

The Funerary Transformation of the Great Perfection (*Rdzogs chen*)

David Germano
University of Virginia

Abstract: *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs chen) is one of the most important tantric traditions to develop in Tibet, but much of its early history has been obscured by the tradition's visionary narratives of revelation, concealment, and excavation regarding its core scriptures. In addition, the over-reliance on the rubric "Great Perfection" itself obscures a broad diversity of distinct traditions, each with its own distinct rubric of self-identification and often quite divergent characteristics. This includes at the most general level the Three Series (Sde gsum), Four Cycles (Skor bzhi), Crown Pith (Spyi ti), and Ultra Pith (Yang ti). The present essay utilizes a simple hermeneutic of two trajectories – labeled "pristine" and "funerary," respectively – to offer a developmental history of these movements in broad strokes from the eighth to fourteenth century. In doing so, it interprets the major variants of the Great Perfection historically in terms of their interrelations via development, influence, and criticism.*

Introduction

The present essay attempts a preliminary reconstruction of the history of the various traditions positioned under the rubric of the Great Perfection (*Rdzogs chen*) in Tibet from the eighth to fourteenth century by using their diverse handling of death-related issues as a primary point of demarcation.¹ Three historical problems have bedeviled traditional and modern scholarship on the Great Perfection: (i) the chronological conundrum of authorship resulting from the veil of the tradition's visionary practices of concealing and revealing texts, (ii) the seemingly unified

¹ The research for this article was made possible by support provided by research grants from Fulbright-Hayes, from the Committee on Scholarly Communication with China (with NEH funds), and from a Sesquicentennial associateship at the University of Virginia during 1996-97. I would like to express my appreciation to all of these organizations for making this work possible.

homogeneity indicated by the single rubric “Great Perfection” in contrast to the heterogeneity of its internal doxographical categories and sub-rubrics of identification, and (iii) its relationship to late Indian Buddhist tantra, particularly in terms of its frequent rhetoric of a transcendence of, or standing apart from, tantra.

On these points, traditional historiography with its visionary biases has (i) strongly portrayed Great Perfection in all its varieties as being fully developed in the eighth century by non-Tibetan authors, (ii) stressed the consistency of distinct subtraditions rather than viewing them as sharply divergent and mutually critical traditions, and (iii) failed to clearly account for the distinct relationships of each of these subtraditions to Buddhist tantra.

Modern academic scholarship has tended to either uncritically accept these claims or to only suggest vague questions about their veracity. Samten Karmay’s *The Great Perfection* was a landmark in initiating the *historical* study of the Great Perfection, but the flood of subsequent studies has for the most part shed little additional light on historical issues.

The present paper will argue that it is possible to reconstruct a developmental history of these traditions beyond the traditional visionary historiography, and that the funerary orientation of late Indian Buddhist tantra is one of the primary fault-lines marking the boundaries of the synchronic and diachronic diversity of the Great Perfection. This paper will thus confront two primary issues: the historical development of the various Great Perfection traditions and the manner in which their orientation towards death is a crucial factor in understanding their relationship to each other. In doing so, I will argue (i) that most of the relevant literature is authored *after* the eighth century by *Tibetan* authors, (ii) that the various subtraditions are *competing* and mutually critical movements whose differences with each other are substantial, and (iii) that an adequate understanding of the relationship of Great Perfection to tantra must be founded upon a non-traditional developmental history with a focus on the fluctuating relationship of the subtraditions to the changing identity of Buddhist tantra over time. On the second and third points, we will find that issues related to death are of particular importance.

“Pristine” and “Funerary” Brands of the Great Perfection

In terms of the Great Perfection’s historical development, we must first explain the significance of the period from the eighth century to the fourteenth century. The eighth century appears to mark the inception of the rubric of the Great Perfection and its affiliated rubric Transcendence Yoga (*A ti yo ga*), though it is unclear if a formal tradition corresponded to either rubric prior to the ninth century. With the fourteenth century – and above all else with Klong chen rab ’byams pa (1308-1363) – we find an explosion of Great Perfection literature, the first lengthy corpus of treatises explicitly attributed to a Tibetan author, the dominance of the Seminal Heart (*Snying thig*) variant, and the systematization of the Great Perfection in relation to trends among the “new” or Modernist (*Gsar ma*) sects. The time period of the eighth to fourteenth centuries thus embraces the rubric’s inception and primary period of development, during which all of its major sub-rubrics came

into being. The fifteenth to twentieth centuries can thus profitably be viewed as a distinct period in the history of the Great Perfection characterized by the dominance of the Seminal Heart to the detriment of other sub-traditions, an increasing incorporation of tantric *sādhana*-based ritual, a significant decrease in creative philosophical developments, and a tendency to work within received sub-rubrics rather than to generate new rubrics of identification. This second period involves authors working within received literary, intellectual, and doxographical genres, often in simplified fashion, and with the main innovation being the general ritual trajectory towards assimilation of *sādhana* technology.

In contrast, the first seven centuries of the Great Perfection in Tibet is marked by near constant ferment and stunning creativity, resulting in the constant emergence of new traditions with new rubrics of self-identification. While almost all of the resultant traditions claim to stem from the eighth century, even by traditional historiographical standards they can be chronologically differentiated by virtue of their respective dates of public revelation in Tibet. Leaving aside the problematic issue of how the chronology of actual composition relates to the chronologies of visionary inception and the public revelation, we can thus do an initial chronology by analyzing the temporal development of the Great Perfection from this perspective of a subtradition's *public* appearance in Tibet. We can therefore say that the earliest *public* Great Perfection traditions are marked by the absence of presentations of detailed ritual and contemplative technique, *and* by the absence of funerary Buddhism. We will term this "*pristine* Great Perfection," which, at least literarily – as distinct from the use of that literature in concrete pedagogical contexts – consists of aphoristic philosophical poetry with terse experiential descriptions lacking any detailed outline of practice. There is then a gradual incorporation of the description of diverse ritual and contemplative techniques and funerary elements culminating in the eleventh century rise of the Seminal Heart tradition. We will term this "*funerary* Great Perfection." Following this, the twelfth to fourteenth century involves a reemergence of pristine Great Perfection, as well as the gradual pervasion of funerary Great Perfection.

Background on Funerary Buddhism

When I speak of "funerary" Buddhism, I have in mind the way in which late Buddhist tantric movements in India tended to be obsessively concerned with death on multiple fronts. For the purposes of conceptual analysis, we can analytically discern five components of funerary Buddhism: (i) the focus on charnel grounds and their corpses, (ii) funerary rituals, (iii) the signs of dying and death (particularly relics), (iv) "intermediate process" (*bar do*, *antarābhava*) theory, and (v) contemplative *yogas* based on death.

(i) Charnel grounds form the terrifying iconographic, ritual, biographical and ideological background of the Yoginī class of *tantras*. In contrast to the older pure lands of Buddhas with their idyllic, peaceful character, these *tantras* are centered on horrific pure lands modeled after Indian charnel grounds. The quest for enlightenment takes place within the terrestrial locus of the dead, a horrifying

environment of corpses, scavengers, and the dark shadow of the *ḍākinī*. These charnel grounds figure prominently in hagiographies as the actual or visionary locus of crucial encounters with one's destined teacher, a Buddha, or a *ḍākinī*. They also form the basis for iconographic depictions of the *maṅḍalas*, as well as their contemplative reproduction via visualization. Ideologically, the charnel grounds are of crucial importance in these traditions' pervading antinomian rhetoric, as well as in their focus on horrific figures with garlands of skulls, fingers, and other emblems of violent death. Finally, there are magic rites for coping with corpses in odd circumstances beyond a standard funeral, which clearly derive from this overall focus on the charnel grounds.

(ii) While it is certain that a Buddhist concern with funerary rituals predates the rise of tantra, Buddhist tantra had a particular interest in such rites, and was the source of some of the most dominant funerary rituals in Tibet. (iii) This interest in death also manifested in the tantric interest in analyzing the internal processes and distinct stages of dying. Thus tantric literature is rife with analyses of the signs of dying and death for ordinary individuals *and* saints, and particularly in the presentation of relics. Again, these are all longstanding Buddhist interests in India, but tantra was marked by distinctive developments in these areas. (iv) The increased focus on funerary rituals and the stages of dying took place against the backdrop of an increasing interest in granting a central role to a renovated theory of the "intermediate processes" that mark human birth, death, and rebirth. In particular, there was a strong interest in the ritual guiding of a deceased person through post-death experiences, and a new postmortem phase of transformative visionary experiences.

(v) Finally, a broad spectrum of new contemplative *yogas* based on death – such as the "consciousness transfer" (*'pho ba*) and intermediate process techniques which constitute two of the famous Six Yogas of Nāropa (*Nā ro chos drug*) anthology of perfection phase (*rdzogs rim*) practices – developed in tantra. Even more importantly, the two most central perfection phase practices are based on the contemplative mimicking of sexuality and death, with the former focusing on manipulation of the body's seminal nuclei (*thig le*), and the latter on manipulation of the body's winds (*rlung*).

In this context, it is essential to reassess the significance of Karma gling pa's (1327-1387) fourteenth-century *The Profound Doctrine of Wisdom's Natural Freedom (in Encountering) the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities (Zhi khro dgongs pa rang grol)*, parts of which have become so famous in the West under the heading of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. This has often been treated as an innovative synthesis emerging out of nowhere in Tibet via the shadowy mechanisms of treasure (*gter*) revelations. As a consequence, there has been an inadequate understanding of the original historical context of the cycle.² In fact, these materials are deeply

² The recent works of Henk Blezer (*Kar gliñ Ži khro: A Tantric Buddhist Concept* [Leiden: Research School CNWS, School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies, 1997]) and Bryan Cuevas (*The Hidden History of the Tibetan Book of the Dead* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003]) both mark significant progress in appraising the cycle's relationship to its historical context. Blezer's work

indebted to death-related syntheses worked out in at least four centuries of Great Perfection literature that preceded Karma gling pa, literature which for the most part is located in the various editions of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients* (*Rnying ma rgyud 'bum*). Thus, it is an analysis of the gradual incorporation of funerary Buddhism into the Great Perfection from the tenth to fourteenth centuries that provides the proper context for these famous revelations. Such an analysis will reveal that in fact much of Karma gling pa's synthesis is directly recycled from these earlier texts, and that his significance lies much more in the packaging and focus of the cycle than in any innovative synthesis of doctrines and practices. It is very much a cycle based on the consolidation of the creative ferment of funerary Buddhism in the Great Perfection over the preceding centuries.

Interpreting Doxographies Historically

In writing modern histories of treasure-based movements, it is necessary to date treasure texts in relationship to each other with a focus on the earliest strata and broad affiliations within doxographical classes. However, there have to date been relatively few wide-ranging attempts to assess early treasure revelations' claims for dynastic-period authorship. It is impossible to assess the significance of funerary elements in Great Perfection literature without evaluating the temporal and cultural locus of their composition within the context of a reconstructed history of the different movements to which they belonged and those movements' interrelations. At the same time, of course, tracking these individual elements is a crucial ingredient in reconstructing that history. This is an especially problematic process for a visionary tradition that clouds its origins and development with a rhetoric of concealment and unconcealment of texts, as well as with its belief in the reincarnation and visionary apparition of authors in other modalities long after they vanish from the historical scene. We thus are confronted with a historical and visionary version of the hermeneutical circle.

The present study is an attempt to gain a point of entry into that circle, as well as to begin to project a possible reconstruction of the historical lines of development that might form the greater context for understanding the significance of individual doctrinal, rhetorical, and ritual elements. I am working with the operative assumption that the vast majority of the Great Perfection literature found in the various editions of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients* are original Tibetan compositions postdating the eighth century. That assumption is based on detailed textual and historical research that I cannot repeat here.³ This assumption allows us to begin to discern how particular movements grew out of others gradually, while still seeing others as conservative responses or radicalized transformations of their predecessors.

contributes much of importance, though it is somewhat flawed in its understanding of the cycle's historical debt to the earlier Great Perfection – and especially Seminal Heart – materials.

³ See my *The Secret Tibetan History of Buddhist Tantra in the Great Perfection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming).

There are a number of important methodological problems that pertain to the reconstruction of a history for a visionary set of traditions whose own historiographic self-representation presents a flattened-out account denying any such historical development or change in Tibet. These methodological problems are even more difficult with literature that often lacks even colophonic indications of transmission, concealment, and revelation, to say nothing of references to them in extrinsic literature. I believe four general methodological procedures are of value in this process of reconstruction.

The first procedure is the most obvious one, namely charting the first historical references to the tradition in question and/or its independent texts, as well as colophonic, biographical, or historical attributions of the text to a given treasure revealer (*gter ston*), or at least to the first known independently attested lineal transmitter or commentator on the text. The analysis of these “public” references to the text and its “handlers” are the crucial first step to assessing the actual temporal origins of these texts, though of course one must be cautious not to collapse the difference between known historical references to the texts’ existence and the possibility of much earlier origins that are at present undocumented in other literature.

The second, and equally obvious, procedure is to evaluate each text purporting to be a “translation” into Tibetan for indications of it instead being either an original Tibetan composition or a much later non-Tibetan composition dating long after the time of its supposed translation. In both cases, philological analysis as well as analysis of content can provide ample evidence.

The third procedure involves analysis of the various rubrics used to identify particular traditions, textual references to these rubrics, doxographies which provide hierarchies of rankings for such rubrics, and so on. Often the semantic value of the individual rubrics themselves in relation to other rubrics yields important information – the Unsurpassed Secret Cycle (*Bla na med pa'i gsang skor*), for example, appears to be in fact later than the Secret Cycle (*Gsang skor*), just as the name would indicate. In addition, texts often refer to traditions they see as subordinate to themselves, thus clearly dating themselves as posterior to (or at least contemporary with) the subordinated traditions.

The fourth and final procedure entails analysis of the constellation of doctrinal, rhetorical, and ritual elements characterizing a given tradition. These can then be linked to what we know about the presence or development of these elements in other datable sources. In addition, one can begin to argue for a clear developmental track of a given element across several different traditions, which helps suggest the temporal sequence of the emergence of these traditions in terms of which is assimilating which, which is reacting to which, and so forth. In this way we can begin to discern the various fault-lines between these different movements. In the present context, I am focusing on the presence or absence of various “funerary” elements in any given tradition of the Great Perfection prior to the fourteenth century as such a fault-line.

When these procedures are followed in evaluating classes of treasure texts, it slowly becomes possible to date and to identify the original language and period of composition of broad groups of texts in plausible manners without necessarily offering rigorous proof for each text individually. When we turn to Transcendence Yoga specifically, we immediately see that the category Great Perfection came to constitute a vast meta-rubric concealing the heterogeneity of an extremely diverse array of traditions.⁴ These ranged from simple anti-technique, philosophical poetry (which I have labeled “pristine”) to complex tantric traditions dominated by death and ritual-contemplative praxis. I have labeled the latter traditions “funerary,” but they could just as appropriately be termed “visionary” since these two tendencies go hand-in-hand in the relevant Great Perfection traditions. In fact, many of these traditions maintained their own distinct labels of self-identification. The most successful labels historically – with success measured by the preservation of a corresponding body of canonical literature – are those utilized as classificatory divisions in the Transcendence Yoga sections of the various redactions of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*. The standard grouping and sequencing of texts for the latter derives largely from 'Jigs med gling pa's (1729-1798) editorial efforts for the now lost Pad ma 'od gling edition towards the end of the eighteenth century.⁵ Since we retain the catalog for that edition, we can see the slightly later Sde dge edition closely follows 'Jigs med gling pa's scheme. This scheme of doxographical categories is inclusive of all major subtraditions of the Great Perfection for which there are significant extant literature prior to the fourteenth century: the Three Series (*Sde gsum*) consisting of the Mind Series (*Sems sde*), Space Series (*Klong sde*), and Esoteric Precept Series (*Man ngag sde*); the Four Cycles (*Skor bzhi*) consisting of the External Cycle (*Phyi skor*), Internal Cycle (*Nang skor*), Secret Cycle, and Unsurpassed Secret Cycle, the final item also termed Seminal Heart; and the Three Piths consisting of the Transcendent Pith (*A ti*), Crown Pith (*Spyi ti*), and Ultra Pith (*Yang ti*).

Each of these traditions rhetorically understood itself as the pinnacle of Buddhist teachings, often positioning themselves as such in explicit contrast to the other traditions of Great Perfection. These rubrics are thus related to each other in various ways in the extant literature, and at times are contrasted to the label “Great Perfection,” even when they are elsewhere clearly identified with it. The unitary

⁴ *The Samantabhadra Collection* (<http://www.thdl.org/collections/literature/nyingma.php>) is a collaborative and electronic thematic research archive dedicated to all such research into the ancient tantras (*rnying rgyud*), as well as reproduction and translation of texts. It is hoped that the archive will enable teams of scholars to work in a collaborative fashion in order to begin to sort out the historical development of the wide variety of tantric traditions that developed among the Ancients (*Rnying ma*) and Bon traditions.

⁵ See 'Jigs med gling pa's catalog to *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients, The Ornament of the Pervasive Ship at the Edge of the World: The Narrative Histories Behind the Precious Collected Tantras of the Ancient Translations* (*De bzhin gshegs pas legs par gsungs pa'i gsung rab rgya mtsho 'i snying por gyur pa rig pa 'dzin pa'i sde snod dam snga 'gyur rgyud 'bum rin po che 'i rtogs pa brjod pa 'dzam gling mtha'i gru khyab pa'i rgyan*), in *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, Gting skyes edition (*Rñin ma'i rgyud 'bum: A Collection of Treasured Tantras Translated during the Period of the First Propagation of Buddhism in Tibet* [Thimbu, Bhutan: Dingo Khyentse Rimpoche, 1973]), Tk.448: vol. 34.

nature of “Great Perfection” as a rubric thus obscures the fact that these traditions’ contents and practices are often stunningly different, and highly critical of each other, as well as rhetorically engaged in attempts to subordinate each other. There were also a number of other labels that circulated, though for many of these no corresponding literature has survived, and their historical founders and primary disseminators remain unclear. Often these other labels seem simply to be local variants of larger traditions, and are distinguished by a place name or personal name followed by the word for “tradition” (*lugs*); an exception is the important Brahmin Tradition discussed below. Often it is difficult to assess whether the rubrics are retroactive or artificial labels that don’t even occur within the supposed tradition’s own texts, or whether they are labels firmly grounded within the associated literature’s own self-representation.

What ties together these quite diverse traditions under the single rubric of the Great Perfection and how are we to understand their interrelationships? The present paper will limit itself to focusing on funerary Buddhism as a crucial pivot between the various traditions constituting the Great Perfection. The problem in assessing these historical issues – and one of the primary reasons previous scholarship has largely shied away from them – is the visionary nature of the treasure tradition which produced almost all of the principal literature and sub-traditions of the Great Perfection from its inception right into the fourteenth century.

In short, most of the producers of this literature and public founders of these traditions claim that the underlying scriptures are translations of non-Tibetan original manuscripts executed in the late eighth and early ninth centuries. By traditional historiographic accounts, then, these various movements all date back to the eighth century, but as a result of treasure concealment, often only appeared in wider circulation in Tibet gradually over the next six centuries. The literature, and its associated movements, are thus temporally and authorially indexed to a small group of largely non-Tibetan figures in the latter half of the eighth century.

The practice of treasure revelation thus resulted in a flattening of history, where centuries of difference, dialogue, and cultural assimilation have been reduced to homogeneous temporal and non-Tibetan origins. Scholars too frequently understand treasure claims literally, so that what may be a thirteenth-century Tibetan composition is implicitly assumed to be an eighth-century Indian work, while the developmental interrelation of these various sub-traditions is simply not understood. Certainly, I am not arguing that we thus simply reduce revelation to composition in doing historiography of treasure revelations. While we can do a chronology of revelation, and construct a developmental history based on it, at some point we must evaluate the relationship of revelation to composition, basing ourselves on particular traditions rather than attempting a global assessment of treasure texts across temporal periods and traditions. However, such a move entails complex issues that require more space than the present context allows. I will thus present a developmental history based on public revelation that tends to assume an identification of revelation with composition, with the caveat that further arguments

are required to address the thorny issues of the texts' pre-revelational compositional roots.⁶

Since we presently lack access even to catalogs of earlier editions of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients* such as the Smin grol gling and Lhun grub pho brang editions which presumably influenced 'Jigs med gling pa, we are hampered in assessing the innovativeness or age of the standard classification schemes used by him. However, we do have a variety of ways to assess how viable or artificial the schemes are in their own right, despite the regrettable lack of evidence for their editorial pedigree prior to the end of the eighteenth century (see below). The Gting skyes and Skyid grong editions also follow 'Jigs med gling pa's scheme fairly closely, which I suspect reflects the wide circulation of the Sde dge print both because of the prestige of the Degé Publishing House (*Sde dge par khang*) and because of its being the first known blockprint of the collection. The Mtshams brag edition, however, reflects an entirely different classification scheme that appears to reflect a Bhutanese-based tradition also dating to perhaps the eighteenth century during which 'Jigs med gling pa lived.

