug pa'o // dad pa can chos spyod dus gdab med  
par bya // rang sems g.yo sgyu med par byed // dam tshig do lkog med par bsrung bas // 'khor  
ba dang ngan song las thar ro // shes rab can 'jug sgo ngan pa grub mtha'i sgor mi 'jug //  
rnam rtog ngan pa<sup>744</sup> gral mi sgrig // bsgom nyams bde gsal gser gyi {560/114} sgrog tu mi  
gzhugs // shes rab can yin na 'jug sgo ma nor ba gcod kyi sgor zhugs nas // sgom dran pa med  
cing yid la byar med pa nyams su len pa'o gsungs //*

Question: “When there is a complete summary of this Chöd system of Negative Forces of the Noble Mother, how is it made?”

<sup>742</sup> These terms are experiential language (*myong tshig*) for “clearly obvious, still, splendid.”

<sup>743</sup> Yet it appears that there are twenty-eight questions according to this version.

<sup>744</sup> Reading “ngan pa” for “dan pa.”

Response: “It is stated that there are two teachings regarding the Chöd system. That is to say, [one for] the faithful ones who have not abandoned the abyss of the lower state of existence and [one for] the knowledgeable ones who are not placed in the fetters of saṃsāra.

“The faithful ones should not establish a time of Dharma practice. [Their] own minds should be without deceit. By protecting their commitments without hypocrisy, they are emancipated from saṃsāra and the lower states of existence.

“The knowledgeable ones do not enter the inferior gates, the gates of the tenet systems. They do not arrange their discursive thought in inferior order. With meditative experience of bliss and clarity, they will not be placed in golden fetters.

“If one is a knowledgeable one, having entered the gate of Chöd, the unmistakable gate, there is the experience of meditation without remembering (*sgom dran pa med cing*) and without mental events.”

*nyams su len na ji ltar bgyid // zhus pas //*

*dang po lta bas thag bcad pa dang // bar du sems mnyam par bzhag rag pa la yid ches pas // tha mar chos thams cad sems su 'khyer shes pa gcig dgos gsungs //*

Question: “How is this experience made?”

Response: “It was definitively stated that, first, one has resolve through examination and, because in the middle one has trust in having meditative equipoise, ultimately one should know to carry all things in the mind.”

*'di'i drung<sup>745</sup> na chos thams cad glor 'dug zhus pas //*

*bshad pas 'chal // bsgom pas gol // 'dod pas phung gsungs //*

Question: “At the root of this, are all things in the mind (glo)?”

---

<sup>745</sup> Archaic for “*rtsa ba*.”

Response: “There is laxity through speech, errors through meditation, degradation through desire.”

*‘o na ji ltar bsgom zhus pas //*  
*gnyis ‘dzin gyi shes pa dga’ mi dga’ dang bral ba la sems snyems med ‘gyur med du*  
*bzhag gsungs //*

Question: “In that case, how does one meditate?”

Response: “Understanding dualistic grasping, the mind freed from joy and no joy, without pride, rest in the changeless.”

*dmigs pa gcig zhus pas //*  
*gtad so ma byas pas gol sa chod // dmigs med tsam gyis ‘dzin pa grol // nga la gdams*  
*ngag g.yas med cig las med gsungs //*

Question: “Is there a single visualization?”

Response: “By not making a focus, one cuts the point at which one could go astray. By not even a little visualization, one becomes freed from grasping. My personal instruction is without sides and there is not more than one.”

*nyon mongs pa skyes nas gnyen po ji tsug tu btang zhus pas //*  
*gsal cha ma ‘gag ste ‘dzin cha ma grub // bdud shar tsam na dgos pa’i gcod kyis sleb*  
*par bya gsungs //*

Question: “Having generated mental afflictions, does one apply the same kind of antidote?”

Response: “Not obstructing a factor of luminosity, there is no establishment of a factor of grasping. When a Negative Force appears, one should reach out to it through the requisite severing.”

*chos 'di la tshig bral go dgos par 'dug zhus pas //*  
*gcod yul 'di tshig nyung la don che slob par sla la rtogs par dka' // rtog pa'i spyod yul*  
*min gsungs //*

Question: “[For one who is] separated from the words of this teaching, isn’t hearing and understanding [the teaching] necessary?”

Response: “This Chöd system has great meaning in few words; it is difficult to understand with a little training; the practice of understanding is not a system.”

*gnyen po thub kyang snang ba 'di la 'khri shing gda'<sup>746</sup> // zhus pas //*  
*lar zhen pa rang log cig nang nas 'char dgos // zhen pa nang nas ma log na chos las su*  
*che ste gcod bya snyams pa rang yang bdud yin gsungs //*

Question: “As for the antidote that is possible and moreover apparent, is it the medicinal plant Hombu?”<sup>747</sup>

Response: “It is necessary for natural revulsion from the ground up to appear from within. When clinging is not transformed from within, [clinging] to things becomes greater; even one’s thought of the activity of cutting is a Negative Force.

*gcod rang ji ltar bgyi zhus pas //*  
*gcod kyang bya'o byed do snyam pa'i rtog pa med par dga' la re tsam g.yas med du byed*  
*pa yin gsungs //*

Question: “How does one cut through oneself?”

Response: “Even cutting through is done without even a little orientation toward happiness as it is without consideration of the action or agent.”

*gcod yul rtogs tshad gang lags // zhus pas //*

---

<sup>746</sup> Kham dialect for “’dug.”

<sup>747</sup> Tamarisk or “um bu,” a medicinal plant.

*snyems dang bral ba yin gsungs //*

Question: “What is the measure of understanding for the Chöd system?”

Response: “It is freedom from pride.”

*snyems dang bral ba'i tshad gang lags // zhus pas //*

*snyems dang bral ba'i tshad nyam nga med {561/115} pa yin gsungs //*

Question: “What is the measure of freedom from pride?”

Response: “The measure of freedom from pride is the absence of feeling intimidation.”

*nyams su myong pa'i rtags ji lta bu mchi zhus pas //*

*phyi snang ba la zhen pa med pa // nang sems nyid la 'khri ba med pa // gsang ba nyon  
mongs la dmigs pa med pa yong gsungs //*

Question: “What kind of indications of experience are there?”

Response: “The external is without clinging to the internal. The internal is without attachment to one’s own mind. The secret comes without consideration of mental afflictions.”

*gzhi stong pa nyid la ci 'khrul zhus pas //*

*stong pa nyid du ma shes pas ma rig pa'i 'dzin pa byung // des khams gsum du 'khor  
zhing rgyud drug tu 'khyams pa yin // chos nyid kyi ngo bo la ngos bzung rgyu med // 'dzin  
'dzin po 'dod 'dod pos 'khrugs pa yin gsung //*

Question: “How can the ground be confused for emptiness?”

Response: “Because of not knowing emptiness, one holds tight to misknowledge. Because of that, there is cycling in the three realms and roaming in the six kinds of continuums. Having identified the essence of Reality/*Dharmatā* without cause, there is conflict [between] the grasped and the one who grasps, the desired and the one who desires.”

*'dzin med du rtogs pa la sangs rgyas zer ba lags sam zhus pas //*



*sangs rgyas la rang bzhin gyis bde ba yod la // 'dzin pa'i rtog pa med pa yin // sems la  
ci yang med bsam par zhog // da sgom pa ma yin gsung //*

Question: “What do the buddhas say about non-conceptual understanding?”

Response: “As there is bliss through the very nature of the buddhas, it is without conceptual understanding. One rests in contemplation without anything whatsoever in one’s mind. Now it is not meditation.”

*ma bsam bya ba ci tsam gcig la zer zhus pas //  
yid la mi byed pa la zer ba yin // rig pa 'di la 'dzin pa med pa la sangs rgyas zer ba yin  
pas // sems 'di chud ma gson par sgoms shig gsung //*

Question: “Would you speak a little about the activity of non-contemplation?”

Response: “It is said that it is not made in the mind. Because the buddhas say that this knowledge is without grasping, spend (*chud pa*) this mind [and] contemplate without squandering!”

*rnal 'byor pa bya ba ci la zer zhus pas //  
rtog pa dang bral pa la zer pa yin // bdag tu 'dzin pa'i 'du shes dang bral nas zhen pa  
rang log tu 'gro dgos // de ltar rgyud la ma skyes na chos byed pa skad byas kyang phan med  
gsung // dang po'ang gcig pur 'ongs // tha ma'ang gcig pur 'gro bas da lta yang gcig pu la  
spob dgos gsung //*

Question: “What is said about so-called ‘yogis’?”

Response: “It is said they are freed from understanding. Having been freed from cognitions of self-grasping, they necessarily proceed to self-transform (*rang log*, self-reverse) clinging. In this way, when there is no generation in one’s continuum, one makes the speech of a Dharma practitioner, although it is without benefit.

“One who has arrived first and also alone, leaving last and also alone, now also necessarily moves alone.”

*gcod 'di go nas chos kun gtan la phebs par 'dug zhus pas //*

*chos spyi dang mthun gdams ngag khyad par 'phags // gcod gong khal yin gsungs //*

Question: “By understanding this Chöd, does one arrive at the completely permanent Dharma?”

Response: “The exalted personal instructions are harmonious with the general Dharma. Chöd is a burden.”

*chos spyi dang 'brel phyin de tsam 'ong ba ci lags zhus pas //*

*don la 'khrul pa 'jig pa yin // re ba bshig na lha dang 'bral // dogs pa bshigs na 'dre dang 'bral // gsungs so //*

Question: “Having connected with the general Dharma, at that point, what happens?”

Response: “Mistakes in one’s aim are ruin. If there is destruction of hope, there is freedom from gods. If there is destruction of fear, there is freedom from spirits.”

*zhus lan rdo rje rol pa zhes bya ba 'di ni yongs su rdzogs so //*

This completes the “Vajra Play Interview.”

**Appendix Three: *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag nying tshoms chos kyi rtsa ba***<sup>748</sup>

{562/116} *shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag bdud kyi gcod yul las nying tshom bzhugs //*

The Quintessential Chapter of the Chöd System of Negative Forces, The Instructions of the Prajñāpāramitā.

*rgyal ba kun gyi yum la phyag 'tshal skyabs su mchi // shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i dgongs pa 'grol ba'i sprul pa'i sku ma jo mo lab kyi sgron*<sup>749</sup> *mas gsungs pa 'di la don rnam pa lnga ste //*

I take refuge, prostrating to the mother of all Victors (buddhas). The meaning of this teaching by the liberated emanation body of the Lady Lab kyi sgron ma<sup>750</sup> on the intent of the Prajñāpāramitā has five parts.

*sngon du 'gro ba'i gdams ngag dang // sems ngos bzung ba'i gdams ngag dang / byin rlabs lus sems*<sup>751</sup> *phral ba'i gdams ngag dang // sgom pa gnas lugs la bzhag pa dang / lta ba bdud kyi spyod yul du ma shor ba dang lnga'o /*

The five are: 1) the personal instruction of the preliminaries; 2) the personal instructions for identifying one's mind; 3) the oral instructions of the blessings of separating body and mind; 4) the meditation that is resting in *tathātva*/the way things are; and 5) the view that does not stray from the practice system of Negative Forces.

<sup>748</sup> In *Gdams ngag mdzod*, Vol. 14 (1979): 116-130; Vol. 9 (1971): 562-576.

<sup>749</sup> Note: in the text it is “*sgrol ma*” not “*sgron ma*” at the beginning; at the conclusion it is “*sgron ma*”; I have changed the initial use to “*sgron ma*” to be consistent within the text and within the tradition.

<sup>750</sup> These opening lines might suggest that the text is a *dgongs gter*, or a mind treasure, that has been revealed to the author (perhaps Rangjung Dorjé?).

<sup>751</sup> Reading “*sems*” for “*sem*.”

*dang po la bcu ste / skyabs su 'gro ba dang / sems bskyed pa dang / sdom pa bzung ba dang / gsol ba gdab pa dang / phyag 'tshal ba dang / mchod pa rgya chen po 'bul ba dang / khyad par gyi skyabs 'gro smon lam dang bcas pa dang / sdig pa bshags pa dang / rjes su yi rang ba dang / de dag bla na med pa'i byang chub tu bsngo ba'o //*

The first [personal instruction of the preliminaries] has ten parts: 1.1) going for refuge; 1.2) generating the mind; 1.3) holding vows firmly; 1.4) making supplications; 1.5) prostrations; 1.6) presenting the great offering; 1.7) the particular going for refuge together with prayers of aspiration; 1.8) putting aside negative actions; 1.9) rejoicing; and 1.10) dedicating these [the merit of these actions] to unsurpassed enlightenment.

*gnyis pa sems ngos bzung ba ni / de'ang che 'khor ba thog pa<sup>752</sup> med pa nas / dus da lta yan chad du khams gsum du 'khor zhing rgyud drug tu 'khyams pa 'di ci las byung na / rang gis rang ngo ma shes / bla ma'i gdams ngag gis ma zin / rang brtson 'grus kyi 'bad rtsol chung ba dang gsum las byung ba yin no //*

(2) Second, as for identifying one's mind, from the unobstructed cycle of existence being greater than that, with one cycling in the three realms up until this point in time, roaming in the six continuums, if [one asks], “why does this occur?,” then one does not know one's own face. One does not grasp [this] through the personal instruction of a spiritual teacher; it occurs through a little of one's own perseverance and the three.<sup>753</sup>

*da phan chad kyang shes rig yan par btang nas bla ma'i gdams ngag la nan tan ma byas na / 'khor ba'i sdug bsngal chen po las mi thar bas / rang dad pa dang shes bzhin gyis zin par byas la / dad pa dang brtson 'grus kyis bskul nas / btang snyoms dang le lo'i dbang du skad cig*

---

<sup>752</sup> Reading “pa” for “ma.”

<sup>753</sup> This is probably a reference to the Three Jewels—the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha; it might also be a reference to the Vajrayāna Three Roots—the Guru, *Yi dam* and *Dākinīs*.

*kyang mi gtang bar bla ma dam pa'i gdams ngag dang / rgyal ba'i lung zab mo kun thos sing  
khong du chud par byas nas nyams su len dgos / nyams su len pa la byang chub kyi {563/117}  
sems rin po che bsgom dgos /*

Henceforth from now, moreover, having allowed realization (*shes rig*) to roam free, if there is not conscientiousness regarding the lama's personal instructions, there is not emancipation from the great sufferings of saṃsāra. When one grasps through one's own faith and alertness, having been encouraged through faith and perseverance, not allowing even a moment in the influence of neutrality and laziness, it is necessary to gain experience from hearing and internalizing all the profound authoritative teachings of the Victors and the personal instructions of the lama. With regard to gaining experience, it is necessary to meditatively cultivate the precious spirit of enlightenment.

*de la dang po sems ji lta bu zhig yin ngos zin dgos / de la gnyis te / sems ngos 'dzin pa  
dang / bzhag thabs bstan po'o /*

With regard to that, (2.1) first it is necessary to recognize what the mind is like. (2.2) Second, identify the mind and teach the method of resting.

*de la ngos bzung ba ni / byang chub kyi sems de dang po rgyu las ma byung / bar du  
rkyen gyis ma bskyed / tha ma skye 'jig dang 'pho 'gyur med de / ngo bo ngos bzung thams cad  
dang bral ba / mtshan nyid 'di yin bstan du med pa / rang bzhin gsal zhing gsal la rtog pa med  
pa don 'dus ma byas pa // de nyid kho na yin par shes par bya'o //*

(2.1) As for the identification with regard to that: (2.1.1) first, that mind of enlightenment does not occur from causes; (2.1.2) midway, it is not produced through conditions; (2.1.3) ultimately, it is without generation, destruction and change. Its identity is separate from all identification. It is this characteristic that cannot be taught. The luminosity of the luminous self-

nature [of the mind] is not conceptualized; it is an uncompounded fact. One should know that it is exactly that.

*de yang yum chen las / sems ni 'gyur ba med cing rnam par rtog pa med pa'o // zhes pa dang / sems ni sems ma mchis pa ste / sems kyi rang bzhin ni 'od gsal ba'o // zhes so //*

In addition, from the Great Mother<sup>754</sup> it is said that the mind is changeless and without discursive thinking. And it is said that the mind is non-existent; the self-nature of mind is luminosity.

*gnyis pa bzhag thabs bstan pa la bdun te / ma bcos par bzhag pa / ma bslad par / ma bsgyur<sup>755</sup> bar / ma yengs par / rang lugs su / rang sor / gnyug mar bzhag pa'o //*

(2.2) Second, the teaching on the method of resting is seven-fold. (2.2.1) Rest in the unfabricated, (2.2.2) in the unspoiled, (2.2.3) in the unaltered, (2.2.4) in the undistracted, (2.2.5) in one's own way, (2.2.6) in one's own ground, (2.2.7) and in the innate.

*dang po ni / rig pa byang chub kyi sems ye nas gnas pa'i don chos nyid kyi steng du shes pa rang lugs su lhod kyis glod la / 'bol le<sup>756</sup> / shig ge / seng nge / gsal le / yer re / phyogs med du gdal le / rig med du khyab be / sing nge / phyal le / dga' yal le rnam par rtog pa gang la yang sems ma shor bar bde sang nge ba la 'jog pa yin no //*

(2.2.1.1) As for the first [resting in the unfabricated], one's awareness, the spirit of enlightenment, consciousness that is above primordial reality and *Dharmatā*, relaxes by naturally loosening.<sup>757</sup> Relaxed, comfortable, floatingly, clear, waking, spreading without direction,

<sup>754</sup> This would appear to be a reference to a *Prajñāpāramitā* text; however, I have not identified a specific source.

<sup>755</sup> Reading “*ma bsgyur*” for “*ma bskyur*” to correspond with the elaboration of this method (see below 2.2.3.1).

<sup>756</sup> Reading “*bol le*” for “*pol le*,” as per other occurrences of the term in this text.

<sup>757</sup> This is a provisional translation.

unknowing pervasion, non-knowledgeable pervasion, pure, open, joyfully relaxed, whatever discursive thinking there is, the mind enters into clear openness, unstraying bliss.<sup>758</sup>

*gnyis pa rnam rtog gis ma bslad par bzhaḡ pa ni / rang gi sems ma bcos pa'i ngang la ci  
yang yid la mi byed par 'jog pa yin te / dga' mi dga' ngang / bde sdug dang / tsha grang dang /  
bza' btung dang / dgra gnyen dang / bdag gzhan dang / 'dod yon gyi zhen pa dang / 'khor 'das  
gang yang yid la mi byed par 'jog pa yin /*

(2.2.2.1) Second, as for resting in [that which is] unspoiled through discursive thinking, one's own mind in whichever unfabricated state, it is without mental activity (literally “it is placed without mental activity”); the state of happiness and pain, pleasure and suffering, hot and cold, food and drink, enemies and relatives, self and other, clinging to qualities of desire, saṃsāra or nirvāṇa, [the mind] is without any mental activity whatsoever.

*de yang yum las / gzugs yid la mi byed pa las rnam {564/118} pa thams cad mkhyen pa  
nyid kyi bar du yid la mi byed pas 'dod pa'i khams su 'dre bar mi 'gyur / gzugs kyi khams su 'dre  
bar mi 'gyur / gzugs med pa'i khams su 'dre bar mi 'gyur ro // zhes so //*

In addition, it is stated in the *Mother*, form is without mental fabrication, and because it is not fabricated in the mind within omniscient consciousness, one will not become a spirit in the realm of desire; one will not become a spirit in the realm of form; one will not become a spirit in the realm of the formless.<sup>759</sup>

<sup>758</sup> Many of these adjectives are “*myon tshigs*,” or terms connoting lived experience.

<sup>759</sup> I have not been able to locate a direct source for this in the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus, although it of course echoes several passages regarding the emptiness of form.

*gsum pa dmigs pas ma bsgyur pa bzhag pa ni / rang gi sems gang gis kyang ma gyos par  
snyems med du khres se 'jog pa yin / de yang sems la sgrib pa med pas skrag pa med de / phyin  
ci log las shin tu 'das nas mya ngan las 'das pa'i mthar phyin no<sup>760</sup> // zhes so //*

(2.2.3.1) Third, it is said that as for resting in the unaltered through reference, one's own mind is without pride and not wavering in any way, and you rest in complete relaxation (*khres se*). In addition, because there are no obscurations in the mind, one is without fright. Having completely transcended misapprehension, one ultimately reaches nirvāṇa.

*bzhi pa tshogs drug gi yul la ma yengs par 'jog pa ni / sems bsam du med pa'i ngang la  
rang bzhin gyis gsal ba / dangs pa / bde ba / yul bzang ngan gyi rtog pa gang la yang ma yengs  
par / nam mkha' lta bu'i don la rgyun chad med par bzhag go / de yang yum las / chos thams cad  
ni nam mkha'i rten can te / de dag rten de las mi 'da' 'o // zhes so //*

(2.2.4.1) Fourth, as for resting in the undistracted with regard to the objects of the six-fold group, the mind in the state of non-thought, luminous by self-nature, lucid,<sup>761</sup> pleasant. Objects understood as good or bad, whatever the case, one is undistracted; one rests in the uninterrupted continuum with regard to the meaning of the view of space. In addition, from the *Mother* it is stated that as for all things, they have the support of space; these [things] do not go beyond that support.

*lnga pa rang lugs de bzhin nyid du bzhag bya<sup>762</sup> ni / sems kyi dran pa rnam rtog gang la  
yang ma shor ba bde / stong / gsal ba'i ngang la shes pa rten med du 'jog pa yin no // de yang  
yum las / shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa mnyam pa nyid pas chos thams cad mnyam pa nyid do  
// zhes so //*

---

<sup>760</sup> Reading “no” for “to.”

<sup>761</sup> Reading “dang ba” rather than “dangs ba.”

<sup>762</sup> Reading “bya” for “pya.”



(2.2.5.1) Fifth, as for resting in the “Thusness” of one’s own way, not straying into whatever memories and discursive thought, one rests in the unsupported knowledge in the state of bliss, emptiness and luminosity. In addition, from the *Mother* it is stated that all things are equal through the equality of the perfection of wisdom.

*drug pa ‘du shes mi ‘jug par rang sor ‘jug pa ni / sems nyid ye nas chos nyid ji bzhin par gnas pa’i ngang la hrig ge ye re yang yid la mi dmigs pa’i don la ‘jog pa yin no //*

(2.2.6.1) Sixth, as for resting in one’s own ground without entering into cognitive thinking, the mind itself is wide awake and lucid in a state of abiding in primordial *Dharmatā* exactly as it is, resting without mental referents (*mi dmigs pa’i don*).

*bdun pa gnyug ma ji bzhin par bzhag pa ni / chos nyid ye nas gnas pa chos kyi dbyings de la blo gya gyur med pas khyab bdal chen po’i ngang la rtsol sgrub med par rang lugs su lhan ne ‘jog pa yin no //*

(2.2.7.1) Seventh, as for resting in how it is innately, *Dharmatā* is the primordially abiding *Dharmadhātu*, because the mind is without flickering (*gya gyur med pa*) in it [that realm], one rests relaxed in one’s own way without exertion in the state of great pervasive display.<sup>763</sup>

*de yang sdud pa las / ‘di ni nam mkha’i khamdang dbyer med bcad du med / ces so // de ltar sems ngos zin pa’i ngang la ‘jog shes na / yon tan gyi rtsal / nyams {565/119} dang drod rtags la sogs pa shugs la ‘byung ngo //*

In addition, in the *Samcayagātha* it is stated: “This is the realm of space, inseparable and indivisible.”<sup>764</sup> In this way, when one understands how to rest in the state of identification, the

<sup>763</sup> This might be a misprint for “*khyab gdal chen po*,” which is a somewhat more common phrase generally meaning “great all-pervasiveness” or “utterly pervasive.”

<sup>764</sup> This is probably a reference to the section of the *sdud pa* which reads: “*nam mkha’i khamdang ma tshungs ted*

expressive qualities (*yon tan gyi rtsal*), experience, signs of accomplishment, and so forth, occur of their own accord.

*gsum pa byin brlabs lus sems dang phral ba'i gdams ngag ni / dang po skyabs 'gro sems  
bskyed / mchod pa rgya chen po 'bul / bla ma la gsol ba gdab /*

(3.1) Third, as for the oral instructions of the transmission for separating body and mind. First, you go for refuge, generate the mind, present the great offering, and supplicate the lama.

*de nas kag gis langs la / rkang pa gnyis gshib ste lag pa gnyis thal mo sbyar nas / lus  
krim gyis bsgrim te / shes pa gzhan du yengs su mi gzhug par / lus sems la gzhig 'brel 'di ltar  
btang ste /*

Then, as for suddenly arising,<sup>765</sup> having crossed both legs and joined the two palms of your hands, concentrating by straightening your body, your consciousness is not engaged in wandering elsewhere, and the connection between your body and mind (*sems*) is severed and let go of in this way.

*lus 'di gzugs lbu ba lta bu tshor ba sgyu ma lta bu / 'du shes chu zla lta bu / 'du byed  
smrig sgyu lta bu / rnam par shes pa rgu shing lta bu /*

[As for] this body, form is like a bubble, feeling is like an illusion, cognitions are like the moon in water, karmic formations are like colored illusions, consciousness is like many horses.

*mi rtag pa / sdug bsngal pa / mi gtsang ba / chu ser rnag khrag gi rkyal pa / rus pa'i du  
ma bu / rtsa dang chu rgyus kyi drwa ba lta bu la sogs pa mi rtag 'gyur ba'i mtshan nyid ma  
gtogs pa las / brtan zhing ther zug pa / yid brtan du rung ba gang yang mi 'dug /*

---

*byer med gcad du med*" (*Bod skad* 12)

<sup>765</sup> This is a provisional reading for "kag gis langs." I am interpreting it as a description of the 'pho ba practice of Chöd.

[This body is] impermanent, a thing of suffering; it is like a bag of shit, piss, pus, and blood, [and] pieces of bone, a web of channels, ligaments and nerves, nothing other than characteristic of impermanence and change; it is not in any way reliable (*yid brtan du rung ba*).

*sems ni rang bzhin gyis mya ngan las 'das pa'i chos nyid 'od gsal bar 'dug pas // lus  
sems phral la skye ba med pa'i ngang du bzhag dgos snyam du bsam la / rang gi sems 'di rkang  
mthil gnyis su thig le la hril bsdus la / de nas mas yar hril li li drangs la / lte bar dar gcig bzung /*

As for mind, by its own nature, it is the luminous *Dharmatā* of nirvāṇa. When thinking the required thought, the separated body and mind rest in the state of birthlessness; this mind of one's own is completely concentrated in the drop in the two soles of the feet; then, as it is being drawn completely from the bottom to the top, it is held for a moment at the navel.

*de nas snying gar drangs / de nas lce steng du drangs la dar gcig bzung / de nas spyi bo  
tshangs pa'i bu ga phye ba'i nang na yar rlung sems 'dres pa de / mda' rgyangs gang tsam du  
rgyang 'phags la nam mkha'i mthongs su phyal gyis btang / zhen med du btang / yan par thong /  
lhug par thong / rang dgar khyab bdal du stong song / rig pa thod rgal rten med du thong /*

Then it is drawn up to the heart centre. Then it is drawn up above the tongue and held for just a moment. Then, the winds and mind are brought upward into the opening of the orifice of the brahmā aperture and mixed together, [and] released by the abdomen into the expanse of space (*nam mkha'i mthongs*), raised up (*'phags la*) the distance of an arrow's distance. It is released without clinging. Release it to move freely! Release it loosely! Empty it of natural (*rang dgar*) pervasive display! Release your awareness (*rig pa*) for the direct crossing without support.

*'brel med du thong / shes pa bde phril phril bshig / dga' yal yal / bag dro 'ur 'ur / nam  
mkha' dang shes pa krug {566/120} 'dres pa'i ngang la rig pa stong sang nge / shes pa gsal  
seng nge bzhag go //*

Release it without connection. Your consciousness is demolished by vibrations (*phril phril*) of bliss. Joyfully relaxing (*dga' yal yal*). Warmth (*bag dro*) increases. In a state where your consciousness is mixed vigorously (*krug 'dres pa*) with space, awareness (*rig pa*) is pure emptiness. Your consciousness rests in transparent luminosity.

*de ltar bzhag pas rig pa zin pa'i rtags su / 'phar ba dang / 'dar ba dang / dngang ba<sup>766</sup>  
dang / rgod pa dang / 'phyong ba dang / 'drog pa dang / skad sna tshogs 'don zhing bla ma'i  
drung du ci mnyes 'byung ste nyams skyes pa'o //*

Then, through resting, the indications of the grasping of awareness (*rig pa*) are throbbing, quivering, fright, agitation, defensiveness (*'phyong ba*),<sup>767</sup> shock, the uttering of various sounds, and becoming supple in the presence of the teacher,<sup>768</sup> whatever delight occurs in the presence of the teacher; these are the experiences that occur.

*nyams skyes na spyod lam rnam bzhi gang la yang de nyid ngang la rgyun du 'jog pa yin  
no //*

When experiences occur, there are four types of paths for practice; whatever the case, it is the continual placement in the state of thatness.

---

<sup>766</sup> Reading “*dngang ba*” for “*dngang pa*.”

<sup>767</sup> If “*'phyong ba*” is a derivative of “*skyong ba*,” as suggested in Das.

<sup>768</sup> This is a provisional translation of “*bla ma'i drung du ci mnyes 'byung*.”

*de nyid chos nyid du thag chod pa lta ba'o / de'i ngang la ma yengs pa bsgom pa'o //  
de'i ngang las thams cad chos nyid du 'khyer shes pa spyod pa'o'<sup>769</sup> // chos thams cad gcig tu  
rtogs shing mnyam par gyur pa 'bras bu'o //*

Thatness is the view of resolve (*thag chod pa*) in *Dharmatā*. It is the undistracted meditation in that state. In that state, you experience consciousness (*shes pa*) that carries everything into *Dharmatā*. You understand all things as one and effects as being equal.

*de ltar lus la na tsha dang sdug bsngal chags sems gang byung yang de ltar lam du  
'khyer shes par bya'o //*

Then, illness in the body and suffering arises from such a mind of desire; in that way, moreover, one should know to carry it on the path.

*bzhi pa sgom pa gnas lugs la bzhag pa ni / dang po bla ma'i gdams ngag thob cing byin  
rlabs zhugs par byas nas / bsgom pa'i gnas ni / dur khrod dam / nags tshal chen po'am / 'chad  
gseb bam / shing gcig gam / re rul lam / lha khang rnying pa'm / mtsho dbus sam / gangs sam /  
lha 'dre che ba'i sar phyin nas /*

(4.1) Fourth, as for the meditation that is resting in the way things are, (4.1.1) first one receives the oral instructions and blessings from the guru. A place of meditation is a place where many gods and spirits have arrived: a charnel ground, or a large forest, or a blocked alleyway,<sup>770</sup> or a lone tree, or a rotten goat,<sup>771</sup> or an old temple, or in the middle of a lake or snow.

<sup>769</sup> Missing “o”; reads “*spyod pa*” rather than “*spyod pa'o*.”

<sup>770</sup> This is a provisional reading for “*'chad gseb*.”

<sup>771</sup> This is a provisional reading for “*re rul*.”

*bsgom pa ni / shes pa sngar gyi bsgrim pa de lhod kyis glod la / cog<sup>772</sup> gis bzhag go / de  
yang ma jo mo'i zhal nas / krim gyis bsgrim la lhod kyis glod / shigs kyis bshigs la phyal gyis  
thong / lhugs kyis klug la cog gis zhog / bsgom pa'i bzhags de na yod / ces gsungs pas /*

As for meditation, with the earlier concentration of (*shes pa*) understanding released by loosening, one leisurely/completely rests. Furthermore, from the mouth of the noble Mother [that is, Machik Labdrön] it is said: “Loosen by loosening [what has been] tightened by tightening; abandon by leveling out [what has been] destroyed by destroying; relax by freely resting [what has been] continued by continuing.”<sup>773</sup>

*lugs la lugs su mi bzung par sog phon thag pa chad pa ltar / 'bol le / shig ge / re dogs  
med par bzhag / sems rang lugs su nyam nga dang bag tsha ba med par bzhag go / /*

With regard to the system, not grasping the system as if cutting a rope of a bunch of accumulations; relaxed; comfortable; resting without hopes and fears. The mind rests without intimidation and anxiety in its own way.

*tshogs drug gi ngang la ji ltar snang yang snyems med rtog pa med par bzhag go / /*

One should rest, without pride and without discursive thought, in whatever way the six-fold group (of sense consciousnesses) appear.

*yid {567/121} gnyis the tshom med par bzhag / shes pa bde lhan ni / gsal sing nge 'jog  
pa yin no / /*

The mind rests without dualistic doubt. As for the understanding of relaxing in bliss, it is the resting in pure luminosity (*gsal sing nge*).

---

<sup>772</sup> Das: “*cog pa*” means “leisurely”; ID: “*cog*” is archaic for “*kun*” or “*ma lus*.”

<sup>773</sup> This is a conjectured reading: I have been unable to find any meaning anywhere for the term “*klug*,” but given the logic of the previous phrases, I assume it means something in consonance with “*lhugs*” (also a difficult term to translate in this context), which I am reading as “continued.”

*de ltar bzhang pa'i byin rlabs kyis / lha 'dre gdug pa can ma bzod par tsho 'phrul sna  
tshogs 'byung ste / de ltar byung na sems zin nas byin brlabs yod pa'i rtags yin no //*

In that way, through the blessing of resting, various unbearable (*ma bzod pa*) magical displays (*tsho 'phrul*) of deities, spirits and malevolent ones occur. In that way, having grasped the mind in the occurrence, it is a mark of the existence of the blessing.

*gal te cho 'phrul byung ba la / 'dar yeng byung na sems yengs ba'i rtags yin pas / de ma  
thag tu lus lha 'dre la ltos pa med par byin la / sems lhod kyis lhod la / A ma rtsir shes pa rgya  
bskyed la bzhang go //*

If apparitions arise, then shivering and distraction occur [and] it is the mark of a distracted mind. Subsequently (*de ma thag tu*), one gives one's body to the deities and spirits without concern; relaxing by relaxing the mind, one rests in heightened understanding the essence of the Mother.

*nyam nga bag tsha med par bzhang / snyems dang rtog pa med par bzhang / re ba dang  
dogs pa med par<sup>774</sup> bzhang go // yang na sems ngos 'dzin gyi bzhang thabs bdun shes par byas la  
bzhang go //*

Rest without intimidation or anxiety, rest without pride and conceptual thinking, rest without hope or fear. Then again, rest understanding the seven methods of the mind identification rest.

*de ltar bzhang pas nyams dga' yal / sems bde lhod / bag dro 'ur / shes pa bde sing / blo  
bde 'bol gyis 'gro 'o // nges pa'i shes pa lhag gis skye'o //*

By resting in that way there is the experience of joyfully relaxing (*dga' yal*); the mind is blissfully relaxed (*sems bde lhod*); warmth is increased; understanding is blissfully clear; the

---

<sup>774</sup> Reads "med bar."

mind (*blo*) becomes blissfully relaxed. Definitive understanding is produced in full view (*lhag gis*).

*de tsam na bdud chos nyid du chod / rnam rtog ye shes su 'char / dug lnga sman du 'gyur  
/ ltaṅ ngan gyang du len pa zhes bya'o //*

It is said that to that extent, Negative Forces are cut in *Dharmatā*, discursive thinking appears as primordial wisdom, the five poisons change into medicine, bad omens are accepted as riches.

*yang bsgom pa'i dus su nyam nga dang bag tsha med par chos nyid kyi ngang la bzhaḡ  
par / lha 'dre'i thug chom dang / 'ur sgra dang / rdegs pa dang / 'then pa dang / sdigs pa dang /  
/ skad sna tshogs 'don pa dang / gzugs sna tshogs ston pa dang / ri bsnyil ba dang / de ltaṅ cho  
'phrul sna tshogs ston pa 'ong ste / de tsa na cho 'phrul sna tshogs ji ltaṅ snang yang sems nyid  
rang snang du shes par bya'o //*

As well, at the time of mediation, resting in the state of *Dharmatā* without anxiety or fear [from] the dreadful noise of deities and spirits,<sup>775</sup> with thunderous noise, beating, dragging (*'then pa*), threats, uttering various expressions, manifesting various forms, and crumbling mountains, and various supernatural manifestations become displayed like that. Then, in whatever way various apparitions appear, you should understand them as projections from your own mind.

*de nyid dge sbyor gyi bskul 'debs pa yin pas / lus la lus su mi bzung / lha la lhar mi bzung  
/ cho 'phrul la cho 'phrul du mi bzung / don chos nyid la shes pa gtad la nyam nga ba dang bag  
tsha med pa /*

Due to the encouragement of precisely that spiritual practice in *Dharmatā*, there is no grasping of the body as body, no grasping of the deity as deity, no grasping of the apparition as a

---

<sup>775</sup> “*Thug chom*” could also mean “overcoming contact.”



apparition; the focus of understanding is the meaning of *Dharmatā*, without intimidation or anxiety.

*snyems dang rtog pa med par sems rang lugs su shig {568/122} bshigs la / blo bde 'bol  
le / shig ge / sa le<sup>776</sup> / sing nge ba las yid rten med / 'brel med / spyod lam g-yas med des med du  
lhod de bzhag go /*

A mind (*sems*) without pride and conceptual thought overcomes through naturally eliminating [thought]; the rational mind (*blo*) is blissfully relaxed, comfortable, clear, and mental functioning (*yid*) is without support, without connection. Behavior is without a right side, [and] resting loosely, it does not exist.

*de ltar bzhag pas nyams dang rtogs pa lhan cig skyes pa'i rtags su / blo bde 'bol / shes  
pa bde phril / nyams dga' yal / lus sems bde seng / bag dro 'ur song ste /*

Because one rests in that way, the indications of experience and realization are co-emergent. The mind (*blo*) is blissfully relaxed, knowledge (*shes pa*) is completely happy, experiencing joyful relaxation, the body-mind is blissfully open, and warmth is increased.

*bro rdung snying 'dod / glu len snying 'dod / dkyu med dkyu snying 'dod / sngar ma byas  
pa'i spyod pa byed snying 'dod / sngar 'gro bar ma 'dod pa'i lha 'dre 'or<sup>777</sup> che sar 'gro snying  
'dod pa byung na / shes pa mi 'gegs par shugs 'byung la gtong ba yin no / /*

When there arises the desire to dance, the desire to sing a song, the desire to race even though there is no race, the desire to do things one has not done before, the desire to go to the place one has previously left to thank (*'or che*) the undesirable deities and demons, one's consciousness is spontaneously released into the unobstructed [state].

---

<sup>776</sup> I am reading this as an alternative form (or mis-spelling?) of “*gsal le*.”

<sup>777</sup> I am reading “*'or*” as archaic for “*'bor*.”

*rjes la rnal du lhan gyis phab la / lhod kyis klod la ma yengs par gong bzhin 'jog pa yin  
no / de tsam na 'dre lhar chod pa ma don<sup>778</sup> no /*

Afterward, when you descend into natural quiet, loosening by relaxing, you rest like before without distraction. At that time, there is not an aim to sever demons and deities.

*yang rang gi snying 'byin pa dang / khyod kyis chod dang bsgom 'di tshug min zer ba  
dang / khyod dus 'di tsa na 'chi zer ba dang / de la sogs pa mi snyan pa sna tshogs byung yang  
bden snyam par mi bya bar shes pa 'bol le shig ge btang la / A ma rtsir / blo rgyar bskyed la  
bzhag go // nyam nga dang bag tsha med cing snyems dang rtog pa med par bzhag go // log lta  
yang dag tu chod pa'i dus so //*

Moreover, it is said that this meditation on giving your own heart and dissecting yourself is not harmful; even if various unpleasant things occur such as it being said that you are dead at this time, and so forth, do not think of this as true; rather, consciousness is tranquil and released, it is the essence of the Mother, and you should rest in the vast mind (*blo*) that is generated. Rest without fear or anxiety, without pride or conceptual thought. It is the time of authentically severing erroneous views.

*yang rmi lam du cho 'phrul sna tshogs snyon pa 'ong ste / brag g.yang gi kha nas rbab la  
'dril la khad pa dang / gcong rong dang / nags 'dab dang / mtshor chud pa dang / chu chen po  
dang / me lce chen po dang / rlung nag 'tshub ma dang / ri nyil ba dang / rbab mang po dang /  
dong du bcug pa dang / shwa 'od<sup>779</sup> kyis khyer ba la sogs pa cho 'phrul sna tshogs pa'o //*

---

<sup>778</sup> In the text this looks like “*mdon*,” but I cannot find such a word in the dictionaries I have checked, so I am assuming it must be “*ma don*.”

<sup>779</sup> Reading “*shva 'od*” for “*shva 'ud*.”

Furthermore, the various apparitions in dreams will be denied. These various apparitions include (*la sogs pa*) a rock rolling down (*rbab la 'dril*) slowly (*khad pa*<sup>780</sup>) from the mouth of a rocky abyss, or a steep cliff, or a forest; being trapped in a lake, or a large [body] of water; an inferno; a tornado; a landslide; an avalanche; being put in a pit; and being carried away by a flood.

*yang mi mang pos ded pa dang / mtshon thogs pas gsod pa dang / gcan gzan*<sup>781</sup> *mang pos rmugs pa dang / byol song mang pos brdung ba dang / ri dvags kyi tshogs mang pos dang / bya dang / sha sbrang dang / nya dang / sbal lcong sa dang / {569/123} sdom dang / rtsangs pa*<sup>782</sup> *dang / rta dang / ba lang la sogs pas lus la gnod pa bskyal ba rmi nas / rmi lam bzang ngan ci yang 'ong bas gang la 'ang rnyog par mi bzung sems kyi 'khrul snang /*

Moreover, being chased by many people, and being killed by warriors, and being bitten by many carnivorous beasts, and being beaten by many animals, many hordes of herbivores, birds, meat-eating insects, fish, frogs, tadpoles, spiders, lizards, horses, cattle, and so forth, having dreamed of these bringing harm to your body, do not become agitated in any way whatsoever by whatever positive and negative dreams arise; they are merely the confused appearances of the mind (*sems*).

*sgom gyi bskul mar shes par byas la / nyam nga ba dang bag tsha ba med par chos nyid kyi ngang du snyem med rtog med du ci yang dran pas ma bzung*<sup>783</sup> *bar lhod kyis glod la bzhag /*

---

<sup>780</sup> Archaic.

<sup>781</sup> Reading “*gcan gzan*” for “*gcan zan*.”

<sup>782</sup> Reading “*rtsangs pa*” for “*rtsang pa*.”

<sup>783</sup> Reading “*bzung*” for “*pzung*.”

*rmi lam bzang ngan ci byung yang / rang gi sems kyi cho 'phrul / bag chags kyi gzugs brnyan*<sup>784</sup>  
yin /

When one has understood the motivation of meditative cultivation, without any pride and without any thought whatsoever in the state of *Dharmatā* without intimidation or anxiety, one rests in the loosened through relaxing not having grasped through recollection. Whatever good or bad dreams occur, again, they are the apparitions of one's own mind; the form of the habitual predispositions are lent.

*yang dag par gang yang*<sup>785</sup> *grub pa*<sup>786</sup> *med pas ji ltar yang sems rtog med kyi ngang du cho 'phrul rang zhi rang dag rang grol du blo'i snyems shigs kyis gshegs*<sup>787</sup> *la rig pa stong gsal du bzhag go //*

Because nothing whatsoever is established as ultimately true, just like apparitions in a state of mind that is non-conceptualizing are self-pacified, self-purified, self-liberated; having arrived at the destruction of intellectual pride (*blo'i snyems*), one rests in empty, luminous awareness (*rig pa*).

*des sems bde lhan / shes pa dga' yal / bag dro 'ur 'gro / de ltar rig pa nam mkha dag pa'i dkyil bzhin stong sangs kyis song ba'i dus su / snang ba 'dzin med du 'char ba yin no // rmi lam gyi rtog pa chos nyid du 'char ba'o //*

Through that, the mind (*sems*) is together with bliss. Consciousness (*shes pa*) joyfully relaxes. Warmth becomes increased. In that way, at the time of purification, awareness (*rig pa*)

---

<sup>784</sup> From “*rnyan pa*,” archaic for “*gyar ba*.”

<sup>785</sup> Reading “*yang*” for “*lang*.”

<sup>786</sup> Reading “*pa*” for “*ba*.”

<sup>787</sup> Reading “*gshegs*” for “*bshegs*.”

is empty like the center of pure space; its appearance is apparent without grasping. The comprehended dream appears as *Dharmatā*.

*yang snying mi dga' ba dang / 'gro 'dod pa dang / tshig pa za ba dang / rnal mar sdod*<sup>788</sup>  
*snying mi 'dod pa dang / dge sbyor byed snying mi 'dod pa dang / sems rtog pa du ma la 'phro*  
*zing rang lugs su mi gnas pa byung na / shes pa yengs /*

In addition, if there are occurrences such as that of an unhappy heart, or the desire to go [somewhere], or irritation, or the absence of the desire to remain in reality, or the absence of the desire to do spiritual practices, or there is a proliferation of thoughts in one's mind (*sems*), or one does not abide in one's own natural state, then one's consciousness wanders.

*sems la bdud zhugs pa yin pas / de zlog pa ni / sems nyid rang yin pas bdud log na grub*  
*pa med par shes par byas la / sems gnas lugs kyi ngang la shes par rang lugs su lhan gyis*  
*bzhag*<sup>789</sup> //

Because there are Negative Forces in the mind (*sems*), as for reversing them,<sup>790</sup> because they are your own mind, when you reverse them, you should understand them as not actually existing (literally “are not established”); while in the state of mental abiding, consciousness rests quietly in its own way.

*de ltar bzhag pas sems rtog med mnyam pa nyid kyi ngang du rang grol song nas shes pa*  
*bde seng / bag dro 'ur / nyams dga' yal 'gro / de'i dus su rnam rtog ye shes su 'char ba'o //*

---

<sup>788</sup> Reading “*sdod*” for “*sngod*.”

<sup>789</sup> reading “*bzhag*” for “*bzhab*.”

<sup>790</sup> “*zlog pa*” can also be translated as “exorcism” or “exorcising ritual.”

By resting like that, the mind (*sems*) without conceptualization having become liberated in the state of equanimity, consciousness is blissfully refreshed, warmth is increased, and delight fades away.<sup>791</sup> At that time, discursive thought arises as primordial knowledge (*ye shes*).

*rang gi yid la 'dod yon gyi snang ba dga' mi dga' dang / legs nyes dang / bstod smad dang / bzang ngan dang / yin min dang / bde {570/124} sdug dang / dgra gnyen dang / nor rdzas dang / bdag gzhan dang / re dogs dang / gstang rmed dang / nyam nga bag tsha<sup>792</sup> ji byung yang thams cad rang gi sems su shes par byas la / sems rten med rang grol chen po'i ngang du cog bzhag pas thams cad dbyer med du grol gyis 'gro /*

The appearance of desired qualities in your own own mind as joyous or non-joyous, beautiful or ugly, praiseworthy and blameworthy, good or bad, are or are not, happy or sad, enemies or relatives, possessions or materials,<sup>793</sup> self or other, hope or fear, clean or contaminated, whatever fears and anxieties arise, they are all understood as your own mind. The mind without support, because it is freely resetting in a state of great liberation, becomes liberated in undifferentiated wholeness.

*de tsam na gnyis snang thams cad gnyis med du chod pa 'ong / yang gong bzhin bsgoms pas yi dam ltas lung ston pa dang / lha dang lha mo'i<sup>794</sup> tshogs kyis mchod pa 'bul ba dang / 'dod yon gyi rnam pa legs pa thams cad ston pa dang / dngos dang rmi lam du yid du 'ong ba thams cad ston pa dang / nyams dang drod rtags sna tshogs<sup>795</sup> su ston pa byung yang dga' pa'i sems mi bya bar thams cad chos nyid kyi rol par shes par bya /*

<sup>791</sup> This is a provisional reading for “*nyams dga' yal 'gro*.”

<sup>792</sup> Reading “*bag tsha*” for “*bag cha*.”

<sup>793</sup> This is a provisional reading for “*nor rdzas*,” which is often used as a phrase referring to wealth, but obviously here should be translated as a dyad.

<sup>794</sup> Reading “*lha ma*” as “*lha mo*.”

To that extent, all dualistic appearances come to be determined as non-dual. Moreover, as mentioned above, through meditative cultivation there are predictions through looking at the personal deity, and making offerings by the feast of male and female deities; all the excellent types of desired qualities are displayed, and all things that could occur in the mind as real things or dreams are displayed, as well as various experiences and signs of progress become indicated, all inactivity of a joyful mind (*sems*) should be understood as the play of *Dharmatā*.

*nyams su len pa la yon tan gyi skul 'debs tsam du shes par byas la / chos nyid gsal ba chen por blo rgya bskyed nas / rig pa stong gsal gyi ngang du sems ma g.yos par sal le sing nge<sup>796</sup> bzhag go //*

Having understood [things] to be merely inspiring qualities to incorporate into your practice,<sup>797</sup> and having generated the vast mind of luminous *Dharmatā*, awareness (*rig pa*) is the mind (*sems*) in the state of emptiness and luminosity, unagitated, resting brilliantly and purely.

*des nyams la bog thon nas bde stong gi ngang la rig pa rtsa bral du gnas pa dang / de tsa na dga' brod kyi bdud skye med du chod pa'o //*

That one, having spiritual progress (*bog thon*) in experience, awareness (*rig pa*) in the state of bliss and emptiness dwells separated from a root, and at that time, the birthless Joyous Negative Force is severed.

*yang rigs drug gi snang ba sna tshogs la mtho ris gsum bde sdug gi cho 'phrul sna tshogs pa dang / ngan<sup>798</sup> song gsum gyi dukkha'i cho 'phrul sna tshogs su snang ba'i tshe thams cad rang gi sems kyi cho 'phrul du shes par byas la / ye gdod ma nas ma byung /*

---

<sup>795</sup> Reading “*sna tshogs*” for “*sna chogs*”

<sup>796</sup> Reading “*sing nge*” for “*sing de.*”

<sup>797</sup> This is a provisional translation.

Furthermore, when one understands the various apparitions of pleasure and pain in the three higher levels in the various appearances of the six classes, and the entire life of appearances of various apparitions of suffering of the three lower migrations are apparitions of one's own mind; they do not occur from primordiality.

*ma skyes pa'i snying por rang bzhin gyis 'od gsal bar shes par byas la / nyam nga dang / bag tsha dang / snyems dang / rtog pa<sup>799</sup> med par sems rang lugs su rnal ma'i steng du bzhag pas / shes pa bde stong gsal ba'i rang bzhin du gnas pa'i tshe nyon mongs pa'i bdud rang grol du chod do //*

When one understands luminosity through one's unborn essential self-nature, by resting the mind in its own way without intimidation, anxiety, pride, or concepts, at the time of dwelling in one's own nature of bliss, emptiness and luminosity, consciousness is decisively liberated [from] the Negative Forces of mental afflictions.

*de yang yum chen las / rigs kyi bu 'am rigs kyi bu mo gang zhig gis shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'di 'dzin pa dang / 'chang pa dang / klog {571/125} pa dang / kun chub par byed pa dang / tshul bzhin du yid la byed pa de ni / dam grog na 'dug gam / g.yang<sup>800</sup> dang / bya skyibs dang / gcong rong du 'dug kyang rung ste / bdud kyi phyogs la nyam nga ba dang bag tsha ba med do //*

Furthermore, from the Great Mother, such sons and daughters grasp the Prajñāpāramitā, and retain [it], and read it, and create total enlightenment (*kun chub par byed pa*), and create the mind appropriately (*tshul bzhin du yid la byed pa*); as for that (mind), being in a narrow ravine,

---

<sup>798</sup> Reading “ngan” for “dan.”

<sup>799</sup> Reading “rtog pa” for “rtog ba.”

<sup>800</sup> Reading “g-yang” for “g-yangs.”



or an abyss (*g.yang*), or a bird shelter (*bya skyibs*), or being in a narrow crevasse (*gcong rong*), is also appropriate; in the direction of Negative Forces without intimidation and anxiety.

*de ci'i phyir zhe na / snyems med pa'i phyir ro / zhes pa dang / yang phyi stong pa nyid  
mi dmigs pa'i tshul du bsgom par bya'o // zhes so //*

It is said that, if one asks why that is, it is because of pridelessness, and moreover previously it was said, one should meditate on emptiness in a non-conceptual manner.

*de ltar snang ba ma 'gag pa'i cha nas bde sdug dang cho 'phrul ci byung ba thams cad  
la / nyam nga ba dang bag tsha ba<sup>801</sup> med par bsgom pa gnas lugs la bzhag nas nyams su blangs  
pas / snang ba thams cad chos nyid kyi grogs dang rtsal du 'char ba'o //*

In that way, any pleasurable or painful apparitions arising whatsoever from the perspective of unobstructed appearances, your meditation will be without fear and apprehension because you have gained experience having rested in the way things are (*gnas lugs*), all appearances are allies and dynamic manifestations of *Dharmatā*.

*gal te bsgoms pas skyon byung na / sgom gyi skyon bying rgod gnyis yin te / de'ang bying  
pa ni / 'byung ba'i bying rtags / bar chad kyi bying rtags so //*

If faults occur through meditative cultivation, then there are both sinking and agitation faults of meditation. Moreover, as for sinking, there is the sign of occurrence sinking [and the] sign of interference sinking.

*de la 'byung pa'i bying rtags / lus lci la shes pa mi gsal na sa'i bying rtags yin / shes pa  
mi gsal la rngam zhing 'gro<sup>802</sup> 'dod na rlung gi bying rtags yin / sems nyog la mgo na / drod che  
rngul byung na me yi bying rtags yin /*

---

<sup>801</sup> Reading “*bag tsha ba*” for “*bag cha ba*.”

<sup>802</sup> Reading “*'gro*” for “*'kro*.”

As for that, the sign of occurrence sinking, when there is unclear knowledge (*shes pa*) in a heavy body, it is the sign of ground sinking. When there is desire for exciting migration in unclear knowledge (*shes pa*), it is the sign of wind sinking. When there is more heat in the head with mental defilements and sweat occurs, it is the sign of fire sinking.

*de ltar 'byung ba bzhi gang gis bying yang / kog gis langs la / lus bsrang / rkang pa gshib / lag pa spyi bor*<sup>803</sup> *thal mo sbyar te / phyi lus kyi 'byung ba bzhi nang gi 'byung ba bzhi la bstim / phyi nang gi 'byung ba bzhi gnyis su med par bstim /*

In that way, by whatever of the four occurrences, it is sinking; in addition, suddenly (*kog gis*) arising, a straight body, legs aligned, the hands at the crown of the head with the palms joined, the four elements of the outer body and the four elements of the inner body will be merged. The four elements of the outer and inner bodies are merged without duality.

*sems nam mkha' la phyad kyis btang la / shes pa rten med rig pa yul med / rtog med rang gsal chen po'i klong du gsal sing nge bzhag pas bying ba sangs kyis 'gro ba yin /*

The mind being continuously released in space, knowledge (*shes pa*) is without support, awareness (*rig pa*) is without object. Non-conceptuality is one's own expanse of great luminosity; the sinking by resting in pure luminosity is the migration through enlightenment.

*de yang yum las / sa ni chu la med cing mi dmigs so // sa ni gzugs kyi nang na med cing mi dmigs so // sa ni gzugs kyi bar na med cing mi dmigs so // zhes pa dang / yang / chos nyid ni sems la gnas so // {572/126} nam mkha ni ci la yang mi gnas so // sems nyid ni nam mkha' la gnas so // zhes pa dang / nam mkha' rnam par bsgom pa ni shes rab kyi ha rol tu phyin pa bsgom*<sup>804</sup> *pa'o // zhes so // de ltar bying ba las bsal nas shes pa rang lugs su phab la lhan gyis bzhag go //*

---

<sup>803</sup> Reading “*spyi bo*” for “*sbyi bo*.”

In addition, from the Mother it is said, “The ground lacking water is inconceivable. The ground lacking internal form is inconceivable. The ground lacking intermediate form is inconceivable.” In addition it is said, “*Dharmatā* is a place in the mind. Space is not a place anywhere. The mind itself is a place in space.” And it is said, “the visualization of space is the meditative cultivation of the *prajñāpāramitā*.” Likewise, having eliminated sinking activities, knowledge (*shes pa*) descends into its own mode and one rests quietly.

*gnyis pa yi dwags kyi byings rtags ni / gnyid che / shes pa nyog / yang na snying mi dga’  
sems rang bzhin du mi gnas / dbugs rngams pa ‘byung ngo / /*

Second, the signs of hungry ghost sinking are: deep sleep, sluggish consciousness, or alternatively, an unhappy heart, a mind that is not abiding in its own self-nature, and gasping for breath.

*de la bla ma la gsol ba gdab / skyabs su ‘gro ba bya / lus dang / nad dang / rtog pa thams  
cad ‘dre la byin la / ya nga ba’i sar lus gcer bur phyung ste mchong rgyug bya / lus gcu / smyeng  
/ bskum / zlog sbyong dran tshad byas pa’i rjes la lus sems dad dal byas pas shes pa lhan gyis  
‘gro / de ni bying ba bcos pa’o / /*

Then, you should entreat your lama and go for refuge. In giving all body and illness and thought to the spirits, you should discard your naked body in a dreadful place, you should jump and run, turning your body around, ---,<sup>805</sup> bending, training in reverse. After whatever has been thought, through slowly building one’s body, mind and faith, one’s consciousness becomes quiet. It will treat the mental sinking.<sup>806</sup>

---

<sup>804</sup> Reading “*bsgom pa*” for “*psgom pa*.”

<sup>805</sup> The next term is either “*smyed*” or “*smyeng*”; thus far, I have not been able to learn of a translation for either of these terms, so I have merely marked its position here.

<sup>806</sup> This is a provisional translation.

*bsgom skyon gnyis pa rgod pa ni / sems rang lugs su mi gnas par shes pa 'phror 'ong / de  
la gnyen po shes bzhin gyi bya ra btang ste / 'phro ba'i mkhan po la bltas pas / mkhan po rang gi  
sems su 'dug pa rang gis ngos zin pa dang / tur gyis dran pa thams cad phyal gyis btang / lhug  
gis klugs la cog gis bzhag /*

There are two types of distraction in defective meditation: in a mind (*sems*) that is not abiding in its own way, consciousness (*shes pa*) will wander. The antidote to that is to send a vigilant watcher. Through having seen the master wanderer, one self-recognizes the master as present in one's own mind, and everything is suddenly recalled and flattened. One rests freely through relaxing by loosening.

*shes pa kha nang du bltas la / yid drang med kyi ngang la lhan gyis bzhag / des ma zhi na  
ji tsam 'gro'<sup>807</sup> nus pa lta ste / phyi nang thams cad la 'phror gzhug go // de ltar btang bas slar  
'gro sa ma rnyed par shes pa lhan gyis 'gro ba yin no //*

Consciousness (*shes pa*) having looked inwards, the mind (*yid*) rests quietly in the state without recollection. If one is not tranquil through that [exercise], look only as long as one is capable of proceeding, engaging in wandering with regard to all internal and external things. Through having let go in that way, later, when the consciousness does not find a destination, one will proceed serenely.

*bying rgod gnyis skyon gang che na bying bskyon che / ci'i phyir na / bying ba gti mug  
shas che / rgod pa ye shes shas che bas so // des na gnas lugs ngo sprod kyi steng du lhan gyis  
bzhag pa'i'<sup>808</sup> che bas skyon thams cad yon tan du chod pa'o //*

Whichever of the two, sinking and agitation, has the most faults, sinking has the most faults. If [one asks] why, [it is because] sinking has a greater proportion of obscuration, agitation

---

<sup>807</sup> Reading "'gro" for "'bro."

<sup>808</sup> Reading "bzhag pa'i" for "bzhag pha'i."

is predominantly primordial knowledge (*ye shes*). That being so, in the above introduction of actuality (*tathātvā*), one severs the qualities of all faults through increasing resting quietly.

*gal te yul la shes pa 'phro ba thams cad rgong pa'i cha yin pas / dran pas 'dzin pa gal  
che bas / sems spros pa med {573/127} pa'i ngang du gnas par bya'o // de yang gzungs stong  
pa'o zhes pa'am mi stong ngo zhes spyod pa ni byang chub sems dpa'i spros pa'o // zhes so //*

If all proliferations are known (*shes pa*) as objects, it is because they are part of agitation. The mind should dwell in the state without any elaboration because it is more important to grasp through mindfulness. In addition, it is said that form is emptiness or it is said [that it is] not empty; as for conduct, it is the elaboration of bodhisattvas. Thus [it] is taught.

*de nas gnas lugs spros pa med pa'i don la yengs med du nyams su blang ngo // lar 'gal  
rkyen gang byung ba'i dus su / chos thams cad rang gi lus la bsdu / lus sems la bsdu / sems chos  
kyi dbyings su btang ba ni gdams ngag yin no //*

Following that, gain experience without distraction in the meaning of actuality/*tathātvā* without proliferations. Generally, at the time of whatever adverse conditions occurring, all things are dissolved in one's own body, the body is dissolved in the mind, the mind is released in *Dharmadhātu*: that is the oral instruction.

*de ltar chos kyi dbyings las ma g.yos pa'i ngang la bzhag pas / rig pa zin nas bde lhan  
gyis 'gro / nyams myong thun mong ma yin pa skye'o / de ni sdug bsngal bde bar chod pa'o //*

In that way, through resting in the unwavering state of *Dharmadhātu*, having grasped enlightened knowing (*rig pa*), one becomes blissful and quiet. The experience that is generated is uncommon. It is bliss separated from suffering.

*de ltar bdud thams cad chos nyid du bcad cing bsgoms pas // drod rnam pa gsum 'byung  
ste / sbyor ba phyi'i drod lus yod du mi tshor ba dang na tsha dang bral ba 'byung / mtshan ma*

*nang gi drod dbugs phyi nang du rgyu ba mi tshor ba*<sup>809</sup> *dang rnam rtog mi skye bar ‘gyur /  
gsang ba byang chub sems kyi drod sems nyid de bzhin nyid de bzhin nyid kyi ngang du lhan ne  
song nas bde ba chen po rgyun chad med par skye’o / /*

In that way, all Negative Forces, through severance and meditation in Dharmatā, three types of warmth arise: [1] the combination of outer warmth, with no feeling at all in the body that arises apart from any illness; [2] the characteristic of inner warmth, with no external or internal feeling of the movement of breath and without the production of discursive thought; [3] the secret of the warmth of bodhicitta: the mind itself is tathātā; having reached relaxation in the tathātā state, great bliss is produced without interruption.

*de nas gsal stong gi don phyin ci ma log pa rgyud la skyes nas / rnam pa thams cad  
mkhyen pa nyid kyi ‘bras bu thob pa la tshogs med pa’o / /*

Following that, having produced in [one’s] continuum the unmistakable meaning/aim of luminosity and emptiness, one attains the result of omniscience<sup>810</sup> without [experiencing] hardship.

*de ltar nyams su blangs pas bar do ngang gis ‘byongs te / de yang rang bzhin gnas pa’i  
bar do da lta yin pas / dus ‘di nyid du goms par byas nas / bdud kyi bar chad thams cad nyams  
len gyi bskul ma’am / chos nyid kyi grogs su shes te /*

In that way, due to gaining experience, one is trained through the intermediate state; in addition, because it is now the naturally abiding intermediate state, having become familiarized at this very time, there is the encouragement of practicing all the hindrances of Negative Forces or understanding the assistance of Dharmatā.

---

<sup>809</sup> Reading “mi tshor ba” for “mi tsher ba.”

<sup>810</sup> Honorific for “shes pa” and “rtogs pa.”

*rgyun chad med par nyams su blangs pas / sems la rtog pa bzang ngan gang yang med  
par chos nyid kyi ngang las mi g.yo bar 'dug tsam na da lta'i bar de 'byongs pa yin no / /*

Because one gains experience in an uninterrupted continuum, one's mental realization, when just staying unmoved from the *Dharmatā* state without anything good or bad, is trained at present in the intermediate.

*don de ltar nyams su blangs tsa na / / des rmi lam gyi dus na rmi lam chos nyid du shes  
nas / gnyid sad pa ma tshor ba chos nyid spros bral gyi ngang la gsal {574/128} sing nge ba  
'dug na rmi lam gyi bar do 'byung ba yin no / /*

Having gained experience according to that meaning, due to that, at the time of dreaming, one recognizes the dream and *Dharmatā*. Unaware of waking from sleep, in the state of *Dharmatā* separated from proliferations, when pure luminosity is present, it is the occurrence of the dream intermediate state.

*de ltar goms pas 'gro mthud nas nyams su blangs pas 'chi kha'i dus su nad dam pos zin  
nas langs 'dug mi shes / snang ba ni ma nub / 'chi bar ni shes tsam na chod dgos pa yin pas /  
nyams kyi steng nas lcogs na dngos su bya / ma lcogs na yid kyi skyabs 'gro sems bskyed bya /*

By gaining experience through proceeding (*'gro mthud nas*) by familiarization in that way, having grasped illness tightly at the time of the moment of death, not understanding being awake, appearances do not disappear; at death, due to the necessity of severance when one has just understood, one should in actuality manage from above experience (*nyams kyi steng nas lcogs na*). If one cannot manage, one's mind (*yid*) should take refuge and generate mind (*sems*).

*gsol ba btab la lus mchod par 'bul / sems chos nyid kyi ngang nas chags med zhen med  
du / nyam nga bag tsha dang / the tshom yid gnyis med par / sgom la nyams myong / chos nyid*

*rang lugs kyi ngang la blo ma yengs par*<sup>811</sup> *bzhag / gang la yang snyems dang chags zhen med*  
*par chos nyid mi 'gyur ba'i ngang la blo lhan ne gnas pa la dbugs chad*<sup>812</sup> *na 'chi kha'i bar do*  
*'byongs pa yin no / /*

Making the offering of one's body in supplication, the mind (*sems*), from the state of *Dharmatā*, when it is without attachment, without clinging, without the dualistic mind of irritation and anxiety or doubt, is the experience of meditative cultivation. The mind (*blo*) rests undisturbed in a state of *Dharmatā* in one's own way. The relaxed mind (*blo*) in the unchanging *Dharmatā* state, without whatever pride, attachment and clinging, when there is cessation of breath at rest, one is trained for the intermediate state at the time of death.

*de nas dbugs chad ma thag tu rang bzhin gyi gnas lugs kyi don skye ba med pa'i ngo bo /*  
*sems can thams cad la 'char ba de ngos zin nas chos nyid kyi ngang la gnas / de la brtan pa thob*  
*tsam na / rang bzhin skye 'gags med pa'i dbyings nam mkha' lta bu'i ngang la sems rang sa zin*  
*par bya'o / / de'i ngang nas gzugs sku gnyis kyis gang la gang 'dul du don mdzad pa'o / /*

Following that, as soon as there is cessation of breath, without generating the meaning of actuality/*tathātvā* of one's own nature/self-nature, there is the self-identity/essence of birthlessness. Having recognized the appearance of all sentient beings, one dwells in the state of *Dharmatā*. Steadfast in that, at just the point of peak ability in that, one's own nature is the expanse without production or obstruction; the mind is in the state like space; one should hold one's own ground firmly. From that state, one performs the aim of subduing whatever through both form and body.

*des na srid pa'i bar do 'byongs pa yin te / mngal gyi grong khyer rgyun chad / 'khor ba*  
*chos nyid dul zlos pa'o / / de la ming btags na / ngal*<sup>813</sup> *sos / chad pa btang / dbugs phyin / bya ba*

<sup>811</sup> Reading "ma yengs pa" for "mi yings pa."

<sup>812</sup> Reading "chad" for "cha na."



*byas / byed pa byas / zag pa zad / khur bor / rang bzhin gyi don rjes su thob / aar han zhes bya'o*  
*// de rnams bsgom pa gnas lugs la bzhag pa'i gdams pa'o //*

Following that, one is trained in the intermediate state of possible rebirths. The city of the womb is interrupted; taming saṃsāra and *Dharmatā* is redundant (*zlos pa*). Characterized in that way [that is, as redundant, so too are], resting, cutting through and abandoning (*chad pa btang*), regaining one's breath, doing performances, doing actions, diminishing defilements, laying down burdens. Following the attainment of one's own natural aim, one is known as an "Arhan[t]." These are the instructions of meditative cultivation and resting in thatness.

*lnga pa lta ba bdud kyi spyod yul du ma shor ba'i gdams pa la gnyis te / bdud ngos bzung*  
*ba dang / bdud chos nyid du bcad nas lam du khyer ba'o //*

The instructions on the five views of not losing the object of the practice of Negative Forces are twofold: identifying the Negative Forces, and having severed the Negative Forces, taking [them] on the path.

*dang po la gnyis te / rtsa ba'i {575/129} bdud dang / yan lag gi bdud dang<sup>814</sup> / rtsa ba'i*  
*bdud la bzhi / phung po dang / lha'i bu dang / nyon mongs pa dang / 'chi bdag gi bdud do //*

The first is twofold: the root Negative Force and the branch Negative Force. The root Negative Force is fourfold: [of] the psychophysical aggregates, and [of] the son of gods, and [of] the mental afflictions, and [of] the lord of death.<sup>815</sup>

*yan lag gi bdud la bco brgyad yod de / byang chub bsgrub pa la mngon zhen gyi bdud /*  
*bar chad btang ba la cho 'phrul gyi bdud / thogs bcas dngos kyi bdud / thogs med yid kyi bdud /*

---

<sup>813</sup> Reading "ngal" for "dal."

<sup>814</sup> Reading "bdud dang" for "bdudnga."

<sup>815</sup> This is not the conventional list of Dūd according to Chöd, but is more in line with traditional Indic lists of *māra*.

*yon tan g.yeng ba'i bdud / nyams myong rloms sems kyi bdud / rig pa khu 'phrig gi bdud*<sup>816</sup> /  
*rnam rtog phra ba'i bdud / nga rgyal rloms sems kyi bdud / phrag dog gzhan smod kyi bdud /*  
*shes pa bying rgod kyi bdud / btang snyoms le lo'i bdud / zhe sdang khong khro'i bdud / 'dod*  
*chags log 'tsho'i bdud / shes pa g.yam khyer gyi bdud / yi mug gnya' gcog gi bdud / khol tse A*  
*'thas kyi bdud / kha gtogs 'byung po'i bdud do / /*

There are eighteen branch Negative Forces: the Negative Force of clinging to reality in the attainment of enlightenment; the Negative Force of apparitions in having let go of obstacles; the Negative Force of obstructive things; the Negative Force of unobstructed mind (*yid*); the Negative Force of distracted qualities; the Negative Force of prideful mind experience (*nyams myong rloms sems*); the Negative Force of apprehensive knowledge (*rig pa khu 'phrig*); the Negative Force of subtle consciousness; the Negative Force of prideful mind pride; the Negative Force of jealousy and criticizing others; the Negative Force of agitated and sinking knowledge (*shes pa*); the Negative Force of impartial laziness; the Negative Force of anger and aggression; the Negative Force of desire, attachment, and wrong livelihood; the Negative Force of knowledge (*shes pa*) carried later; the Negative Force of a broken neck and gloom;<sup>817</sup> the Negative Force of the solidification of servitude (*khol tse*); the Negative Force of the interfering spirits.

*gnyis pa bdud de dag chos nyid kyis lam du 'khyer ba ni / dbang po rab*<sup>818</sup> *kyis bdud gang*  
*byung nyam nga bag tsha med par rtog med mnyam pa'i ngang la bzhang go / /*

---

<sup>816</sup> Reading “*bdud*” for “*pdud*.”

<sup>817</sup> A provisional translation for “*yi mug gnya' gcog gi bdud*.”

<sup>818</sup> Reading “*rab*” for “*ra ba*.”

Second, as for taking the Negative Forces on the path through *Dharmatā*: whatever Negative Forces occur, the best faculties rest in the state of unconceptual equanimity without intimidation or anxiety.

*'bring gis tshor ba pos btsal te / bdud rang gi sems su shes / sems rang bzhin skye ba med  
pa de nyid kyis ngang du bzhag go //*

The mediocre know (*btsal*) through [their] senses; the Negative Forces are mentally understood (*sems su shes*); the mind rests in the state of thatness without generating one's own nature.

*dbang po tha mas / lus la gnod pa'i bgegs la ling gis byin la / sems dran med kyis ngang  
la yid la byar med par bzhag go /*

[Those with the] worst faculties completely offer [their] bodies to the harmful obstructors, inactively rest the mind in a state without recollection.

*de yang lus la lus su mi bzung / nad la nad du mi bzung / 'dre la 'drer mi bzung / bar  
gcod thams cad chos nyid kyis ngang du phyal gyis btang / cho ga<sup>819</sup> gis gzhog / shigs kyis bshig /  
'bol gyis gzhog / lhod kyis glod / lhugs kyis klug / stong sang nge<sup>820</sup> / bde 'bol le / gsal sing nge /  
ci yang yid la byar med pa'i ngang la bzhag go //*

Furthermore, with regard to the body, not grasping the body; with regard to illness, not grasping illness; with regard to spirits, not grasping spirits; all interferences are evened out by the flatness in a state of *Dharmatā*. Defined by the ritual manual, destruction through destroying, rest by becoming soft (*'bol gyis*), relax by loosening, blissfully relaxed, pure luminosity, whichever [occurs] rest in a state without activity in the mind.

---

<sup>819</sup> The blockprint isn't entirely clear here.

<sup>820</sup> Reading "sang nge" for "sad nge."

*de yang sdud pa las / shes rab ldan pas mnyam nyid gnas par shes par bya / zhes so / /  
des na sems nyid mnyam pa nyid kyi don {576/130} la ma yengs par gnas par bya'o / /*

In addition, in the *Samcayagātha* it is said, “through association with wisdom, it should be known as the equanimous place.”<sup>821</sup> That being so, mind itself (*sems nyid*) will be the unwavering place with regard to the goal of equanimity.

*de ltar gnas lugs kyi don la ma yengs par byas pas byin rlabs kyi rtsal dang nus pa  
'byung ste / nad pa lta bu la byin rlabs byed na / 'dre dang nad pa mi dmigs bar bsgoms la /  
gang na sar phyag gis byabs / phu btab / ma chil ma gdab / nad thams cad stong par bsam la /  
gang la yang ma grub cing dngos po med pa'i ngang la sems bzhang la / skyabs 'gro bya / gsol ba  
gdab / gnas lugs kyi ngang tshul du shes par bya'o / /*

In that way, the creative power (*rtsal*) and potential of blessings occur through unwavering effort toward the goal of thatness. When the one making the blessing is like a sick person, then spirits and sick people are meditatively cultivated as non-conceptual; having dusted by hand whatever place, one exhales one's breath (*phu btab*), one does not expel, does not cast off. When all illness is considered empty, when resting the mind in a state where nothing is established and things do not exist, one should go for refuge, one will supplicate; this should be known as the method for resting in thatness.<sup>822</sup>

*de ltar bdud chos nyid kyi ngang du bcad nas lam du khyer ba la / lta ba bdud kyi spyod  
yul du ma shor bar don chos nyid kyi spyod yul du gyur pa yin no / / shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin  
pa bdud kyi gcod yul las / nying tshoms chos kyi rtsa ba zhes bya ba / / bka' shes rab kyi pha rol  
phyin pas dgongs pa grol bsprul pa'i sku jo mo lab kyi sgron mas gsungs pa rdzogs so / / / /*

<sup>821</sup> The *sdud pa* reads: “*shes rab ldan te mnyam nyid gnas bar shes par bya*” (*Bod skad* 6).

<sup>822</sup> This is a provisional translation.

In that way, when the Negative Forces are carried on the path, having been severed in the state of *Dharmatā*, without losing the meaning of the praxis (*spyod yul*) of the Negative Forces, the view will be the praxis of *Dharmatā*. From the Chöd system of Negative Forces (according to the) *Prajñāpāramitā, The Quintessential Chapter, the Root of Things*. This completes the teaching by the liberated emanation body of the Noblewoman Lab kyi sgron ma on the intent of the *Prajñāpāramitā* instructions.

**Appendix Four: *Thun mong gi le lag brgyud***<sup>823</sup>

{130/576} *thun mong gi le lag brgyad pa bzhugs so //*

*The Common Eightfold Supplementary Section*

*bla ma dam pa rnam la phyag 'tshal lo // skyabs su 'gro dang mchod pa rgya chen dang  
// bem rig bral dang gdams ngag gdab pa dang // dam pa'i zhal gyi bdud rtsi 'di // sems can  
rnam la phan pa srid // 'on kyang skal ldan spyod yul yin // skal dman rnam la bsdigs mor  
che //*

I pay homage to the supreme gurus.<sup>824</sup> Going for refuge, making extensive offerings, separating matter and mind, requesting oral teachings, and elixirs from the supreme mouths,<sup>825</sup> these exist for the benefit of sentient beings. Nevertheless, this is the realm of practice for the fortunate ones. The unfortunate ones have great degradations (*bsdigs mor che*).

[First Section]

*dang por bla ma mnyes byed cing // dam tshig srung zhing sgrub brtson la // thog bab  
gdams ngag bstan par bya // bdud la rnam pa gnyis su 'byed // thogs bcas bdud dang thogs med  
bdud // 'on kyang snyems byed bdud las med // snang dang de ni stong pa la // yid kyi snyems  
byed ma zhugs na // bdud rnam ma lus sems su bcad // sems ni skye med dbyings su yal //  
bdud rnam thams cad sems las byung // sems ni ngo bo ma grub pa // snang dang srid dang  
lha dang 'dre // {131/577} ngo bo ma grub rang sar grol //*

---

<sup>823</sup> In *Gdams ngag mdzod*, Vol. 14 (1979): 130-40; Vol. 9 (1971): 576-86. The latter has the slightly different title of *Thun mong gi le lag brgyud [sic] pa*.

<sup>824</sup> This is explicitly plural: “*bla ma dam pa rnam*.”

<sup>825</sup> This could be read as a reference to Padampa Sangyé, “*dam pa'i zhal*”; however, I am choosing to read it as a reference to the previously-mentioned “supreme lamas.” Part of my reasoning for this decision is that the next line discusses this as provisional practice for beings who are not the fortunate ones to practice the Chöd described herein; partly because I think that Padampa would be more explicitly referred to if he was meant to be referenced.

First, when there is a decline in actions pleasing lamas, protecting vows, making effort at practice, the oral instructions should be taught. The Negative Forces are differentiated into two (*rnam pa gnyis su 'byed*), the Obstructive Negative Forces and the Unobstructive Negative Forces; however, these do not exist apart from the Negative Forces that Produce Pride. As for appearances, they are empty. When not engaged in producing a prideful mind (*yid*), the Negative Forces without exception are severed in the mind (*sems*). As for the mind (*sems*), unproduced, it vanishes into the (unproduced) expanse. All Negative Forces arise from the mind.<sup>826</sup> As for the mind, its essence is not established. Appearance and existence and deities and demons, their essence not established, are liberated on their own ground.

*sems kyi ngo bo der rtogs na // thog tu skyur ba man ngag yin // bla ma'i zhal las shes  
par bya // snang dang de ni stong pa la // shes pa 'khris med yan par byed // thad kar ma  
bsgom sems ma 'dzin // dbang po rgya yan lhug par bz'ag // rang la rang chas yin pa la //  
rang ngo shes pas snang srid rang //*

When that essence of mind is understood, it is the personal instructions of directly abandoning (*thog tu skyur*). It should be known from a lama's mouth. As for that with appearances, it is empty. Consciousness roams freely without direction (*'khris med*), the mind (*sems*) not thinking directly and not grasping, the carefree (*rgya yan*) faculties rest loosely. Through recognizing one's own face as a natural attribute to oneself, appearance and existence are oneself.

*dper na smrig rgyu chur mthong ba // thog tu phyin pas chu med bz'hin // lha dang klu  
dang nyams grib sogs // de thog bskyur bas yod mi srid // ci phyir rang gi sems yin pas // de na*

---

<sup>826</sup> This is similar to a statement in the opening of the *Bka' tshoms chen mo* (7/456): “*bdud kyi rtsa ba rang gi sems*,” “the root of Negative Forces is one's own mind.”

*snyem med lhug par zhog // chos kyis chos 'tshol ga la rnyed // ji ste 'tshol mkhan dngos ma grub //*

For example, seeing the fibers (*rgyu*) of dyed robes (*smrig*<sup>827</sup>) in water, by going directly [to them], it is like they were not in water [the dye is still present]. Because one directly abandons deities, nāgas, the taint from broken vows (*nyams grib*), and so forth, their existence is impossible. Why? Because they are one's own mind. Rest loosely without pride in that. Investigating things by things, how can they be discovered? Moreover, an investigator does not actually exist.

*E MA HO / rang las byung ba'i chos rnam la // chags dang 'dzin pa ngo mtshar che // rang la grub pas kun ma grub // bdag snang bar du kun kyang snang // sna tshogs bkag pas mi khegs so //*

How wonderful! Things come about from oneself. Attachment and grasping are a great wonder (*ngo mtshar che*). Everything that is self-established is not established. All appearances are mediated by what appears to me, not blocked by various obstructions.

*dper na rmi lam yul bzhin no // sad pa'i dus na mi snang bzhin // snyems dang bral bas gnyid sad 'dra // ma rig pa dang grub mtha'i blo // rang la bzhag nas gzhan du tshol // rang sems 'dre ru bzung nas ni // rang la rang 'jigs rang sdug pas // sems la yul du btags de 'khrul // rang sar bzhag pas grol bar nges // ma bcos bzhag pa de bzhin nyid kyi le lag ste dang po'o //*

For example, like objects in a dream. When one wakes up, it is like they did not appear. Because one is separated from pride, it is like one has woken from sleep. A mind of ignorance (*ma rig pa*) and tenets, having rested in oneself, should search elsewhere. As for one's own mind having embraced spirits, because of one's own fear and one's own unpleasantness in

---

<sup>827</sup> “*smrig*” is archaic for “*gos tshos ma*.”



oneself, the objective designation in the mind (*sems*) is the confusion. By resting on one's own ground, one will definitely be liberated/freed. The section of uncontrived resting and thusness is first.

[Second Section]

*yum sras gnyis la gdams pa zhus // zhus nas bdud la thogs rdzis byas // bdud dang lha  
gnyis gzhi gcig pas // mchod dang spong ba ga la srid // mi srid pa yi chos 'di yang // mi shes  
pa yi rang ngo shes // sems can sems la sangs rgyas thugs // mi srid snyam pa ye srid de // da  
lta nyid du gtan la dbab // nag po dang ni sol ba gnyis // gcig yin tha {132/578} dad ma yin  
no //*

The mother and her two sons received a request for advice on how it is possible to directly suppress Negative Forces, and, since both Negative Forces and deities are from a single ground, how it is possible to make offerings [to deities] and shun [Negative Forces]. [The answer that is given is:] The self-recognition of non-cognition (*mi shes pa*) is also an impossible thing (*mi srid pa yi chos*). The mind of a sentient being is the mind of a buddha. Thinking it is impossible, one determines immediately (*da lta nyid du gtan la dbab*) that it is primordially existent. As there is both black and charcoal, yet they are one and there is no separation [of black from charcoal].<sup>828</sup>

*de ltar rig pa'i rnal 'byor pa // sangs rgyas sems can de dang mtshungs // snyems med  
chos sku rgya mtsho 'dra // snyems ni de yi rlabs bzhin na // de ltar rig pa'i rnal 'byor pas //  
snyems dang snyems byed tha mi dad // brgyad khri bzhi stong chos rnams kyang // sems kyi  
bkra lag bkyi ba las // blo yi khyad kyis zab mi zab // 'byung ba theg pa rim dgu'o // dgu ru  
phye yang sems yin pas // sems las ma gtogs chos med pas // chos ni blo yi bsam de yin // chos*

---

<sup>828</sup> Charcoal necessarily has the property of blackness.

*la sangs rgyas re na 'chings // ci ste ye sangs rgyas phyir ro // dper na phyin zin lam mi dgos //  
sems nyid gdod nas dag pa la // stong dang zhi gnas bsgom mi dgos //*

In that way, it is the yoga of enlightened knowing. Buddhas are equivalent with sentient beings; lacking pride they are like the sea of *dharmakāya*. As for pride, it is like the waves of that [sea]. In that way, through the yoga of enlightened knowing, pride and that which produces pride are not separate. The 84,000 things, moreover, bind<sup>829</sup> the vibrancy of the mind (*sems*), distinguished by the mind as profound or not profound, they occur as the nine stages of vehicles. The division into nine, as well, is by the mind (*sems*); things do not exist (*chos med pas*) apart from mind (*sems las ma gtogs*); things are the mental thoughts (*blo yi bsam*). If each buddha is bound to things, how are there primordial buddhas? For example, a path is unnecessary for one who has retained having gone (*phyin zin*). Mind itself is pure from the beginning. Thinking of emptiness and calm abiding is unnecessary.

*zhi ni ye nas rang bzhin zhi // stong ni stong pas stong mi bsgom // snang dang stong du  
'dzin pa yi // phur pa bton pas dbyings su sleb // mi yis me sod mi srid pas // rtog pa gnyen pos  
ma gzhom par // bzhag pas grol bar the tsom med // dper na rnga ma'i mdud pa bzhin // nges  
par snang ba dngos yod na // shes pa<sup>830</sup> snang log mi srid do //*

As for peace, one's own nature is primordially peaceful. As for emptiness, because it is empty, there is no meditation on emptiness. Appearances and emptiness that are grasped,<sup>831</sup> one arrives in the expanse by having expelled (*bton*) them with a ritual dagger (*phur pa*).<sup>832</sup> Because

---

<sup>829</sup> Here I am reading “*bkyi ba*” as a variation on “*khyig pa*”; such an interpretation remains provisional.

<sup>830</sup> Reading “*shes pa*” for “*sheb*”; the line needs an extra syllable, therefore “*she ba*,” and thus far the only dictionary entry I can find for “*she pa*” (“*she ba*” not being in any dictionary I have consulted thus far) is in Das, who says it is mistaken and should be “*shes pa*.”

<sup>831</sup> I am reading the *yi* here as a non-case phrase connector marking contrariness.

<sup>832</sup> This passage might be suggesting an analogy to the Nyingma practice of *bsgral mchod*, or “liberation offering.”

it is impossible for a man to kill fire, a conceptual thought is not overcome by antidotes; by resting, one will indubitably be liberated. For example, like tying together cut grass, if things are definitely how they appear, the knowledge of erroneous appearances would be impossible.

*nges par sems 'di yod bden na // bde gshegs kun dang rang rang gi // ci ste mthong bar rigs pa la // sems kyi rang bzhin 'di 'dra zhes // sangs rgyas mthong bar mi srid do // dper na ri bong rwa bzhin no // btags pa tsam la chags pas 'ching // sngar yang bcings pas da dung 'chings // thar pa mi thob bar dor 'chings // de bas snang srid btags pa tsam // btags pa'i chos la yid ma chags // snang la ma chags rtag mtha' sol † / stong pa yid la ma byas pas // chad pa'i mtha' bsal re dogs bral /*

If this mind as definitive truly exists, how is it that all *sugata* and each individual have reasonable perceptions? [i.e. how can both types of perception be tenable?] Saying that nature of mind is like this, a buddha would be impossible to perceive. For example, it is like the horns of a rabbit, one is bound by attachment to mere labels. Because one was also previously bound, one is still bound. Not having attained liberation, one is bound in the intermediate state. Therefore, appearances and existence are mere labels. Do not attach the mind to labelled things. Not attached to appearances, dispel the extreme of permanence! † Because emptiness is not made in one's mind, dispelling the extreme of nihilism, one is freed from hope and fear.

*E MA HO // rtag tu ma btub dngos po med // chad du ma btub cir yang gsal // rang stong rang gsal mkhan po med par nges<sup>833</sup> // gnyen pos bzung du med pa'i {133/579} le lag ste gnyis pa'o //*

---

<sup>833</sup> Here the text departs from the seven-syllable metre.

How wonderful! There cannot be permanence without things; there cannot be nihilism with various manifestations. Inherent emptiness and inherent luminosity are definitely without an expert. The second section of the non-existence of grasping by an antidote.

[Third Section]

*yum sras gnyis kyi gdams ngag 'di // bdud kyi gcod yul zhes pa 'di // mkhas pa rnams kyi snying khrag yin // skal ldan rnams kyi rgyud 'grol yin //*

This is the personal instruction of the mother and her two sons. This is called the *Chöd System of Negative Forces*. It is the heart's blood (*snying khrag*) of experts. It is the liberated mental continuum of fortunate ones.

*nyen ni lta ba log pa che // dgra ni dam tshig nyams pa gnod // dug ni bdag 'dzin rtog pa che // des na gdams ngag don la ltos // sangs rgyas don la blta rgyu med // sems can don la rtog par mdzad // mi rtog pa la bsgom rgyu med // rtog pa'i rtsa ba chod par mdzad // 'di ka yin no bya ba med // gyi na tsam la bzhag par bya //*

As for danger (*nyen*), it is the greatest mistaken view. As for enemies, they are one's broken vows. As for poison, it is the greatest conceptualization of ego-clinging. Thus, look at the purpose of the oral teachings! Regarding buddhahood, there is nothing to see. Regarding sentient beings, one produces conceptualizations. Regarding unknowing there is nothing to visualize. One cuts through the root of conceptualization. It is exactly this! One should rest in simply an ordinary state without activity.

*snang ba'i chos 'di re zhig tsam // yang dag chos 'di blo las 'das // snyems thag bcad pas slar la snyems // de bas snyems byung ma gtso zhog // gces na dug sbrul ji bzhin no //*

These apparent things are just momentary. This actual thing is beyond the conceptual mind (*blo*). Having definitely decided about pride, pride reoccurs (*slar la snyems*). Thus, do not establish the occurrence of pride as principal! If held dear, it is just like a poisonous snake.

*phyal sa yan par lhug pa la // rtsis med pa ni spyod pa'i mchog // snang ba rtsis gdab  
ma byas na // de ni yang dag rtsi yis zin // brtsi bya ci shor ma tshor ba // des na zhal gyi  
gdams ngag gces // yang dag nyid la ched rtsol ba // dper na lam 'grul rgyab gyes bzhin //  
snang ba'i chos la mngon zhen pa // sems stong tsam la rloms sems<sup>834</sup> byed // de ni thogs med  
bdud kyis zin //*

In an even (*phyal*) place that is loose and unconstrained, without evaluation, when one does not evaluate appearances, it is the most excellent practice. As for that, capturing (*zin*) the actual through evaluation, one does not sense whatever escapes the act of evaluating. Thus, hold dear the personal oral instructions. Make effort on account of actuality (*yang dag nyid*). For example, it is like completely separating (*rgyab gyes*) the path and the traveller; clinging to the reality of apparent things, the mind creates an arrogant mind out of mere emptiness. As for that, it is the grasping of Unobstructed Negative Forces (*thogs med bdud kyis zin*).

*rang bdud rang las byung bar dgongs lags sam<sup>835</sup> // snang la ma chags stong ma bsgom /  
/ zla la ma dga' gcig pur sdod // rang gi yon tan brtags na skyon // dran pa sna tshogs gsob yin  
pas // yid ches ma bca' rnal 'byor kun // dran pa yid ches ma byas na // snyems med chos sku  
shugs las 'byung † / byas pa'i chos dang bsags pa'i nor // shi nas 'grogs pa kha rje kha // des  
na de lta gtan la dbab par rig // mi 'chi snyam pa cang<sup>836</sup> gda' yi // med na ci ste 'bad mi mdzad  
// rtsol ba dang bcas pa'i le lag ste gsum pa'o //*

---

<sup>834</sup> Reading “*rlom sems*” for “*rloms sems*.”

<sup>835</sup> This is a line of more than seven syllables, which is inconsistent with much of the text.

Is it thought that Negative Forces themselves arise from oneself? Not attached to appearances, not meditatively cultivating emptiness, remain alone without desire for a companion (*zla*). If one names one's own qualities, it is a flaw. Because various memories are superficial (*gsob*), everything is yoga practice without belief (*yid ches ma bca' rnal 'byor kun*). Memories, when not made through faith, arise without pride from the force of the *dharmakāya*. † Having died, one's manufactured things and accumulated treasures will be taken by enemies.<sup>837</sup> Thus, in that way, it is definitively known (*gtan la dbab par rig*). When there are not such thoughts about immortality (as the immediately preceding), one does not make effort. The third section of connections with effort.

[Fourth Section]

{134/580} *yum sras gnyis kyi gdams pa 'di // tshig tu brjod na tshig rang yin // nyams su blangs na bdud rnams gcod // 'phrig pa lha 'dre yongs kyis 'phrig // dngos grub bdud dang klu las 'byung // yon bdag bdud dang rgyal pos byas // rkyen ngan sna tshogs ci byung yang // grogs su 'khyer ba gdams ngag mchog //*

This is the instruction from the mother and her two sons. When expressed in words, it is just the words (*tshig rang yin*). When one has gained actual experience, it cuts through the Negative Forces. Doubt (*'phrig pa*) is undecided by (*'phrig*) all deities and spirits.<sup>838</sup> Accomplishments arise from negative spirits and nāga. Sponsorship is given by Negative Forces and kings. Whatever arises as various negative conditions, moreover, can be carried as beneficial (on the path); this is the excellent oral instruction.

---

<sup>836</sup> Abbreviation of “*ci yang*.”

<sup>837</sup> This is a provisional translation.

<sup>838</sup> This is a provisional translation.

*sems kyi rgyu ni gnyis ma mchis // dge dang sdig ba gnyis rtog pa // de yis yang dag don  
ma rig // gcig la gnyis su phye bas 'khrul // dge sdig gnyis ka rang bzhin stong // ye stong pa la  
de stong bsgom // de ni don med bsgom pas stong // ci ste snyems las byung bas na // des na  
gdams dag srog gis bslu // stong pa mi bsgom dngos 'dzin bral // de ni ma bcos bde ba che //  
rang rig zer gyin gzhan la sems // bsam pas rang grol ga la 'byung // ci ste don la bsam med  
do //*

As for mind, it is not dual. Virtue and vice are conceptualized as two. One does not know the meaning of the actual by this. The classification of one into two is a mistake. The self-nature of both virtue and vice is emptiness. The primordially empty will be meditatively cultivated as empty. As for that, because one meditatively cultivates without purpose, it is empty. But if pride occurs, then the core instructions have been contradicted. Not meditatively cultivating empty[ness], one is freed from grasping things. That is the greatest uncontrived happiness. By referring to self-knowledge and thinking of others, how does one become self-liberated? And thus, in fact, it is inconceivable.<sup>839</sup>

*rig pa rten med snyems dang bral // rten rang ngo bos stong shes na // rten dang brten  
pa gnyis med mtshungs // lha yang sems la 'dre yang sems // ngo bo ma grub sems las 'das //  
rang gis rang byad mi mthong bzhin // sems kyi sems bltas ga la mthong // dbyer med gti mug  
snyems med la // sangs rgyas tsam du btags pa yin //*

Unsupported enlightened knowing is separate from pride. If the support itself is understood as empty of essence, the support and supported are without duality and equivalent. Deities are also in the mind, spirits are also mind; not establishing an essence, the mind is transcended. Not perceiving its own appearance (*byad*, literally “aspect”), the mind looking at

---

<sup>839</sup> This is a provisional translation.

the mind, how could it be perceived? Without differentiation, a buddha is merely a label for one without obscuration or pride.

*sems can mi dmigs sangs rgyas su yis 'dogs<sup>840</sup> // sems can sems la blta rgyu med // blta ru med pas sangs rgyas tsam // dug lnga rang bzhin med pa la // ye shes tsam du btags pa yin // btags par shes pas rtogs 'gyur bsgom // bsam zhing brjod la re ma che //*

Which buddhas name ('dogs) unseen sentient beings? The five poisons are without self-nature; primordial knowledge is merely a label. By understanding they are labels, one meditatively cultivates realization (rtogs 'gyur); there is not great hope in thought and expression.

*bsam med re med snyems bral na // des ni sangs rgyas the tshom med // dngos po spangs kyin stong pa 'do // ma rtogs pa ni snying re rje // stong pa tsam yang mi dmigs na // dngos por 'dzin pa smos ci dgos // {135/581}*

If one is without thought, without hope, and is separated from pride, that one does not doubt the buddhas. Abandoning objects is emptiness. Non-realization is compassion. Needless to say there is grasping at things if one doesn't at all conceive of emptiness.

*E MA HO // gnyen sar song la shes pa dol // ma yengs glod na grol bar nges // 'jigs so snyams pa'i sems byung na // snyems de 'dre yin glod la zhog // glod kyang 'jigs pa'i sems byung na // sems ni rang bzhin med pa la // lus 'di sa dang rdo bzhin gnas //*

How wonderful! Having gone to a severe place, understanding is purified (dol).<sup>841</sup> If one is without distraction and loose, liberation is certain. If a mind thinking about fear arises, that

---

<sup>840</sup> Note here this is a nine-syllable line.

<sup>841</sup> All of the dictionaries I have consulted give the meaning of a fish net. Sonam Topgyal, a librarian at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (Dharamshala, India) speculated it might mean "pure/purify"; he based this interpretation on the fact that there was once a lama named "klong dol," which Sonam translated as "pure realm."



pride is a negative force; rest loosely! Even when loose, if a fearful mind arises, that mind is without self-nature; this body abides like earth and rocks.

*de ltar brtags la ma bcos bzhag // yang yang bsgom pas klong du 'gyur // rtsol ba med  
par lhun gyis grub // sems rtog bzang ngan ci byung yang // ma bcos rang sar grol bar nges //  
zungs su ma 'dzin man ngag yin // snyems ni 'khor ba'i sa bon yin // snyems med rang ngo rang  
gis dag // sangs rgyas tsam du re zhig brtags // nyams su blangs pas dngos grub 'byung ba'i le  
lag ste bzhi pa'o //*

In that view, rest not fabricating labels. By meditatively cultivating again and again, the expanse will be effortlessly and spontaneously achieved. Whatever good or bad things arise in the mental understanding (*sems rtog*), not fabricating, liberation in one's own place is certain. Grasping should not be grasped! This is the oral instruction. As for pride, it is the seed of saṃsāra. Without pride, one's own face is self-purified, having been briefly considered a buddha. The fourth section on the occurrence of attainments through gaining experience.

[Fifth Section]

*yum sras gnyis la gdams pa zhus // dam chos bdud kyi gcod yul 'di // gdams ngag gzhan  
dang 'di mi 'dra // gzhan ni phyi dus 'debs pa yin // 'di ni da lta nyid du gcod // chod dam ma  
chod gnyan sar blta // gzhan ni rnam rtog rim gyis spang //*

The mother and her two sons received a request for advice. The excellent teaching is this Chöd system of Negative Forces. This is not like other oral teachings. The others are established at a later time. This one cuts through immediately; decisive or indecisive (*chod dam ma chod*), one will examine the severe place(s). The others abandon through stages of discursive thought.

*‘di ni da lta nyid du bsre // lus ni ting ‘dzin byin brlabs nas // lhog pa la sogs ‘go ba’i  
nad // klu la sogs pa gnod pa’i gdon // gcod kyang de yi thog tu bya // thams cad snyems las  
byung ba yin // snyems med gdeng<sup>842</sup> du ‘khyer ba gces //*

This [system] mixes immediately. As for the body, through the blessing of concentration, Chöd will also act directly on infectious diseases of ulcerous sores and whatnot, on the harmful forces of *nāga* and so forth. They are all arising from pride. Without pride, one can cherish what is carried away with confidence.