Again, our lack of early catalogs for other editions prevents us from assessing the importance of this difference. However, it does appear that while the Sde dge Transcendence Yoga section is internally organized and clearly subdivided in accordance with doxographical affiliation that evinces a precise and highly ordered editorial scheme, the Mtshams brag, in contrast, appears rather unorganized, and internal subdivisions of Transcendence Yoga are not clearly marked in any fashion. Finally, *The Collected Tantras of Vairocana (Bai ro'i rgyud 'bum)* appears to be a very early (possibly twelfth-century) redaction that contains only Transcendence Yoga texts, yet it is highly incomplete compared to the Transcendence Yoga sections of later editions of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*. The missing texts are precisely those that appear to be later, namely those corresponding to the Secret Cycle, Unsurpassed Secret Cycle, Crown Pith, and some strands of the Ultra Pith.

Given the paucity of historical information on the canons, character, and lineal transmission of most of these early subtraditions of the Great Perfection – all of which predate the fourteenth century in terms of inception and development – the viability and reliability of such a late editorial scheme is seriously in doubt. The editors behind these schemes clearly intend to identify individual literary canons corresponding to these dominant Great Perfection traditions, yet it is far from clear that the texts thus classified together historically were composed, transmitted, and

⁶ I in fact have addressed these issues in detail in my forthcoming *The Secret Tibetan History of Buddhist Tantra in the Great Perfection*. In addition, I have comparative charts of all Transcendence Yoga doxographical classes in all known editions of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, but the present article's deadline precluded a stabilization of reference numbers. Thus, in the present context I have limited myself to providing an analytical bibliography of Ultra Pith and Crown Pith texts in only the Gting skyes (Tk) and Mtshams brag (Tb) editions. For the full reference to the former, see note 5. The latter refers to the Mtshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (The Mtshams-brag Manuscript of the Rñin ma rgyud 'bum* [Thimpu, Bhutan: National Library, Royal Government of Bhutan, 1982]).

understood as belonging to a distinct tradition prior to the editorial magic which brought them together. In other words, to what degree are these seven doxographical categories – Mind Series, Space Series, External and Internal Cycle (*Phyi nang skor*), Secret Cycle, Unsurpassed Secret Cycle, Crown Pith, and Ultra Pith – descriptive of historical formations based upon the texts they are correlated with, and to what degree are they contrived categories that suggest a false unity and historical interconnection between diverse texts?

I would like to briefly describe some of the resources we do possess for assessing these questions. While we lack early catalogs, there are a myriad of early lists of “ancient tantras” found in historical and other works. These lists are important sources both for dating the earliest reference to a given text and for providing information on early groupings of texts and uses of sub-rubrics. Likewise, there are scattered references to individual texts and doxographical rubrics in biographies and commentarial literature which must be analytically cataloged and analyzed. Analysis of lineages for individual texts as well as overall traditions also offers important clues in terms of individuals participating in lineages for different traditions – clues that could mark derivation or influence. These external references must be complemented by internal references from the texts themselves, beginning with internal references to common rubrics to which the texts see themselves as belonging, and even references to other texts by title. Common colophons, and particularly associations with the same Indian and Tibetan dynastic-period figures in terms of composition, translation, and original concealment, are also important clues. Of course intertextual relationships are particularly important evidence as well, whether the shared text is completely identical or involved in a more complex pattern of relationship. Finally, there is the obvious analysis of texts for common doctrines, practices, images, and so forth.

My unpublished research along these lines indicates that the seven Great Perfection traditions in question each constitute a “tradition” in quite different senses of the word, and their corresponding literary canons enshrined within the various editions of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients* have diverse characters. The most diverse is the Mind Series, which undoubtedly is a very loose rubric covering the majority of developments prior to the eleventh century, and their subsequent continuance by conservative authors. The texts that fall under this sub-rubric were thus authored over a lengthy time period, and are bound together (taking for granted the characteristic Great Perfection motifs and terminology) primarily by a common rejection of practice of any type, as well as by their rejection of funerary Buddhism. The Space Series appears to be similar in character, though less extensive in extent and somewhat more accommodating of practice and funerary Buddhism. It does appear that certain texts in both categories at relatively late dates tried to retroactively create these categories as unified traditions, but in some sense these were as artificial as the later editorial attempts to buttress these doxographies via editorial redactions.

These two traditions contrast sharply to the Crown Pith, which appears to have a tightly organized and self-consciously unified canon composed over a relatively

short time period by a few closely associated authors. Likewise, the Unsurpassed Secret Cycle texts seem to have been composed over a matter of decades by closely linked figures. They contain internal references to each other, and they were clearly redacted together as a canon of texts with its own commentarial corpus at least by the early twelfth century. The External and Internal Cycle, Secret Cycle, and Ultra Pith all have an intermediate character with a greater diversity, temporal duration of composition, and looser coherence than the Crown Pith and Unsurpassed Secret Cycle but a greater unity, perhaps somewhat shorter duration, and tighter coherence than the Mind Series and Space Series.

As mentioned above, it is crucial to question the degree to which these classifications distort or illuminate the significance of the texts they supposedly group together. I will proceed by examining these classifications sequentially, following the chronological order in which their corresponding texts are said to have been widely disseminated in Tibet following excavation. In doing so, I will sketch the emergence and suppression of funerary Buddhism within the Great Perfection overall, though my conclusions remain preliminary since the analysis of the pre-fourteenth century Great Perfection literature is not exhaustive. In addition, some of the statements below are based upon original research documented in my forthcoming monograph on the history of the Great Perfection, but space limitations do not allow for their full documentation in the present context.

The Three Series (Sde gsum)

The earliest revelations of the Great Perfection are those said to have been disseminated in Tibet in the latter half of the eighth century, and which retroactively were classified as the Mind Series to distinguish them from later developments. They begin with a collection of quite short texts known as *The Eighteen Texts of the Mind Series* (*Sems sde bco brgyad*), and then subsequently proliferate into a large family of texts spawned by the original collection's expansion, modification, and so forth, culminating in a series of texts centered on *The All-Creating King* (*Kun byed rgyal po*).⁷ Most of the resultant sub-divisions of the Mind Series rubric have names based upon geographical regions, clans, or individual founders. Padmasambhava (eighth century) does not figure prominently – if at all – in these early Great Perfection traditions; rather, Śrīsimha (eighth century), Dga' rab rdo rje (seventh century?), and Vimalamitra (eighth-ninth century) are the main Indian figures cited as involved in their authorship, redaction, transmission, and translation.

⁷ *The All-Creating King* (Tb.1: vol. 1, 2.1-192.5) has three associated texts that in some ways form a single whole: a transitional section (*skabs sbyor*) – Tb.2: vol. 1, 192.5-199.4; a supplement (*phyi ma*) – Tb.3: vol. 1, 199.4-225.5, and a secondary supplement (*phyi ma'i phyi ma*) – Tb.4: vol. 1, 225.5-262.1. There is then a series of directly connected texts called the *Ten Discourses* (*Mdo bcu*) consisting of twelve distinct textual units – Tb.7 to Tb.18: vol. 1, 352.4-499.5. Working in the other direction, *The All-Creating King* incorporates parts of *The Eighteen Texts of the Mind Series*, which in turn are intertextually connected to other Mind Series texts as well. Phil Stanley and I are currently working on a large-scale project to analyze the intertextual relationships between these and other Mind Series texts in order to begin to sort out their historical development. It will be published in *The Samantabhadra Collection* (see note 4 for the URL).

These original revelations of the Great Perfection – at least in the pre-tenth-century texts – are the purest exemplars of pristine Great Perfection in their strict omission of all of the following elements pertaining to tantric Buddhism: ritual presentations, meditative systems with discrete prescriptive techniques, visionary practices of light images, mantric technology, subtle body practices and ideology, sexological rhetoric and practices, generation-phase texts and iconographic detail, and death/funerary Buddhism with its associated violent, exorcistic ideology and praxis. These original Great Perfection texts are thus not death-centered; nor, in more general terms, do they provide much in the way of specification of actual praxis. As we shall see, it is precisely the gradual incorporation of these various elements in varying constellations that produced the widely divergent nature of the subsequent traditions that emerged under the vast umbrella of Great Perfection. Of course, we must keep in mind that we are speaking about literature, and as such the present inquiry concerns the literary history of Great Perfection. Surely, however, that literature was closely interwoven with its associated oral teachings and transmitted practices, even allowing for moderate discrepancies between linked literary rhetoric, oral rhetoric, and practices.

The second of the Three Series – the Space Series – appears to emerge in Tibet at least after the earliest of the Mind Series traditions, and has a greater diversity than the Mind Series on funerary issues. However, this is largely limited to clear signs of an emerging interest in the concept of intermediate processes. For example, *The Greatness of the Precious Expansion Tantra (Rin po che rgyas pa'i chen po'i rgyud)*⁸ presents a threefold typology of intermediate processes: (i) natural intermediate process (*rang bzhin bar do*), (ii) intermediate process of dreaming (*rmi lam bar do*), and (iii) intermediate process of rebirth (*srid pa bar do*)⁹.

All three are interlinked, so that whatever one realizes in the natural intermediate process – this life – will manifest as karmic traces in dreaming (*rmi lam bar do*), and will cause one to obtain a corresponding fruit in the post-death phase (*srid pa bar do*).¹⁰ As a result, contemplation of “Enjoyment Body” (*Longs sku*) forms of a Buddha during life results in their manifestation within dreams and after-death experience.¹¹ This version of post-death visions of Buddhas is thus still based on the generation phase (*bskyed rim*) ideology of visions following strenuous contemplative exertions, rather than a natural efflorescence of internal Buddha-nature. In addition, the post-death intermediate process is still presented as a single unitary period, while the general stress is on visions of five-colored light rather than on anthropomorphic visions of deities.¹² On all these fronts, the

⁸ Tb.137: vol. 5, 596.2-705.6.

⁹ Chapter fourteen (Tb.137.b14: vol. 5, 634.5-636.3) is devoted to this trio of intermediate processes.

¹⁰ Tb.137: vol. 5, 635.2 and 636.1-636.2.

¹¹ Tb.137: vol. 5, 686.4.

¹² Chapter fifteen (Tb.137.b15: vol. 5, 636.3-638.4) is devoted to the intermediate process of rebirth, and chapter forty-one (Tb.137.b41: vol. 5, 675.4-676.7) shows the focus on five-colored light.

presentation is thus typical of standard Indian portrayals of the intermediate processes.

Another text of the Space Series, *The Precious Array of the Exalted Path Tantra* (*Rin po che 'phags lam bkod pa'i rgyud*),¹³ has a sixfold typology of intermediate processes with an emphasis on their role as opportunities for liberation:¹⁴ (i) naturally abiding intermediate process (*rang bzhin gnas pa'i bar do*), (ii) intermediate process of contemplation (*ting nge 'dzin gyi bar do*), (iii) intermediate process of the dyad of birth and death (*skye shi gnyis kyi bar do*), (iv) intermediate process of rebirth (*srid pa bar do*), (v) intermediate process of sleep and dreams (*gnyid log rmi lam bar do*), and (vi) intermediate process of radiant reality (*chos nyid gsal ba'i bar do*).

While this focus on the central soteriological role of the intermediate processes is suggestive, the text fails to clearly indicate the significance of each. Thus, while the crucial term “intermediate process of reality” (*chos nyid bar do*) appears (see below for a detailed explanation), its definition is unclear beyond a general association with “radiance.”

When we turn to the Esoteric Precept Series, however, we find in general a far greater role granted to death and intermediate processes schemes. The latter schemes play a central role, even to the point of having entire texts devoted to them. In particular, spontaneous visions of *maṅḍalas* dominate presentations of post-death experience, often under the rubric of the intermediate process of reality, which constitutes a fundamental transformation of Buddhist depictions of post-death processes. Other funerary issues also are dominant motifs, ranging from the ritual transformation of a corpse’s tongue to practices predicting impending death. The horrific environment of the Yoginī *tantras* is pervasive, and in addition there is a marked influx of presentations of ritual and contemplative techniques. In short, these traditions embody a transformation of pristine Great Perfection into funerary or tantric Great Perfection.

The rubric of the Esoteric Precept Series itself is a very loose one that appears to have functioned to embrace new traditions emerging from the late tenth century onwards and diverging in significant ways from the older Great Perfection traditions. At least in retrospect, two overarching classifications came to be the dominant subdivisions: the Four Cycles and Three Piths. In contravention of the normative tendencies in Tibetan doxography, these two were not generally ranked hierarchically in relationship to each other, indicating distinct origins and development. Significantly, subdivisions increasingly were given abstract rubrics of identification rather than labels based on regional origins or personal names of founders, as was true for older Great Perfection traditions. I will thus examine the subdivisions of these two classifications one by one with reference to important texts and their relationship to funerary Buddhism.

¹³ Tb.45: vol. 1, 837.3-863.6.

¹⁴ Tb.45: vol. 1, 858.5ff.

The Four Cycles (*Skor bzhi*)

The Four Cycles involves four sequentially emerging rubrics, each of which self-consciously attempts to trump its predecessors in terms of doxographical rhetoric of superiority and inferiority: (i) the External Cycle (*Phyi skor*), (ii) the Internal Cycle (*Nang skor*), (iii) the Secret Cycle (*Gsang skor*), and (iv) the Unsurpassed Secret Cycle (*Bla na med pa'i gsang skor*).

I believe the lower three cycles (*skor gsum*) represent the development of movements culminating in the fourth, which is also known as the Seminal Heart. This process most likely extended from the latter half of the tenth century to the first half of the twelfth century in terms of the date of their Tibetan revelations, and the dominant eighth-century Indian patron of these texts prior to their treasure concealment and revelation was Vimalamitra. This is why most of the External and Internal Cycle texts are found in *The Collected Tantras of Vairocana*, most likely a twelfth-century collection, but the later Secret Cycle and Unsurpassed Secret Cycle were either not known to, or else not accepted by, the collection's conservative editors. Padmasambhava simply had nothing to do with these transmissions or their mythos until a much later date.

In particular, the Secret Cycle, while doxographically subordinated by Seminal Heart adherents to their own Unsurpassed Secret Cycle, appears in fact to be a competing and contemporary eleventh century-based movement spearheaded above all by Lce sgom nag po (eleventh-twelfth century). I think Zhang ston bkra shis rdo rje's (1097-1167) redaction of a canon of *tantras* and commentarial literature in the twelfth century and his consolidation of lineal lines of authority created the Seminal Heart as a distinct tradition by eliminating other closely associated literature and lineages from its domain, such as that of the Secret Cycle.

The extant literature of the Four Cycles reveals throughout an ever-increasing incorporation of precisely those elements which are so conspicuous by their absence from the earlier *pristine* Great Perfection: ritual presentations, meditative systems with discrete prescriptive techniques, visionary practices of light images, mantric technology, subtle body practices and ideology, sexological rhetoric and practices, generation phase texts and iconographic detail, and death/funerary Buddhism with its associated violent, exorcistic ideology and praxis. These elements appear to be ever more developed, explicit, and prevalent as one proceeds from the External and Internal Cycle literature to the Secret Cycle, and finally to the Unsurpassed Secret Cycle, or Seminal Heart, literature. It thus appears that the Seminal Heart represents the culmination of this two-century process of the transformation of *pristine* Great Perfection into *funerary* Great Perfection, and in fact is the fullest transformation of the Great Perfection along these lines prior to the fourteenth century. In particular, the early Seminal Heart corpus of *tantras* – the so-called *The Seventeen Tantras (Rgyud bcu bdun)* collection redacted now within the Transcendence Yoga sections of the various editions of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients* – is dominated by funerary Buddhism with its obsessive interest in corpses, dying, and post-death intermediate processes. With these developments,

the Great Perfection – while retaining its original emphasis on evocative celebration of paradoxical negations and affirmation of primordial, spontaneous purity – came to be an irretrievably thanocentric religious tradition as well.

We will first look at the External and Internal Cycle, which tends to be treated as a single classification. *The Divine Tantra of Overflowing Preciousness (Lha rgyud rin chen spungs pa)*¹⁵ has a discussion of death signs and dying, in the context of which it refers to the “intermediate process of reality,” though it does not spell out appearances of Buddhas at all.¹⁶ More interesting is *The Precious Self-Presencing of the Intermediate Process of Rebirth (Rin po che srid pa bar do rang snang)*,¹⁷ which is devoted to the subject of the intermediate phases, and especially embodiment and death. However, here the stress is on the intermediate process of rebirth (*srid pa bar do*), though we find the characteristic Great Perfection emphasis on letting go into primordial gnosis (*ye shes*) within the intermediate processes.¹⁸ However, it is the invisible, not the visible, that is stressed. There are also elaborate discussions of corpse rituals, the signs of dying, relics, cremation and ashes, and so forth.¹⁹ Thus, here we find funerary Buddhism clearly infiltrating the Great Perfection – it consists of the idea of multiple intermediate phases with a focus on dying, postmortem experience, and rebirth, and a concern with the physical transmutation at death, and hence corpses, ashes, signs, and so forth. However, it lacks the visionary side of post-death experience which is central to the classic elaboration of the intermediate process of reality found in the Seminal Heart as detailed below.

The three texts constituting *The Black Ash of Cremated Corpses (Ro bsreg thal ba nag po)*²⁰ are centered around the image of cremation and ashes. *The Black Ash of Cremated Corpses* concludes with discussions of corpse rituals, dealing with ashes, and relics. Despite its many details on rituals, particularly exorcistic ones, it has no account of intermediate processes typologies, or post-death visions. *The Blazing Body in the Charnel Grounds (Dur khrod phung po 'bar ba)*²¹ mentions charnel grounds in its very title, though in reality the text is more focused on embodiment than on death per se. However, its discussion of channels and allegories

¹⁵ Tb.115: vol. 4, 705.4-753.4.

¹⁶ Chapter twenty-four (Tb.115.b24: vol. 4, 737.5-739.2) is devoted to the intermediate process, and chapter twenty-three (Tb.115.b23: vol. 4, 736.3-737.5) is devoted to the signs of impending death and the locus of impending rebirth; the reference to intermediate process of reality (*chos nyid bar do*) is in Tb.115: vol. 4, 738.1.

¹⁷ Tb.110: vol. 4, 609.1-632.7.

¹⁸ See particularly chapters five (Tb.110.b5: vol. 4, 615.7-617.5) and six (Tb.110.b6: vol. 4, 617.5-619.5) on the postmortem intermediate process.

¹⁹ Chapter four (Tb.110.b4: vol. 4, 614.2-615.7) is devoted to the signs of death, chapter twelve is devoted to relics (Tb.110.b12: vol. 4, 628.2-629.1), and chapter thirteen (Tb.110.b13: vol. 4, 629.1-630.1) is devoted to ashes.

²⁰ See Tb.112: vol 4, 682.1-691.2; Tb.113: vol. 4, 691.3-693.4; and Tb.114: vol. 4, 693.4-705.4, respectively. It is the third text that has the most concrete death-related detail.

²¹ Tb.163: vol. 7, 816.3-839.2.

reveals a close connection to the Seminal Heart on other fronts.²² *The Secret Intermediate Process Tantra (Bar do gsang ba'i rgyud)* and its supplementary tantra (*phyi ma'i rgyud*)²³ lack any standard doxographical classification since they are absent in the Sde dge edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*. However, they would appear to be most closely associated with the External and Internal Cycle, and are centered on the topic of intermediate processes and death. They provide a fivefold classification of intermediate processes:²⁴ (i) naturally abiding intermediate process (*rang bzhin gnas pa'i bar do*), (ii) intermediate process of contemplation (*ting nge 'dzin gyi bar do*), (iii) intermediate process of dreaming (*rmi lam bar do*), (iv) intermediate process of birth and death (*skye shi dag gi bar do*), and (v) intermediate process of rebirth (*srid pa bar do*).