*dang po snying khams che yang dgos // bdud kyi gcod yul gdams ngag ‘di // snyems med  
blo bder bzhugs pa des // gnyan sar song la rnal ‘byor kun // bsgom bsgom po yis ma theb par /  
/ sems glod lus dol nyam nga thong //*

First, a great element of heart-mind is also required (*yang dgos*). This is the oral teaching of the Chöd system of Negative Forces. By one who, having gone to a severe place, rests in a pleasant state of mind (*blo bde*) without pride, everything is yoga. Meditative cultivation not established by a meditative cultivator, the mind is loose, the body is purified (*dol*).<sup>843</sup> Let go of intimidation!

*‘dod dang bsgrub pa’i yid ma ‘cha’ // bag dro nyams dga’ shes pa bde // rang bag rang  
gis bsre ba las // gzhan la ltos na rnal ‘byor min // sangs rgyas snyems dang bral {136/582} ba  
tsam //*

The mind (*yid*) of desire and accomplishment is not established. Cheerful warmth, joy, a happy consciousness, if relying on something other than having mixed one’s own state of mind (*rang bag*) by oneself, it is not yoga. A buddha is simply [one who is] separated from pride.

---

<sup>842</sup> reading “*gdeng*” for “*gding*.”

<sup>843</sup> See earlier discussion.

*snyems sems pa ni sems can te // des na rang las gzhan na med // de bas rang don rang  
la bsgrubs // don ma rig pa'i rnal 'byor pa // gcod par 'dod pa de rang bdud // don gyi go ba  
blang bar rigs // chos sgo mthong ba'i<sup>844</sup> mi rnams kun // rtag tu rig pa chud ma gson // gang  
du chud zos rnal ma 'byor // E MA HO // tshe gcig la sangs rgyas su ngo sprod pa'i le lag ste  
Inga pa'o //*

As for a prideful mind, it is a sentient being. Thus, it is not anything other than oneself. Thus, one's own aims are self-accomplished. The aim is the yoga of mis-knowing. The Chöd practitioner's desire is one's own Negative Forces. Understanding the aim, reason will be taken up (*blang bar rigs*). All people of who have beheld the gates of Dharma, do not waste eternal enlightened knowing (*rig pa*); whatever is wasted is not united with the real (*rnal ma 'byor*; not yoga). How wonderful! The fifth section of introduction to buddha in one life.

[Sixth Section]

*gnyis med gcig la thabs mkhas kyis // chos rnams sna tshogs gsungs ba yang // sems can  
rang gis blo skyon gyis // sbur pa bal du btums pa bzhin // rgan mo nga yis brtags pa la // chos  
pa rnams kyang chos kyis bcings // grol bar 'dod kyang slar la bcings // gcod yul 'dod kyang  
slar la bcings //*

Through skill in means regarding the single non-duality, even speaking about various things, sentient beings, by the flaws of their rational minds (*blo skyon*), are like beetles wrapped in fiber. This has been examined by me, an old lady: even dharma practitioners, are fettered by dharma; desiring liberation, they are once again fettered; desiring the Chöd system, they are fettered yet again.

---

<sup>844</sup> Reading “*mthong ba*” for “*mthob ba*.”

*gcod yul 'dod pa mang lags kyang // 'di yi grags pa<sup>845</sup> 'dod pa las // skye shi'i 'jigs pa  
ma byung na // gnyan sar 'gro ba mang gda' yang // nga rgyal chags pa ma byung na //  
snyems rtog chod pa mang lags kyang // ngang la gdong pa mi gda' na // 'khor bas 'jigs ba srid  
pa<sup>846</sup> tsam //*

Even though there are many who desire the Chöd system, it is desired because of its renown. If the fear of birth and death does not arise, even though there are many beings in severe places; if attachment to egocentricity does not arise, even though there are many prideful thoughts to sever; if there is not a countenance in that state (*ngang la gdong pa mi gda'*), then this is merely fear due to saṃsāra.<sup>847</sup>

*'khor ba spangs ba 'ga' byung yang // myang 'das thob pa srid pa tsam // sdug bsngal  
spangs pa mang lags kyang // bde ba spangs pa srid pa tsam // mi dge spangs pa mang lags  
kyang // dge ba spel ba srid pa tsam // zhen pa log pa mang lags kyang // gzung 'dzin spangs  
pa srid pa tsam //*

There are several occurrences of abandoning saṃsāra; it is just as possible (*srid pa tsam*) nirvāṇa might be attained as well. There are many who abandon suffering; it is just as possible that they will abandon happiness as well. There are many who abandon non-virtue; it is just as possible that they will develop virtue as well. There are many who turn away from clinging; it is just as possible that they will abandon grasping as well.

*lta ba rtogs pa mang lags kyang // mtha' dang bral ba srid pa tsam // mi rtog bsgom pa  
mang lags kyang // yid byed med pa srid pa tsam // spyod pa bzang po mang lags kyang //  
'phrad 'joms byed pa srid pa tsam //*

---

<sup>845</sup> Reading “grags pa” for “grags ba.”

<sup>846</sup> Reading “srid pa” for “srid ba.”

<sup>847</sup> This is a provisional translation.

There are many who understand the view; it is just as possible that they will be separated from extremes as well. There are many who meditatively cultivate no thought (*mi rtog*); it is just as possible they will be without mental activity as well. There are many who have fine conduct; it is just as possible that they will meet defeat (*'phrad 'joms*) as well.

*nyams len bzang ba mang lags kyang // rgyun chad med par srid pa tsam // thos pa che  
ba mang legs te // {137/583} sgro 'dogs chod pa srid pa tsam // gdams pa che ba mang lags te /  
/ nyams su len pa srid pa tsam //*

There are many who gain positive experiences; it is just as possible they will be without interruption (*rgyun chad med*) as well. There are many who are great hearers; it is just as possible that they will cut through misconceptions. There are many who are great instructors; it is just as possible they will gain experience.

*mi chos spangs pa mang lags kyang // lha chos spangs pa srid pa tsam // 'dre bdud  
chom pa 'ga' byung ste // dngos 'dzin thong ba srid pa tsam // ngan rtog chom pa 'ga' byung  
yang // bzang rtog chom pa srid pa tsam // mdze po gsos pa mang byung yang // dug lnga'i nad  
gsos<sup>848</sup> srid pa tsam //*

There are many who abandon mundane ways (*mi chos*); it is just as possible they will abandon divine ways as well. There are several occurrences of overcoming spirits and Negative Forces; it is just as possible that grasping of things will also be relinquished. There are several occurrences of overcoming bad thoughts; it is just as possible that good thoughts will be overcome. There are many occurrences of lepers being healed (*gsos pa*; literally, “being given sustenance”); it is just as possible that the five poisons will be cured.

---

<sup>848</sup> Reading “gsos” for “sos,” as in the previous line.

*yul gyi pha yul spangs lags kyang // gzung 'dzin pha yul ma thon pas // gang ltar bsdad  
kyang 'ol 'drar gda' // rgan mo nga yis chos bshad kyang // nyal du ma btub nyal ma nus // blo  
bder nyal ba'i chos lags te // slob ma rnams la yid ma ches // mi tshe 'di la mngon zhen nas //  
'jig rten phyi ma'i chos gtam gtong //*

Those who abandon the fatherland of objects, because they do not leave the fatherland of grasped and grasping, yet they will remain in whatever way, like a kite (an 'ol bird). This Dharma explanation by me, an old woman, moreover, one who is unable (*ma btub*) to rest and is incapable (*ma nus*) of rest, is the teaching of resting with mental ease (*blo bde*); without trust in disciples, having strong attachment to this human life, I give this oral teaching for a future life.

*phyi ma'i don la dgongs zer nas // da lta chags sdang nges par che // des na rgan mo yid  
ma ches // gcig pur 'dug pa'i dus la bab // 'di pa yin na phyi ma'i gdams pa tshol // phyi ma yin  
na da lta chags sdang che // yid ma ches pas gcig pur bsdad par bya'o // E MA HO // gol sa  
bcad pa rgya gang kyi le lag ste drug pa'o //*

Having expressed thoughts regarding further meanings, at this time when (*da lta*) attachment and aversion are certainly great, as for that, the old lady does not trust the mind (do not trust the mind [*yid*] of an old lady!). The time has come for staying alone. If this person is [you] (*'di pa yin na*), seek out further teachings (*phyi ma'i gdams pa*)! When it is further, now there is great attachment and aversion, because one does not trust the mind, one should stay alone. How wonderful! The section of whatever marks distinguish the places for straying is sixth.

[Seventh Section]

*yum sras gnyis kyi gdams pa 'di // 'ga' la phan srid brjed thor bris // pho la mo bdud  
gnod kyis mor 'dzin snyems byed thong // mo la pho bdud gnod kyis pho yi snyems thag chod //*

*pho mo gnyis su med kyis sems kyis ngang la ltos // yin pa ye nas yin gyis ye yin rtogs par mdzod  
// brtags pas rtogs pa yin gyis mkhan po zhi bar mdzod // byas pa las ro yin gyis byar med lhug  
par zhog //*

This is the speech of the mother and her two sons, a written record for the benefit of some. For a male, a harmful female Negative Force, grasped as a female, is seen as that which creates pride. For a female, a harmful male Negative Force cuts through male pride. The non-dual male-female is dependent on the state of mind (*sems*); as it is primordial, it must be conceptualized as timeless! Expertise through analysis and comprehension must be pacified! Without work to be performed, one must rest naturally!<sup>849</sup>

*ngang nas ci yang 'char gyis chags sdang med par mdzod // chags sdang rang sar grol  
bas sgo lnga bsgom pa'i grogs // snyems ni dum bu skad cig ma // yin par rtogs nas chags ma  
myong // de ltar {138/584} rig na nam yang bde //*

From that state, by whatever arises, one's deeds must be without attachment and aversion. Attachment and aversion are liberated on their own ground, with assistance from the meditative cultivation of the five (sense) doors. As for pride, from conceptualizing it is a momentary phenomenon of fragments, attachment is not experienced. When there is enlightened knowing in that way, one is always happy.

*E MA HO // glod dang yin gyis zhog dang gsal // gyis // X dol dang bde yis<sup>850</sup> / E MA  
HO/ brgyad khri bzhi stong gsungs pa yang // mtshon pa yin par ma rtogs na // tshig la zhen na  
chags pas 'ching //*

<sup>849</sup> This section is a provisional translation.

<sup>850</sup> The text has an "x" marker here, which follows a stranded instrumental. I have yet to be able to decipher this section; here I am reading it as suggesting a repetition of the previous line up until "gyis."

How wonderful! By being loose, rest with clarity! By being loose, there is purity<sup>851</sup> and bliss. How wonderful! Having spoken of the 84,000, moreover, if there is no understanding of that which has been demonstrated, when there is clinging to words, one is fettered by attachment.

*bka' ni gyin 'da' re zhig tsam // lung yang de bzhin shes par gyis // man ngag snying po  
rtsol bral yang // don ma mthong bar zhi gnas bsgom //*

As for speech, the ordinary kind (*gyin 'da'*) for just a short time (*re zhig tsam*), by understanding even textual transmissions like that, the pith of personal instruction (*man ngag*) is also separated from effort/separated with effort (*rtsol bral*), without perceiving an aim/meaning (*don ma mthong ba*), meditatively cultivate calm-abiding (*zhi gnas*).

*me 'dags thal bas byib pa 'dra // rtogs pas chog zer bya byed mang // rta rgod srab  
skyor chad pa 'dra // mthong nas ma yengs 'jog legs na // bla med byang chub ring po med //*

Like a fire covered (*byib pa*) by cinders (*'dags*<sup>852</sup>) and ashes (*thal*), it is said that a permissive mind allows many activities.<sup>853</sup> Like a horse whose restlessness has been repeatedly (*skyor*) cut by a bridle (*srab*), when one is not distracted by what one perceives, unsurpassed enlightenment is not far away (*ring po med*).

*sems kyi ngo bo rtogs gyur na // rgyu drug*<sup>854</sup> *'khor ba spang bya min // des na rtog  
dpyod ma byed zhog // brtags pa yul min don ma yin // bsam pa'i yul las sangs rgyas med //*  
*med par bsam pas tshi re chad //*

When one has understood the essence of the mind, one should not abandon the six causes<sup>855</sup> and saṃsāra. Thus, rest without conducting coarse and subtle examinations. Without

---

<sup>851</sup> On translating “*dol*” as “pure/purity,” see the note attached to “*dol*” in section four above.

<sup>852</sup> This term is interpreted on the advice of Sonam Topgyal.

<sup>853</sup> Sonam Topgyal suggested that this means one can cook and warm oneself with a fire that is hot but dampened with cinders and ashes (?).

<sup>854</sup> Reading “*rgyu drug*” for “*rgyud drug*.”



an object of examination (or imputed object), there is no meaning/aim. There are no buddhas in the realm of thought. One who thinks that they don't exist loses hope (*tshi re chad*).

*nyon mongs lnga dang ye shes lnga // gzhi rtsa ngo bo gcig pa la // nyon mongs ma  
bcings ye shes grol ba med // gcig yin gnyen pos bcos su med // bcos med rang lugs sangs rgyas  
lam // bcos med rang lugs sangs rgyas gnas // 'das dang ma byon da lta kun // ma bcos zhe  
'dod bral las byung //*

The root ground of the five mental afflictions and the five primordial wisdoms is one essence. Not fettered by the mental afflictions, without being liberated by the primordial wisdoms, this is one, without modification by an antidote. Without modification, one's own way is the path of the buddhas. Without modification, one's own way is the abode of the buddhas. All that are from the present or past, or [those who] have not arrived, without modification they will arise apart from one's heart's desire.

*rtog pa med par chos spyod tsam // re ba dang bcas don la bsgrib // bde 'dod bsgoms  
pas snyems ma chod // re na sangs rgyas re yang bdud // dogs na dmyal bar dogs kyang bdud //  
rang la ma 'phongs rang ni 'khrul pa yin // gzhan la ma sdang gzhan ni rang sems du //*

Without discursive thought it is just dharma practice. Hope together with aim obscures. One does not cut through pride by meditatively cultivating the desire for happiness. If there is hope, even the hope for buddhas, it is a negative force. If there is apprehension, even apprehension about hells, it is a negative force. As for oneself who has not cast off (*ma 'phongs*) one's self, it is confusion. As for the "other" in non-aversion toward others, it is in one's own mind.

---

<sup>855</sup> These six types of causes, brought about by the four conditions (*rkyen bzhi*) that lead to the five results (*'bras bu lnga*) are: the operative cause (*byed pa'i rgyu*); the co-occurring cause (*lhan cig 'byung ba'i rgyu*); the concomitant cause (*mtshungs par ldan pa'i rgyu*); the homogeneity between cause and effect (*skal ba mnyam pa'i rgyu*); the omnipresent cause (*kun tu 'gro ba'i rgyu*); and the complete maturation cause (*rnam par smin pa'i rgyu*).

*E MA HO // nad pa 'dri la gtad pas gnyis med rang sar grol // skyel med dgra la gtad pas 'jigs med mtha' ru bskyal // lam khyer rkyen la byas pas mi mthun 'gal rkyen med // rkyen ngan srid du chod pas yul na dgra med 'dra // 'dzin pa bdud yin // rtsol ba nang yin /*  
 {139/585} *dogs pa 'dre yin // bzhag pa gzhi yin // cir snang grogs yin // sangs rgyas sems can yin // sems nyid nam mkha' yin // lus ni ro yin gzan du bskiyur // bskiyur mkhan sems yin glod la zhog // thugs kyi snying po'i le lag ste bdun pa'o //*

How wonderful! By focusing on the smell of a sick person, one is liberated on one's own ground without duality. By focussing on an enemy without travelling, one will travel to the end without fear. By bringing conditions to the path, disagreeable adverse conditions do not exist. By cutting through the existence of bad conditions, it is like there are no enemies in the realm; they are the Negative Forces of grasping. Effort is internal. Apprehension is a spirit. Resting is the ground. Whatever appears is a friend. Buddhas are sentient beings. The mind itself is space. As for the body, it is a corpse that will be given away as food. The master of giving is the mind. Rest loosely! The section of the heart essence is seventh.

[Eighth Section]

*'di don nyams su len pa ni // dad pa brtson 'grus shes rab ldan // byams dang snying rje rgyun thag ring // zhen pa chung zhing bstan la mos // bla ma la gus ldan pa la // dang po ngo sprod gdams pa ni // yang dang yang du gdab par bya // sngon 'gro thabs kyi rim pa dang // dngos gzhi shes rang rang bzhin dang // rjes zung 'jug thabs la mkhas pa'i spyod pa'o // de nas lag tu len pa la // skyabs su 'gro zhing sems bskyed la // bla ma bsgom la gsol ba gdab // ces so //*

As for gaining experience in the meaning of this, one [should] have faith, perseverance, and wisdom, a long continuum (*rgyun thag ring*) of loving-kindness and compassion, little

attachment and the intention to teach, together with faith in one's lama. First, the "pointing out instructions," which should be explained over and over again: the stages of the preliminary techniques, one's own knowledge of the main part, the practice of being skilled in the technique of unifying of self-nature and trace/imprint (*rjes*). Then, in making a practice, going for refuge and developing the mind, visualizing one's lama, one makes supplications. Thus [it] was taught.

*de nas smra bsam brjod med 'das // yang na bem rig phral la bzhag // yang na phung po gzan bskyur la // mnyam nyid ngang du bzhag par bya // cho 'phrul la sogs byung ba la // 'jigs dang dran rtog skyes pa na // rig pa ngar dang ldan byas la // phat la sogs pas hur phyung la // rjes la dran med ngang du bzhag //*

Then, going beyond speech, thought and expression, rest in the separation of matter and mind; furthermore, tossing away one's aggregates as food, one should rest [in] a state of equanimity. If fear and thoughts are generated toward occurrences of manifestations and the like, one should act with intense enlightened knowledge. Energize (*hur phyung*) through *phat* and so forth; rest in the state without memory of the imprint/trace.

*'khrul rtog rang grol chos sku yin // rjes la sgyu ma lta bu'i blos // dge ba bsngo zhing smon lam gdab // thun mtshams su yang gnas lugs kyi // ngang nas snying rje chen po dang // skyabs su 'gro ba la sogs te // tshogs gnyis bsags la 'bad par bya // gzhan yang rang la brten pa yi // chags sdang rnam rtog skyes pa na // ngo sprod dran byas lhod kyis glod //*

Self-liberation from mistaken thinking is the *dharmakāya*. A mind that is like an illusory trace, dedicating merit and planting aspirations. In between sessions, as well, from the state of actuality, having compassion and going for refuge and so forth, one should make effort in gathering the two accumulations. As a support to others as well as oneself, if thoughts of attachment and aversion are produced, remembering the introduction, relax by loosening.

*rang grol bde ba chen po yin // thun du bcad nas bsgom mi dgos // ma yengs dran pa'i  
 rtsi yis bzung // 'thas na rkyen snang sna tshogs la // brten nas nyams la bog dbyung bya // log  
 na log gnon yin te {140/586} bsre // mi 'dod sna tshogs rtsal sbyang bya // snyems med gding  
 ldan re dogs med // tshe 'di nyid la mngon sangs rgyas // nyams su blang ba lag khrid kyi le lag  
 ste brgyad pa'o // thun mong gi le lag brgyad pa zhes bya ba rdzogs so //*

Self-liberation is great bliss. It is unnecessary to divide meditative cultivation into periods. Grasped by evaluation of undistracted memory, when solid (*'thas na*), having the support of various conditions and appearances, one should profit from experience. When mistaken, mix with the overcoming of mistakes. One should train in various undesirables. Without pride, with confidence (*gding ldan*), without hope and fear, one will manifest enlightenment in this very life. The chapter on the instructions on gaining experience is eighth. *The Eight Common Supplements* is complete.

**Appendix Five: *Thun mong ma yin pa'i le'u lag brgyad pa***<sup>856</sup>

{586/140} *thun mong ma yin pa'i le'u lag brgyad pa bzhugs so //*

*The Uncommon Eightfold Supplementary Section*

*bdud kyi stobs rab tu 'joms pa la phyag 'tshal lo // A ma jo mo'i gdams pa thun mong ma yin pa'i le lag 'di la brgyad de /*

I prostrate to the one who completely overcomes the power of the Negative Forces.

There are eight [sections] in this *Instruction of the Noble Mother, the Uncommon Supplementary Section*.

*mtshan don gyi le lag dang gcig / gnad bstan pa'i le lag dang gnyis / dbang po dang sbyar ba'i nyams bstan pa'i le lag dang gsum / gegs sel bstan pa'i le lag dang bzhi / gol sa bstan pa'i le lag dang lnga / g.yel ba kha bsdus pa'i le lag dang drug / na tsha byung na nyams su ji ltar blang ba'i le lag dang bdun / 'thas na bogs dbyung ba'i le lag dang brgyad do //*

[1] The section on the meaning of the name is first. [2] The section on teaching of the key points is second. [3] The section on experiential teaching correlated with the faculties is third. [4] The section on teaching the dispelling obstructions is fourth. [5] The section on teaching about places of potential error is fifth. [6] The section on containing distractions (*g.yel ba kha bsdus*) is sixth. [7] The section on accepting any kind of experience when illness occurs is seventh. [8] The section on enhancement of practice when strong is eighth.

*dang po mtshan don gyi le lag la / gcod zhes pa ci gcod zhe na / kyi zhen pa gcod pas gcod // sems kyi rtsa ba gcod pas gcod / gzhi la phyogs cha gcod pas gcod // lam la blang dor*

---

<sup>856</sup> In *Gdams ngag mdzod*, Vol. 14 (1979): 140-55; Vol. 9 (1971): 586-601. This text has been previously translated by Carol Savvas in her Ph.D. dissertation (154 ff.). Although I am familiar with the Savvas translation, I have chosen to retranslate the text because the Savvas translation is very unreliable and does not follow the original text closely; in her version there are several omissions, as well as many additions from an acknowledged source (indicating that her translation was possibly based on an oral commentary that she received).

*gcod pas gcod // 'bras bu re dogs gcod pas gcod / thams cad nas thams cad du rnam rtog rang  
sar gcod pas na gcod ces bya'o //*

[1.1] First, in the meaning of the name section, if one were to ask what is to be cut in this so-called “Chöd,” [the answer would be] because one cuts clinging to the body, it is Chöd; because one cuts the root of mind (sems), it is Chöd; because one cuts partiality<sup>857</sup> on the ground, it is Chöd; because one cuts acceptance and rejection on the path, it is Chöd; because one cuts hopes and fears at fruition, it is Chöd.<sup>858</sup> Because one cuts, on one’s own ground, all discursive thinking from everything, it is known as “Chöd.”

*gnyis pa gnad bstan pa'i le lag la bzhi ste / gnyan thog tu gnyan dbab pa me btsa' lta bu'i  
gnad dang / lha 'dre zil gyis mnan pa nyi ma lta bu'i gnad dang / lha 'dre la nye ring spang pa  
pha ma lta bu'i gnad dang / ji ltar byas kyang bar chad rtsom na ri dvags mtha' la gtad pa lta  
bu'i gnad dang bzhi'o //*

[2.1] Second, the section on the teaching of the key points has four parts. The four are [2.1.1] the key point that is like moxibustion, severely applied on top of the severe [cause of harm],<sup>859</sup> and [2.1.2] the key point that is like sun will overcome the deities and demons by its brilliance, and [2.1.3] the key point on abandoning closeness or distance toward deities and demons,<sup>860</sup> who are like one’s father and mother, and [2.1.4] whatever happens, moreover, the key point is that when interferences begin, it is like directing a deer to the edge.

---

<sup>857</sup> Given the context, I think “partiality” is the best translation for the term “*phyogs cha*.”

<sup>858</sup> Vajrayāna teachings are often presented as threefold, in terms of “*gzhi*” (“ground”), “*lam*” (“path”), and “*bras bu*” (“result”). This is what is being referenced here.

<sup>859</sup> “*gnyan*” can also mean “disease”; Savvas translates “*gnyan*” as “antidote,” which it could be if it were written “*gnyen [po]*” in her text.

<sup>860</sup> Becoming impartial and equanimous—abandoning closeness and distance—toward deities and demons as if they were one’s father and mother

*ci phyir bskal pa'i sangs rgyas rnams / / bla ma dag la brten nas byon / zhes bshad pas /  
rang gi spyi bor<sup>861</sup> nyi zla padma'i gdan la rtsa ba'i bla ma la brgyud pa'i bla ma rnams bstims  
la / bla ma de bla ma thams cad kyi ngo bor bzhugs pa /*

Why is that? It is said that the buddhas of the kalpas arrive based on one's lama; thus, the lineage lamas merge into [one's] root lama, who is on a sun, moon and lotus seat on the crown of one's head. This lama is the essential form of all lamas.

*grub pa thob pa'i cha byad<sup>862</sup> can / g.yas ḍa ma ru / gyon kha tvaṅ ga bsnam pa / sku  
gcer bu la rus pa'i rgyun drug gsol ba / snang srid 'di mnan na nem pa / btegs na theg pa / bar  
chad thams cad sel zhing dngos grub thams cad ster nus pa / gzi brjid dang ldan pa zhig bsgom /*

Visualize him dressed as an accomplished being (*siddha*), a ḍamaru [in his] right [hand], a khatvaṅga [in his] left [crook of the arm], wearing the six bone ornaments<sup>863</sup> on his naked body. When trampling this apparent existence, it is suppressed; when elevating it, it is borne. He is capable of dispelling all interferences and bestowing all accomplishments (*siddhis*). You should cultivate contemplation on this splendid one.

*de nas bla ma de la sems ma yengs par byas la / bla ma rin po che sems can thams cad  
kyi don du bdag la byin gyis brlab tu gsol / / nyams myong dang rtogs pa khyad par can rgyud la  
skye bar mdzad du gsol / bdag gi sdig sgrib dang sdug bsngal dang bar chad thams cad zhi bar  
mdzad du gsol byas la / rig pa khyab bdal chen po'i ngang la glod la bsdad do / /*

Next, having produced [an image of] the lama in one's undistracted mind, having made requests to the precious lama—please bless me for for the aims of all sentient beings; please generate the distinctive experiences and realizations in my mental continuum; please pacify all of

---

<sup>861</sup> Archaic for “*rtse mo*.”

<sup>862</sup> Archaic for “*cha lugs*.”

<sup>863</sup> These six ornaments represent the six perfections.

my negative actions, obscurations, sufferings and interferences — one remains loosely in the state of great pervasive display of enlightened knowing.

*gnyis pa lha {588/142} ‘dre zil gyis mnan pa nyi ma lta bu’i gnad ni / dper na tho rangs  
kyi skar chen thams cad nam langs pa dang ‘di je chung la ‘gro / nyi ma shar ba dang nyi ma  
‘od kyis zil gyis mnan te mi snang ba bzhin du / rnal ‘byor pas rang sems khyab bdal chen po’i  
ngang du bzhag pas / gdon snang srid kyi lha ‘dre thams cad chos nyid kyi zil gyis non nas  
ldang<sup>864</sup> mi nus pa’o / /*

[2.1.2.1] Second, as for the key point that is like sun will overcome the deities and demons by its brilliance: for example, all the great stars of the earliest dawn become diminished with daybreak, overcome by the brilliance of the sunrise and sunlight, it is as if there is no appearance [of the stars]. Because the yogin rests in the state of the great pervasive display of his own mind, all deities and demons of negative apparent existence are unable to emerge, having been overcome by the brilliance of *dharmatā*.

*gsum pa lha ‘dre la nye ring med pa pha ma lta bu’i gnad ni / dper na rang gi pha ma  
gnyis po bde bar ‘dod cing sdug bsngal bar mi ‘dod pa bzhin du lha ‘dre gnyis la nye ring mi  
bya ste / lha bzang po logs na mchod du med cing / ‘dre ngan pa logs na brdud du med / ‘khor  
‘das thams cad logs na spang blang med par rang grol du rtogs pas / de la lhas phan btags pa  
med cing ‘dres gnod pa bskyal ba med de / gnyis ka sems nyid du gcig pas mnyam pa nyid yin no  
/ / de ltar yang mdo las / chos thams cad mnyam pa nyid pas shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa  
mnyam pa nyid do / / zhes bshad do / /*

[2.1.3.1] Third, the key point on lacking closeness or distance toward deities and demons, who are like one’s father and mother: for example, just like both one’s father and mother desire

---

<sup>864</sup> Reading “*ldang*” for “*lṅgang*.”



happiness and do not desire suffering, one should not have closeness or distance toward deities and demons, without making offerings on the side of good deities and without beating on the side of the bad demons. Because one has realized self-liberation without abandoning saṃsāra nor accepting nirvāṇa, in that way, there is not the imputation of benefit by the gods nor the delivery of harm by demons; through being the same in the mind itself, there is equanimity. In addition, from the Sūtras it is said, “Prajñāpāramitā is equivalent because all things are equivalent.”<sup>865</sup>

*bzhi pa ji ltar byas kyang bar chad rtsom na ri dvags mtha' la gtad pa lta bu'i gnad ni /  
dper na ri dvags bshor ba'i rngon pa dag gis / thang lta bu la ri dvags ji ltar byas kyang mi zin  
pa la brag la sogs pa'i mtha' gcig la gtad nas ded pas / mtha' der tshud pas gang du yang 'gro  
sa med pas zin pa bzhin / gnyan khrod du rnal 'byor pa la gnod pa cung zad byas te / na tsha  
bag re byung na / de nas byol ba dang / yas stags byin pas mi phan pas / slar kho gnas pa'i sa  
gnyan brko / chu gnyan dkrugs / shing gnyan bcad / thab gzhib chen po btang la / de nyid du  
glod la bsdud pas / slar gdon de nyid 'byer nas gnod mi nus so / /*

[2.1.4] Fourth, as for whatever happens, moreover, the key point is that when interferences begin, it is like directing a deer to the edge. For example, just like hunters hunting herbivores on the open land cannot catch a deer by herding, [if they] direct [the deer] to one edge of a rocky crag or some such, because it is put at an edge, without a route anywhere, it is caught. If a yogin in a severe region receives a small injury or a little illness occurs, then, because there is no benefit gained through trying to avoid [the harm] or through a Bön ransom offering given to gods and demons (*yas stags byin*),<sup>866</sup> once again, he should dig in a threatening location, stir

<sup>865</sup> I have not been able to locate the precise source for this quote thus far; however, the teaching that all things are equal because they are empty of any inherent nature is a fundamental tenet of Prajñāpāramitā.

<sup>866</sup> See entry in THDL Tibetan to English Translation Tool, version 3.3.0. This is an interpretation given by several

threatening water, cut down threatening trees, and burn very impure things (*thab gzhob chen po btang la*); because [the yogin] remains loose in that way, the negative influence, having fled, will be unable to cause harm.

*gsum pa dbang po dang sbyar ba'i nyams len bstan pa'i le lag la / gang {589/143} zag dbang po*<sup>867</sup> *rab kyis lus ro lta bu / ngag lkugs pa lta bu / sems chu rdo lta bur smra bsam brjod med du bzhag pas / cho 'phrul rang zhi rang dag la grol nas blo bde 'bol gyis 'gro // bag dro 'ur gyis 'gro // nyams dga' yal gyis 'gro bas rjes la nyams rtogs khyad par can 'byung ba'o //*

[3.1] Third, the chapter of the teaching on practice correlated with the faculties. [The practice of] a person with the best faculties has a body like a corpse, a voice like a mute, a mind like a water stone; by resting without words, thoughts or descriptions, apparitions are liberated in self-pacification and self-purification; because the mind [*blo*] becomes blissful and softened, warmth becomes increased, experience becomes joyfully relaxed, and it is followed by the occurrence of distinctive experience and realization.

*'bring gis gnyan sar cho 'phrul de rnams rang gi sems kyi snang ba yin zhing / sems skye ba med pa chos sku yin pas / cho 'phrul de dag sems kyi rtsal lam rol pa rgyan du shes pas byung yang sems kyi cho 'phrul du byung snang yang sems kyi cho 'phrul du snang / yin yang sems kyi cho 'phrul yin / zhi yang sems su zhi bas / sems las tha dad pa'i don med la / sems skye med yin pas de'i ngang la glod la bzhag go /*

[The practice of] a mediocre [person is to understand] the apparitions in the severe places as appearances of his own mind; because the unproduced mind is the *dharmakāya*, these apparitions occur through knowledge (*shes pa*) as the path of mental creativity (*sems kyi rtsal*

---

scholars and appears to be based on Samten Karmay's interpretation in *A Treasury of Good Sayings: A Tibetan History of Bon*.

<sup>867</sup> Reading “*dbang po*” for “*dbang bo*.”

*lam*) [and] ornamental play (*rol pa rgyan*); moreover, they are apparent occurrences as mental apparitions; in addition, they appear as mental apparitions, they are these as well as mental apparitions.<sup>868</sup> [They are] pacified, moreover, through mental pacification. Lacking meaning distinct from the mind, because the mind is birthless, one rests loosely in its state.

*dbang po tha mas lus sems phral la lus blos lings kyis btang la / rig pa rten med rjen par  
nyams su blangs pas / cho 'phrul zhi nas shes pa bde sangs pa'am / nyams dga' yal gyis 'od zhed  
rjes la nyams rtogs 'phel bar 'gyur ro //*

By those with the least faculties, when separating the body and mind, released through the surrender of the body. Through gaining the naked experience of enlightened knowing without support, having pacified the apparitions, there is the experiential knowledge of purified bliss (*shes pa bde sangs pa*), or by the experience of joyfully relaxing, there is the increase of experiential realization as a trace of brilliance (*'od zhed rjes*).

*de ltar dbang por rab 'bring tha ma gsum gyi nyams len bskyangs pas / mi ma yin gyis  
stong grogs la sogs byung yang dga' ba'i blo mi skye / dga' brod kyi bdud 'jug pa la tshogs med  
pa yin / lar dben pa bsten nam / chogs pa skyod dam / grong yul du sdod dam / mi gseb tu 'gro  
ba la sogs pa gang la yang tshul 'chos dang khe rnga ma la sogs bdud 'jug pa'i rgyu yin pas mi  
bya'o //*

In that way, because the experiential practice of the three—highest, mediocre and lowest faculties—have been nurtured, supported and so forth by means of non-humans, a happy mind has not been produced; in the engagement of the Joyful Negative Forces, hardship is not experienced. Generally, alone or accompanied, walking around (*chogs pa*) or drifting (*skyod*), residing in an urban area, proceeding in a crowd (*mi gseb*), whatever the case, one should not

---

<sup>868</sup> Savvas cites Milarepa's song about confronting the demonic manifestations with Goddess Tseringma in this regard.

behave with hypocrisy (*tshul 'chos*), for profit (*khe rnga ma*)<sup>869</sup> and so forth, because it is a cause of engagement with Negative Forces.

*stong nyid snying rje bla ma'i mos gus gsum nam du'ang mi 'bral bar bya / grong yul la  
sogs par yun ring na nyams yal 'gro bas / grong yul du yun ring par mi bsdad / ro snyoms ldom  
bu yang yun ring du mi bya / lto phyir 'chor / tshogs pa'ang {590/144} yun ring du mi bskyang /*

One should not be separate during any of the three times from emptiness, compassion and the lama's devotion. Because there will be a vanishing of experience [if one spends] a long time in an urban area and the like, one should not live for a long time in an urban area; also do not have alms of equal taste (*ro snyoms ldom bu*) for a long time. Because foods spoil (*'chor*), the accumulations, moreover, are not preserved for a long time.

*tshig dang long gtam dang yengs ma lam la yan nas 'gro bas rtag tu dben pa ri khrod du  
nyams bskyang ngo / ri khrod du sdod pa'i dus su 'ang / ri dvags kyi thed la sog pa la'ang  
gdung sems dang rngams sems mi bya / de kun mi ma yin gyis byed pa yin te / byams dang  
snying rje la tshod len byed pa yin /*

Having roamed on a broad meandering path (*yengs ma lam*) with words and chatter (*long gtam*), the wanderer preserves experience in the mountains completely alone. At the time of remaining in the mountains, moreover, one should have longing (*gdung sems*) and intense craving (*rngams*) toward the carcasses of herbivores, and so forth. All of these are actions of non-humans; loving-kindness and compassion are the appropriate actions (*tshod len byed pa*).

*yul pa'i dad zas la'ang gdung ba'i sems mi bskyed / byung yang tshogs 'khor dang bla  
ma'i phyogs su ma lus par gtong / dben pa brten 'dod pas kyang / dang por gnas der phyin pa  
dang / dang po nas spro zhing dga' bar byung nas / 'dris shing dang mi spro bar song na / bar*

---

<sup>869</sup> This is a provisional translation: “*khe*” is simply “profit”; however, “*rnga ma*” seems usually to refer to an animal tail.

*chad 'ong bas gzhan du 'pho / dang po nas 'jigs shing nyam nga bar byung nas / bsdad cing  
dang spror song na dge sbyor 'phel ba'i gnas yin no //*

Toward the objects of the deceased, moreover, do not generate a mind of longing; also, pass one's elements without remainder toward the feast gathering and the lama. Because of desiring the support of solitude, moreover, at the beginning, having gone to that place, and from the beginning, delight and joy having occurred, if one becomes familiar (*'dris shing*) and not delighted (*mi spro*) because interferences come, transfer to another place. From the beginning, from the occurrence of fear and intimidation, when remaining and delight comes, it is a place for the development of spiritual practice.

*de lta bu'i gnas dben par mi ma yin gyis nyams tshad byung na'ang byams pa dang  
snying rje bsgoms pas zhi nas 'gro ba yin / des ma zhi na phung po gzan du bskyur bas zhi pa yin  
/ 'jam por gcod pa las drag rtsub bya ba ma yin no // snying rje dang byams pa byang chub kyi  
sems kyis bdag gzhan thams cad thar pa'i lam la 'god par bya'o //*

In a solitary place such as that, if the experiencing of testing (*nyams tshad*) by non-humans happens, moreover, through the meditative cultivation of loving kindness and compassion, they will become pacified. If [the non-humans] are not pacified by this activity, they will be pacified by throwing away one's body-mind aggregates as food. The activities of a gentle Chöd practitioner are not abusive, forceful actions. Compassion, loving-kindness, and the spirit of enlightenment should be brought onto the path of freedom for oneself and all others.

*bzhi pa gegs sel bstan pa'i le lag la / 'go ba'i nad dang lhog pa'am / mdze po dang / dme  
po dang / nyams bag can la sogs pa rnams la bcad pas snyems zhugs pa'am / sngar gyi nyams  
shor nas sngar mi gtsang ba la snyad btags nas shes pa bying rmugs sam / lus skrang pa dang*

*nad 'gos pa la sogs pa byung na / nyams len gyi gegs yin pas / sngar bstan pa'i gnyen po dang  
ldan pas gang gis len pa de ka dang spyod lam bsres pas myur du zhi nas 'gro ba'o //*

[4.1]<sup>870</sup> Fourth, the teaching on clearing away obstructions chapter. Having defilements such as infectious illnesses and cancers, or leprosy, spots,<sup>871</sup> or becoming prideful because of cutting through [these], previous experiences having been lost, or one's awareness becomes depressed and dull because of false accusations of former impurity, or if there are occurrences of bodily swellings and infections and so forth—because these are obstructions to one's practice, one should pacify them quickly by means of the previously explained antidotes, bringing whatever is appropriate to the situation, and mixing with one's activity.

*mi gtsang ba la sogs pa byung na / khru kyi dod por ro bag dang mdze can la sogs dang  
kha bsres la thog brdzis bya / phyogs {591/145} ngan dang gza' skar ngan pa la sogs pa la don  
ched kyis phyin la thog brdzis bya / ye nas skye med yin pa bya rtsol dang bral snyam du bsam te  
dbyings rig pa 'dres par bsres /*

If uncleanliness and so forth occur, as a substitute for bathing, having mixed directly (*kha bsres*) with contaminated corpses and persons with leprosy, one should trample on top of it (*thog brdzis*). Having deliberately gone (*don ched kyis*) in bad directions with bad planets and stars (at bad astrological times), one should trample on top of it. Thinking the effortless thought of what is primordially birthless,<sup>872</sup> merge expanse and enlightened knowing.

---

<sup>870</sup> Savvas' translation is sufficiently different in this section to make me wonder if she was either working from a different edition of the text or was working from an oral commentary from a teacher such as Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche.

<sup>871</sup> See "*rme po*" in Das; Savvas has "stroke caused by uncleanliness."

<sup>872</sup> Or perhaps, "primordially is birthless."

*dbyings dang rig pa ma bsres par khyad du gsod na lta ba'i gegs yin pas / chos spyod  
yan lag bdun pa la sogs pa sngon du 'gro bas yang dang yang du dbyings dang rig pa bsre zhing  
rkyen thog tu rtsal sbyang ngo //*

Because there are interferences to the view when there is disrespect toward the unmixed expanse and enlightened knowing, through an introduction to Dharma practices such as the seven limb offering and so forth, and again and again merging enlightened knowing and expanse, one cultivates energy on top of the circumstances.

*yang 'dre gcod lta bu la bcad sla bar chod pa dang / de nyid kyis go chod par byas na  
rtsal phyogs med du mi 'byong ste / de nyid spyod pa'i gegs yin pas / de la brten nas rtog pa cher  
skye zhing bcad dka' ba de dag la brten la / yang dang yang du rtsal sbyang zhing bogs<sup>873</sup>  
dbyung ngo //*

Furthermore, the demons that are easily cut according to the Chöd perspective on demons, when one has acted effectively by that very [method], one should not train impartially, because that itself is an obstruction of practice. From a foundation in that [practice], generating greater understanding, and on the basis of these difficult hindrances, again and again cultivating the energy, one will extract benefit.

*de yang lan cig ngo 'phrod tsam gyis sangs rgyas 'di ka yin / thob bya 'di ka yin snyam  
na / 'bras bu'i gegs yin pas / chos nyid ngang nas re dogs med pa'i blo yis phrin las phun sum  
tshogs pa'i rkyen theg pa chen po'i smon lam rgya chen po gdab bo //*

In addition, because it is an obstruction of the result when one thinks, through a mere single introduction, “this is exactly buddahood, this is exactly the object of attainment”; from the

---

<sup>873</sup> Reading “bogs” for “bog.”

state of *dharmatā*, a mind (*blo*) without hopes and fears sows the conditions of perfectly complete enlightened activity, the extensive aspirations of the Great Vehicle.

*Inga pa gol sa bstan pa'i le lag la gsum ste / gcod mo sman du shor ba dang / gcod 'dod yon du shor ba dang / gcod drag sngags su shor ba'o //*

[5.1] Fifth, the teaching on places of potential error is threefold. [5.1.1] Chöd that deviates into divination medicine. [5.1.2] Chöd that deviates into attributes of the desire realm. [5.1.3] Chöd that deviates into wrathful mantras.

*gcod mo sman du shor ba ni / gnyan khrod 'grim zhing nyams len bskyangs pas / rig pa dvangs snyigs phyed pas gsal snang cung zad skyes pas / 'dre gnod mi gnod dang / nad lta bu la phan mi phan shar te gzhan la bzlas pas / thams cad kyis tshor nas yang dang yang du 'drir 'ong ba de ni gcod mo sman du shor ba'o //*

[5.1.1.1] As for Chöd that deviates into divination medicine. Because of roaming in severe regions and nurturing practice, because enlightened knowing produces a little apparent clarity through distinguishing the impure from the pure, by repeating to others the apparent benefits and non-benefits regarding what appears as illness, harmful and non-harmful spirits, all those who have such feelings will again and again come with questions: this is Chöd that deviates into divination medicine.

*gcod 'dod yon du shor ba ni / dga' brod dam / g.yeng ba'am / bsod nams sna tshogs byung bas / gnyan khrod la sogs phan tshun du 'pho mi srid par zang zin dang g.yog 'khor dang snyan grags la sems yengs nas / rang gi nyams myong shor te 'dod yon rang gar spyod pa ni gcod 'dod yon du shor ba zhes bya'o //*

[5.1.2.1] As for Chöd that deviates into attributes of the desire realm, through a variety of occurrences, of joyfulness, or distraction, or merit, severe regions and so forth, having a mind



distracted by mutual exchange, reciprocity in human existence, a retinue, and fame and reknown, is one's own experience of deviating, and this ordinary practice of desired qualities should be known as "Chöd that deviates into attributes of the desire realm."

*gcod drag {592/146} sngags su shor ba ni / nyams myong bskyangs pas chos nyid bden pa'i byin rlabs kyis nad gdon gyis zin pa'i sar phyin nas byin rlabs byas pas / sangs song ba thams cad kyis bos shing grong kha 'grim pas nyams rtogs 'grib pas byin rlabs shor te / drag sngags kyis 'dre nad 'dul dgos pa 'ong bas / de ni gcod drag sngags su shor ba zhes bya ba yin no //*

[5.1.3.1] As for Chöd that deviates into wrathful mantras, if one who has received the blessings of the truth of Thusness through nurturing his experience, having gone to a place where [others] are grasped by illness and bad forces and making blessings, having purified [them], he is called by everyone [and] due to traveling to villages, his realizations become diminished and his blessings are lost. Because it becomes necessary [for the Chöd practitioner] to subdue bad forces and illness by wrathful mantras, it is known as Chöd that deviates into wrathful mantras.

*drug pa gyel ba kha bsdu ba'i le lag la gsum ste / nyams ltengs pa spang pa dang / 'thor ba sdud pa dang / grim pa glod pa dang gsum mo /*

[6.1] Sixth, the chapter on containing the distractions (*g.yel ba kha bsdu ba*) has three parts. The three are: [6.1.1] abandoning stagnant experiences, [6.1.2] gathering the fragments, and [6.1.3] loosening what is tight.

*ltengs pa<sup>874</sup> spang ba ni / gnyan khrod la sogs par phyin pa'i dus su cho 'phrul dang drod rtags gang yang med na / rang gi nyams len gyi stobs chung bas gdon ma slongs te gcod ltengs<sup>875</sup> yin pas / de slong ba'i thabs la ting nge 'dzin gyis mtha' gtang bya /*

---

<sup>874</sup> "pa" appears to be an editorial amendment.

[6.1.1.1] As for abandoning stagnancy, when one has arrived at a severe region or similar area, if there are not any supernatural manifestations<sup>876</sup> or signs of warmth,<sup>877</sup> the negative influences are not excited because one's own practice has little strength. Because one's Chöd practice is stagnant, one should abandon extremes (*mtha' gtang bya*) through meditative concentration as a method for manifesting [the negative influences].

*des ma slong na gcer bur bud la / mi lpags kyi g-yang gzhi go na / mi rkang gi gling bu  
'bud / ḍa ma ru dkrol zhing / rgya dkar nag bal po la sogs pa'i lha 'dre'i ming nas thon tshad  
bos la / ngas gcod byed pa yin pas thams cad 'dir 'dus shig pas la / sngon du dkar gtor cig byin /*

When [they are] not excited by that, then one should strip naked except for wearing her human skin, blow a human thighbone trumpet, play a ḍamaru, call out the full yield of names of deities and demons, including the Indian, Chinese and Nepali ones; then exclaim “all gather here because I am doing Chöd!” and offer a preliminary white torma.

*de nas dmar gtor byin te / rang gi lus sems phral la lus sha khyer khrag khyer du byin pas  
bsod nams kyi tshogs rdzogs / sems nam mkha'i tshul du rten med du bzhang pas ye shes tshogs  
rdzogs / lan cig cho 'phrul zing zing pa gcig byung na'ang gnas lugs kyi ngang la snyems thag  
rbad kyis chod pas nyams rtogs lhag par 'char bar 'gyur ro / /*

Then offer a red torma. Complete the collection of merit by giving the body's flesh that was brought and blood that was brought when one's body and mind were separated. Complete the collection of wisdom by resting the mind in the unsupported manner of space. At the same time when a chaotic (*zing zing pa*) apparition arises once, moreover, experiential realization

---

<sup>875</sup> Reading “*ltengs*” for “*ltebs*.”

<sup>876</sup> Supernatural manifestations, *cho 'phrul*, are extensively discussed in the [*S*]nying tshoms, also translated in this present study.

<sup>877</sup> A sign of meditative realization, especially on the Mahāyāna *sbyor lam*, path of connection.

through completely cutting (*rbad kyis chod pa*) pride in a state of actuality (*gnas lugs*) will especially arise.

*'thor ba bsdu ba ni / blo rtse gnyis su mi btang / (kyi)<sup>878</sup> shes pa kha 'tshams su mi gzhus*  
*/ shes pa yab yob tu mi btang bas / shes pa bag phebs par byas la / shes pa bdal la bzhas*  
 {593/147} go //

[6.1.2.1] As for gathering the fragments, one's attention should not be split. Your consciousness should not engage in insults.<sup>879</sup> Your consciousness should not wander hither and thither (*yab yob*). Your consciousness should become relaxed. Your consciousness should rest expansively.

*bsgrim pa glod pa ni / sgom sgom po dang 'dod 'dod por ma song bar shes pa lhod kyis*  
*glod nas yengs thabs su 'jog go //*

[6.1.3.1] As for loosening what is [too] tight: there should not be [the dualistic perception of] meditative cultivation and a meditative cultivator, a desirable object and a desirer, in your consciousness; through relaxing by loosening (*lhod kyis glod*),<sup>880</sup> you should rest in the method of wandering.<sup>881</sup>

---

<sup>878</sup> “*kyi*” seems to be an editorial amendment, perhaps marking a footnote or editor?

<sup>879</sup> I have not found an authoritative translation for “*kha 'tshams*,” so here I am taking the liberty of a provisional translation: given the two terms together and with a possible meaning of “*kha*” as “oral,” I have chosen to interpret “*tshams*” as a form of “*tsham pa*,” and thus having the sense of speaking derogatorily.

<sup>880</sup> This aphorism is referenced in the first Panchen Lama Lozang Chökyi Gyaltsen (1570-1662) on the Mahāmudrā (The Great Seal of Voidness), 86. Tsong kha pa also paraphrases this aphorism in his *khrid yig* (Savvas [1990, 362] has incorrectly noted that it is from the *Thun mong gyi le'u lag brgyas* [sic]).

<sup>881</sup> “*yengs*” usually has a negative connotation and refers to a wandering or distracted mind. Here, the sense is obviously not negative: the mind should not grasp on to concepts of subject and object; rather the meditator should pay attention to being too tight or too loose and recalibrate accordingly.

*bdun pa na tsha byung na ji ltar nyams su blangs pa'i le lag la bzhi ste / gnyan khrod  
'grim la bcad pa dang / 'byung bzhi cha snyoms pa dang / nad thog tu nad dbab pa dang / las kyi  
mtha' bstan pa'o //*

[7.1] Seventh, the chapter on experientially accepting whatever illness occurs is fourfold.

[7.1.1] Cutting with regard to wandering in severe places. [7.1.2] Equilibrating the parts of the four elements. [7.1.3] Putting illness on top of illness. [7.1.4] Explaining ultimate action.<sup>882</sup>

*gnyan khrod 'grim la bcad pa ni / rang la na tsha byung na thabs gzhan mi btsal bar  
gnyan khrod gcig tu phyin la / lus 'di la zhen pa'i rtog pa bcad la / gdon de la lings kyi byin la  
'di skad bya /*

[7.1.1.1] As for cutting with regard to wandering in severe places, if illness arises in oneself, one goes alone to severe places without the necessity of other methods; cutting the thought of clinging to this body, one should say this when giving [it] completely [*lings kyi*] to the negative influences:

*khyod dang bdag gnyis smon lam gcig pas da lta 'brel ba yin / de bas kyang bdag gi lus  
'di khyod la 'bul gyis / khyod 'dir sdod cig / nga la snyan brgyud zab mo yod pas rang cag gnyis  
ka'i sdig pa<sup>883</sup> sbyong ba'i don du yang dag pa'i don bsgom gyi byas la / lus sems phral gnas  
lugs don la blo lhod kyi bzhag pas nad gang yin pa rang zhir 'gro'o //*

“You and I both are now interconnected through a single aspiration [the aspiration to attain happiness and avoid suffering]. Therefore, moreover, by offering this body of mine to you [the negative forces], you remain here! Because the profound aural lineage [was transmitted to me], I will meditatively cultivate the correct meaning in the aim of purifying the faults of us

<sup>882</sup> This could be a reference to the fourth of the eightfold noble path (*'phags pa'i lam yan lag brgyad*): right action (*yang dag pa'i las kyi mtha'*; *samyakkarmantā*).

<sup>883</sup> Reading “*sdig pa*” for “*sngig pa*.”

both.” Separating body and mind, no matter what the illness is, it becomes self-pacified through resting by means of mentally relaxing in the meaning of actuality.

*nad pa gso na / de'i lus ri rab tsam du bsams la / yu'u cag gsum gnas skabs kyi smon lam  
gcig yin pas / khyod gzhan ma 'gro bar 'dir sdod cig / 'o cag gsum gyi sdig sgrib sbyang bar bya  
ba'i phyir ngas yang dag pa'i don bsgom gyi byas nas / nad pa'i lus kho la ltos med du byin la  
gnas lugs kyi ngang la lhan gyis bzhag go //*

When healing an ill person, think of the body of that person as the size of Mount Meru. Because there is a single aspiration of the circumstances for us three [the negative force, the ill person and the practitioner], you remain here without going elsewhere! On account of the purification activities of the degradations and obscurations of us three, my having meditatively cultivated the correct meaning, having given the body of the ill person without concern to that one, I rest in stillness in the state of actuality.

*yang gang nad sar stong nyid kyi ngang nas byab byab bya zhing / bden pa'i tshig brjod /  
rang gi rig pa yang stong pa / nad dang gdon yang stong pa / nad pa'i lus dang sems yang stong  
pa / stong pa la stong pas glags mi rnyed pas stong sangs sangs song bar bsams la / gnas lugs  
kyi steng du lhan gyis bzhag go //*

In addition, wherever the illness is, from an experiential state of emptiness, one should cleanse [the area] while reciting words of truth. One's own mind is also empty. Illness and negative influences are also empty. The body and mind of the ill person are empty. Due to the emptiness of emptiness, one cannot be harmed; one cannot be harmed because of the emptiness of emptiness, purified by emptiness, with the thought that [the illness] has been purified, one rests through stillness on top of actuality.

*'byung bzhi cha mnyam pa ni / spyir<sup>884</sup> rnal 'byor pa la na tsha ci yod kyang nyams len gyi steng {594/148} du bzhag nas lus la lus su mi bzung bar gang dgar bzhag pas grol nas 'gro ba yin pa la / de ltar byas kyang drag tu mi 'dod na // lus 'di yang 'byung ba bzhi las grub pa yin la nad kyang 'byung ba bzhis bskyed pa yin kyang / lus phyin na / phyi'i 'byung ba chen po bzhi nang gi 'byung ba chen po bzhi la bstims la / gang na ba de 'og tu bcug la lus khang stong ltar du khres kyis bskiyur la / sems nam mkha'i ngang du rten med du khres se bzhag go //*

[7.1.1.2] On equalizing the parts of the four elements. In general, whatever illness (*na tsha*) is in the yogin, in addition, having rested on top of practice, having been liberated through resting in whatever isolated place (*gang dgar*), not having grasped the body as body (*lus la lus*), [the illness] will leave the body. Done in that way, moreover, when one does not have intense desires [for one's own body], [one understands] this body is also established from the four elements; illness as well is produced by the four elements and subsequently in the body; the four great external elements will merge with the four great internal elements. Whatever type of sickness the body is oppressed by, forsake the burden like an empty house; the mind (*sems*) rests its burden in the homeless state of space (*nam mkha'i ngang du rten med*).

*lus kyi nang du na na / nang gi lus 'byung ba bzhi po 'di phyi'i 'byung ba bzhi la phar bstims la / sems na bun yal ba ltar yal du bcug ste / glod pas zhi nas 'gro ba yin no //*

When there is illness within the body, the four elements of the internal body dissolve outward into the four external elements, the mind (*sems*) dissolves like the dissipation of fog; because of loosening, one becomes peaceful.

*yang na phyi'i 'byung ba bzhi nang gi 'byung ba bzhi la bstim / nang gi 'byung ba bzhi gsang ba byang chub sems la bstims la / sems skyed med stong pa'i ngang la khres se bzhag go //*

---

<sup>884</sup> Reading “*spyir*” for “*sbyir*.”

In addition, external elements dissolve into the four internal elements. The four internal elements dissolve into the secret spirit of enlightenment (bodhicitta); the mind rests easily in the state of unproduced emptiness.

*nad thog tu nad dbab pa la / nad tshad par 'dug na / tshad pa me nang du zhi bar bya ba dang / nad grang bar 'dug na skom thag chu nang du bcad pa'o / /*

[7.1.3.1] Putting illness on top of illness. If there is fever (*nad tshad pa*), the fever should be pacified through one's inner fire; if there are chills (*nad grang ba*), the thirst should be ameliorated by internal fluids.

*de la nad tshad par 'dug na / tshad pa la gang gnod pa'i zas dang spyod lam bsten la / da bdag shi na re dga' / da lta nyid du 'chi ba don dam pa'i bden pa / shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i ngang du sangs rgyas yod pas / de ngos bzung dgos snyam du bsam zhing / tshe 'di la ma chags par / phaṭ byas la bem rig shag gis phral la blo re dogs med par lhod kyis glod la / blo rgya bskyed la / rig pa khyab bdal chen po'i ngang du yid la mi byed par bzhag go / /*

Then, if there is fever, rely on whatever food and behavior undermines (*gnod pa*) the fever. Thinking, “If I die now, how wonderful! Death right now is the ultimate truth.” Because there is enlightenment in the state of transcendent wisdom, it is necessary to identify it, without any attachment to this life. With regard to doing “phaṭ,” matter is completely separated from mind (*rig*); the mind (*sems*) relaxes by loosening without hopes and fears. The mind (*blo*) is expanded. The mind rests inactively in the state of great pervasive display of enlightened knowing.

*A ma rtsir bzhag / nam kyang med du bzhag / gar song gar legs tu bzhag go / /*

Rest in the essence of the mother. Rest without even temporality (*nam*). Rest well in such a place where things go when they vanish (*gar song gar*).

*de ltar bzḥag pas nad ‘dzin dang nam bral tshe sos nas ‘ong / sos kyang dga’ ba’i sems  
med par gtad med du bzḥag go /*

Through resting in that way, separated from holding on to illness and temporality (*nam*), there will be the revival of one’s lifespan. One should rest without a reference point, without thought of revival or happiness.

*grang ba’i nad de la gang {595/149} gnod pa’i zas dang spyod lam byas la / lhod kyis  
glod la ‘dzin med kyi ngang du phaṭ byas la nyal bsdad do // de ltar snyems dang phral nas ‘jog  
pa las bsgom du ci yang med do //*

Whatever food and behavior undermines an illness with chills, relaxing by loosening, having done “phaṭ” in the state without grasping, one lays down. In this way, rest separated from pride, without any meditative cultivation whatsoever.

*mi bsgom pa de ka bsgom pa yin / des shi yang legs te chos dbyings su grol ba yin / ma  
shi na yang gal med do // rang rig pa’i ye shes ‘gag pa med pas so //*

That very non-meditative cultivation is the meditative cultivation.<sup>885</sup> Then, even death is good, it is liberation in *Dharmadhātu*. Even if there is no death, it is not important. It is the primordial wisdom of one’s own enlightened knowing because there is no obstruction.

*don go sems la ‘chi rgyu mi ‘dug pas gar song gar legs su ‘jog pa yin / gzhan yang shes  
pa mi dga’ ‘am / ‘gro ‘dod / ngu ‘dod / tshig pa za ba sogs byung na / shes pa rang rgyud par mi  
btang par / mkhan po rtsad bcad cing rtsa bral ngos zin par byas la glod la bzḥag go //*

The understood meaning is that, because there is no cause of death in the mind (*sems la ‘chi rgyu mi ‘dug*), it is well-placed in such a location where things vanish.<sup>886</sup> Otherwise, if one’s consciousness is unhappy, wishing to migrate, wishing to cry, or irritated, or such, one’s

<sup>885</sup> Savvas has a footnote here to the *Yang tshoms*, Vol. XIV: 107.

<sup>886</sup> See similar phrase above.



consciousness is not released in one's own continuum; a master, having investigated and identified a separation from the cause (*rtsa bral*), rests loosely.

*las kyi mtha' bstan pa la / gzhan la byin rlabs la sogs byed na / kun rdzob kyi bden pa la mi 'gegs pas / sems can sdug bsngal gyi nad pa rnams la byams pa dang snying rje bsgom / /*

[7.1.4.1] With regard to the explanation of ultimate action. When making blessings for others, and so forth, because there is no obstruction of conventional truth, meditatively cultivate loving kindness and compassion toward the sentient beings with the illness of suffering.

*skyabs 'gro dang byang chub tu sems bskyed / brgyud pa'i bla ma la gsol ba gdab / yi dam la bden pa bdar / nad gdon thams cad zhi bar byin gyis brlab /*

Going for refuge and generating the spirit of enlightenment, make supplications to the lineage lamas, confess the truth to one's personal deity, peacefully bless all influences of illness and negativity.

*don dam par na bdag dang nad pa dang yi dam gsum chos nyid stong pa'i dbyings su ngo bo gcig tu krug gis bsres la lhod kyis glod nas mi gyo bar 'jog pa yin /*

Then in the ultimate (truth), the three—self, the ill person and one's personal deity—are mixed into a single identity in the empty expanse of *dharmatā*; having relaxed by loosening, one rests without distraction.

*de tsam sngon la bsgoms ma snyam / shes pa sdug thum ma byed / dmigs pa phyogs gcig tu ma gtad / dmigs med bsam bral gyi ngang la bsran bskyed / phan du re ba ngang ma thung / sos kyang rloms<sup>887</sup> sems ma byed / nyams dang byin rlabs yengs su chug /*

To that extent, one does not think about previous meditative cultivation. Consciousness (*shes pa*) does not make an unpleasant package (*sdug thum ma byed*). Perception does not focus

---

<sup>887</sup> Reading “*rloms*” as a mis-spelling for “*rlom*.”

on a single side. The lack of an object generates endurance in the state of separation from thought. The state of beneficial hope is not decreased. The revivication, moreover, does not create conceit. Completely engage in gaining experiences and blessings.<sup>888</sup>

*de ni chos nyid don dam pa'i bden pa yin pas nang thams cad sgron me btegs pas mun pa sangs pa bzhin rang denga su 'gro ba yin / sdud pa las / bden pa'i byin rlab gyis<sup>889</sup> me yi phung po zhi / zhes so / /*

As for that, *dharmatā* is the ultimate truth; everything internal (*nang thams cad*) becomes self-surpassed like enlightening gloom by raising (*btegs pa*) a light. It is stated in the *Ratnagaṇasamcayagāthā*, “By the blessing of truth, the aggregate of fire is pacified.”<sup>890</sup>

*sri'u gso na / gnyan sar khyer la sha krag gnod {596/150} byed la lings kyis phyin la / sems stong pa nyid du byin gyis brlab po /*

When healing the small infant spirits (*sri'u*<sup>891</sup>), carry [the infant] to a severe place; going completely beyond the harm of flesh and blood, the mind will be blessed in emptiness.

*na na ting nge 'dzin gyi mtha' gtad bya / gos tshul bkrus la brag shing la sogs pa la gtor / bu chung gi ri lam bsreg la dud pa btang la me de la bu chung bsro / mdze klad byug / mdze can gyi kha 'phro blud snam phyin lta bu la mdze can gyi drod la phab nas bkon pas 'tsho nges so / /*

---

<sup>888</sup> This is a provisional, and not very satisfying, translation. Savvas' translation of this section is more of a gloss of a teaching she has received; she explicitly relies on explanation given by Venerable Geshe Champa Lodrö Rinpoche, as acknowledged in her footnotes (1990, 181).

<sup>889</sup> Reading “gyis” for “kyis.”

<sup>890</sup> The source for this quote occurs in Chapter 20, verse 23 of the RGS. The Sanskrit reads “*satyādhiṣṭhāna praśameti ca agni-skandho a-vivartīyo ti ayu vyākṛtu veditavyo*” (Yuyama 1976, 82). Conze translates: “If, through the power of his declaration of the Truth, he appeases even a mass of fire, predicted as ‘irreversible’ should he then be known” (1994[1973], 48). According to Savvas's communication with Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, the quote, “*me phung po*,” “refers to the fire of conceptuality (*rnam rtog*), i.e. ignorance” (1990, 182 n.1).

<sup>891</sup> Negative spirits that particularly harm infants and small children.

If [the infant is still] ill, one should have extremely focused concentration. Having washed the [infant's] clothes, sprinkle (*gtor*) [the water] on boulders and trees, and so forth. Releasing the smoke from burning [a fire] on a mountain path [near] the small child, dry the small child in the [warmth] of the fire. Anoint [the child] with the brains of one who has died from leprosy, [with the child] drinking the remainder from the leper's mouth (*mdze can gyi kha 'phro blud*); subsequently, the woolen clothes, carrying the warmth of the leper, through dressing [the child] in the woolen clothes that carry the warmth of the leper will certainly be nurturing.

*gnyan sar khyer ba ma grub na / gnyan sa'i shing dang rde'u la sogs btags pas*<sup>892</sup> 'grub bo //

If carrying to a severe place cannot be accomplished, [treatment] can be accomplished through the markers—the trees, pebbles, and so forth—of a severe place.

*char pa 'bebs na / klu yod nges pa'i chu mig tu / ba su ki dang / dkar gsum mngar gsum gyi gtor ma byin la char pa bslang*<sup>893</sup> go // *des ma phebs na / mdze khrag / mdze klad / dor rta la sogs pa bsregs nas chu mig tu blugs pas phebs*<sup>894</sup> par 'gyur ro //

When making rain fall, through offering a torma of BA SU KI,<sup>895</sup> three white substances and three sweet substances at a spring where there are definitely nāga, the rain will begin (*bslang*). If it does not come by that [method], having burned the blood of one with leprosy, the brains of one with leprosy, underwear (*dor rta*), and so forth, by pouring [this] into the spring, [rain] will come.

<sup>892</sup> reading “*btags pa*” for “*btags ba*.”

<sup>893</sup> Reading “*bslang*” for “*bslad*.”

<sup>894</sup> Reading “*phebs*” for “*phep*.”

<sup>895</sup> According to Savvas' information from Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, this is a special torma for nāga.

*bstan pa 'jigs pa'i dgra byung na / de'i dri ma ming rus bris la glad rur bcug nas gnyan sar bras la sba / gzu dpang gsol zhing las 'di gyis shig bya'o / /*

When fearful enemies arise, it is taught that the given and family names of the contaminated one should be written (*ming rus*) down, inserted into the head (of the leper), and concealed in a lump (*bras*) in a severe place, requesting a witness. One should do this deed!<sup>896</sup>

*ser ba 'bebs na / dug khrag sna tshogs yugs sa'i dor rtar btum la gnyan sar sbas nas / ting nge 'dzin gyis mtha' gtang drag po byas pas 'ongs nges so / sar srung byed kyang stong pa'i ngang la dmigs la bya'o / /*

To make hail fall, having wrapped (*btum*) various poisons and blood in the underwear (*dor rta*) of a widow (*yugs sa*) and concealed them in a severe place, by strongly abandoning extremes through mental concentration, [hail] will definitely arrive. Even when guarding a place, one should visualize in the state of emptiness.

*brgyad pa 'thas na bogs dbyung ba'i le lag la / rtsol ba drag tu byas kyang nyams la yar skyed med na 'thas pa yin pas bogs dbyung ba la gsum ste / sems can la snying rje bsgom la bogs byung ba dang / bla ma la mos gus bsgom la bogs dbyung ba dang / rkyen drag po la thog 'gel byas la bogs dbyung ba'o / /*

[8.1] Eighth, the chapter on the extraction of profit<sup>897</sup> when reified (*'thas*). Even though vigorous effort one has made, when the experience is unproductive at the beginning because [things have become reified], there are three ways for the extraction of profit. [8.1.1] Extraction of profit from meditatively cultivating compassion toward sentient beings. [8.1.2] Extraction of

---

<sup>896</sup> This and the next passage of this section are very “uncommon” (*ma yin pa*); their translations are provisional. Savvas’ translation of this text does not include these passages. Both source texts that I consulted have these passages.

<sup>897</sup> A technical term referring to additional advice that is provided after one has begun initial practices, usually on how to bring mental afflictions (*nyon mongs*) and so forth onto the path of practice in order to benefit from them.

profit from meditatively cultivating longing and respect<sup>898</sup> toward the lama. [8.1.3] Extraction of profit from getting on top of forceful conditions.<sup>899</sup>

*yod na sngon du mkha' 'gro dang chos skyong rnams la gtor tshogs btang la / de nas 'di bzhin bsam par bya / spyir khams gsum 'khor ba'i sems can snying re rje / khad par du 'ang da ltar bdag la gnod par byed pa'i dgra 'dre 'di rnams snying re rje /*

[8.1.1.1] If that is the case, give tormas offerings to *ḍākinī* and *dharmapāla* (dharma protectors) as before; then, one should meditatively cultivate in this way. In general, [cultivate] compassion toward sentient beings of the three realms of *samsāra*. In particular, moreover, [cultivate] compassion toward these enemies and spirits who cause harm to oneself at this time.

*sems can 'di rnams kyis bdag gi pha dang ma lan grangs dpag tu med pa zhig byas shing phan med {597/151} po btags gnod pa mang po bsal zhing / rang gi srog bskyed / bu tsha la gces par byas shing bskyangs pa yin pas / shin tu drin che bar 'dug Ang snyam du yang yang bsam /*

These sentient beings have been my father and mother unfathomable times; having dispelled many harmful signs of the unbeneficial ones, they have given me life. Because they have treasured and cherished sons and grandsons, one thinks again and again thoughts of great kindness.

*bdag gi pha ma drin can 'di rnams bde bar 'dod kyang bde ba ma myong gi steng du sdug bsngal 'ba' shig mi 'dod bzhin du dbang med par myong ba 'di rnams snying re rje na snyam du bsam / de yang dang po sdug bsngal dngos la gnas pa la bsgom / de bas sdug bsngal gyi rgyu tshabs<sup>900</sup> chen po spyod pa rnams mchi ma ko thul byung du bsgom /*

<sup>898</sup> “*mos gus*,” alternatively translated as “devotion.”

<sup>899</sup> A metaphor for having finished a task/project: Das 590.

These kind fathers and mothers of mine desire happiness; on top of not experiencing happiness, while having only undesired suffering, they experience powerlessness. Think the thought “I feel compassion for them!” Furthermore, first meditate on their endurance of real suffering. Then, meditate on their behaviors as the very intense (*tshabs*) causes of suffering until spontaneous tears arise (*mchi ma ko thul byung*).

*de yang sdug bsngal ba rnambsam zhing phreng bab grangs la / snying re rje na zhes  
pa la sogs pa brgya rtsa brgyad la sogs pa bsgom / de ltar ngal gso zhing thun bzhir bsgoms pas  
/ mjug tu snying rje rang babs su skye ba ‘byung la / de skyes pa de’i dbang gis sdig sgrib thams  
cad dag nas dge sbyor gyi bogs rang bzhin gyis ‘byung bas / gnas lugs stong pa nyid rgyud la  
skye / de rgyud la skyes tsa na bsgom mi dgos par rang shugs kyis sems can la snying rje skye  
ba’o //*

As well, thinking of these sufferings, counting down on a mālā, saying “I feel compassion for them!” and the like, meditatively cultivate 108 times or more. By resting like that and meditatively cultivating four times a day, lastly, the development of compassion occurs as one’s own disposition (*rang babs*). Having purified all one’s negative actions and obscurations through the power of that development, the enhancement (bogs) of virtuous practice occurring through one’s own nature, the actuality of emptiness develops in one’s own mental continuum. When it is produced in that mental continuum, meditative cultivation is unnecessary; compassion toward sentient beings is developed through one’s own nature.

*gnyis pa bla ma’i mos gus bsgom pas bogs dbyung ba ni / lam la ‘bad rtsol drag tu byas  
kyang blo la yar skyed med na bla ma’i byin rlabs ma zhugs pas lan la / byin rlabs mi ‘jug pa de  
cis lan na / gsol ba btab kyang mos gus drag po ma skyes pas lan /*

---

<sup>900</sup> Reading “*tshab*” as “*tshabs*.”

[8.1.2.1] Second, as for the extraction of profit from meditatively cultivating longing and respect toward the lama. Having made great effort on the path, yet if there is not further development in the mind, then the response is because the blessings of the lama were not engaged. When there is a response because of such non-engagement of the blessings, the response is due to one not forcefully generating supplication as well as longing and respect.

*de la sdug btsir gyis bsgom kyang mi phan pas / chos kyi bya ba gzhan thams cad lings  
kyis bzahag la / nyin mtshan thun bzhir bcad la / gdams pa dang byin rlabs kyis rang la phan  
gdags pa'i rtsa ba'i bla ma bka' drin can gang yin pa de la sangs rgyas kyi 'du shes pa skyed la /*

In this regard, because ascetic meditation (*sdug btsir gyis bsgom*) is also unbeneficial, having rested by abandoning all other dharma activities, having divided day and night into four periods, toward such a designated root lama who possesses loving-kindness and gives assistance to one through advice and blessings, one will generate recognition of a buddha.

*bla ma'i rnal 'byor dang ldan pas gsol ba drag po yang nas yang du btab pas / mos gus  
nam chud pa dang byin rlabs zhugs te / nyams rtogs gong nas gong du 'phel bar 'gyur ba yin  
pas /*

By repeatedly employing forceful supplication in connection with lama yoga, one is infused with blessings and engaged in (*nam chud pa*) devotion, because there is a greater and greater increase in experiential realization.

*rang {598/152} stan bde ba la spyod lam bde bar bsdad la / sngon la byams pa dang  
snying rje byang chub kyi sems brtan par bsgoms la / de nas rang tha mal du yod pa'i spyi bo'i  
steng du nyi zla padma'i gdan la gdams pa dang byin rlabs kyis rang la phan thogs pa'i rtsa ba'i  
bla ma bka' drin can gang yin pa de shin tu gsal bar bsgom la / gdung sems dung ba gcig bskyed  
de /*

One should sit on a comfortable seat, resting comfortably. As before, steadfastly meditate with loving-kindness, compassion and the spirit of enlightenment. Then, very clearly visualize that there is that root lama who possesses great kindness and provides benefit to oneself through advice and blessings [sitting on] a seat of a sun, moon and lotus on top of the crown of the head of one's ordinary being. Mentally anguished, generate a singular yearning.

*de nas bla ma'i thugs ka nas 'od zer dpag tu med pa phyogs bcur 'phros pas / phyogs bcu dus gsum rnams na bzhugs pa'i rtsa ba dang brgyud pa'i bla ma rnams dang yi dam dkyil 'khor gyi lha tshogs mkha' 'gro ma dang bcas pa rnams dang / sangs rgyas dang byang chub sems dpa' thams cad 'od kyi rnam par byon nas bla ma dang gnyis su med par thim pas / 'od dang gzi brjid dang bcas te mngon sum bzhin bkra lam me bzhugs par bsam /*

Then, unfathomable light rays from the heart center of the lama having radiated in ten directions. The root and lineage teachers, yidam, assembly of deities of the maṇḍala together with the ḍākinīs, buddhas, and bodhisattvas abiding in the ten directions and three times, all having descended (*rnam par byon*) as light, dissolve non-dualistically with the lama. The light has such resplendence (*gzi brjid*), contemplate the vividly clear and brilliant<sup>901</sup> form as if it is directly perceived.

*chos skyong ba'i srung ma thams cad bar snang dang sa gzhi thams cad khengs te bar chad thams cad sel bar bsams la / mos gus drag po dang bcas te yid kyis phyag 'tshal zhing / re sa gzhan na med snyam du zhe mna' bskyal / lus dang longs spyod thams cad lings kyis mchod par phul la gsol ba gdab ste /*

One contemplates the entire guardianship of dharma protectors filling the unobstructed space and entire ground, eliminating all obstacles; one's longing and respect possesses

---

<sup>901</sup> “*bkra lam me*,” *myong tshig* terminology.



forcefulness, paying homage with one's mind (*yid*), make a promise with the thought "there are no other places of hope." Having made an offering by giving all of one's body and resources, one will make entreaties/supPLICATIONS.

*bla ma rin po che sems can thams cad kyi don du bdag la byin gyis brlab par mdzad du  
gsol / nyams myong dang rtogs pa khyad par du phags pa bdag gi rgyud la skye bar mdzad du  
gsol / bdag gi sdig sgrib dang sdug bsngal dang bar chad thams cad zhi bar mdzad du gsol /  
zhes yang dang yang du 'bod do //*

With effort, one should say again and again, "Precious lama, I request blessings for the aims of all sentient beings. I request the production of distinctively noble experiential realization and understanding in my mental continuum. I request the pacification of all of my degradations and obscurations, sufferings and obstacles."

*gdung sems gting nas skyes na tshig tu ma bton yang 'gal ba med do //*

When the yearning is generated from the depths of the mind, there is no contradiction/breach even if one does not verbally/orally recite the words.

*bla ma'i thugs nyid nam mkha' lta bu'i klong nas byin rlabs nam mkha' lta bu de / rang  
gi sems nyid nam mkha' lta bu la 'jug pa la the tshom ga la srid snyam du gsha' mar yid ches  
par bya zhing / {599/153} gsol ba rus pa'i gting nas gdab par bya'o // de ltar byas na byin rlabs  
mi 'jug mi srid pa yin no //*

The blessings from the space-like expanse that is the very heart of the lama are like space. How could there be (*ga la srid*)<sup>902</sup> doubt one's very own mind does not infuse that kind of space? One should really, truly trust (*gsha' mar yid ches pa*) in thinking [in the way discussed

---

<sup>902</sup> The text reads "*ga la srid*" very distinctively; however it could be a mistake for "*gal srid*." The translation would then read, "If (*gal srid*) there is doubt one's very own mind does not infuse that kind of space, one should really, truly trust (*gsha' mar yid ches pa*) in thinking [in the way discussed above]."

above]. The requests should be cultivated from the depths of one's bones. When done in that way, it is impossible that the blessings are not infused.

*de ltar nyin mtshan thun bzhir longs par*<sup>903</sup> *gsol ba btab la / thun 'jog khar bla ma 'od du zhu nas rang gi spyi bo nas mar thim pas rang sems dang dbyer med du 'dres par bsam la rig pa khyab bdal chen po'i ngang*<sup>904</sup> *la lhug ge bzhag go / /*

In that way, having made one's requests at the conclusion of the four periods of day and night, right before (*khar*) the period of resting (*thun 'jog*), because the lama has melted (*zhu*) in light, dissolving downward from one's own crown, the contemplation mixing indivisibly with one's own mind, one rests loosely<sup>905</sup> in a state of great pervasive display of enlightened knowing.<sup>906</sup>

*rjes spyod lam rnam bzhi'i dus su dud tsam dran par bya / mos gus dud pa re bya'o / / de ka ltar yang nas yang du bskyangs pas mos gus chud pa dang byin rlabs zhugs te nyams myong dang rogs pa 'char bar 'gyur ba yin no / /*

[In one's] subsequent behaviour, one should remember only smoke (*dud pa*) in the four times. With longing and respect, one should hope for smoke (*dud pa re bya*). By nurturing again and again exactly like that, one is infused with blessings and engaged in (*chud pa*) longing and respect; experience and assistance will become apparent.

*gsum pa rkyen drag po la thog 'gel byas la bogs*<sup>907</sup> *dbyung ba ni / spyir yid yul na go ba yod pa tsam gyis mi chog ste / dgag sgrub kyi gnas la yang nas yang du bsre zhing rtsa la phyogs*

---

<sup>903</sup> Reading “*longs par*” for “*long par*.”

<sup>904</sup> Reading “*ngang*” for “*dang*.”

<sup>905</sup> “*lhug ge*,” a *myong tshig* similar to *glod de*.

<sup>906</sup> See parallel statement at 142.

<sup>907</sup> Reading “*bogs*” for “*phyogs*,” as per the earlier occurrence of the sentence in the outline.

*med du spyad*<sup>908</sup> *dgos / de ltar ma sbyangs na rkyen drag po dang 'phrad tsam na / dgra byung dus skyel mas por ba ltar blo tha mal du lus pas / 'gal rkyen byung dus nyid du thog 'gel byas la sems dang chos su bsre dgos so / /*

[8.1.3.1] Third, as for the extraction of profit from having finished the root in forceful conditions. Generally, a mind merely understanding that there is an object is insufficient; mixing [one's mind] again and again in the place of negation and affirmation (*dgag sgrub*), one should have impartial conduct at the root. When untrained in that way, if one merely encounters forceful conditions, at the time that enemies arise, because the mind (*blo*) is ordinarily left out (*tha mal du lus pas*) like that discarded (*por ba*) by an escort (*skyel ma*), at the very time that adverse conditions arise, it is necessary to mix the mind that has taken them [i.e., adverse conditions] on (*thog 'gel byas la sems*) with dharma.

*'dres pa tsam gyis kyang mi chog ste / rtsal phyogs med du ma sbyangs na / zag med kyi yon tan phyogs med du mi 'char bas / 'gal rkyen sna tshogs thog 'gel byas shing phyogs med du rtsal sbyang / rtsal sbyong ba la khrig kham bshigs na tshul 'chos kyis 'ching bas gad byung gi snang ba thad kar gcod cing spyod pa ci thod thod du spyad dgos pas*<sup>909</sup> / *'di ltar bsam par bya /*

Merely mixing [the mind and dharma] is also insufficient. When one's abilities are not trained without bias, the qualities lacking outflows (mental afflictions) do not appear without bias. Taking on various adverse conditions, one trains in the lack of bias. In one's training, when one is precisely (*khrig*) demolishing fragments (*kham*) through binding by establishing (*'chos*) a method, solid appearances (*gad byung gi snang ba*)<sup>910</sup> are directly cut (*thad kar gcod*);

---

<sup>908</sup> Reading “*spyad*” for “*sbyad*.”

<sup>909</sup> There is a possibility that puns are being used in this section of the Tibetan, with “*'chos*” (establishing, instituting), “*gcod*” and “*spyod*” all being employed in one line of text.

<sup>910</sup> Following Das (212), who includes “unalloyed” and “rock” as two possible translations for “*gad*,” I am

it is necessary to practice whatever conduct is the very highest (*ci thod thod*). One should think like this.

*bdag sangs rgyas*<sup>911</sup> *ma 'dod pa 'di 'khor ba thog ma med pa nas snang ba la bden par zhen nas / blang dor 'ga' zhig*<sup>912</sup> *byas te ro ma snyoms bas len 'dug / sems nyid gnas lugs la skye 'chi dang / gtsang btsog*<sup>913</sup> *dang / dgra gnyen la sogs pa gang yang grub pa mi 'dug pa la {600/154} ngas grub grub por bzung nas / bskyur ma nus / bsre ma nus pas len 'dug*<sup>914</sup> /

I, having clung to the truth in appearances from beginningless (*thog ma med pa*) samsāra with this disinterest (*ma 'dod pa*) in buddhahood, have accepted and rejected several times; because of not equalizing tastes, they are taken up (*len 'dug*). Birth and death, clean and dirty, friend and enemy, and so forth, anything such as these are non-existent in actuality; one's mind itself has grasped them as established things, they are established by me (*ngas grub grub por bzung*); unable to abandon [such things], because one is not capable of mixing [the values of these], they are taken up.

*da khyed rang ji ltar song bar song snyam du bsam zhing / gnyis su 'dzin pa'i rtog pa rgyangs kyis bskyur te / phaṭ phaṭ byas la / gang la yang nyam nga zhing bag tsha ba de dang bsres la snyems dang mbral gyi bar du yang dang yang du rtsal spyad do / /*

---

interpreting *gad byung gi snang ba* as “solid (or possibly “concrete”) appearances.”

<sup>911</sup> This looks like “*sangs rgyar*” in the text, but I think it must be “*sangs rgyas*.”

<sup>912</sup> Reading “‘*ga*’ *zhig*” for “‘*bga*’ *zhig*.”

<sup>913</sup> Reading “‘*btsog*” for “‘*rtsog*.”

<sup>914</sup> There is an unrecognizable mark in the blockprint below the “‘*dug*.”

Now, thinking about going just as you have gone, giving up an extended (*rkyangs*<sup>915</sup>) understanding of dualistic grasping, doing “phaṭ, phaṭ,” mixing intimidation and anxiety wherever, train repeatedly until separated (*mbral*<sup>916</sup>) from pride.

*de yang dang po rig pa la dar btags la lta ba'i rbad khams bskyed la / dgra sngang ba dang / bu gnyen dang / zas skom zhim mi zhim / mdze can dang / nad rims dang / ro bag dang / rnam snang lta bu skyug bro ba dang / nyam nga ba dang / skyo jigs thams cad la rtsis gdab med par mi phod brdzi / 'khri ba bcad / skyon ngos bzung / mtshangs yul nas bton la / blos rtsis gdab med par bsres la glod nas bzhang go / ngu ba dang / rgod pa dang / 'o dod 'bod pa la sogs pa smyon pa'i spyod pa byas la / khrig kha bskyur te / mi khyu nas phud la bzhang go / /*

Furthermore, first, the signs spreading in one's enlightened knowledge, producing the total expanse of the view: the hostility of enemies, the relation of sons, delicious and non-delicious food and drink, the smell and taste of vomit like the various appearances of having leprosy, the stages of illness, the contamination of corpses, all intimidations, miseries and fears, not being noticed (*rtsis gdab*), [they] are unable to bear down one one (*mi phod brdzi*). Severing obligations, identifying faults, exposing (*bton*) flawed objects, rest loosely having mixed [one's mind] without mental evaluation (*blos rtsis gdab med pa*). Abandoning face and propriety (*khrig kha bskyur*), and acting with crazy behaviour such as weeping, agitation, wailing, rest among a select portion of people.

*de ltar byas shing 'dod pa'i blo gang yang phugs su mi gzhus par / rkyag gtad med par g.yas med du bzhang go / de ltar yang dang yang du rtsal sbyangs pas / 'khrul pa btsan thabs su 'jig / zhen pa rang logs su 'gro / mos gus shugs 'byung du skye / mtshan ma rang grol du 'gro'o / /*

<sup>915</sup> I am interpreting this as a variation of the verb “*rkyongs*.”

<sup>916</sup> I am reading “*mbral*” as an archaic spelling of “*bral*.”

Acting like that, the mind of desire is not ultimately engaged in anything; rest with a reference point of dirtiness (*rkyag*), without a right side. In that way, by training repeatedly, one demolishes confusion through force (*btsan thabs su 'jig*), clinging becomes self-reversed, the occurrence of energetic longing and respect is generated, and the signs (*mtshan ma*) become self-liberated.

*des 'bras bu sku gsum thob bam zhe na / chos thams cad stong pa nyid du rtogs shing  
mngon du gyur pa ni chos kyi sku'o // de'i ngang nas smon lam gyi stobs kyis 'gro don ci yang  
'byung ba ni sprul pa'i sku'o // 'gro don phyogs bzhin du rtogs pa med pa / rtog pa med bzhin  
du 'gro don 'byung / de gnyis su med par longs spyod pa ni / longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku'o //  
sku gsum po de dbyer med / ngo bo bsam brjod las 'das pa gcig tu rtogs pa ni ngo bo nyid chos  
kyi sku'o //*

If one asks, is the effect through that the attainment of the three bodies? One who has understood and realized the emptiness of all things is the *dharmakāya*. From that state (realizing the emptiness of all things), that which occurs for the aims of beings through the power of aspiration is the *nirmāṇakāya*. That which occurs without biased understanding as to the aims of beings, that which occurs for the aims of beings without conceptuality, it is the non-dual resource, the *sambhogakāya*. The unique understanding of the three bodies as inseparable, an essence that transcends thought and expression is the *svabhavikadharmakāya* (*ngo bo nyid chos kyi sku*).

*thun mong ma {601/155} ma yin pa'i le lag brgyad rdzogs<sup>917</sup> so //*

The *Eight Uncommon Chapters* are completed.

---

<sup>917</sup> Reading “*rdzogs*” for “*rjogs*.”

**Appendix Six: *Khyad par gyi le lag brgyad pa*<sup>918</sup>**

{601/155} *Khyad par gyi le lag brgyad pa bzhugs /*

The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section [of Practical Instruction]

*rgyal ba'i yum la phyag 'tshal lo // A ma jo mo'i gdams pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin  
pa bdud kyi gcod yul khyad par gyi le lag 'di la brgyad de / 'jug pa skyabs 'gro sems bskyed  
dang / byin rlabs lus sems bral ba dang / sgom dran pa med cing yid la byar med pa dang /  
nyams len phung po gzan la bskyur ba dang / lta ba bdud kyi spyod yul du ma song ba dang / lus  
dang sems kyi gnas skabs kyi bar chad zhi bar bya ba'i gdams ngag dang / gcod kyi dam tshig  
bstan pa dang / nyams su blangs pa'i 'bras bu bstan pa'o //*

I pay homage to the Mother of the Victors. In this distinctive supplementary section, the Transcendent Wisdom teaching of the Mother and Lady, the Severance Realm of Negative Forces, this distinctively excellent supplementary section, there are eight [parts]. [1] The entrance (*'jug pa*): going for refuge, the conception of the spirit [of enlightenment].<sup>919</sup> [2] The blessings: the separation of the body and mind. [3] The meditative cultivation, without mindfulness and without mental activity. [4] The practice: the giving up of the mental and physical being<sup>920</sup> as food. [5] The view: not straying into the activity sphere of the Negative Forces. [6] The practical instruction: the pacification of temporary hindrances of body and mind. [7] The teaching of the Chöd commitments. [8] The teaching on the fruits of gaining experience.

*dang po 'jug pa skyabs 'gro sems bskyed la don gsum stel gang la 'jug pa dang / gang du  
'jug pa dang / ji ltar 'jug pa'o // gang la 'jug na yang dag pa'i lam phyin ci ma log pa la 'jug*

<sup>918</sup> In *Gdams ngag mdzod*, Vol. 14 (1979): 155-64, Vol. 9 (1971): 601-10. The latter edition has the slightly different title of *Khyad par gyi le lag brgyud [sic] pa*.

<sup>919</sup> *sems skyed; bodhicitta-utpāda*.

<sup>920</sup> *phung po; skandha*.

*pa'o // gang*<sup>921</sup> *'jug na theg pa chen po'i rigs can gyi gang zag rnam* *'jug pa'o // ji ltar 'jug na stong pa nyid dang snying rje*<sup>922</sup> *dbyer mi phyed pa'i ngang nas tshogs gnyis tshad med pa sogs la 'jug pa'o //*

[1a] First, there are three meanings to the entrance, going for refuge and conception of the spirit [of enlightenment]. [1.1] What one enters. [1.2] Who enters. [1.3] How one enters. [1.1.1] As to what one enters, one enters into the unmistaken, authentic path. [1.2.1] As for who enters, the persons who possess the Mahāyāna lineage (gene) enters. [1.3.1] As for how one enters, one enters from the state of emptiness and compassion inseparable, with immeasurable amounts of the two accumulations [i.e. merit and wisdom], and so forth.

*de la gnyis te / chos sgo 'byed pa'i skyabs 'gro sems bskyed dang / rgyun tu bsgom pa'i skyabs 'gro sems bskyed gnyis las / dang po ni / tshogs dang / gtor ma dang / mchod pa la sogs pa bya / skyabs 'gro yan lag brgyad pa byed pa'o //*

[1.3.1a] In that, there are two [kinds]: [1.1.3.1] the Dharma-door-opening refuge taking and spiritual conception, and [1.1.3.2] the ongoing meditational refuge taking and spiritual conceiving. [1.1.3.1.1] As for the first [kind], one should make host offerings, tormas offerings, and [general] offerings, and so forth, and [then] perform the eight-limbs of going for refuge.

*gnyis pa rgyun du bsgom pa'i skyabs 'gro sems bkyed ni / bdag la gnod par byed pa'i gdon 'dis gtsor byas pa'i sems can thams cad snying re rje bas rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas thob par bya / de'i ched du bdag gis skyabs 'gro la sogs pa'i dge sbyor bya snyam du sems bskyed / de ltar yang / theg pa 'di la nges par {602/156} 'byung 'dod na // 'gro ba kun la sems snyoms pha ma'i 'du shes bskyed / zhes so //*

---

<sup>921</sup> Reading “gang” for “gad.”

<sup>922</sup> Reading “snying rje” for “snyid rje.”



[1.1.3.2.1] As for the second [kind], the ongoing meditational refuge taking and spiritual conceiving, one should conceive the mind [of enlightenment] by thinking “I should perform virtuous activities such as taking refuge for the sake of the goal of attaining perfect buddhahood through feeling compassion for each of all sentient beings, taking this devil who harms me as chief among them.” Further, just like that, if you wish for definite transcendence in this vehicle, you must conceive the spirit of impartiality toward all beings as if they are your parents.

*de nas rang gi mdun du rin po che las grub pa'i khri yangs shing rgya che ba gcig bsgom / de'i steng du sna tshogs padma'i gdan zhig bsgom / de'i steng du zla ba'i dkyil 'khor zhig bsgom /*

Then, visualize (*bsgom*) a vast and spacious (*khri yangs shing rgya che ba*) throne made from made from precious jewels (*rin po che*) in front of yourself. Visualize a lotus-flower cushion of various lotuses on top of this. Visualize a moon maṇḍala on top of this.

*de'i steng du dbus su yum chen mo shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin ma sku mdog gser btso ma'i mdog lta bu / zhal gcig phyag bzhi ma / zhabs skyil mo krung du bzhugs pa / phyag g.yas kyi dang po na gser gyi rdo rje rtse lnga pa bsnams pa / gyon gyi dang po ni mnyam bzhag gi phyag rgya mdzad pa / 'og ma gnyis shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i pu sti bsnams pa / sku la rin po che'i rgyan rnam pa sna tshogs pas brgyan pa zhig bzhugs par bsgom /*

On top of that, in the middle, is the Great Mother, Prajñāpāramitā, her body the color of pure gold dust, with one face and four arms, sitting with crossed legs. Her first right hand holds a golden vajra with five points. Her first left hand makes the gesture of equipoise. She holds a bound volume (*pu sti*<sup>923</sup>) of the *Prajñāpāramitā* in her lower two [hands]. Visualize her sitting, her body adorned by various precious jeweled ornaments.

---

<sup>923</sup> For the Sanskrit *pustikaḥ*, Tibetan *glegs bam*.

*de'i rtsar bcom ldan 'das rgyal ba shaakya thub pa / de'i rtsar A ma jo mo lab kyi sgron ma bsgom / sku lus chung la sku sha dkar ba / sku gzi brjid can / zhal 'dzum bag dang bcas pa gcig bzhugs par bsgom / de'i rtsar sras rgyal ba don grub dang / 'gro mgon thod smyon bsam 'grub gnyis rten rnal 'byor pa'i cha lugs su bzhugs pa / dbu skra li ba / zhal ras smug pa / sku gzi brdzid dang bcas pa / zhal 'dzum bag dang bcas nas bzhugs par bsgom / gzhan yang rang gi rtsa ba dang brgyud par bcas pa'i bla ma rnams kyang bzhugs par bsgom / bla ma de rnams kyi g.yas na dpa' bo<sup>924</sup> / g.yon na 'phags pa nyan thos kyi dge 'dun / mdun na mkha' 'gro ma'i tshogs dpag tu med pa bzhugs par bsgoms la /*

Near her (*de'i rtsar*) is the Victorious Lord Śākyamuni. Near him, visualize the Queen Mother Labki Drönma (*Lab kyi sgron ma*); her body is small and its complexion is pale, shining with brilliant energy (*gzi brjid can*); smiling, she is sitting alone. Near her are her sons, Gyalwa Döndrüp (*Rgyal ba don grub*) and Savior of Beings Thönyön Samdrüp (*'gro mgon<sup>925</sup> Thod smyon bsam 'grub*), sitting on two seats dressed (*cha lugs*) as yogins. Visualize them sitting with well-arranged hair (*dbu skra li ba*), bronzed countenances, their bodies shining with brilliance, smiling. Furthermore, also visualize seated [columns of] your own root and lineage lamas. On the right side of these lamas are the heroes.<sup>926</sup> On the left side is the virtuous community of noble disciples.<sup>927</sup> In front, visualize measureless host of *dākiṇīs*.

*skyabs su 'gro ba bya ste / bdag dang nam mkha'i mtha' dang mnyam pa'i sems can thams cad dus 'di nas bzung ste ji srid sangs ma {603/157} rgyas kyi bar du / yum chen mo shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin ma la phyag 'tshal zhing skyabs su mchi'o / / bcom ldan 'das rgyal ba*

<sup>924</sup> Reading “*dpa' bo*” for “*dpa' po*.”

<sup>925</sup> Lit. “protector of migrators.”

<sup>926</sup> Sanskrit: *vīra*, counterpart to the *mkha' 'gro ma* (Skt. *dākiṇī*).

<sup>927</sup> The saṅgha of *ārya śrāvaka*.

*shaakya thub pa la phyag 'tshal zhing skyabs su mchi'o' // ma cig jo mo lab kyī sgron ma la*  
*[phyag 'tshal zhing skyabs su mchi'o'] // sras rgyal ba don grub la [phyag 'tshal zhing skyabs su*  
*mchi'o'] // 'gro mgon thod smyon bsam 'grub la [phyag 'tshal zhing skyabs su mchi'o'] // phyogs*  
*bcu'i sangs rgyas la [phyag 'tshal zhing skyabs su mchi'o'] // chos la [phyag 'tshal zhing skyabs*  
*su mchi'o'] // dge'dun la [phyag 'tshal zhing skyabs su mchi'o'] // bla ma rin po che la [phyag*  
*'tshal zhing skyabs su mchi'o'] // yi dam gyi lha tshogs rnams la [phyag 'tshal zhing skyabs su*  
*mchi'o'] // dpa' po dang dpa' mo rnams la phyag 'tshal zhing skyabs su mchi'o' // zhes gus pa*  
*dang bcas pas lan gsum bya'o' // de ltar yang lung las / sangs rgyas chos dang 'phags pa'i dge*  
*'dun skyabs song ste / zhes pas so //*

One should go for refuge, [reciting thus]: “I and all the sentient beings equivalent to the limits of space, from this time on, for as long as we have not become enlightened (*sangs ma rgyas*), pay homage and go for refuge to the Great Mother Prajñāpāramitā. I pay homage and go for refuge to the Lord and Victor Śākyamuni. I pay homage and go for refuge to the Queen Machig Labkyi Drönma. I pay homage and go for refuge to the Victorious Son Döndrüp. I pay homage and go for refuge to Savior of Beings, Thönyön Samdrüp. I pay homage and go for refuge to the buddhas of the ten directions. I pay homage and go for refuge to the Dharma. I pay homage and go for refuge to the virtuous community (*saṅgha*). I pay homage and go for refuge to the precious lama. I pay homage and go for refuge to the assembly of personal deities (*yi dam gyi lha tshogs rnams*). I pay homage and go for refuge to the heroes and heroines.” One should say this respectfully three times. In this way, it is also taught in the authoritative transmission [from the Buddha] (*lung; āgama*), “Having gone for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Noble Saṅgha.”