The analogy of a beautiful girl looking into a mirror is used for the second intermediate process, though later literature associates this image instead with the intermediate process of dying. The process of dying is more typically referred to as the intermediate process of dying (*'chi ka'i bar do*), and its designation here as intermediate process of birth and death – birth and death – often indicates a discussion of embryogeny as well as dying. Despite the fivefold classification, the postmortem processes remain a singular process with the traditional appellation of the intermediate process of rebirth and their description does not depart from standard Indian descriptions. The text has a long discussion of consciousness transfer,²⁵ but there is no reference to peaceful and wrathful deities appearing after death, nor is there any reference to a postmortem phase known as the intermediate process of reality.

This preliminary survey indicates that the External and Internal Cycle strata of the Great Perfection is marked by a strong influx of funerary Buddhism, yet lacks the central complex of innovations centered around the idea of an intermediate process of reality postmortem phase.

In the Secret Cycle, *The Totally Radiant Seminal Nucleus (Thig le kun gsal)*²⁶ has another fourfold typology that substitutes meditation for dying:²⁷ (i) natural intermediate process (*rang bzhin bar do*), (ii) intermediate process of contemplation (*ting nge 'dzin gyi bar do*), (iii) intermediate process of reality's radiant light (*chos nyid 'od gsal bar do*), and (iv) intermediate process of rebirth (*srid pa bar do*).

The discussion clearly points to a Seminal Heart-like scheme: the intermediate process of reality is defined as the cessation of distorted appearances (*'khrul snang*) followed by luminous manifestation of one's own primordial gnosis for up to five days. It also has a discussion of light channels in the body, a characteristic of

²² See the allegories in chapter two (Tb.163.b2: vol. 7, 817.5-819.3), and the channels in chapter five (Tb.163.b5: vol. 7, 825.5-829.1).

²³ Tb.99: vol. 4, 526.6-531.7, and Tb.100: vol. 4, 531.7-534.5, respectively.

²⁴ See chapter two (Tb.99.b2: vol. 4, 527.2-528.2).

²⁵ See chapter three (Tb.99.b3: vol. 4, 528.2-529.3).

²⁶ Tb.303: vol. 13, 296.6-492.5.

²⁷ See chapter eighty-four (Tb.303.b84: vol. 13, 443.4-444.6).

Seminal Heart texts that is bound up with the internal illumination of buddha-nature that shines externally in the postmortem visions.

Even more striking is the Secret Cycle text entitled *The Victorious Intention of the Quintessential Esoteric Precepts (Man ngag snying gi dgongs pa rgyal ba)*.²⁸ It gives a detailed discussion of the one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities (*zhi khro rigs brgya*) located in the *tsitta* of the heart and the conch chamber of the brain (*klad pa dung khang*).²⁹ These are the iconographic representations of the body's internal buddha-nature, which form the visual content of the postmortem visions in which they are externalized. On the basis of contents there is no reason to suspect that it is later than the thirteenth century, since Klong chen rab 'byams pa in the fourteenth century refers to precisely these types of attributes connected to the Secret Cycle in his own corpus, and since it accords well with other eleventh- and twelfth-century materials.³⁰ It also provides a detailed description of the dying and post-death scenarios as found in the Seminal Heart, with Rdo rje sems dpa' exhorting Gsang ba'i bdag po as to what to do. It is clearly an important template for Karma gling pa.³¹ It contains a classic description of the intermediate process of reality that will be very familiar to anyone who has read the Seminal Heart literature, and the later recycling of that by Karma gling pa.³² The text's fourfold typology of intermediate processes is: (i) natural intermediate process (*rang bzhin bar do*), (ii) intermediate process of contemplation (*ting nge 'dzin gyi bar do*), (iii) intermediate process of dreaming (*rmi lam bar do*), and (iv) intermediate process of reality (*chos nyid kyi bar do*).³³ In addition, prior to and subsequent to this reference there are chapters devoted to the intermediate process of rebirth,³⁴ while later in the text there is a reference to the intermediate process of birth and death (*skye shi 'i bar do*).³⁵

²⁸ Tb.326: vol. 13, 795.2-843.2.

²⁹ Tb.326: vol. 13, 798-800.

³⁰ For example, his *The Treasury of Words and Meanings (Tshig don mdzod)* – in *Mdzod bdun: The Famed Seven Treasuries of Vajrayāna Buddhist Philosophy*, vol. 5 (Gangtok, Sikkim: Sherab Gyaltzen and Khyentse Labrang, 1983), 176.1 – links the second cycle to substantialist interpretations of light visions, while *The Seminal Quintessence of the Spiritual Master (Bla ma yang tig)* – in *Sñin thig ya bzhi*, vol. 1 (New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi, 1970) – teaches the key practice of these visions shining through the eyes (254.1-254.5) and discusses the “four lamps” (246.6-247.3) in the context of the Secret Cycle.

³¹ See Henk Blezer, “Karma Gling pa: Treasure Finder (gTer ston), Creative Editor (gTer ston)? – A Preliminary Comparison of the *Man ngag snying gi dgongs pa rgyal ba 'i bka' zhes bya ba 'i rgyud* and two *Bar do thos grol chen mo*-texts: The *Chos nyid bar do 'i gsal 'debs thos grol chen mo* and the *Srid pa bar do 'i ngo sprod gsal 'debs thos grol chen mo*,” *East and West* 52, no. 1-4 (2000): 311-345 (cf. “scrambled” edition: “Karma gling pa: Treasure Finder or Creative Editor?,” in *Reading Asia: New Research in Asian Studies*, edited by Frans Hüsken and Dick van der Meij, 292-338 [Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001]).

³² See chapter twelve (Tb.326.b12: vol. 13, 832.5-840.1), and elsewhere.

³³ Tb.326: vol. 13, 829.5ff lists these four out. These are then discussed one by one in subsequent chapters.

³⁴ See chapter six (Tb.326.b6: vol. 13, 818.2-820.6), and chapter fourteen (Tb.326.b14: vol. 13, 840.6-842.2), respectively.

³⁵ See Tb.326: vol. 13, 840.6.

These references tend to indicate that the lower “three cycles” are the literature in which the doctrinal and practical foundations of the Seminal Heart were worked out. Thus *The Seventeen Tantras* are most likely an extraction and canonization of a selection of *tantras* out of a broader movement, which Zhang ston bkra shis rdo rje identified as the Unsurpassed Secret Cycle to differentiate it out from earlier precedents, and presumably to distinguish himself from other redactors/codifiers of this broader movement.

Within Seminal Heart itself, the earliest canon of *tantras* is the eleventh-century *The Seventeen Tantras*. Three of these seventeen *tantras* are explicitly devoted to death-related issues: *The Blazing Relics Tantra (Sku gdung 'bar ba'i rgyud)*³⁶ is devoted to the subject of relics and to various signs marking the death of an ordinary and extraordinary individual; *The Tantra of the Sun and Moon's Intimate Union (Nyi zla kha sbyor gyi rgyud)*³⁷ is a presentation of the classic systematization of four intermediate processes; and *The Self-Emerging Perfection Tantra (Rdzogs pa rang byung)*³⁸ is a lengthy and wide-ranging study of death rituals and of death itself. The third text deals in great detail with exorcisms, coping with a zombie (*ro langs*), leading a deceased person step by step through the six states of rebirth to a pure land, the classic seven-day juncture funerary ritual (*bdun tshig*), cremation rituals, making clay clay medallions (*tsha tsha*) and *stūpa*'s with cremated ashes, and so forth. In addition, death and intermediate process theories figure prominently in at least six of the other *tantras*.³⁹ Thus death in all forms dominates the horizons of this collection of early *tantras*.

In addition to these explicit motifs, analyses, and rituals pertaining to death, the very core of the Seminal Heart ideology and practice is a fourfold process of: (i) spontaneous visions of peaceful and wrathful (*zhi khro*) Buddhas found in the contexts of ground-presencing (*gzhi snang*), i.e., cosmogenesis, (ii) contemplation called “direct transcendence” (*thod rgal*), (iii) death, and (iv) Buddhahood.

In this sense, even those *tantras* that do not directly deal with death or the new postmortem phase termed the “intermediate process of reality” do deal with the processes of the latter in one of the other three contexts, and hence are inextricably founded upon the broader innovation in postmortem phases. This renovation of post-death experience under the heading of the intermediate process of reality basically involved the spontaneous self-presentation of Buddhas to individuals immediately following death. This pushed back the previous classic Buddhist

³⁶ Tb.289: vol. 11, 788.2-815.7.

³⁷ Tb.298: vol. 12, 491.6-559.7.

³⁸ Tb.284: vol. 11, 2.1-297.7.

³⁹ *The Tantra of Self-Arising Awareness (Rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud)* (Tb.286: vol. 11, 323.1-699.1), *The Tantra of Naturally Free Awareness (Rig pa rang grol chen po thams cad 'grol ba'i rgyud)* (Tb.287: vol. 11, 699.2-757.2), *The Tantra of the Adamantine Hero's Heart-Mirror (Rdo rje sems dpa' snying gi me long gi rgyud)* (Tb.292, vol. 12, 193.4-245.5), *Rin po che 'byung bar byed pa sgra thal 'gyur chen po'i rgyud* (Tb.290, vol. 12, 2.1-173.3), *The Six Spaces Tantra (Kun tu bzang po klong drug pa'i rgyud)* (Tb.296, vol. 12, 394.1-467.3), and *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra (Mu tig rin po che phreng ba'i rgyud)* (Tb.295: vol. 12, 304.7-393.7).

version of post-death experience into a secondary phase leading back to rebirth. The former came to be known as the “reality” (*chos nyid*) intermediate process in that it focuses on a person’s buddha-nature unleashed into exterior visions by the collapse of body and mind at the time of death; in contrast, the latter phase retained the older name of “becoming” or “existence” (*srid pa bar do*) to signify its orientation towards impending rebirth. This new “reality” intermediate process is different from earlier descriptions of postmortem visions of meditational deities through the force of previous contemplation on deities, since it instead involves *spontaneous* manifestation of naturally indwelling deities in the *tsitta* (heart) and conch chamber of the brain. The deities are the peaceful and wrathful deities drawn from Great Yoga (*Rnal ’byor chen po, Mahāyoga*) *tantras*, especially *The Secret Nucleus Tantra* (*Gsang ba snying po’i rgyud, Guhyagarbhatantra*).⁴⁰

Historically, it appears that this process – which is at the basis of the entire Seminal Heart system – is the result of Ancients groups merging the pristine Great Perfection with the new tantric emphasis on intermediate processes and subtle body meditations found in such Indian materials as the Six Yogas of Nāropa, and incorporating deity iconography (particularly the peaceful and wrathful *maṅḍalas*) and ritual techniques from its own corpus of Great Yoga literature. Since the pristine Great Perfection and Great Yoga represent the dominant Ancients or proto-Ancients traditions of the tenth century, and tantric traditions such as the Six Yogas of Nāropa were one of the dominant influences among Modernist groups in the eleventh century, the Seminal Heart embodies above all else the creative blending of dominant Early Transmission (*Snga ’gyur*) and Later Transmission (*Gsar ’gyur*) traditions. The resulting synthesis had strong roots in Indian paradigms, but also introduced fundamental innovations that are specifically Tibetan in origin. There are four distinctive overarching features in relationship to funerary Buddhism. (i) The first is the systematization of a set of associated contemplative and ritual techniques centered on death, a systematization which is partially integrated with the rhetoric of pristine Great Perfection.⁴¹ (ii) The second feature is the centralization and expansion of the notion of intermediate processes within the entire tradition, such that one is never anywhere other than an intermediate process of one type or another. (iii) This centralization, not surprisingly, was accompanied by new typologies of intermediate processes ranging from three to six. (iv) All of these typologies are centered on the expansion of the post-death situation to include a striking new phase known as the “intermediate process of reality” marked by the systematic unfolding of a series of visions of one’s internal Buddha-nature in terms of the deity *maṅḍalas* known as the one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities.

The Tantra of the Sun and Moon’s Intimate Union standardized a fourfold typology: (i) the ordinary or natural intermediate process of this life as existing between rebirth and death, (ii) the dying intermediate process, (iii) the post-death

⁴⁰ Tb.417: vol. 20, 152.6-218.7.

⁴¹ See David Germano, “Dying, Death and Other Opportunities,” in *Religions of Tibet in Practice*, ed. Donald Lopez, 458-93 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997) for details on these practices.

reality intermediate process, and (iv) the second post-death rebirth intermediate process.⁴² This expanded an earlier triad: (i) this life, (ii) the intervening period between death and rebirth, and (iii) dreams. It also includes references to a fifth intermediate process, the intermediate process of contemplation, though it is only referred to in passing. *The Self-Emerging Perfection Tantra*,⁴³ however, seems to offer a pre-standardized version which specifies a twenty-one day postmortem period divided into three distinct phases in contrast to the later standard twofold division of a forty-nine day period. The *tantra* thus gives the following list of four intermediate processes, the final three of which are successive seven-day periods following death and preceding rebirth:⁴⁴ (i) the natural intermediate process of this life, (ii) the intermediate process of reality's self-presencing, (iii) the intermediate process of dreaming, and (iv) the intermediate process of wandering in existence/becoming (rebirth).

The reality intermediate process is characterized by the separation of gnostic awareness and the ordinary mind, such that one sees reality's intrinsic sphere; in contrast, the dream process is then marked by the initial revival of the ordinary mind's karmic latencies and ends with the manifest emergence of its coarser conceptuality; and the rebirth process then involves a more conscious awareness of impending rebirth sites and one's own suffering. In the fourteenth century, Klong chen rab 'byams pa's *The Seminal Quintessence of the Profound (Zab mo yang tig)*⁴⁵ expands the Seminal Heart's basic quartet to six by adding dreams and contemplation, while in *The Seminal Quintessence of the Spiritual Master*⁴⁶ he alters this sextet by substituting "the intermediate process of the abiding Ground" for the "ordinary intermediate process."

Finally, I would like to make a few brief remarks on the significance of the new intermediate process of reality. This single process of the spontaneous efflorescence of Buddhas from a concealed interior is found, as specified above, not only in the postmortem visions, but also in the central contemplative process of direct transcendence, the cosmogonic process known as ground-presencing, and the process of a Buddha's manifestations or displays. This single process found in four different contexts forms the new visionary basis of the Seminal Heart in all its aspects: contemplative, philosophical, psychological, cosmogonic, and so forth. It has distinct and varied roots in Indian Buddhism, and each of its four contexts must be investigated individually as to possible separate developments – especially

⁴² These are found in the chapter titles of chapters two through four, with chapter four including both of the post-death intermediate processes. The term "reality" itself is used in conjunction with the post-death intermediate state in the Bka' bryud tradition as well (see Herbert Guenther, *The Life and Teaching of Nāropa* [London: Oxford University Press, 1963], 264), but the division of the post-death state into two discernible phases of a quite different nature appears to be an innovation.

⁴³ Tb.284: vol. 11, 2.1-298.1.

⁴⁴ Tb.284: vol. 11, 17.1ff and 44.3ff.

⁴⁵ Klong chen rab 'byams pa, *The Seminal Quintessence of the Profound*, in *Sñiñ thig yab bzhi* (New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi, 1971), 11: 78.3ff.

⁴⁶ *The Seminal Quintessence of the Spiritual Master*, pt. 2: 218.1.

in relationship to death – prior to their unification within Seminal Heart. In other words, what is the history of such a process in describing cosmogony, contemplation, death, and Buddhas? Clearly, the process itself has its most ancient roots in the description of a Buddha as unfolding endless arrays of pure lands and multiple divine bodies out of his/her own enlightenment experience. This process then was interiorized – at least implicitly – through the notion of Buddha-nature, a notion that was radicalized and worked out contemplatively with the much later rise of subtle body practices in Buddhist tantra. These contemplative projects were linked to an attempt to analyze and mimic death as a set of interior processes, which was itself part of a broader dynamic involving inquiry into the relation of possession, vision, cultivated visions, and visualization.

In the final analysis, I believe the intermediate process of reality represents a thanocentric adaptation of the intermediate process of dreaming, since its descriptions of the creation of worlds out of one's bodily interior precisely mimics the process of dreaming; indeed, Seminal Heart sources explicitly identify dreaming as a nighttime version of this process. The intermediate process of reality thus appears to be thanocentric dreaming linked to a strong belief in an internal Buddha-nature concealed within the body. This evolved against the backdrop of tantric associations of deity images linked to deity *yoga* praxis in the post-death states, and to the cultivation of spontaneous light images in relationship to manipulation of internal breath-winds.

The Crown Pith (Spyi ti)

When we consider the Four Cycles' developmental trajectory of the pristine Great Perfection gradually transformed by incorporation of tantric praxis and funerary ideology, the twelfth-century Crown Pith revelations are puzzling in their near complete absence of such elements. If they are merely a continuance of older traditions, why the new rubric? The Crown Pith belongs to newer Padmasambhava-centric Great Perfection traditions emerging in the twelfth century, roughly contemporaneous with the close of the early Seminal Heart canon. These traditions at times refer to a doxographical triad sharing the common suffix of "ti": Transcendent Pith, Crown Pith, and Ultra Pith.⁴⁷ The references to Transcendent

⁴⁷ A typically terse contemporary explanation can be found in Bdud 'joms, *Record of Teachings Received for the Treasury of Precious Treasures (Rin chen gter mdzod kyi thob yig)*, published as *Gsan snags snia 'gyur nan rgyud sde gsum gyi bka' babs ñe brgyud zab mo Rin chen gter gyi mdzod chen po 'i thob yig ño mtshar Au dumwa ra 'i phren mdzes zes bya ba bñugs so* (Dal-hor: 1968): 147-52; see Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991) 2: 73, for a summary of the passage. It explicitly identifies Transcendent Pith as Seminal Heart. Actually the earlier Crown Pith sources express heterogeneous opinions on this issue, with the most common pattern being dyadic references to Transcendent Pith and Crown Pith, though some also include Ultra Pith, and still others appear to add still yet more rubrics that transcend all three. *The Secondary Supplementary Tantra of the Cyclic Existence-Eradicating Ambrosial Drops Unifying Appearances and Life-Worlds (Snang srid kha sbyor bdud rtsi bcud thigs 'khor ba thog mtha' gcod pa 'i rgyud phyi ma 'i phyi ma)* (Tb.261: vol. 10, 399.3-423.2) refers to Crown Pith repeatedly in its chapter titles (chap. 80 – Tb.261.b1: vol. 10, 399.3-400.5; chap. 106 – Tb.261.b27: vol. 10, 417.5-418.5, and so forth), once refers to Ultra Pith as a chapter topic (chap. 81 – Tb.261.b2: vol. 10, 400.6-402.4) and also refers to Transcendent Pith as a chapter topic (chap. 102 – Tb.261.b23: vol. 10, 415.1-415.4).

Pith (*A ti*) in this context are unclear, except that it is clearly positioned as a subordinated third to the other two traditions. It may very well be that it refers to the types of developments represented by the Four Cycles, and perhaps even to Seminal Heart itself.

If we begin with the Crown Pith texts, one is immediately struck by how tightly integrated a canon of seventeen texts they are in terms of imagery, motifs, and colophons.⁴⁸ It appears that the core text were revelations of Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer (1124/36-1204) in the twelfth century, though these may have been amplified by his own son, and then by his reincarnation as Gu ru chos kyi dbang phyug (1212-1270).⁴⁹ Above all else, it may be that it was the towering figure of Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer – one of the main architects of the Padmasambhava mythos – who first linked Padmasambhava to the Great Perfection in a high-profile manner. Regardless, it is a closely connected series of texts that appear to have been produced in a relatively short time period, and that became a closed canon shortly afterwards. Only one is found, for example, in *The Collected Tantras of Vairocana*.⁵⁰ The content is fairly uniform: the texts are very philosophically oriented, and overflowing with a variety of symbolic literary devices such as allegory, symbolic encoding, striking images, and so forth. There is almost no exposition of techniques, ritualistic or contemplative, and also little in the way of funerary influences. In short, the texts are philosophical poetry rather than practical handbooks of praxis techniques; instead of the blood and violence of later tantra, we find lyrical and elegant verses on light and darkness, purity and pollution, freedom and bondage, illusion and reality, plurality and unity, embodiment and mind.