*de nas rang gi lus 'di kha zas ro brgya dang ldan pa / dkar pa / snum pa / lci ba / 'bol ba / blos 'khyud tshad tsam du bsgom la / lag pa g.yas na shes rab kyi ral gri yod par bsam la / yan lag gi dang po mgo yin pas rke nas rbad kyis bcad nas / bla ma dkon mchog rnam la mchod par phul bas / shin tu dgyes nas gsol bar bsam / de bzhin du brang dbrog pa'i gnad<sup>928</sup> du don snying lnga la sogs pa bcug nas phul bas dgyes shing gsol bar bsam /*

Then, as for one's body, it is food with one thousand tastes: mild (*dkar pa*; literally "white"), oily, heavy, soft. Visualize to the degree (*tshad tsam*) one's mind can hold. Think that there is a sword of wisdom in the right hand; the first part that is the head, having cut right through (*rbad kyis bcad nas*) from the neck (*rke nas*), by making an offering to the lama and the [Three] Jewels, think "may this give you great pleasure" (*shin tu dgyes nas gsol bar bsam*). Likewise, having broken into (*drog pa*)<sup>929</sup> the vital [region of] the chest, having entered into the five vital organs (i.e., the heart, lungs, liver, spleen, and kidneys), and so forth, think "may you be pleased by this offering."

*yang ro smad rkang pa dang bcas pa phul bas shin tu dgyes par bsam / de'i rjes la skyabs 'gro'i bla ma dang dkon mchog la sogs pa'ang yid la mi bya / rang gi lus po'ang yid<sup>930</sup> la mi byed / 'das pa'i rjes mi bcad / ma 'ongs pa'i son mi bsu bar / da ltar gyi shes pa gang la'ang mi 'dzin par<sup>931</sup> rang lugs su bcas bcos mi byed par 'bol le shigs se bzhag go / /*

As well, by offering the lower body together with the marrow,<sup>932</sup> think of great pleasure.

---

<sup>928</sup> Reading "gnad" for "nad," as per recommendation by Robert Thurman.

<sup>929</sup> Reading "dbrog pa" as archaic for "'phrog pa," "to steal, to plunder."

<sup>930</sup> Reading "yid" for "yad."

<sup>931</sup> Reading "'dzin pa" for "'jin pa."

<sup>932</sup> Possibly a reference to marrow as one of the seven bodily constituents.

Following that, don't think of the lama and Three Jewels of going for refuge. As well, do not think of your physical body (*lus po*). Do not hanker after the remains of the past, do not anticipate the future, do not hold onto the present either—do not fabricate anything as your condition, just remain very relaxed (*'bol le shigs se bzhag*).<sup>933</sup>

*de la shes pa gnas bdo'i dus na'ang sems bskyed sngar bzhin bya / bla ma dkon mchog mdun du bsgoms la skyabs {604/158} 'gro lan gcig bya / lus mchod par phul / sems gnas lugs kyi steng du bzhag go /*

Further, even at such a time of your consciousness (*shes pa*) being destroyed (*gnas mdo*), you should generate the mind as before. You should take refuge once again, thinking of the lama and the Three Jewels before you. Make an offering of your body and leave your mind resting in its natural condition.

*de lta bu lan gsum la thun gcig byas pa'i / srod<sup>934</sup> la thun gcig / nam phyed<sup>935</sup> thun gcig / tho rang thun gcig / snga gro thun gcig / nyi ma phyed thun gcig / dgongs mo thun gcig / de ltar nyin zhag gcig la thun drug tu byas te / de las mang bar yang mi bya / nyung bar yang mo bya'o //*

Like that, do the activity three times in one session: one session at dusk (*srod*),<sup>936</sup> one session at midnight, one session at dawn, one session at morning (*snga gro*), one session at midday, one session in the evening (*dgongs mo*). In that way, one makes six sessions in one day. One should not do more than that; one should also not do fewer.

---

<sup>933</sup> This latter clause has been translated according to the recommendation of Robert Thurman.

<sup>934</sup> Reading “*srod*” for “*srong*.”

<sup>935</sup> Reading “*nam phyed*” for “*nam pyed*.”

<sup>936</sup> This refers to ancient ideas regarding the receptivity and responsiveness of the mind and body to different natural periods of the day and thus the best times of day for practice.

*de la byang chub mchog tu sems bskyed pa dang / skyabs 'gro byed pa dang / lus mchod  
par 'bul ba'<sup>937</sup> rgyu bsod nams kyi tshogs yin / rjes la gnas lugs ma bcos pa'i ngang la 'jog pa  
'bras bu ye shes kyi tshogs yin pas / nyams len 'di gcig pus kyang chog pa yin no / /*

As for that, generating the supreme mind of enlightenment, going for refuge and the offering of the body constitute the cause for the store of merit, and afterward, the resting in the unfabricated state is the fruitional store of intuitive wisdom. Therefore, this practice, even alone, is sufficient.

*gnyis pa byin brlabs lus sems phral ba la gnyis te / ngo sprod kyi ngo sprod dang / rgyun  
du bsgom pa'i ngo sprod do /*

[2a] Second, the blessings, the separation of body and mind, has two parts. [2.1] The identifying identification (*ngo sprod kyi ngo sprod*), and [2.2] the continuous meditation identification (*rgyun du bsgom pa*).

*ngo sprod kyi ngo sprod la gsum ste / sbyor ba lus la zhen pa spang ba dang / dngos gzhi  
lus sems bral ba dang / rjes la sems chos nyid kyi dbyings nas nam mkha' lta bur ngo sprod  
cing /*

[2.1a] The identifying identification has three parts. [2.1.1] The prelude of abandoning attachment to the body; [2.1.2] the actual practice of separating the body and the mind; [2.1.3] and the follow-up identification of the mind as space-like from the realm of reality.

*nyams kyi 'char tshul bstan pa ni / dang po ni / tshogs dang gtor ma sngon du byas la /  
skyabs 'gro sems bskyed la sogs pa chos sgo 'byed pa'i skyabs 'gro sems bskyed ltar byas la / de  
nas bla ma des slob ma la me tog dbul te / mdun du langs nas rkang pa gnyis gshibs / lag pa  
gnyis thal mo smin mtshams su sbyar /*

---

<sup>937</sup> Reading “‘bul ba” for “‘brul ba.”

As for teaching the way experience arises, first making host and tormas offerings, go for refuge and generate the mind and so forth, doing so with the process of Dharma-door-opening going for refuge and mind generation. Then, the lama offers flowers to the disciple [who] should stand in front, with [her] two feet together and the palms of [her] hands joined together at the point between [her] eyebrows.

*lus drang por bsrang la / dang po phung po la gzhiḡ ‘grel btang ste / bdag gi lus ‘di mi  
{605/159} gtsang ba’i rdzas sum cu rtsa gnyis las grub pa / rang khrag gi rkyal pa<sup>938</sup> / rus pa’i  
dum bu ‘thud pa / chu rgyus kyi drva ba / ‘di lta bu la chags shing zhen par gyur pas ‘khor ba’i  
sdug bsngal nyams su myong ba yin te / da ni ma chags ma zhen par bya dgos snyams du bsams  
la /*

When you have straightened your body, first, you should [mentally] let go of the mind-body as dissected parts, thinking “This body of mine is made out of thirty-two unclean substances, a sack of my own blood, a wound-up bundle of bones, a network of muscles. Through attachment and clinging to such, I experience of the suffering of saṃsāra. Now I must not have attachment and clinging!”

*de nas dngos gzhi lus dang sems dbral ba ni / rang gi rkang pa’i mthil gnyis su sems kyi  
ngo bo snang la rang bzhin med pa chu nang gi zla ba lta bu gcig bsgom ste /*

[2.1.2a] Then, as for the actual practice of separating the body and mind, you visualize the actuality of your mind in the soles of your both your feet, appearing there without substantial reality, like the moon [reflected] in water.

*gsus pa rgal pa la sbyar te lus dang sems gnyis drag tu bsgril nas / ‘og rlung steng du  
drangs la / chu zla lta bu de yar la dkar na ra ra byung bas / brla’i rtsa bo che’i nang nas yar la*

---

<sup>938</sup> Reading “*rkyal pa*” for “*rkyal ba*.”

*dkar na ra ra byung bas / lte ba'i thad ka'i byang khog nang du gnyis po gcig tu 'dus te / dkar hri li li 'dug pa la dmigs pa drag tu gtad /*

Draw the stomach to touch the backbone, draw tightly together the body and mind, draw the lower winds upward, and that water-moon-like [mind], [as a] white [drop] rises continuously upward within the great channel of the thigh, [as an other] white [drop also] rises upward continuously (*na ra ra*), and both are united within the torso (*byang khog*) in front of the navel chakra, where your mind is focused strongly, condensed (*hri li li*) into the white [drop].<sup>939</sup>

*de nas yang dkar na ra ra byung nas / snying kha nas yar byung / mgrin pa nas yar byung nas / spyi bo<sup>940</sup> tshangs pa'i bu gar sangs kyis byung bar bsgom / tshangs bug 'phang lo 'bring po'i mig gi tshad tsam dkar sang de yod par bsgom la / dag tu phat ces drag tu brjod pas / chu zla lta bu de nyid de nas nam mkha' la dkar na ra ra 'gro tshad la btang ngo / /*

Following that, the white [drop] continuously arises, rising above the heart. Having risen above the throat, visualize that it arises through purification (*sangs kyis*) through the brahṃa aperture (Skt. *brahṃārandra*) at the crown of one's head. Visualize that the brahṃa aperture chakra (*'phang lo*) is about the size of the middle eye and it is purified white. Through a strong exclamation of the word “*phaṭ,*” just like the moon in water (*chu zla lta bu de nyid de nas*), the white [drop] continuously moves in space.

*mi 'gro snyams sems pa dang / dkar hri le 'dug pa la ma yengs par bsgom la / rjes la do sprod pa ni / de nas rgya je cher song bas / nam mkhas gar khyab rig pas khyab / rig pas gar khyab nam mkhas khyab par bsam la / bsgom mi bsgom gyi rtog pa med par rang lugs su lhod*

<sup>939</sup> Usually the sense of passages similar to this is that the practitioner imagines the mind in two white drops in each foot that rise up through the channels of the legs and merge at the central chakra at the level of the navel.

<sup>940</sup> Reading “*spyi bo*” for “*sbyi bo*.”



*kyis glod la bz'bag go // de ltar yang / 'di ni nam mkha'i khams dang mtshungs te dbyer med dpyad du med / ces so //*

Your mind reflecting on not moving, visualize without distraction that it [your mind] is present in the condensed white [drop]. Following the connection of the pair (*do sprod pa*) [of drops], it then becomes vastly bigger (*rgya je cher song bas*), [and is] pervaded by enlightened knowing (*rig pa*) as pervasive as space. Contemplate the pervasion of space pervaded by enlightened knowing; without conceptualizing visualization or non-visualization, rest in loosening by relaxing in your own natural condition. Moreover, it is also said, “As for this, it is equivalent with the realm of space: indivisible, immeasurable.”<sup>941</sup>

*de ltar bsgoms pas nyams rnam pa gsum 'char te / dbang po rab la spros bral gyi nyams {606/160} 'char † dbang po 'bring la thod rgal gyi nyams 'char / dbang po tha ma la shugs can gyi nyams 'char / de la dgongs nas ma gcig gi zhal nas / grims gyis bsgrim la lhod kyis glod / bsgom pa'i gnad cig de na gda' / gsungs /*

[2.1.3a] In that way, the experience through visualizing arises in three ways. [2.1.3.1] For the highest faculties, an experience of freedom from elaboration (*spros bral*<sup>942</sup>) arises †. [2.1.3.2] For the mediocre faculties, an experience of Direct Crossing (*thod rgal*<sup>943</sup>) arises.<sup>944</sup> [2.1.3.3] For the lowest faculties, an experience of possessing strength (*shugs can*) arises. Having that in mind, Ma chig said, “As for what has been concentrated by tightening, relax by loosening. The pith of meditative cultivation is like that.”

<sup>941</sup> Thus far, I have not been able to locate a source for this reference.

<sup>942</sup> Often used as a technical term in Mahāmudrā teachings in reference to the second of the four Mahāmudrā yogas.

<sup>943</sup> Often used as a technical term in Dzokchen teachings.

<sup>944</sup> Here we find a suggestion that to some degree Chöd considers the Dzokchen practice of *thod rgal* as a mediocre method and the second Mahāmudrā yoga practice of *Spros bral* as the method for those with the highest faculties. I have not been able to locate an explicit reference for the cited material.

*gnyis pa rgyun du bsgom pa'i ngo sprod ni / lus gang bde'i spyod lam byas la / dmigs pa  
rlung sems 'dus pa'i ngo bo snang la rang bzhin med pa chu nang gi zla ba lta bu ste lte ba'i 'og  
tsam du bsgom la gong ma bzhin shes bar bya'o //*

[2.2.1] Second, the introduction of continuous meditative cultivation. The body, doing whatever comfortable activity,<sup>945</sup> should be known as before—a mental image of an essence composed of winds and mind, its appearance without self-nature, like the moon [reflected] in water, visualized just below the navel.

*gsum pa bsgom dran pa med cing yid la byar med pa ni / rkang pa rdo rje'i skyil krung  
bca' / lag pa myam bzhag gi phyag rgya bya / sgäl tshig drang por bsrang / mgrin pa yid tsam  
dgu bar bya / mig sna'i rtse mo la gtad la / sems 'das pa'i rjes mi bcad / ma 'ongs pa'i sngon mi  
bsu / da ltar gyi shes pa gang yang yid la mi byed par / rang lugs su / 'bol le / shig ge / had de /  
tshom me / bsgom bya sgom byed kyi rtog dpyod thams cad dang bral la bzhag go //*

[3.1] Third, meditative cultivation without mindfulness and without mental activity. Place the legs in *vajrāsana* (*rdo rje'i skyil krung*; vajra cross-legged posture/full lotus).<sup>946</sup> The hands should be in the position/mudrā of equipoise. The spine is straightened. The neck (*mgrin pa*, literally “throat”) and mind (*yid*)<sup>947</sup> should be inclined a little. The eyes should be focused on the tip of one’s nose. The mind (*sems*) does not decide the future of the past; the past of the future is unprecedented. Understanding the present, nothing whatsoever is constructed in the mind (*yid*); one meditatively cultivates in one’s own way, softly (*'bol le*), very loosely (*shig ge*),

<sup>945</sup> Note the later occurrence of the phrase “*gang bde'i spyod lam*.”

<sup>946</sup> This corresponds to five of the seven characteristics of the traditional meditative posture of Vairocana, each of which has different effects on the subtle body and its functioning.

<sup>947</sup> “*yid*,” perhaps meaning “*mgo ba*,” “head.”

openly (*had de*), confidently (*tshoms me*), resting in freedom from all coarse and subtle considerations (*rtog dpyod thams cad*) of meditative activity.<sup>948</sup>

*de ltar yang lung las / gang dran pa med cing yid la byar med pa ni sangs rgyas rjes su dran pa'o // zhes pa dang / gzugs nas rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid kyi bar du yid la ma bya'o // zhes pa dang /*

In that way, moreover, from the authoritative transmissions (*lung; āgama*), it is said “Without any mindfulness and without mental activity, one has the recollection of the buddha (*snags rgyas rjes su dran pa*).” It is also said that, “There should be no activity in the mind (*yid*) from form to omniscience.”

*shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa yid la mi byed pa nyid pas chos thams cad yid la mi byed pa nyid do // shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa mnyam pa nyid pas chos thams cad mnyam pa nyid do // shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa skye ba med pa nyid pas chos thams cad skye ba med pa nyid do // shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'gag pa med pa nyid pas chos thams cad 'gag pa med pa nyid do // zhes 'phags pa chos 'phags kyi byang chub sems {607/161} dpa' rtag tu du la byas so //*

“Because the perfection of wisdom (*shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa, prajñāpāramitā*) is uncreatedness (*mi byed pa nyid*) in the mind (*yid*), all things are non-creation itself in the mind. Because the perfection of wisdom is equality (*mnyam pa nyid*),<sup>949</sup> all things are equality. Because the perfection of wisdom is birthlessness (*skye ba med pa nyid*), all things are birthlessness. Because the perfection of wisdom is ceaseless (*'gag pa med pa nyid pa*), all things are ceaseless.” Through the noble teaching by the noble one, the bodhisattvas always focus in that way.

<sup>948</sup> That is, without employing *vipaśyanā* techniques.

<sup>949</sup> “Equality” is here a synonym for “emptiness” (*stong pa nyid*).

*shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa bsgom pa nyid ni chos thams cad bsgom pa'o // zhes pas  
/ 'di ni skyabs 'gro'i rjes dang / lus sems dbral ba'i rjes dang / gzan bskyur gyi rjes dang / lta ba  
bdud kyi spyod<sup>950</sup> yul du ma shor ba'i rjes dang / dus thams cad du bsgom pa'o //*

It is said, “As for the meditative cultivation itself of the perfection of wisdom, one meditatively cultivates all things.” As for this, after going for refuge, after separating (*dbral*) body and mind, after giving [one’s body] as food, after not straying in the realm of activity of the negative forces of the view, one meditatively cultivates at all times.

*spyir<sup>951</sup> gzan du bskyur pa la don rnam pa gsum ste / sbyor ba snying rje dang byams pa  
bsgom pa dang / dngos gzhi rang gi lus phar phyin drug ldan du sbyin par btang ba dang / rjes  
bla na med pa'i byang chub tu bsngo ba byed pa'o //*

[4.1] Generally, the meaning of giving [the aggregates] as food has three parts. [4.1.1] The prelude of meditatively cultivating compassion and loving-kindness; [4.1.2] the main practice of engaging in the practice of giving one’s own body possessed of the six perfections; and [4.1.3] the follow-up of making the dedication to the unsurpassed spirit of enlightenment.

*dang po ni / bdag la gnod par byed pa'i gdon 'dis gtsor byas pa'i sems can thams cad  
snying re rje / snying rje bas bdag gi lus 'di sbyin par btang dgos snyam du bsgom pa dang /  
gnod byed la sogs kyis gtsor byas bgegs rigs stong phrag brgyad cu la sogs pa mdun du thibs se  
byung bar bsgom la /*

[4.1.1.1] As for the prelude, feeling compassion for all sentient beings, making foremost those negative influences that have caused harm to oneself. Through compassion meditatively cultivate the thought, “I must make an offering of this body of mine.” Visualize that 80,000

---

<sup>950</sup> Reading “*spyod*” for “*sbyod*.”

<sup>951</sup> Reading “*spyir*” for “*sbyir*.”

types of obstructors, and so forth, made foremost by the harmdoers and so forth, arise in a swarm in front of oneself.

*de nas dngos gzhi la / rang gi lus po 'di shin tu che ba gcig tu bskyed do // lag pa g.yas  
na shes rab kyi rol gri gcig bsgoms nas / rang gi rke nas phar rbad bcad nas sbyin par btang bas  
/ gnod byed la sogs bas sha la dga bas sha la za / khrag la dga' ba khrag la 'thung / rus pa la  
dga ba rus pa mur bar bsgom /*

[4.1.2.1] Then, in the main practice, one generates one's own body as very large. Having visualized a sword of wisdom (*shes rab kyi rol gri*) in one's right hand, having totally cut through one's own neck, one makes an offering. Visualize those harmdoers who like meat eating the meat, those who like blood drinking the blood, those who like bones gnawing the bones.

*de nas brang phog pa'i nang du don snying lnga la sogs pa bcug nas byin pas gong bzhin  
za bar bsgom / ro stod lag pa dang bcas pa dang / ro smad rkang pa {608/162} bcas pa dang /  
thams cad sbyin par btang bas gnod byed la sogs pa rnams sha la dga' bas sha la za / khrag la  
dga' ba khrag la 'thung / rus pa la dga' pa rus pa 'cha' bar bsgom la / lus lhag ma til 'bru tsam  
ma lus par ril por zos par bsgom mo //*

Then, through giving, having placed (*bcug*) the five vital organs and so forth within the penetrated chest (*brang phog pa*), one visualizes the food (*za*) as before (*gong bzhin*). The upper body is together with the hands, the lower body together is with the legs. Having given it all, visualize the harmdoers and so forth that like meat as eating the meat, that like blood as drinking the blood, that like bones as chewing on the bones. Visualize that the whole body has been consumed (*ril por zos pa*) without even as much as a sesame seed remaining.

*de'i rjes la / sems 'das pa'i rjes mi bcad / ma 'ongs pa'i sngon mi bsu / da ltar gyi shes  
pa gang yang yid la mi byed par 'bol le<sup>952</sup> shig gi bshag go // de nas snying rje bsgom lus gzan  
du bskyur / sems gnas lugs kyi ngang la bzhag go // de ltar re mos su khor ro ro nyin rtser /  
mtshan yal gyis bsgom mo //*

Following that, the mind (*sems*) does not hanker after the past, does not anticipate the future, and does not notice the present. You rest softly and very loosely. Then, meditatively cultivating compassion you give your body as food; the mind rests in the state of reality (*gnas lugs*). In that way, visualize the tip of day and the fading away of night cycling (*khoro ro*) in turn (*re mos*).

*rjes bla na med pa'i byang chub tu bsngo ba ni / thun 'jog pa'i dus su / sangs rgyas chos  
dang tshogs kyi mchog rnam la / byang chub bar du bdag nyid skyabs su mchi / bdag gi sbyin  
sogs bgyis pa' bsod nams kyi / 'gro la phan phyir sangs rgyas 'grub par shog / ces lan gsum  
bya / gang bde'i spyod lam bya'o //*

[4.1.3] As for the follow-up of making the dedication to the unsurpassed spirit of enlightenment: at the time of entering a session, you should say three times, “I myself go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma, and the supreme assembly (*tshogs kyi mchog rnam*; *gaṇānāmagraṃ*) until enlightenment. By the merit of the actions including the giving of myself for the benefit of beings, may I attain buddhahood.” Your activity should be comfortable!

*de yang dang po snying rje dang byams pa bsgom pa sbyor ba / gzan bskyur dang gnas  
lugs la 'jog pa dngos gzhi / bsngo ba byed pa rjes so //*

---

<sup>952</sup> Reading “*bol*” for “*do la*,” as per the similar section above.

[4.2] Additionally, [4.2.1] the prelude of the meditative cultivation of compassion and loving kindness; [4.2.2] the main practice of giving [the body] as food and resting in reality; [4.2.3] and the follow-up of the dedication.<sup>953</sup>

*de ltar snying rje dang byams pa zhe sdang gi gnyen por 'gro / gdon pho gdon dang / nad gzer zug zhi bar byed / gzan bskyur byas pas 'dod chags kyi gnyen por 'gro / nad ldad dub dang / mo gdon zhi bar byed / gnas lugs kyi ngang la bzhas pas gti mug gi gnyen por 'gro / klu gdon dang nad bying can zhi bar byed do //*

[4.2.1.1] In that way, one's compassion and loving-kindness becomes an antidote to aggression, pacifying negative influences, male negative influences (*pho gdon*), illness, pain and discomfort. One's giving [the body] as food becomes an antidote for desire and attachment, pacifying infection (*nad ldad*), exhaustion, and female negative influences (*mo gdon*). One's resting in the state of reality (*gnas lugs*) becomes an antidote for delusion (*gti mug*), pacifying nāga negative forces (*klu gdon*) and illnesses accompanied by depression (*nad bying can*).

*de yang lus gzan du bskyur ba sbyin pa'i pha rol tu phyin pa / de sems can gyi don du gtong bas tshul khrims / khong khro med par gtong bas bzod pa / yang dang yang du gtong bas {609/163} brtson 'grus / ma yengs par gtong bas bsam gtan / rjes gnas lugs stong pa nyid kyi ngang du 'jog pas shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'o //*

[4.2.2.1] Furthermore, the giving of the body as food is the perfection of giving (*sbyin pa*). It is [the perfection of] moral discipline (*tshul khrims*) because one gives for the sake of sentient beings. It is [the perfection of] forbearance (*bzod pa*) because one gives without anger. Because one gives again and again, it is [the perfection of] perseverance (*brtson 'grus*). Because one gives without distraction, it is [the perfection of] concentration (*bsam gtan*). Subsequently

---

<sup>953</sup> This does not get elaborated in distinction to the general practice instructions above on 608/162.

because one rests in the state of reality and emptiness, it is the perfection of wisdom (*shes rab*).<sup>954</sup>

*gnyis pa bye brag tu gzan la bskyur ba ni / rang gi mig lta bu na na / mig na ba'i sems  
can snying re rje / de rnams kyi mig nad zhi par byed pa'i ched du / bdag gi mig sbyin pa btang  
dgos snyam du bsgom la / bgegs rigs stong phrag brgyad cu la sogs mdun du byung bar bsam ste  
/ rang gi mig sbyin par btang la / sems gang du'ang mi rtog par 'jog pa gong dang 'dra'o // de  
bzhin du lag pa la sogs pa gang na ba la bya'o //*

[4.2.2.1a] There are two particularities to giving [of the body as food]. [4.2.2.1.1]

Feeling compassion toward sentient beings with eye illnesses as if the illness is of one's own eyes, meditatively cultivate the thought that it is necessary to give one's own eyes for the purpose of pacifying the eye illnesses of these [people]. [4.2.2.1.2] Thinking that eighty thousand types of obstructors (*bgegs*) arise in front of one, give one's own eyes, the mind rests without thought anywhere, as if it is above (*gong dang 'dra*). Similarly, one should act [as if there are] such illnesses in the hands and so forth.

*lnga ba lta ba bdud kyi spyod yul du ma shor ba ni / de ltar nyams su len pa la lha 'dre'i  
bar chad 'ong te / de yang rab gzugs ston pa'i cho 'phrul dang / 'bring skad 'don pa'i cho 'phrul  
dang / tha ma 'dres gnon pa'i cho 'phrul dang / rmi lam gyi cho 'phrul dang bzhi 'byung ngo //*

[5a] Fifth, as for the view that does not stray into the activity sphere of the negative forces, with regard to that, deities and demons will come to interfere in one's practice. Furthermore, [5.1] to the superior [practitioner] there are apparitions of the forms of teachers (*rab gzugs ston pa*), [5.2] to the mediocre [practitioner] there are apparitions of loud voices (*'bring skad 'don pa*), and [5.3] to the common [practitioner] there are apparitions of being

---

<sup>954</sup> This section provides an argument for how the act of giving one's body fulfills all six of the perfections.



overcome by various malicious spirits (*tha ma 'dres gnon pa*); these occur with the four types of dream apparitions.

*de rnams rab kyis gnas lugs kyi steng du bzhag pa ni / lha 'dre'i cho 'phrul de rnams gang byung yang / rang gi sems kyi cho 'phrul du shes par byas la / cho 'phrul yid la mi byed / shes pa rang lugs su lhod kyis glod la / 'bol le † shig ge bzhag pas lha 'dre'i cho 'phrul thams cad rang zhi / rang grol nas slar chos nyid kyi grogs su 'char ro //*

[5.1.1] As for these superior ones resting above reality, whichever of these apparitions of deities and demons occur, moreover, they are understood as apparitions of one's own mind (*sems*). Not creating apparitions in one's mind (*yid*), relaxing by loosening in one's own way of knowing, by resting softly (*'bol le*) and loosely (*shig ge*), all the apparitions of deities and demons are self-pacified. After one's self-liberation, they appear as natural companions (*chos nyid kyi grogs*).

*'bring gis lus sems dbral ba ni / lha 'dre'i cho 'phrul de rnams gang byung yang / lus sems shag gis phral nas / sems nam mkha' la bun gyis btang nas / shes pa stong sangs kyis song nas / lha 'dre'i cho 'phrul stong sangs kyis 'gro'o //*

[5.2.1] As for the separation of body and mind by the mediocre [practitioner], whatever of these apparitions of deities and demons occur, moreover, having completely (*shag gis*) separated body and mind, the mind having been released by disappearing (*bun*) in space, your awareness having gone into a pure emptiness, any apparitions of deities and demons will become a pure emptiness.

*tha mas phung po gzan du bskyur ba la lha 'dre'i cho {610/164} 'phrul de rnams gang byung yang / nga'i lus 'di 'dod na da lta khyer zhid snyam du bu bsam nas / lus lings kyis bskyur*

*la / sems rang lugs su lhod kyis glod nas bzhag pas / / shes pa stong<sup>955</sup> sangs kyis song nas / lha  
‘dre’i cho ‘phrul stong sangs kyis ‘gro bar ‘gyur ro / /*

[5.3.1] When the ordinary [practitioner] gives up the body-mind aggregates as food, whichever of these apparitions of deities or demons arise, then [the practitioner] has the thought “if [you] desire this body of mine, take it now!,” and should utterly abandon the body, because her mind rests having relaxed by loosening into its own natural condition, her awareness having gone into pure emptiness, the apparitions of deities and demons will become a pure emptiness.

*mdor na lta ba bdud kyi spyod yul du ma song ba ni / lha ‘dre’i cho ‘phrul gang byung  
yang dge sbyar gyi grogs su shes na / lta ba bdud kyi spyod yul du ma shor ba’o / / de ltar ma  
shes pa cho ‘phrul rang rgyud du bzung na / lta ba bdud kyi spyod yul du song ba’o / / gal te lta  
ba bdud kyi spyod yul du song na gdams pa la nan tan bya zhing / shes rab kyis rang bzhin med  
par gtan la dbab bo / /*

In brief, as for your view not straying into the experiential domain of negative forces, whatever arises as apparitions of deities and demons, when understood as assistants of spiritual practice, your view will not become lost in the experiential domain of negative forces. In that way, if you do not understand that the apparitions are (only) upheld in your own mental continuum, your view will go into the experiential domain of negative forces. Should it be that your view strays into the experiential domain of negative forces, when you intensify your attention (*nan tan bya*) to the instructions, your wisdom (*shes rab; prajñā*) can determine that they are without any intrinsic reality.

*drug po lus dang sems kyi ‘phral gyi bar chad zhi bar bya ba ni / bla ma’i zhal pas shes  
so / bdun pa gcod kyi dam tshig bstan pa ni / thun mong ba’i dam tshig sdig pa mi dge ba bcu*

---

<sup>955</sup> Reading “*stong*” for “*steng*,” in parallel with the earlier examples of this phrase.

*spang zhing sems can gyi don du dge ba bcu / pha rol tu phyin pa drug ldan du bsgrub par bya'o*  
*// khyad par gyi dam tshig ni / bon chog dang / sman dpyad<sup>956</sup> dang / 'dre brdung rnams dus*  
*dang rnam pa thams cad du mi bya'o //*

[6.1] As for pacification of sudden interferences of body and mind, it should be understood directly from a lama (*bla ma'i zhal pas shes*; lit. from the mouth of a lama). [7.1] As for the teachings of the commitments of Chöd, you should abandon the ten non-virtues that degrade the common commitments, and accomplish the ten virtues to benefit sentient beings, together with the six perfections (*pha rol tu phyin pa drug*; *ṣaṭpāramitā*). As for the distinctive commitments, you should not perform Bön rituals (*bon chog*), medical treatments (*sman dpyad*), or exorcisms (*'dre brdung*) at any time.

*brgyad pa nyams su blangs pa'i 'bras bu bstan pa ni / gnas skabs kyi 'bras bu / thogs*  
*bcas kyi bdud dang / thogs med kyi bdud dang / dga' brod kyi bdud dang / snyems byed kyi bdud*  
*rnams zhi nas lus na tsha las grol / sems sdug bsngal las grol te mthar thug sku gsum gyi rang*  
*bzhin du sangs rgyas par 'gyur ro //*

[8.1] As for the teaching of the fruits of gaining experience, the circumstantial fruit is liberation from physical illness, having pacified the Obstructive Negative Forces, the Non-obstructive Negative Forces, the Joyful Negative Forces and the Negative Forces that Create Pride. Liberated from mental suffering, one will ultimately be a buddha with the self-nature of the three bodies.

*ma gcig jo mo'i gdams ngag pha rol tu phyin pa bdud kyi gcod yul las khyad par gyi le*  
*lag brgyad pa zhes bya ba I TI //*

---

<sup>956</sup> The text is a bit unclear here.

This is the Practical Instruction of the Lady Machik, *The Distinctive Eightfold Supplementary Section on the Chöd Domain of the Negative Forces from the Prajñāpāramitā*.

**Constructed Outline:**

[1a] First, there are three meanings to the entrance, going for refuge and conception of the spirit [of enlightenment]. [1a] First, there are three meanings

[1.1] What one enters

[1.1.1] As to what one enters, one enters into the unmistaken, authentic path

[1.2] Who enters

[1.2.1] As for who enters, the persons who possess the Mahāyāna lineage (gene) enters

[1.3] How one enters

[1.3.1] As for how one enters, one enters from the state of emptiness and compassion inseparable, with immeasurable amounts of the two accumulations [i.e. merit and wisdom], and so forth

[1.3.1a] In that, there are two [kinds]

[1.1.3.1] The Dharma-door-opening refuge taking and spiritual conception

[1.1.3.1.1] As for the first [kind], one should make host offerings, tormas offerings, and [general] offerings, and so forth, and [then] perform the eight-limbs of going for refuge

[1.1.3.2] The ongoing meditational refuge taking and spiritual conceiving

[1.1.3.2.1] As for the second [kind], the ongoing meditational refuge taking and spiritual conceiving, one should conceive the mind [of enlightenment] (*includes visualization of the refuge assembly and body offering*)

[2 (604/158)] The blessings, the separation of the body and mind

[2.1] The identifying identification

[2.1.1] The prelude of abandoning attachment to the body

[2.1.2] The actual practice of separating the body and the mind

[2.1.3] The follow-up identification of the mind as space-like from the realm of reality

[2.1.3a] In that way, the experience through visualizing arises in three ways

[2.1.3.1] For the highest faculties, an experience is freedom from elaboration arises

[2.1.3.2] For the mediocre faculties, an experience of Direct Crossing arises

[2.1.3.3] For the lowest faculties, an experience of possessing strength arises

[2.2 (606/160)] The continuous meditation identification

[3 (606/160)] The meditative cultivation, without mindfulness and without mental activity

[4] The practice, the giving up of the mental and physical being as food

[4.1 (607/161)] Generally, the meaning of giving [the aggregates] as food has three parts

[4.1.1] The prelude of meditatively cultivating compassion and loving-kindness

[4.1.1.1] As for the prelude, feeling compassion for all sentient beings, making foremost those negative influences that have caused harm to oneself

[4.1.2] The main practice of engaging in the practice of giving one's own body possessed of the six perfections

[4.1.2.1] The main practice of generating a large body, butchering it, and offering it to harmdoers

[4.1.3 (608/162)] The follow-up of making the dedication to the unsurpassed spirit of enlightenment

[4.2 (608/162)] Additionally, (the three additional parts)

[4.2.1] The prelude of the meditative cultivation of compassion and loving-kindness

[4.2.1.1] One's compassion and loving-kindness becomes the antidote

[4.2.2] The main practice of giving [the body] as food and resting in reality

[4.2.2.1] The giving of the body as food as equated to the perfections

[4.2.2.1a] There are two particularities to giving [of the body as food].

[4.2.2.1.1] Feeling compassion toward sentient beings with eye illnesses as if the illness is of one's own eyes, meditatively cultivate the thought that it is necessary to give one's own eyes for the purpose of pacifying the eye illnesses of these [people].

[4.2.2.2.1.2] Thinking that eighty thousand types of obstructors arise in front of one, give one's own eyes, the mind rests without thought anywhere, as if it is above

[4.2.3] The follow-up of the dedication (this does not get elaborated in distinction to the general practice instructions above on 608/162)

[5] The view, not straying into activity sphere of the Negative Forces.

[5a (609/163)] Fifth, as for the view that does not stray into the activity sphere of the negative forces, with regard to that, deities and demons will come to interfere in one's practice.

[5.1] To the superior [practitioner] there are apparitions of the forms of teachers

[5.1.1] For the superior ones, they are understood as apparitions of one's own mind

[5.2] To the mediocre [practitioner] there are apparitions of loud voices

[5.2.1] Through the separation of body and mind by the mediocre [practitioner] any apparitions of deities and demons will become a pure emptiness

[5.3] To the common [practitioner] there are apparitions of being overcome by various malicious spirits

[5.3.1] When the ordinary [practitioner] gives up the body-mind aggregates as food, apparitions of deities and demons will become pure emptiness

[6] The practical instruction, the pacification of temporary hindrances of body and mind

[6.1] As for pacification of sudden interferences of body and mind, it should be understood directly from a lama

[7] The teaching of the Chöd commitments

[7.1] The teachings of the general and the distinctive commitments of Chöd

[8] The teaching on the fruits of gaining experience.

[8.1] The teaching of the fruits of gaining experience, liberation from physical and mental suffering

### Appendix Seven: *Gcod bka' tshoms chen mo'i sa bcad*

*Gcod bka' tshoms chen mo'I sab cad bzhugs so // rje rang byung rdo rjes m'ad pa /*<sup>957</sup>

{53/501} *gcod bka' tshoms chen mo'i sa bcad bzhugs so // rje rang byung rdo rjes  
md'ad pa ldeb //*

*An Outline of the Great Speech Chapter of Chöd.* Composed by Lord Rangjung Dorjé.

{54/502} *shes rab kyi phar rul tu phyin ma la phyag 'tshal lo // bdud kyi gcod yul bka'  
tshoms chen mo 'di la gsum las / klad kyi don dang / gz'hung dang / m'jug go //*

I pay homage to the Goddess Prajñāpāramitā. There are three parts to the *Great Speech Chapter of the Chöd System of Negative Forces*: [1] the prefatory materials (*klad kyi don*<sup>958</sup>), [2] the main teaching, and [3] the conclusion.

*gong ma la gsum / phyag 'tshal ba {mi smra} / na tsha na*<sup>959</sup> *bstan pa {gcod kyi} / mdor  
bstan pa {'ga' la*<sup>960</sup> *dang gsum mo //*

[1a] There are three parts at the top (*gong ma*).<sup>961</sup> The three are: [1.1] the homage {"not speaking"}; [1.2] the teaching on illness {"of Chöd"}; and [1.3] the brief teaching {"some"}.

*gnyis pa gz'hung gi don la gnyis / mdor bstan pa {bdud la*<sup>962</sup> */ rgyas par bshad pa'o // 'di  
la gsum // bdud bzhi bye brag tu bstan pa dang / dpe bstan pa / dpe dang bral bar bstan pa'o //*

[2a] Second, the purpose of the text is in two parts: [2.1] the brief teaching {"Negative Forces"}, and [2.2] the extensive explanation. In this [the extensive explanation] there are three

<sup>957</sup> In the *Gdams ngag mdzod*, Vol. 14 (1979): 53-57; Vol. 9 (1971): 501-505.

<sup>958</sup> *klad kyi don* is a technical term for the prefatory materials in authoritative texts (*bstan bcos*; *śāstra*), in a continuation of the classical Indic traditions of knowledge.

<sup>959</sup> Reading "tsha na" for "tshan."

<sup>960</sup> Reading "'ga'" for "dga'," as per the root text.

<sup>961</sup> That is, in the prefatory materials.

<sup>962</sup> The root text reads "bdud kyi."



parts: [2.2.1] the teaching on the details of the four types of Negative Forces, [2.2.2] analogies, and [2.2.3] the teaching separate from analogies.

*thog ma la bzhi // thog bcas kyi bdud / thogs med kyi bdud / dga' brod kyi bdud / snyems byed kyi bdud do //*

[2.2.1a] There are four parts in the beginning: [2.2.1.1] Negative Forces With Obstruction, [2.2.1.2] Negative Forces Without Obstruction, [2.2.1.3] Joyous Negative Forces, [2.2.1.4] Negative Forces Producing Pride.

*dang po la gnyis / bdud rang las byung ngos bzung ba {thog bcas} dang / de'i ngo bo stong par gtan la dbab pa'o {gzugs ni} //*

[2.2.1.1a] There are two parts in the first: [2.2.1.1.1] Negative Forces identified as arising from oneself {"With Obstruction"}, and [2.2.1.1.2] their essence (*ngo bo*) is determined to be empty {"as for form"}.

*thogs<sup>963</sup> med la gnyis / byung tshor ngos bzung ba {thogs med<sup>964</sup>} dang / rtogs pa {chos dbyings} shar bas rang grol du bstan pa'o //*

[2.2.1.2a] There are two parts in [Negative Forces] Without Obstruction: [2.2.1.2.1] the teaching on the identification of sensation (*byung tshor*) {"Without Obstruction"}, and [2.2.1.2.2] the teaching on the self-liberation through the arising of comprehension (*rtogs pa*) {"the expanse of things" (*chos dbyings*; *dharmadhātu*)}.

*dga' brod la gnyis / mdor bstan pa {dga' brod} dang<sup>965</sup> / rgyas par bshad pa'o / {55/503} 'di la gnyis / thun mong dang / mchog go // dang po la gnyis / yon tan la chags na lam bdud yin pa {gnyan sar 'dre yis} dang / rmi lam lta bur bstan pa'o {yon tan} // mchog la gnyis / mgo na*

---

<sup>963</sup> Reading "thogs" for "thog."

<sup>964</sup> This "thogs med" isn't explicitly attached anywhere in the text; however, it is placed on the line below "byung tshor" and would appear to fit the context here.

<sup>965</sup> Reading "dang" for "dar."

*lam bdud du bstan pa dang / blos byas bdud du bstan pa'o / / dang po la gnyis / bdud ngos bzung  
ba dang / brda ru shes na grol ba'o / /*

[2.2.1.3a] There are two parts in Joyous [Negative Forces]: [2.2.1.3.1] the brief teaching {“Joyous”}, and [2.2.1.3.2] the extensive explanation. In this [extensive explanation] there are two parts: [2.2.1.3.2.1] the common, and [2.2.1.3.2.2] the exceptional. In the first, there are two parts: [2.2.1.3.2.1.1] If attached to qualities, they are Negative Forces of the path {“by spirits in severe places”}, and [2.2.1.3.2.1.2] they are taught to be like dreams {“qualities”}. [2.2.1.3.2.2a] The exceptional is twofold: [2.2.1.3.2.2.1] at the beginning,<sup>966</sup> they are taught as Negative Forces of the path, and [2.2.1.3.2.2.2] they are taught as mentally-fabricated Negative Forces (*blos byas bdud*). In the first, there are two parts: [2.2.1.3.2.2.1.1] identification of Negative Forces, and [2.2.1.3.2.2.1.2] liberation when signs (*brda*) are understood.

*ngos bzung ba la gnyis las / mdor bstan pa {mchog gi} dang / rgyas par bshad pa'o  
{spros bral} / / gnyis pa la bzhi / rang shar blta bya lta byed med pa {lta bsgom<sup>967</sup>} dang / bsgom  
pa bsgom mkhan med pa {kun kyang} / shugs byung rang gi blta ba zin na {spyod} / spyod pa zin  
na spyod pa rang gi rol pa yin pa nyams myong blo las 'das pa'o {nyams su} / blos byas bdud du  
bstan pa la gnyis / 'dod pa dang bcas 'bras bu'i bdud {mchog gi bdud} dang / rang yin par rtogs  
na bsgrub du med pa'o {lus ngag yid gsum} / /*

[2.2.1.3.2.2.1.1a] In the identification, there are two parts: [2.2.1.3.2.2.1.1.1] the brief teaching {“exceptional”}, and [2.2.1.3.2.2.1.1.2] the extensive explanation {“freed from elaborations”}. [2.2.1.3.2.2.1.1.2a] In the second, there are four parts: [2.2.1.3.2.2.1.1.2.1] self-arising without a visible object or a viewer {“meditative view”}; [2.2.1.3.2.2.1.1.2.2.] without a

---

<sup>966</sup> “*mgo na*,” lit. “at the head.”

<sup>967</sup> The root text reads “*lta sgom*.”

meditation or a meditation expert (*bsgom mkhan*) {"in all cases"}; [2.2.1.3.2.2.1.1.2.3] grasped as one's own view, occurring of its own accord (*shugs 'byung*<sup>968</sup>) {"practice"};

2.2.1.3.2.2.1.1.2.4] when the practice is grasped, it is a practice that is one's own playful

manifestation (*rol pa*) and is an experience that transcends the rational mind. [2.2.1.3.2.2.2a]

There are two parts to the teaching on the mentally-fabricated Negative Forces: [2.2.1.3.2.2.2.1]

Negative Forces of craving together with the results {"exceptional Negative Forces"<sup>969</sup>}, and

[2.2.1.3.2.2.2.2] when one understands one's own state of being, nothing is established {the three, body, speech and mind"}.

*snyems byed kyi bdud la gnyis / mdor bstan pa / rgyas par bshad pa'o {bdud la} // de la gsum / {56/504} thogs bcas kyi bdud snyems byed du 'dus pa dang / thogs med kyi bdud snyems byed du 'dus pa dang / dga' brod kyi bdud snyems byed du 'dus pa dang gsum mo //*

[2.2.1.3a] There are two parts to Negative Forces Creating Pride: [2.2.1.3.1] a brief teaching, [2.2.1.3.2] and an extensive explanation {"Negative Forces"}. In that [the latter] there are three parts: [2.2.1.3.2.1] Negative Forces with Obstructions in combination with that which causes pride, [2.2.1.3.2.2] Negative Forces without Obstructions in combination with that which causes pride, and [2.2.1.3.2.3] Negative Forces of Joyousness in combination with that which causes pride; these are the three.

*thog ma la gnyis / lta bas ma zin na dngos po bdud du bstan pa {dngos po'i yul} dang / rtsa bral du shes na kun grol du bstan pa'o {dngos su} // gnyis pa la lnga / rtsa bsnyems byed las byung ba'i bdud lnga ngos bzung ba {thogs med} dang / snyems byed grol na rigs drug las thar zhing ye shes lnga rtogs pa {zhe sdang rang} dang / dpe'i sgo nas ya nga med pa {de*

<sup>968</sup> The root text reads "*shugs 'byung*" rather than "*shug byung*."

<sup>969</sup> This does not correspond to the order of the root texts that I have consulted; references to "the exceptional Negative Force" (*mchog gi bdud*) occur significantly earlier in the root text than the phrase "Negative Force of craving and its results" (*'dod pa dang bcas 'bras bu'i bdud*) (root text 10/459).

*yang*<sup>970</sup>} *dang / rtogs kyang ma bcad na 'ching ba {rtogs kyang} dang / snyems byed chod na sangs rgyas pa'o {E MA HO} //*

[2.2.1.3.2.1a] There are two parts at the beginning: [2.2.1.3.2.1.1] when seeing but not grasping (*lta bas ma zin*), this is taught as Negative Forces of Things {"tangible objects"}, and [2.2.1.3.2.1.2] when understood as separated from a root, this is taught as total liberation (*kun grol*) {"things"<sup>971</sup>}. In the second, there are five parts: [2.2.1.3.2.1.2.1] one identifies the five Negative Forces arising from the production of pride<sup>972</sup> {"without Obstruction"}, [2.2.1.3.2.1.2.2] when one is liberated from the cause of pride, there is emancipation from the six classes of saṃsāra (*rigs drug*) and comprehension of the five primordial wisdoms {"self-[liberated] from aggression"}, [2.2.1.3.2.1.2.3] from the perspective of analogy [*dpe'i sgo nas*; i.e. as taught in the root text], one is without fear (*ya nga med pa*) {"therefore"<sup>973</sup>}, [2.2.1.3.2.1.2.4] even comprehension is a fetter when it has not been severed {"furthermore, comprehension"}, [2.2.1.3.2.1.2.5] when the production of pride is severed, one is enlightened {"How wonderful!"}.

*gsum pa la gnyis / thun mong dang / mchog go / thun mong la gnyis / dngos grub la chags na bdud yin pa {dga' brod} dang / ma chags na rgyan yin pa'o // mchog la gnyis te / brod pa bdud du bstan pa {sku gsum} dang / de shes na snyems byed<sup>974</sup> med pa'o {'khor ba rang} //*

[2.2.1.3.2.3a] In the third, there are two parts: [2.2.1.3.2.3.1] the common and [2.2.1.3.2.3.2] the exceptional. [2.2.1.3.2.3.1a] In the common, there are two parts:

<sup>970</sup> The root text reads "*des na*" rather than "*de yang*."

<sup>971</sup> There is no exact match for this reference, *dngos su* ("things") in the root text; however, there is a corresponding passage, *dngos 'dzin grol* ("liberated from grasping things") (root text 10/459).

<sup>972</sup> Possibly referring to the five poisons, i.e. passion, aggression, delusion, pride and envy.

<sup>973</sup> The root text reads "*des na*" (root text 11/460) rather than "*de yang*" as here in the *sa bcad*.

<sup>974</sup> Reading "*snyems byed*" for "*snyoms byed*."

[2.2.1.3.2.3.1.1] when there are attachments to accomplishments (*dnegos grub; siddhi*), they are Negative Forces {“Joyous”}, and [2.2.1.3.2.3.1.2] when there is non-attachment, it is an ornament. [2.2.1.3.2.3.2a] In the exceptional, there are two parts: [2.2.1.3.2.3.2.1] that taught as Negative Forces of cheer {“Three Bodies”}, and, [2.2.1.3.2.3.2.2] that when understood, it does not produce pride {“saṃsāra own”<sup>975</sup>}.

*spyi don gnyis pa dpe'i sgo nas bstan pa la lnga las / dpes bshad pa dang / lta ba dang / bsgom pa dang / spyod pa dang / 'bras bu'o //*

[2.2.2a] The second general meaning taught from the perspective of analogy has five parts: [2.2.2.1] Taught by analogy, [2.2.2.2] view, [2.2.2.3] meditative cultivation, [2.2.2.4] practice, and [2.2.2.5] results.