I suspect that Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer was well aware of the Four Cycles' infusion of funerary Buddhism and tantric praxis into the rubric of the Great Perfection, and that he didn't like it. There is a constant motif throughout the literature of the superiority of Crown Pith to the Great Perfection or Transcendence Yoga, indicating that competing Great Perfection movements formed some of its

The Tantra of the Swirling Lake of Ambrosia Blazing with the Light of the Solar and Lunar Cores: The King of All Tantras (Rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po nyi zla'i snying po 'od 'bar ba bdud rtsi mtsho 'khyil ba'i rgyud) (Tb.262: vol. 10, 423.2-510.1) in a sequence of seven chapters (chaps. 43-49 – Tb.262.b43-b49: vol. 10, 467.7-474.1) gives a ranked series of doctrinal systems which culminates in (4) the view of the three internal tantric systems (Mahā, Anu, and Ati), (5) the view of Crown Pith yoga, (6) the view of Ultra Pith yoga, and finally (7) the view of Total Perfection Direct Transcendence (*Yongs rdzogs thod rgal*) which transcends even Transcendent Pith, Crown Pith, and Ultra Pith.

⁴⁸ See the bibliographical appendices for the list of texts.

⁴⁹ The Crown Pith sections' opening and central three-part *tantra* – *The Tantra of the Cyclic Existence-Eradicating Ambrosial Drops Unifying Appearances and Life-Worlds (S nang srid kha sbyor bdud rtsi bcud thigs 'khor ba thog mtha' gcod pa'i rgyud)* – is a revelation of Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer. None of the other Crown Pith *tantras* specify the treasure finders possibly involved in their revelation. However, their colophons and content link the first fourteen texts of the seventeen, and it is precisely these fourteen that are also found as a contiguous set in all known editions of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*.

⁵⁰ Text no. 15 in the Crown Pith corpus: *The Stacked Mountain Encapsulating the Quintessence of All the Buddhas' Wisdom Tantra (Sangs rgyas kun gyi dgongs pa'i bcud bsdus ri bo brtsegs pa'i rgyud)* (Tk.113: vol. 6, 323.6-349.3; Tb.411: vol. 19, 181.2-213.3).

main targets.⁵¹ The subordinated Transcendent Pith Great Perfection (*A ti rdzogs chen*) is consistently associated more with the side of manifestation and vision and is described as retaining a degree of exertion, conceptuality, and focus on appearances, while the Crown Pith is presented as an uncompromising non-duality zeroed in on original purity (*ka dag*), one of the most common terms in the text.⁵² The tradition never really took off beyond Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer and his immediate disciples.

Thus, the Crown Pith is not merely a blind continuance of earlier traditions, unaware of, or simply ignoring, more recent developments (such as seems to be the case with the redactors of *The Collected Tantras of Vairocana*), but rather a type of conservative backlash against those developments. It reflects an intuition that the Great Perfection should be preserved – at least in its role as the highest of all vehicles – as a pristine discourse that does not stoop down to the exposition of particular techniques, nor to the death-dominated discourses and motifs of later tantra. In other words, the Crown Pith seems to represent an attempt to reassert the primacy of pristine Great Perfection over funerary Great Perfection, which sometimes results in describing it as a tenth vehicle that supersedes the latter's position as the ninth vehicle.⁵³ Clearly, Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer was not opposed to funerary or horrific forms of Buddhism overall, since he was one of the primary revealers in the Great Yoga Eight Precept Deities (*Bka' brgyad*) tradition centered on wrathful deities and massive compendia of esoteric ritual techniques.⁵⁴ It is thus of great interest that one of the major advocates of funerary, horrific Buddhism with its exorcistic technology and wrathful icons should be so concerned with preserving the Great Perfection as a pure pristine discourse without any contamination. What might have been his motivation?

I believe that Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer felt that Transcendence Yoga and Great Yoga needed to be kept separate from each other, each holding down alternative yet complementary visions of the real, and of how reality relates to embodied lives within *samsāra*. The violent and technique-ridden character of Great Yoga was

⁵¹ See, for example, *The Lamp of the Blazing Sun and Moon: A Precious Commentary on the Litany of Mañjuśrī's Names* ('Phags pa 'jam dpal gyi mtshan yang dag par brjod pa'i 'grel pa rin po che nyi zla 'bar ba'i sgron ma) attributed to Padmasambhava treasure revelation, in *rNying ma bka' ma rgyas pa*, ed. Dudjom Rinpoche, vol. 22 (Kalimpong: Dudjung Lama, 1982): 195-493; however, I only had access to Tarthang Tulku's reprint, for which I lack any publication information. The entire text is structured on the idea of multi-level interpretations corresponding to ten, not nine, vehicles (Tarthang Tulku repr.: 2b.6, 4a.4, 17a.6ff). The tenth vehicle is Crown Pith, which is at times labeled as Great Perfection (Tarthang Tulku repr.: 3b.4), but throughout is clearly portrayed as superior to Transcendent Pith/Great Perfection (Tarthang Tulku repr.: 7a.2 and 19b.6-20a.3.).

⁵² See Padmasambhava's *The Lamp of the Blazing Sun and Moon*, Tarthang Tulku repr.: 11a.2, 11b.4, 30b.3, and 41b.

⁵³ See note 51.

⁵⁴ See Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer, *The Gathering of the Eight Precept Blissful Ones in One Hundred and Thirty Sections* (*Bka' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa'i rgyud lung man ngag dang bcas pa'i chos tshan brgya dang sum cur bkod pa*), in *Ngaggyur Nyingmay Sungrab* (Gangtok, Sikkim: Sonam T. Kazi, 1978). Also, the Mtshams brag manuscript has been published in thirteen volumes (Paro: Ngodrup, 1979-1980).

valuable as a pragmatic concession to daily experiences of aggression and violence in the world, as well as to the need of addressing the requirements of communities and individuals for clear practices that articulated and sustained their Buddhist identities. In contrast, Transcendence Yoga represented a vision of the real beyond this violence, and beyond the need for complex arrays of ritual practices to tame and transform internal and external aggression. Transcendence Yoga thus pointed to a terrain in which another world of experience quite different from our ordinary horizons dominated by sexuality, violence, and mundane concerns for detail might come into being. These two traditions, while at first glance seemingly poles apart from each other on every front, in fact are thus involved in a mutually supportive secret complicity.⁵⁵ I believe Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer and his associates were concerned that developments like the Four Cycles ran the danger of damaging this relationship by beginning to corrode the pristine vision of Transcendence Yoga with contaminating influences from the realm of Great Yoga. The development of Crown Pith thus marks a strong assertion of the need to preserve the Great Perfection as a Buddhist vision of reality beyond death, violence and sexuality, and beyond ritual praxis and techniques in general.

The Ultra Pith (Yang ti)

The Ultra Pith canon of forty-two texts is, in contrast to the Crown Pith literature, internally heterogeneous, and closer to the Four Cycles texts in overall content. As regards the influence of funerary Buddhism, I believe that originally it inhabited an intermediate position between the Crown Pith and Four Cycles. In short, there are two principal strands of the Ultra Pith: a fifteen-text “Brahmin Tradition” linked to Vimalamitra that I suspect was originally an eleventh to twelfth century contemporary of the Seminal Heart; and a nine-text Padmasambhava-based tradition linked again to Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer and his descendants from the twelfth century onwards.⁵⁶ This problematizes the contemporary Tibetan categorization of the Crown Pith and Ultra Pith as both Padmasambhava treasure traditions, which one often hears in oral teachings. There are also at least two other independent constellations of texts under the Ultra Pith rubric: six texts linked to Śrīsimha and Bai ro tsa na (eighth-ninth century) that have more affinity to the Mind Series canon, and five texts with the sub-rubric Black Ultra Pith (*Yang ti nag po*).⁵⁷

The Vimalamitra texts have at least three other rubrics associated with them: the Brahmin Tradition, the “Cycle of the Yellow Volumes with Dark Blue Pages”

⁵⁵ See Matthew Kapstein, “Samantabhadra and Rudra: Innate Enlightenment and Radical Evil in Tibetan Rnying-ma-pa Buddhism,” in *Discourse and Practice*, ed. Frank E. Reynolds and David Tracy, 51-82 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) for comments suggesting a related interpretation of the “peculiar...synthesis” of Great Perfection and “the gradualist esotericism of the tantras” (72). In short, Kapstein suggests they correspond to a view of the human condition which sees a “profound and eminently evil act of rebellion” as concealing human purity, such that the “violent inversion of the soul” taught by the *tantras* is necessary to create “the essential clearing in which the truth of the Great Perfection may be disclosed.”

⁵⁶ See the bibliography for details.

⁵⁷ See the bibliography for details.

(*po ti se ru mthing shog can gyi bskor*),⁵⁸ and the “One with the Golden/Silver Bell and Staff” (*gser [/] dngul gyi dril shing can*).⁵⁹ The first and third rubrics appear to refer to Vimalamitra himself, who is of the brahmin caste and evidently was associated with carrying a bell and staff of gold or silver; the second rubric likely refers to the special physical form of the manuscripts used by Vimalamitra to form his treasure cache in this case. Finally, the colophons reveal a distinctive treasure narrative, which most typically involves Vimalamitra, Dran pa ye shes (eighth-ninth century), and Myang ting ’dzin bzang po (c. eighth-ninth century) involved with the dynastic period translation and concealment, and then ’Brom ye shes [bla ma’i] snying po (eleventh century?), Shangs pa lce chung [ba] ye shes rgyal mtshan (eleventh century?), and others involved in their re-excavation and subsequent transmission.⁶⁰ This contrasts to the Crown Pith and other Ultra Pith texts with their narratives of concealment by Padmasambhava and excavation by Nyang ral nyi ma ’od zer and Gu ru chos kyi dbang phyug.

These excavation accounts of the Brahmin Tradition involve figures and time periods similar to those of the accounts of the revelation of the Four Cycles. In short, it appears that the Four Cycles literature mostly predates the twelfth century, and was partially contemporaneous to the earliest use of the Ultra Pith rubric, namely Vimalamitra’s “Brahmin Tradition.” Together they formed the matrix of the later Crown Pith and Ultra Pith Padmasambhava-based movements, which

⁵⁸ See, for example, Brag dkar rta so sprul sku chos kyi dbang phyug’s (1775-1837) *A Catalog to the Kyidrong Edition (Rnying ma rgyud ’bum phyi glegs bam nang gi chos tshan bzhugs byang dkar chag dpe rdzi bsam ’phel nor bu’i ’phreng ba)* (Brag dkar rta so sprul sku chos kyi dbang phyug, *Rnying ma rgyud ’bum phyi glegs bam nang gi chos tshan bzhugs byang dkar chag dpe rdzi bsam ’phel nor bu’i ’phreng ba*, 8a.1 and 8b.6); obtained from the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project, Kathmandu, Nepal via the kindness of Franz-Karl Ehrhard (at present I lack any identifying numbers). Also, the colophon to *Byang chub sems yis skyob pa* (Tb.145: vol. 6, 464.5).

⁵⁹ See, for example, Brag dkar, *A Catalog to the Kyidrong Edition* (Brag dkar, *Rnying ma rgyud ’bum dkar chag*, 7b.3, 8a.5); the colophon to *The Tantra of Primordial Gnosis Perfectly Complete from Its Depths: The Great Perfection View Eliminating the Darkness of Non-Awareness (Rdzogs pa chen po ma rig mun pa rab tu sel bar byed pa’i lta ba ye shes gting nas rdzogs pa’i rgyud)* (Tb.153: vol. 7, 496.7); and the colophon to *The Blissful Wheel of Self-Emergent Enlightened Speech of Awareness Encapsulating the Great Perfection Tantra (Rdzogs pa chen po don ’dus rig pa’i gsung rang byung bde ba’i ’khor lo’i rgyud)* (Tb.146: vol. 6, 520.4).

⁶⁰ For the basic concealment narrative, see the colophons to *The Tantra of the Vast Matrix of the Sky, The Wisdom of All the Buddhas, The Ultra Nucleus of the Great Perfection View (Rdzogs pa chen po lta ba’i yang snying / sangs rgyas thams cad kyi dgongs pa/ nam mkha’ klong yangs kyi rgyud)* (Tb.143: vol. 6, 306.4-307.3) and to *The Tantra of the Ultra-Nucleus Encapsulating the Great Perfection’s Definitive Dimension in the Gnostic Space of All Good: The Ultra Purified Molten Essence of Precious Gold (Rdzogs pa chen po nges don ’dus pa’i yang snying kun tu bzang po ye shes klong gi rgyud rin po che gser gyi yang zhun)* (Tb.150: vol. 6, 806.6-807.1). For the excavation narratives involving ’Brom and Shangs pa, see the colophons to *The Great Perfection Tantra of the All-Generative Source of the Precious Meaning of the Counsel Encapsulating the Wisdom of All the Buddhas into the Single Reality Body (Rdzogs pa chen po sangs rgyas thams cad kyi dgongs pa chos sku gcig tu ’dus par bka’ bgras pa’i don rin po che ’byung gnas kun ’byung gi rgyud)* (Tb.144: vol. 6, 414.4-7), to *The Blissful Wheel of Self-Emergent Nucleus of the Great Perfection’s Marvelous Meaning Tantra (Rdzogs pa chen po rmad byung don gyi snying po rang byung bde ba’i ’khor lo’i rgyud)* (Tb.147: vol. 6, 569.7-570.3), and to *The Tantra of Primordial Gnosis Perfectly Complete from Its Depths: The Great Perfection View Eliminating the Darkness of Non-Awareness (Rdzogs pa chen po ma rig mun pa rab tu sel bar byed pa’i lta ba ye shes gting nas rdzogs pa’i rgyud)* (Tb.153: vol. 7, 496.7-497.3).

were in the former case probably reacting against them, and in the latter case appropriating them without acknowledgment.

The term *bar do* is scattered throughout the Vimalamitra Ultra Pith materials (which are largely absent in *The Collected Tantras of Vairocana*), but on the whole it seems to be a less innovative reiteration of intermediate process of rebirth discourse. They mostly consist of chapters entitled along the lines of “wandering into *saṃsāra* in the intermediate process of rebirth.” The most systematic presentation is in *The Identical Sky of Primordial Gnosis Tantra (Ye shes nam mkha’ mnyam pa’i rgyud)*,⁶¹ which has a sequence of four chapters dealing with the intermediate processes based on a fivefold typology:⁶² (i) intermediate process of cyclic existence and transcendence – the primordial ground before *saṃsāra* and *nirvāna*, (ii) intermediate process of birth and death (*skye shi bar do*) – the actual phases of dying and rebirth, rather than this life itself, or the postmortem state, (iii) intermediate process of objects and minds (*yul sems bar do*) – a contemplative context revealing the expanse of reality (*chos dbyings*) between object and mind, (iv) intermediate process of contemplation (*ting nge ’dzin gyi bar do*) – more classic meditation, and (v) intermediate process of rebirth (*srid pa bar do*) – significantly this is not discussed further, but presumably signifies the postmortem intermediate processes. There is a much later chapter on “not taking birth in the intermediate processes” which tersely discusses primordial gnosis in the body, and refers to the Six Able Ones (i.e., Six Buddhas; *thub pa drug*) and two types of Form Body (*Gzugs sku*) automatically manifesting.⁶³ However, it is in verse, and not very explicit.

*The Tantra of Primordial Gnosis Perfectly Complete from Its Depths (Ye shes gting nas rdzogs pa’i rgyud)*⁶⁴ devotes a chapter to the intermediate process of rebirth, which describes the process of dying in detail.⁶⁵ It culminates in the standard phases of appearance (*snang ba*), intensification (*mched pa*), and attainment (*thob pa*), using standard images like mirage (*smig rgyu*), fireflies, and so forth. Then it discusses latent karmic propensities (*bag chags*) causing one to think one has one’s previous body, and makes other references to a psychic body (*vid kyi lus*) and so forth as is standard in Indian postmortem presentations. There is no trace of any intermediate process of reality-style discussion. It thus appears that the Vimalamitra Ultra Pith tradition incorporates older style intermediate processes discourse only to a limited extent.

⁶¹ Tb.152: vol. 7, 2.1-433.5.

⁶² Chapter fifty-five (Tb.152.b55: vol. 7, 133.4-135.7) on intermediate process of cyclic existence and transcendence (*’khor ’das bar do*) lists out the five at its beginning, and then devotes itself to the first; the second through fourth are then dealt with by chapters fifty-six (Tb vol. 7: 135.7-138.1), chapter fifty-seven (Tb152.b57: vol. 7, 138.1-140.1) and chapter fifty-eight (Tb.152.b58: vol. 7, 140.1-141.4), respectively. The fifth intermediate process is referred to in passing, but there is not an entire chapter on it.

⁶³ Chapter 159 (Tb.152.b159: vol. 7, 320.1-321.5).

⁶⁴ Tb.153: vol. 7, 433.5-497.3.

⁶⁵ Chapter eight (Tb.153.b8: vol. 7, 445.7-447.5), which is entitled *Ma rtogs pa bar dor ’khor bar khyams pa*.

When we turn to the slimmer volume of Padmasambhava-based Ultra Pith literature, we find one text actually attributed to Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer – *The Tantra of the Pure Vastness of the Sky Blazing with the Solar and Lunar Light* (*Nyi zla 'od 'bar mkha' klong rnam dag*) – and four texts attributed to his reincarnation, Gu ru chos kyi dbang phyug, including the massive *The Great Illumination of the Non-Discursive Dimension Tantra* (*Spros bral don gsal chen po'i rgyud*).⁶⁶ In addition, Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer's secondary supplement to the central Crown Pith text entitled *The Tantra of the Ambrosial Union of Appearances and Life-Worlds* (*Snang srid kha sbyor bdud rtsi'i rgyud*), does refer to Ultra Pith, and explicitly indicates its superiority to Crown Pith (see above). It thus may be that Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer's later works began to employ the Ultra Pith rubric, which was then picked up by his successors. The central *The Great Illumination of the Non-Discursive Dimension Tantra* has significant discussions of death-related materials, but its one hundred and twelfth chapter on the four intermediate processes is in fact lifted directly from chapter eighty-four of the key Secret Cycle *tantra*, *The Totally Radiant Seminal Nucleus* (as is much of the rest of the text as well).⁶⁷ This suggests that the Ultra Pith discourse on intermediate processes is lifted from presumably earlier Four Cycles discourses, though further research is necessary on this point.

I would suggest the Crown Pith's reactionary orientation failed ultimately because the incorporation of tantra into Great Perfection was too popular and powerful, even for the potent Padmasambhava cult to overcome. Its proponents thus shifted over into a linked Ultra Pith movement which carried a similar rubric as well as the Padmasambhava associations, and continued to speak of the Crown Pith, albeit now in a subordinated role. In this sense, it is similar to my hypothesized historical relationship between the materials now classified as Outer, Inner, Secret, and Unsurpassed Secret Cycles. However, the Ultra Pith adopted a more sympathetic attitude towards the new developments and continued to evolve, while the Crown Pith became a closed canon with no future. The point at which this Ultra Pith tradition was linked via the common rubric of Ultra Pith to the older Vimalamitra traditions is as yet unknown.

Conclusion

The two major dividing points of the Great Perfection prior to the fourteenth century were thus an incorporation of (1) praxis focused on tantric ritual and visionary meditations and (2) elements of funerary Buddhism. These two were intertwined at a number of points, beginning with the ritualistic approach to death in dying and post-death states. In addition, it is clear that the former's visionary contemplations and the latter's innovative postmortem state of visionary apparitions of Buddhas known as the intermediate process of reality are understood as a single process. The fourteenth century then marks the clear triumph of the Seminal Heart synthesis

⁶⁶ See the bibliography section on the Ultra Pith for references to Ultra Pith materials.

⁶⁷ See Tb.301.b112: vol. 13, 244.2-245.7, and Tb.303.b84: vol. 13, 443.3-446.6, respectively.

with its radical position on extensive incorporation of both factors, a triumph above all else indicated in Klong chen rab 'byams pa's redaction of *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts (Snying thig ya bzhi)* and his composition of *The Seven Treasuries (Mdzod bdun)*. Karma gling pa's later revelations thus represent a consolidation and deepening of the commitment of the Great Perfection to funerary and ritual Buddhism, along with a new packaging, rather than any fundamental shift in orientation. Constraints of length and time have entailed that the preceding is rather general and provisional in character. I am working on a more detailed study that also takes into account the crucial issues of related developments in Great Perfection traditions in Bon.

This article, despite its provisional and partial character, should indicate the importance of commitment to a broader historical analysis of early treasure traditions for the assessment of the significance of particular doctrinal, ritual, and rhetorical elements in individual texts. Greater progress on these fronts with regards to Transcendence Yoga treasure traditions will allow us to begin to address the three most pressing general historical questions that pertain to the Great Perfection traditions that circulated from the eighth to thirteenth centuries: what were the origins and character of the Great Perfection when it first emerged as a distinct movement in the eighth and ninth centuries? Why did the Great Perfection prove to be such a popular category of indigenous literary production in Tibet among the groups that gradually evolved into the Ancients and Bon po movements in the ninth and tenth centuries? Assuming that one of the chief sources of later transformations of the Great Perfection is the dominant tantric movements of those times, why did the Great Perfection prove to be such a popular category of literature among Ancients and Bon po groups for the creative assimilation of new Indian and Tibetan developments under the guise of treasure revelation in the eleventh through thirteenth centuries?

Glossary

Note: *Glossary entries are organized in Tibetan alphabetical order. All entries list the following information in this order: THDL Extended Wylie transliteration of the term, THDL Phonetic rendering of the term, description (includes Sanskrit equivalents, translation, and/or dates when applicable), and type.*

ka

<i>ka dag</i>	kadak	original purity	Technical Term
<i>karma gling pa</i>	Karma Lingpa	1327-1387	Person
<i>kun tu bzang po klong drug pa'i rgyud</i>	Küntu Zangpo Long Drukpe Gyü	<i>The Six Spaces Tantra</i>	Text
<i>kun tu bzang po thugs kyi me long gi rgyud</i>	Küntu Zangpo Tukkyi Melonggi Gyü	<i>The Tantra of All Good's Enlightened Spirit-Mirror</i>	Text
<i>kun tu bzang po ye shes gsal bar ston pa</i>	Küntu Zangpo Yeshé Selwar Tönpa	The Clear Display of the Primordial Gnosis of the Great Perfection's All Good	Doxographical Category

<i>kun byed rgyal po</i>	Künjé Gyelpo	<i>The All-Creating King</i>	Text
<i>kun bzang srog gi thig pa 'bras bu ye grol chen po 'i rgyud</i>	Künzang Sokgi Tikpa Drebu Yedröl Chenpö Gyü	<i>The Great Primordially Free Fruit of All Good's Vitality Drop Tantra</i>	Text
<i>klad pa dung khang</i>	lepa dungkhang	conch chamber of the brain	Technical Term
<i>klong chen rab 'byams pa</i>	Longchen Rapjampa	1308-1363	Person
<i>klong sde</i>	Longdé	Space Series	Doxographical Category
<i>bka' brgyad</i>	Kagyé	Eight Precept Deities	Doxographical Category
<i>bka' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa 'i rgyud lung man ngag dang bcas pa 'i chos tshan brgya dang sum cur bkod pa</i>	Kagyé Deshek Düpé Gyü Lung Menngak Dang Chepé Chötsen Gya Dang Sumchur Köpa	<i>The Gathering of the Eight Precept Blissful Ones in One Hundred and Thirty Sections</i>	Text
<i>bka' brgyud</i>	Kagyü		Organization
<i>bka' srung nag mo 'i rgyud</i>	Kasung Nakmö Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Black Religious Protectoress</i>	Text
<i>bkra shis mdzes ldan chen po 'i rgyud</i>	Trashi Dzedden Chenpö Gyü	<i>The Tantra of Exquisite Auspiciousness</i>	Text
<i>ska ba dpal brtsegs</i>	Kawa Peltsek	last half of eighth century	Person
<i>skabs sbyor</i>	kapjor	transitional section	Technical Term
<i>sku thams cad kyi snang ba ston pa dbang rdzogs pa rang byung chen po 'i rgyud</i>	Ku Tamchekyi Nangwa Tönpa Wang Dzokpa Rangjung Chenpö Gyü	<i>The Self-Emerging Perfection Tantra</i>	Text
<i>sku gdung 'bar ba 'i rgyud</i>	Kudung Barwé Gyü	<i>The Blazing Relics Tantra</i>	Text
<i>skor bzhi</i>	Korzhi	Four Cycles	Doxographical Category
<i>skor gsum</i>	korsum	three cycles	Technical Term
<i>skyid grong</i>	Kyidrong		Organization
<i>skye med ka dag zang ka 'i rgyud</i>	Kyemé Kadak Zangké Gyü	<i>The Unborn Original Purity's Intensity Tantra</i>	Text
<i>skye shi gnyis kyi bar do</i>	kyeshi nyigyü bardo	intermediate process of the dyad of birth and death	Technical Term
<i>skye shi dag gi bar do</i>	kyeshi dakgi bardo	intermediate process of birth and death	Technical Term
<i>skye shi 'i bar do</i>	kyeshi bardo	intermediate process of birth and death	Technical Term
<i>skye shi bar do</i>	kyeshi bardo	intermediate process of birth and death	Technical Term

kha

<i>mkha' 'gro snying thig</i>	Khandro Nyingtik	<i>The Seminal Heart of the Dakinīs</i>	Text
-------------------------------	------------------	---	------

<i>mkha' 'gro yang tig</i>	Khandro Yangtik	<i>The Seminal Quintessence of the Dakinīs</i>	Text
<i>'khor 'das bar do</i>	khordé bardo	intermediate process of cyclic existence and transcendence	Technical Term
<i>'khrul snang</i>	trül nang	distorted appearances	Technical Term

ga

<i>gu ru chos kyi dbang phyug (chos dbang)</i>	Guru Chökyi Wangchuk (Chöwang)	1212-1270	Person
<i>grub mtha' mdzod</i>	Drupta Dzö	<i>The Treasury of Spiritual Systems</i>	Text
<i>dga' rab rdo rje</i>	Garap Dorjé	seventh century?	Person
<i>rgyud kyi rgyal po nyi zla 'od 'bar mkha' klong rnam dag rgya mtsho klong gsal rgyud</i>	Gyükyi Gyelpo Nyida Öbar Khalong Namdak Gyatso Longsel Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Ocean's Radiant Vastness and the Pure Vastness of the Sky Blazing with the Solar and Lunar Light as the King of Tantras</i>	Text
<i>rgyud bcu bdun</i>	Gyü Chupdün	<i>The Seventeen Tantras</i>	Textual Collection
<i>rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po nyi zla 'i snying po 'od 'bar ba bdud rtsi mtsho 'khyil ba 'i rgyud</i>	Gyü Tamchekyi Gyelpo Nyidé Nyingpo Ö Barwa Dütsi Tso Khyilwé Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Swirling Lake of Ambrosia Blazing with the Light of the Solar and Lunar Cores: The King of All Tantras</i>	Text
<i>rgyud thams cad kyi spyi phud nyi zla bkod pa nam mkha' dang mnyam pa 'i rgyud</i>	Gyü Tamchekyi Chipü Nyida Köpa Namkha Dang Nyampé Gyü	<i>The Crest of All Tantras Equal to the Sky Where The Sun and Moon Are Arrayed Tantra</i>	Text
<i>rgyud thams cad kyi rtse rgyal nam mkha' 'bar ba 'i rgyud</i>	Gyü Tamchekyi Tsegyel Namkha Barwé Gyü	<i>The Blazing Sky Tantra: The Victorious Summit of All Tantras</i>	Text
<i>sgron ma 'bar ba 'i rgyud</i>	Drönma Barwé Gyü	<i>The Blazing Lamp Tantra</i>	Text

nga

<i>ngo sprod rin po che spras pa 'i zhing kham bstan pa 'i rgyud</i>	Ngotrö Rinpoché Trepé Zhingkhams Tenpé Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Pointing Out Introduction</i>	Text
<i>mnga' bdag nyang ral pa can</i>	Ngadak Nyang Relpachen	reigned 815-c. 838	Person
<i>snga' gyur</i>	Ngagyur	Early Transmission	Technical Term

ca

<i>lce sgom nag po</i>	Chegom Nakpo	eleventh-twelfth century	Person
------------------------	--------------	--------------------------	--------

cha

<i>chos chen po rmad du byung ba</i>	Chō Chenpo Medu Jungwa	<i>The Marvelous Great Teaching</i>	Text
<i>chos nyid</i>	chōnyi	reality	Technical Term
<i>chos nyid kyi bar do</i>	chōnyikyī bardo	intermediate process of reality	Technical Term
<i>chos nyid bar do</i>	chōnyi bardo	intermediate process of reality	Technical Term
<i>chos nyid 'od gsal bar do</i>	chōnyi ösel bardo	intermediate process of reality's radiant light	Technical Term
<i>chos nyid gsal ba'i bar do</i>	chōnyi selwé bardo	intermediate process of radiant reality	Technical Term
<i>chos dbyings</i>	chöying	expanse of reality	Technical Term
<i>chos dbyings mdzod</i>	Chöying Dzö	<i>The Treasury of Reality's Expanse</i>	Text
<i>mched pa</i>	chepa	intensification	Technical Term
<i>'chi ka'i bar do</i>	chiké bardo	intermediate process of dying	Technical Term

ja

<i>'jam dpal 'dus pa'i rgyud</i>	Jampel Düpé Gyü	<i>The Tantra of Mañjuśrī's Gathering</i>	Text
<i>'jigs med gling pa</i>	Jikmé Lingpa	1729-1798	Person

nya

<i>nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer (nyang ral)</i>	Nyangrel Nyima Özer (Nyangrel)	1124/36-1204	Person
<i>nyi ma dang zla ba zla kha sbyor ba chen po gsang ba'i rgyud</i>	Nyima Dang Dawa Da Khajorwa Chenpo Sangwé Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Sun and Moon's Intimate Union</i>	Text
<i>nyi zla kha sbyor gyi rgyud</i>	Nyida Khajorgyi Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Sun and Moon's Intimate Union</i>	Text
<i>nyi zla 'od 'bar mkha' klong rnam dag</i>	Nyida Öbar Khalong Namdak	<i>The Tantra of the Pure Vastness of the Sky Blazing with the Solar and Lunar Light</i>	Text
<i>gnyid log rmi lam bar do</i>	nyilok milam bardo	intermediate process of sleep and dreams	Technical Term
<i>rnying rgyud</i>	nyinggyü	ancient tantras	Technical Term
<i>snying thig</i>	Nyingtig	Seminal Heart	Doxographical Category
<i>snying thig ya bzhi</i>	Nyingtik Yapzhi	<i>The Seminal Heart in Four Parts</i>	Textual Collection
<i>snying po bcud spungs nam mkha' klongs yangs kyi rgyud</i>	Nyingpo Chüpfung Namkha Longyangkyi Gyü	<i>The Sky's Vast Space of Accumulated Quintessential Nuclei Tantra</i>	Text

<i>rnying ma</i>	Nyingma	Ancients	Organization
<i>rnying ma rgyud 'bum</i>	Nyingma Gyübum	<i>The Collected Tantras of the Ancients</i>	Textual Collection
<i>snye mo shu yas gnod sbyin 'bar</i>	Nyemo Shuyé Nöjinbar	thirteenth century?	Person

ta

<i>ting nge 'dzin gyi bar do (ting 'dzin bar do)</i>	tingngendzinglyi bardo (tingdzin bardo)	intermediate process of contemplation	Technical Term
<i>gting skyes</i>	Tingkyé		Organization
<i>gter</i>	ter	treasure	Technical Term
<i>gter snying rin po che spungs pa 'i rgyud</i>	Ternying Rinpoché Pungpé Gyü	<i>The Accumulated Precious Nucleus of Treasure Tantra</i>	Text
<i>gter bdag gling pa</i>	Terdak Lingpa	1646-1714	Person
<i>gter ston</i>	tertön	treasure revealer	Technical Term
<i>lta ba thal gyi rgyud</i>	Tawa Telgyi Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Penetrating View</i>	Text
<i>lta ba la shan chen po rin chen sgron ma rtsa ba 'i rgyud</i>	Tawala Shen Chenpo Rinchen Drönma Tsawé Gyü	<i>The Lamp of the Precious Great Differentiation of the View Root Tantra</i>	Text

tha

<i>thig le</i>	tiklé	seminal nuclei	Technical Term
<i>thig le kun gsal</i>	Tiklé Künsel	<i>The Totally Radiant Seminal Nucleus</i>	Text
<i>thig le mthong brtol gyi rgyud/ rig pa bcu 'byung gi brda'/_srog gi 'chan pa/_yang ti nag po 'i rgyud</i>	Tiklé Tongtölyi Gyü, Yangti Nakpö Gyü	<i>The Penetrating Vision of Seminal Nuclei Tantra: A Black Ultra Pith Tantra</i>	Text
<i>thig le ye shes bcud spungs sgron ma 'od 'bar gyi rgyud</i>	Tiklé Yeshé Chüpfung Drönma Öbargyi Gyü	<i>The Blazingly Luminous Lamp of the Accumulated Gnostic Quintessence of Seminal Nuclei Tantra</i>	Text
<i>thig le 'i ngang las shar ba yi/_ thabs dang shes rab kyi rgyud/_srog gi thigs pa/_bdud rtsi 'i bum pa/_snang byed kyi spu gri 'i rgyud</i>	Tiké Nganglé Sharwayi, Tap Dang Sherapkyi Gyü, Sokgi Tikpa, Dütsi Bumpa, Nangjekyi Pudri Gyü	<i>The Tantra of Means and Wisdom Arisen from within the Seminal Nuclei, the Tantra of the Vitality drop, the Vase of Ambrosia, and the Illuminating Razor</i>	Text
<i>thugs kyi yang snying dgongs pa 'i bcud 'dus pa/_ka dag rñams kyi gsang don bcud dril pa/_ma rig mun sel nyi zla 'bar ba 'i rgyud</i>	Tukkyi Yangnying Gongpé Chü Düpa, Kadak Namkyi Sangdön Chü Drilpa, Marik Münsel Nyida Barwé Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Blazing Sun and Moon Dispelling the Darkness of Non-Awareness, The Unified Quintessence of Original Purities' Esoteric Meaning, The Encapsulated Quintessence of the Ultra</i>	Text

		<i>Core Wisdom of the Enlightened Mind</i>	
<i>theg mchog mdzod</i>	Tekchok Dzö	<i>The Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle</i>	Text
<i>thod rgal</i>	tögel	direct transcendence	Technical Term
<i>thob pa</i>	toppa	attainment	Technical Term

da

<i>dur khrod phung po 'bar ba</i>	Durtrö Pungpo Barwa	<i>The Blazing Body in the Charnel Grounds</i>	Text
<i>de bzhin gshegs pas legs par gsungs pa'i gsung rab rgya msho'i snying por gyur pa rig pa 'dzin pa'i sde snod dam snga 'gyur rgyud 'bum rin po che'i rtogs pa brjod pa 'dzam gling mtha'i gru khyab pa'i rgyan</i>	Dezhin Shekpé Lekpar Sungpé Sungrap Gyatsö Nyingpor Gyurpa Rikpa Dzinpé Denödam Ngagyur Gyübum Rinpoché Tokpa Jöpa Dzamling Té Dru Khyappé Gyen	<i>The Ornament of the Pervasive Ship at the Edge of the World: The Narrative Histories Behind the Precious Collected Tantras of the Ancient Translations</i>	Text
<i>dran pa ye shes</i>	Drenpa Yeshé	eighth-ninth century	Person
<i>dri med ka dag gi rgyud rin po che gsal ba chen po</i>	Drimé Kadakgi Gyü Rinpoché Selwa Chenpo	<i>The Great Radiant Precious Tantra of Stainless Original Purity</i>	Text
<i>bdud rtsi bcud thigs sgron ma brtsegs pa'i rgyud</i>	Dütsi Chütik Drönma Tsekpé Gyü	<i>The Stacked Lamps of Quintessential Drops of Ambrosia Tantra</i>	Text
<i>bdun tshig</i>	düntsik	seven-day juncture funerary ritual	Technical Term
<i>mdo bcu</i>	Do Chu	<i>Ten Discourses</i>	Textual Collection
<i>rdo rje sems dpa'</i>	Dorjé Sempa		Buddhist Deity
<i>rdo rje sems dpa' snying gi me long gi rgyud</i>	Dorjé Sempa Nyinggi Melonggi Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Adamantine Hero's Heart-Mirror</i>	Text
<i>rdo rje sems dpa' yi ge brgya pa thugs phrin las thams cad kyi dam tshig gi rgyud</i>	Dorjé Sempa Yigé Gyapa Tuk Trinlé Tamchekyi Damtsikgi Gyü	<i>Adamantine Hero's One Hundred Letters: The Commitments of All Enlightened Minds and Activities Tantra</i>	Text
<i>rdo rje sems dpa' yi ge brgya pa dbang mchog rgyal po'i rgyud</i>	Dorjé Sempa Yigé Gyapa Wangchok Gyelpö Gyü	<i>Adamantine Hero's One Hundred Letters: The King of Supreme Empowerments Tantra</i>	Text
<i>rdo rje sems dpa' yi ge brgya pa dbang mchog rgyal po'i rgyud phyi ma</i>	Dorjé Sempa Yigé Gyapa Wangchok Gyelpö Gyü Chima	<i>Adamantine Hero's One Hundred Letters: The King of Supreme Empowerments Supplementary Tantra</i>	Text
<i>sde dge</i>	Degé		Organization

<i>sde dge par khang</i>	Degé Parkhang	Degé Publishing House	Organization
<i>sde gsum</i>	Desum	Three Series	Doxographical Category

na

<i>nag mo khros ma</i>	Nakmo Tröma	<i>The Tantra of the Black Wrathful Lady</i>	Text
<i>nang skor</i>	Nangkor	Internal Cycle	Doxographical Category
<i>nam mkha' 'brug sgrogs thob babs klog 'dus spyi rgyal rgya mdud rgyud</i>	Namkha Drukdrok Topbap Lokdü Chigyel Gyadü Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Sky Dragon's Roar; Thunderbolt, Gathering within Space, Generally Victorious Water Monster; Jewel, and Magical Knot</i>	Text
<i>nam mkha'i snying po</i>	Namkhé Nyingpo	eighth century	Person
<i>nā ro chos drug</i>	Naro Chödruk	Six Yogas of Nāropa	Doxographical Category
<i>nor bu phra bkod rang gi don thams cad gsal bar byed pa'i rgyud</i>	Norbu Trakö Ranggi Dön Tamché Selwar Jepé Gyü	<i>The Inlaid Jewels Tantra</i>	Text
<i>gnas lugs mdzod</i>	Neluk Dzö	<i>The Treasury of Abiding Reality</i>	Text
<i>rnal 'byor chen po</i>	Nenjor Chenpo	Great Yoga Skt. <i>Mahāyoga</i>	Doxographical Category
<i>snang ba</i>	nangwa	appearance	Technical Term
<i>snang srid kha sbyor bdud rtsi bcud thigs 'khor mtha' gcod pa'i rgyud</i>	Nangsi Khajor Dütsi Chüтик Khorta Chöpé Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Cyclic Existence-Eradicating Ambrosial Drops Unifying Appearances and Life-Worlds</i>	Text
<i>snang srid kha sbyor bdud rtsi bcud thigs 'khor mtha' gcod pa'i rgyud phyi ma'i phyi ma</i>	Nangsi Khajor Dütsi Chüтик Khorta Chöpé Gyü Chimé Chima	<i>The Secondary Supplementary Tantra of the Cyclic Existence-Eradicating Ambrosial Drops Unifying Appearances and Life-Worlds</i>	Text
<i>snang srid kha sbyor bdud rtsi' i rgyud</i>	Nangsi Khajor Dütsi Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Ambrosial Union of Appearances and Life-Worlds</i>	Text
<i>snubs sangs rgyas ye shes</i>	Nup Sanggyé Yeshé	ninth-tenth century	Person

pa

<i>pad ma 'od gling</i>	Pema Öling		Organization
-------------------------	------------	--	--------------