*dang po la gnyis / rgyud la ma khel na 'ching ba {dpe yis} / rang gis rtogs na gzhan la phan pa'o {bri bzang} //*

[2.2.2.1a] In the first, there are two parts: [2.2.2.1.1] when one does not rely on one's lineage, one is fettered {“by analogy”}; [2.2.2.1.2] when comprehended by oneself, one is a benefit to others {“fine Dri” [i.e. a good female yak]}.

*lta ba la gnyis / bdud rtsa bral du rtogs par byed pa {khyung chen} dang / de ltar shes pas chod pa'o {rtsa bral} //*

[2.2.2.2a] There are two parts to the view: [2.2.2.2.1] Negative Forces of one who comprehends the separation from the root {“garuda bird”}, and [2.2.2.2.2] by understanding in that way, [the root] is severed {“separation from the root”}.

---

<sup>975</sup> This is a reference to a passage in the root text that reads, “from being liberated from saṃsāra in one's own place” (*khor ba rang sar grol ba las*) (root text 12/461).

*bsgom pa la gsum / dpe'i sgo nas bsam du med pa {bzhag thabs} / ma bcos lhug par  
bzhag pa {bcos bslad} dang / dran rtog bden med du shes pas mya ngan las 'das pa'o {rig pa  
rang lugs} //*

[2.2.2.3a] There are three parts to meditative cultivation: [2.2.2.3.1] from the perspective of analogy, it is without thought {"method of resting"}; [2.2.2.3.2] resting loosely without contrivance {"tainted by contrivance"}; and [2.2.2.3.3] by understanding the lack of truth in thought, it is nirvāṇa {"one's own way in enlightened knowing"<sup>976</sup>}

*spyod pa la gnyis / nyon mongs {spyod pa} dang bral ba'i brtul zhugs<sup>977</sup> / spyod pa  
glod<sup>978</sup> du gyur pas thams cad grogs su bstan pa'o /*

[2.2.2.4a] There are two parts to practice: [2.2.2.4.1] the yogic discipline of separation from afflictions, and [2.2.2.4.2] the practice that is taught as beneficial to all by means of loosening.

*'bras bu la gnyis / don rtogs pas bsgrub tu {57/505} med pa {'bras bu} dang / bdag  
sangs rgyas su nges pa'o {snyems ba} //*

[2.2.2.5a] There are two parts to the result: [2.2.2.5.1] one will not have accomplishments by comprehending the meaning {"result"}, and [2.2.2.5.2] one will ascertain the enlightened state {"pride"}.

*spyi don gsum pa dpe dang bral par bstan pa la lagna / rig pa 'khrul pa / ma rig pa ye  
shes / ma byas pa gzhi / mi byed pa lam / ma grub pa 'bras bu 'o //*

---

<sup>976</sup> This does not correspond to any passage in the root text; I think it is supposed to refer to "rig pas rang lus" (root text 13/462).

<sup>977</sup> Reading "brtul zhugs" for "brtul / shugs."

<sup>978</sup> Reading "glod" for "klod."

[2.2.3a] In the third general meaning, there are five parts in the teaching separate from analogy (*dpe dang bral pa*): [2.2.3.1] the confusion of enlightened knowing, [2.2.3.2] the primordial wisdom of ignorance, [2.2.3.3] the uncreated ground (*ma byas pa gzhi*), [2.2.3.4] the indestructible path (*mi byed pa lam*), and [2.2.3.5] the unestablished result.

*dang po la gnyis / rang bzhin 'khrul pa {rig med} dang / grub mtha' la ltos te 'khrul pa'o  
{dbyer med} //*

[2.2.3.1a] There are two parts in the first: [2.2.3.1.1] the confusion of self-nature {"without knowledge"}, and [2.2.3.1.2] the confusion from relying on tenet systems {"undifferentiated"}.

*gnyis pa la gnyis / gti mug ye shes su bsgyur ba {de bas} / ci shar rang byung du bstan  
pa'o {rig pa} //*

[2.2.3.2a] There are two parts in the second: [2.2.3.2.1] obscurations become primordial wisdom {"therefore"<sup>979</sup>}, and [2.2.3.2.2] whatever arises are self-occurring teachings {"enlightened knowing"}.

*gsum pa la gnyis / sangs rgyas kyis ma byas pa {yang dag} / 'jig rten las mi rtogs pa'o  
(ma byas 'dus ma byas) //*

[2.2.3.3a] There are two parts in the third: [2.2.3.3.1] uncreated by a buddha {"pure"}, and [2.2.3.3.2] unknown from the mundane world {"uncreated, un compounded"}.

*bzhi pa la gnyis / mu bzhi bden med du rtogs pa {ma byas} / don rtogs pas 'khor pa las  
grol ba'o {gzugs gis (sic) dang tshor} //*

---

<sup>979</sup> The root text has "*des na*" rather than, as the text does here, "*de bas*."

[2.2.3.4a] There are two parts in the fourth: [2.2.3.4.1] the four states are comprehended as without true existence {“uncreated”}; [2.2.3.4.2] one is liberated from saṃsāra by comprehending the meaning {“form and feeling”<sup>980</sup>}.

*lnga pa la bzhi / blo chung ba la drang thabs su bstan pa {ma grub} / grub rgyu don med pa {grub na} dang / blo ma grol na don med pa {chos kyi} dang / 'dzin med rtogs na sku gsung thugs su bstan pa'o {lus la} //*

[2.2.3.5a] There are four parts in the fifth: [2.2.3.5.1] the teaching on the provisional method for the small discursive mind {“unaccomplished”}; [2.2.3.5.2] the lack of an aim as a cause for accomplishment {“if accomplished”}; [2.2.3.5.3] the lack of an aim when one is not liberated from the discursive mind {“to things”}, and [2.2.3.5.4] the teaching on body, speech and mind when non-grasping is comprehended {“to the body”}.<sup>981</sup>

*mjug gi don la yang gnyis / mtshan don gyi sgo nas bstan pa {E MA HO} dang<sup>982</sup> / nyams so // de la bzhi / blo dang bral ba'i nyams {nan tan} dang / gdams pa khyad par can {gnyan sa la sogs} dang / khal du khel na lta ba yin pa {rkyen snang} dang / gnyan sa 'grim pa gal che ba'o {gnyan sar} //*

[3.1] The concluding materials are also twofold: [3.1.1] taught from the perspective of the meaning of the title {“how wonderful!”}, and [3.1.2] [taught] from experience. [3.1.2a] In [the latter] there are four: [3.1.2.1] the experience of separation from the discursive mind {“conscientiously”}; [3.1.2.2] together with the distinctive instruction {“severe places and the like”}; [3.1.2.3] the viewpoint when one is loaded with burdens, {“apparent circumstances”}; and [3.1.2.4] the great importance of wandering in severe places {“in severe places”}.

<sup>980</sup> The root text has “gzugs dang tshor” rather than, as the text does here, “gzugs gis (sic) dang tshor.”

<sup>981</sup> This is a provisional translation.

<sup>982</sup> Reading “dang” for “rang.”



*bka' tshoms chen mo'i bsdus don rdzogs so / §*

*The Summary of the Great Speech Chapter is complete.*

**Appendix Eight: *Gcod kyi TIKA (Bka' tshom chen mo'i 'grel pa)***

*Gcod bka' tshoms chen mo'i sab cad bzhugs so // rje rang byung rdo rjes mdzad pa /*<sup>983</sup>

*{57.6/505} {gcod kyi TIKA bzhugs so} //*

*{A Chöd Commentary.}*

*shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin ma la phyag 'tshal lo // spros pa nyer zhi zhi ba 'dus ma  
byas // 'gag med thugs rje'i thugs la pha rol phyin // rgyas pa'i bang ltar rnam rgyas skyon mi  
mnga' // 'gro la thugs brtse thub dbang sras bcas 'dud // brjod med dbyings las ming dang yi  
ge'i tshogs // rnam 'phros brgyad khri bzhi stong gsung gi mdzod // kun gyi {58/506} snying po  
pha rol phyin pa yi //*

I pay homage to the Goddess Prajñāpāramitā. The perfection at the heart of compassionate activity is the complete cessation of elaborations (*spros pa*; *prapañca*), uncompounded, unobstructed peace. It is like an abundant storehouse (*rgyas pa'i bang*) without an abundance of faults. I bow down (*'dud*) to those empowered with loving-kindness toward beings and their sons. This is a collection of words<sup>984</sup> and letters from the expanse beyond expression (*brjod med dbyings*), a treasury (*mdzod*; *koṣa*) of teachings in 84,000 emanations (*rnam 'phros*).<sup>985</sup> The heart of everything is the *pāramitā*.

*nyams len rnam rtog gcod pa'i yi ge brtsams / rgyal ba sras dang bcas pa'i bka' dang /  
de'i rnam 'phrul 'jig rten du dpag tu med pa byon pa rnams kyis bstan bcos dang gdams pa'i*

<sup>983</sup> In *Gdams ngag mdzod*, Vol. 14 (1979): 57-79; Vol. 9 (1971): 505-526.

<sup>984</sup> “*ming*,” lit. “names.”

<sup>985</sup> “A treasury of teachings in 84,000 emanations” echoes the “84,000 dharma doors” (*chos kyi sgo mo brgyad khri bzhi stong*; i.e. the 84,000 dharma teachings) taught by the Buddha, antidotes for each of the 84,000 types of mental afflictions (*nyon mongs*) suffered by sentient beings.

*tshogs ji snyed*<sup>986</sup> *cig bshad kyang / theg pa che chung rnam su 'dus shing / de las kyang theg pa chen po'o //*

[This is a] Chöd practitioner's written composition<sup>987</sup> [regarding] meditation practice (*nyams len*) and discursive thought (*rnam rtogs*). The speech of the buddhas and bodhisattvas (*rgyal ba sras dang bcas pa*), with the collections of treatises (*bstan bcos*; *sāstra*) and instructions (*gdams*), as well as whatever has been explained (*ji snyed cig bshad*) by a procession of unfathomable worldly manifestations of these [buddhas and bodhisattvas], combined in the greater and lesser vehicles (*theg pa che chung*; Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna), and from that there is the great vehicle (*theg pa chen po*).

*mdo sde dang rgyud sde'i dgongs pa gnyis las / kun gyi mthar thug shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'o // de la nyams su blangs pa'i tshul gnyis las legs par sbyangs shing lung dang rigs pa'i sgo nas spros pa'i mtha' brgyad dang bral bar gtan la dbab pa dang / nang du 'jog pa la brten nas gzugs sogs kyi snang bden sgyu mar bshig pa'i tshul dang / gnyis ka la bogs 'don yul yul can gnyis med du bsre bar byed pa ni pha rol tu phyin nas*<sup>988</sup> *gcod kyi gdams ngag yin no //*

Having the intention of both Sūtra and Tantra, the *prajñāpāramitā* is the ultimate (*kun gyi mthar thug*) [teaching]. In that regard, [the *prajñāpāramitā*] is a fine discipline (*legs par sbyangs*) from these two methods of gaining experience: from the [Sūtra] perspective of authoritative transmissions (*lung*; *āgama*) and logic (*rigs pa*), [the *prajñāpāramitā*] is definitely understood as separate from the eight extremes of elaboration (*spros kyi mtha' brgyad*<sup>989</sup>);

<sup>986</sup> Reading “*ji snyed*” for “*ci snyed*.”

<sup>987</sup> “*yi ge brtsams*,” lit. “a composition of letters.”

<sup>988</sup> Reading “*phyin nas*” for “*phyins*.”

<sup>989</sup> “*spros kyi mtha' brgyad*,” or “the eight extremes of elaboration” are four pairs of appositions which result in elaborations of conceptual thinking by dualistic mental consciousness. These are: *skye 'gag* (birth and cessation), *rtag chad* (permanence and nihilism), *'gro 'ong* (coming and going), *gcig tha dad* (singularity and distinction).

relying on resting within (*nang du 'jog pa la brten nas*) is the [Tantra] method for eliminating the apparently true illusions (*snang bden sgyu ma*) of form and the rest.<sup>990</sup> A supplementary practice (*bogs 'don*) to these two,<sup>991</sup> the mixing of subject and object without duality, is the oral instruction of Chöd based in the *Prajñāpāramitā*.

*de la gnyis / ci ltar byung ba'i lo rgyus dang / gdams pa dngos so // dang po ni brgyud  
pa'i tshul gsum dang / ma cig la sogs pa rnams kyi lo rgyus gzhan du shes par bya'o /*

With regard to that [the oral instruction of Chöd based in the *Prajñāpāramitā*], there are two parts: [1.] the history (*lo rgyus*) of whatever has occurred, and [2.] the necessity of instruction. [1.1.] As for the first, the three modes of transmission<sup>992</sup> and the history of Ma cig and others should be understood from another [source].

*gnyis pa gdams pa ni / gsum las / bde gshegs bka' ma brgyud pa'i gdams ngag dang /  
byin rlabs dbang bskur gyi brgyud pa'i gdams ngag<sup>993</sup> dang / lung bstan gyi brgyud pa'i gdams  
ngag gsum las / dang po ni ma cig nyid kyi thugs nyams su byon pa'i yi ger bkod pa rnams yin te  
/ de la bzhi las / phyi bka' tshoms zhi ba rgyas su bshad pa dang / nang ngo sprod le lag tu gdab  
pa dang / don gnad them khong khol<sup>994</sup> du bstan pa dang / gsang ba brda chos la brdar bsgyur  
pa'o //*

<sup>990</sup> This phrase “*gzugs sogs*” (“form and the rest”) is common shorthand for the “*yul drug*” (the “six [sensory] objects”) and appears often in this text. The “*yul drug*” are: 1) *gzugs* (visible forms); 2) *sgra* (sounds); 3) *dri* (smells); 4) *ro* (tastes); 5) *reg bya* (tactile objects); and 6) *chos* (dharmas, or things).

<sup>991</sup> That is, Sūtra and Tantra.

<sup>992</sup> This is suggestive of the Nyingmapa threefold classification of Vajrayāna transmissions (*brgyud pa gsum*): the Mind Lineage of the Victorious Ones (*rgyal ba dgongs pa'i brgyud*, direct mind-to-mind transmission beyond words and symbols from buddhas); the Sign Lineage of *Vidyādhara*s (*rig 'dzin brda yi brgyud*, transmission through symbols by Wisdom-holders); and the Aural Lineage of Persons (*gang zag snyan gyi brgyud*, transmission of meaning from person to person).

<sup>993</sup> Reading “*gdams ngag*” for “*gdam ngag*.”

<sup>994</sup> This should probably read “*khong rgol*,” as per the following note on titles of Machik’s teachings. I have chosen to translate it *khong rgol* in the English presentation of the title. Edou (1996, 163) has translated this title as

[2.a.] Second, as for the instruction, there are three parts. The three are [2.1.] the oral instruction of the transmission of speech (*bka' ma; buddhavacana*) of the sugata [buddhas], [2.2.] the oral instruction of the transmission of blessings and empowerments, and [2.3] the oral instruction of the transmission of predictions.<sup>995</sup> [2.1.a.] First, there are the writings from the heartfelt practice (*thugs nyams su byon pa'i yi ger bkod*<sup>996</sup>) of Ma cig herself. Concerning those, there are four parts: [2.1.1.] the exoteric *Speech Chapter*, an extensive explanation of pacification (*phyi bka' tshoms zhi ba rgyas su bshad pa*); [2.1.2.] the esoteric *Introduction*, [which is] established in sections (*nang ngo sprod le lag tu gdab pa*); [2.1.3.] the vital *Pith Instructions* (*don gnad them*) and *Hypothetical Disputes* (*khong rgol*); [2.1.4.] and the secret *Symbolic Teaching* translated in signs (*brda chos la brdar bsgyur pa*).<sup>997</sup>

*de rnams la mchog tu gyur pa bka' tshoms chen mo 'di la gsum las / klad dang / gzhung dang / mjug go / / dang po ni gsum las / tshig rkang pa gnyis kyis phyag 'tshal ba bstan te / de yang mi smra zhes bya ba la sogs {59/507} pa smos nas / don spros pa'i*<sup>998</sup> *mtha' dang bral bar ston pa yin te / gang 'phags pa rnams kyis mngon sum du gyur pa /*

[2.1.1.a.] The most excellent of these [writings], the *Great Speech Chapter*, has three parts: [2.1.1.1.] the prefatory materials, [2.1.1.2.] the main part, and [2.1.1.3.] the conclusion.

---

“*Answers to Detractors*,” while Harding (2003, 98) has translated it as “*Refutation of Detractors*.”

<sup>995</sup> The latter two, “the oral instruction of the transmissions of blessings and empowerments” and “the oral instruction of the transmission of predictions” are not included in the *Bka' tshoms chen mo* and must refer to other teachings.

<sup>996</sup> “*yi ger bkod*,” lit. “arranged in letters.”

<sup>997</sup> The last three—“the esoteric *Introduction*,” “the vital *Pith Instructions* and *Hypothetical disputes*,” and “the secret *Symbolic Teaching*”—are not part of the *Bka' tshoms chen mo*. This may be a reference to the three *Le'u lag* texts. According to the second chapter of the *Rnam bshad chen mo* (*Gcod kyi chos skor* folio 80), the list of transmitted teachings includes the *Gnad them*, *Khong rgol*, *Gsang ba brda chos*, *La bzlas skor gsum*, *Gzhi lam du slong ba*, and the *Khyad par gyi mang ngag*. I have yet to locate these texts and they may no longer be extant in material form, but it appears that at least a few were known to Rangjung Dorjé.

<sup>998</sup> The *gi gu*, or character marker for “i” is present in the 1971 edition, but not evident in the 1981 edition; I have followed the 1971 edition.

[2.1.1.1.a.] In the first [i.e. the prefatory materials], there are three sections: [2.1.1.1.1.] the teaching on paying homage through two lines of verse. In addition, having mentioned the so-called “inexpressible” (*mi smra*) and so forth, the meaning that is the teaching on freedom from extremes of elaboration and [the teaching on] whatever is directly perceived by superior ones (*‘phags pa; ārya*).

*spros pa thams cad nye bar zhi ba’i bdag nyid can ni / brjod par mi ‘gyur la / so so’i skye  
bo rnam kyis bsams pas rjes su dpag par mi nus pa’i<sup>999</sup> phyir / yul yul can las ‘das pa ste /  
dmigs pa’i sgrib g.yogs can thams cad kyis dben pa’i bdag nyid can / shes rab kyi pha rol tu  
phyin ma de nyid la phyag ‘tshal ba yin te / 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 // zhes pa dang dbyer med pa’i phyir ro //*

The personification (*bdag nyid can*) of the complete pacification of all elaborations is not expressible; subject and object are transcended because individual beings are incapable of inference through contemplation (*bsams pa*). Having an isolated self-nature [*dben pa’i bdag nyid can*]<sup>1000</sup> through the complete veiling of referents (*dmigs pa*), I pay homage to the Goddess Prajñāpāramitā herself. The perfection of wisdom (*shes rab pha rol phyin; prajñāpāramitā*) is without speech, thought or expression; it is the unborn, unobstructed essentiality of space. Discriminating awareness primordial wisdom (*so so rang rig ye shes*) is the domain of practice

---

<sup>999</sup> Reading “*nus pa’i*” for “*nus ba’i*.”

<sup>1000</sup> This is a reference to the “Three Isolations” (*dben pa gsum*) of Sūtra and Tantra, namely one’s body isolated from frivolity (*lus ‘du ‘dzis dben pa*), one’s mind isolated from non-virtuous discursive thinking (*sems mi dge ba’i rnam rtog gis dben pa*), and one’s three doors (body, speech and mind) isolated from common vision and clinging (*sgo gsum tha mal gyi snang zhen gyis dben pa*).

(*spyod yul ba*).<sup>1001</sup> One says “I pay homage to the Mother of the Victorious Ones of the Three Times” for the sake of inseparability.<sup>1002</sup>

*gnyis pa ni / gcod kyi bka' tshoms zhes pas / mtshan thog mar smos pa'o / /*

[2.1.1.1.2.a.] Second: by saying “*Great Speech Chapter*,” the name is expressed at the beginning.

*gsum pa ni / 'ga' la phan phyir zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang pa lngas / bshad par dam bca' zhing / mdor bstan pa yin te / chos thams cad kyi rtsa ba bden med yin la / de rtogs par byed pa la sgrib ba gnyis spangs dgos shing / sgrib byed kyi rtsa ba kun gzhi las / rnam par rtog pas nying 'khrul dang sum 'khrul tu rtog ste / gzugs la sogs pa'i<sup>1003</sup> yul bden par rig pa las zhen cing chags pas / don bden med la sgrib pa'i bdud du gyur pa yin te / de yang sems ye nas stong zhing / rang bzhin gyis 'od gsal ba de la gnas pa ni / sangs rgyas kyi ye shes dang kyad par med de / mdo las / sems rtogs na sangs rgyas yin pas / sangs rgyas gzhan du mi btsal ba'i 'du shes rab tu bsgom par bya'o / / zhes gsungs pa'i<sup>1004</sup> phyir ro / /*

[2.1.1.1.3.] Third: through the five-line verse stating “in order to benefit some” and so forth, there is the intention to explain (*bshad par dam bca'*) and to briefly summarize. As the root of all things is without truth, it is necessary to abandon the two obscurations (*sgrib ba gnyis; āvaraṇadvitidhaḥ*<sup>1005</sup>); by understanding that the root of the production of obscurations is the

<sup>1001</sup> “*spyod yul ba*” (“domain of practice”) is a homonym for “*gcod yul [ba]*.” I discuss these homonyms in the body of the dissertation. See also Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel 2003, 1139. In the translation of Gö Lotsawa’s interpretation by George Roerich and Gendun Choephel (1976, 981), there is an annotation remarking that “gCōd-yul means the ‘act of cutting asunder.’”

<sup>1002</sup> Here Rangjund Dorjé provides an elaboration of the first two lines of *The Great Speech Chapter*: “Not speaking, not thinking, I pay homage to the state without thought, the realm beyond objects and without reference” (*mi smra mi bsam bsam du med pa'i ngang / / yul 'das dmigs med dbyings la phyag 'tshal lo / §*) (7/456).

<sup>1003</sup> Reading “*pa'i*” for “*ba'i*.”

<sup>1004</sup> Reading “*pa'i*” for “*ba'i*.”

<sup>1005</sup> That is, the *nyon mongs pa'i sgrib pa* (coarse obscurations of mental afflictions for sentient beings) and *shes*

underlying ground (*kun gzhi*; *ālaya*<sup>1006</sup>), one understands one’s own inner confusion (*nying ‘khrul*) and the three-fold confusions (*sum ‘khrul*).<sup>1007</sup> Because of clinging and attachment to knowing objects (*yul*) such as form as truly existing, there is a Negative Force of obscuration regarding the absence of a truly existent meaning (*don*). Therefore, mind (*sems*) is primordially empty and naturally abides in that luminosity; it is without distinction from the primordial knowledge of the enlightened state (*sangs rgyas kyi ye shes*). In order to explain, it is said in the *Sūtra*, “because one is in an enlightened state (*sangs rgyas*) when the mind (*sems*) is understood, cognitions other than the enlightened state are not sought [and] there should be complete meditative cultivation (*rab tu bsgom pa*).”<sup>1008</sup>

*gnyis pa gzhung gi don la mdor bstan pa dang / rgyas par bshad pa gnyis las / thog ma ni  
sems rang rig rang {60/508} gsal chos kyi sku de la / sgrib byed kyi bdud de gang yin zhe na /  
thogs bcas dang thogs med dang / dga’ brod dang snyems byed de / bzhi po yang rtsa ba snyems  
byed las byung zhes pa’o / /*

[2.1.1.2.] In the second [the main section], there are two parts: [2.1.1.2.1.] the brief summary of the meaning of the text and [2.1.1.2.2.] the extensive explanation. [2.1.1.2.1.1.] At the beginning—with regard to that mind (*sems*) that is self-knowing (*rang rig*), is self-luminous (*rang gsal*), and is the *dharmakāya*—what is said to be the Negative Force that creates

---

*bya’i sgrib pa* (subtle obscurations of knowables which prevent enlightenment due to one’s continued conceptualization of subjects, objects and actions).

<sup>1006</sup> This is the mind-stream as the underlying basis of everything.

<sup>1007</sup> This is a provisional translation. The Tibetan-language entry under “*nying ‘khrul*” in the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (Vol. I, 951) reads: “*‘khrul ba’i nang gi ‘khrul ba*” and “*nying ‘khrul ‘og ‘gyu’i tha shal gyi tshig min na da dung khyed kyi dgongs dang*” (loose translation of the latter: “*nying ‘khrul*” is when one is still thinking even though one’s inferior subconscious is without words’). The term “*sum ‘khrul*” may be a reference to the three-fold confusion of body, speech and mind.

<sup>1008</sup> This is evocative of various *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings; thus far, I have not been able to locate the exact source.



obscurations? With Obstruction and Without Obstruction and Joyous and Producing Pride, these are the four [Negative Forces]; moreover, they are said to arise from the root of Producing Pride.

*rgyas par bshad pa la rnam pa gsum las / skyes bu las dang po<sup>1009</sup> rnams la bdud bzhi bye  
brag tu bstan nas nyams su blang pa dang / gnyis pa dpe'i sgo nas bden med du spyad pa dang /  
gsum pa dpe dang bral ba'i nyams len bstan pa yin te / 'di dag kyang lam rnam pa lnga dang  
sbyar bar<sup>1010</sup> bya'o † /*

[2.1.1.2.2.] The extensive explanation is threefold: [2.1.1.2.2.1.] beginners (*skyes bu las dang po rnams*) gain experience from the teaching on the four specific Negative Forces; [2.1.1.2.2.2.] the second [stage] is practicing the absence of true existence from an analogical perspective; [2.1.1.2.2.3.] the third [stage] is experiential teachings that are separate from analogy. These moreover, should be connected with the five parts of the path.

*thog ma la bzhi las / thob bcas kyi bdud 'di la gnyis las / bdud rang las byung ba ngos  
bzung ba ni / thogs bcas zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang ba bzhi ste / gzugs sogs dbang shes kyi  
dngos su snang ba<sup>1011</sup> rnams dang / dgag bsgrub dang bcas pas 'khor bar bcings zhes so /*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.a.] At the beginning, there are four parts. [2.1.1.2.2.1.1.] There are two aspects regarding these Negative Forces With Obstruction: [2.1.1.2.2.1.1.1.] the Negative Forces identified with what arises from oneself, so-called “With Obstruction” and the like, [are discussed] in four lines [rtsa 7/456]. Because substantial appearances of sense consciousness (*dbang shes*) such as form are associated with negation and affirmation (*dgag bsgrub*), they are said to be fetters to saṃsāra.

<sup>1009</sup> I am reading this as per the 1981 edition of the text, wherein the term “*las*” has been inserted immediately below “*dang po*”; this insertion is not present in the 1971 edition.

<sup>1010</sup> Reading “*sbyar ba*” for “*sbyar pa*.”

<sup>1011</sup> Reading “*dngos su snang ba*” for “*ngos su snang ba*.”

*de'i ngo bo stong par gtan la 'bebs pa<sup>1012</sup> ni / gzugs ni zhes pa la sogs pa tshig rkang pa  
bcu drug gis bstan te / gzugs sogs kyi snang ba sgrub pa'i tshe na / de'i ngo bo rang bzhin stong  
par rig pas brtag na yang grub la / lung las kyang / gzugs stong ba'o zhes pa dang / bcom ldan  
'das kyi sogs rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid kyi bar stong pa nyid du gtan la phab pas /  
de ltar gzugs sogs bden med du bsgoms pas / dngos por rtag 'dzin spangs te / stong yang yid la  
ma byas pas / chad pa'i tha snyad dang bral ba'o //*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.1.2.] As for the determination that the essence of form is emptiness, stating “gzugs” and so forth, it is taught in sixteen lines [rtsa 7-8/456-457]. At the time of the accomplishment, when enlightened knowing (*rig pa*) understands the essence and self-nature of appearances of form and so forth to be empty, they are also established [as empty]. Moreover, according to the authoritative teaching (*lung; āgama*), “form is emptiness.”<sup>1013</sup> Also, the Lord (*bcom ldan 'das; bhagavan*) [taught that] form, “until one is omniscient (*thams cad mkhyen pa nyid kyi bar*), is logically determined (*gtan la phab pa*) to be emptiness.”<sup>1014</sup> In that way, through meditatively cultivating [an understanding of] the lack of true existence [inherent in] form and the rest, one abandons clinging to the permanence of objects. Moreover, because not even emptiness<sup>1015</sup> is produced in the mind, one is separated from the conventions of nihilism.

<sup>1012</sup> Reading “*bebs pa*” for “*beb pa*.”

<sup>1013</sup> This is an oft-repeated formulation present in various *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings. One of the most well-known presentations occurs in both the long and short recensions of the *Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya*, the *Heart Sūtra*, which reads “*rūpam śūnyatā*.” Jan Nattier (1992, 197; 200) notes that only the long recension was included in the Tibetan *bka'* *gyur* (Derge 21 and 531; Narthang 26 and 476; Lhasa 26 and 499; Peking 160), although a Tibetan edition of the short recension has been found in Tun-huang.

<sup>1014</sup> This is evocative of passages in various teachings included in the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus. For example, there is a passage in the *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag nyi shu lnga pa* [To 5574(7)] (*Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*): “*rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid kyi bar du stong pa'o zhes bya bar 'du shes na chags pa'o*” (ACIP file KL0009I2.INC, 260A).

<sup>1015</sup> I am taking the liberty here of reading the adjective “*stong*” (“empty”) as the noun “*stong pa nyid*” (“emptiness”).

*de lta bu'i bden med la gzugs sogs kyi snang ba tsam dgag tu ma btub kyang / snang ba  
rang bzhin med par rtogs pa ni shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'o // de ltar bsgoms pa ni lam gyi  
mchog yin te / 'phags pa las / gzugs ni gzugs kyi ngo bo nyid dang bral ba'o // de bzhin du /  
tshor ba dang / 'du shes dang / 'du byed dang / rnam par shes pa ni // {61/509} rnam par shes  
pa'i ngo bo nyid dang bral ba'o // zhes gsungs pas // rnam rtog rang 'gag su btang zhing  
bsgom pa yin no //*

Lacking true existence in that way, mere appearances of form and the others cannot be obstructive; moreover, comprehending the absence of self-nature of appearances is the perfection of wisdom (*shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa; prajñāpāramitā*). In that regard, meditative cultivation is the exceptional path (*lam gyi mchog*). As is stated in the *Superior One* (*'phags pa; 'ārya*),<sup>1016</sup> “Form is separate from the very essence of form [i.e. it is empty]. Likewise, sensation (*tshor ba; vedanā*), cognition (*'du shes; samjñā*), compositional factors,<sup>1017</sup> (*'du byed; saṃskāra*), and consciousness (*rnam par shes pa; vijñāna*) are separated from the very essence of consciousness.” Letting go of the self-obstruction (*rang 'gag*) of discursive thought is meditative cultivation.

*rnam par rtog pa ni thogs med kyi bdud yin yang / 'khrul pa'i blos zhen pas A 'thas su  
gyur pa ni thogs bcas yin par 'di dag kyang chos kyi dbyings kyi ye shes su bsgyur cig ces  
pa'o //*

Discursive thinking is a Negative Force Without Obstruction; in addition, the occurrences of reification (*A 'thas su gyur pa*) due to the clinging by confused rational minds (*'khrul pa'i*

<sup>1016</sup> This appears to be a paraphrase from the *'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa* (*Ārya-aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*): “gzugs nyid gzugs kyi ngo bo nyid dang bral ba / de bzhin du gang gi tse tshor ba nyid dang 'du shes nyid dang / 'du byed rnam nyid dang de bzhin du 'di ltar gang gi tse rnam par shes pa nyid kyang rnam par shes pa'i ngo bo nyid dang bral ba” (Toh. 6758: Tshe mchog gling edition via ACIP, Ka 1-428, 5B-6A). Rangjung Dorjé presents “gzugs ni” (“as for form”) instead of citing “gzugs nyid” (“form itself”), as presented in my source text.

<sup>1017</sup> “‘du byed’ are also known as “formatives.”

*blos*) are [Negative Forces] With Obstruction, yet these [rational minds] are also said to become the primordial wisdom of the expanse of things (*chos kyi dbyings kyi ye shes*; *dharmadhātujñāna*).

*gnyis pa thog med kyi bdud la gnyis las / byung tshor ngos bzung ba ni / thogs med zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang pa dgu ste // yid kyi rnam shes las byung ba'i / byung tshor bzang ngan rnam yin no // zhes so /*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.2.] Second, there are two sections on Negative Forces Without Obstruction. As for the identification of sensations, in the nine lines beginning with the phrase “*thogs med*” [rtsa 8/457], it is said that sensations which arise from mental consciousness (*yid kyi rnam shes*) are [2.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.] good and bad.<sup>1018</sup>

*de dag kyang rtogs na rang grol du 'gyur ba ni / chos dbyings klong chen la sogs thig rkang bcu ste / sems nyid kyi dbyings las rnam par rtog pa chu rlabs lta bu rnam kyang / gong du bshad pa ltar dgag bsgrub med par rang rig rang gsal gyi ngang la mnyam par bzhas pas grol bar 'gyur zhes pa'o //*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.2.2.] Moreover, when these [sensations] are comprehended, they will become self-liberated; this is stated in the nine lines from “*chos dbyings klong chen*” onward. Like waves on water, discursive thoughts [arise] from the expanse of mind itself (*sems nyid*). Moreover, as explained above, it is said that [through] a self-knowing that lacks negation and affirmation (*dgag bsgrub med par rang rig*), one will become liberated by resting equanimously in the state of self-luminosity.

---

<sup>1018</sup> The root text emphasizes that that objects occurring to the mind are discriminated as “good” and “bad,” not that they are inherently good or bad, “*rang gi rtog pas phye ba rnam // thogs med bdud du bstan pa yin*” (rtsa 8/457).

*dga' brod kyi bdud la gnyis las / mdor bstan pa ni / dga' brod ces pa la sogs pa'i tshig  
rkang pa gsum ste / thun mong dang mchog gi bdud gnyis / rang rig 'khrul pa las byung ba yin  
no //*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.3.] With regard to Joyous Negative Forces, there are two sections.

[2.1.1.2.2.1.3.1.] As for the brief explanation, there are three lines including the phrase “*dga' brod*” [rtsa 8/457]. The two types of Negative Forces that arise from one’s own mental confusion are the common Negative Forces and the exceptional Negative Forces.

*rgyas par bshad pa la gnyis las / thun mong dang / mchog go // dang po la gnyis las /  
yon tan la chags na lam bdud yin pa ni / gnyan sar zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang pa brgyad de / de  
yang bla ma'i gdams ngag nyams su blangs nas / rkyen phra'u lam du slong ba las / rlom sems  
skye ba dang / gzhan yang g.yeng ba la sogs pa'i byang chub kyi gegs su 'gyur pa thams chad  
bdud du bstan pa'o //*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.] In the extensive teaching, there are two sections: [2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.1.] the common [Negative Forces] and [2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.] the exceptional [Negative Forces].

[2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.1.a.] With regard to the first, there are two types. [2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.1.1.] Path Negative Forces, when one is attached to qualities, are discussed in eight lines beginning from “*gnyan sar*” [rtsa 8/457]. Then, having gained experience and with the oral instruction of one’s lama, more subtle conditions (*rkyen phra'u*) rise up on the path, such as the generation of an arrogant mind and also other distractions; everything that becomes an obstruction of the spirit of enlightenment is explained as a Negative Force.

*rmi lam lta bur bstan pa ni / yon tan ces pa la sogs pa'i tshig gis / gong gi bdud de'i  
skyon sel zhing / gnyen po yang bden med du ston par byed pa yin te / thun mong gi {62/510}  
yon tan phra'u gang la yang / yul sems gnyis med du bshig pa'i shes rab kyi blos zhen pa med*

*par bya ste / rmi lam dang / bzhin bzang gi snyis pa<sup>1019</sup> chus bkang ba ltar / yon tan gyi rnam pa  
la sogs pa rnam kyang / rang gi rnam par rtog pa bsdu pa yin te / rloms sems bskyed par mi  
bya'o //*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.1.2.] As for the explanation of what is similar to dreams, through the words “yon tan” and so forth [rtsa 8/457], there is the teaching on the absence of true existence for the elimination of, and also as the antidote for, the faults of the above Negative Forces. Whatever subtleties the ordinary qualities have, it should go without saying (*zhen pa med par bya*) that by means of the demolishing wisdom mind (*bshig pa'i shes rab kyi blo*), mind and object are without duality (*yul sems gnyis med*). As if covered by water (*chus bkang ba*), dreams and pleasing appearances (*bzhin bzang*) fade away (*snyis pa*); even such qualities as these are contained in one's own discursive thinking. One should not generate an arrogant mind!

*de bzhin du sdug bsngal gyi rnam pa ci snyed pa'ang shes par byas la / shes nas kyang  
thad kar bcad par bya'o // 'di yan chod ni / tshogs lam nyams su len par byed pa rnam kyi bogs  
'don gyi gdams pa yang dag par bstan to<sup>1020</sup> //*

Similarly, having knowledge of whatever types of suffering there are, from this knowledge, moreover, one should cut directly through [the suffering]. Up to this point, the instruction on the methods for augmenting (*bogs 'don*) the actions for gaining experience on the path of accumulation is an authentic teaching.

*mchog la gnyis / mgo na lam bdud du bstan pa dang / blos byas bdud du bstan pa'o //  
thog ma la gnyis las / bdud ngos bzung ba la yang gnyis las / mdor bstan pa ni / tshig rkang pa  
gnyis dang / rgyas par bshad pa ni / tshig rkang pa drug<sup>1021</sup> ste / de yang mchog ces pas / spros*

---

<sup>1019</sup> Reading “snyis pa” for “snyim pa.”

<sup>1020</sup> The form “bstan to” reflects the old orthography.

*bral du blta ba dang / mnyam nyid du bsgom pa dang / rtog med du spyod pa dang / nyams len myong cha dang bcas par 'dzin pa ni / yul sems gnyis med du ma shes par / bdag med rtogs par byed pa'i lam khyad par can du mi 'gyur te / 'dzin pa dang bcas pa'i phyir ro / /*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.a.] With regard to the exceptional [Negative Forces], there are two parts: [2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.] at the beginning is a teaching on the Negative Forces of the path when misunderstood, and [2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.2.] a teaching on mind-made (*blos byas*) Negative Forces. [2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.a.] At the beginning [regarding the Negative Forces of the path when misunderstood] there are two parts. [2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.1.] [First,] the identification of the Negative Forces, which also has two parts: [2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.1.1.] [it is] taught briefly in two lines; [2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.1.2.] [and it is] explained extensively in six lines.

[2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.1.1.a.] Moreover, [with regard to the brief teaching mentioning “path” and “result”], the word “*mchog*” [rtsa 9/458] [denotes] the view freed from elaborations, the meditative cultivation of equanimity, and the non-conceptual practice (*rtog med du spyod pa*). As for the grasping associated with lived experience (*nyams len myong cha*), there will not be a distinctive path of comprehending selflessness without knowing the non-duality of objects and mind (*sems*); this is due to the association with grasping.

*gnyis pa brda' ru shes na grol ba la bzhi las / rang shar la blta bya lta byed med pa ni / lta bsgom zhes pa la sogs pa'i tshig rkang pa drug ste / de yang dbang po rnon po'i rten gyi gang zag 'ga' zhig la / lta bsgom pa'i bye brag dpag tu med pa bshad pa rnams kyang don dam par yid la byar med pa yin pas / / A 'thas kyi blo yang spang zhing / ma 'gags pa'i rtsal snang ba bden med du rgyas btab pa ni gcod kyi mchog yin no / / de ltar du yang / rgyas pa las / gzugs*

---

<sup>1021</sup> The editions of Rangjung Dorjé's '*grel pa* read “*tshig dang nga drug*” which I have edited to read “*tshig rkang pa drug*” based on the following: first, the corresponding section of the root text has six lines and not fifty-six lines, as would be suggested by “*nga drug*”; and second, the consistent use of the formulaic phrase “*tshig rkang pa {grangs ka}*” (“in {number} of lines”) throughout the '*grel pa*.

*yid la mi byed ces pa nas rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid kyi bar du yid la mi byed par*  
 {63/511} *gsungs pa'i phyir ro / /*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.2.] Second, with regard to liberation when the signs are understood, there are four parts. [2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.2.1.] [First,] the absence of a self-arising observer or observed is discussed in six lines beginning with “*lta sgom*” [rtsa 9/458]. In addition, for the few persons who have a foundation of sharp faculties, because even explanations about the unfathomable particularities of view and meditative cultivation are not created in their actual mental consciousnesses (*don dam par yid la*), the mind of reification (*A 'thas kyi blo*) is also abandoned and one extensively determines the lack of truth of unobstructed apparent appearances—this is the exceptionality of Chöd. Also in that way, the extensive teaching states, “form is not created in mental consciousness” (*gzugs yid la mi byed*),<sup>1022</sup> since it is said that there is no creation in mental consciousness (*yid*) in the middle of omniscience (*rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid*).

*gnyis pa bsgom pa snyom mkhan med pa ni / kun kyang rang byung zhes pa la sogs pa*  
*tshig rkang pa bcu ste / gong du smos pa la sogs pa kun kyang rang sems yin pas / gnyen po rtsol*  
*bcas kyis bsgom du med la / / lhang nge lhan ne la sogs pa bsam gtan gyi bye brag kyang / chu*  
*dang mar la sogs pa'i dpes / bsgom bya sgom byed gnyis med du bstan pa'o / /*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.2.2.] Second, as for the meditative cultivation [for one who is not an] expert in equilibrium (*snyom mkhan med pa*), there are ten lines, from “*kun kyang rang byung*” onward [rtsa 9/458]. Including that expressed above, because everything is one’s own mind, the antidote is not meditative cultivation with effort. Clear (*lhang nge*), still (*lhan ne*), and the like

<sup>1022</sup> I have yet to locate a direct source for this citation. It could be a paraphrase of or allusion to a passage such as this in the *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag nyi shu lnga pa* [To 5574(7)] (*Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*): “*ngos po thams cad yid la mi byed ste*” (Provisionally accessed ACIP file KL0009I1.INC, 356A).



are the specifics of concentration (*bsam gtan*; *dhyāna*). By the analogies of water and butter and so forth, it is taught that the meditative cultivation and the meditative cultivator are without duality.

*gsum pa shugs 'byung gi lta bas zin na / spyod pa rang gi rol pa ni / rang spyod zhes pa la sogs pa tshig rkang pa drug gis / bden med kyi don la ched du gnyer ba'i spyod pas spyad du med cing / nyams kyi snang ba A 'thas kyi gnyen pos bzung du med de / rang grol du ma go na 'ching pa'i phyir ro //*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.2.3.] Third, when grasped by the view occurring of its own accord (*shugs 'byung*), regarding one's own play as practice, it is discussed in six[teen] lines beginning with “*rang spyod*” [rtsa 9/458].<sup>1023</sup> One who practices deliberately seeking (*ched du gnyer ba*) the factual meaning of the absence of true existence (*bden med kyi don*) is without a practice (*spyad du med*); by means of antidotes to reification of experiential appearances, there is an absence of grasping. When one does not understand self-liberation, it is because of [such] fetters.

*gnyen po bcug kyang rang grol du gyur na ni / gang yang bkag pa med mod kyi<sup>1024</sup> / 'on kyang ma rtogs pa'i spyod pa mi bya ste / 'di'i bzhed pas nyon mongs pa la sogs pa'i rnam rtog la / gnyen po stobs can gyis thad kar bcad cing / gcod byed kyi shes pa bden med du rgyas 'debs pa ni / spyod pa'i mchog gyur gsungs pa'o //*

Moreover, when one becomes self-liberated having used an antidote, there are no obstructions whatsoever; but in any case, one should not practice uncomprehendingly. Through acceptance of this, by means of a powerful antidote, one directly severs discursive thoughts

<sup>1023</sup> This should perhaps read “*tshig rkang pa bcu drug*” (“sixteen lines”), to correspond with the actual number of lines in this section of the root text.

<sup>1024</sup> Reading “*mod kyi*” (a genitive absolute) for “*mod kyis*.”

about such things as mental afflictions; the knowledge of the one who severs is the sealing of the absence of true existence, [which] is said to be the exceptional practice.

*bzhi pa nyams myong blo las 'das pa ni / nyams su zhes pa la sogs pa'i tshig rkang pa  
bcu yis / lam gyi gol sa bcod pa'i gdams ngag yin te / bdud kyi rtsa ba dmigs bcas yin pas /  
dmigs pa bsgom pa ni / shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa bsgom pa ma yin no / /*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.2.4.] Fourth, the transcendence of one's experiential mind (*nyams myong blo*) is discussed in ten lines, beginning with “*nyams su*” [rtsa 9-10/458-459];<sup>1025</sup> it is the oral instruction regarding the place of going astray on the path. The root of the Negative Forces is an objective reference (*dmigs bcas*); as for the meditative cultivation of an objective reference, it is not the meditative cultivation of *prajñāpāramitā*.

*'o na gang yin zhe na / bsgom bya sgom byed dang bral ba / 'dzin pa mtha' dag gis dben  
pa'i bdag nyid can / snang sems 'dzin med du bzhag pa las / nyams kyi bye brag mtha' dag  
kyang bden med du bshig cing / bskal pa bye ba la sogs par yang / yul / yul can du bsgoms na de  
nyid kyi lam ma yin la / bden med rtogs pa'i skad cig la / bdud thams cad rang sar grol bar 'gyur  
bas / 'di'i phyir na bla ma mchog la rag lus pa'o / / ces so / /*

Then, if one were to ask what [the meditative cultivation] is, [the reply would be that it is] the separation of the meditation object and the meditator. Having a self-identity (*'dzin pa mtha' dag*) isolated from grasping in its entirety, from resting without grasping appearances and mind (*sems*), the particularities of experience in their entirety are also destroyed in their lack of true existence.<sup>1026</sup> It is not the path of thatness (*de nyid*) when one meditatively cultivates objects and subjects, even for millions of eons or more. At the moment of comprehending selflessness,

<sup>1025</sup> In the editions of the root text I have consulted, this section has nine lines rather than ten.

<sup>1026</sup> This is a provisional translation.

all the Negative Forces will be liberated on their own ground. Because of this, one is dependent on an exceptional spiritual teacher (*bla ma mchog*).

*blos {64/512} byas bdud du bstan pa la gnyis las / 'dod pa dang bcas pas 'bras bu'i  
bdud ni / mchog gi zhes pa la sogs pa'i tshig rkang pa lnga ste / de yang theg pa gsum gyi lam  
gyi drod rtags dang / 'bras bu la 'dod pa dang / 'dzin pa rnams ni bdud yin no zhes so / /*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.2.] The teaching on mind-made Negative Forces has two parts.

[2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.2.1.] The Negative Forces of results because of having desire is discussed in five lines beginning with “*mchog gi*.”<sup>1027</sup> Moreover, there are the signs of warmth<sup>1028</sup> of the paths of the three vehicles; it is said that desire for and grasping of results are Negative Forces.

*de yang rang yin na bsgrub tu med pa ni / lus ngag yid gsum zhes pa la sogs pa'i tshig  
rkang pa bcu gcig ste / gong gi rgyu 'bras la sogs re dogs dang bcas pa las grol bar byed pa ni /  
rang gi lus ngag yid gsum rtogs na sku gsum yin pas / sangs rgyas gzhan nas bsgrub tu med de /  
slob dpon Na ro pas / chos kun sems la gnas zhes gsungs / /*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.2.2.] In addition, that one’s own identity is not something to be achieved is discussed in eleven lines beginning with “*lus ngag yid gsum*” [rtsa 10/459].<sup>1029</sup> The previous cause, result, and so forth, are created by liberation from having hopes and fears; when one understands one’s own triad of body, speech and mind as the three bodies, there will not be

---

<sup>1027</sup> This would appear to correspond with a passage on page 10/459 of the root text that begins with “*bras bu'i bdud*” rather than “*mchog gi*.”

<sup>1028</sup> “*drod rtags*” literally translates as “signs of warmth,” but can be read as a metaphor for signs of accomplishment in general since generating warmth is a type of accomplishment. Generating warmth is the first of four levels on the second of the five paths (*lam lnga*): that is, the path of connection (*sbyor lam*).

<sup>1029</sup> In the editions of the root text I am working from, this section has ten lines rather than eleven; however, one of the lines is of thirteen syllables rather than the seven-syllable meter of the other lines. This may suggest that Rangjung Dorjé was citing an edition in which this line was divided into two separate lines.

accomplishment through other enlightened ones. By the master Nāropa it is said, “all things abide in the mind.”<sup>1030</sup>

*chos kyi rtsa ba sems nyid des / zhes bshad pa'i phyir / sems nyid de bzhin rtogs par ma gyur na / bskal pa la sogs par bsgrubs kyang thob par mi 'gyur zhing / lam dang 'bras bu la re ba med par / chos dang gang zag gi bdag 'dzin mtha' dag bcad pa las / sangs rgyas gzhan nas bsgrub tu med ces so //*

Because it is said that the root of things is mind itself, when there is no understanding of that very mind itself, even if one has practiced (*bsgrubs*) for an aeon (*bskal pa*) or more, there will not be attainment and there will not be hope in the paths and results. Having thoroughly severed the self-grasping of things and persons, there will not be accomplishment through other enlightened ones.