<i>dpal nam mkha' med pa'i sku gdung 'bar ba chen po'i rgyud</i>	Pel Namkha Mepé Kudung Barwa Chenpö Gyü	<i>The Blazing Relics Tantra</i>	Text
<i>spyi ti</i>	Chiti	Crown Pith	Doxographical Category
<i>spros pa gcod pa sde lnga'i rgyud</i>	spros pa gcod pa sde lnga'i rgyud	<i>The Five Sections of the Eradication of Discursive Elaboration Tantra</i>	Text
<i>spros bral don gsal chen po'i rgyud</i>	Trödrel Dönsel Chenpö Gyü	<i>The Great Illumination of the Non-Discursive Dimension Tantra</i>	Text
<i>spros bral don gsal chen po'i rgyud kyi le don bsdu pa</i>	Trödrel Dönsel Chenpö Gyükyi Ledön Düpa	<i>The Summarized Meaning of Chapters for the Great Illumination of the Non-Discursive Dimension Tantra</i>	Text

pha

<i>phyi skor</i>	Chikor	External Cycle	Doxographical Category
<i>phyi nang skor</i>	Chinangkor	External and Internal Cycle	Doxographical Category
<i>phyi ma</i>	chima	supplement	Technical Term
<i>phyi ma'i rgyud</i>	chimé gyü	supplementary tantra	Technical Term
<i>phyi ma'i phyi ma</i>	chimé chima	secondary supplement	Technical Term
<i>'phags pa 'jam dpal gyi mshan yang dag par brjod pa'i 'grel pa rin po che nyi zla 'bar ba'i sgron ma</i>	Pakpa Jampelgyi Tsen Yangdakpar Jöpé Dreipa Rinpoché Nyida Barwé Drönma	<i>The Lamp of the Blazing Sun and Moon: A Precious Commentary on the Litany of Mañjuśrī's Names</i>	Text
<i>'phags pa spyan ras gzigs ting nge 'dzin rtse gcig gi rgyud</i>	Pakpa Chenrezik Tingngendzin Tsechikgi Gyü	<i>The One-Pointed Contemplation of Avalokiteśvara</i>	Text
<i>'pho ba</i>	powa	consciousness transfer	Technical Term

ba

<i>bag chags</i>	bakchak	latent karmic propensities	Technical Term
<i>bar do</i>	bardo	intermediate process Skt. <i>antarābhava</i>	Technical Term
<i>bar do gsang ba'i rgyud</i>	Bardo Sangwé Gyü	<i>The Secret Intermediate Process Tantra</i>	Text
<i>bi ma snying thig</i>	Bima Nyingtik	<i>The Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra</i>	Text
<i>bon</i>	Bön		Organization
<i>bon po</i>	Bönpo		Organization
<i>bai ro tsa na</i>	Bairo Tsana	eighth-ninth century	Person

<i>bai ro 'i rgyud 'bum</i>	Bairö Gyübum	<i>The Collected Tantras of Vairocana</i>	Text
<i>byang chub sems yid skyob pa</i>	Jangchup Sem Yi Kyoppa	<i>Protection of the Psyche by the Enlightening Mind</i>	Text
<i>bla na med pa 'i gsang skor</i>	Lana Mepé Sangkor	Unsurpassed Secret Cycle	Doxographical Category
<i>bla ma yang tig</i>	Lama Yangtik	<i>The Seminal Quintessence of the Spiritual Master</i>	Text
<i>'brom ye shes bla ma 'i snying po ('brom)</i>	Drom Yeshé [Lamé] Nyingpo (Drom)	eleventh century?	Person

ma

<i>man ngag snying gi dgongs pa rgyal ba</i>	Menngak Nyinggi Gongpa Gyelwa	<i>The Victorious Intention of the Quintessential Esoteric Precepts</i>	Text
<i>man ngag sde</i>	Menngakdé	Esoteric Precept Series	Doxographical Category
<i>man ngag mdzod</i>	Menngak Dzö	<i>The Treasury of Esoteric Precepts</i>	Text
<i>mu tig rin po che phreng ba 'i rgyud</i>	Mutig Rinpoché Trengwé Gyü	<i>The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra</i>	Text
<i>rmi lam bar do (rmi lam gyi bar do) (rmi lam dag gi bar do)</i>	milam bardo (milamgyi bardo) (milam dakgi bardo)	intermediate process of dreaming	Technical Term
<i>smig rgyu</i>	mikgyu	mirage	Technical Term
<i>smin grol gling</i>	Mindrölling		Organization

tsa

<i>rtsa lung thig le rgyud</i>	Tsa Lung Tiklé Gyü	<i>The Tantra of Channels, Winds, and Seminal Nuclei</i>	Text
--------------------------------	--------------------	--	------

tsha

<i>tsha tsha</i>	tsatsa	clay medallions	Technical Term
<i>tshig don mdzod</i>	Tsikdön Dzö	<i>The Treasury of Words and Meanings</i>	Text
<i>mtshams brag</i>	Tsamdrak		Organization

dza

<i>mdzod bdun</i>	Dzödün	<i>The Seven Treasuries</i>	Textual Collection
<i>rdzogs chen</i>	Dzokchen	Great Perfection	Doxographical Category

<i>rdzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po ye shes gsal bar ston pa phyi ma gsang ba'i rgyud</i>	Dzokpa Chenpo Küntu Zangpo Yeshé Selwar Tönpa Chima Sangwé Gyü	<i>The Secret Supplementary Tantra of the Clear Display of the Primordial Gnosis of the Great Perfection's All Good</i>	Text
<i>rdzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po ye shes gsal bar ston pa/_gsang sngags kyi lam mchog 'dus pa'i rgyud</i>	Dzokpa Chenpo Küntu Zangpo Yeshé Selwar Tönpa, Sanggakkya Lamchok Düpé Gyü	<i>The Tantra Encapsulating the Supreme Path of Secret Mantra: Showing Clearly the Primordial Gnosis of the Great Perfection's All Good</i>	Text
<i>rdzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po ye shes gsal bar ston pa'i rgyud</i>	Dzokpa Chenpo Küntu Zangpo Yeshé Selwar Tönpé Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Clear Display of the Primordial Gnosis of the Great Perfection's All Good</i>	Text
<i>rdzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po ye shes gsal bar ston pa'i rgyud phyi ma</i>	Dzokpa Chenpo Küntu Zangpo Yeshé Selwar Tönpé Gyü Chima	<i>The Supplementary Tantra of the Clear Display of the Primordial Gnosis of the Great Perfection's All Good</i>	Text
<i>rdzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po ye shes gsal bar ston pa'i rgyud phyi ma'i phyi ma</i>	Dzokpa Chenpo Küntu Zangpo Yeshé Selwar Tönpé Gyü Chimé Chima	<i>The Secondary Supplementary Tantra of the Clear Display of the Primordial Gnosis of the Great Perfection's All Good</i>	Text
<i>rdzogs pa chen po 'khor ba brtsad nas good pa chos sku skye med rig pa'i rgyud</i>	Dzokpa Chenpo Khorwa Tsené Chöpa Chöku Kiyemé Rikpé Gyü	<i>The Precious Great Perfection's Eradication of Cyclic Existence Unborn Awareness of the Reality Body Tantra</i>	Text
<i>rdzogs pa chen po nges don thams cad 'dus pa ye shes nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'i rgyud lta sgom thams cad kyi snying po rin po che rnam par bkod pa</i>	Dzokpa Chenpo Ngedön Tamché Düpa Yeshé Namkha Dang Nyampé Gyü Tagom Tamchekyi Nyingpo Rinpoché Nampar Köpa	<i>The Tantra of Primordial Gnosis Identical to the Sky Encapsulating All of the Great Perfection's Definitive Dimension: The Array of the Precious Nucleus of All Views and Meditations</i>	Text
<i>rdzogs pa chen po nges don 'dus pa'i rgyud lta ba thams cad kyi snying po rin po che rnam par bkod pa</i>	Dzokpa Chenpo Ngedön Düpe Gyü Tawa Tamchekyi Nyingpo Rinpoché Nampar Köpa	<i>The Tantra Encapsulating the Great Perfection's Definitive Dimension: The Array of the Precious Nucleus of All Views</i>	Text
<i>rdzogs pa chen po nges don 'dus pa'i yang snying kun tu bzang po ye shes klong gi rgyud rin po che gser gyi yang zhun</i>	Dzokpa Chenpo Ngedön Düpe Yangnying Küntu Zangpo Yeshé Longgi Gyü Rinpoché Sergyi Yangzhün	<i>The Tantra of the Ultra-Nucleus Encapsulating the Great Perfection's Definitive Dimension in the Gnostic Space of All Good: The Ultra Purified Molten Essence of Precious Gold</i>	Text

<i>rdzogs pa chen po lta ba thams cad kyi snying po'i rgyud</i>	Dzokpa Chenpo Tawa Tamchekyi Nyingpö Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Precious Nucleus of All Views in the Great Perfection</i>	Text
<i>rdzogs pa chen po lta ba'i yang snying /_sang rgyas thams cad kyi dgongs pa/_nam mkha' klong yangs kyi rgyud</i>	Dzokpa Chenpo Tawé Yangnying, Sanggyé Tamchekyi Gongpa, Namkha Longyangkyi Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Vast Matrix of the Sky, The Wisdom of All the Buddhas, The Ultra Nucleus of the Great Perfection View</i>	Text
<i>rdzogs pa chen po don 'dus rig pa'i gsung rang byung bde ba'i 'khor lo'i rgyud</i>	Dzokpa Chenpo Döndü Rikpé Sung Rangjung Dewé Khorlö Gyü	<i>The Blissful Wheel of Self-Emergent Enlightened Speech of Awareness Encapsulating the Great Perfection Tantra</i>	Text
<i>rdzogs pa chen po ma rig mun pa rab tu sel bar byed pa'i lta ba ye shes gting nas rdzogs pa'i rgyud</i>	Dzokpa Chenpo Marik Münpa Raptu Selwar Jepé Tawa Yeshé Tingné Dzokpé Gyü	<i>The Tantra of Primordial Gnosis Perfectly Complete from Its Depths: The Great Perfection View Eliminating the Darkness of Non-Awareness</i>	Text
<i>rdzogs pa chen po rmad byung don gyi snying po rang byung bde ba'i 'khor lo'i rgyud</i>	Dzokpa Chenpo Mejung Döngyi Nyingpo Rangjung Dewé Khorlö Gyü	<i>The Blissful Wheel of Self-Emergent Nucleus of the Great Perfection's Marvelous Meaning Tantra</i>	Text
<i>rdzogs pa chen po ye shes 'khor lo gsang ba thugs rgyud</i>	Dzokpa Chenpo Yeshé Khorlo Sangwa Tukgyü	<i>The Enlightened Mind Tantra of the Great Perfection's Secret Wheel of Primordial Gnosis</i>	Text
<i>rdzogs pa chen po rin po che 'khor ba rtsad gcod kyi rgyud</i>	Dzokpa Chenpo Rinpoché Khorwa Tsechökyi Gyü	<i>The Precious Great Perfection's Eradication of Cyclic Existence Tantra</i>	Text
<i>rdzogs pa chen po shin tu rnal 'byor sangs rgyas thams cad 'byung ba'i rgyud/_ye shes chos kyi sku/_don 'dus rig pa'i gsung/_gsang ba thugs kyi ting nge 'dzin/_rang byung bde ba'i 'khor lo/_mthar phyin 'bras bu'i rgyud</i>	Dzokpa Chenpo Shintu Nenjor Sanggyé Tamché Jungwé Gyü, Yeshé Chökyi Ku, Döndü Rikpé Sung, Sangwa Tukkyi Tingngendzin, Rangjung Dewé Khorlo, Tarchin Drebu Gyü	<i>The Transcendent Yoga of the Great Perfection from which All Buddhas Emerge Tantra: The Tantra of the Ultimate Fruit of the Gnostic Reality Body, Awareness's Meaning Encapsulating Speech, the Contemplation of Esoteric Mind, and the Wheel of Self-Emergent Bliss</i>	Text
<i>rdzogs pa chen po sangs rgyas thams cad kyi dgongs pa chos sku geig tu 'dus par bka' bgros pa'i don rin po che 'byung gnas kun 'byung gi rgyud</i>	Dzokpa Chenpo Sanggyé Tamchekyi Gongpa Chöku Chiktu Düpar Ka Dröpe Dön Rinpoché Jungné Künjunggi Gyü	<i>The Great Perfection Tantra of the All-Generative Source of the Precious Meaning of the Counsel Encapsulating the Wisdom of All the Buddhas into the Single Reality Body</i>	Text
<i>rdzogs pa chen po'i lta ba ye shes gting rdzogs kyi rgyud</i>	Dzokpa Chenpö Tawa Yeshé Tingdzokkyi Gyü	<i>The Tantra of Primordial Gnosis Perfectly Complete from Its Depths: The View of the Great Perfection</i>	Text

<i>rdzogs pa rang byung</i>	Dzokpa Rangjung	<i>The Self-Emerging Perfection Tantra</i>	Text
<i>rdzogs rim</i>	dzokrim	perfection phase	Technical Term

zha

<i>zhang ston bkra shis rdo rje</i>	Zhangtön Trashi Dorjé	1097-1167	Person
<i>zhi khro</i>	zhitro	peaceful and wrathful	Technical Term
<i>zhi khro dgongs pa rang grol</i>	Zhitro Gongpa Rangdröl	<i>The Profound Doctrine of Wisdom's Natural Freedom (in Encountering) the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities</i>	Text
<i>zhi khro dgongs pa rang grol gyi chos skor</i>	Zhitro Gongpa Rangdrölyi Chökor	<i>The Doctrinal Cycles of Wisdom's Natural Freedom in the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities</i>	Text
<i>zhi khro rigs brgya</i>	zhitro rikgya	one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities	Technical Term
<i>gzhi snang</i>	zhinang	ground-presencing	Technical Term

za

<i>zab mo yang tig</i>	Zapmo Yangtik	<i>The Seminal Quintessence of the Profound</i>	Text
<i>gzugs sku</i>	Zukku	Form Body	Technical Term

ya

<i>yang ti</i>	Yangti	Ultra Pith	Doxographical Category
<i>yang ti nag po</i>	Yangti Nakpo	Black Ultra Pith	Doxographical Category
<i>yang ti nag po srog gi 'khor lo'i rgyud</i>	Yangti Nakpo Sokgi Khorlō Gyü	<i>The Black Ultra Pith Wheel of Vitality Tantra</i>	Text
<i>yang tig nag po gser gyi 'bru gcig snang byed spu gri'i rgyud</i>	Yangti Nakpo Sergyi Dru chik Nangjé Pudri Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Razor Illuminating the Single Golden Grain of the Black Ultra Pith</i>	Text
<i>yang ti nag po 'i 'bru gcig pa</i>	Yangti Nakpö Dru Chikpa	<i>The Single Grain of the Black Ultra Pith</i>	Text
<i>yang tig gsum</i>	Yangtik Sum	<i>The Trilogy of Seminal Quintessences</i>	Text
<i>yi ge med pa 'i gsang ba rgyud chen po</i>	Yigé Mepé Sangwa Gyü Chenpo	<i>The Great Esoteric Unwritten Tantra</i>	Text
<i>yid kyi lus</i>	yikyi lü	psychic body	Technical Term
<i>yid bzhin mdzod</i>	Yizhin Dzö	<i>The Wish-Fulfilling Treasury</i>	Text

<i>yul sems bar do</i>	yülsem bardo	intermediate process of objects and minds	Technical Term
<i>ye shes</i>	yeshé	primordial gnosis	Technical Term
<i>ye shes 'khor lo 'i rgyud</i>	Yeshé Khorlō Gyü	<i>The Wheel of Primordial Gnosis Tantra</i>	Text
<i>ye shes glong gi le sdebs</i>	Yeshé Longgi Ledep	<i>Chapters on the Matrix of Primordial Gnosis</i>	Text
<i>ye shes gting nas rdzogs pa 'i rgyud</i>	Yeshé Tingné Dzokpé Gyü	<i>The Tantra of Primordial Gnosis Perfectly Complete from Its Depths</i>	Text
<i>ye shes nam mkha' mnyam pa 'i rgyud</i>	Yeshé Namkha Nyampé Gyü	<i>The Identical Sky of Primordial Gnosis Tantra</i>	Text
<i>yongs rdzogs thod rgal</i>	Yongdzok Tögel	Total Perfection Direct Transcendence	Doxographical Category
<i>myang ting 'dzin bzang po</i>	Nyang Tingdzin Zangpo	c. eighth-ninth century	Person

ra

<i>rang bzhin gnas pa 'i bar do (rang bzhin gnas kyi bar do)</i>	rangzhin nepé bardo (rangzhin nekyi bardo)	naturally abiding intermediate process	Technical Term
<i>rang bzhin bar do (rang bzhin gyi bar do) (rang bzhin dag gi bar do)</i>	rangzhin bardo (rangzhingyi bardo) (rangzhin dakgi bardo)	natural intermediate process	Technical Term
<i>rat+na gling pa</i>	Ratna Lingpa	1403-1478	Person
<i>rig pa rang grol chen po thams cad 'grol ba 'i rgyud</i>	Rikpa Rangdröl Chenpo Tamché Drölwé Gyü	<i>The Tantra of Naturally Free Awareness</i>	Text
<i>rig pa rang shar chen po 'i rgyud</i>	Rikpa Rangshar Chenpö Gyü	<i>The Tantra of Self-Arising Awareness</i>	Text
<i>rin chen gter mdzod kyi thob yig</i>	Rinchen Terdzökyi Topyik	<i>Record of Teachings Received for the Treasury of Precious Treasures</i>	Text
<i>rin chen spungs pa yon tan chen po ston pa rgyud kyi rgyal po</i>	Rinchen Pungpa Yönten Chenpo Tönpa Gyükyi Gyelpo	<i>The Tantra of Overflowing Preciousness</i>	Text
<i>rin po che rgyas pa 'i chen po 'i rgyud</i>	Rinpoché Gyepé Chenpö Gyü	<i>The Greatness of the Precious Expansion Tantra</i>	Text
<i>rin po che bcud kyi yang snying thog ma 'i dras thag gcod pa spros pa gcod pa rtsa ba 'i rgyud</i>	Rinpoché Chükyi Yangnying Tokmé Dré Takchöpa Tröpa Chöpa Tsawé Gyü	<i>The Root Tantra of Eradication of Discursive Elaboration: Eradicating Doubts Regarding the Initial Ultra Nucleus of the Previous Quintessence</i>	Text
<i>rin po che bdud rtsi bcud thigs kyi rgyud</i>	Rinpoché Dütsi Chütikkyi Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Quintessential Drops of Precious Ambrosia</i>	Text