*snyems byed kyi bdud la gnyis las / mdor bstan pa ni / bdud la bzhi ru phye ba la sogs pa'i tshig rkang gnyis ni go sla'o // rgyas bshad la gsum las / thogs bcas kyi bdud snyems byed du 'dus pa dang / thogs med snyems byed du 'dus pa dang / dga' brod snyems byed du 'dus pa'o //*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.4.] As for Negative Forces Producing Pride, there are two parts:

[2.1.1.2.2.1.4.1.] as for the brief teaching, the two lines from “*bdud la bzhi ru phye ba*” onward [rtsa 10/459] are easy to understand. [2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.] In the extensive explanation, there are three types: [2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.1.] Negative Forces With Obstructions in combination with

<sup>1030</sup> This seems to be a paraphrase of the second line of Nāropa's *Phyag rgya chen po'i tshig bsdu pa* (*The Summary of Mahāmudrā*), which reads “*chos rnam thams cad rang gi sems*” (“All things are one's own mind”). Herbert Guenther argues that it is problematic to translate “*rang gi sems*” as “one's mind”: “*rañ sems*, also *rañ-gi sems*, is a term most likely to mislead the linguistic specialist by inducing him to translate the genitive case *rañ-gi* as such and render the whole term as ‘one's mind,’ taking ‘one’ as one entity and ‘mind’ as another. However, the use of *rañ* is, to our Western thinking, exceedingly ambiguous. Above all it refers to itself so that *rañ-gi sems* would have to be translated as ‘mind pointing to itself,’ ‘mind in itself,’ ‘mind as such’ or any such similar circumlocutions” (1999 [1963], 39 n. 1). Yet, oddly enough, Rangjung Dorjé seems unintentionally to reinforce just the duality that Guenther cautions against: Rangjung Dorjé uses “*gnas*,” which can be read as a verb meaning “to abide, to dwell, to stay, to remain,” but is not a copula, that is, a linking verb connecting “*chos*” (“things”) and “*sems*” (“mind”).

Producing Pride; [2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.2.] [Negative Forces] Without Obstructions in combination with Producing Pride; [2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.3.] Joyful [Negative Forces] in combination with Producing Pride.

*dang po la gnyis las / lta bas ma zin pa'i dngos po bdud du bstan pa ni / dngos 'dzin la sogs pa'i tshig rkang gnyis ni / dbang shes 'khrul pas bzung ba dkar dmar / yul / yul can du zhen pas / thogs bcas kyi bdud du gyur zhes pa'o / /*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.1.a.] The first [i.e., the Negative Forces With Obstructions in combination with Producing Pride] has two parts. [2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.1.1.] Things which are not grasped correctly<sup>1031</sup> are described as Negative Forces; there are two lines about “*dngos 'dzin*” and so forth.<sup>1032</sup> [One perceives] white and red objects because of mistaken sense consciousness; because of clinging to objects and subjects, they are said to be the Negative Forces With Obstructions.

*rtsa bral du shes pa ni / dngos po yul gyi zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang pa bco lnga ste / gong du brjod pa'i gzung 'dzin gyis bsdus pa'i rnam rtog ci snyed pa<sup>1033</sup> snyems byed du rtogs pa'i tshe gzung yul rags pa<sup>1034</sup> 'dzin med du rtogs la / snyems byed de {65/513} bcad pas bdud bzhi chod pa yin te / dper na nang gi me bsad pas rtsig gseb kyi du ba rang zhi ba bzhin no / /*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.1.2.] Understanding the separation from the root is discussed in fifteen lines beginning from “*dngos po yul*” [rtsa 10/459].<sup>1035</sup> As mentioned above, whatever is discursively thought about the connection of the grasping subject and the grasped object, at the

<sup>1031</sup> “*lta bas ma zin pa*,” lit. “not grasped through the correct view.”

<sup>1032</sup> This does not seem to be a direct quotation of the text; I would suggest that it corresponds to “*dngos po'i yul la snyems zhugs pas*” on page 10/459 of the root text.

<sup>1033</sup> Reading “*ci snyed pa*” for “*ci snyed ba*.”

<sup>1034</sup> The 1971 edition reads “*rags pa*,” while the 1981 edition reads “*rag pa*”; I am following the earlier edition here.

<sup>1035</sup> The root text reads “*dngos po'i yul*” instead of “*dngos po yul*.”

time of understanding the production of pride, one understands without coarsely grasping (*rags pa* ‘*dzin med*) the apprehended object (*gzung yul rags pa*). By cutting through that production of pride, the four Negative forces are also severed. As an analogy, by extinguishing the fire within, the smoke from wall cracks subsides of its own accord.<sup>1036</sup>

*de yang ‘gog pa’am nyan thos kyi zhi ba ltar / yul snang tsam bkag pa ma yin gyis / gzugs sogs kyi yul snang la / de’i ngo bo chos nyid stong pa nyid du gnas pa dang / nam mkha’i ‘ja’ ltar / snang ba la rang bzhin med pa bzhin du / ‘phags pa rnams kyis gzigs pa A cang ches kyis / so so skye bo rnams kyis kyang lung rigs<sup>1037</sup> gi sgo nas brtags shing dpyad na / de ltar yin te / sher snying las / gzugs stong pa’o // stong pa nyid gzugs so zhes bshad cing / dper na sgyu ma’i mkhan po sgyu ma la chags sems mi ‘byung ba bzhin no //*

In addition, there is not cessation of merely the objective appearances like there is in the cessation (*‘gog pa; nirodha*) or the pacification of the Hearers. The essences of those objective appearances of form and so forth abide in the emptiness of things themselves (*chos nyid; dharmatā*); they are like rainbows in space. It is absolutely the case (*A cang ches*) that the superior ones (*‘phags pa; ārya*) perceive (*gzigs pa*) that appearances are lacking in self-nature. Moreover, when each individual being labels and analyzes from the perspective of authoritative teachings and reasoning (*lung rigs*), they are like [the superior ones]. According to the Heart Sūtra (*sher snying*), “form is empty” (*gzugs stong pa*). Explaining that “emptiness is form” (*stong pa nyid gzugs so*) in an analogy, it is like a master of illusion for whom attachment to the illusion does not arise in the mind (*sems*).

*de’i phyr nang du snyems byed las byung ba’i bdud bzhi bden med du rtogs pa las / gnyis ‘dzin gyi blos bcad du yod pa ma yin gyi / dngos po dang ‘dzin pa rtsa bral rtogs pas /*

<sup>1036</sup> “*rang zhi*,” lit. “self-pacified.”

<sup>1037</sup> Reading “*rigs*” for “*rig*.”

*gzugs sogs rang sar grol ba ni / shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa yin gyis / des na gnyis 'dzin med  
pa'i ngang du zhog cig ces pa'o //*

Thus, from comprehending the absence of true existence of the four Negative Forces arising from the internal production of pride, there is no cutting by a discursive mind (*blo*) of dualistic grasping. Form and the rest are liberated on their own ground because one comprehends things (*dngos po*) and grasping subjects (*'dzin pa*) as separated from a root; [this] is the perfection of wisdom (*shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa; prajñāpāramitā*). That being so, it is said that one must rest in a state without dualistic grasping.

*thog med snyems byed du 'dus pa las / rtsa ba snyems byed las byung ba'i bdud lnga  
ngos bzung ba ni / thogs med zhes ba sogs tshig rkang drug ste / de yang dug lnga la sogs re  
dogs su gyur pa rnam ni snyems byed kyi bdud do // zhes so //*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.2.a.] From the combination of [Negative Forces] Without Obstruction and [Negative Forces] Producing Pride, the root of Negative Forces which arise from the Production of Pride is identified as five-fold. [2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.2.1.] Stating “*thogs med*” and so on, in six lines [rtsa 10-11/459-460], it is also said that hopes and fears regarding such things as the five poisons are Negative Forces Producing Pride.

*gnyis po snyems byed las grol na rigs drug las thar zhing ye shes lnga rtogs ba ni / zhe  
sdang rang sar grol zhes ba la sogs pa tshig rkang pa nyi shu rtsa gnyis te / de yang thog bcas  
snyems byed du 'dus pa'i skabs su bshad pa ltar / rnam rtog gzhi med du shes bas / nyon mongs  
pa lnga rang sar grol zhing / rigs drug gi sdug bsngal rang sar dag nas / nyon mongs pa lnga ye  
shes lngar 'gyur pa yin te / de yang rgyas {66/514} par phye na / nyon mongs pa zhe sdang gi  
rgyu byas nas dmyal ba'i sdug bsngal nyams su myong ba dang / snyems byed yin pas / de gzhi  
med du rtogs pa la brten nas / me long lta bu'i ye shes 'thob bo /*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.2.2.] Second, the emancipation from the six classes [of saṃsāra] and the comprehension of the five primordial wisdoms when one is liberated from the [Negative Forces] producing pride are discussed in twenty-two lines continuing from “*zhe sdang rang sar grol*” [rtsa 11/460]. In addition, in the way that it is explained in the context of the connection of the [Negative Force] with Obstructions and the [Negative Forces] that Produce Pride, because one knows that discursive thought is groundless, the five mental afflictions having been liberated on their own ground and the sufferings of the six classes having been purified on their own ground, the five mental afflictions will become the five Primordial Wisdoms. Moreover, when [the teaching] is elaborated, from the mental afflictions having caused aggression, there is the experience of the suffering of hell and the production of pride. From a basis in comprehension of the groundless[ness] of the [mental affliction causing aggression], one attains the Mirror-like Primordial Wisdom (*me long lta bu'i ye shes*).

*de bzhin du / 'dod chags dang / yi dvags / so sor rtog pa'i ye shes*<sup>1038</sup> *gsum dang / gti mug dang / dud 'gro / chos dbyings kyi ye shes gsum dang / phrag dog dang / lha mi / bye ba grub pa'i ye shes gsum dang / nga rgyal dang / lha ma yin / / mnyam pa nyid kyi ye shes gsum ste / gong ma ltar sbyar ro / / de'i phyir snyems byed rang sar grol bas / shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'o / / zhes so / /*

Similarly, threefold Individually-Discriminating Primordial Wisdom [is connected] with desire, attachment and hungry ghosts (*yi dvags; pretaḥ*); threefold *Dharmadhātu* Primordial Wisdom [is connected] with obscuration and animals; threefold Activity-Accomplishing Primordial Wisdom [is connected] with jealousy, deities and humans; and threefold Equanimous Primordial Wisdom [is connected] with personal pride (*nga rgyal*) and demi-gods (*lha ma yin*;

---

<sup>1038</sup> Reading “*so sor rtog pa'i ye shes*” for “*so sor rtogs pa'i ye shes*.”



*asura*). These are connected just like the above [i.e. the connection between the mental affliction causing aggression and the Mirror-like Primordial Wisdom]. Thus, it is said that because the Production of Pride is liberated on its own ground, it is the Perfection of Wisdom (*shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa*).

*gsum pa dpe'i sgo nas nyams nga med pa ni // de yang zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang pa  
bcu gsum gyis / gdams pa khyad par can yin te / rnam rtog thams cad bdud yin pas / de gcod par  
byed pa / dper na gangs khrod na gnas nga'i seng ge bzhin du / zhum pa dang bag tsha ba med  
par / snyems byed bshig cing bden med kyi ngang du mnyam par bzhag pas / phyi nang gi bar  
chad gang yang mi 'byung la / gal te byung yang nges par rtsal sbyongs su 'gyur te / rang gi cho  
'phrul yin pa'i phyir ro //*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.2.3.] Third, from the perspective of analogy, the lack of an “I” is discussed in thirteen lines beginning with “*de yang*”; it is a distinctive instruction.<sup>1039</sup> Because all discursive thought is a Negative Force, it is cut through. As an analogy, one is like a prideful lion (*nga'i seng nge*) in the snow mountain regions, without timidity and anxiety; because one has destroyed the production of pride and rests equanimously in the truthless state, there is no arising whatsoever of external and internal interruptions. Even if [interruptions] arise, one should train [in resting equanimously] (*rtsal sbyongs su 'gyur*) because they are one's own apparitions.

*'o na dran rtog de bcad nas bsgom mam zhe na / de ltar ma yin gyi / gang shar bden med  
du bcad pas / theg dman la sogs pa zil gyis mnan par 'gyur na / nad gdon la sogs pa smos kyang  
ci dgos te / de'i phyir rtsa bral du gcod pa 'di khyad par du 'phags so // zhes so //*

<sup>1039</sup> This section would appear to correspond with the section of the root text available to me that begins with “*des na thams cad snyems su 'dus*” (rtsa 11/460).

Then, if it is asked how one cultivates meditation when thought processes have been cut through, [the reply is] that it is not meditation like that. Because whatever appears is determined not to be truly existent,<sup>1040</sup> [the teachings of the] inferior vehicle and the rest are outshone and it is not necessary to mention the spirits of illness, and so forth. Thus, this cutting that separates the root [of mind] is distinctively superior (*khyad par du 'phags*).

*bzhi pa rtogs kyang ma bcad na 'ching ba ni / rtogs kyang zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang pa  
bdun te / de yang gang zag rnams kyis / gong du bshad pa ltar don bden med du rtogs kyang / lta  
spyod zung 'jug tu nyams su ma blangs na / dngos por {67/515} 'dzin pa dang khyad par med de  
/ dper na mtshon dar med pa dang 'dra'o //*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.2.4.] Fourth, seven lines beginning with “*rtogs kyang*” [rtsa 11/460] [explain] that even comprehension, if not cut through, is a fetter. In addition, if persons who comprehend the lack of true existence of mental objects (*don bden med*) as explained above do not gain experience in the unification of view and practice, there is no distinction from grasping onto things. As an analogy, it is similiar to not distributing weapons (*mtshon dar med pa*) [to warriors].

*lta spyod zung 'jug tu nyams su blangs pas / bdud rnams 'joms pa ni / dper na skyes bu  
dpa' bo sgyu rtsal shes pas dgra dpung 'joms pa bzhin no // de yang sdud pa las / dper na skyes  
bu mkhas pa yon tan kun ldan zhing / zhes pa nas / bde bar song zhing phyir yang khyim du 'ong  
ba ltar / zhes pa'i bar gyis dpe dang / de bzhin de tshe byang chub sems dpa' mkhas pa yang /  
sems can khams rnams kun tu snying rje cher bskyed cing // bdud bzhi dag dang sa gnyis las  
kyang rab 'das 'gyur / zhes bshad ba bzhin no //*

---

<sup>1040</sup> This could be an intentional pun with the word “*bcad*” (past tense of “*gcod*”): this verb often means “to cut through”; however, in this context I have chosen one of its secondary meanings, namely “to decide” or “to determine.”

The Negative Forces are defeated through gaining experience in the unification of view and practice; as an analogy, it is like the defeat of troops of enemies by warriors who know their craft (*sgyu rtsal*).<sup>1041</sup> In addition, in an analogy from the *Samcayagātha*,<sup>1042</sup> “an intelligent being possessing all qualities”<sup>1043</sup> is mentioned who, “travelling happily, turns around and goes home.”<sup>1044</sup> The analogy continues through the statement, “similarly, at that time, an intelligent bodhisattva who also develops great compassion for all realms of sentient beings, will purify the four Negative Forces and also transcend the two grounds.”<sup>1045</sup> [The defeat of the Negative Forces] is explained in such a way.

*lnga pa snyems byed bcad nas sangs rgyas su 'gyur ba ni / E MA HO / zhes pa la sogs  
tshig rkang gsum ste / de yang 'dzin pa mtha' dag dang bral ba de rtogs na sangs rgyas su 'gyur  
ba yin te / pha rol tu phyin pa sdud pa las / gang dag 'das dang gang dag phyogs bcu'i 'jig rten*

<sup>1041</sup> This is probably a reference to the analogy from the section of the *sdud pa* that will be cited next. In the analogy, an intelligent being who knows his craft can overcome adversities in the wilderness: “*stobs ldan mi thub brtson byas sgyu rtsal cho ga shes // 'phong dang bzo gnas mang po'i pha rol phyin gyur cing // sgyu ma sgrub shes 'gro don rab tu 'dod pa zhis // pha dang ma dang chung mar bcas bar yongs bsdus nas // dgra byed mang ba dgon pa'i lam du phyin pa dang // de yis dpa' zhing rtul phod skyes bu mang sprul te*” (*sdud pa*, XX.2-3).

<sup>1042</sup> Literally “*sdud pa*,” shorthand for the *Condensed Verse Prajñāpāramitā* (*Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa sdud pa tshigs su bcad pa*, [Ārya] *Prajñāpāramitā samcayagāthā*), also known as the *Ratnaḡaṇasamcayagāthā*. It consists of 302 verses and has been translated into English by Edward Conze (1994 [1973]). In addition, there is a critical Sanskrit edition with a transliteration of the Tibetan by Akira Yuyama (1976).

<sup>1043</sup> This is an exact quote from the Tibetan (*sdud pa*, XX.2). The Sanskrit reads: “*puruṣo yathā kuśalu sarva-guṇair upeta*” (Yuyama 1976, 74). See also Conze, “The Simile of the Hero” (1994 [1973], 45).

<sup>1044</sup> This is an exact quote from the Tibetan (*sdud pa*, XX.3). The Sanskrit reads: “*kṣemeṇa gatva puna geham upāgameyā*” (Yuyama 1976, 75).

<sup>1045</sup> “*de bzhin de tshe byang chub sems dpa' mkhas pa yang // sems can khams rnams kun du snying rje cher bskyed cing // bdud bzhi dag dang sa gnyis las kyang rab 'das nas*” (*sdud pa*, XX.4). Rangjung Dorjé, since he ends the quote here, writes “*rab 'das 'gyur*,” instead of following the Tibetan source text which provides “*rab 'das nas*.” The Sanskrit reads “*ema eva tasmī samaye vidu bodhisattvo maha-maitri sarvi upapadyati sattva-dhātu / caturo sa māra atikramya dvaye ca bhūmī*” (Yuyama 1976, 75). Khenpo Gawang suggested that the “two grounds” mentioned here might be a reference to the *śravakayāna* (Vehicle of the Hearers) and the *pratyekabuddhayāna* (Vehicle of the Solitary Realizers), which the bodhisattva transcends by following the *bodhisattvayāna*.

*mgon / rigs sngags 'di bslabs<sup>1046</sup> sman pa'i rgyal po bla med 'gyur / zhes bshad pa ltar / thams cad kyang bden med du bzhag par bya'o / /*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.2.5.] Fifth, having cut through the production of pride and becoming an enlightened one (*sangs rgyas su 'gyur ba*) is discussed in three lines from “*E MA HO*” onward [rtsa 11/460].<sup>1047</sup> In that regard, when freedom from all grasping is comprehended, one will become an enlightened being. From the *Samcayagātha*, it is explained thus: “whoever transcends whatever (*gang dag 'das dang gang dag*) is the guardian of the mundane world of the ten directions; the king of physicians trained in this knowledge mantra (*rigs sngags*) becomes unsurpassed.”<sup>1048</sup> Everyone, moreover, should rest in the absence of true existence.

*dga' brod snyems byed du 'dus pa la gnyis las / thun mong dang / mchog go / /*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.3.a.] The combination of the Joyful [Negative Force] with the Production of Pride has two parts: [2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.3.1.] the common and [2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.3.2.] the exceptional.

*dang po la gnyis las / dngos grub la chags na bdud yin pa ni dga' brod la sogs tshig rkang lnga ste / de yang drod<sup>1049</sup> rtags dang / gnas skabs kyi 'bras bu rnam la chags pa de ka bdud yin no zhes so / ma chags na rgyan yin pa ni / chags med la sogs tshig rkang gnyis te / de yang gzung 'dzin gnyis kyis dben pa'i bdag nyid la / 'gag med kyi rtsal 'cha' ba ni rgyan yin no / de yang sdud pa las / rdzu 'phrul gyi dpe dang / de bzhin byang chub sems dpa' mkhas pa stong*

<sup>1046</sup> Reading “*bslabs*” for “*slab*,” as per the edition of the *sdud pa* root text I have consulted.

<sup>1047</sup> There are five lines in this section according to the editions of the root text I have consulted.

<sup>1048</sup> “*gang dag 'das dang gang dag phyogs bcu'i 'jig rten mgon / / rig sngags 'di bslabs sman pa'i rgyal po bla med gyur*” (*sdud pa*, III.5). Rangjung Dorjé cites the source text verbatim, except for presenting the past tense of “*gyur*” in the source as “*gyur*” (present or future tense). The Sanskrit reads “*ye 'tīta- 'n-āgata-daśa-d-dīśi loka-nāthā ima-vidya-śikṣita an-uttaru-vaidya-rāja*” (Yuyama 1976, 23).

<sup>1049</sup> Reading “*drod*” for “*drong*.”

*gnas shing // ye shes rdzu 'phrul pha rol son la {68/516} gnas pa med // 'gro ba dag la bya ba rnam pa mtha' yas ston // bskal pa bye bar skyo ba med cing dub pa med / ces pa bzhin no //*

[2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.3.1.a.] In the first section, there are two parts: [2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.3.1.1.] the Negative Forces related to attachment to accomplishments (*dnagos grub*) are discussed in five lines beginning with “*dga' brod*” [rtsa 11-12/460-461]. That is to say, attachments to signs of accomplishment (*drod rtags*) and circumstantial effects are precisely what are called Negative Forces. [2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.3.1.2.] The ornament that is non-attachment is discussed in two lines, from “*chags med*” onward [rtsa 12/461]. In this regard, when you yourself are freed of both grasped object and grasping subject, you can depend upon your unhampered skills; this is an ornament.<sup>1050</sup> In addition, with the example of miracles (*rdzu 'phrul; rddhi*), it is said in the *Samcayagātha*: “similarly, an intelligent bodhisattva—abiding in emptiness and primordial wisdom (*ye shes*), having reached the side of miracles and without an abode—displays infinite kinds of activities to beings without wavering and without exhaustion for ten million kalpa.”<sup>1051</sup>

*gnyis pa mchog la gnyis te / brod pa bdud du bstan pa ni / sku gsum la sogs tshig rkang gnyis te / de yang sku gsum rang chas su gnas pa la / gzhan du re dogs dang bcas pa ni / bdud yin no / zhes so / de shes na snyems byed med pa ni / 'khor ba rang grol zhes pa la sogs pa'i tshig rkang pa brgyad de / de yang 'khor 'das rang sar grol bar shes shing / dran rtog bden med du go ba<sup>1052</sup> las / gnyen po gzhan gyis bsgom rgyu med pas snyems byed chod cig ces bstan to<sup>1053</sup> //*

<sup>1050</sup> The root text reads: “*chags pa med pa'i rang shar ni // snyems med chos sku'i rgyan du gsungs / §*” (12/461: “As for the self-arising without attachment, it is said to be the Ornament of the *Dharmakāya* Without Pride.”)

<sup>1051</sup> This is an exact quote from the Tibetan (*sdud pa* XX.12). The Sanskrit reads: “*em eva śūnyata-sthito vidu bodhisattvo jñānā-rddhi-pārami-gato a-niketa-cārī / vividhāṃ kriyāṃ jagati darśayate an-antāṃ na ca sajjate na pi ca khidyati kalpa-koṭīḥ*” (Yuyama 1976, 78). See also Conze, “The Simile of the Twin Miracle” (1994 [1973], 46).

<sup>1052</sup> The 1971 edition reads “*gro ba*,” while the 1981 edition, which I am following here, gives “*go ba*.”

[2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.3.2.a.] Second, there are two parts to the exceptional [teaching].

[2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.3.2.1.] The teaching on the Negative Force of Joy is in two lines beginning with “*sku gsum*” [rtsa 12/461]. In this regard, it is said that the Three Bodies are intrinsically present (*rang chas su gnas*); other hopes and fears (*gzhan du re dogs dang bcas*) are Negative Forces.

[2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.3.2.2.] There is no production of pride when that is understood, as explained in eight lines from “‘*khor ba rang gro!*” onward [rtsa 12/461]. In addition, it is taught that from knowing liberation from saṃsāra and nirvāṇa on one’s own ground and from understanding that thought processes lack true existence, one must cut through the production of pride since there is no cause for meditative cultivation by means of another antidote.

*gzhan yang bdud kyi rnam pa de dag zhib par pha rol tu phyin pa’i bdud kyi le’u las shes  
par bya zhing / de dag gi rtsa ba yang rnam rtog yin pas de nyid bcad cing bsgom par bya’o //*

Furthermore, these types of Negative Forces should be understood from the detailed *Prajñāpāramitā* sections on the Negative Forces; moreover, because the root of these [Negative Forces] is discursive thought, cutting that very [root], one should do meditative cultivation (*de nyid bcad cing bsgom par bya*).

*de yan chod kyis sbyong lam pa man chod kyi nyams len spyod pa’i bogs ‘don bstan to //  
spyi don gnyis pa dpe’i sgo nas gtan la dbab pa la lnga las / dpes bshad pa dang / lta ba / bsgom  
pa / spyod pa / ‘bras bu’o //*

One on the path of purification (*sbyong lam pa*) up to that point (*de yan chod kyis*) will then be taught augmenting methods for experiential practice (*nyams len spyod pa*) from that point onward (*man chod*). [2.1.1.2.2.2.] The two general meanings, as determined from the perspective of analogy (*dpe’i sgo nas*), have five [explanations]: [2.1.1.2.2.2.1.] explained

---

<sup>1053</sup> The text reads “to.”

through analogy (*dpes bshad pa*); [2.1.1.2.2.2.2.] view; [2.1.1.2.2.2.3.] meditative cultivation; [2.1.1.2.2.2.4.] practice; and [2.1.1.2.2.2.5.] result.

*thog ma la gnyis las / rgyud la ma khrel na 'ching ba ni / dpe yis zhes pa la sogs tshig  
rkang drug ste / gdams ngag 'di thob pa'i gang zag rnams kyis bdag ma grol bar gzhan don mi  
bya ste / bye'u dang / ston skyel gyi dpe bzhin / bdag gzhan grol bar dka' zhes bstan to / /*

[2.1.1.2.2.2.1.] The initial [meaning] has two parts. [2.1.1.2.2.2.1.1.] The fetters when one's mental continuum is unembarrassed are discussed in six lines beginning with “*dpe yis*” [rtsa 12/461]. A person who has obtained the oral instructions [but] who is not liberated herself should not benefit others; as in analogy of the little bird and the conveyed teachings (*ston skyel*), the teaching speaks of the difficulty of liberating self and others.

*rang gis rtogs na gzhan la phan pa ni / 'bri bzang zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang drug ste /  
skyes bu bdag gis bden med rtogs na / sems can gyi don shugs las 'byung ste / 'bri'i dpe ltar /  
rang nyid kyis bdag med rtogs par bya'o / /*

[2.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.] The benefit for others when one understands oneself is discussed in six lines beginning with “*bri bzang*” [rtsa 12/461]. When beings comprehend that the self does not truly exist, the welfare of sentient beings arises of its own accord. As in the example of the Dri (*'bri*; female yak), the absence of a self (*bdag med*) should be comprehended by one's own self.

*ces bshad pa yin te / sdud pa las / / gal te sems can 'du {69/517} shes sdug bsngal 'du  
shes bskyed / / 'gro ba rnams kyi don bya sdug bsngal spang snyam ste / bdag dang sems can  
yongs rtog byang chub sems dpa' ste<sup>1054</sup> / 'di ni shes rab pha rol phyin mchog spyod ma yin /  
zhes bshad pa dang / 'gro don mtshan nyid pa byed pa la / bdag bden med du shes shing / de ltar  
sems can yang shes la / sems can ltar nyon mongs pa'i gnyen por chos kyang de ltar shes pa zhig*

---

<sup>1054</sup> Reading “*ste*” for “*de*.”

*dgos te / de ltar yang sdud pa las / bdag ci 'dra ba de 'drar sems can thams cad shes / / sems can thams cad ci 'dra de 'drar chos kun shes / / skye ba med dang skye ba gnyis kar mi rtogs pa / 'di ni shes rab pha rol phyin mchog spyod pa yin / ces gsungs pa'i phyir ro / /*

Thus it is explained. In the *Samcayagātha* it is explained that, “if there are cognitions of sentient beings, one will generate cognitions of suffering. A bodhisattva who wonders how to benefit beings and to abandon suffering, conceiving of (*yongs rtog*) self and sentient beings, does not practice the perfection of wisdom (*shes rab pha rol phyin; prajñāpāramitā*).”<sup>1055</sup> Knowing that the self does not truly exist, one creates the characteristics for benefitting beings; also knowing that sentient beings are like that [i.e. do not truly exist], it is necessarily the case that one likewise knows things that are antidotes to suffering for such sentient beings.<sup>1056</sup> However, as is also explained in the *Samcayagātha*, “knowing that all sentient beings are just like he himself is, knowing that all things are just like all sentient beings are, birthlessness and birth are not conceived of dualistically; this is the exceptional practice of the perfection of wisdom.”<sup>1057</sup>

*gnyis pa lta ba la gnyis las / bdud rtsa bral du rtogs par bya ba ni / khyung chen zhes pa la sogs pa tshig rkang pa bcu gcig ste / de yang bdag med kyi don du 'gyur bar byed pa la / bdag med rnam pa gnyis rtogs shing / snyems byed rang sar grol ba las / bdud bzhi rtsa bral du rtogs*

<sup>1055</sup> The Tibetan source text I have consulted reads: “*gal te sems can 'du shes sdug bsngal 'du shes skyed / / 'gro ba rnams kyi don bya sdug bsngal spang snyam ste / / bdag dang sems can yongs rtog byang chub sems dpa' ste / / 'di ni shes rab pha rol phyin mchog spyod ma yin / /*” (*sdud pa*, I.25, emphasis added). Rangjung Dorjé has made a slight grammatical change, using “*bskyed*” (the past or future tense) instead of “*skyed*” (the present tense). The Sanskrit reads: “*saci sattva-saṃjña dukha-saṃjña upāda yātī cariyāmi duḥkha jagatī kariṣyāmi arthaṃ / so ātma-sattva-parikalpaku bodhisattvo na ca eṣa prajña-vara-pāramitāya caryā*” (Yuyama 1976, 15).

<sup>1056</sup> This is a provisional translation.

<sup>1057</sup> The Tibetan source text reads slightly differently: “*bdag ci 'dra ba de 'drar sems can thams cad shes / / sems can thams cad ci 'dra de 'drar chos kun shes / / skye ba med dang skye ba gnyi gar mi rtog pa / / 'di ni shes rab pha rol phyin mchog spyod pa yin / /*” (*sdud pa*, I.26, emphasis added). Rangjung Dorjé has changed “*ci 'drar*” to “*ci dra ba*,” possibly for consistency with the preceding line; he has also substituted an updated spelling of “*gnyi ga*,” changing it to “*gnyis ka*.” The Sanskrit reads: “*yatha ātmanaṃ tatha prajānati sarva-sattvān yatha sarva-sattva tatha jānati sarva-dharmān / an-upād' -upādu ubhaye a-vikalpamāno eṣā sa prajña-vara-pāramitāya*” (Yuyama 1976, 15).



*shing phyir mi ldog pa'i rtags thob nas / bdud las rnam par rgyal bar 'gyur te / khyung chen gyi  
dpe ltar ro // de ltar ma rtogs na / spyod pa rnam don chung bar 'gyur ba ni / sdong po'i dpe  
bzhin no //*

[2.1.1.2.2.2.2.] Second, the [explanation according to] view has two parts.

[2.1.1.2.2.2.2.1.] The Negative Force separated from the root that will be comprehended is discussed in eleven lines beginning with “*khyung chen*” [rtsa 12/461]. [2.1.1.2.2.2.2.2.] In addition, shifting to the meaning of the absence of self, two types of the absence of self are comprehended.<sup>1058</sup> [2.1.1.2.2.2.2.1.] From the production of pride having been liberated on its own ground, having comprehended the four Negative Forces separated from the root, and having attained the signs of a Non-Returner, one will be victorious over the Negative Forces. It is like the metaphor of the great garuda bird. If the [Negative Forces] are not comprehended in this way, there will be little meaning in one’s practices, similar to the metaphor of the branch (*sdong po*) [rtsa 12/461].

*de ltar shes pas chod pa ni / rtsa bral zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang drug ste / de yang dran  
byung gi rnam par rtog pa blo bur bden med du shes na / spang bya dang gnyen po gnyis med du  
grol bas / lus ngag yid gsum sku gsung thugs su grol lo zhes so //*

[2.1.1.2.2.2.2.2.] Likewise, cutting through by means of knowing is discussed in six lines,<sup>1059</sup> from “*rtsa bral*” onward [rtsa 12-13/461-462]. In that regard, when one knows that discursive thoughts about the arising of recollections are temporary and do not truly exist, it is said that the three—body, speech, and mind (*lus ngag yid*)—are liberated as body, speech and

<sup>1058</sup> That is, the lack of a self of persons (*gang zag gi bdag med*) and the lack of a self of things (*chos kyi bdag med*).

<sup>1059</sup> In the root text, this section consists of seven lines.

mind (*sku gsung thugs*)<sup>1060</sup> through liberation regarding the non-duality of objects to be abandoned and [their] antidotes.

*gsum pa bsgom pa la gsum las / dpe'i sgo nas bsam du med pa ni / bzhag thabs ces pa la  
sogs tshig rkang pa bco lnga se / de yang bdag med kyi don la mnyam par 'jog pa la / spros pa  
thams cad nye bar zhi zhing / bsam du med pa lha khang gi sder {70/518} so lta bu dang / byung  
tshor gyi rnam rtog chos nyid kyi dbyings su yal ba glog lta bu dang / rnam rtog byung yang  
chos nyid las ma g.yos pa chu rlabs lta bu dang / thams cad ye shes kyi rol pa'i dbyings su ma  
bcos lhug par 'jog pa'i thabs rnam kyis / mnyam par bzhag thabs su bstan pa'o / /*

[2.1.1.2.2.2.3.] Third, meditative cultivation is threefold. [2.1.1.2.2.2.3.1.] From the perspective of analogy, the absence of thought (*bsam du med*) is discussed in fifteen lines beginning with “*bzhag thabs*” [rtsa 13/462]. In this regard, all elaborations (*spros pa*; *prapañca*) are pacified in the equanimous engagement in the meaning of the absence of self and one lacks thought like a clay temple statue (*lha khang gi sder so*). Discursive thinking about sensations disappears like lightning in the expanse of things themselves (*chos nyid kyi dbyings*); furthermore, the occurrence of discursive thoughts is like waves [occurring] on the water, there is no movement from the things themselves. The method of being uncontrived and loosely engaged in the playful expanse of all primordial knowledge is explained as the method of resting in equanimity.

*ma bcos lhug par bzhag pa ni / bcos bslad mi bya zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang dgu ste / de  
yang<sup>1061</sup> yid la mi byed pa'i ngang<sup>1062</sup> du mnyam par 'jog pa las / gzhan rnam rtog gis bcos 'chos  
par byed pa bdud yin pas na / ma bcos lhug par bzhag par bya'o / /*

<sup>1060</sup> In the Tibetan language, these two sets of three—body, speech and mind—are actually subtly different: the second set is in the honorific form, suggesting enlightened body, speech and mind.

<sup>1061</sup> The 1981 edition of this text reads “*da yang*.”

[2.1.1.2.2.3.2.] Resting uncontrived and loosely is discussed in nine lines, from “*bcos bslad mi bya*” onward [rtsa 13/462]. In this regard, from equanimous engagement in a state of mental inactivity, when there is another [state] contrived by discursive thinking because of a Negative Force, one should rest uncontrived and loosely.

*de yang tshogs drug lhug pa'i dpe / skyes bu nad kyis zin pa lta bu / blo bde ba zin pa lta bu / snang yang nus pa med pa bu chung gis ma ma mthong ba lta bur bzhang par bya'o / ces pa'o /*

In addition, analogies are mentioned: one should rest like a person grasped by illness who loosens the sixfold group [of sense consciousness], or like one whose mind is grasped by bliss,<sup>1063</sup> or like a small child who sees her nurse, even though there is appearance [of the nurse], there is no ability [to do anything].

*dran rtog bden med du shes pas mya ngan las 'da' ba ni / rig pa zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang bcu gcig ste / de yang rang rig gzung 'dzin gyi rnam rtog dang bcas pa 'di nyid gnyan sa yin te / 'di nyid chod'<sup>1064</sup> nas phyi rol gyi gnyan sa rnams kyang chod par 'gyur zhing / gal te las dang po pa cung zad bag tsha ba rnams kyis kyang / gzan skyur la sogs pas ma chags par bya zhing / don shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i ngang du gnas par bya'o /*

[2.1.1.2.2.3.3.] Passing into nirvāṇa by knowing that thoughts lack true existence is discussed in eleven lines, beginning with “*rig pa*” [rtsa 13/462]. In this regard, this very combination of one’s own enlightened knowing (*rang rig*) and discursive thinking about grasped objects and grasping subjects is a terrifying place (*gnyan sa*). Having cut through this very

---

<sup>1062</sup> Reading “*ngang*” for “*dad*.”

<sup>1063</sup> The root text includes a second part of this analogy which is not included here: “*bya ba zin pa'i skyes bu bzhin / / blo bde'i ngang la kad kyis bzhang*” (“it is like a person whose work is done (*bya ba zin pa*) rests briefly (*kad kyis*) in a state of blissful rational mind”).

<sup>1064</sup> Reading “*chod*” for “*chong*.”

[combination], one will cut through even external terrifying places (*phyi rol gyi gnyan sa rnams*). If one is a beginner, even with just a few anxieties, by casting off [the body] as food and so forth, one will become unattached. The aim is to dwell in the state of the perfection of wisdom (*shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa*).

*de yang bzang ngan gyi rnam rtog mi 'jug pa / glen pa lto ba*<sup>1065</sup> *'grangs pa'i dpe bzhin  
bzhag pas / dran pa ma 'jigs shing 'khor ba las grol nas / mya ngan las 'das pa 'thob par 'gyur  
ste / de'i don bya brtsal med par shes par gyis cig pa'o /*

Furthermore, one does not engage in discursive thinking of “good” and “bad.” By resting as in the example of the dullness of one with a full stomach, not fearing thoughts, liberated from cyclic existence (*samsāra*), one will pass into nirvāṇa. One should know these activities without effort!

*de yang pha rol tu phyin pa las / bsam du med cing yid la byar med pa shes rab kyi pha  
rol tu phyin pa ces pa dang / gzugs ni shes rab ma yin gzugs la shes rab med / rnam shes la sogs  
tshor dang sems dpa' 'di dag ni / shes rab ma yin 'di dag la yang shes rab med / {71/519} 'di ni  
nam mkha'i khams dang mtshungs te tha dad med / ces gsungs so / /*

In addition, in the *Pāramitā* it is stated: “the absence of thoughts and the absence of activity in the mind are called ‘the perfection of wisdom,’”<sup>1066</sup> and “as for form, it is not wisdom, there is no wisdom in form. These sensations and heroic attitudes of consciousness and so forth are not wisdom; moreover, they lack wisdom. This [wisdom] is equivalent with the realm of space; it is without distinction.”<sup>1067</sup>

<sup>1065</sup> Reading “*lto ba*” for “*ltos*,” in parallel with the root text.

<sup>1066</sup> This is evocative of various *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings; thus far, I have not been able to locate the exact source. Not located in RGS, 25K, 8K or HS.

<sup>1067</sup> This seems to be a paraphrase of the *sdud pa*: “*gzugs ni shes rab ma yin gzugs la shes rab med / / rnam shes 'du*

*bzhi pa spyod pa la gnyis las / nyon mongs pa dang bral ba'i brtul zhugs<sup>1068</sup> ni / spyod pa zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang bcu gnyis te / de yang bdag med rtogs pa'i skyes bu rnams kyis / sems can gyi don du spyod pa rlabs can ston pa dang / lam rnam rtogs gcod pa'i spyod pa gnyis las / gang ltar yang spyod pa'i khyad par rnams ni / brtul zhugs<sup>1069</sup> che yang rgyud la nyon mongs pa med pa / khro bo'i 'bag lta bu / spyod pa la 'dzin chags med pa chu la nya 'phyo ba lta bu dang / nyon mongs rjes med pa rlung ri rtsibs 'grim pa lta bur spyod pas / brtul zhugs<sup>1070</sup> kyi bar chad 'dul zhing / zhe 'dod med pas / shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'o //*

[2.1.1.2.2.2.4.] Fourth, there are two parts [in the explanation according to practice].

[2.1.1.2.2.2.4.1.] As for the yogic discipline of being freed from mental afflictions, there are twelve lines stating “*spyod pa*” and so forth [rtsal 13/462]. In addition, persons that understand the absence of a self have an energetic practice (*spyod pa rlabs can*) for the benefit of sentient beings; the two practices of a Chöd practitioner are discursively understood as the teaching and path. In any case, as for the distinctions of practice, great yogic practice lacks mental afflictions in one’s mental continuum, like the contamination of wrath (*khro bo*). One holds on to one’s practice without attachment, like a fish swimming in the water. By practicing like wind travelling through mountain ranges, without a trace of mental afflictions, overcoming interruptions of yogic practice, the lack of anger or desire is the perfection of wisdom.

---

*shes tshor dang sems pa 'di dag ni // shes rab ma yin 'di dag la yang shes rab med // 'di ni nam mkha'i kham dang mtshungs te tha dad med*” (II.9). Rangjung Dorjé has quoted verbatim the first, third and fourth lines. The second line is misquoted (possibly due to the allusion to the catalogue of *phung po* [*skandha*; psycho-physical constituents] and the phonetic similarity between the words “*sems pa*” and “*sems dpa*”): the source text presents “*rnam shes 'du shes tshor dang sems pa 'di dag ni*,” while Rangjung Dorjé cites “*rnam shes la sogs tshor dang sems dpa' 'di dag ni*.” The Sanskrit reads: “*rūpaṃ na prajñā iti rūpi na asti prajñā vijñāna saṃjñā api vedana cetanā ca / na ca eti prajñā iti teṣu na cāsti prajñā ākāśa-dhātu-sama tasya na cāsti bhedaḥ*” (Yuyama 1976, 19-20). See also Conze, “The Facts of Existence” (1994 [1973], 13).

<sup>1068</sup> Reading “*brtul zhugs*” for “*brtul shugs*.”

<sup>1069</sup> Reading “*brtul zhugs*” for “*brtul shugs*.”

<sup>1070</sup> Reading “*brtul zhugs*” for “*brtul shugs*.”

*de skad du yang † sdud pa las / de yi tshe na bdud ni zug rngu ldan par*<sup>1071</sup> ‘gyur // mya ngan nyam thag sdug bsngal yid mi bde nyams chung // ji ltar byang chub sems dpa’ ‘di yid nur gyur zhes // ‘jigs pa bstan phyir phyogs rnams bsreg cing skar mda’ gtong // gang tshe mkhas pa de dag bsam pa dran ldan zhing // nyin mtshan shes rab pha rol phyin pa mchog don blta // de tshe lus sems ngag ni mkha’ ‘gro’i bya ltar rgyu // nag po’i rtsa lag rnams kyis glags rnyed ga la ‘gyur / zhes bshad do //

It is also said, in the *Samcayagātha*, “At that time, a Negative Force comes to have pain (*zug rngu ldan ba*), its unhappy and feeble mind is miserable, weak and suffering, [and] it asks ‘how will this bodhisattva’s mind become distressed?’<sup>1072</sup> In order to teach fear (*‘jigs pa bstan*), [the Negative Force] scorches the regions<sup>1073</sup> and releases meteors. At such a time, those wise ones, with mindful contemplation (*bsam pa dran ldan*) see the excellent meaning of the perfection of wisdom (*shes rab pha rol phyin pa; prajñāpāramitā*) day and night. Then, [their] bodies, minds [and] speech are like the activities of sky-goers (*mkha’ ‘gro’i bya*). How will negative kith and kin<sup>1074</sup> have an opportunity [for harm]?”<sup>1075</sup>

<sup>1071</sup> Reading “*ldan par*” for “*ldan bar*.”

<sup>1072</sup> My interpretation of “*nur*” as “distressed” follows the Sanskrit “*dīna*.” According to Das (1973, 742), “*nur (pa)*” refers to an ovoid shape while “*nur (ba)*” refers to shifting or displacing something, or to a substance becoming desiccated (*ibid.*).

<sup>1073</sup> “*phyogs rnams*,” lit. “sides.”

<sup>1074</sup> “*nag po’i rtsa lag rnams*,” lit. “black kith and kin.”

<sup>1075</sup> The Tibetan source text reads slightly differently than Rangjung Dorjé’s citation. I have noted the discrepancies with underscoring in the following citation from the source text: *de yi tshe na bdud ni zug rdu ldan par ‘gyur // mya ngan nyam thag sdug bsngal yid mi bde nyam chung // ji ltar byang chub sems dpa’ ‘di yid nur gyur zhes // ‘jigs pa bstan phyir phyogs rnams sreg cing skar mda’ gtong // gang tshe mkhas pa de dag bsam pa drag ldan zhing // nyin mtshan shes rab pha rol phyin pa’i mchog don lta // de tshe lus sems ngag ni mkha’ ‘gro bya ltar rgyu // nag po’i rtsa lag rnams kyis glags rnyed ga la ‘gyur”* (*sdud pa*, XXIV.1-2). The Sanskrit reads: “*māro ‘pi tasmi samaye bhavate sa-śalyo śokārtu duḥkhitu-manā sada alpa-sthāmo / diśa-dāha-ulka kṣipate bhaya-darśanārthaṃ katham eṣa dīna-manaso bhavi bodhisattvo // yada te bhavanti vidu āśaya-saṃprayuktā diva-rātri prajñā-vara-pāramitārtha-darśī / tada kāya-citta-vacanaṃ khaga-pakṣi-tulyaṃ avatāru teṣu kutu lapsyati kṛṣṇa-bandhu”* (Yuyama 1976, 96). See also Conze, “How Mara is Discomforted and Defeated” (1994 [1973], 54), although one should note the misreadings by Conze that Yuyama identifies (Yuyama 1976, 96 n. 1b and n. 2c).

*spyod pa klong du gyur pas thams cad grogs su bstan pa ni / rang gis zhes pa la sogs pa  
tshig rkang bcu gcig ste / gong du bshad pa ltar bdag med kyi don du gyur pa'i spyod pa de dag  
kyang / snyems byed bar chad med par rang byung du spyod dgos pa cig yin te / gzung 'dzin  
dang bcas pas ma yin no / /*

[2.1.1.2.2.2.4.2.] As for the teaching favorable to all by means of the mastered practice, there are twelve lines stating “rang gis” and so on [rtsa 14/463]. As explained earlier, these practices have the meaning of the absence of self; furthermore, without the interruption of the production of pride, self-arising practice is necessary. [This practice] is not associated with grasped objects and grasping subjects.

*de yang 'dzin bcas kyis brtags pas 'khrus pa dang khyad par med de / rmi lam du sdug  
bsngal nyams su myong yang / rang gi 'khrul rtog yin zhing / lha la sogs pa yang rang gis mngon  
zhen du bltas pa'o / / {72/520}*

In addition, the imputation by a grasping subject is not distinguished from confusion. Even the experience of suffering in dreams, moreover, is confused thinking, as are such things as deities when viewed by oneself with attachment to their manifestation.

*de na bzang ngan<sup>1076</sup> thams cad rang gis 'dzin pa yin pas / rang snang rang la gnod pa  
yin te / gzung 'dzin gyis la 'bras bu<sup>1077</sup> brtags pa'i phyir ro / /*

Thus, because one grasps everything as good or bad, one's own projections (*rang snang*) are harmful to oneself; the grasped object is an effect for the grasping subject because of imputations.<sup>1078</sup>

---

<sup>1076</sup> The 1981 edition reads “bzang rang”; the 1971 edition reads “bzang ngan.”

<sup>1077</sup> The 1971 edition reads “la 'bras bu.” The 1981 edition reads “A 'bras su”; according to Das (1973, 1344) and in Volume Two of the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (1996, 3123), “A 'bras” is a kind of fruit useful for treating kidney disease. This doesn't seem to fit the context here; however, the “la” following the “gyis” is also awkward in the 1971 edition.

*rang gis bden med du rtogs na / yul snang 'brel med kyis gnod par mi nus te / rgya gar  
gyi<sup>1079</sup> dug sprul bod la mi gnod pa bzhin no / /*

When one comprehends the lack of true existence, because there is no relation between object and appearance, there is no potential for harm; it is like the poisonous snake of India that is not harmful in Tibet.

*lnga pa 'bras bu la gnyis las / don rtogs pas 'bras bu sgrub tu med pa ni / 'bras bu zhes  
pa la sogs tshig rkang dgu ste / de yang<sup>1080</sup> bdag med<sup>1081</sup> mngon gyur du mthong zhing / snyems  
byed rang sar grol pa las / don de las gzhan pa'i sangs rgyas bsgrub tu med de / chos can chos  
nyid rang byung gi ye shes su rtogs pa'i phyir ro / /*

[2.1.1.2.2.2.5.] Fifth, with regard to results, there are two parts. [2.1.1.2.2.2.5.1.] As for the result that is not attained through comprehending the meaning, there are nine lines stating “*bras bu*” and so on [rtsa 14/463]. In addition, seeing phenomena (*mngon gyur*) as lacking inherent existence, one has been freed from the production of pride on one’s own ground; there is no attainment of enlightenment other than that aim, because one has comprehended particular things (*chos can; dharmin*) and reality itself (*chos nyid; dharmatā*) through self-arising primordial wisdom.<sup>1082</sup>

*de ltar yang / sems ni sems ma mchis pa ste / sems kyi rang bzhin 'od gsal ba'o / / ces pa  
dang / sems med pa ni 'gyur ba med pa rnam par rtog pa med pa'o / / ces 'phags pa las bshad  
pas / sems bden med rang bzhin 'od gsal ba / de rtogs pas sangs rgyas su grub ste / gzung 'dzin*

---

<sup>1078</sup> This is a provisional translation.

<sup>1079</sup> Reading “gyi” for “gye.”

<sup>1080</sup> Reading “yang” for “lang.”

<sup>1081</sup> Reading “bdag med” for “bdak med.”

<sup>1082</sup> This is a provisional translation.



*gyis dben pa'i bdag nyid can de las gzhan pa'i sangs rgyas bsgrub tu med de / dper na rtsi mar  
bzang po mthong zin gyi skyes bu la / mar zhes brjod pas dkar po la sogs ba'i rnam pa rnam  
phyis bsgrub mi dgos bar blo'i steng du grub pa bzhin / bdag med rnam pa gnyis mngon du rtogs  
pa'i gang zag<sup>1083</sup> la / sku dang ye shes mdzad ba dang phrin las gzhan nas btsal du med pa'o / /*

Although, according to the explanation from the Superior One, “as for mind (*sems*), mind does not exist,”<sup>1084</sup> “the self-nature of mind is luminosity (*'od gsal ba*),”<sup>1085</sup> and, “as for the non-existent mind, it is without change and without discursive thinking.”<sup>1086</sup> Through comprehending that mind—lacking true existence and having the self-nature of luminosity—the enlightened state (*sangs rgyas*) is attained. The enlightened state is not attained apart from [comprehending] that the grasped object and grasping subject have the very nature of void[ness] (*dben pa'i bdag nyid*). For example, a person who has perceived fine butter describes (*zhes brjod*) butter as having characteristics including whiteness and so forth; as it has been previously established in the rational mind, it is not necessary to establish [it again] later on. A person who fully comprehends (*mngon du rtogs pa*) both types of the absence of a self<sup>1087</sup> does not search elsewhere for the actions of body (*sku*), primordial knowledge, and enlightened activity.

---

<sup>1083</sup> Reading “*gang zag*” for “*gang zad*.”

<sup>1084</sup> This is a verbatim citation from the *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag nyi shu lnga pa* [To 5574(7)] (*Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*) (ACIP file KL0009I1.INC, 266A). An earlier reference to “*phags pa*” as a source seemed to refer to the *Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa* (*Ārya-aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramita*).

<sup>1085</sup> This is a verbatim citation from the *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag nyi shu lnga pa* [To 5574(7)] (*Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*) (ACIP file KL0009I1.INC, 169A).

<sup>1086</sup> This is a paraphrase from the *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag nyi shu lnga pa* [To 5574(7)] (*Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*): “*sems ma yin pa ni 'gyur ba med cing rnam par rtog pa med pa ste*.” (ACIP file KL0009I1.INC, 169B).

<sup>1087</sup> The two types of lack of self are 1) *gang zag gi bdag med*, the lack of self of persons, and 2) *chos kyi bdag med*, the lack of self of dharmas/things.

*bdag sangs rgyas su nges pa ni / snyems grol la sogs tshig rkang bzhi ste / de yang gong  
du bshad bltar rtogs pas bdud bzhi dang nyon mongs pa brgyad khri bzhi stong las rgyal zhing  
rang zhi par ‘gyur ro // zhes bstan te / de yang chod kyis mthong ba’i lam gyis spyod pa’i bogs  
‘don dang bcas pa bshad zin to //*

[2.1.1.2.2.5.2.] As for determining a self in the enlightened state, there are four lines, “*snyems grol*” and so on [rtsa 14/463<sup>1088</sup>]. In addition, it is taught that through comprehension as explained above, overcoming the four Negative Forces and the 84,000 mental afflictions, one will become self-pacified. Furthermore, it is explained by cutting through, by the Path of Insight, together with the augmenting methods of practice.

*spyi don gsum pa dpe dang bral ba la lnga las / rig pa ‘khrul pa ni / ma rig pa ye shes /  
ma {73/521} byas pa gzhi / mi byed pa lam / ma grub pa<sup>1089</sup> ‘bras bu’o //*

[2.1.1.2.2.3.] The third general meaning, separate from analogy, has five parts:

[2.1.1.2.2.3.1.] knowing as confusion (*rig pa ‘khrul pa*); [2.1.1.2.2.3.2.] unknowing as primordial wisdom; [2.1.1.2.2.3.3.] non-action as the ground; [2.1.1.2.2.3.4.] inactivity as the path; and [2.1.1.2.2.3.5.] non-attainment as result.

*dang po la gnyis las / rang bzhin ‘khrul pa ni / rig med zhes pa la sogs pa tshig rkang pa  
gnyis te / de yang chos nyid gzung yul du ma grub pa de / snang ba tsam la nges par zhen pa’i  
blos / rig bya rig byed la sogs pa sna tshogs su brtags pas / gzung ‘dzin gyur ba ni ‘khrul pa’o  
zhes pa’o /*

[2.1.1.2.2.3.1.a.] In the first, there are two: [2.1.1.2.2.3.1.1.] as for the confusion of self-nature, stating “*rig med*” and so forth, there are two lines [rtsa 14/463]. In addition, things

<sup>1088</sup> The editions of the root text I am working from read “*snyems sangs rtsa bral kun las rgyal*,” rather than “*snyems grol*.”

<sup>1089</sup> Reading “*ma grub pa*” for “*ma grub pha*.”

themselves are not established in the grasped object; the mind clings to mere appearances. Because of the various labels of known objects, knowing subjects, and the like, there will be grasped [objects] and grasping [subjects], which is called confusion.

*grub mtha' la ltos te 'khrul pa ni / dbyer med cig la zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang nyi shu  
rtsa gnyis te / de yang bdag med<sup>1090</sup> kyi don la tha dad du med kyang / rig ma rig la brten nas /  
sangs rgyas dang sems can byung ba yin te / de yang gzung 'dzin ma rig pa 'khrul ba ni / chu  
dang gser dang nam mkha' ltar ces pas / lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig pas rkyen byas shing / sems  
can du 'khrul pa yin te /*

[2.1.1.2.2.3.1.2.] As for the confusion related to one's tenets, stating “*dbyer med cig la*” and the rest, there are twenty-two lines [rtsa 14/463].<sup>1091</sup> In addition, there is no distinction in the meaning of the lack of self; as well, knowledge (*rig*) is dependent on mis-knowledge; there are the occurrences of enlightened ones and of sentient beings. Furthermore, because the grasped object, the grasping subject, mis-knowing and confusion are said to be like water and gold and space, the mis-knowing of the co-emergence creates conditions, and there is confusion in sentient beings.

*de yang rang gis de nyid ma rtogs pa las byung zhes pa dang / log par rtog pa'i phyi rol  
pa / lta ba log pa dpag med las kyang / mdor bsdus pas chad pa ba / snga phyi'i rgyu 'bras  
kyang med cing / phyi ma'ang med par 'dzin pa rnams kyang 'khrul la / bdag rtag pa dang / gcig  
pu rang dbang can 'gyur med la sogs pa'i lta ba rnams dang / nyan thos pas gzung ba rdul  
phran dang / 'dzin pa skad cig cha med don dam du 'dod pa dang / rang rgyal gzung ba med  
cing 'dzin pa don dam du smra ba dang / sems tsam pa gzung 'dzin gnyis med kyi rang rig don  
dam du rtog pa dang / sems tsam rnam bden pas dkar dmar la sogs pa'i rnam par snang ba*

<sup>1090</sup> Reading “*bdag med*” for “*bngag med*.”

<sup>1091</sup> The editions of the root text that I am working from read “*dbyer med gcig la*,” rather than “*dbyer med cig la*.”

*rnams shes pa nyid du bden par 'dod cing / rnam brdzun pas rnam pa de rnams rdzun yang / rnam<sup>1092</sup> med kyi shes pa bden par 'dod pa rnams kyang 'khrul pa srab mthug las rnam rtog gi dra ba las ma 'das zhes pa'o //*

In addition, it is said that thatness by itself arises from miscomprehension, and it is the opposite of perverse comprehension; perverse views are even more unfathomable. In brief, for the nihilist (*chad pa ba*), even past causes and future results do not exist; subsequently, even grasping selves are confusion. The permanent self [view] (*bdag rtag pa; pudgalavādin*) has views of individuality, independence, changelessness and so forth. The śrāvaka has the particles of the grasped objects and asserts the ultimate meaning of a the momentary grasping subject without parts, and the pratyekabuddhas lack a grasped object and speak of the ultimate meaning of a grasping subject. The mind-only [view] comprehends the ultimate meaning of one's own enlightened knowing of the non-duality of grasped object and grasping subject; the mind-only vijñānavādins (*sems tsam rnam bden pa*) asserts the inherent existence in knowledge itself of the appearances of white, red and so forth; these aspects of the [mind-only] false-image [adherents] are also false. [Their] understandings of the non-existence of aspects are assertions regarding [their] true existence (*bden par 'dod pa rnams*); in addition, it is said that, from the thinness or thickness of confusion, one does not transcend the similarities of discursive thinking.

*gzhan yang dbu ma pa spros pa'i mtha' brgyad dang bral {74/522} ba yin no / zhes tshig gi rjes su 'brang ba dang / gsang sngags kyi pha rgyud rtsa rlung la brten nas nyam myong bde gsal skyes pa bde chen du 'dod pa dang / ma rgyud pa bde stong gi ye shes thabs dang shes rab tu 'dod pa dang / gnyis ka'i mthar thug phyag rgya chen po zhes kha cig blo 'das su 'dod pa dang / rdzogs chen pa kha cig kun rdzob kyi bden pa'ang chos nyid du 'dod pa dang / gzhan*

---

<sup>1092</sup> Reading “*rnam*” for “*rnams*.”

*yang de la sogs pa grub mtha'i 'dod ba yong ba*<sup>1093</sup> *thams cad kyis bdag med kyis don mthong bar mi 'gyur te / grub mtha'i 'dzin pa dang bcas pa'i phyir ro / /*

Furthermore, the Madhyamaka view is divorced from the eight extremes of elaboration. Following these words, it is said that Secret Mantra Father Tantra asserts the generation of experiences of bliss and luminosity based on channels, winds, and great bliss; Mother Tantra asserts the primordial wisdom of bliss and emptiness, and technique and wisdom. One group asserts the transcendence of discursive mind and states that Mahāmudrā is the ultimate of both [Father and Mother Tantra]. One group of Mahā-ati followers (*rdzogs chen pa*) assert conventional truths (*kun rdzob kyis bden pa; saṃvṛtisatyam*) as well as things themselves (*chos nyid; dharmatā*). Furthermore, as for that one and the rest, all who arrive at assertions of tenets will not change their perception of the meaning of the lack of a self, because of their adherence to tenets (*grub mtha'i 'dzin pa dang bcas pa*).

*de skad du yang / te lo pas / sngags su smra dang pha rol phyin pa dang / / 'dul ba mdo sde mngon pa la sogs pa / / rang rang gzhung dang grub pa'i mtha' yis ni / 'od gsal phyag rgya chen po mthong mi 'gyur / zhe 'dod byung bas 'od gsal ma mthong bsgrubs / / zhes bshad pa ltar / yul / yul can du rig pa'i don de ma yin la / yul / yul can bden med du gyur pas / rig bya rig byed gnyis med du gyur pa ni / chos nyid de bzhin nyid yin no zhes pa'o † /*

Moreover, as is said by Tilopa,<sup>1094</sup> “Mantra expressions, pāramitā, vinaya, Sūtra, abhi[dharma] ([*chos*] *mngon pa*), and the like, as each has its own textual tradition and tenet system, the luminous Mahāmudrā will not be seen; one is not able to see the luminosity because of one’s own wishes.”<sup>1095</sup> In that way it is explained. It is said that, “Objects and subjects are not

<sup>1093</sup> Reading “*yong ba*” for “*yong pa*.”

<sup>1094</sup> Spelled “Telopa” in the Tibetan text.

the aim of enlightened knowing (*rig pa'i don*). There is no duality of knowable objects and knowing subjects because objects and subjects are without true existence; things themselves (*chos nyid; dharmatā*) are exactly like that/thatness (*de bzhin nyid; tathāta*).<sup>1096</sup>

*gnyis pa ma rig pa ye shes la gnyis las / gti mug ye shes su bsgyur ba ni / de bas rig med  
la sogs tshig rkang drug ste / de yang gnyid dang snang ba bar mtshams med par 'od gsal chos  
kyi dbyings kyi ye shes su gyur na / snyems byed rang sar grol zhing yul snang gi 'khrul pa ye  
shes su shar ba ni / sangs rgyas dngos so zhes pa'o /*

[2.1.1.2.2.3.2.] Second, there are two parts to unknowing as primordial wisdom.

[2.1.1.2.2.3.2.1.] As for the obscuration that will transform into primordial wisdom, there are six lines, “*de bas rig med*” and so on [rtsa 14-15/462-464].<sup>1097</sup> In addition, it is said that when luminosity without a boundary between sleep and appearances transforms into the primordial wisdom of the expanse of things (*chos kyi dbyings; dharmadhātu*), the production of pride is

---

<sup>1095</sup> This appears to be a paraphrase from the *Phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag* (Toh. 2303, zhi 242b7-244a5), a Tibetan translation of what was probably originally an *upadeśa* text in Apabhramśa, composed by the great North Bengali adept Tilopa (988-1069) for his student Nāropa. The Tibetan text reads: “*sngags su smra dang pha rol phyin pa dang // 'dul ba'i sde snod la sogs chos rnams dang // rang rang gzhung dang grub pa'i miha' yis kyang // 'od gsal phyag rgya chen po mthong mi 'gyur*” (243B; emphasis added). Rangjung Dorjé has presented an alternate second line to the one underlined above, although his reference is clear. He also composed a commentary to this text, which is included in the *Gdams ngag mdzod*. We also find in the Tibetan translation of Tilopa's work a stanza that is remarkably similar in sentiment to that found in Āryadeva the Brahmin's *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i tshigs su bcad pa chen mo* (ninth century). In the context of discussion of the mind and its events, Tilopa explains, “*dper na ljon shing yal ga lo 'dab rgyas // rtsa bcad yal ga lo 'dab khri 'bum skams*” (ibid. 243A; “As an example, there is a tree with flourishing branches and leaves, having cut its roots, the ten thousand branches and leaves dry up”). In Āryadeva we read “*de ltar rtogs na sdong po rtsad bcad bzhin // rtog pa'i yal ga nam yang skye mi 'gyur*” (2-3; “When one realizes this it is like cutting the root of a tree trunk: branches of thought will never again be produced”). On correspondences between the compositions of Tilopa and Saraha, see Schaeffer (2005, esp. 105).

<sup>1096</sup> This is possibly a paraphrase of the teaching that follows the above quote in the *Phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag*: “*gid la mi byed zhe 'dod kun dang bral // rang byung rang zhi chu yi dba' rlabs 'dra // zhe 'dod byung bas 'od gsal ma mthong bsgribs // rtogs pa bsrung sdom dam tshig don las nyams // mi gnas mi dmigs don las mi 'da' na // dam pa nyams lun mun pa'i sgron me yin // zhe 'dod kun bral miha' la mi gnas na // sde snod chos rnams ma lus mthang bar 'gyur // don 'dri gzhon na 'khor ba'i btson las thar // don 'des mnyam gzhag ma lus sdig sgrib sbreg // bstan pa'i sgron me zhes su bshad pa yin // don 'dir mi mos skye bo blun po rnams // 'khor ba'i chu bos rtag tu khyer bar zad // ngan song sdug bsngal mi bzod snying re rje // sdug bsngal thar 'dod bla ma mkhas pa bsten // byin rlabs zhugs pas rang sems grol bar 'gyur*” (Toh. 2303 zhi 243B-244A).

<sup>1097</sup> The root text I am working from reads “*des na rig med*” rather than “*de bas rig med*.”

liberated on its own ground and confusion about the appearances of objects has appeared as primordial wisdom; this is actually the state of enlightenment.

*ci shar rang byung du bstan pa ni / rig pa zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang lnga ste / de yang rig bya rig byed bden med du shes pas / yul / yul can gyi 'dzin pa rang dag la / mdzad pa dang phrin las ched du byas pa ma yin la rang byung du byung ba yin pas / de lta bu'i don mngon du gyur tshe / nam du yang A 'thas su spyod pa ma yin no // zhes so //*

[2.1.1.2.2.3.2.2.] Whatever appears is taught as self-arising; stating “*rig pa*” and so forth, there are five lines [rtsa 15/464]. In addition, it is said that because one understands the lack of true existence of a knowable object and a knowing subject, the grasping of objects and subjects is self-purified (*rang dag*); deeds and enlightened activity are not done for a purpose, [but] because they arise as self-arising. When such meanings become manifest, even then there is no reified behavior (A *'thas su spyod pa*).

*gsum pa ma byas pa gzhi la gnyis {75/523} las † sangs rgyas kyis ma byas pa ni / yang dag don gyi la sogs tshig rkang bzhi ste / de yang shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa de nyid<sup>1098</sup> // 'khor 'das kun gyi gzhi yang yin la / ye nas stong zhing bdag med pas 'gyur ba med par gnas so //*

[2.1.1.2.2.3.3.] Third, there are two parts to non-action as the ground [2.1.1.2.2.3.3.1] Regarding non-action, according to the Buddha, there are four lines, “*yang dag don*” and the rest [rtsa 15/464]. In addition, [according to] the perfection of wisdom itself, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, moreover, are the ground of everything (*kun gyi gzhi*). One abides in the changeless because one is empty from primordiality and without a self.

---

<sup>1098</sup> The 1971 edition reads “*de nyid*”; the 1981 edition reads “*da nyid*.” I am following the 1971 edition.

*de skad du yang / sdud pa las / gang dag 'das dang gang dag phyogs bcu'i 'jig rten mgon  
 // rig sngags<sup>1099</sup> 'di bslab sman pa'i rgyal po bla med 'gyur // gang dag phan dang snying rjer  
 bcas pa spyad spyod pa // rig sngags 'di la bslab nas mkhas pa byang chub reg // 'dus byas bde  
 dang 'dus ma byas bde gang yin pa // bde ba de kun 'di las byung ba rig par bya / ces so //*

Further, it is said, in the *Samcayagātha*, “Those who have gone beyond and those who are guardians of the ten directions, trained in this knowledge mantra, will be unsurpassed kings of physicians. Those who practice beneficial and compassionate behaviors, the expert ones, having trained in this knowledge mantra, have contact with enlightenment (*byang chub*). Whatever compounded happiness and uncompounded happiness there is, all that happiness should be known as arising from this.”<sup>1100</sup>

*'dzin pas mi rtogs pa ni / ma byas zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang bzhi ste / gong du brjod pa  
 lta bu'i 'dus ma byas de / skye 'gag gnas gsum gyi mtha' dang 'bral bas gzhi zhes brjod pa yin  
 pas / gzhan gol sa thams cad chod cig ces pa'o /*

[2.1.1.2.2.3.3.2.] As for non-comprehension by the grasping subject, stating “*ma byas*” and so forth, there are four lines [rtsa 15/464].<sup>1101</sup> The uncompounded, like the view expressed

<sup>1099</sup> Reading “*rig sngags*” for “*rigs sdags*,” here and in the line following next, as per the *sdud pa* source text. See following note.

<sup>1100</sup> Part of this was already cited by Rangjung Dorjé above (see earlier footnote mentioning of *sdud pa*, III.5). The Tibetan source text reads slightly differently than Rangjung Dorjé’s citation here. I have noted the discrepancies with underscoring in the following citation from the source text: “*gang dag 'das dang gang dag phyogs bcu'i 'jig rten mgon // rig sngags 'di bslabs sman pa'i rgyal po bla med gyur // gang dag phan dang snying rjer bcas pa spyad spyod pa // rig sngags 'di la bslabs nas mkhas pa byang chub reg // 'dus byas bde dang 'dus ma byas bde gang yin pa // bde pa de kun 'di las 'byung bar rig par bya*” (*sdud pa*, III.5-6). The Sanskrit reads: “*ye 'tīta-'n-āgata-daśa-d-diśi loka-nāthā ima-vidya-śikṣita an-uttaru-vaiddya-rājā // ye vā caranti cariyāṃ hita sānukampā iha vidya-śikṣita vidū sprśiyanti bodhiṃ / ye saukhya saṃskṛta a-saṃskṛta ye ca saukhyāḥ sarvaṃ ti saukhya prasutā itu veditavyāḥ*” (Yuyama 1976, 23-24). See also Conze, “Perfect Wisdom a Great Lore” (1994 [1973], 15); however, note Yuyama’s concerns about Conze’s misreadings (1976, n. 5c). It may be of some significance that the text preceding this citation in the *sdud pa* speaks about the pacification of suffering (*sems can khams mang mya ngan sdug bsngal chos zhi byed*), which is reminiscent of the Zhijé system of Padampa Sangyé.

<sup>1101</sup> In the editions of the root text I have consulted, the opening of this verse reads “*sangs rgyas 'dus ma byas yin pas*” (rtsa 15/464).



above, is explained as the ground separated from the three extremes of birth, cessation and abiding; all other points of deviation should be severed.

*bzhi pa mi byed pa lam la gnyis las / mu bzhi bden med du rtogs pa ni / ma byas zhes pa la sogs pa tshig rkang bdun te / gang ltar 'dus ma byas de la bden pa mthong ba'i skyes bu rnams kyis mi byed pa lam du 'gro ba yin te / snang ba mtha' dag bden med du bshig pas / stong 'dzin gyi blo rang sar dag pa ni / rtag chad bden med du grol bas / stong pa dang snying rje zung 'jug gi lam du 'gyur ro / snang ba dang snang med yid la ma byas pas / khams gong ma la sogs pa'i ting nge 'dzin gyi sgrib pa rang sar dag nas / bsgom lam du shes bya'i sgrib pa dag par 'gyur ro /*

[2.1.1.2.2.3.4.] Fourth, there are two parts to inactivity as the path. [2.1.1.2.2.3.4.1.] As for comprehending the lack of true existence of the four limits,<sup>1102</sup> stating “*ma byas*” and so on, there are seven lines [rtsa 15/464]. In such a way, for beings who perceive truth in the uncompounded, inactivity is travelling on the path. Because appearances in their entirety are eliminated in the absence of true existence, the discursive mind (*blo*) that grasps emptiness is purified in its own ground; because one is liberated in the absence of true existence of permanence and annihilation, the unification of emptiness and compassion becomes the path. The obscurations of meditative concentration (*ting nge 'dzin; samādhi*) of the upper realms and so forth having been purified on their own ground, because appearances and the lack of appearances are not constructed in mental functioning (*yid*), the obscurations of knowable objects on the path of meditative cultivation<sup>1103</sup> will be purified.

---

<sup>1102</sup> “*mu bzhi*” (*catuḥskoti*) is a form of Madhyamaka logical analysis with the aim of discerning emptiness (*stong pa nyid; śūnyatā*) through considering the four limits (or possibilities) of generation and cessation; it is sometimes referred to as a “tetralemma” when translated into English.

<sup>1103</sup> The “obscurations of knowables” (*shes bya'i sgrib pa*) is a subtle obscuration arising from grasping knowables through relations between subject, object and action.

*don rtogs pas 'khor ba las grol pa ni / gzugs dang zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang bcu gsum  
ste / de yang gzugs sogs phung po dang / khams {76/524} dang skye mched la sogs pa / bden  
med du grol bas khams gsum las grol zhing / gang yang yid la ma byas pas / sgrib gnyis rang  
dag pa ni sangs rgyas nyid yin la / sa lam rdzogs par 'gyur zhing / yid la mi byed pa lam du  
'gyur te / shes rab nyams su blangs ba'i phyir ro // 'phags pa las kyang / chos thams cad yid la  
mi byed pa nyid pas / shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa yid la mi byed pa nyid do // zhes bshad pa  
dang / gzhan yang yid kyi 'gyu byed bden med du grol na dgag mi dgos te / rtsol ba dang bral  
ba'i phyir ro // de yan chad kyis bsgom pa'i lam tsung zad tsam bshad do //*

[2.1.1.2.2.3.4.2.] As for the liberation from saṃsāra through comprehending the meaning [of enlightenment], stating “gzugs dang” and more, there are thirteen lines [rtsa 15/464].<sup>1104</sup> In addition, form and so forth, with the psycho-physical aggregates, elements, sense-faculties, and the others, there is liberation from the three realms because one has been liberated through the lack of true existence; as for the self-purification of the two obscurations, because nothing whatsoever is created in mental functioning (*yid*), it is precisely the enlightened state. On account of having gained wisdom experience, the ground and path will become complete and the inactivity in mental functioning will become the path. The Superior One (*'phags pa*)<sup>1105</sup> also explains, “Because all things are unfabricated in mental functioning itself, the perfection of wisdom is unfabricated in mental functioning itself.” And it is explained that, “Furthermore, without the movements of mental functioning, negation/refutation is unnecessary when one is liberated in the absence of true existence, because one is freed from expending effort.”

<sup>1104</sup> In the editions of the root text I have consulted, there are fifteen lines in this section.

<sup>1105</sup> This is evocative of various *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings; thus far, I have not been able to locate the exact source.

*lnga pa 'bras bu la bzhi las / blo chung ba la drang thabs su bstan pa ni / ma grub ces pa  
la sogs tshig rkang lnga ste / de yang yod<sup>1106</sup> med dang / skye 'gag / 'gro 'ong / rtag chad la sogs  
pa gang du yang ma grub pa'i / bden med ngo bo nyid kyi sku la 'bras bur gsungs pa dang /  
gzhan yang sku gsum du bstan pa la sogs pa / smon lam gyi stobs kyis gdul bya la snang bar zad  
mod kyi<sup>1107</sup> / mtshan bzang po sum cu rtsa gnyis dang / dpe byad bzang po brgyad cu la sogs pa  
yang / don gnas lugs kyi steng du nges par snang bden du grub pa rdul tsam yang med do / /*

[2.1.1.2.2.3.5.] Fifth, there are four parts to the result [of this path]. [2.1.1.2.2.3.5.1.] As for the teaching on the provisional methods for those with lesser mental functioning, stating “*ma grub*” and the rest, there are five lines [rtsa 15/464]. In addition, existence and non-existence, birth and cessation, going and coming, permanence and annihilation, etcetera, are not established whatsoever; it is said that results regarding the essential body (*ngo bo nyid kyi sku*; *svabhavikakāya*) are without true existence. Alternatively, there is the teaching on the Three Bodies and so forth. Even though appearances are exhausted (*zad*) for disciples through the power of aspirational prayers, as well as the thirty-two major marks (*mtshan bzang po*; lit. “excellent characteristics”), the eighty minor marks (*dpe byad*; lit. “illustrative signs”), and so forth, definitive appearances on top of meaning and actuality are not truly established even in the slightest amount.

*de yang rgyud bla ma las / ci ltar tshon ni sna tshogs kyis † / nor bu de dngos min ltar  
snang / de bzhin 'gro rkyen sna tshogs pas / khyab bdag de dngos min par snang / zhes bshad  
pa'i phyir ro / /*

---

<sup>1106</sup> Reading “yod” for “yong.”

<sup>1107</sup> Reading “kyi” for “kyis.”

In addition, according to the explanation from the *Uttaratantra*,<sup>1108</sup> it is said that, just as a jewel appears as if it is insubstantial by the variety of its colors, likewise the All-pervading Lord (*khyab bdag; vibhū*) appears insubstantial due to the various conditions of [his] being.<sup>1109</sup>

*grub rgyu don med ni / grub na zhes pa la sogs tshig rkang pa brgyad de / / de yang don  
dam la / sku dang ye shes tha dad du grub na / 'khor ba'i pha rol 'da' bar mi nus te / shes rab  
kyi pha rol tu phyin pa ni blo yul du byar med pa'i phyir ro / /*

[2.1.1.2.2.3.5.2.] As for the cause of attainment (*grub rgyu*) being meaningless, stating “*grub na*” and the rest, there are eight lines [15-16/464-465]. In addition, with regard to the ultimate meaning, when body and primordial knowledge are established separately, one is incapable of passing over to the other side (*pha rol 'da' ba*). As for the perfection of wisdom, it is due to the absence of any activity regarding discursive thinking and objects.

*yang gal te blo 'am yul du grub na / blo 'khrul pa yin pas / grub 'dod kyi rtsol ba rnams  
kyis mya {77/525} ngan<sup>1110</sup> las 'das pa thob par mi 'gyur ro / /*

Also, if discursive thinking or objects are established, then those who desire accomplishment will not attain the transcendence of misery (*mya ngan las 'das; nirvāṇa*) because there is confused discursive thinking.

<sup>1108</sup> This is a quotation of verse 52 in the second chapter of the *Rgyud bla ma (Ratnagotravibhāga Mahāyānottaratantra)* by Asaṅga/Maitreyanatha. There is a slight variation in the version found in the Derge Tangyur, which reads: “*ji ltar tshon ni sna tshogs kyis / nor bu de dngos min snang ltar / de bzhin 'gro rkyen sna tshogs pas / khyab bdag de dngos min par snang*” (Sde dge *Bstan 'gyur, sems tsam, phi*, 64B, emphasis added here to highlight the slightly different order of the terms). Following E.H. Johnston’s edition, the Sanskrit is as follows: “*raṅgapratyayavaicitryādatad bhāvo yathā maṇeḥ / sattvapratyayavaicitryādatad bhāvastathā vibhoḥ*” (1997 [1991], 87). According to Mathes, Rangjung Dorjé is considered to have composed a summary of the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, but thus far there does not seem to be a copy extant. Mathes discusses other texts of Rangjung Dorjé’s that refer to the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, including the *Dharmadhātustotra*, the *Snying po bstan pa* and his autocommentary on the *Zab mo nang gi don*. Mathes pays particular attention to the sections of the *Dharmadhātustotra* wherein Rangjung Dorjé summarizes the seven examples of the relationship between the *Dharmadhātu* and individual sentient beings, including ones mentioned in this present commentary concerning butter and gems. See Mathes 2008, esp. 51-75.

<sup>1109</sup> In the Tibetan, this reads “*gro ba*,” lit. “going” or “migrating.”

<sup>1110</sup> Reading “*ngan*” for “*dan*.”

*de ltar yang sdud pa las / 'jig rten mkhyen pa'i shes rab de yang pha mtha' med // sems can rang bzhin gang yin de yang pha mtha' med / ces pa dang / 'du shes tshu rol yin zhes 'dren pas yongs su bsgrags // 'du shes rnam par bshig nas spong ba<sup>1111</sup> pha rol 'gro / ces gsungs so //*

Although it is that way, according to the *Samcayagātha*, “that wisdom of world knowers is also without boundary (*pha mtha' med*); whatever is the self-nature of sentient beings, it is also without boundary”; and it is said that it is universally known through the teachings that cognitions are [from] this side [i.e. they are subjective]; having disrupted cognitions, they are abandoned and one transcends them (lit. “goes to the other side”).<sup>1112</sup>

*blo ma grol na don med pa ni / chos kyi zhen blo zhes pa la sogs pa tshig rkang brgyad de / gong du bshad pa'i 'bras bu khyad par can thob par byed pa la / zhen blo dang bral ba cig dgos te / zhen pa'i dbang gis chos spyod pa ni / 'ching bar byed mkhan nyid yin la / sangs rgyas ni 'dus ma byas pa yin pas / rtsol bcas kyi 'dzin pa rnam shig cig ces pa'o //*

[2.1.1.2.2.3.5.3.] With regard to the lack of meaning when one is not liberated from discursive thinking, there are eight lines beginning with “*chos kyi zhen blo*” [rtsa 16/465]. With regard to attaining the distinctive effects as explained, it is necessary to be freed from the discursive thinking of clinging (*zhen blo*). As for the dharma practice by means of the power of attachment, creating fetters is mastery itself (*mkhan nyid*). As for the state of enlightenment, because it is uncompounded, it is said that one must destroy graspings associated with effort.

---

<sup>1111</sup> Reading “*spong ba*” for “*spong pa*.”

<sup>1112</sup> The edition of the *sdud pa* that I have has similar statements in a different order: “*sems can rang bzhin gang yin de yang ma mtha' med // nam mkha'i khams kyi rang bzhin de yang pha mtha' med // 'jig rten mkhyen pa'i shes rab de yang pha mtha' med // 'du shes tshu rol yin zhes 'dren pas yongs su bsgrags // 'du shes rnam par bshig nas spong ba pha rol 'gro*” (*sdud pa*, II.10-11). The Sanskrit reads: “*sattvāna yā ca prakṛtī sa an-anta-pārā / ākāśa-dhātuprakṛtī sa an-anta-pārā prajñāpi loka-vidunām sa an-anta-pāra // saṃjñeti nāma parikṛtītu nāyakena saṃjñā vibhāviya prahāṇa vrajanti pārāṃ*” (Yuyama 1976, 20). Yuyama notes that the Sanskrit text of verse eleven (the final line of the Sanskrit presented here) “represents a different recension” from the Tibetan and Chinese (ibid., n. 11). It may be that Rangjung Dorjé was citing a different recension for verse ten as well, which would account for the slight differences in the presentation.

*‘dzin med rtogs na sku gsum du bstan pa ni / lus la ‘dzin ces pa la sogs pa tshig rkang  
Inga ste / de yang rnal ‘byor pa bdag lam pha rol tu phyin pa drug la brten nas / bdag ‘dzin rang  
sar dag cing / gzung yul sku dang ye shes su rgyas pa’i tshe / sangs rgyas rnams kyi sku gsung  
thugs dang tha dad med par ‘gyur bas / lam rnams kyang ‘dzin med ‘od gsal la / shes rab kyi pha  
rol tu phyin pa nyid ma gtogs pa / rgyal ba’i dgongs pa gzhan nas btsal<sup>1113</sup> du med de / sku gsum  
dbyer med du rtogs pa’i phyir ro / /*

[2.1.1.2.2.3.5.4.] As for the teaching on the Three Bodies when one comprehends the absence of grasping, there are five lines beginning with “*lus la ‘dzin*” [rtsa 16/465]. In addition, the yogin, having a foundation in the six perfections as his own path,<sup>1114</sup> purifies self-grasping on its own ground; when apprehended objects have been diffused into the Body (*sku*) and Primordial Knowledge, they will be inseparable from the body, speech and mind of the Enlightened Ones. Without grasping even the paths, there is luminosity, and the Perfection of Wisdom itself is included in the Mother. Because one understands the inseparability of the Three Bodies, one does not seek (*btsal*) the mind (*dgongs pa*) of the Victorious One elsewhere (*gzhan nas*).<sup>1115</sup>

*de yan chod kyis pha rol tu phyin pa’i lam gyi bogs ‘don lam rnam pa lnga dang sbyar  
nas bshad zin to / /*

Up to that point the augmenting methods of the perfections are explained from the connection with the five kinds of paths.

<sup>1113</sup> Reading “*btsal*” for “*brtsal*.”

<sup>1114</sup> Interpreting “*bdag lam*” as “his own path”; however, this could also be an abbreviation for “*bdag po’i lam*,” meaning “governing path” or “dominant path.”

<sup>1115</sup> “‘*dzin med rtogs na sku gsum du bstan pa ni / lus la ‘dzin ces pa la sogs pa tshig rkang Inga ste / de yang rnal ‘byor pa bdag lam pha rol tu phyin pa drug la brten nas / bdag ‘dzin rang sar dag cing / gzung yul sku dang ye shes su rgyas pa’i tshe / sangs rgyas rnams kyi sku gsung thugs dang tha dad med par ‘gyur bas / lam rnams kyang ‘dzin med ‘od gsal la / shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa nyid ma gtogs pa / rgyal ba’i dgongs pa gzhan nas btsal<sup>1115</sup> du med de / sku gsum dbyer med du rtogs pa’i phyir ro*” (*Bka’ tshoms ‘grel pa 77/525*).

*mjug gi don la gnyis las / mtshan don gyi sgo nas bstan pa'i / E MA HO / zhes ba la sogs  
tshig rkang gsum ste / de yang rnam rtog gcod cing 'gyur ba med pa bshad pa'i tshoms<sup>1116</sup> su  
bstan pas go sla'o //*

[2.1.1.3.] The conclusion is twofold. [2.1.1.3.1.] Explained from the perspective of the meaning of the title (*mtshan don*), stating “*E MA HO*” and so forth, there are three lines [rtsa 16/465]. In addition, the severance of discursive thinking and immutability are easy to understand through the teachings in the explanatory chapters.

*nan tan du nyams su blang thabs bstan pa la bzhi las / blo dang bral ba ni / nan tan zhes  
pa la sogs tshig rkang gsum ste / de yang dus thams cad {78/526} du dmigs pa'i yul mtha' dag  
dang bral ba'i don de nyid kyi ngang du mnyam par zhog cig ces pa'o //*

[2.1.1.3.2.] The teaching on the methods for conscientiously gaining experience has four parts. [2.1.1.3.2.1.] As for the separation from discursive thinking (*blo*), stating “*nan tan*” and the rest, there are three lines [rtsa 16/465]. In addition, it is said that one should rest equanimously in the state of thatness (*de nyid*), with the aim of complete separation (*mtha' dag dang bral ba*) from a referential object at all times.

*gdams pa khyad par can ni / gnyan sa la sogs tshig rkang lnga ste / de yang las dang po  
pa rnams gnyan sa la sogs gcod pa'i dus su 'jigs pa dang bag tsha ba la sogs pa rnams la / rab  
kyis stong nyid / 'bring gis lus sems dang bral ba / tha mas zin bskyur la sogs pas / 'dzin med du  
spyad pas / slar phar<sup>1117</sup> la gcod par 'gyur ro // zhes so //*

[2.1.1.3.2.2.] As for the distinctive instruction, there are five lines, “*gnyan sa*” and the rest [rtsa 16/465]. In addition, it is said that beginners (*las dang po pa rnams*) have fears, anxieties, and so forth, at the time of [practicing] Chöd in such [environments] as severe places.

<sup>1116</sup> Reading “*tshoms*” for “*tshom.*”

<sup>1117</sup> The script is unclear in this portion of the text in both editions.

Later on they will cut through to the other side (*phar la gcod pa*) through practicing the absence of self—the highest [will employ] emptiness, the mediocre will separate body and mind (*sems*), the lowest will abandon grasping (*zin bskyur*).

*khal du bkal*<sup>1118</sup> *na lta ba yin pa ni / rkyen snang la sogs tshig bzhi ste / de yang chos rgyud thog tu ma bkal*<sup>1119</sup> *na / zhi bde tsam gyis grol bar mi nus pas / gdams pa 'di ni rkyen snang khal du 'gel ba'i gnad yin pas shes par gyis shig pa'o / /*

[2.1.1.3.2.3.] As for the view when a burden is imposed (*khal du bkal ba*), there are four lines, “*rkyen snang*” and so on [rtsa 16/465]. In addition, one cannot be liberated through only peace and bliss when there is no imposition on top of a continuum of things (*chos rgyud*).

According to this teaching, because there is a point of being loaded with the burden of apparent conditions, they must be destroyed (*shig pa*) through knowledge (*shes pa*).

*ri khrod 'grim pa gal che ba ni / gnyan sar zhes pa la sogs pa tshig rkang bzhi ste / de yang gdams ngag thob pa'i skyes bu rnams / 'dod yon gyi ro la ma chags par / gnyan sa dang ri khrod la sogs pa rnams 'grim shig de dag tu phyin nas kyang / gdams rnams dpe dang tshig tu bzhag cing don ma bsgoms na / byin rlabs mi 'jug cing tshig dred can du 'gyur ba yin pas / de bas dben par nyams su longs shig / ces pa'o / /*

[2.1.1.3.2.4.] As for the importance of wandering in isolated mountains, stating “*gnyan sa*” and the rest, there are four lines [rtsa 16/465]. In addition, the oral instructions for accomplished beings say one should wander in severe places and mountain retreats unattached to the experiential taste of sense pleasures; even having gone to these [places], if one does not meditate on the meaning but rests in the analogies and words of the instructions, one is not

<sup>1118</sup> Both editions of Rangjung Dorjé’s text read “*khal du khel na*”; however, I am following the root text which reads “*khal du bkal ba*,” “loaded with a burden.”

<sup>1119</sup> Reading “*bkal*” for “*khel*,” in parallel with the above.



infused with blessings and becomes resistant to the words. Therefore, gain experience in isolated places!

*‘di ltar bshad pa’i gdams pa rnams / lta ba dang / spyod pa zung ‘jug gi bogs ‘don yin te  
/ skyes bu las dang po ba nas / bla na med pa’i byang chub ma thob kyi bar du / lta spyod zung  
‘jug tu ‘khyer ba ‘di ni gdams pa zab pa ste / de yang ma cig gi bzhed pas / bla ma’i man ngag  
gdengs ldan gyis / rnam rtog dag la thog rdzis bya / zhes gsungs pas /*

In this way, the explanatory instructions are the augmenting methods for the unification of view and practice. Having become beginners, beings carry the unification of view and practice until attaining unsurpassed enlightenment; these are the profound instructions. In addition, it is said that because this is the accepted position of Ma cig, through having confidence in the supreme personal instructions, one should trample on top of discursive thoughts.

*bdag med rtogs pa’i spyod pa sna tshogs su {79/527} ston yang ‘dzin pa med pa ni de  
nyid kyi lam du ‘gyur bas / stong pa dang snying rje zung ‘jug tu nyams su len pa gces so / /*

Because the teaching on the various practices of understanding the absence of self as well as the lack of grasping becomes the path of thatness (*de nyid*), gaining experience in the unity of emptiness and compassion is treasured (*gces*).

*shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i gdams ngag / bdud kyi gcod yul bka’ tshoms chen mo’i  
rnam par bshad pa / snyigs dus kyi bsam gtan pa rnams kyi gtso bo theg pa chen po’i mdo sde la  
/ rnam dbyod kyi blo dang ldan pa’i rang byung rdo rje zhes bya bas sbyar ba rdzogs so / /*

*The Explanation of the Great Speech Chapter of the Chöd Cutting of Negative Forces,*<sup>1120</sup>  
the Oral Teaching of the Prajñāpāramitā, composed by Rangjung Dorjé, the one who possesses

---

<sup>1120</sup> *Gcod yul*: “*Gcod* system” or “object of *Gcod*.” It is probably a play on “spyod yul”; cf. 507 and also Gö Lotsawa Zhonnupel. In Roerich, *pha rol tu phyin pa bdud kyi gcod yul* is translated as “prajnaparamita cutting (the influence) of demons,” and there is an additional commentarial note stating that “gcod yul” means an “act of cutting asunder” (1976, 980-981).

thoughtful intelligence on the Sūtra section of the Great Vehicle (*theg pa chen po'i mdo sde*; *mahāyānasūtra*), the foremost of those having meditative concentration in the time of the dregs (*snyigs dus*), is complete.

---

## Appendix Nine: My Outline of the Bka' tshoms TIKA

ORAL INSTRUCTION OF CHÖD FROM THE *Prajñāpāramitā*; a supplementary practice to  
Sūtra and Tantra

1. the history of whatever has occurred, i.e., the three modes of instruction and the history of Ma  
cig

1.1 the history is to be understood from another source

2. necessity of instruction (x3)

2.1. writings from the heartfelt practice of Ma cig herself (x4)

2.1.1. exoteric *Speech Chapter* on pacification (*phyi bka' tshoms*) (x3)

2.1.1.1. the prefatory materials (x3)

2.1.1.1.1. teaching on paying homage

2.1.1.1.2. expressing the name at the beginning

2.1.1.1.3. explanation and brief summary

2.1.1.2. the main part (x2)

2.1.1.2.1. the brief summary of the meaning of the text (x1)

2.1.1.2.1.1. the four Negative Forces arising from the production of pride

2.1.1.2.2. the extensive explanation (x3)

2.1.1.2.2.1. [the first stage:] teaching for beginners on four Negative Forces (x4)

2.1.1.2.2.1.1. negative forces with obstruction in two parts

2.1.1.2.2.1.1.1. affirmation and negation of objects as fetters to saṃsāra

2.1.1.2.2.1.1.2. form as emptiness

2.1.1.2.2.1.2. negative forces without obstruction in two sections

2.1.1.2.2.1.2.1. evaluated as good and bad

- 2.1.1.2.2.1.2.2. lacking evaluation, they are self-liberated
- 2.1.1.2.2.1.3. Joyous negative forces in two parts
  - 2.1.1.2.2.1.3.1. brief explanation on common and exceptional Negative Forces
  - 2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2. extensive explanation (x2)
    - 2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.1. on the common Negative Forces (x2)
      - 2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.1.1. on the Path Negative Forces
        - 2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.1.2. absence of true existence as antidote for Negative Forces
      - 2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2. on the exceptional Negative Forces (x2)
        - 2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1. when Path Negative Forces are misunderstood (x2)
          - 2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.1. identification of negative forces (x2)
            - 2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.1.1. taught briefly
            - 2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.1.2. explained extensively in six lines
            - 2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.2. liberation when the signs are understood (x4)
              - 2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.2.1. absence of self-arising observer/observed
                - 2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.2.2. meditative cultivation without expert in equilibrium
                - 2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.2.3. grasped by the view occurring of its own accord
                - 2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.1.2.4. transcendence of one's own experiential mind
              - 2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.2. the teaching on mind-made Negative Forces (x2)
                - 2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.2.1. the Negative Forces of results due to desire
                - 2.1.1.2.2.1.3.2.2.2.2. one's own identity is not something to be achieved
  - 2.1.1.2.2.1.4. the Negative Forces Producing Pride (x2)
    - 2.1.1.2.2.1.4.1. brief teaching
    - 2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2. extensive explanation (x 3)

- 2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.1. Negative Forces with obstructions and producing pride (x 2)
  - 2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.1.1. on things grasped incorrectly
  - 2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.1.2. understanding the separation from the root
- 2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.2. Negative Forces without obstructions and producing pride (x 5)
  - 2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.2.1. Negative Forces with hopes and fears about the five poisons
  - 2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.2.2. emancipation from saṃsāra and comprehension of wisdoms
  - 2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.2.3. lack of an “I” from perspective of analogy
  - 2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.2.4. even comprehension can be a fetter
  - 2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.2.5. cutting through and becoming enlightened
- 2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.3. joyful Negative Forces and producing pride (x 2)
  - 2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.3.1. common (x 2)
    - 2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.3.1.1. Negative Forces related to attachment to accomplishments
    - 2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.3.1.2. the ornament that is non-attachment
  - 2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.3.2. exceptional (x 2)
    - 2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.3.2.1. the intrinsically present Three Bodies
    - 2.1.1.2.2.1.4.2.3.2.2. no production of pride when Three Bodies are understood
- 2.1.1.2.2.2. [the second stage:] practicing absence of true existence by analogy (x5)
  - 2.1.1.2.2.2.1. explained through analogy (x2)
    - 2.1.1.2.2.2.1.1. non-liberated should not benefit others
    - 2.1.1.2.2.2.1.2. when one has understanding, welfare of others arises
  - 2.1.1.2.2.2.2. explained according to view (x2)
    - 2.1.1.2.2.2.2.1. Negative Forces separated from root
    - 2.1.1.2.2.2.2.2. shifting to the meaning of absence of self (x2)

- 2.1.1.2.2.2.2.1. absence of self and attaining signs of non-returner
- 2.1.1.2.2.2.2.2. cutting through by means of knowing
- 2.1.1.2.2.2.3. explained through meditative cultivation (x3)
  - 2.1.1.2.2.2.3.1. absence of thought from the perspective of analogy
  - 2.1.1.2.2.2.3.2. resting uncontrived and loosely
  - 2.1.1.2.2.2.3.3. knowing that thoughts lack true existence, passing into nirvāṇa
- 2.1.1.2.2.2.4. explained through practice (x2)
  - 2.1.1.2.2.2.4.1. freed from mental afflictions through yogic discipline
  - 2.1.1.2.2.2.4.2. teaching by means of the mastered practice
- 2.1.1.2.2.2.5. explained through result (x2)
  - 2.1.1.2.2.2.5.1. the result not attained through comprehending the meaning
  - 2.1.1.2.2.2.5.2. determining a self in the enlightened state
- 2.1.1.2.2.3. [the third stage:] experiential teachings separate from analogy (x5)
  - 2.1.1.2.2.3.1. knowing as confusion (x2)
    - 2.1.1.2.2.3.1.1. confusion of self-nature
    - 2.1.1.2.2.3.1.2. confusion related to one's tenets
  - 2.1.1.2.2.3.2. unknowing as primordial wisdom (x2)
    - 2.1.1.2.2.3.2.1. obscuration that will transform into primordial wisdom
    - 2.1.1.2.2.3.2.2. whatever appears is self-arising
  - 2.1.1.2.2.3.3. non-action as the ground (x2)
    - 2.1.1.2.2.3.3.1. authoritative teachings on non-action
    - 2.1.1.2.2.3.3.2. non-comprehension by the grasping subject
  - 2.1.1.2.2.3.4. inactivity as the path (x2)

- 2.1.1.2.2.3.4.1. comprehending the lack of true existence of the four limits
  - 2.1.1.2.2.3.4.2. understanding the meaning of the enlightened state
  - 2.1.1.2.2.3.5. non-attainment as the result (x4)
    - 2.1.1.2.2.3.5.1. provisional methods for those with lesser mental functioning
    - 2.1.1.2.2.3.5.2. cause of attainment being meaningless
    - 2.1.1.2.2.3.5.3. lack of meaning when not liberated from discursive thinking
    - 2.1.1.2.2.3.5.4. Three Bodies when absence of grasping is understood
  - 2.1.1.3. the conclusion (x2)
    - 2.1.1.3.1. from the perspective from the meaning of the title
    - 2.1.1.3.2. methods for conscientiously gaining experience (x4)
      - 2.1.1.3.2.1. separation from discursive thinking
      - 2.1.1.3.2.2. distinctive instruction
      - 2.1.1.3.2.3. view when a burden is imposed
      - 2.1.1.3.2.4. importance of wandering in isolated mountains
- The following are references to other teachings mentioned at the beginning of the *Bka' tshoms tika* commentary and correspond to teachings mentioned in other sources:
- 2.1.2. esoteric *Introduction (nang ngo sprod)*
  - 2.1.3. *Pith Instructions* and *Hypothetical Disputes*
  - 2.1.4. secret *Symbolic Teaching* translated in signs
  - 2.2. oral instruction of the transmission of blessings and empowerments
  - 2.3. oral instruction of the transmission of the predictions