<i>rin po che snang gsal spu gri 'bar bas 'khrul snang rtsad nas gcod pa nam mkha'i mtha' dang mnyam pa'i rgyud</i>	Rinpoché Nangsel Pudri Barwé Trülñang Tsené Chöpa Namkhé Ta Dang Nyampé Gyü	<i>The Eradication of Distorted Appearances by the Blazing of the Precious Illuminating Razor Identical to the Sky Tantra</i>	Text
<i>rin po che spyi gnad skyon sel thig le kun gsal gyi rgyud</i>	Rinpoché Chiné Kyönsel Tiklé Künselgyi Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Totally Radiant Seminal Nuclei: The Precious One which Eliminates in General Illness and Faults</i>	Text
<i>rin po che 'phags lam bkod pa'i rgyud</i>	Rinpoché Paklam Köpé Gyü	<i>The Precious Array of the Exalted Path Tantra</i>	Text
<i>rin po che 'byung bar byed pa sgra thal 'gyur chen po'i rgyud</i>	Rinpoché Jungwar Jepa Dra Telgyur Chenpö Gyü	<i>The Tantra of Unimpeded Sound</i>	Text
<i>rin po che srid pa bar do rang snang</i>	Rinpoché Sipa Bardo Rangnang	<i>The Precious Self-Presencing of the Intermediate Process of Rebirth</i>	Text
<i>ro lang</i>	rolang	zombie	Technical Term
<i>ro bsreg thal ba nag po</i>	Rosek Telwa Nakpo	<i>The Black Ash of Cremated Corpses</i>	Text

la

<i>lugs</i>	luk	tradition	Technical Term
<i>longs sku</i>	longku	Enjoyment Body	Technical Term
<i>rlung</i>	lung	wind	Technical Term

sha

<i>shangs pa lce chung ba ye shes rgyal mtshan (shangs pa)</i>	Shangpa Chechung[wa] Yeshé Gyeltsen (Shangpa)	eleventh century?	Person
--	---	-------------------	--------

sa

<i>sangs rgyas kun gyi dgongs pa'i bcud bsdus ri bo brtsegs pa'i rgyud</i>	Sanggyé Küngyi Gongpé Chüdü Riwo Tsekpé Gyü	<i>The Stacked Mountain Encapsulating the Quintessence of All the Buddhas' Wisdom Tantra</i>	Text
<i>seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po'i rgyud</i>	Senggé Tsel Dzok Chenpö Gyü	<i>The Tantra of the Lion's Perfect Dynamism</i>	Text
<i>sems sde</i>	Semdé	Mind Series	Doxographical Category
<i>sems sde bco bryad</i>	Semdé Chopgyé	<i>The Eighteen Texts of the Mind Series</i>	Textual Collection
<i>srid pa bar do (srid pa dag gi bar do) (srid pa'i bar do)</i>	sipa bardo (sipa dakgi bardo) (sipé bardo)	intermediate process of rebirth	Technical Term

<i>gsang skor</i>	Sangkor	Secret Cycle	Technical Term
<i>gsang ba snying po 'i rgyud</i>	Sangwa Nyingpö Gyü	<i>The Secret Nucleus Tantra</i> Skt. <i>Guhyagarbhatantra</i>	Text
<i>gsang ba 'i bdag po</i>	Sangwé Dakpo		Buddhist Deity
<i>gsar 'gyur</i>	Sangyur	Later Transmission	Technical Term
<i>gsar ma</i>	Sarma	Modernist	Organization
<i>bskyed rim</i>	kyerim	generation phase	Technical Term

ha

<i>lha rgyud rin chen spungs pa</i>	Lhagyü Rinchen Pungpa	<i>The Divine Tantra of Overflowing Preciousness</i>	Text
<i>lhun grub pho brang</i>	Lhündrup Podrang		Organization

a

<i>a ti</i>	Ati	Transcendent Pith	Doxographical Category
<i>a ti rdzogs chen</i>	Ati Dzokchen	Transcendent Pith Great Perfection	Doxographical Category
<i>a ti yo ga</i>	Atiyoga	Transcendence Yoga	Doxographical Category

Bibliography**Tibetan Language Collections*****The Seventeen Tantras (Rgyud bcu bdun)***

This collection of *tantras*, of transcendental authorship, is located in most editions of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*; I have utilized the Mtshams brag edition, referred to herein by the abbreviation Tb: *The Mtshams-brag Manuscript of the Rñiñ ma rgyud 'bum*, vols. 11-12. Thimphu, Bhutan: National Library, Royal Government of Bhutan, 1982. I have also used the separately published three-volume edition based on the Adzom Drukpa blocks (abbreviation = Ab): *Rñiñ ma 'i rgyud bcu bdun: Collected Nyingmapa Tantras of the Man ñag sde Class of the A ti yo ga (Rdzogs chen)*. 3 vols. New Delhi: Sanje Dorje, 1973. Some collections also include a short protectoress text at the end, which I have listed below:

1. *The Tantra of Unimpeded Sound (Rin po che 'byung bar byed pa sgra thal 'gyur chen po 'i rgyud)* (Tb.290: vol. 12, 12.1-173.3; Ab: vol. 1, 1-205).
2. *The Tantra of Exquisite Auspiciousness (Bkra shis mdzes ldan chen po 'i rgyud)* (Tb.291: vol. 12, 173.3-193.4; Ab: vol. 1, 207-32).
3. *The Tantra of All Good's Enlightened Spirit-Mirror (Kun tu bzang po thugs kyi me long gi rgyud)* (Tb.293: vol. 12, 245.5-280.1; Ab: vol. 1, 233-80).

4. *The Blazing Lamp Tantra* (*Sgron ma 'bar ba'i rgyud*) (Tb.297: vol. 12, 467.4-491.6; Ab: vol. 1, 281-313).
5. *The Tantra of the Adamantine Hero's Heart-Mirror* (*Rdo rje sems dpa' snying gi me long gi rgyud*) (Tb.292: vol. 12, 193.4-245.5; Ab: vol. 1, 315-88).
6. *The Tantra of Self-Arising Awareness* (*Rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud*) (Tb.286: vol. 11, 323.1-699.1; Ab: vol. 1, 389-855).
7. *The Inlaid Jewels Tantra* (*Nor bu phra bkod rang gi don thams cad gsal bar byed pa'i rgyud*) (Tb.300: vol. 12, 712.6-777.7; Ab: vol. 2, 1-75).
8. *The Tantra of the Pointing Out Introduction* (*Ngo sprod rin po che spras pa'i zhing khams bstan pa'i rgyud*) (Tb.294: vol. 12, 280.1-304.7; Ab: vol. 2, 77-109).
9. *The Six Spaces Tantra* (*Kun tu bzang po klong drug pa'i rgyud*) (Tb.296: vol. 12, 394.1-467.3; Ab: vol. 2, 111-214).
10. *The Great Esoteric Unwritten Tantra* (*Yi ge med pa'i gsang ba rgyud chen po*) (Tb.285: vol. 11, 298.1-322.7; Ab: vol. 2, 215-244).
11. *The Tantra of the Lion's Perfect Dynamism* (*Seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po'i rgyud*) (Tb.299: vol. 12, 559.7-712.6; Ab: vol. 2, 245-415).
12. *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* (*Mu tig rin po che phreng ba'i rgyud*) (Tb.295: vol. 12, 304.7-393.6; Ab: vol. 2, 417-537).
13. *The Tantra of Naturally Free Awareness* (*Rig pa rang grol chen po thams cad 'grol ba'i rgyud*) (Tb.287: vol. 11, 699.2-757.2; Ab: vol. 3, 1-72).
14. *The Tantra of Overflowing Preciousness* (*Rin chen spungs pa yon tan chen po ston pa rgyud kyi rgyal po*) (Tb.288: vol. 11, 757.3-788.2; Ab: vol. 3, 73-114).
15. *The Blazing Relics Tantra* (*Dpal nam mkha' med pa'i sku gdung 'bar ba chen po'i rgyud*) (Tb.289: vol. 11, 788.2-815.7; Ab: vol. 3, 115-51).
16. *The Tantra of the Sun and Moon's Intimate Union* (*Nyi ma dang zla ba zla kha sbyor ba chen po gsang ba'i rgyud*) (Tb.298: vol. 12, 491.6-559.7; Ab: vol. 3, 152-233).
17. *The Self-Emerging Perfection Tantra* (*Sku thams cad kyi snang ba ston pa dbang rdzogs pa rang byung chen po'i rgyud*) (Tb.284: vol. 11, 2.1-297.7 and Ab: vol. 3, 235-558).
18. *The Tantra of the Black Religious Protectress* (*Bka' srung nag mo'i rgyud*) or *The Tantra of the Black Wrathful Lady* (*Nag mo khros ma*) (not located in Tb; Ab: vol. 3, 559-573).

The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (Rnying ma rgyud 'bum)

Of varied authorship, but most of the texts are by Buddhas or are anonymous. All references to texts in these editions identify the THDL (www.thdl.org) text ID as well as the edition, volume number, and pagination. The particular edition is identified by the corresponding siglum (see below) used in the archives.

1. The Gting skyes edition: *Rñiñ ma'i rgyud 'bum: A Collection of Treasured Tantras Translated during the Period of the First Propagation of Buddhism in Tibet*. 36 vols. Thimbu, Bhutan: Dingo Khyentse Rimpoche, 1973-75. Identified as Tk.
2. The Mtshams brag edition: *The Mtshams-brag Manuscript of the Rñiñ ma rgyud 'bum*. 46 vols. Thimphu, Bhutan: National Library, Royal Government of Bhutan, 1982. Identified as Tb.
3. The Sde dge edition: *Bde bar gshegs pa'i bstan pa thams cad kyi snying po rig pa 'dzin pa'i sde snod rdo rje theg pa snga 'gyur rgyud 'bum*. 26 vols. Sde dge, Sichuan: Sde dge par khang, n.d. My copy was purchased from the Degé Publishing House (*Sde dge par khang*) in 1991. Identified as Dg.
4. The Skyid grong edition is now available in microfilm from the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project in Kathmandu, Nepal. Identified as Kg.
5. The Pad ma 'od gling edition produced by 'Jigs med gling pa is no longer extant, but his index, *The Ornament of the Pervasive Ship at the Edge of the World: The Narrative Histories Behind the Precious Collected Tantras of the Ancient Translations*, is: 'Jigs med gling pa. *De bzhin gshegs pas legs par gsungs pa'i gsung rab rgya mtsho'i snying por gyur pa rig pa 'dzin pa'i sde snod dam snga 'gyur rgyud 'bum rin po che'i rtogs pa brjod pa 'dzam gling mtha'i gru khyab pa'i rgyan*. In *Rñiñ ma'i rgyud 'bum: A Collection of Treasured Tantras Translated during the Period of the First Propagation of Buddhism in Tibet*, vol. 34. Thimbu, Bhutan: Dingo Khyentse Rimpoche, 1975. Since this text constitutes volume 34 of Tk, I have assigned it "Po" numbers for the purpose of comparison using the same format as above, though no page references are available in the absence of the actual canon.
6. The Smin grol gling edition produced by Gter bdag gling pa is no longer extant, nor do I know of any existing indexes.
7. The Lhun grub pho brang editions produced by Ratna gling pa and his son are no longer extant, nor do I know of any existing indexes.

The Seminal Heart in Four Parts (Snying thig ya bzhi)

By miscellaneous authors: Klon-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer. *Sñiñ thig ya bzhi*. 11 vols. New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi, 1970-71. All page references are to this edition. The current redaction has five sections, despite its title (the three attributed to Klong chen rab 'byams pa are also known as *The Trilogy of Seminal Quintessences (Yang tig gsum)*):

1. *The Seminal Quintessence of the Spiritual Master (Bla ma yang tig)* by Klong chen rab 'byams pa (vol. 1 but consisting of two parts, identified as Lyt).
2. *The Seminal Heart of the Dākinīs (Mkha' 'gro snying thig)* by Padmasambhava (vols. 2-3, identified as Knt).
3. *The Seminal Quintessence of the Dākinīs (Mkha' 'gro yang tig)* by Klong chen rab 'byams pa (vols. 4-6, identified as Kyt).
4. *The Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra (Bi ma snying thig)* by Vimalamitra and other early Great Perfection masters (vols. 7-9, identified as Vnt).
5. *The Seminal Quintessence of the Profound (Zab mo yang tig)* by Klong chen rab 'byams pa (vols. 10-11, identified as Zyt).

The Collected Tantras of Vairocana (Bai ro'i rgyud 'bum)

The Rgyud 'bum of Vairocana: A Collection of Ancient Tantras and Esoteric Instructions Compiled and Translated by the Eighth Century Tibetan Master. 8 vols. Leh, Ladakh: S. W. Tashigangpa, 1971. Published as volumes 16-23 of the Smarntsis shesrig spendzod. The format for references is the same as for *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, with “Vg” substituted for “Tk.”

The Seven Treasuries (Mdzod bdun)

By Klong chen rab 'byams pa. There are three complete editions. The first is the six-volume edition: Kloñ-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer. *Mdzod bdun: The Famed Seven Treasuries of Vajrayāna Buddhist Philosophy.* 6 vols. Gangtok: Sherab Gyaltzen and Khyentse Labrang, 1983. Page references are to this volume. The second was published in Gangtok not as a collection but as individual titles.⁶⁸ The third is a xylographic edition currently available from the Degé Publishing House. The individual seven titles are as follows:

1. *The Wish-Fulfilling Treasury (Yid bzhin mdzod).*
2. *The Treasury of Esoteric Precepts (Man ngag mdzod).*
3. *The Treasury of Spiritual Systems (Grub mtha' mdzod).*
4. *The Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle (Theg mchog mdzod).*
5. *The Treasury of Words and Meanings (Tshig don mdzod).*

⁶⁸ Kloñ-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer, *Theg pa chen po'i man ñag gi bstan bcos Yid bzhin rin po che'i mdzod*, 2 vols. (Gangtok: Dodrup Chen Rinpoche, 1966 or 1967); Kloñ-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer, *Man ñag rin po che'i mdzod* (Gangtok: Dodrup Chen Rinpoche, c. 1969); Kloñ-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer, *Theg pa mtha' dag di don gsal bar byed pa Grub pa'i mtha' rin po che'i mdzod* (Gangtok: Dodrup Chen Rinpoche, c. 1969); Kloñ-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer, *Theg pa'i mchog rin po che'i mdzod*, 2 vols. (Gangtok: Dodrup Chen Rinpoche, c. 1969); Kloñ-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer, *Gsan ba bla na med pa 'Od-gsal-rdo-rje-sññ-po'i gnas gsum gsal bar byed pa'i Tshig don rin po che'i mdzod* (Gangtok: Dodrup Chen Rinpoche, c. 1969); Kloñ-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer, *Sde don gnas lugs mdzod dan ran 'grel* (Gangtok: Dodrup Chen Rinpoche, c. 1966); Kloñ-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer, *Chos dbyiñs rin po che'i mdzod kyi 'grel pa Lui gi gter mdzod* (Gangtok: Dodrup Chen Rinpoche, 1964).

6. *The Treasury of Reality's Expanse (Chos dbyings mdzod).*

7. *The Treasury of Abiding Reality (Gnas lugs mdzod).*

The Crown Pith (Spyi ti)

1. *The Tantra of the Cyclic Existence-Eradicating Ambrosial Drops Unifying Appearances and Life-Worlds (Snang srid kha sbyor bdud rtsi bcud thigs 'khor ba thog mtha' gcod pa 'i rgyud)* (Tk.119: vol. 5, 525.7-601.3; Tb.259: vol. 10, 259.4-355.7).
2. *The Supplementary Tantra of the Cyclic Existence-Eradicating Ambrosial Drops Unifying Appearances and Life-Worlds (Snang srid kha sbyor bdud rtsi bcud thigs 'khor ba thog mtha' gcod pa 'i rgyud phyi ma)* (Tk.120: vol. 6, 2.1-34.5; Tb.260: vol. 10, 355.7-399.3).
3. *The Secondary Supplementary Tantra of the Cyclic Existence-Eradicating Ambrosial Drops Unifying Appearances and Life-Worlds (Snang srid kha sbyor bdud rtsi bcud thigs 'khor ba thog mtha' gcod pa 'i rgyud phyi ma 'i phyi ma)* (Tk.121: vol. 6, 34.6-52.6; Tb.261: vol. 10, 399.3-423.2).
4. *The Tantra of the Swirling Lake of Ambrosia Blazing with the Light of the Solar and Lunar Cores: The King of All Tantras (Rgyud thams cad kyi rgyal po nyi zla 'i snying po 'od 'bar ba bdud rtsi mtsho 'khyil ba 'i rgyud)* (Tk.122: vol. 6, 53.1-119.4; Tb.262: vol. 10, 423.2-510.1).
5. *The Root Tantra of Eradication of Discursive Elaboration: Eradicating Doubts Regarding the Initial Ultra Nucleus of the Previous Quintessence (Rin po che bcud kyi yang snying thog ma 'i dras thag gcod pa spros pa gcod pa rtsa ba 'i rgyud)* (Tk.123: vol. 6, 120.2-133.4; Tb.263: vol. 10, 510.2-527.1).
6. *The Five Sections of the Eradication of Discursive Elaboration Tantra (Spros pa gcod pa sde lnga 'i rgyud)* (Tk.124: vol. 6, 133.6-146.2; Tb.264: vol. 10, 527.2-543.2).
7. *The Tantra of the Quintessential Drops of Precious Ambrosia (Rin po che bdud rtsi bcud thigs kyi rgyud)* (Tk.125: vol. 6, 146.4-170.3; Tb.258: vol. 10, 224.4-259.4).
8. *The Eradication of Distorted Appearances by the Blazing of the Precious Illuminating Razor Identical to the Sky Tantra (Rin po che snang gsal spu gri 'bar bas 'khrul snang rtsad nas gcod pa nam mkha 'i mtha' dang mnyam pa 'i rgyud)* (Tk.126: vol. 6, 170.5-230.3; Tb.256: vol. 10, 101.2-182.7).
9. *The Tantra of the Totally Radiant Seminal Nuclei: The Precious One which Eliminates in General Illness and Faults (Rin po che spyi gnad skyon sel thig le kun gsal gyi rgyud)* (Tk.127: vol. 6, 230.5-237.6; Tb.269: vol. 10, 614.5-624.3).

10. *The Accumulated Precious Nucleus of Treasure Tantra (Gter snying rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud)* (Tk.128: vol. 6, 238.1-243.1; Tb.265: vol. 10, 543.4-549.7).
11. *The Blazingly Luminous Lamp of the Accumulated Gnostic Quintessence of Seminal Nuclei Tantra (Thig le ye shes bcud spungs sgron ma 'od 'bar gyi rgyud)* (Tk.129: vol. 6, 243.2-254.5; Tb.268: vol. 10, 598.7-614.5).
12. *The Stacked Lamps of Quintessential Drops of Ambrosia Tantra (Bdud rtsi bcud thigs sgron ma brtsegs pa'i rgyud)* (Tk.130: vol. 6, 254.6-285.6; Tb.257: vol. 10, 182.7-224.4).
13. *The Sky's Vast Space of Accumulated Quintessential Nuclei Tantra (Snying po bcud spungs nam mkha' klongs yangs kyi rgyud)* (Tk.131: vol. 6, 285.7-304.4; Tb.266: vol. 10, 549.7-574.2).
14. *The Tantra of the Blazing Sun and Moon Dispelling the Darkness of Non-Awareness, The Unified Quintessence of Original Purities' Esoteric Meaning, The Encapsulated Quintessence of the Ultra Core Wisdom of the Enlightened Mind (Thugs kyi yang snying dgongs pa'i bcud 'dus pa/ ka dag rnams kyi gsang don bcud dril pa/ ma rig mun sel nyi zla 'bar ba'i rgyud)* (Tk.132: vol. 6, 304.6-323.5; Tb.267: vol. 10, 574.2-598.7).
15. *The Stacked Mountain Encapsulating the Quintessence of All the Buddhas' Wisdom Tantra (Sangs rgyas kun gyi dgongs pa'i bcud bsdus ri bo brtsegs pa'i rgyud)* (Tk.133: vol. 6, 323.6-349.3; Tb.411: vol. 19, 181.2-213.3).
16. *The Great Radiant Precious Tantra of Stainless Original Purity (Dri med ka dag gi rgyud rin po che gsal ba chen po)* (Tk.134: vol. 6, 349.3-364.4; Tb.165: vol. 7, 850.3-869.5).
17. *The Unborn Original Purity's Intensity Tantra (Skye med ka dag zang ka'i rgyud)* (Tk.135: vol. 6, 364.4-373.3; Tb.164: vol. 7, 839.2-850.2).

The Ultra Pith (Yang ti) Canon (total 42)

I. Padmasambhava-linked texts (total 9)

1. *The Great Illumination of the Non-Discursive Dimension Tantra (Spros bral don gsal chen po'i rgyud)* (Tk.136: vol. 6, 374.1-608.4; Tb.301: vol. 13, 2.1-288.6): revealed by Gu ru chos kyi dbang phyug (1212-1270).
2. *The Summarized Meaning of Chapters for the Great Illumination of the Non-Discursive Dimension Tantra (Spros bral don gsal chen po'i rgyud kyi le don bsdus pa)* (not included in TK; Tb.302: vol. 13, 288.7-296.6).
3. *Adamantine Hero's One Hundred Letters: The King of Supreme Empowerments Tantra (Rdo rje sems dpa' yi ge brgya pa dbang mchog rgyal po'i rgyud)* (not

- included in Tk but it is in Dg.14: vol. 1, 135a.6-147a.1 and Tb.327: vol. 13, 843.3-888.5): revealed by Gu ru chos kyi dbang phyug.⁶⁹
4. *Adamantine Hero's One Hundred Letters: The King of Supreme Empowerments Supplementary Tantra (Rdo rje sems dpa' yi ge brgya pa dbang mchog rgyal po'i rgyud phyi ma)* (only in Dg.15: vol. 1, 147a.1-160a.6): revealed by Gu ru chos kyi dbang phyug.
 5. *Adamantine Hero's One Hundred Letters: The Commitments of All Enlightened Minds and Activities Tantra (Rdo rje sems dpa' yi ge brgya pa thugs phrin las thams cad kyi dam tshig gi rgyud)* (not included in Tk but it is in Dg.6: vol. 1, 160a.6-176b.7 and Tb.328: vol. 13, 888.5-943.7).
 6. *The Tantra of the Ocean's Radiant Vastness and the Pure Vastness of the Sky Blazing with the Solar and Lunar Light as the King of Tantras (Rgyud kyi rgyal po nyi zla 'od 'bar mkha' klong rnam dag rgya mtsho klong gsal rgyud)* (Tk.150: vol. 7, 529.2-562.4, and Tb.270: vol. 10, 624.3-671.6) revealed by Mnga' bdag nyang ral pa can and Snye mo shu yas gnod sbyin 'bar.
 7. *The Crest of All Tantras Equal to the Sky Where The Sun and Moon Are Arrayed Tantra (Rgyud thams cad kyi spyi phud nyi zla bkod pa nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'i rgyud)* (Tk.154: vol. 7, 568.5-583.3, and Tb.250: vol. 10, 42.3-61.6): no treasure revealer is specified.
 8. *The Tantra of the Sky Dragon's Roar, Thunderbolt, Gathering within Space, Generally Victorious Water Monster, Jewel, and Magical Knot (Nam mkha' 'brug sgrogs thog babs klong 'dus spyi rgyal chu srin nor bu 'phrul gyi rgya mdud rgyud)* (Tk.146: vol. 7, 499.7-504.7; Tb.251: vol. 10, 61.5-68.5): no treasure revealer is specified.
 9. *The Lamp of the Precious Great Differentiation of the View Root Tantra (Lta ba la shan chen po rin chen sgron ma rtsa ba'i rgyud)* (Tk.147: vol. 7, 505.2-525.2; Tb.252: vol. 10, 68.5-94.1): no treasure revealer is specified.

II. Vimalamitra-linked texts (total 12) plus related texts (total 3). All texts are linked to Vimalamitra in Tb colophons unless noted otherwise

1. *The Tantra Encapsulating the Great Perfection's Definitive Dimension: The Array of the Precious Nucleus of All Views (Rdzogs pa chen po nges don 'dus pa'i rgyud lta ba thams cad kyi snying po rin po che rnam par bkod pa)* (Tk.138: vol. 7, 2.1-108.7; Tb.140: vol. 6, 2.1-145.5).
2. *The Precious Great Perfection's Eradication of Cyclic Existence Tantra (Rdzogs pa chen po rin po che 'khor ba rtsad god kyi rgyud)* (Tk.139: vol. 7, 109.2-121.1; Tb.141: vol. 6, 145.5-162.1): this lacks a colophon attributing it to Vimalamitra or anyone else, but the title clearly links it to text no. 3.

⁶⁹ See Brag dkar, *A Catalog to the Kyidrong Edition* (Brag dkar, *Rnying ma rgyud 'bum dkar chag*, 7a.4-5), which states, "This tantra and its appendix, which are the treasures of Chos dbang, are translated by the Emanation Padmasambhava and Nam mkha'i snying po."

3. *The Precious Great Perfection's Eradication of Cyclic Existence Unborn Awareness of the Reality Body Tantra* (Rdzogs pa chen po 'khor ba brtsad nas gcod pa chos sku skye med rig pa'i rgyud) (Tk.144: vol. 7, 387.5-413.2; Tb.142: vol. 6, 162.1-194.7).
4. *The Tantra of the Vast Matrix of the Sky, The Wisdom of All the Buddhas, The Ultra Nucleus of the Great Perfection View* (Rdzogs pa chen po lta ba'i yang snying / sangs rgyas thams cad kyi dgongs pa/ nam mkha' klong yangs kyi rgyud) (Tk.140: vol. 7, 121.2-201.6; Tb.143: vol. 6, 194.7-307.3).
5. *The Great Perfection Tantra of the All-Generative Source of the Precious Meaning of the Counsel Encapsulating the Wisdom of All the Buddhas into the Single Reality Body* (Rdzogs pa chen po sangs rgyas thams cad kyi dgongs pa chos sku gcig tu 'dus par bka' bgros pa'i don rin po che 'byung gnas kun 'byung gi rgyud) (Tk.145: vol. 7, 413.3-499.4; Tb.144: vol. 6, 307.4-414.7).
6. *The Blissful Wheel of Self-Emergent Enlightened Speech of Awareness Encapsulating the Great Perfection Tantra* (Rdzogs pa chen po don 'dus rig pa'i gsung rang byung bde ba'i 'khor lo'i rgyud) (Tk.143: vol. 7, 341.5-387.3; Tb.146: vol. 6, 464.5-520.6).
7. *The Blissful Wheel of Self-Emergent Nucleus of the Great Perfection's Marvelous Meaning Tantra* (Rdzogs pa chen po rmad byung don gyi snying po rang byung bde ba'i 'khor lo'i rgyud) (Tk.142: vol. 7, 304.7-341.1; Tb.147: vol. 6, 520.6-570.3).
8. *The Transcendent Yoga of the Great Perfection from which All Buddhas Emerge Tantra: The Tantra of the Ultimate Fruit of the Gnostic Reality Body, Awareness's Meaning Encapsulating Speech, the Contemplation of Esoteric Mind, and the Wheel of Self-Emergent Bliss* (Rdzogs pa chen po shin tu rnal 'byor sangs rgyas thams cad 'byung ba'i rgyud/ ye shes chos kyi sku/ don 'dus rig pa'i gsung/ gsang ba thugs kyi ting nge 'dzin/ rang byung bde ba'i 'khor lo/ mthar phyin 'bras bu'i rgyud) (Tk.141: vol. 7, 202.5-304.6; Tb.149: vol. 6, 621.2-754.1): this lacks a colophon attributing it to Vimalamitra, but its placement, Ultra Pith classification, and title of the final chapter ("gser gyi dril shing can gyi le'u" - Tb.149: vol. 6, 754.1) all indicate it belongs to this group of texts.
9. *The Tantra of the Ultra-Nucleus Encapsulating the Great Perfection's Definitive Dimension in the Gnostic Space of All Good: The Ultra Purified Molten Essence of Precious Gold* (Rdzogs pa chen po nges don 'dus pa'i yang snying kun tu bzang po ye shes klong gi rgyud rin po che gser gyi yang zhun) (Tk.163: vol. 8, 478.3-522.3; Tb.150: vol. 6, 754.2-807.1).
10. *Chapters on the Matrix of Primordial Gnosis (Ye shes glong gi le sdebs)* (Tb.151: vol. 6, 807.1-811.6): no colophonic attribution; text is just a chapter index for no. 9.

11. *The Tantra of Primordial Gnosis Identical to the Sky Encapsulating All of the Great Perfection's Definitive Dimension: The Array of the Precious Nucleus of All Views and Meditations (Rdzogs pa chen po nges don thams cad 'dus pa ye shes nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'i rgyud lta sgom thams cad kyi snying po rin po che rnam par bkod pa)* (Tk.162: vol. 8, 124.1-478.1; Tb.152: vol. 7, 2.1-433.5): this lacks a colophon attributing it to Vimalamitra, but its title clearly links it to no. 1 and no. 9, while its final chapter (Tb.152.b212: vol. 7, 430.3) refers in a prophecy to both Śrīsimha and Vimalamitra.
12. *The Tantra of Primordial Gnosis Perfectly Complete from Its Depths: The Great Perfection View Eliminating the Darkness of Non-Awareness (Rdzogs pa chen po ma rig mun pa rab tu sel bar byed pa'i lta ba ye shes gting nas rdzogs pa'i rgyud)* (Tk.155: vol. 8, 2.1-57.6; Tb.153: vol. 7, 433.5-497.3).
13. *The Tantra of Primordial Gnosis Perfectly Complete from Its Depths: The View of the Great Perfection (Rdzogs pa chen po'i lta ba ye shes gting rdzogs kyi rgyud)* (Tk.67: vol. 3, 33.3-65.5; Tb.154: vol. 7, 497.4-534.5): Dg classifies this as Mind Series, but its colophon refers to Vimalamitra and its title is nearly identical to no. 12.
14. *Protection of the Psyche by the Enlightening Mind (Byang chub sems yid skyob pa)* (Tk not included [nor Dg]; Tb.145: vol. 6, 415.1-464.4): this is not included in Dg or Tk and hence lacks a doxographical classification; however, its locus in Tb and its Vimalamitra connection indicate a Ultra Pith affiliation. Its colophon (Tb vol. 6: 464.5) also refers to one of the Vimalamitra Ultra Pith tradition's sub-rubrics – *Po ti se ru mthing shog can*.
15. *The Marvelous Great Teaching (Chos chen po rmad du byung ba)* (Tk vol. 2: 487.1-531.7; Tb.148: vol. 6, 570.4-621.2): Dg classifies as Mind Series.

III. The Clear Display of the Primordial Gnosis of the Great Perfection's All Good (Kun tu bzang po ye shes gsal bar ston pa) Cycle (total 6) associated with Śrīsimha and Snubs sangs rgyas ye shes

1. *The Tantra of the Clear Display of the Primordial Gnosis of the Great Perfection's All Good (Rdzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po ye shes gsal bar ston pa'i rgyud)* (Tk.157: vol. 8, 101.7-113.5; Tb.102: vol. 4, 548.5-563.3).
2. *The Supplementary Tantra of the Clear Display of the Primordial Gnosis of the Great Perfection's All Good (Rdzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po ye shes gsal bar ston pa'i rgyud phyi ma)* (Tk.158: vol. 8, 113.6-116.3; Tb.103: vol. 4, 563.3-566.5).
3. *The Secondary Supplementary Tantra of the Clear Display of the Primordial Gnosis of the Great Perfection's All Good (Rdzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po ye shes gsal bar ston pa'i rgyud phyi ma'i phyi ma)* (Tk.159: vol. 8, 116.5-119.3; Tb.105: vol. 4, 568.3-572.1).

4. *The Secret Supplementary Tantra of the Clear Display of the Primordial Gnosis of the Great Perfection's All Good* (*Rdzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po ye shes gsal bar ston pa phyi ma gsang ba'i rgyud*) (Tk.160: vol. 8, 119.6-121.2; Tb.106: vol. 4, 572.1-573.7).
5. *The Secondary Supplementary Tantra of the Clear Display of the Primordial Gnosis of the Great Perfection's All Good* (*Rdzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po ye shes gsal bar ston pa'i rgyud phyi ma'i phyi ma*) (Tk.161: vol. 8, 121.3-123.7; Tb.107: vol. 4, 574.1-577.2).
6. *The Tantra Encapsulating the Supreme Path of Secret Mantra: Showing Clearly the Primordial Gnosis of the Great Perfection's All Good* (*Rdzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po ye shes gsal bar ston pa/ gsang sngags kyi lam mchog 'dus pa'i rgyud*) (Tk.70: vol. 3, 108.6-115.1; Tb.108: vol. 4, 577.2-585.1): Dg classifies this as Mind Series, but its title as well as location in Tb and Vg with the above texts suggests it should be classified as Ultra Pith.

IV. The Black Ultra Pith (Yang ti nag po) Cycle (total 5)

1. *The Tantra of Mañjuśrī's Gathering* (*'Jam dpal 'dus pa'i rgyud*) (Tk.167: vol. 8, 551.1-558.4; Tb.192: vol. 8, 640.2-648.1 and Tb.272: vol. 10, 709.6-718.6): an alternative title is *The Single Grain of the Black Ultra Pith* (*Yang ti nag po'i 'bru gcig pa*).
2. *The Penetrating Vision of Seminal Nuclei Tantra: A Black Ultra Pith Tantra* (*Thig le mthong brtol gyi rgyud/ yang ti nag po'i rgyud*) (Tk.165: vol. 8, 526.4-527.7; Tb.104: vol. 4, 566.6-568.3).
3. *The Tantra of Channels, Winds, and Seminal Nuclei* (*Rtsa rlung thig le rgyud*) (Tk.153: vol. 7, 567.7-568.5; Tb.255: vol. 10, 98.1-101.2): this is connected to the Black Ultra Pith in that it is described as being an extraction from *The Tantra of Mañjuśrī's Gathering*.
4. *The Black Ultra Pith Wheel of Vitality Tantra* (*Yang ti nag po srog gi 'khor lo'i rgyud*) (Tk.149: vol. 7, 527.3-529.1; Tb.118: vol. 4, 760.4-762.5).
5. *The Tantra of Means and Wisdom Arisen from within the Seminal Nuclei, the Tantra of the Vitality drop, the Vase of Ambrosia, and the Illuminating Razor* (*Thig le'i ngang las shar ba yi/ thabs dang shes rab kyi rgyud/ srog gi thigs pa/ bdud rtsi'i bum pa/ snang byed kyi spu gri'i rgyud*) (Tk.151: vol. 7, 562.6-564.2; Tb not included): this text is given the alternate title of *The Tantra of the Razor Illuminating the Single Golden Grain of the Black Ultra Pith* (*Yang tig nag po gser gyi 'bru gcig snang byed spu gri'i rgyud*) by Brag dkar rta so sprul sku chos kyi dbang phyug in *A Catalog to the Kyidrong Edition* (*Rnying ma rgyud 'bum phyi glegs bam nang gi chos tshan bzhugs byang dkar chag dpe rdzi bsam 'phel nor bu'i 'phreng ba*), 7a.1.

V. Miscellaneous Ultra Pith (Yang ti) texts (total 7)

1. *The Wheel of Primordial Gnosis Tantra (Ye shes 'khor lo'i rgyud)* (Tk.164: vol. 8, 523.1-526.4; Tb.58: vol. 2, 869.6-873.7).
2. *The Enlightened Mind Tantra of the Great Perfection's Secret Wheel of Primordial Gnosis (Rdzogs pa chen po ye shes 'khor lo gsang ba thugs rgyud)* (Tk.166: vol. 8, 529.1-550.1; Tb.88: vol. 4, 80.4-105.2).
3. *The Blazing Sky Tantra: The Victorious Summit of All Tantras (Rgyud thams cad kyi rtse rgyal nam mkha' 'bar ba'i rgyud)* (Tk.137: vol. 6, 608.4-635.7; Tb.249: vol. 10, 2.1-42.3).
4. *The Great Primordially Free Fruit of All Good's Vitality Drop Tantra (Kun bzang srog gi thig pa 'bras bu ye grol chen po'i rgyud)* (Tk.148: vol. 7, 525.4-527.2; Tb.117: vol. 4, 758.4-760.4).
5. *The Tantra of the Penetrating View (Lta ba thal gyi rgyud)* (Tk.152: vol. 7, 564.2-565.6; Tb.253: vol. 10, 94.1-95.7).
6. *The Tantra of the Precious Nucleus of All Views in the Great Perfection (Rdzogs pa chen po lta ba thams cad kyi snying po'i rgyud)* (Tk.156: vol. 8, 58.1-101.3; Tb.155: vol. 7, 534.4-588.1).
7. *The One-Pointed Contemplation of Avalokiteśvara ('Phags pa spyan ras gzigs ting nge 'dzin rtse gcig gi rgyud)* (Tk.168: vol. 8, 558.5-569.3; Tb.246: vol. 9, 896.3-908.4).

Other Tibetan Texts

Karma gling pa. *The Doctrinal Cycles of Wisdom's Natural Freedom in the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities (Zhi khro dgongs pa rang grol gyi chos skor)*, published as *Karma-glin-pa. Źi khro dgoñs pa ran grol gyi chos skor: A Collection of Źi khro Texts*. 3 vols. Delhi: Sherab Lama, 1975-6.

Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer. *The Gathering of the Eight Precept Blissful Ones in One Hundred and Thirty Sections (Bka' bryad bde gshegs 'dus pa'i rgyud lung man ngag dang bcas pa'i chos tshan brgya dang sum cur bkod pa)*. Published as vols. of the *Ngagyur Nyingmay Sungrab*. Gangtok: Sonam T. Kazi, 1978. Also, the Mtshams brag manuscript has been published in thirteen volumes (Paro: Ngodrup, 1979-1980).

Bdud-'joms 'jigs-bral-ye-ses-rdo-rje (Bdud 'joms 'jigs bral ye shes rdo rje). *Record of Teachings Received for the Treasury of Precious Treasures (Rin chen gter mdzod kyi thob yig)*, published as *Gsañ snags sna 'gyur nan rgyud sde gsum gyi bka' babs ñe brgyud zab mo Rin chen gter gyi mdzod chen po'i thob yig ño mtshar Au dumwa ra'i phren mdzes zes bya ba bzugs so*. Dal-hor: 1968.

Padmasambhava. *The Lamp of the Blazing Sun and Moon: A Precious Commentary on the Litany of Mañjuśrī's Names ('Phags pa 'jam dpal gyi mtshan yang dag*

par brjod pa'i 'grel pa rin po che nyi zla 'bar ba'i sgron ma), translated by Ska ba dpal brtsegs (see 148b.6). In *rNying ma bka' ma rgyas pa*, edited by Dudjom Rinpoche, vol. 22: 195-493. Kalimpong: Dobjung Lama, 1982. The *Bka' ma*, in fifty-five volumes, is of varied authorship. I only had access to Tarthang Tulku's reprint of the Padmasambhava text, for which I lack any publication information.

Brag dkar rta so sprul sku chos kyi dbang phyug. *A Catalog to the Kyidrong Edition (Rnying ma rgyud 'bum phyi glegs bam nang gi chos tshan bzhugs byang dkar chag dpe rdzi bsam 'phel nor bu'i 'phreng ba)*. Published as Brag dkar rta so sprul sku chos kyi dbang phyug. *Rnying ma rgyud 'bum phyi glegs bam nang gi chos tshan bzhugs byang dkar chag dpe rdzi bsam 'phel nor bu'i 'phreng ba*. This text is an index to the Skyid grong edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (Rnying ma rgyud 'bum)*, and was obtained from the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project, Kathmandu, Nepal via the kindness of Franz-Karl Ehrhard (at present I lack any identifying numbers).

Secondary Literature

Blezer, Henk. *Kar gliñ Ži khro: A Tantric Buddhist Concept*. Leiden: Research School CNWS, School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies, 1997.

———. “Karma Gling pa: Treasure Finder (gTer ston), Creative Editor (gTer ston)? – A Preliminary Comparison of the *Man ngag snying gi dgongs pa rgyal ba'i bka' zhes bya ba'i rgyud* and two *Bar do thos grol chen mo*-texts: The *Chos nyid bar do'i gsal 'debs thos grol chen mo* and the *Srid pa bar do'i ngo sprod gsal 'debs thos grol chen mo*.” *East and West* 52, no. 1-4 (2000): 311-345 (cf. “scrambled” edition: “Karma gling pa: Treasure Finder or Creative Editor?” In *Reading Asia: New Research in Asian Studies*, edited by Frans Hüsken and Dick van der Meij, 292-338. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001.

Cuevas, Bryan. *The Hidden History of the Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Dorje, Gyurme, and Matthew Kapstein. *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, 2 vols. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991.

Germano, David F. “Dying, Death and Other Opportunities.” In *Religions of Tibet in Practice*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr., 458-93. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997.

———. *The Secret Tibetan History of Buddhist Tantra in the Great Perfection*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming.

Guenther, Herbert. *The Life and Teaching of Nāropa*. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Kapstein, Matthew T. “Samantabhadra and Rudra: Innate Enlightenment and Radical Evil in Tibetan Rnying-ma-pa Buddhism.” In *Discourse and Practice*,

edited by Frank E. Reynolds and David Tracy, 51-82. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.

Karmay, Samten. *The Great Perfection (rDzogs chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988.